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**Old Park Farm, Waterloooville, Phase 2 of Development:
Ecology Survey Report**



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Notice to Interested Parties

To achieve the study objectives stated in this report, we were required to base our conclusions on the best information available during the period of the investigation and within the limits prescribed by our client in the agreement.

No investigative method can completely eliminate the possibility of obtaining partially imprecise or incomplete information. Thus, we cannot guarantee that the investigations completely defined the degree or extent of e.g. species abundances or habitat management efficacy described in the report.

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CONTENTS

0	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
1	INTRODUCTION.....	2
	Background to the study.....	2
	Aims and objectives.....	4
	Study area	4
2	METHODS.....	5
3	RESULTS	6
	Habitats	6
	Signs of protected species.....	6
4	ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT	8
	Evidence from previous surveys.....	8
	Evidence from this survey.....	9
	The potential impact of Phase 2	9
	Appropriate measures to alleviate any impact	10
5	CONCLUSIONS.....	11

FIGURES

Figure 3.1: Survey of habitats and signs of protected species on Phase 2.....	12
Figure 4.1: Phase 2 development boundary overlain on habitats mapped in 2007.....	13
Figure 4.2: Phase 2 development boundary overlain on protected species interest.....	14

0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 0.1 RPS was commissioned by Taylor Wimpey to undertake a protected species and habitats scoping survey on the land being brought forward as Phase 2 of the development at Old Park Farm, Waterloooville. This was in order to discharge a planning condition imposed on the outline planning consent for the site.
- 0.2 The protected species component of the survey had a particular focus on identifying signs of Badger and the suitability of the habitat for reptiles as these had been recorded in the general area before and there was the risk of movement by these species onto the area of Phase 2.
- 0.3 The survey found that half of the area had been stripped of top soil leaving exposed bare ground, there were a number of soil mounds and the remaining area was improved or semi-improved grassland. These habitats were of no or local botanical value.
- 0.4 The survey found that within Phase 2 of the development there was no potential for reptiles, no trees or built structures that could provide a roost for bats and no potential habitat or features for amphibians, Water Vole, Otter or Dormouse.
- 0.5 A single sign of foraging by Badger was found in the grassland of the Phase 2 development area. There was no evidence of a sett or further signs of Badger use.
- 0.6 The ecological interests of the area of Phase 2 of the development is either not significant and hence not a constraint to the development or in the case of bats has already been addressed through a series of actions licenced by Natural England.
- 0.7 There is no current use of the area of Phase 2 of the development by species protected by legislation that will require specific measures to be taken in advance of the development.
- 0.8 Mitigation for the overall loss of low value habitats across the Phase 2 development and the enhancement of biodiversity in the area is provided by the habitat creation and management actions elsewhere in the Old Park Farm development.

I INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

1.1 RPS was commissioned by Taylor Wimpey, to undertake a protected species and habitats scoping survey on the land being brought forward as Phase 2 of the development at Old Park Farm, Hambledon Road, Waterlooville, Hampshire (OS grid reference SU 669 103). The proposed development is part of the Waterlooville Major Development Area. Outline planning permission has been granted for a mixed-use development over approximately two thirds of the Old Park Farm site, with the remainder set aside for open space and nature conservation.

1.2 The protected species and habitats scoping survey was commissioned in order to discharge a planning condition (Condition 30) imposed on the outline planning consent for the site.

1.3 Condition 30 states that:

Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, no phase of development shall commence on the site until an ecological survey of that phase and any other land likely to be significantly effected by the proposed development, as identified on drawing no. JWR.0457-56-1, has been carried out and details, including an assessment of the impact of the proposed development and any appropriate measures to alleviate this shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority concurrently with the submission of site layout drawings.

Reason: To enable proper consideration of the impact of the development on the contribution of nature conservation interests to the amenity of the area.

1.4 To fulfil statutory obligations and satisfy Condition 30, a number of ecological surveys have been undertaken at the site. Some of those surveys were across the whole of the site at Old Park Farm, Waterlooville and some specifically related to parts of the development.

