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Land Adoption  
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## James Blake Associates Ltd

Our Ref: JBA 15/363 ECO05 REV A SK/SR

13<sup>th</sup> November 2018

Emma Hewitt,  
For and on behalf of Countryside Properties Ltd.

Dear Emma,

### **RE: Updated ecology walkover survey report of land at Cuffley Hill, Goffs Oak.**

James Blake Associates Ltd were commissioned by Countryside Properties Ltd to undertake an ecology walkover survey to provide a letter report stating any changes at their site at Cuffley Hill, Goffs Oak, Waltham Cross.

This report should be read in conjunction with Phase 1 Habitat Survey of Land at Cuffley Hill, Goffs Oak, Waltham Cross (James Blake Associates, 2017).

For the purpose of this report, protected species are taken to be those which are protected under European Legislation (Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended) and UK legislation (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; Protection of Badgers Act 1992); and species and habitats of principle importance which are listed in Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006).

There is a general biodiversity duty in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018, placing responsibility on Local Planning Authorities to aim to conserve, enhance and encourage biodiversity in and around developments. Section 40 of the NERC Act requires every public body in the exercising of its functions to 'have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity'. Biodiversity, as covered by the Section 40 duty, includes all biodiversity, not just the habitats and species of principal importance. However, there is an expectation that public bodies would refer to the S41 list when complying with the Section 40 duty.

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## Introduction and Background

The site was located in Goff's Oak, to the north of Cuffley Hill. Residential properties border the site to the south and east with a builder's merchant's yard to the west and arable land to the north. The wider area is dominated by the conurbation of Goff's Oak and grazed pasture and arable land. An area of broadleaved woodland is present to the west of the builder's merchant's yard.

A previous phase one survey was undertaken in March 2017 by Mary Power BSc (Hons) MSc MCIEEM (JBA, 2017).

## Survey

An updated walkover survey was conducted on the 12<sup>th</sup> July 2018 by Sam Rigg BSc (Hons) & Crystal Acquaviva BSc (Hons) MSc, MCIEEM. Conditions were favourable with good visibility, temperature being 24°C and a Beaufort scale of 2. Most areas of the site were accessible during the survey; however various storage containers and structures were not safe to access.

## Results and Evaluation

The site itself was largely the same as at the time of the previous survey (March 2017), comprised of grassland and ruderal mosaic with scattered mature and semi-mature trees throughout the site. The trees to the north of the site are subject to a woodland TPO and will be retained within the proposed development. To the east were a number of storage units and a brick chimney; in this area the vegetation was unmanaged and dense patches of scrub were present at the boundaries. Since the last survey patches of bracken have also grown alongside these dense patches of scrub. To the south of the site a dense patch of scrub was present at the boundary.

Trees considered to be of bat roost potential at the time of the current survey (12<sup>th</sup> July 2018) are denoted in Figure 1. A late mature willow tree along the northern boundary was considered to be of high bat roost potential (BRP). An oak close to the north-west boundary of the site was also considered to have moderate BRP. The rest of the oaks found along the north of the site were semi-mature and considered not to have BRP. In the south of the site, a mature ash (T117) was considered to be of moderate bat roost potential due to split limbs and a potential cavity in the trunk. In close proximity to T117 was an early mature oak (T118) with low bat roost potential due to a single dead stem with an upwards facing cavity and small knot holes was present. A semi-mature ash to the central southern section of the site was also considered to be of low BRP. Under current development proposal plans all high and moderate BRP trees are to be retained. The current plans for tree retention and removal can be found within the Arboricultural Planning Report (2018) (Tracy Clarke Tree Consultancy).

