

Bat Survey of Green Acre Barn, Lower Westbury Road, Bratton, Wiltshire

Client Larner Sing Ltd

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Non-technical Summary

Background

In March 2025, Crossman Associates was commissioned by Larnier Sing Ltd to undertake a bat and bird survey of a small modern block and steel-built barn known as Green Acre Barn, lower Westbury Road, Bratton, Wiltshire, BA13 4RH.

Proposals are to convert the barn under the 'Q' class registration into a single dwelling.

Methodology

The scoping survey was undertaken by Fairbrass Knowles, a fully licensed bat worker, experienced ecologist and full member of CIEEM. The barn was inspected both externally and internally for any evidence of bat / bird presence, such as droppings, food remains, staining or actual bats / birds.

Results

Green Acre Barn is a modern (C.1990's) square shaped barn, which measures approximately 13 m x 13 m. The barn has lower walls of concrete block, with the upper walls and the roof clad with single skin corrugated steel cladding. The barn is used as a hobby workshop and is in excellent condition. The barn is surrounded by farmland.

No evidence of bat or bird activity. The building has negligible suitability for roosting bats.

Recommendations

A precautionary approach to development with regard to bats and hedgehog.

Install bird and bat boxes

Exterior lighting (if planned) to be controlled and used only where necessary.

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1. Background

- 1.1. In March 2025, Crossman Associates was commissioned by Larner Sing Ltd to undertake a bat and Bird survey of a small, modern barn known as Green Acre Barn, Lower Westbury Barn, Bratton, Wiltshire, BA13 4RH; site Ordnance Survey grid reference ST 90525 52532.
- 1.2. Proposals are to convert the barn under the 'Q' class registration into a single dwelling.
- 1.3. Figure 1 within Appendix I provides a site location map.
- 1.4. The objectives of the survey were to:
 - Make an assessment of the likely presence or absence of bats and birds
 - Identify any legislative or planning policy constraints relevant to the site
 - Determine the need for further surveys, compensation or mitigation

Site Description

- 1.5. Green Acre Barn is a modern (C.1990's) square shaped barn, which measures approximately 13 m x 13 m. The barn has lower walls of concrete block, with the upper walls and the roof clad with single skin steel corrugated cladding. The barn is used as a hobby workshop and is in excellent condition.
- 1.6. The barn is situated with a yard style setting which is composed of hard-standing which entirely surrounds the barn and serves for parking and storage.
- 1.7. The barn is situated on the western edge of the rural village of Bratton and adjacent to the north side of the Lower Westbury Road (a minor country byway). The immediate surroundings are dominated by farmland with scattered and well-

spaced dwellings and farmsteads. Farmland tends to be a mixture of small hedge divided fields to the north while to the south the fields tend to be larger.

- 1.8. The wider landscape to the north, south and west provides an expanse of farmland while to the east lays the village of Bratton, which itself is surrounded by farmland.
- 1.9. There are no significant areas of woodland or watercourses laying in the local environs.

Legislation

- 1.10. 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 take into account bats within the planning process and the level of bat activity on-site must be fully assessed prior to the assessment the planning application.
- 1.11. 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. 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.

Birds

- 2.5. The building was also inspected for the presence of birds including barn owl *Tyto alba* house sparrow *Passer domesticus* and barn swallow *Hirundo rustica*. 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 of no statutory sites within 4 km of the site designated for bats.

Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act

- 3.2. The NERC Act 2006 places a duty on authorities to have due regard for biodiversity and nature conservation during the course of their operations.

Planning Policy

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

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- 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

- 3.4. Survey work was undertaken by Fairbrass Knowles an experienced ecologist and Natural England licensed bat worker; licence number 12392-CLS-CLS. The survey took place on 25 March 2025. The barn was fully accessible.
- 3.5. The external and internal conditions of the barn are described in the table below and photographic reference can be found within Appendix II.
- 3.6. 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.

Table 1: building description and bat suitability.

Feature	Feature Description	Bat suitability
Overview	Green Acre Barn is a modern (C.1990's) square shaped barn, which measures approximately 13 m x 13 m. The barn has lower walls of concrete block, with the upper walls and the roof clad with single skin steel corrugated cladding. The barn is used as a hobby workshop and is in excellent condition.	Negligible roosting suitability ☒
Exterior	The barn has lower walls of single skin and well-pointed concrete block. The upper walls are composed of vertical sheets of single skin corrugated steel cladding. Access is via steel doors on the front and rear elevations (north and south). The exterior showed no evidence of a bat roost and overall, the exterior does not provide bats with any significant roosting suitability.	
Interior	The interior provides 1 very large and open bay with a vaulted roof. The interior walls are composed of the inner face of the blockwork, which is well-pointed and the inner face of corrugated steel cladding.	

