

Site:	Campdown, Havant
Client:	Persimmon Homes
Job Number:	A100376
File Location:	\\LDS-DC-VM-002\Group Ecology\Projects\Projects A100000 on\A100376 Campdown\REPORTS

Introduction

This letter has been prepared to provide additional ecological information and clarification following comments received on 24/12/19 by Tristan Norton, Hampshire County Council Senior Ecologist on the hybrid planning application for residential development at Campdown in Havant (APP/19/01101).

This focusses on three main topics; botany, hazel dormice and bats. Additional information relating to European sites will be provided separately.

Botanical Interest

More information was requested regarding the potential botanical value of the site in light of the presence of notable plant species and remnant unimproved and calcareous grassland in local area.

The Phase 1 habitat survey in November 2016 assessed the grassland as semi-improved neutral grassland with a sward dominated by perennial rye grass *Lolium perenne* and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, with a number of common herb and ruderal species. It was also noted that the fields were managed via grazing with a herd of horses on site at the time. Additional visits to the site were conducted on eleven occasions between October 2016 and October 2017 to conduct protected species surveys for hazel dormice (six occasions including setup) and bats (five occasions). During these further visitors to the site, there was no change in the condition of the habitats, with continued grazing by horses and cattle sufficiently intensive to maintain an extremely short sward (as visible in photographs within the Ecological Appraisal) with low species diversity. Furthermore, there were large areas of bare ground created through continued poaching by livestock. As such it was considered there was negligible potential for the site to support sufficiently species-rich grassland that it would qualify as a priority habitat, and further grassland surveys were not recommended.

This assessment is supported by information provided by Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) via a data request. This included a Broad Habitat map which identified the site as comprising improved grassland, and a Priority Habitat map which did not identify any priority habitats within the site. Both of these maps included patches of neutral and calcareous grassland off site, including within the fields immediately south of the site. Furthermore, the site is notable for its use by brent geese *Branta bernicla bernicla* over winter which are associated with artificially improved grasslands due to their higher nutrient content over unimproved grasslands. A review of the Soilscape layer within the MAGIC database shows that the site lies within an area characterised by 'slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils'. This is supported by the archaeological investigations on site (AOC Archaeology Group, 2019) which included extensive trenching, revealing topsoil and subsoil comprising silt, clay and sand (fragments of chalk were only found in four of the 80 trenches dug, all in the vicinity of the roman road).

The presence of a number of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) which support notable plant species in proximity to the site. These are (with the exception of Littlepark Wood which

is designated for its ancient semi-natural woodland) located to the south and south west of the site. The closest four are located within 500m of the site and are detailed in Table 1 along with the notable species they support as identified within the HBIC data search.

Name	Distance	SINC Criteria	Notable Species
Portsmouth City Golf Course Copse	Adjacent	1B/6A	Fly orchid <i>Ophrys insectifera</i> (VU) Goldenrod <i>Solidago virgaurea</i> Quaking-grass <i>Briza media</i> Devil's-bit scabious <i>Succisa pratensis</i>
Camp Down Grassland Remnants	0.18 km	2D	Quaking-grass <i>Briza media</i> Field scabious <i>Knautia arvensis</i> Hoary plantain <i>Plantago media</i>
Portsmouth Golf Course East	0.19 km	2B/2D	Narrow-leaved water-plantain <i>Alisma lanceolatum</i> Quaking-grass <i>Briza media</i> Crosswort <i>Cruciata laevipes</i> Autumn gentian <i>Gentianella amarella</i> Field scabious <i>Knautia arvensis</i> Hoary plantain <i>Plantago media</i> Autumn lady's-tresses <i>Spiranthes spiralis</i> (NT) Devil's-bit scabious <i>Succisa pratensis</i> Heath speedwell <i>Veronica officinalis</i>
Field East of Farlington Redoubt (North)	0.17 km	2D	Quaking-grass <i>Briza media</i> Harebell <i>Campanula rotundifolia</i> Crosswort <i>Cruciata laevipes</i> Hoary plantain <i>Plantago media</i>

The majority of the species identified are typically characteristic of drier and calcareous unimproved grasslands. As set out above, these are considered unlikely to be present on site based on field surveys undertaken, management of the site and soil characteristics. Only two species are listed under IUCN criteria for species of conservation concern¹. Fly orchid are associated with broadleaved woodland and calcareous grassland which are not present on site. Autumn lady's-tresses are also typically associated with unimproved and calcareous grassland. However, they can occur on grazed grasslands (such as those within the New Forest) and they can persist for a period of years without flowering (when heavily grazed). It is therefore possible that they could occur on site, however they are not a species of principal importance and therefore this is not considered to be a significant constraint.

