

C.B.E. Consulting

Review of Ecological Report
Land to the rear of 223 Station Road
Earls Shilton
Leicestershire
NGR SP46310 96782

Survey by
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Review of Ecology Report, Land at 223 Station Road, Earls Shilton

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1. Introduction

1.1 Site Details and Location

The site surveyed comprises an existing residential garden lying to the rear of 223 Station Road, Earls Shilton, Leicestershire centred at NGR SP46310 96782.

The location of the site is shown on the plan within **Figure 1** and an aerial photograph has been provided within **Figure 2** to place the site in context.

The Client has commissioned a review of previous ecological appraisal as part of a due diligence exercise as it is understood that a new planning application to redevelop the rear garden area is to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority. As part of this review the original survey report (CBE Consulting P1853 / 0519 /01 v2 dated 05th June 2019) was reviewed and the site was inspected again on the 27th January 2022. A photographic record of the site and any key locations is provided in Section 3.

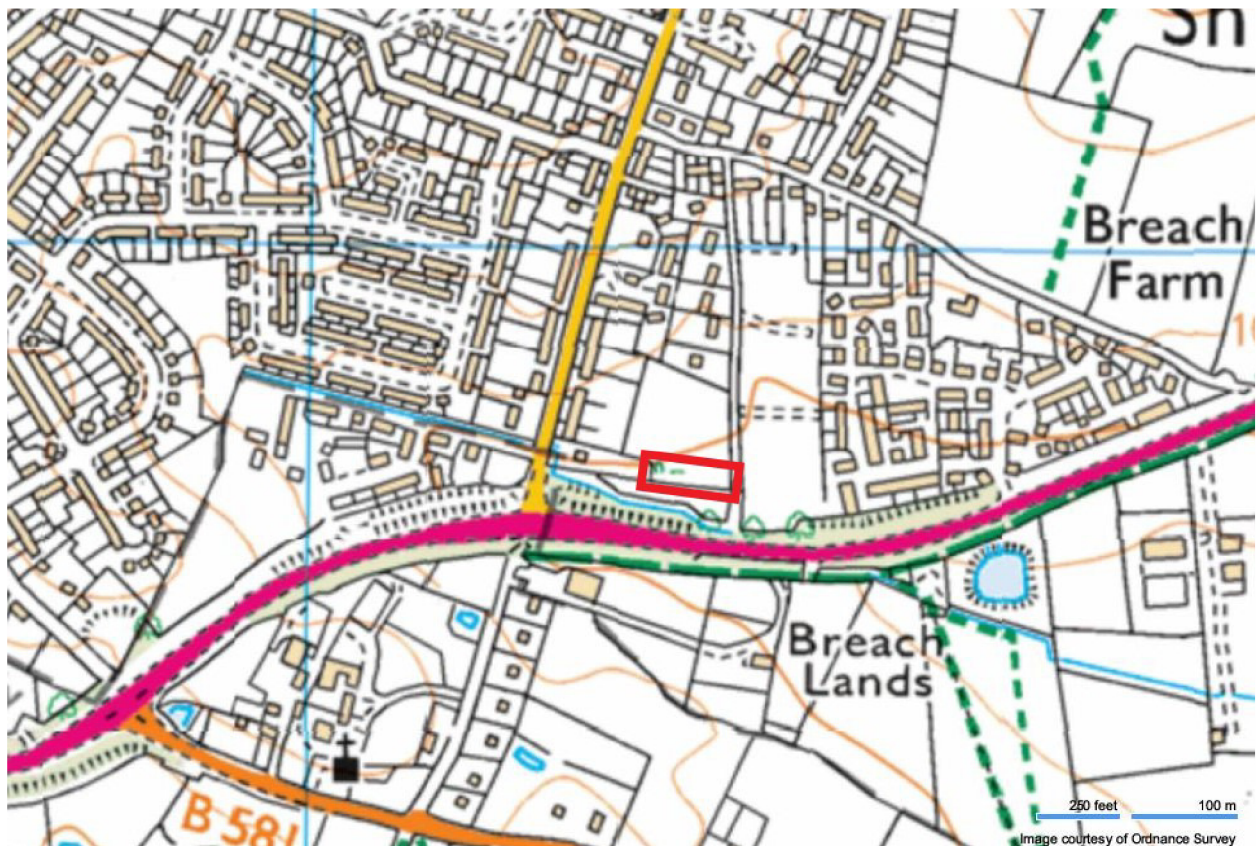


Figure 1: Site location.

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1.2 Objective of the Report

This report is a review of the previous protected species survey report prepared for the site area. The objective of this review is to determine, through assessment of the original report and also a new site inspection completed in January 2022, whether the original report still accurately characterises the area surveyed and identify any significant changes that may have occurred.