1.5 Surveys across the whole of the site at Old Park Farm, Waterlooville, and hence including the area of land that is Phase 2 of the development were undertaken in 2004. These surveys were:

- Phase I Habitat Survey
- Hedgerow survey
- National Vegetation Classification Survey of specific botanically interesting habitats
- Survey of trees for bat roost potential
- Internal inspection of tree cavities for bats

- Bat emergence survey
- Bat activity survey
- Badger survey
- Dormouse survey
- Water Vole survey
- Otter survey
- Breeding bird survey
- Wintering bird survey
- Amphibian scoping survey
- Reptile survey
- Invertebrate survey

1.6 Information was also gathered through a desk study. The purpose of the surveys and desk study was to inform the Environmental Statement accompanying the application for outline planning permission. Scoped out for the need for detailed survey in this process was Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* as the habitat was unsuitable. No evidence was found of Dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*, Water Vole *Arvicola terrestris* or Otter *Lutra lutra*.

1.7 Subsequent surveys that have been undertaken were:

- Phase I Habitat Survey in 2007 across the whole of the site
- National Vegetation Classification Habitat Survey in 2007 of specific botanically interesting habitats
- Survey of trees with bat roost potential in 2006 and 2007 across the whole of the site
- Bat activity survey in 2006 and 2007 across the whole of the site
- Reptile survey in 2007 across the whole of the site
- Badger survey in 2007 across the whole of the site

1.8 The outline planning consent is also subject to another condition (Condition 31) relating to ecological interests. This requires that, where relevant, a programme of mitigation measures be undertaken before the development of the relevant phase commences.

I.9 Condition 31 states that:

No phase of development shall commence on the site until details of the provision of ecological mitigation measures for that phase and any other land likely to be effected by the proposed development, including the provision of the wetland areas, have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The mitigation measures shall include a programme for their implementation specifying start and completion dates and the provision of a management regime for these areas thereafter. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the mitigation measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved programme.

Reason: To ensure effects of the development upon the natural environmental are adequately mitigated.

- I.10 This condition has already been discharged for Phase 2 of the development in conjunction with the mitigation works carried out for bats (under licence) and reptiles prior to the implementation of Phase 1.

Aims and objectives

- I.11 The aim of the protected species and habitats scoping survey undertaken in 2010 was to update the ecology information relating to that area of land that is Phase 2 of the development at Old Park Farm, Waterloooville in order to satisfy the requirements of Condition 30 of the outline planning permission.

Study area

- I.12 The Old Park Farm site comprises a series of grass fields, some of which were formerly used to graze horses, bounded by mature hedgerows. A cluster of stable and kennel buildings was located in the centre of the site.
- I.13 The development is part of the Waterloooville Major Development Area. Outline planning permission has been granted for a mixed-use development over approximately two thirds of the Old Park Farm site, with the remainder set aside for open space and nature conservation, including the diversion of a section of the Old Park Farm stream.
- I.14 Phase 2 is part of this development and consists of residential housing and associated gardens, public space and streets.

2 METHODS

2.1 The ecology survey had two components:

- A survey of the site to identify the habitats present.
- A survey of the site to identify the presence of, or the potential for, protected species and species of conservation interest based upon sightings, signs and the suitability of the habitat.

2.2 The survey was carried out by walking over the area of Phase 2 of the development and a buffer at least 30 metres around it and recording the habitat types, their suitability for protected species and any sightings and signs of protected species.

2.3 The protected species component of the survey had a particular focus on identifying signs of Badger *Meles meles* and the suitability of the habitat for reptiles. This was because previous surveys had identified evidence of a limited amount of Badger use of this part of the site, but no sett, and a population of Common Lizard *Zootoca vivipara* to the east. The reports of the surveys also identified the potential for Badger to spread to new locations within the site. The Common Lizard population had been the subject of a translocation.

2.4 The potential habitat and features used by Common Lizard include open patches to bask in, especially piles of rubble and wood in sunny areas; dense but short vegetation open to the sun; and open scrub and scrub edges. Additional habitat features of interest for Grass Snake *Natrix natrix* are water bodies or damp habitat surrounded by long grass, scrub or woodland.

2.5 The signs of use by Badger were dependent on the habitat being surveyed. Grassland areas were surveyed for pathways, footprints, dung pits, and snuffle holes. Boundary hedges, scrub areas, walls and fences were searched for access points and latrines indicating a territory boundary. Runways under boundary fences were also searched for guard hairs. Hedgerows, earth banks, woodland and scrub habitats were searched for signs of sett building activity, including dung pits and hairs close to sett entrances, discarded bedding, and spoil heaps from recent digging. If any setts were found they would be examined to establish their level of usage, being classed as well used, partially used or disused. They would also be classified, defined by the number of holes present, as a main sett, an annex sett, a subsidiary sett or an outlier sett.