Based on the above, it is considered that there is negligible potential for the site to support notable grassland habitats or species. An area of 2.21 ha will be retained where the scheduled ancient monument is located within Phase 3 of the development. The Ecological Mitigation and Management proposes that this area is managed using hay cuts with seed retained and arisings removed to prevent any additional nutrient enrichment of the soil.

¹ Leach, S.J. 2019 (in prep) The Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain: a summary of amendments in years 12 and 13 (2017-2018) of the annual amendments process. BSBI News 141.

Hazel Dormice

Additional information was requested regarding impacts on hazel dormice and in particular, the consideration of alternatives to the proposed habitat loss.

The majority of the habitat on site is considered to be suboptimal for hazel dormice, comprising gappy hedgerows of poor species diversity. Littlepark Wood, north of the site is a SINC known to support hazel dormice and a single hazel dormouse nest was recorded during surveys along the eastern boundary of the site. No evidence of hazel dormice was found within the central hedgerow (which is a gappy, defunct hedgerow with trees), however it is assumed that hazel dormice could be present based on the confirmed presence along the eastern boundary (although this hedgerow is not connected, there is no significant barrier to dispersal). The site presents a challenging topography with the majority of the site (where development is proposed) subject to level changes. An Indicative Levels Plan Phase 1 was submitted with the application which demonstrates the extent of changes within the first phase. Due to these level changes, the hedgerow, which lies to the base of a downward sloping field, cannot be retained in-site. However, new infill planting is proposed to take place around all site boundaries to improve foraging/nesting habitat for hazel dormice and connectivity around and off site. This will result in a gain in hazel dormouse habitat on site.

Given the relatively low significance of the impact (loss of 155 m of suboptimal habitat), use of standard mitigation techniques and habitat creation measures it is considered that there is negligible risk that an EPSL licence will not be granted by Natural England.

Bats

Additional information was requested regarding the value of the site for bats (including Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*) and the validity of surveys undertaken.

The site was assessed as having low suitability for foraging and commuting bats. The site, which measures c. 26.1 ha, predominately comprised heavily grazed improved and semi-improved grassland. These habitats are of limited value for bats as they do not support large numbers of prey invertebrates. No linear features cross the site which could provide a commuting route or corridor for bats. Gappy hedgerows and woodland along the site boundary do have suitability for bats and were considered likely to support foraging and commuting bats. In addition to the habitat characteristics of the site, it was notable that the site is extremely open in nature and during all surveys was subject to windy conditions which are also likely to deter prey invertebrates from flying on site in significant numbers. This is due to an absence of barriers such as mature trees and woodland along the majority of the site boundary, and the high elevation of most of the site. There is woodland and mature trees in patches along the southern boundary of the site, however this is located within a valley with levels increasing both to the north and south.

The activity surveys carried out were in accordance with BCT good practice guidelines² which require three surveys (Spring, Summer and Autumn) for sites with low suitability. Given the absence of large numbers of linear or other features within the site (aside from the boundaries) the size of the site was not an impediment to completing surveys with a single transect. Therefore, the use of a single

² Collins, J. (ed) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

automated detector was also in accordance with best practice which requires one automated detector per transect for low suitability sites. Surveys were conducted in October (Autumn), April (Spring) and June (Summer) which is in accordance with the timings in Table 8.3 of the BCT guidelines. Although in some regions (such as the north of England) surveys in April and October may be suboptimal, in southern England surveys during this period are suitable, weather depending. Weather conditions during all surveys were suitable (for example sunset temperature was 12.3°C in October and 12.7°C in April, comfortably above the 10°C minimum recommended in the BCT guidelines). The limitation caused by the theft of the automated detector in October (and mechanical failure in June) was acknowledged in the Bat Survey Report. However, based on the results of manual surveys it is not considered a significant limitation, as it is unlikely that results would materially alter the valuation of the site for bats, the assessment of impacts or proposed mitigation.

