Update Ecological Walkover Survey

Land East of Bines Road
Partridge Green
Horsham

The Ecology Partnership, Thorncroft Manor, Thorncroft Drive, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 8JB

T +44 (0) 1372 364133 E info@ecologypartnership.com W ecologypartnership.com

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LIABILITIES:

Whilst every effort has been made to guarantee the accuracy of this report, it should be noted that living animals and plants are capable of migration/establishing. Whilst such species may not have been located during the survey duration, their presence may be found on a site at a later date. This report provides a snap shot of the species that were present at the time of the survey only and does not consider seasonal variation. Furthermore, where access is limited or the site supports habitats which are densely vegetated, only dominant species may be recorded.

The recommendations contained within this document are based on a reasonable timeframe between the completion of the survey and the commencement of any works. If there is any delay between the commencement of works that may conflict with timeframes laid out within this document, or have the potential to allow the ingress of protected species, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted.

It is the duty of care of the landowner/developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to or during works.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Ecology Partnership was commissioned by Croudace Homes to undertake an update ecological assessment of land at Partridge Green, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 8EF, hereafter referred to as the 'site'. The site has been subject to numerous ecological surveys (table 1 below), however due to the time lapse between the previous submission and the resubmission, it was recommended that a site review and assessment should be undertaken to assess whether there were any changes to the original baseline.

1.2 The site was approximately 6.59ha of primarily arable land and semi-improved grassland field margins with hedgerows bordering its northern and eastern boundaries as well as running adjacent to the site's southern boundary. Some mature scattered trees are also present across the site.

Figure 1: Approximate Site Boundary (red).

1.3 Table 1 below shows the surveys that have been conucted between 2021 and the update survey conucted in October 2025.

Table 1: Species surveys undertaken between 2021 -2025

Faunal Group	Survey Methodology	Date of Surveys	Guidance
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
Bats – tree inspection	As part of the PEA, any trees supporting particular features likely to be of value to bats, such as splits, cracks, rot holes, coverings of ivy, peeling bark or similar, were recorded. The potential for the trees to support roosting bats were assessed in accordance with the criteria set out in the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines (BCT, 2012; BCT, 2016, BCT 2023	10th August 2021 17th September 2024 Update walkover October 2025	Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines 2nd Edition (Hundt 2012) Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines 3rd edition (Collins 2016) Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines 4th edition (Collins 2023)
Bats – activity surveys	Dusk surveys were carried out across the site using transect methods to record activity, along with three remote recording devices (Anabat surveys) as per Bat Conservation Trust guidelines (BCT, 2012; BCT 2016, BCT 2023).	Transect surveys: 16th May 2022 14th June 2022 20th July 2022 17th August 2022 14th September 2022 Anabat Express devices were deployed on site and recorded data on: 16th May 2022 14th June 2022 20th July 2022 17th August 2022 14th September 2022 Transect surveys: 30th April 2024 14th May 2024 17th September 2024 Anabat Express devices were deployed on site and recorded data on: 30th April 2024 14th May 2024 17th September 2024	Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines 3rd edition (Collins 2016) Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines 4th edition (Collins 2023)
Great Crested Newts	An eDNA survey was carried out on Ponds 1-7 in 2021	eDNA- 28th June 2021 Bottle trapping- 21st- 22nd March 2023	eDNA surveys and analysis follow the protocol outlined by Biggs *et al.* (2014)

	Bottle trapping and eDNA of Ponds 1, 2, 4 and 5 in 2023. eDNA of Ponds 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 in 2024. All water samples were analysed by SureScreen Scientifics.	27th- 28th March 2023 4th -5th April 2023 19th – 20th April 2023 25th – 26th April 2023 27th – 28th April 2023 eDNA- 24th April 2024	
Reptiles	The refugia were placed around the edges of the site within the habitat edges and next to hedgerows prior to the commencement of the reptile survey. A total of seven survey visits were made to the site to check the refugia for the presence of reptiles. Visits were only carried out if the weather conditions were suitable for locating reptiles. On each visit to the site, a minimum of one circuit to check all refugia was carried out.	Refugia set up 14th September 2021 Checks 23rd September 2021 28th September 2021 29th September 2021 5th October 2021 7th September 2021 11th September 2021 13th September 2021 Refugia set up 19th March 2024 3rd April 2024 10th April 2024 17th April 2024 24th April 2024 1st May 2024 8th May 2024 15th May 2024	The timing and number of surveys completed were based on guidelines produced by Froglife (1999) and Gent and Gibson (1998)
Water vole and otter surveys	All watercourse and water bodies within the site and site boundaries were surveyed for water vole and otter.	10th August 2021 17th September 2024	Strachan *et al*. 2011
Nesting birds	As part of the PEA, the site was assessed for its potential to support nesting birds. The hedgerows, treelines, woodland edge and scattered scrub all retained suitability for nesting birds.	10th August 2021 17th September 2024	BTO (Balmer et al 2013)
Breeding Birds	The arable land, hedgerows, trees and grassland were surveyed for evidence of breeding birds.	21st March 2024 12th April 2024	A British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) Breeding Birds Atlas method (Balmer et al. 2013)

2.0 Methodology

2.1 The site was subject to an update walkover survey on 30th October 2025 by senior ecologist Kieran McGranaghan BSc (Hons) PGDip. The update walkover was primarily focused on the habitats within the development boundary shown in Figure 1 and reclassified the habitats present to UKHab from Phase 1 terminology.

