NATURAL SOLUTIONS

Bat Scoping Survey: 33 Nicholas Way, Northwood

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Non-technical Summary

Background

In April 2025, Crossman Associates was commissioned to undertake a bat survey of 33 Nicholas Way, Northwood HA6 2TR. Development proposals include demolition and replacement.

Methods

The scoping survey was undertaken by Miguel Canovas, an experienced ecologist and licenced bat worker. The building was inspected both externally and internally for any evidence of bat / bird presence, such as droppings, food remains, staining or actual bats / birds.

Results

The dwelling is located within a residential area. Overall, the dwelling remains in good condition. The property has a spacious roof void and during the survey was found to have bat droppings attributable to long-eared bat, confirming an active roost of at least one bat species. The quantity of bat droppings is typical of a non-breeding day roost. The roof provides features suitable for roosting bats and include weatherboards and soffit gaps. The garden is maintained.

The dwelling is a confirmed roost.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the following be undertaken as part of the development:

- Further bat surveys of the dwelling.
- A precautionary approach to development regarding hedgehogs.
- Install a bird nest box.
- Exterior lighting planned sensitive to nocturnal wildlife.

Contents

1. Background

1.1. In April 2025, Crossman Associates was commissioned to undertake a bat survey of 33 Nicholas Way, Northwood HA6 2TR. Development proposals include demolition and replacement. (ordnance Survey grid reference: TQ 08211 90664).

1.2. Figure 1 under Appendix II provides a site location map.

1.3. The objectives of the survey were to:

- Assess the likely presence or absence of bats.
- Identify any legislative or planning policy constraints relevant to the site.
- Determine the need for further surveys, compensation, or mitigation.

Site Description

1.4. The site comprises a detached two-storey house which is in a residential area in Northwood, London. The property has a maintained garden with mature trees.

1.5. The property is adjoined on all sides by similar properties with maintained gardens with mature trees.

1.6. The environs are predominately residential with a mix of medium/large properties. The wider landscape includes woodland.

Legislation

1.7. In the UK all species of bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended and the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations. Under this legislation it is a strict liability offence to injure or destroy a bat or to disturb damage or destroy the resting place of a bat. Under this

legislation the UK is obliged to fully consider bats within the planning process and the level of bat activity on-site must be fully assessed prior to the assessment the planning application.

1.8. In Britain all wild birds are granted legal protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) (as amended). This legislation protects the birds, their eggs and nests whilst being built or in use.

2. Methodology

Desktop Study

Data search

2.1. The MAGIC website was accessed to gain information on any statutory site designations within 4 km of the site that are designated for bats.

National Planning Policy

2.2. National Planning Policy has been reviewed for policies that relate to nature conservation relevant to the site.

Field Survey

Bat scoping survey

2.3. A bat scoping survey was carried out on the 16th April 2025 by Miguel Canovas, an experienced ecologist and licenced bat worker.

2.4. The building was methodically inspected internally and externally for any evidence of roosting bats, including actual bats, droppings, urine staining and evidence of feeding activity such as discarded insect wings and cases.

2.5. The building was also assessed for its suitability to support roosting bats by considering several factors including whether bats can access internal and external voids within the building and whether these voids provide adequate protection and shelter for roosting bats. If the building is not confirmed as a roost, it is assessed from High to Negligible Suitability as follows;

- **High Suitability** – many roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be old, large and rural

- **Moderate Suitability** – some roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be old, rural with some recent maintenance
- **Low Suitability** – few roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be modern, urban and well maintained
- **Negligible Suitability** – insignificant roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be small, modern, urban and very well maintained.

Birds

2.6. The building was also inspected for the presence of birds including house sparrow *Passer domesticus.* The building was checked for field signs including nesting material, accumulations of droppings and/or pellets.

3. Results

Desktop Study

Data Search

3.1. The MAGIC website informed that there are no statutory sites within 4 km of the site designated for bats.

Planning Policy

3.2. National policy guidance is provided by National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024), which sets out the Government' planning policies for England and how they should be applied to planning applications;

<u>Conserving and enhancing the natural environment</u>

- Planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

  a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

  b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

  c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

Habitats and Biodiversity

- To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

  a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity68; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and

  b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

- When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;

b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons70 and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and

d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

Field Survey

Bat scoping survey

3.3. The external and internal conditions of the buildings are described in the table below and photographs can be found in Appendix II.

