



# JAMES BLAKE ASSOCIATES

Our Ref: JBA 23/183 ECO01 AW

David & Alison Bowyer  
The Old Rectory  
Norton Road  
Tostock  
IP30 9NZ

9<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Dear Mr & Mrs Bowyer,

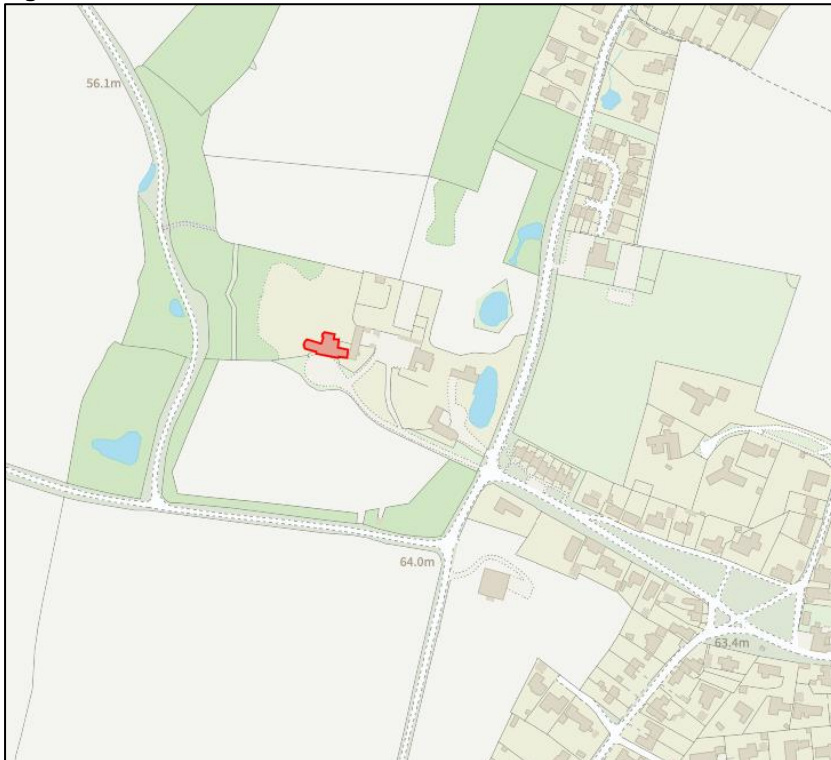
## **RE: Preliminary ground level assessment of potential bat roost features of buildings at The Old Rectory, Norton Road, Tostock, Suffolk.**

### Introduction and Background

James Blake Associates Ltd. (JBA) was instructed by Rees Pryer Architects on behalf of David and Alison Bowyer to undertake an external and internal building inspection of the residential building at The Old Rectory, Norton Road, Tostock in Suffolk, due to roof renovation proposals.

The building surveyed is an active residential dwelling. Adjacent habitats included hardstanding, amenity grassland, mixed woodland and wooden structures including barns and stable. The wider landscape includes agricultural fields and associated farms, several woods, Norton Road connects the property to the village of Tostock southeast of the site (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Site Location**



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All UK bat species are protected under European and UK law (Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981), and some are species of principal importance (SPI) in England under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. Protected and principally important species are a consideration under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021. The NPPF places responsibility on Local Planning Authorities to aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity and the encourage biodiversity in and around developments.

The external and internal survey was undertaken on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2023 by Alex Ward and Olivia Padua BSc (Hons). This report is intended to give an overview of the site habitat(s) and condition at the time of the survey.

The method of the preliminary ground level roost assessment for bats was to observe the structure(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 6<sup>th</sup> June 2023

### Results and Evaluation

The building itself is a two storey, brick-based grade two listed building, with a slate roof across most of the building except for the western elevation comprising of a decaying roof felt roof.

Internally the building consisted of multiple rooms separated by plasterboard walls; many of the rooms were accesses through archways or internal doors. Internally the condition of the main building was in good condition with no signs of degradation, however the western elevation was showing signs of degradation due to the decaying roof felt with holes in the plasterboard roof. One loft hatch was present giving access to a small section of the loft space. The loft space was sealed with wooden boarding which was generally in good condition although a large hole was present giving further access to the loft space for roosting bats. Bat droppings were present in the loft space.

Assessment of the exterior of the building found gaps around facias, multiple windows and metal cladding. It was noted that the brickwork of the building and associated pillars had some degradation with gaps between the brickwork and the buildings soffits, providing suitable roosting features. Some of the building's soffits had holes and in some places the soffit was missing.

The buildings woodwork has also started to show signs of degradation with the separation and holes providing roosting features. Lifted slate roof tiles were present across the whole buildings roof.

**The building was assessed as having 'high' bat roost potential (BRP). Due to the presence of bat dropping within the loft space of the buildings, a bat roost is confirmed.**

Site photographs are shown in Appendix A.

### Recommendations

Due to the results of the external and internal inspection, it is recommended that further surveys are undertaken on the building. Surveys will include three separate dusk emergence and/or dawn return surveys due to the 'high' roosting suitability, and the presence of bat droppings confirming the building holds a bat roost.

Emergence surveys commence 15 minutes prior to sunset to up to two hours after sunset. Dawn return surveys commence 1.5 hours prior to sunrise and continue until sunrise. Surveys would be undertaken using electronic bat detectors and observation aids. The number of surveyors depends on the proportion of potential exit/entry points of the building for bats. The optimum months for emergence surveys are from May to August, although it is sometimes possible for a single survey in September, providing other survey visits have been/will be undertaken between May and August.

Due to the presence of bat droppings, construction works which may impact the building can only proceed under the auspices of a European Protected Species (EPS) licence granted by Natural England. Mitigation would be required depending on the type of roost present and the proposed works/level of impact.

### Conclusion

An external and internal building inspection was undertaken on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2023 of a building at The Old Rectory, Norton Road, Tostock, Suffolk due to renovation of the current roof.

The survey found that the main building on site has 'high' BRP and contains a bat roost; therefore, three dusk emergence surveys are required prior to works. An EPS licence will be required prior to any works which may impact the building.

Yours sincerely,








**Alex Ward**  
**Field Ecologist**  
James Blake Associates

## References

Collins, J. (ed) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (3rd edition); The Bat Conservation Trust, London

<https://www.nhbs.com/>

**Appendix A: Photographs of Site**

Holes in wooden fascia	
	
Missing soffit	Gap between soffit and brickwork
	
Gaps in brickwork	
	
Lifted metal cladding	
	
Seperated wood	Gaps around brick pillars