The Bat Report concluded that the site was of local value for foraging and commuting bats with low levels of activity by predominately common and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and *P. pygmaeus* (with occasional serotine *Eptesicus serotinus*), including during June when the highest levels of activity might be expected. The automated detector results from April were consistent with the results of the manual transects. Additional data was collected during two further surveys in August which were carried out to determine the likely presence or absence of roosting bats within woodpecker holes in a cluster of trees in the south west corner of the site. These surveys (each comprising three surveyors) collected a further 11.25 hours of manual survey data and observations of bat activity. These surveys were also undertaken within one of the areas of the site more likely to be used by bats as it comprised a small patch of wet scrub approximately 115 m north of offsite woodland in the form of Portsmouth City Golf Course Copse SINC. The dusk survey recorded a low level of activity by common and soprano pipistrelle. A small number of passes by brown long-eared bats *Plecotus auritus* and one by serotine were also recorded. The dawn survey recorded no activity.

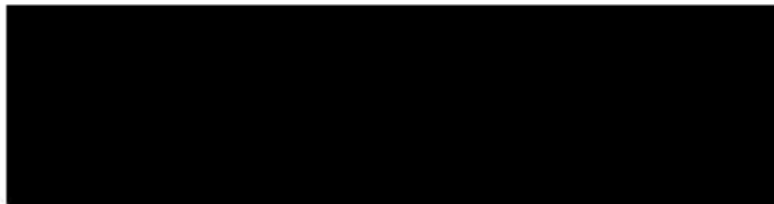
The Pre-Submission Havant Borough Local Plan 2036 includes Policy E15 which relates specifically to Bechstein's bats and includes a search area (Figure 20). The site lies within this search area. The data search returned by HBIC included no records of Bechstein's bat. Bechstein's bat are associated with deciduous and mixed woodland, in particular oak and beech woodland³. Roosts are typically in tree holes and trunks and foraging takes place at 1-5 m along understorey and at canopy height. In Hampshire, surveys for proposed developments at Land South of Horndean (East Hampshire) and Land North of Longcopse Lane (Havant) have identified Bechstein's bat roosts in parkland trees. The site comprises grassland with defunct hedgerows and small patches of scrub and does not support suitable foraging or roosting habitat for Bechstein's bats. Woodland to the north in the form of Littlepark Wood is suitable for Bechstein's bat. However, this is isolated from further suitable habitat in the wider landscape, and known Bechstein's bat records, by busy lit roads in the form of the A3(M) and Purbrook Way. WYG also completed a series of harp trapping and mist net surveys (using acoustic lures) on six occasions in woodland habitats north of Purbrook Way and west of the A3(M) during 2019 during which no Bechstein's bats were caught. Finally, as part of the proposed development, all boundary habitats will be retained and enhanced (with artificial lighting controlled) to avoid any severance of commuting corridors (albeit field surveys did not identify any significant commuting routes on site).

In summary, the survey effort carried out was suitable for the low habitat suitability of the site for bats. The very low level of activity recorded over the surveys is likely to be a result of these

³ Dietz C., von Helversen O., and Wolz I., (2007). Bats of Britain, Europe and North West Africa.