3 RESULTS

- 3.1 An experienced ecologist undertook the survey on 24th November 2010.
- 3.2 The results of the survey are illustrated on Figure 3.1. This shows the boundary of Phase 2 of the development, the boundary of the area surveyed and the habitats and evidence of protected species that were identified.

Habitats

- 3.3 Around 50% of the area had been stripped of top soil leaving exposed bare ground. This was very waterlogged following recent rains.
- 3.4 There was soil banked up in mounds across the survey area with three within the boundary of Phase 2 of the development. All but one of these mounds was of very recent origin and had no developing or covering of ruderal vegetation. There was a single more mature soil mound that had tall ruderal vegetation growing on it that was located within Phase 2 of the development (Target Note 1 on Figure 3.1).
- 3.5 There were two further heaps of material, one of fence posts (within the area of Phase 2 of the development) and one of general waste (outside of the area of Phase 2 of the development). Both were very recent, having been created within the last 2-3 days.
- 3.6 The remainder of the area was grassland that was either improved or semi-improved grassland. It was not a suitable time of the year to differentiate between the two using plant diversity and specific indicator plants. The evidence from surveys in 2004 and 2007 was that it was semi-improved. The grassland was very waterlogged following recent rains.

Signs of protected species

- 3.7 A single sign of foraging by Badger was found in the grassland. This was within the area of Phase 2 of the development; its location is shown on Figure 3.1. No further evidence of use by Badger was found and no suitable sett building habitat was found.
- 3.8 Earth mounds can provide potential reptile habitat. This is especially the case if present throughout the spring, summer and autumn, connected to other suitable reptile habitat, covered in vegetation, with rabbit burrows and containing construction waste that leads to voids within the structure of the mound. The mounds within Phase 2 of the development did not have these characteristics. All but one of the mounds were recent, having been created since any reptiles in the area would have gone into hibernation. The older mound was vegetated but this was isolated from suitable reptile habitat. The previous surveys had shown that the nearest reptile population was to the east, adjacent to the stream. This population had been the subject of a translocation in 2009 before the vegetated mound was created. It was concluded that there was no potential for reptiles to be present within Phase 2 of the development.

- 3.9 The area that was the receptor site for the reptiles translocated from the east of Phase 2 of the development was also inspected. This receptor site was at the south end of the Old Park Farm development. The reptile fencing around the receptor site was found to be intact. As a result it can be concluded that this site was not a potential source of reptiles to recolonise the northern part of the development area and Phase 2 in particular.
- 3.10 Within Phase 2 of the development there were no ponds or slow flowing watercourses and hence no suitable breeding habitat for amphibians. There was no watercourse and hence no suitable habitat for Water Vole and Otter. There was no woodland or large, mature hedgerows and hence no suitable habitat for Dormouse. There were no trees or built structures that could provide a roost for bats.

4 ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT

Evidence from previous surveys

- 4.1 Summarised below is the evidence obtained from previous surveys of the protected species and habitat interest within Phase 2 of the development.

Habitats

- 4.2 The Phase 2 development is wholly within the two fields that were identified as semi-improved neutral grassland. Field A (the north west edge of Phase 2 of the development) was described as a species poor example of MG11 *Festuca rubra*-*Agrostis stolonifera* grassland. Field B (the majority of Phase 2 of the development was in this field) described as most closely resembling MG9 *Holcus lanatus*-*Deschampsia caespitosa* grassland. Both fields were evaluated as of local botanical value.
- 4.3 The Hedgerow Survey described the hedges within Phase 2 of the development as being species poor and not of a nature that they would be assessed as being an 'Important Hedgerow' under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.
- 4.4 Corky-fruited Water-dropwort *Oenanthe pimpinelloides* was not found in the area of Phase 2 in 2007.

Reptiles

- 4.5 No reptiles were located within Phase 2 of the development. Common Lizard were identified on the eastern side of the site close to Phase 2 but this population has been the subject of a trapping and translocation programme in 2009 in advance of the construction of Phase 1 and infrastructure. As a result this population is no longer present and hence there is not the potential for colonisation of Phase 2.