3.4. A table within Appendix III; information sheets set out the criteria for the way a building is assessed for its potential to support roosting bats.

Building	Feature	Feature Description	Bat suitability
33 Nicholas Way, Northwood	Overview	Detached two-storey house. The property is in good condition and is currently occupied. Several bat droppings were found scattered around the roof void (<100).	Confirmed Roost ☒
	Exterior	The brick walls are in good condition; no gaps or cracks were observed. The windows and doors are all well-sealed. The property has a maintained garden of lawns and mature trees. The attached garage is in good condition.	
	Interior	Areas of living accommodation are composed of well-sealed rooms with plaster and painted walls and ceilings. The roof void is insulated, compost of exposed timber and type 1 bituminous sarking felt.	
	Roof	Flat roof tiles, with no gaps observed, however, gaps were observed at the southwestern elevation soffit and the northern elevation weatherboard.	

Building	Feature	Feature Description	Bat suitability
		The chimneys brick work remains in good condition, and the flash/ concrete work which seals the chimneys to the roof is well fit in place.	

Birds

3.5. No birds or bird nesting activity was recorded in any aspect of the building.

Evaluation

3.6. The property is located within a residential area, however, lies near to Ruslip Woods Ancient woodland with habitats likely to function as commuting and foraging resource for bats.

Long-eared bat roost

3.7. Bat droppings were recorded in the roof void of the dwelling. The size and shape of the droppings and context indicate that the droppings come from a species of long-eared bat, most likely brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*; which is a common species that occupies spacious and uncluttered lofts in domestic dwellings.

3.8. The access point(s) could be the soffit and weatherboard gaps.

3.9. During the survey, no bats were present and the lack of a significant build-up of droppings suggests that the building is functioning as a non-breeding summer day roost.

3.10. The roof void is not likely to be supporting a maternity roost of long eared bats as in these situations, a larger quantity of droppings and other bat related evidence would be expected.

3.11. Long-eared bats do sometimes make use of roof voids as hibernation sites; however, the roof void provides no significant hidden cavities or crevices and is thus considered to be sub-optimal as a hibernation site for this species.

Behaviour and habitat

3.12. Long-eared bats are a roof void and crevice dwelling bat, particularly favouring older buildings particularly ones with large open roof spaces. Bats roost singly or in small groups among the roof timbers of the apex, especially around ridge ends, chimneys and in crevices at the top of gable walls. Correctly assessing the quantity of brown-long eared bats can be problematic as the species is very secretive and their detection can be difficult due to their quiet echolocation making them difficult to detect using bat detectors. They also rarely exit their roosts until it has become very dark, so observation can be difficult.

3.13. Current proposals will destroy the roost, possibly leading to the injury or death of bats if they are present at the time of works. Without an appropriate Natural England licence in place this would be a strict liability offence.

3.14. The property is a confirmed roost.

4. Recommendations

4.1. The recommendations in the paragraphs below are provided to help ensure that wildlife and important ecological features are protected during the course of works. Recommendations also set out mitigation measures to minimise harm where this cannot be avoided and provide compensation measures to allow the proposals to meet current legislative and planning policy objectives.

4.2. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) states that a public authority must 'in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity; Conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat'.

4.3. The NPPF (2024) states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

Species recommendations

Bats

4.4. All bats within the UK are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act as Amended and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations. Under this registration there are strict liability offence to injure or destroy a bat or to disturb, damage or destroy the resting place (roost) of a bat. Under the Bonn Convention, the UK is obliged through the planning system to protect important bat habitats.

Further surveys of the dwelling

4.5. To fully characterise the type of roost, quantity and species of bat, pattern and usage of the loft and access points, further surveys will be necessary.

4.6. At least two activity surveys will be undertaken. If bats are found and any discrepancies between the two surveys, may require a **third** survey to fully characterise the roost. Surveys are undertaken during the main bat activity period (May – September) with at least two of these surveys carried out between May – August and spread at least three weeks apart.

4.7. Surveys will involve appropriately experienced personnel observing all aspects of the building to watch where bats emerge (evening emergence surveys).

4.8. Evening emergence surveys commence approximately 20 minutes prior to sunset and continue for approximately two hours.

4.9. The results of the surveys (if bats are present) will inform an appropriate mitigation / compensation strategy that will ensure that bats are safe guarded during works and that bats are maintained at a favourable conservation status locally.

