

Ecological Walkover Survey

for

Land East of Drove Lane,

Yapton, West Sussex

On behalf of

Barratt Homes Southern Counties

January 2020

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Revision	Purpose	Originated	Checked	Authorised	Date
		DB	SR	JBA	January 2020
Job Number: JBA 19/291		JAMES BLAKE ASSOCIATES **Title:** Ecological Walkover Survey of East of Drove Lane, Yapton, West Sussex			

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James Blake Associates Ltd has made every effort to meet the client's brief. However, no survey ensures complete and absolute assessment of the changeable natural environment. The findings in this report were based on evidence from thorough survey: It is important to remember that evidence can be limited, hard to detect or concealed by site use and disturbance. When it is stated that no evidence was found or was evident at that point in time, it does not mean that species are not present or could not be present at a later date: The survey was required because habitats are suitable for a given protected species, and such species could colonise areas following completion of the survey.

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Executive Summary

James Blake Associates Ltd. was commissioned by Barratt Homes Southern Counties to undertake an ecology walkover survey and letter report to update a previous Biodiversity Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Lizard Landscape Design, 2016) of Land east of Drove Lane, Yapton.

The ecological walkover survey is required to accompany planning permissions for residential development with associated infrastructure.

It is considered that the site has not changed since the previous report. If areas on site suitable for hedgehogs, reptiles or nesting birds are effected surveys and/or precautionary measures will be required.

1 INTRODUCTION

Background

1.1 The site is located adjacent to the east of Drove Lane and south of the B2233 in Yapton, West Sussex. See Appendix A for site location. The site consists of arable land encompassed by an intensely managed hedgerow to the north, fencing with scattered trees to the north east, a ditch leading onto a public footpath transitioning into a small section of trees to the east, a small bund to the south and a wet ditch to the west.

1.2 This survey is a follow up report to a preliminary ecological appraisal conducted by Lizard Landscape and Design in September 2016. The previous report has informed statutory sites which may be impacted by the development, habitats present and species likely to be present. It concludes that the presence of reptiles is deemed likely and any vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season. A recommendation is also made for a dark corridor to be maintained on the eastern boundary to prevent disturbance to bat flight patterns.

1.3 A reptile survey was conducted in 2016 by Lizard Ecology. Given the low numbers of reptiles found they concluded works should be conducted outside the active reptile season (March to October) and a method statement should be in place to ensure no reptile is recklessly or intentionally killed or injured during the construction (Lizard Landscape Design, 2016).

1.4 The updated ecology walkover survey was undertaken on the 14th January 2020 by Daniel Blake BSc (Hons) Qualifying CIEEM to assess the habitat suitability for and scope for signs and evidence of protected, principally important and rare species, such as; bats, badgers (*Meles meles*), birds, great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*), reptiles and invertebrates. Any changes in condition/habitat from the previous survey (Lizard Landscape and Design, 2016) were recorded.

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

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1.6 The baseline conditions reported and assessed in this document represent those identified at the time of the walkover survey on the 14th January 2020. Although a reasonable assessment of habitats present can be made during a single walkover survey, seasonal variations are not observed. The walkover survey was conducted in January, which is outside the optimal season for Phase 1 habitat surveys; however this is not considered a significant constraint. All areas of the site were accessible on the day of the survey.

1.7 The validation period for this report is 2 years form the date of the survey 14th January 2020.

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2 Results and Evaluation

2.1 The majority of the site is an arable field providing poor habitat for protected species such as birds, amphibians and invertebrates. The sites condition and habitats had remained similar to that found during the previous survey in 2016 (Lizard Landscape Design).

2.2 The surrounding hedgerows and ditches contain areas which will allow for reptiles to both commute and shelter. If the majority of suitable areas are to be impacted by the development, an updated reptile survey will be required to assess the reptile population using the site. However, if only minor suitable areas are to be impacted then destructive search precautionary methods highlighted within the Detailed Reptile Survey Report (Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology, 2016) should be followed.

2.3 If hedgerows are to be removed, maintained or altered this should be done outside the nesting bird season. Nesting bird season is deemed to be March to August; however these timings are weather dependant. If this is not possible a nesting bird check will be required before works on the hedge commence. This check would be valid for 48 hours.

2.4 No habitat on site was considered suitable for badgers due to minimal cover for sett creation. However, the site did offer limited foraging opportunities. No sign of badger was found during this visit or the previous report (Lizard Landscape Design, 2016).

2.5 No sign of hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) were found but areas of bramble within the hedgerow provide suitable hibernation refuge for this species. Therefore if any hedgerows are scheduled for removal, the area should be checked for hedgehogs before removal.

2.6 Adjacent to the footpath off the site to the east, a native hedgerow containing a number of trees with 'low' to 'moderate' bat roost potential which also provide a suitable commuting corridor. This area should be kept as a 'dark corridor' and a sensitive lighting scheme should be implemented.

2.7 The site should be kept ploughed or weeded on a regular basis to maintain the unfavourable habitat condition until development works commence. If the site is left to grow up then it may become more suitable for species in the future.

3 Enhancements and Recommendations

3.1 The following are suggestions that will enhance the value of the site for wildlife. However, it should be noted that these suggestions are not legally required for compensation of habitats or mitigation.

- Landscaping could incorporate native or wildlife attracting trees and shrubs as these would likely be of benefit to a variety of wildlife including, birds, bats and invertebrates.

- Installation of bird and bat boxes in suitable locations (if appropriate).