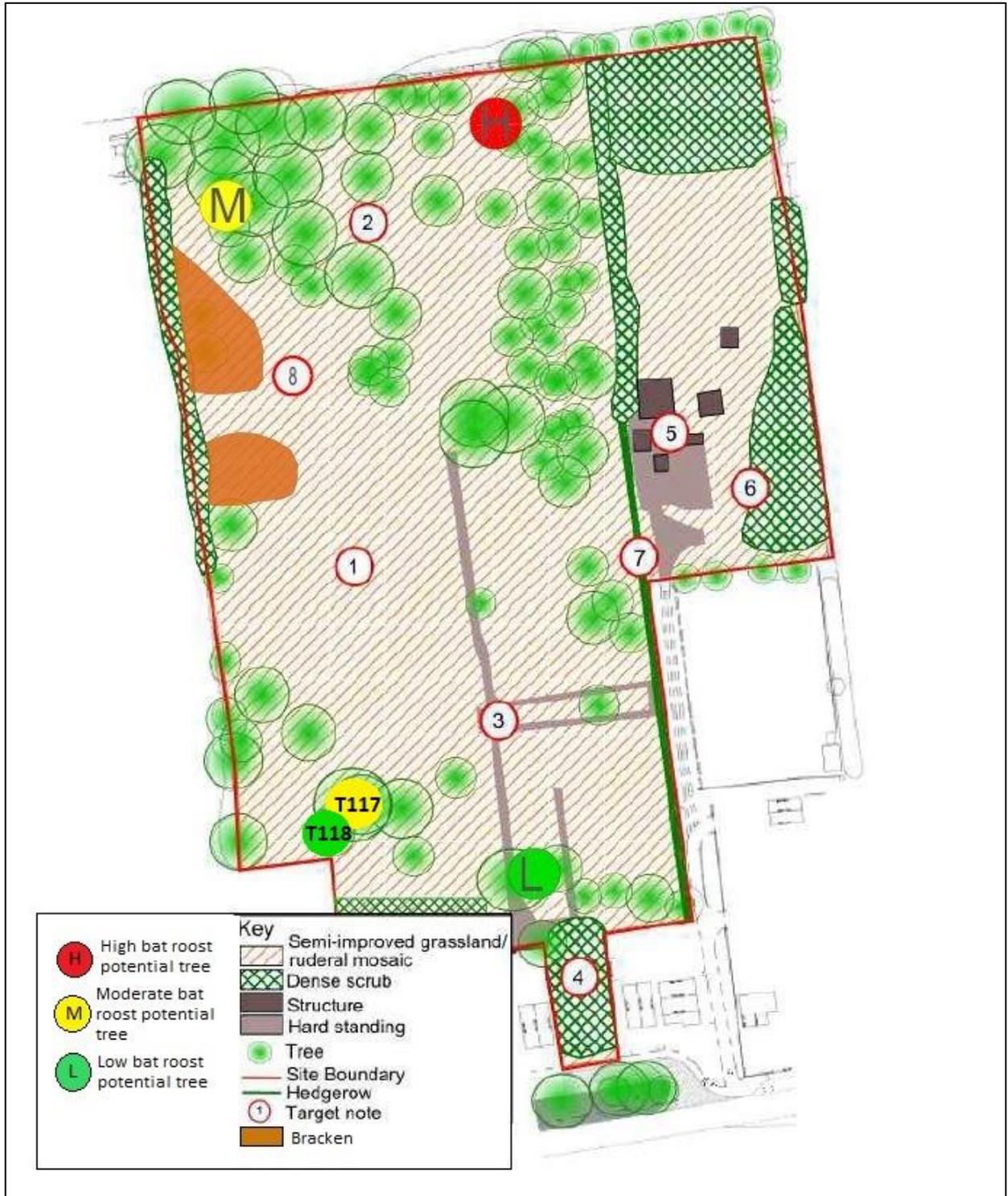
However, if proposed plans change prior to works beginning and trees on site with high or moderate bat roost potential are to be impacted (e.g. by surgery works or

removal), emergence/return to roost surveys should be undertaken prior to works. Bat surveys can be undertaken between May and August. If any trees with low bat roost potential are to be impacted then they should be soft-felled under supervision by a bat licenced ecologist.

A reptile survey was undertaken by James Blake Associates Ltd during the months of April and May 2017. A low population of slow worms were recorded using the site and habitats within the site boundary are still considered suitable for this species. If development does not begin before May 2019, the reptile survey will need updating. A fire pit/debris pile was also on site, denoted by target note 8 (see Figure 1) which is a potential refuge for reptiles, which must be removed by hand before development begins.