The site has been the subject of ecological appraisal and a Protected Species Survey was completed by CBE Consulting in June 2019 as referenced above. The plot of residential garden land lies between gardens and a parcel of amenity grassland to the north and a major road to the south is a thin strip and is located close to the southern edge of the village of Earls Shilton in an area of residential houses and gardens shown in the aerial photograph below. The majority of the garden boundaries are fenced although these are only post and wire fences in some places.

Further to the north and west is a small parcel of improved grassland used for grazing and some allotments. To the south, across the road, is open agricultural land, primarily improved grazing.



Figure 2: Contextual Aerial Photograph. Copyright 2022 Microsoft Corporation

2. Ecological and Protected Species Report 2019

The 2019 CBE Consulting Protected Species survey report followed the most up to date survey guidance and methodology in accordance with NPPF 2019 and CIEEM Survey Guidelines BS42020. The report included a review of the protected species records for the local area and confirmed that there are no Statutory or Non-statutory designated sites within 1km of the land surveyed and the site has no statutory or non-statutory designations.

The 2019 survey identified the site as being “a single habitat which is residential garden classed as a combination of ‘amenity grassland’ (JNCC J1.1) and ‘introduced shrub’ (JNCC J1.4)”.

The site is described as follows in the 2019 survey:

“The site area is a level, roughly rectangular parcel of amenity garden containing two small derelict wooden sheds and one remnant of a brick outbuilding of which has no roof and only some of the walls and base remaining. Photographs of the area surveyed are provided below. The site contains limited biodiversity and the majority of the species present have been introduced.”

*“The majority of the garden comprises amenity grassland dominated by Perennial Ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*) and Fescue cultivars (*Festuca* sp) with some colonisation by other grasses such as Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*). Other forbs are scattered within the grassland such as Mayweed (*Chamomilla suaveolens*), Cut-leaved Cranesbill (*Geranium dissectum*), Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), Daisy (*Bellis perennis*), Forget Me Not (*Myosotis arvensis*), Shepherds Purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*), Chickweed (*Stellaria media*), Speedwell (*Veronica* sp) and Red Dead Nettle (*Lamium purpureum*). There are also area where cultivated daffodil has been planted. Around the margins of the lawns are areas where taller forbs such as Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Dock*

(Rumex obtusifolius), Cow Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) and Lesser Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*) have colonised.”

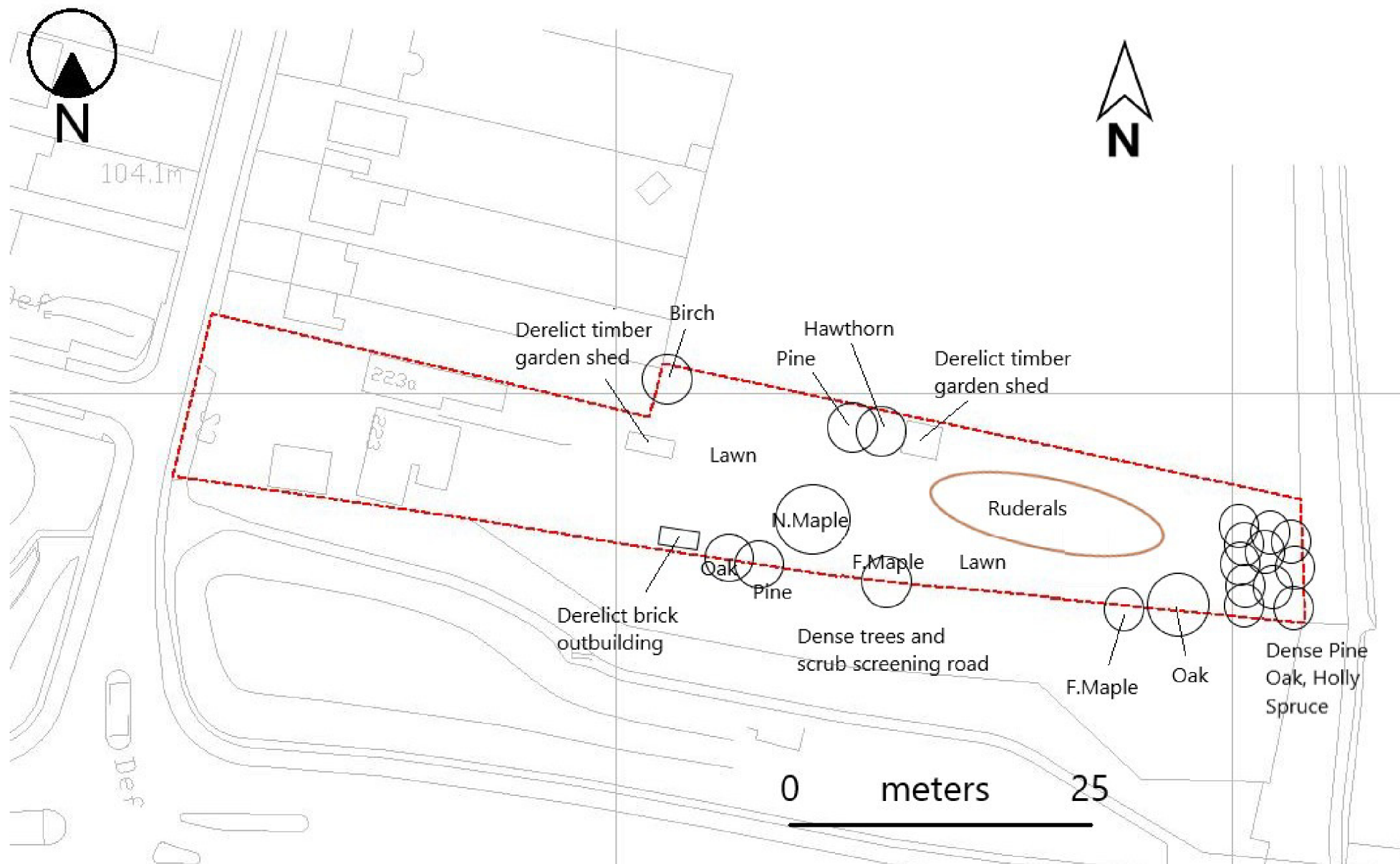
“The shrub borders of the garden contain species such as Buddleia (*Buddleia* sp), Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*), Clematis (*Clematis* sp), Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), Euonymous (*Euonymous*) and Barberry (*Berberis* sp). There are some significant mature and semi-mature trees around the garden boundaries including Oak (*Quercus petraea*), Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*), Spruce (*Picea* sp), Fir (*Abies* sp), Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Apple (*Malus domestica*), Birch (*Betula pendula*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*). At the far eastern end of the garden is a dense stand of trees dominated by Pine with occasional Oak and Spruce present and under canopy Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*).”

