# Preliminary Ecological Appraisal: 29 The Avenue, Ickenham

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NATURAL SOLUTIONS

# Non-technical Summary

## Background

In February 2025, Crossman Associates was commissioned to undertake an ecological appraisal and a bat scoping survey of 29 The Avenue, Ickenham, Uxbridge UB10 8NR.

Proposals are for demolition and replacement.

## Methodology

The survey was undertaken by Miguel Canovas, an experienced ecologist and licenced bat worker. The building was inspected externally and internally for any evidence of bat or bird presence, such as droppings, food remains, staining or the presence of bats or birds. Adjacent habitats were checked for suitability for other protected species.

## Results

The site is located in a residential area. The garden is dominated by lawn, areas of ornamental/introduced shrub, hedgerows and trees. The larger trees present on site are likely to provide foraging and nesting opportunities for common garden and farm birds.

The dwelling remains in good condition and provide no features suitable for roosting bats or nesting birds.

The dwelling and the garage have negligible suitability for roosting bats.

## Recommendations

It is recommended that the following is undertaken as part of the proposals.

- A precautionary approach to development regarding bats.
- Install bird boxes on the exterior of the new development.
- Reduced external lighting to benefit nocturnal wildlife.

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# 1. Background

1.1. In February 2025, Crossman Associates was commissioned to undertake an ecological appraisal and a bat scoping survey of 29 The Avenue, Ickenham, Uxbridge UB10 8NR. (site Ordnance Survey grid reference TQ 07502 86094).

1.2. Figure 1 in Appendix I provides a site location map.

1.3. Development proposals include demolition and replacement.

1.4. The objectives of the survey were to:

- Map the existing habitats on site
- Provide an assessment of the likely presence/absence of notable or protected species
- Identify any legislative or planning policy constraints relevant to the site
- Determine the need for further surveys, compensation or mitigation

## Site Description

1.5. The site is a detached two-storey dwelling with a detached garage and a maintained garden that is composed of amenity lawn, areas of ornamental/introduced shrub, hedgerows and trees.

1.6. The property is Ickenham, London. The site is surrounded by similar properties, with maintained gardens. The wider landscape is characterised by a mix of residential areas and parklands.

# 2. Methodology

## Desktop Study

*Data search*

2.1. The MAGIC website was accessed to gain information on any statutory site designations within 2 km of the site. This was extended to 4 km in respect of sites specifically designated for bat conservation.

*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. 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.

2.4. 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.

*Ecological appraisal*

2.5. The ecological appraisal follows Phase 1 habitat survey methodology, which is a survey method and habitat classification system that was developed by the Nature Conservation Council, now Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC, 2003) to map habitats and land use categories to a 'consistent level and accuracy'. The habitats are mapped using standard colour codes allowing rapid visual assessment of the extent and distribution of different habitat types. Where appropriate, Target Notes highlight potential features of interest.

2.6. An extended Phase 1 habitat survey also records provisional signs of protected or notable species and assesses the suitability of the habitats on-site and within the accessible surroundings of the site to support such species.

## Site Evaluation

2.7. The site evaluation for the habitat areas and species present (where appropriate) is based on published criteria given in the CIEEM guidelines for ecological impact assessment. Values are assigned between International Value and Negligible Value to habitats that are likely to be directly or indirectly affected by the proposed development.

2.8. The value categories used in the assessment are as follows:

- International – Europe

- National – England
- Regional – South-east
- Borough – Hillingdon
- Site – Within the immediate zone of influence

2.9. The conservation and ecological status of the site is assessed using the Ratcliffe criteria (1977).

# 3. Results

## Desktop Study

*Data Search*

3.1. The Magic website informed of the following statutory site designation within 2 km of the site;

- Denham Lock Wood (SSSI) lies approximately 2000m east of the site.
- Frays Farm Meadows (SSSI) lies approximately 1500m east of the site.
- Frays Valley (LNR) lies approximately 2000m east of the site.

3.2. The small scale of the development is not considered to have a significant impact on the designated sites.

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

*Planning Policy*

3.4. 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

3.5. Survey work was undertaken by Miguel Canovas an experienced ecologist and licenced bat worker and took place on 27th February 2025.

*Habitat survey*

3.6. The habitats on site are described in the paragraphs below and are shown in Figure 2, Appendix I. Photographs can be found in Appendix II.

- Vegetated garden
- Trees
- Sealed surfaces

*Vegetated garden*

Amenity grassland

3.7. The property has medium size garden which is managed. The area of lawn remains short and does not have any significant ecological value.

Hedgerows

3.8. Areas of hedgerows are found at the southern and northern boundaries of the site. The hedgerows are well maintained and compost of a mixture of species including, cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*, Leyland cypress *Cupressus x leylandii,* rhododendron *Rhododendron* and holly *Ilex aquifolium.* The hedgerows will be retained within the proposals.