To the north of the site within the area of woodland there were occasional piles of deadwood present which provided suitable habitat for stag beetles. This species was highlighted within the 2017 data search (JBA, 2017). If possible, these woodpiles should remain in situ. However, if this is not possible the woodpiles will need to be removed by hand and moved to a more suitable area on site, or, as close to the site as possible.

Figure 1: Updated Phase 1 Habitat Map 2018



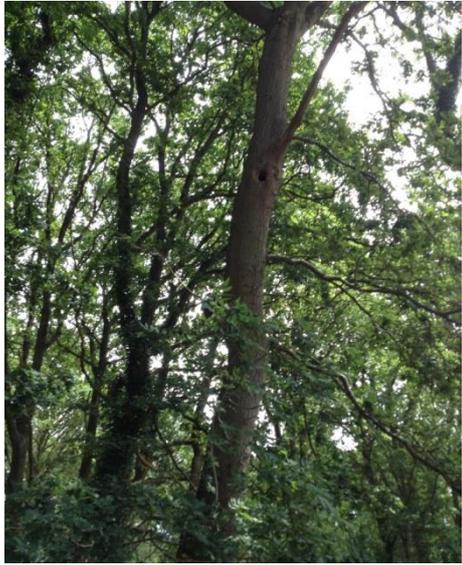
**Target Notes**

Target Note	Habitat description	Photo
1	Semi-improved grassland and tall ruderal vegetation formed a mosaic of habitats through the majority of the site. Species present were the same as those in 2017.	
2	To the north of the site an area of semi-mature and mature trees was present. Occasional woodpiles were also present to the north.	

<p>3</p>	<p>Areas of hard standing (redundant paths) were present throughout the site providing potential basking habitat for reptiles.</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p>Areas of dense scrub at the southern boundary. Species present were the same as those in 2017.</p>	
<p>5</p>	<p>Various storage containers and structures, access into this area was limited. A brick chimney was present providing potential habitat for roosting bats.</p>	

<p>6</p>	<p>An area of tipped debris and brash providing potential refuges for reptiles.</p>	
<p>7</p>	<p>Hedgerow approximately 2.5m tall and 3m wide. Managed along the southern section through regular clipping. Hedgerow species present were the same of those in 2017.</p>	
<p>8</p>	<p>Fire pit/debris pile providing potential refuge for reptiles.</p>	

<p>T117</p>	<p>Mature ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> with moderate bat roost potential due to split limbs and a potential cavity in the trunk.</p>	
<p>T118</p>	<p>Early mature oak <i>Quercus robur</i> with low bat roost potential due to a single dead stem with an upwards facing cavity and small knot holes.</p>	

<p>H</p>	<p>Late mature/dying willow <i>Salix fragilis</i> with high bat roost potential due to a major snap in the stem and large cavities.</p>	
<p>M</p>	<p>Oak with moderate bat roost potential due to woodpecker hole in trunk.</p>	

L	Semi-mature ash with low bat roost potential due to a thick covering of ivy.	
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## Conclusion

The majority of the site had not changed since the initial phase 1 survey (JBA, 2017). However, areas of bracken are now present to the eastern boundary of the site and three trees have been identified to be of low to moderate bat roost potential.

If any works are required to the high and medium BRP trees present, a bat survey is recommended to determine whether the trees contain an active bat roost. Disturbance should be limited in order not to disturb commuting or foraging bats within the site.

Woodpiles were present on site and considered suitable for stag beetles. If the woodpiles cannot remain in situ, they will need to be hand removed and relocated to a suitable area.

Areas on site were considered suitable for reptiles. Reptile surveys were undertaken in 2017, however if works do not start on site before May 2019 then an updated reptile survey will be required.

Yours sincerely,

**Sam Kench**

Assistant Ecologist

James Blake Associates Ltd.

## References

Tracy Clarke Tree Consultancy (2018). Arboricultural Planning Report of Land at Cuffley Hill, Goff's Oak. On behalf of Countryside Properties Ltd.

Bat Conservation Trust, London (2016). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*.

Bat Mitigation Guidelines, English Nature, 2004

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