Bats

- 4.6 The bat surveys in 2006 and 2007 found that hedgerow 2 that is located within Phase 2 had a maximum of one bat pass per survey and was evaluated as having a low level of bat activity. Hedgerow 6 to the south of Phase 2 had regular Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus spp* feeding and commuting activity along it (maximum of six in a survey) and was evaluated as having a relatively high level of bat activity compared to many other parts of the site.
- 4.7 No bat roosts were identified by the previous surveys within Phase 2 of the development.

Badgers

- 4.8 The survey in 2007 identified that there were no setts across the whole site and that the level of foraging activity was low. Specifically within the Phase 2 development area the survey found one latrine site and one location of foraging.

Other protected species

- 4.9 The surveys carried out in 2004 and 2007 found no breeding habitat for amphibians and no evidence of, or potential habitat/features for, Water Vole, Otter or Dormouse.

Evidence from this survey

Habitats

- 4.10 The habitats identified as occurring within the Phase 2 development area were of no or local botanical value.

Reptiles

- 4.11 There was no potential for reptiles to be present within Phase 2 of the development.

Bats

- 4.12 There were no trees or built structures within Phase 2 of the development that could provide a roost for bats.

Badgers

- 4.13 A single sign of foraging by Badger was found in the grassland within the Phase 2 development area. No further evidence of use by Badger was found. There was no evidence of a sett, a lack of suitable features for sett building such as banks and the area was subject to waterlogging, making it unsuitable for sett building.

Other protected species

- 4.14 Phase 2 of the development did not contain potential habitat or features for amphibians, Water Vole, Otter or Dormouse.

The potential impact of Phase 2

- 4.15 The habitats and the protected species interests identified through previous surveys conducted across the site are summarised on Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2 respectively. The Phase 2 development boundary has been overlain to show the area of potential impact.
- 4.16 The loss of habitat to the development is not significant as it is of low nature conservation value. The loss of hedgerow 2 when considered for its intrinsic value is not significant. Its value as a bat commuting corridor is considered below.
- 4.17 Hedgerow 2 had a low level of bat activity and the impact of its loss was considered when a licence to disturb bats was applied for from Natural England. That licence was granted (reference EPSM2010-1953 C) because the mitigation

actions proposed were sufficient to ensure that there will not be an adverse effect on the maintenance of the bats at a favourable conservation status.

- 4.18 The loss of Badger foraging habitat is not significant because the level of foraging activity identified is low and there are not active setts close by.