Feature	Feature Description	Bat suitability
	The underside of the roof panels is on show and the interior is well lit by natural light via 6 number translucent roof panels. Located in the north-west corner is a small office constructed from blockwork, the interior has plaster board walls and ceiling. Above the office there is a small storage area which is accessed via an internal and open staircase. The interior showed no evidence of a bat roost and overall, the interior does not provide bats with any roosting suitability.	
Roof	The roof is a simple double pitched design clad with single skin corrugated steel roof sheets. All sheets are present and fit very well. Overall, the roof provides bats with no significant roosting suitability.	

Birds

- 3.7. No bird nests, birds, bird droppings or any other bird related evidence was found in association with any aspect of the barn.

Evaluation

Scoping survey

- 3.8. During the survey no bats, bat droppings or any other bat related evidence was identified in association with the barn.
- 3.9. The barn is a modern and simple design which is constructed with modern and uniform materials, which include single skin block and steel cladding sheets cladding the upper elevations and the roof. These features provide bats with no significant roosting suitability. Furthermore, the barn is in regular use as a workshop, which generates a lot of noise and fumes. The general assessment is that the barn does not provide bats with a suitable roosting location and the barn is assessed to provide bats with **Negligible Roosting Suitability.**

Foraging habitat

- 3.10. The plot consists of a barn located within a yard style setting which provides bats with no significant foraging and commuting habitats.
- 3.11. The wider environs are dominated by farmland and is likely to support a number of bat species.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1. The recommendations in the paragraphs below should be followed 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 (NPPF, 2021) opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.

Species recommendations

Bats

- 4.4. Due to the lack of evidence of roosting bats within any aspect of the barn and the general unsuitability of the barn in providing bats with roosting features, it is not considered necessary or beneficial to undertake any further survey work.
- 4.5. Due to the transitory nature of bats, there is a small possibility that bats could be encountered during building works; therefore, all works must proceed under a cautionary 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 Crossman Associates or Natural England (telephone number 0300 0603900).

Lighting

- 4.6. The inappropriate use of external lighting has the potential to disturb and discourage the areas usage by bats and other nocturnal wildlife, leading to the potential severance of wildlife corridors, therefore any external lighting schemes planned for the site must not lead to light spill onto the garden of the property and those of adjacent gardens. Any new external lighting schemes must consist of modern LED lights that provide directional and softer less harsh lighting; alternatively, lights can be cowed or louvered.
- 4.7. A recommended exterior light unit is the Knightsbridge WALL 1LBK which is a wall mounted down lighter installed with a 2700K LED bulb which provides a beam angle of 50 degrees.
- 4.8. To further avoid over illumination lighting units should be used only on locations where it is absolutely necessary and be fitted with a motor sensor system with a timer which exceeds no longer than 1 minute.
- 4.9. An information sheet on lighting is provided under Appendix III; information sheets.

Other species

Hedgehog

- 4.10. 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.

- 4.11. 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.
- 4.12. 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.

Ecological enhancements

- 4.13. The following paragraphs provide recommendations for biodiversity gain, which is a requirement under national planning policy.

Bats and birds

Bats

- 4.14. It is recommended that one number Habibat bat boxes (type 001) be installed on the converted barn. This model is the size of a shoebox and is designed for a variety of bat species and has good thermal properties making it suitable as both a maternity roost and hibernation roost. A variety of facings can be fitted to suit any existing brick, wood, stonework or rendered finish, making the box unobtrusive and aesthetically pleasing.
- 4.15. The bat box should be placed beneath the eaves or on gable ends and away from windows and doors and ideally should be fitted in a location that gives bats immediate access to foraging habitat. A southerly / westerly elevation is desirable.
- 4.16. An information sheet detailing this type of bat roosting box can be found in Appendix III.
- 4.17. Boxes are available from www.habibat.co.uk

Birds

- 4.18. New nesting opportunities should be provided for house sparrow in the form a single house sparrow terrace to be fitted below eaves, facing northerly or east and away from windows and doors. In this situation the westerly side would also be suitable as it is shaded by a line of mature trees.
- 4.19. Suitable models include the Schwegler 1SP, which is suitable for surface mounting as well as integral mounting. This model is strong, durable, long lasting and available in brown or stone colour. An information sheet on integral bird nesting boxes is included in Appendix III.
- 4.20. Bird boxes are available from www.wildlifeservices.co.uk telephone number 0333 9000 92. Further models are supplied by Habitat www.habibat.co.uk telephone number 01642 724626.