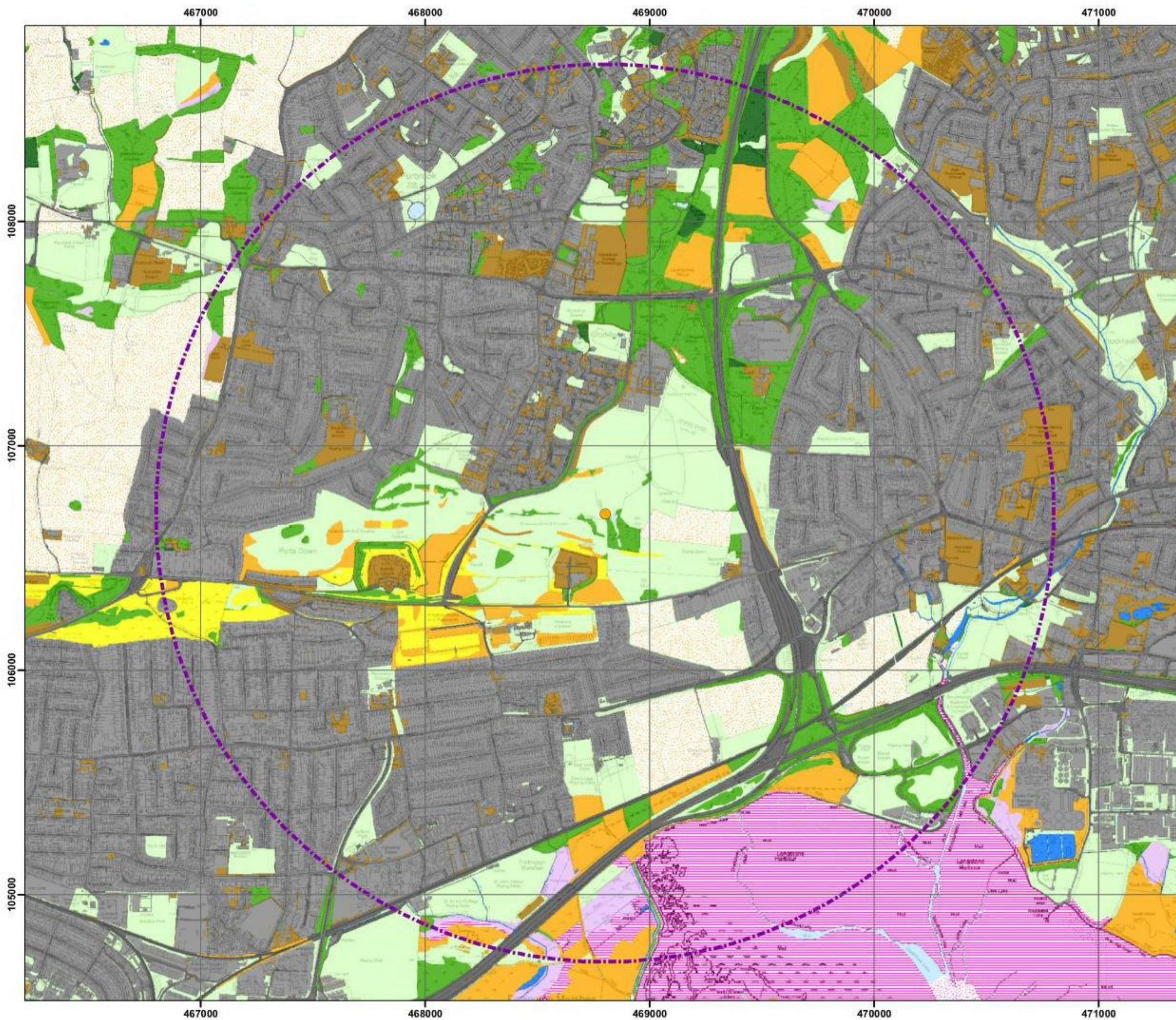


suboptimal site conditions described above, despite the higher quality habitat off site (such as Littlepark Wood). Based on the habitat suitability and barriers to dispersal it is highly unlikely that Bechstein's bats occur on site. All boundary habitats which could potentially be used by foraging and commuting bats will be retained and enhanced with increases in artificial light spill prevented. This will maintain the suitability for foraging and commuting bats and large numbers of artificial roost sites will be included within the proposed development. The theft and failure of automated detectors during October and June is a limitation. However, given the very low level of activity, and the retention and enhancement of habitats on site, it is considered that this does not significantly impact the valuation of the site for bats, or the assessment of impacts.