Appropriate measures to alleviate any impact

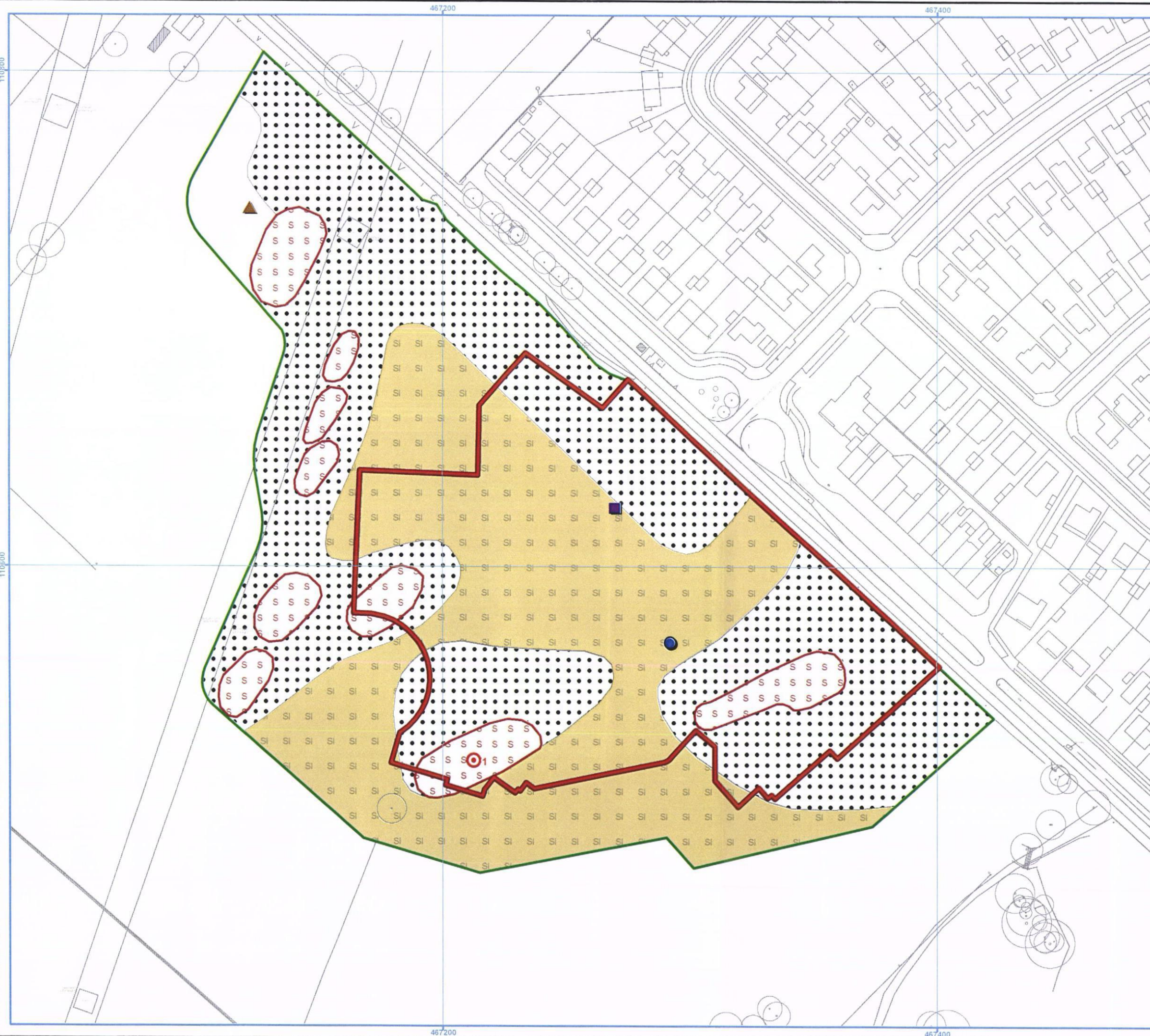
- 4.19 The only potential impact of note is the proximity of the Phase 2 development to hedgerow 6 that had a relatively high level of bat activity. Mitigation for the loss of this hedgerow has already been accounted for by the application for and grant of a bat licence (reference EPSM2010-1953 C). That licence contains a requirement for a number of mitigation actions, as set out in the Method Statement, including an east-west running green corridor that provides links for bats across the development.
- 4.20 Mitigation for the overall loss of low value habitats across the Phase 2 development and the enhancement of biodiversity in the area is provided by the habitat creation and management in the Western Open Space and along the corridor of the Old Park Farm stream.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The ecological interests of the area of Phase 2 of the development identified by a series of surveys since 2004 and the latest survey of 2010 is either not significant and hence not a constraint to the development or in the case of bats has already been addressed through a series of actions licenced by Natural England.
- 5.2 There is no current use of the area of Phase 2 of the development by species protected by legislation that will require specific measures to be taken in advance of the development.

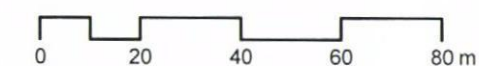
FIGURES

Figure 3.1: Survey of habitats and signs of protected species on Phase 2



Legend

- Phase 2 boundary
- Extent of surveyed area
- Spoil heap
- Bare ground
- Semi-improved neutral grassland
- Badger foraging
- Pile of fence posts
- Pile of waste material
- Target note

