

LAND MANAGEMENT: BALDERTON HOSPITAL

HABITAT TRANSLOCATION AND NEW BAT HIBERNACULUM



The site

A new residential development and associated green space has been established in the grounds of a large disused hospital to the west of Newark, Nottinghamshire. Due to the scale of the development, significant environmental factors were taken into account during the planning process, which started in 2002.

David Wilson Homes commissioned Baker Shepherd Gillespie (BSG) to provide ecological consultancy and advice during both the planning and construction phases. This included survey and mitigation for statutory protected species and the translocation of grassland. Subsequent to the ecological works, the site has been monitored over a period of five years to assess the success of the mitigation.

The incorporation of extensive areas of woodland and grassland into the development masterplan was fundamental to the overall design. Appropriate protection/mitigation measures were devised for identified summer bat roosts and potential underground hibernation roosts.

Following planning approval, BSG played a leading role in implementing the ecological conditions relating to the translocation of semi-improved neutral grassland, provision of summer and hibernation roosting opportunities for bats and the long-term management of retained woodland and grassland.

Grassland translocation

The area of semi-improved grassland was selected for translocation as a last resort to retain an area of relatively species-diverse neutral grassland within the residential development. BSG was responsible for the ground preparation of the donor and receptor areas and the supervision of the translocation process.

Approximately 1050 square metres of unmanaged grassland were moved as 1m x 1m turves, using a specifically designed front loading plate, in two stages in spring and autumn 2002. BSG supervised the initial maintenance of the translocated grassland and continues to advise on its ongoing management.

A long-term monitoring programme has shown that an area of species-rich neutral grassland has been established by moving the turves and that several new grass species including meadow barley (*Hordeum secalinum*) and timothy (*Phleum pratense*) have appeared in the translocated grassland. This grassland is now a protected area surrounded by completed phases of the residential development.

Bats

A thirty metre long underground hibernaculum and the roof space in the sports field pavilion were specifically designed for use by bats. Bat boxes have been erected on mature trees within the grounds (which are already in use) and the roof of the main hall has been modified to improve access for bats into the roof space. BSG continues to monitor the built structures and the known pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus* spp.) and brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*) roosts.



Future

This project is a flagship site for David Wilson Homes, and just one of many projects on which BSG have worked to ensure that all the necessary ecological factors are appropriately incorporated into new developments.

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