*Trees*

3.9. There are few trees at the peripheries of the site. Species include oak *Quercus robur,* ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and Leyland cypress *Cupressus x leylandii.* The most developed trees provide opportunities for nesting birds. However, there are no trees on site providing potential roost features (PRFs) for bats. All the trees will be retained within the proposals.

3.10. Trees include the following trees:

- 2 x small trees (<30 cm at breast height)
- 2 x medium trees (30-60 cm)
- 1 x large trees (>60 cm)

*Sealed surfaces*

3.11. Hardstanding areas are composed of concrete and forms a drive at the front and pathways around the dwelling and garden.

## Species observation

*Flora*

3.12. The garden provides an artificially created area, compost by a low varied mixture of trees, shrubs and introduced plants which is managed.

Non – native invasive plants

3.13. Small patches of *Rhododrendon* (Target Note 1) are present within the hedgerows of the garden. These species are listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) as an invasive species and the act makes it unlawful to allow it to colonise beyond the boundary of a site.

*Invertebrates*

3.14. The site is likely to support a limited invertebrate community of species typical of domestic gardens.

*Amphibians*

3.15. The site is urban, fenced, has no ponds, and there are no known ponds within proximity of the site; however, there may be small ornamental ponds within neighbouring gardens. Such ponds may be suitable as a breeding location for common amphibians such as the common frog *Rana temporaria,* however, these types of ponds are generally unsuitable for great crested newt *Triturus cristatus,* and the presence of this species on or within proximity of the site is considered unlikely.

*Reptiles*

3.16. Most of the garden is composed of short lawns which provide negligible reptile habitat.

3.17. The presence of any significant reptile population is considered unlikely.

*Birds*

3.18. Mature shrubs and trees provide opportunities for nesting birds and the garden is likely to offer both foraging and nesting opportunities for a range of common garden species. The seed and berry-bearing plants on-site provide a limited foraging resource for birds.

*Badgers*

3.31. There is no badger *Meles meles* setts on-site and no evidence of badger activity was recorded on site.

*European hedgehog*

3.19. The site provides no potential habitat for hedgehogs *Erinaceous europaeus*.

*Bat scoping survey*

3.20. The external and internal conditions of the building are described in the table below and photographic reference can be found within Appendix II.

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

Table 1: Bat survey results

| Building | Feature | Feature Description | Bat suitability |
|---|---|---|---|
| **29 The Avenue, Ickenham** | Overview | A detached two-storey house.<br>Overall, the house remains in good condition and is occupied.<br>No droppings, staining, feeding remains or actual bats were observed in any aspect of the buildings. | Negligible suitability ☒ |
| | Exterior | The brick rendered walls remain in good condition; no cracks or gaps were observed. Windows and doors all fit well within their respective reveals.<br>The hanging wall tiles are tightly fitted.<br>The garage is in good condition. | |
| | Interior | The interior is composed of well-sealed rooms with plaster and painted walls and ceilings. The roof void is composed of exposed timbers and no lining. No gaps observed. | |
| | Roof | Flat roof tiles with no gaps observed. | |

| Building | Feature | Feature Description | Bat suitability |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | The chimney brick work remains in a good condition and the flash/ concrete work which seals the chimney to the roof remains well fit in place. | |

## Evaluation

3.22. The garden provides an artificially created and managed areas containing mainly amenity lawn, trees and ornamental species.

3.23. The site is typical of surrounding residential garden units and is considered to be of ecological value at a site level.

*Bats*

3.24. The property is located within an urban area, however, lies near to parkland with habitats likely to function as commuting and foraging resource for different species of bats.

3.25. During the scoping survey, no droppings, staining, feeding remains or actual bats were observed. The building is in good condition and maintained. All verges and soffits are in good condition and fit tightly. All tiles and ridges are sealed. The property is constructed from modern and uniform material and lacks any abiotic roosting opportunities.

3.26. The dwelling and the garage have negligible suitability for roosting bats.

# 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. Under the Government's National Planning Policy Framework opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.

## 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.

4.5. Due to the lack of evidence of roosting bats within any aspect of the building on site, it is not considered necessary or beneficial to undertake any further survey work.

4.6. Due to the transitory nature of bats, there remains a very small possibility that bats could be encountered during the works; therefore, all works must proceed under a precautionary approach. Tiles and roof panels will be removed in a vertical rather than horizontal sliding motion. Soffits and masonry will be dismantled using a 'soft' approach taking care with cavity walls where present. All site workers will be vigilant at all times and in the very unlikely event that a bat is found, then works must stop immediately and advice should be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

## Ecology enhancements

4.7. 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.

4.8. 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

4.9. At least one swift next box to be installed on the new dwelling.

4.10. The nest box should be positioned at least 4 metres 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.

4.11. 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. This report represents a preliminary assessment only. Recommendations and conclusions are subject to change should further findings significantly differ from those collected from the survey efforts to date.