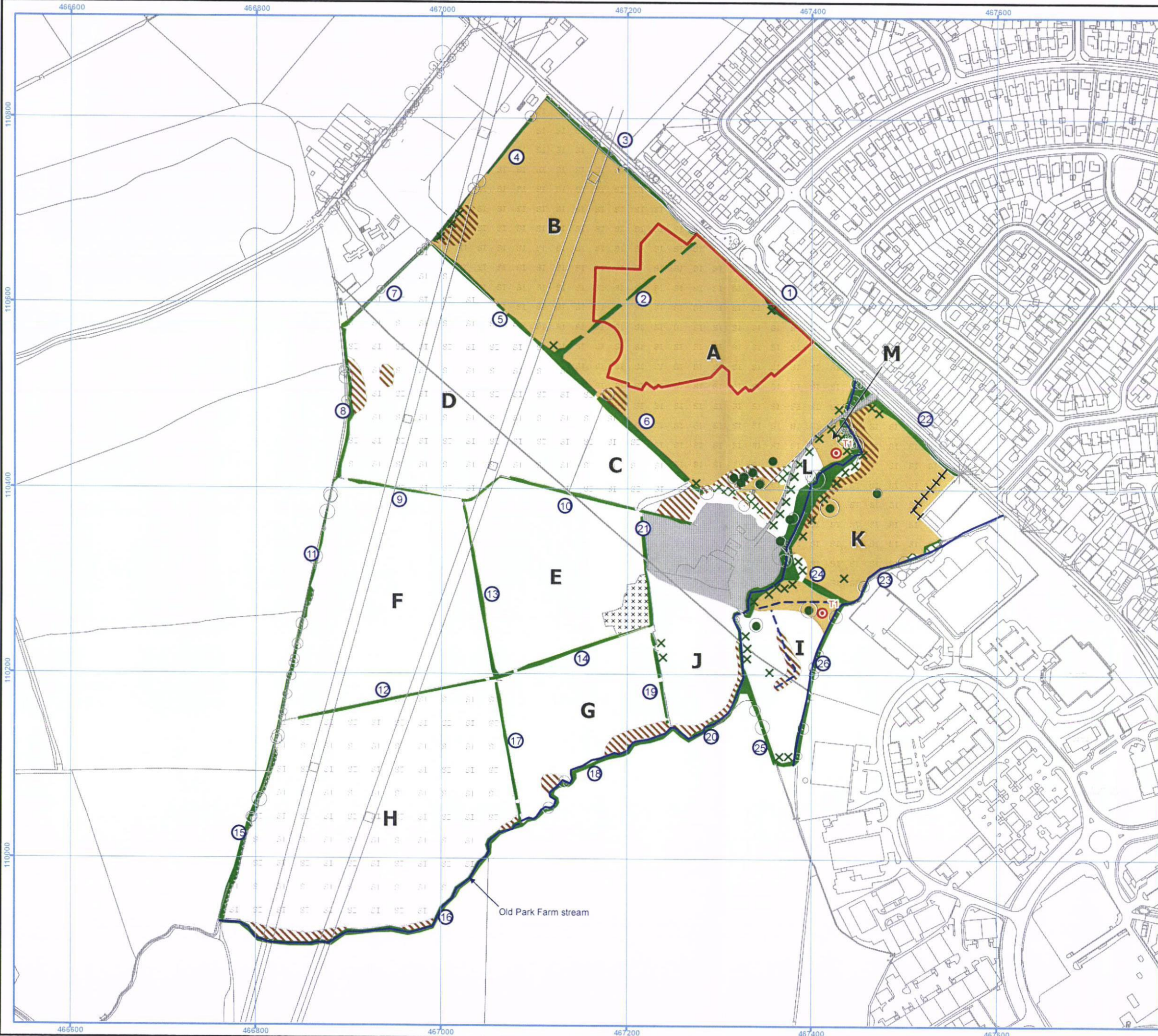


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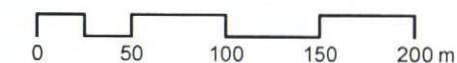
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Checked:	RB
Drawing based upon:	British National Grid
Job:	JPP1535
Figure No:	3.1
Rev:	A

Figure 4.1: Phase 2 development boundary overlain on habitats mapped in 2007



Legend

- Phase 2 boundary
- Woodland
- Dense scrub
- Semi-improved neutral grassland
- Improved grassland
- Species-poor semi-improved grassland
- Tall ruderal
- Inundation vegetation
- Ephemeral/short perennial
- Hardstanding
- Dry ditch
- Running Water
- Fence
- Scattered scrub
- Tree
- 1 Hedgerow number
- Target note 1: Corky-fruited Water-dropwort recorded