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 (2012) *National Planning Policy Framework*. TSO

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

Appendix I – Site Figures

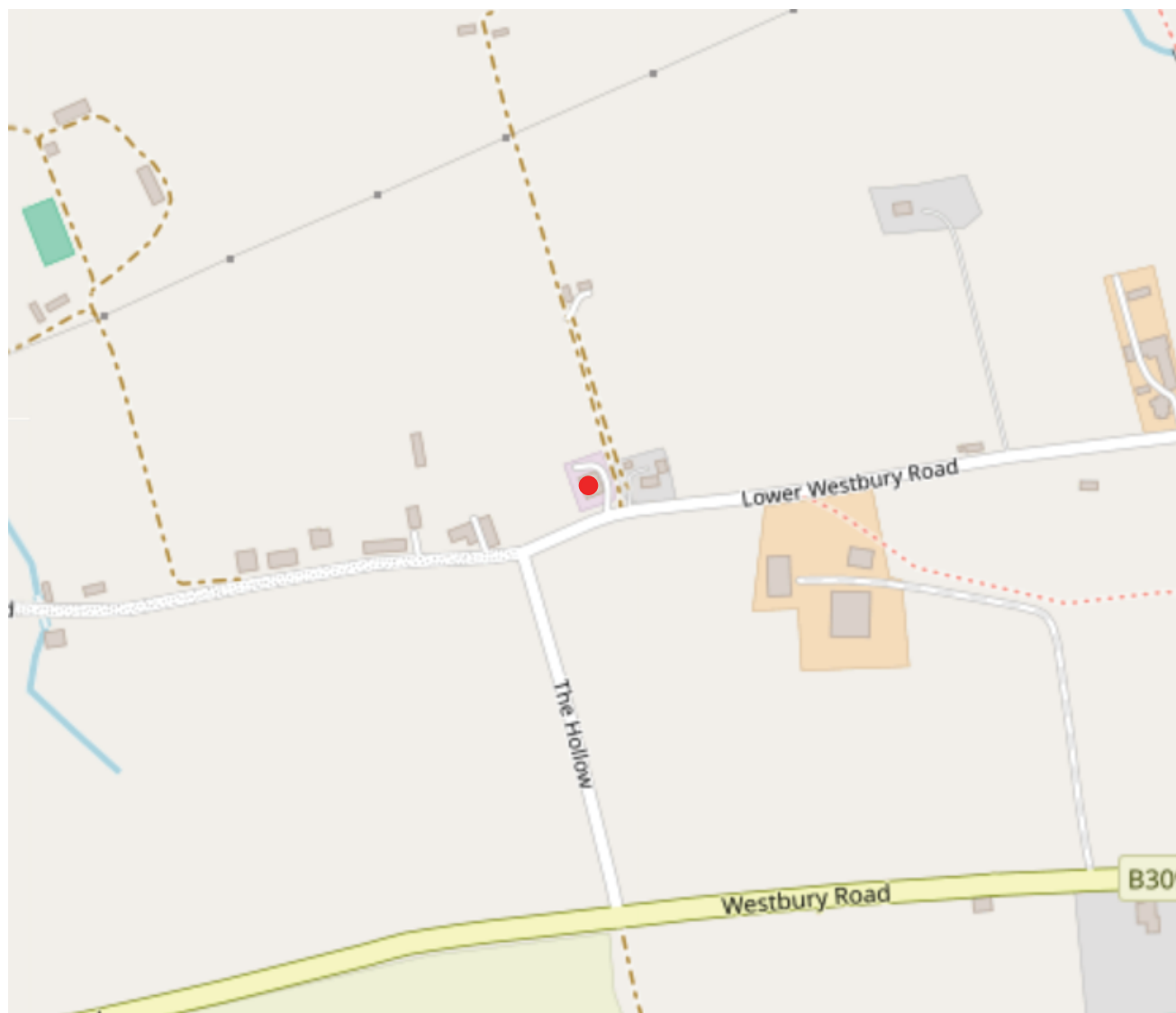


crossman
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● Site location



Client Larner Sing Ltd

Title Location plan

Site Green Acre Barn

Figure 1

Date 28 March 2025

Scale Not to scale



Appendix II – Site Photographs

Photographs 1- 3



Photograph 1:

Southern gable



Photograph 2:

Eastern elevation



Photograph 3:

Western elevation



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



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.

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 house martin box model 9 b double is a suitable box for house martins and can be used to encourage the uptake of 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.

Ibstock Box



Schwegler model 9b