- As stated in the previous report (Lizard Landscape Design, 2016) a dark corridor to the eastern boundary is recommended to create minimal disturbance to bats.

- Areas of dense bramble on the site boundaries could be retained to provide hibernation habitat for hedgehogs. Gaps could be left in garden fences to create connectivity

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4 Conclusions

4.1 An updated ecology walkover survey was undertaken at Dove Lane, Yapton. The survey concluded that the site has not changed since the previous survey by Lizard Landscape Design, 2016.

4.2 An updated reptile survey will be required to determine the presence or absence of the species on site if suitable areas are to be impacted by the development.

4.3 If hedgerows are maintained, altered or removed during the nesting bird season a check for active nests will be required. A check for hedgehog will also be required if suitable habitat is to be removed.

4.4 A sensitive lighting scheme should be implemented for the eastern boundary to create a 'dark corridor'.

4.5 It is considered that by including some, or all, of the additional recommendations, the site could be enhanced for local wildlife post development.

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5 References

CIEEM (Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management) (2013) *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.* Technical Guidance Series.

JNCC (2010) *Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey: a technique for environmental audit (revised reprint)* JNCC: Peterborough.

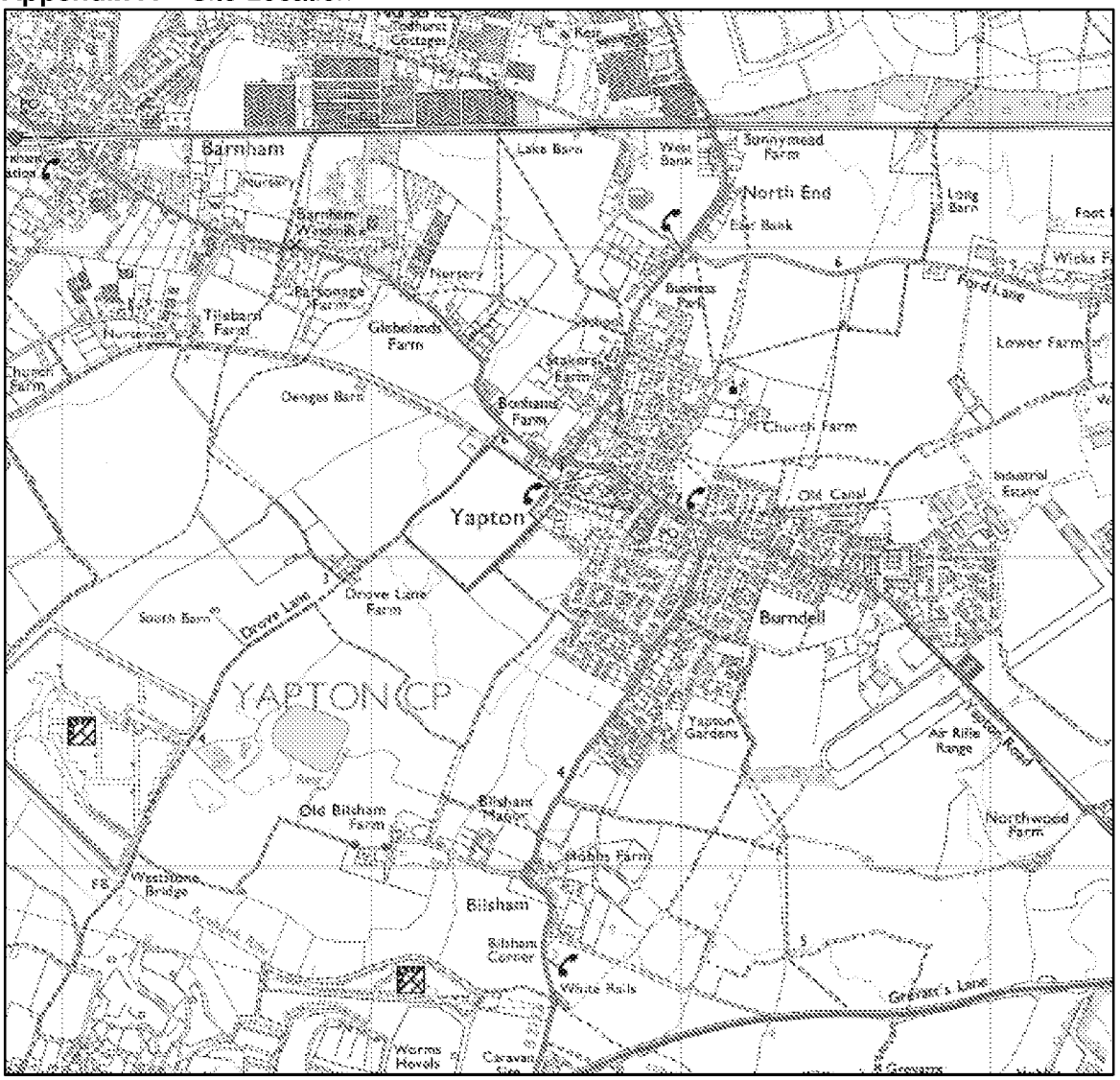
Lizard Landscape Design (2016), Biodiversity Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Land Adjacent to Drove Lane, Yapton, West Sussex.

Lizard Landscape Design (2016), Detailed Reptile Survey Report, Land Adjacent to Drove Lane, Yapton, West Sussex.

Lizard Landscape Design (2016), Biodiversity Management Plan, Land Adjacent to Drove Lane, Yapton, West Sussex.

6 Appendices

Appendix A – Site Location



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