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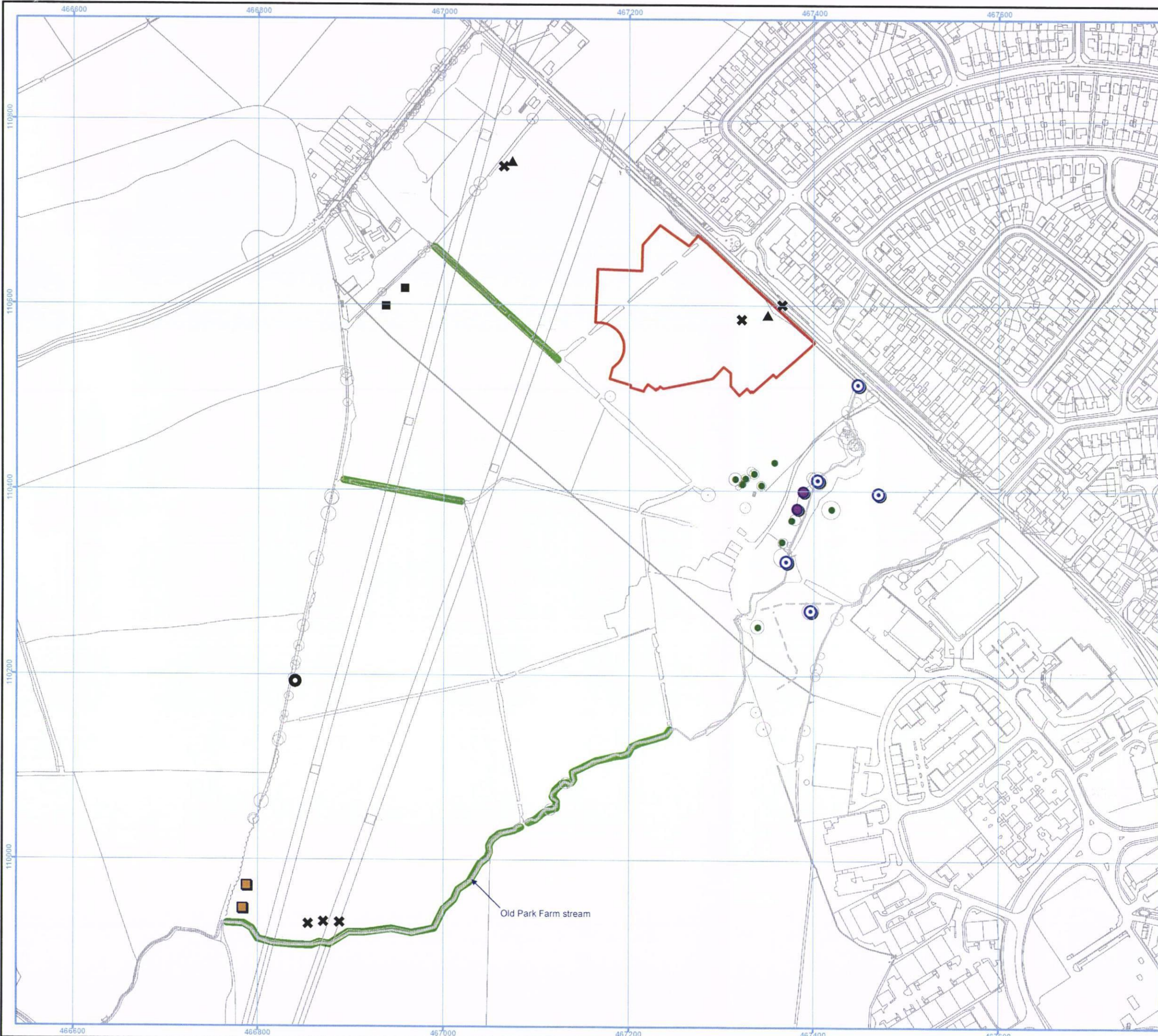
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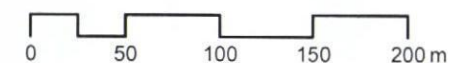
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Figure 4.2: Phase 2 development boundary overlain on protected species interest



Legend

- Phase 2 boundary
- Tree
- ⊙ Confirmed bat roost
- Hedgerow with high bat activity
- Common lizard
- Grass snake
- Badger Activity**
 - ▲ Latrine
 - ✕ Foraging
 - ⊙ Disused sett
 - Scratch marks



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Date:	Dec 2010
Scale:	1:4,000 @A3
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Checked:	RB
Drawing based upon:	British National Grid
Job:	JPP1535
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Rev:	A