It was concluded at that time that it was “considered unnecessary to carry out a more detailed Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey. The survey instead has focused on the potential for protected species to be present.”

The character and use of the site has not changed since the 2019 survey although it is noted that management of the site has reduced allowing ruderals and bramble to spread more widely and the former lawn to go to seed. A site plan is provided below.

Records for protected species were purchased as part of the 2019 Ecological Appraisal. The original records purchased from the Leicestershire and Rutland Biological Records Centre are copied below. A review of records within the National Biodiversity Network and MAGIC was completed to see if any significant new records were available for the 1km radius around the property but no such new records have been identified.

Scientific Name	Attribute	English Name	Earliest Year	Latest Year	Total Records
<i>Lissotriton vulgaris</i>		Smooth Newt	2006	2007	5
<i>Rana temporaria</i>		Common Frog	2005	2006	2
<i>Triturus cristatus</i>		Great Crested Newt	2003	2012	28
<i>Falco peregrinus</i>		Peregrine	2014	2014	1
<i>Falco subbuteo</i>		Hobby	2012	2012	2
<i>Milvus milvus</i>		Red Kite	2011	2012	2
<i>Tringa ochropus</i>		Green Sandpiper	2012	2012	1
<i>Turdus pilaris</i>		Fieldfare	2016	2016	1
<i>Tyto alba</i>		Barn Owl	2015	2015	1
<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>		Bluebell	2000	2016	4
<i>Arvicola amphibius</i>		Water Vole	2001	2001	1
Chiroptera		Bat	1994	2013	7
<i>Meles meles</i>		Badger	2004	2015	7
<i>Myotis mystacinus/brandtii</i>		Whiskered/Brandt's Bat	1995	1995	1
<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>		Noctule Bat	2013	2013	1
<i>Pipistrellus</i>		Pipistrelle Bat species	2003	2003	1
<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	sensu lato	Pipistrelle	2007	2016	9
<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	sensu stricto	Common Pipistrelle	2015	2015	1
<i>Plecotus</i>		Long-eared Bat species	2017	2017	2
<i>Plecotus auritus</i>		Brown Long-eared Bat	2007	2017	5



There are records of larger mammals such as **Badger** in the area around Earls Shilton with the nearest record of a badger sett being an outlier situated approximately 700m to the north west on the outskirts of the village near Westfield Farm and a main sett in the same location, approximately 850m to the north west. This is sufficiently far enough away and on the opposite site of the village centre to make it unlikely any badgers from this location will be accessing the site. There are no records of other species such as **Water Vole or Otter** in close proximity to this site and there are no water features nearby so the potential for either species to be present is considered to be negligible.