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Hampshire Biodiversity
Information Centre

HBIC Ref: 6552

**Broad Habitat
Information within 2km of
College Road, Campdown
(SU688067):**

Legend

 2km Search Area

 Central Search Point

Some Habitats may overlap.
Please see 'UK Priority Habitats
Legend' for full Legend, there
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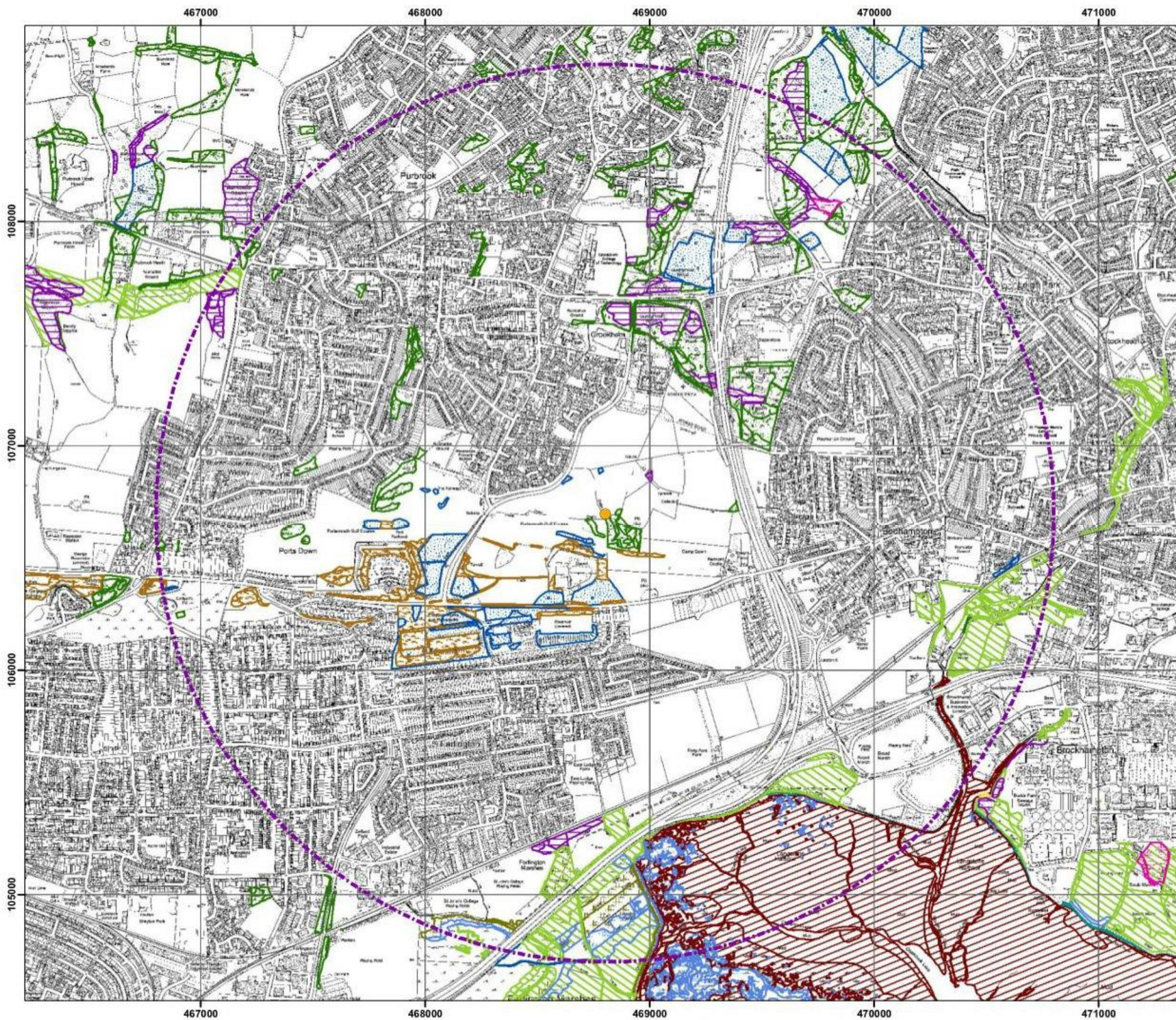
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