



JAMES BLAKE

A S S O C I A T E S

Our Ref: JBA 22/319 ECO01

Newport Estates Limited

13th September 2022

RE: Ecological Walkover Survey of Land Rear of Lion House, Rickingham.

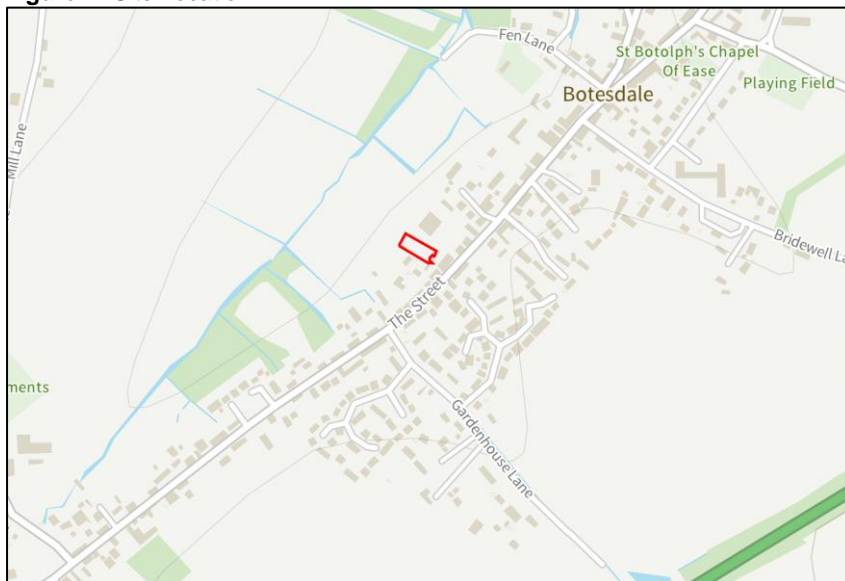
Introduction and Background

James Blake Associates Ltd. (JBA) was instructed by Newport Estates Ltd. to undertake an ecological walkover survey of land tot the rear of Lion House, off The Street in Rickingham, Suffolk. A preliminary ground level roost assessment for bats was also undertaken in relation to any structures and trees on site.

The assessment was required to support a planning application for two new detached residential dwellings, with access and parking.

The site itself mainly consists of well managed poor-quality grassland which is growing up with ruderal vegetation, located west off The Street in the village of Rickingham, Suffolk. Adjacent habitats include residential dwellings and associated gardens. The wider landscape includes mainly arable land and pastures, and the village of Botesdale to the north east (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Site Location



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The survey was undertaken on the 24th August 2022 by Sam Rigg BSc (Hons), Natural England Bat Class Licence CL17 and Natural England Great Crested Newt Class Licence CL08. This report is intended to give an overview of the site habitat(s) and condition at the time of the survey.

The survey methodology followed the standard Phase 1 methodology of Joint Nature Conservation Committee Guidelines (JNCC, 2010). An extension of this basic methodology was also undertaken to provide further details in relation to notable or protected habitats present within the survey area, or in

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relation to habitats present that have the potential to support notable or protected species (CIEEM, 2013).

The method of the preliminary ground level roost assessment for bats was to observe the structure(s)/tree(s) carefully using binoculars where necessary, noting all potential roost features (PRFs) present including:

- Gaps/holes in mortise and tenon joints
- Gaps/holes in beam supports
- Gaps between corrugated roofing and walls/soffits
- Potential cavity/gaps between brick walls
- Top of gable end or dividing walls

The baseline conditions reported in this document represent those identified at the time of the survey on 24th August 2022. Although a reasonable assessment of habitats present can be made during a single walkover survey, seasonal variations are not observed.

Results and Evaluation

The majority of the site is well-managed poor-quality grassland with limited floral diversity; however, a number of ruderal species are present at the south of the site and the western boundary, mainly *Rumex* sp. and nettle (*Urtica dioica*). No hedgerows are present on site and all boundaries are wooden panelled fenced.

A single leylandii cypress (*Cupressus x leylandii*) is present towards the centre of the site which will be lost as part of the development, which does offer nesting potential for birds; however, no nests were recorded during the survey. The tree does not offer any roosting opportunities for bats.

A single corrugated metal shed is present at the western boundary of the site, which was likely used as an animal pen previously, with an open front. This offers no bat roosting potential due to no roosting features internally or externally.

No ponds were identified within 250m of the site boundary; however, a flowing watercourse is present 129m to the north-west. The watercourse was considered unsuitable to support terrestrial protected amphibians such as great crested newts (GCN) (*Triturus cristatus*). Furthermore, the majority of the site is unsuitable for terrestrial GCN due to the high management of the site. A number of hardcore and wood storage is present around the site which could offer sheltering opportunities, however these are limited.

Site photographs to note are shown in Appendix A.

Recommendations

No further surveys for protected species are considered necessary; however, the tree removal works should be undertaken outside the nesting bird season.

The nesting season is deemed to be from March to September, although these times can be temperature dependent. If works cannot be completed outside of the nesting season, a nesting bird check must be carried out by a suitably experienced person, no more than 48 hours between the check and the works. If the 'all clear' is given, then removal/works can commence. The survey lasts for no longer than 48 hours. If works are not completed in this timeframe, then a re-survey will need to be carried out. If birds are found to be nesting, then no works should be undertaken within at least 5m of the nest (depending on species) until chicks have fledged.

It is also recommended that a number of bat boxes and bird boxes, such as swift bricks are installed onto the new buildings as an enhancement.

Conclusion

An ecological walkover survey was undertaken on 24th August 2022 at land to the rear of Lion House, Rickinghall in Suffolk.

No further protected species surveys are considered necessary; however, tree removal works should take place outside the nesting bird season or following a ‘clear’ nesting bird check.

Yours sincerely,

Sam Rigg
Ecologist
James Blake Associates

Appendix A: Photographs to note of Site

View of site to south.	Tree to be removed – no BRP and no nests present.	Existing metal structure with no BRP.
		