The 2019 survey report states that *“the inspection of the garden and the area of dense scrub to the south screening the road (which is not within the site area being considered for development) found no evidence of badger activity such as tracks, snuffle holes or latrines and no sett entrances or obvious mammal trails were found on or adjacent to the site. A further survey for badger is not recommended”*.

There are records of **bats** roosting and foraging in the area with the nearest roost being located on the outskirts of Earls Shilton 500m to the north west of the area being surveyed. At least five bat species are known to be foraging and commuting within this area but none of the structures within the garden or trees present provided any potential roosting location and no field signs of bats were found during the 2019 inspection. The 2019 survey report did not recommend any further surveys for roosting bats.

There are no records of **reptiles** in the local area. Within the 2019 report the search for reptiles found no evidence within the garden and it was concluded that *“the character and management of this garden makes the presence of a significant number of reptiles highly unlikely and the garden is quite isolated. There are no records of reptiles in the immediate surrounding area and it is not habitat of high potential value to reptile species. Further presence / absence surveys for reptiles are not considered necessary.”*

A pond situated 600m to the east of the garden supports a population of **Great Crested Newts**. These ponds are a considerable distance from the garden being surveyed and a major 'A' road presents a significant barrier to commuting by this species from these ponds into the garden. Within the 2019 report it noted that *“the mown lawn and small border areas within the garden present habitats of limited value to this species and there are no ponds or wetland areas within it. The garden does not lie in between GCN ponds and so is not likely to be on a commuting route of any kind. The presence of this species is considered unlikely within the site area and further surveys are not recommended.”*

The local area supports a range of bird species including some schedule 1 species. During the 2019 inspection of the site it did not appear to be particularly rich in bird species, presumably due to the presence of nearby housing and the management of the garden area. The 2019 report concluded that *“the former mown lawns and borders offer limited potential for ground nesting. The mature and semi-mature trees around the garden boundaries and the dense scrub screening the road to the south of the garden offer potential for nesting by birds. It is considered likely nesting birds will be present around the boundaries of the garden where suitable dense vegetation is present.”*

3. 2022 Inspection

A copy of the 2019 Survey Plan is provided as **Figure 3**. The area was inspected by visual walkover on 27th January 2022.

The inspection of 2022 confirmed that the habitat descriptions within the CBE Consulting report of 2019 are still accurate although the lawns are no longer being mown and have gone to seed. The bramble, willowherb and areas of ruderal colonisation are increasing throughout the garden. There is no evidence of any trimming to the boundary shrubs or hedgerow along the southern boundary. Overall, whilst no longer being actively managed as a residential garden, the species diversity remains unchanged and there is no evidence of any colonisation by significant plant species or development of any significant habitats within the former garden. The garden shed has almost completely collapsed since the 2019 survey.

Photographs of the survey area taken in January 2022 are provided below.



Western end of site



Old shed and boundary trees



Northern boundary of garden



Western end of garden



Eastern end of garden



South boundary hedgerow



Eastern end of garden



East boundary trees

The inspection completed in January 2022 found no evidence of any protected species in the form of tracks, trails, burrows or any other field signs. The collapsed timber shed and brick building present no potential roosting locations for bats and there is no evidence of any redundant nests present in these structures. All of the trees were inspected and none were found to have any significant structural features that could shelter roosting bats.

There are no ponds or wetland areas within the former garden to entice amphibians or reptiles. Whilst the grassland areas have gone to seed and the bramble and ruderals are now spreading across the former garden, this land is still isolated by well-managed gardens to the north and a significant road to the south.

It is concluded that there is no evidence of colonisation by any protected species in the period since the 2019 survey was completed and the potential for protected species remains very low. There is potential for nesting birds to be present in some of the dense vegetation but ground nesting is still unlikely as this will be impacted by predatory cats in this area.

4. Conclusions

It is concluded, following the review of the 2019 CBE Consulting report and the new inspection completed in January 2022, that ***the 2019 report still accurately characterises the habitats within the site area and the descriptions within the original report remain valid in terms of the habitats and species present***, even though the management of the former garden has declined significantly. The methodology used within the original survey is still current and the conclusions drawn in terms of habitat classifications are still accurate.

In terms of protected species, there are no obvious changes identified since the 2019 survey and the inspection of January 2022 found no evidence of protected species being present of the site and little potential for this with the exception of nesting birds.

It was concluded within the 2019 report that *"this site provides limited opportunities for habitat creation due to its small scale and position between residential houses and a major road near the edge of the village. Access by wildlife is likely to be limited to species such as bats, birds and invertebrates."* ***The inspection of 2022 confirms that this conclusion remains valid and the potential for protected species to be present within this former garden remains very low.***

Enhancing the potential for the site area to be used by roosting bats and nesting birds by erecting a bat and bird box on the structure of any new house where this is appropriate would be beneficial.

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