5.3. 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

**HMSO (1995)** *Biodiversity.* The UK Steering Group Report

**Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)** *Common Standards Monitoring Guidance for Reptiles and Amphibians* (2004) JNCC

**Mitchell-Jones, A.J (2004)** *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* English Nature

**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

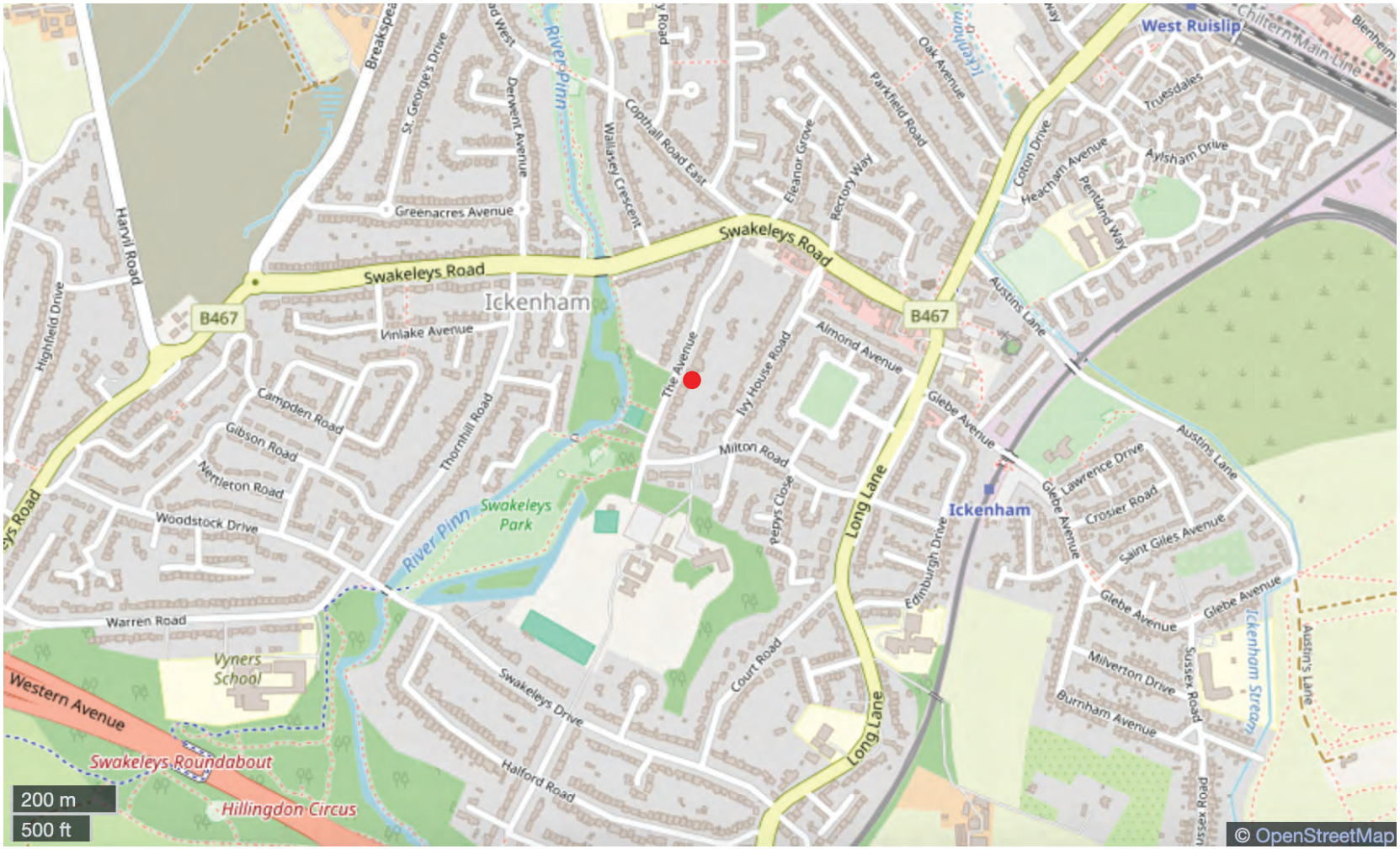
**Stace, C. (1997)** New *Flora of the British Isles 2nd Edition.* Cambridge University Press

**TSO (2018)** *National Planning Policy Framework.* TSO

**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 | JPB Architects |
| Title | Location plan |
| Site | 29 The Avenue, Ickenham |
| Figure | 1 |
| Date | 4 March 2025 |
| Scale | xxx |


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- Site boundary
- Amenity lawn
- Trees
- Hedgerows
- Hard-standing
- Buildings
- Fence
- Target Note

| | |
|---|---|
| Client | JBP Architects |
| Title | Habitat Map |
| Site | 29 The Avenue, Ickenham |
| Figure | 2 |
| Date | 4 March 2025 |
| Scale | xxx |

# Appendix II – Site Photographs

# Photographs 1- 3

## Photograph 1:

Front - northwestern elevation

## Photograph 2:

Front - southwestern elevation

## Photograph 3:

Back - western elevation

# Photographs 4 - 6

## Photograph 4:

Roof void


## Photograph 5:

Garage interior

## Photograph 6:

Garden

# 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.