Lighting

4.10. The site lies near to ancient woodlands, these habitats are likely to support a number of species of bat; typical species that would be likely to be present include common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle, therefore any exterior lighting that is to be employed should be of the modern LED-type and should take into account the presence of bats and avoid over illumination of the garden, trees and adjacent properties. This can be achieved by using directional lights and or cowls.

Hedgehog

4.11. In the UK hedgehogs are listed on schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as Amended which makes it illegal to kill or capture wild hedgehogs. Hedgehogs are also listed as a species of 'principal importance' under the Natural

Environmental and Rural Communities Act 2006, which is meant to confer a 'duty of responsibility' to public bodies.

4.12. Excavated holes and trenches on building sites have the potential to trap wildlife including hedgehogs leading to the potential suffering and death of the animal (s) particularly if they become filled with water.

4.13. If during the development excavated holes / trenches are likely to be left open, then timber builders' planks should be fitted as ramps to enable any wildlife including hedgehogs a means of escape.

Biodiversity enhancements

Birds

4.14. During the construction phase of the works, there is an opportunity to incorporate inexpensive ecological enhancements that aim to increase the biodiversity of the site.

4.15. Swifts (Apus apus) are a declining species in the UK, largely due to the loss of suitable nesting sites in modern and renovated buildings. To support local biodiversity, fulfil policy objectives and contribute to swift conservation efforts, it is recommended that

4.16. At least one swift next box be installed on the new extension.

4.17. The nest box should be positioned at least 4 m above ground level, under the eaves or on an appropriate sheltered wall, with a clear flight path and minimal disturbance. Ideally, the box should face north or east to avoid excessive heat exposure.

4.18. For a long-term, low-maintenance solution, we recommend incorporating the Action for Swifts S Brick into the development. The S Brick is a discreet, integrated nest box designed to be built directly into the structure of the building, providing a secure and permanent nesting site without affecting aesthetics or maintenance requirements. Models can be found on www.actionforswifts.com.

5. Limitations

5.1. This report records wildlife found during the survey and anecdotal evidence of sightings. It does not record any plants or animals that may appear at other times of the year and were therefore not evident at the time of visit.

5.2. The advice contained in this report relate primarily to factual survey results and general guidance only. On all legal matters you are advised to take legal advice.

6. References

Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) *Bats and Lighting in the UK* BCT

HMSO (1981) *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and subsequent amendments).* HMSO

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Mitchell-Jones, A.J, & McLeish A.P. (2012) *The Bat Worker's Manual* (4th Edition)

Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) Website at www.magic.gov.uk

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TSO (2021) *National Planning Policy Framework.* TSO

TSO (2006) *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act* TSO

Appendix I – Site Figures

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● Site location

Client	Dusek Design Associates
Title	Location plan
Site	33 Nicholas Way, Northwood
Figure	1
Date	25 April 2025
Scale	xxx

Appendix II – Site Photographs

Photographs 1- 3

Photograph 1:

Front - western elevation / northern and southwestern aspect

Soffit and weatherboard gaps

Photograph 2:

Back - southeastern elevation

Garden

Photograph 3:

Roof void and bat droppings

Appendix III– Information Sheets

Bat Habitat Suitably Criteria

Bat Roosting Suitability	Criteria	Survey requirement to prove likely absence
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.	No further survey work required
Low	A building, structure or tree with one or more potential roosting sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically; however, these possible roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used by large numbers of bats and are unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation roosts.	One activity survey
Medium	A building, structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to the size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habit, but is unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.	Two activity surveys
High	A building, structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.	Three activity surveys

Survey requirements are taken from Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (2016), which is the recognised industry standard guidance used by local planning authorities and other statutory consultees.

Information sheet Artificial bird nesting boxes for Buildings: Swifts, house martins and house sparrows

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Habibat house sparrow nest box

Vivara woodstone sparrow nest box; suitable for both integral fitment or surface mounting

Ibstock Swift boxes are also suitable for house sparrows. Can be customised to suit any exterior finish.Site boxes under eaves, away from windows and direct sunlight.

Ibstock Box

Sparrow boxes should be grouped together and be at least 2 m of the ground. The boxes can be also be sited on gable walls. At least 3 per averaged size house.

Swifts boxes should be at least 5 m above the ground with an clear un-obstructed flight path.

Schwegler model 9b

Schwegler house martin box model 9 b double is a suitable box for house martins and can be used to encourage the uptakeof a building by this species. The boxes can be attached to the exterior walls in a sheltered position; ideally beneath the eaves. At least two sets should be placed on an averaged size house.