2.2 Any evidence of additional protected species was recorded. Standard methods of search and measures of presence, or likely presence based on habitat suitability were used for bats in trees (Collins 2023), breeding birds (BTO 2020), hazel dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius* (Bright *et al.* 2006), great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* (ARG 2010), reptiles (Froglife 2015), [redacted] and water voles *Arvicola amphibius* (Strachan *et al*. 2011).

Limitations

2.3 It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no single investigation could ensure the complete characterisation and prediction of the natural environment. The site was visited once, as such seasonal variations cannot be observed and potentially only a selection of all species that potentially occur within the site have been recorded. Therefore, the survey provides a general assessment of the potential nature conservation value of the site and does not include a definitive plant species list.

2.4 The protected species assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species occurring on-site, based on the suitability of the habitat and any direct evidence on site. It should not be taken as providing a full and definitive survey of any protected species group. The assessment is only valid for the time when the survey was carried out. Additional surveys may be recommended if, based on this assessment it is considered reasonably likely that protected species may be present.

3.0 Update Ecological Assessment

Update Habitat Assessment

3.1 The habitats present on site had not materially changed since the 2024 surveys with the majority of the site was still considered to be arable land. The arable land was considered to be common and widespread.

3.2 Habitat edges along the arable field, on the hedgerows and ditches supported neutral grassland with species including perennial ryegrass, Timothy, and creeping bent. The margins extend to the north, east and south of the site, with the margins associated with hedgerows H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6 and H7.

3.3 Hedgerow H7 is an ornamental feature associated with the houses to the east of the site. Hedgerow H5 and H6 are associated with a ditch. The ditch was dry in the 2021 walkover as well as throughout the majority of the reptile and bat surveys conducted over the 2023-2024 survey effort. However, this ditch was wet at the time of the survey in October 2025, albeit the water was not flowing and the ditch was considered to be standing water only. As the ditch is considered to be only wet for less than 4 months per year, it is not considered a wet ditch.

3.4 A small area of tall ruderal vegetation along part of its boundary near its eastern boundary. This habitat still supported Schedule 9 Invasive species variegated yellow archangel also present within the habitat.

3.5 The mature trees scattered considered identified as veteran trees T3 ash, T20, T21, T23, T25 oak and G10 oak. The northernmost tree from G10 oak had been removed from the site. This was noted to have early onset decline from the 2021 arboricultural report. It is understood that this tree was removed in 2024.

Update Species Review

3.6 The habitats on site had not materially changed, with the extent of the habitats on site as per previous surveys. Considering this it is considered that the previous surveys are still considered to be valid. The surveys for reptiles and GCNs are still considered to be accurate in terms of the use of the site. No material changes to the use of the site by these species is therefore considered.

3.7 [redacted].

3.8 The other mammal holes previously identified along the hedgerow along the southern boundary and the northeast corner of the site were not seen to be overgrown at the time of the updated walkover and as such were likely considered inactive. No other evidence of badgers using the site was recorded at the time of the survey.

3.9 [redacted].

3.10 With regards to activity, no changes in how bats use the site are predicted for foraging and commuting. However, the removal of one of G10 may result in the decrease of potential roosting sites present within the site.

3.11 It must be noted that G10 was not surveyed for bats during the ecological assessments as these were scheduled to remain in situ. The images are shown below taken prior to felling.

Images of the tree prior to felling in 2024

4.0 Discussion

4.1 As the habitats have not materially changed, albeit there is a loss of one tree from G10, and the site management has not altered since the protected species surveys were conducted, it is considered that the species assessments conducted in 2021 and 2024 are still considered to be sufficient in understanding the nature and impacts of the development proposals. However, the loss of one tree from G10 may result in the loss of potential roosting habitat for bats.

4.2 The loss of potential roosting habitat can be compensated with the inclusion of additional bat boxes within retained mature trees and integrated bat boxes within the building.

4.3 It is considered that the site has not materially changed and the species previously present on site are considered to still persist. Much of the design of the development reduces potential impacts by the avoidance of habitats of high value, such as hedgerows and the individual trees. Ecological enhancements have been detailed in species specific reports, but it is expected that planning permission will include a number of conditions, which will include ecological enhancement plans, CEMP and a LEMP.

4.3 It is considered that the surveys undertaken provide a robust baseline. The impacts of the development are understood. The design of the development is such that loss of habitat is largely restricted to arable, and there is significant ecological uplift across the wider landscape through the development and the associated open space provision.

4.4 As such there is plenty of space and opportunity to support protected species which are known to utilise the site and the design of the development is such that the favourable conservation status of reptiles and bats, [redacted] will be retained within the site and the wider landscape.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 The habitats on site have not materially changed since the 2021 surveys and the 2024 surveys. The 2025 update walkover survey confirmed that the site was still arable, still supported hedgerows, neutral grassland margins., with a number of scattered mature trees. A single tree had, however, been removed. This was a veteran tree in the group G10.

5.2 As the habitats had not materially changed, the extent of use by protected species would not materially change. As such, the use of the site by reptiles and GCNs would not have materially

changed. It was not considered that foraging or commuting bats would be impacted by the loss of a single tree, albeit some potential roosting value may be lost.

5.3 [redacted]

5.4 It is considered that the development has been designed to retain the most ecologically important habitats, notably the mature trees, hedgerows and associate ditch.

5.5 The proposed development will ensure there is a net gain in biodiversity and will provide site level enhancements for species, including bats and birds as well wildflower grassland use, new hedgerow and tree planting.

Appendix 1: Photographs

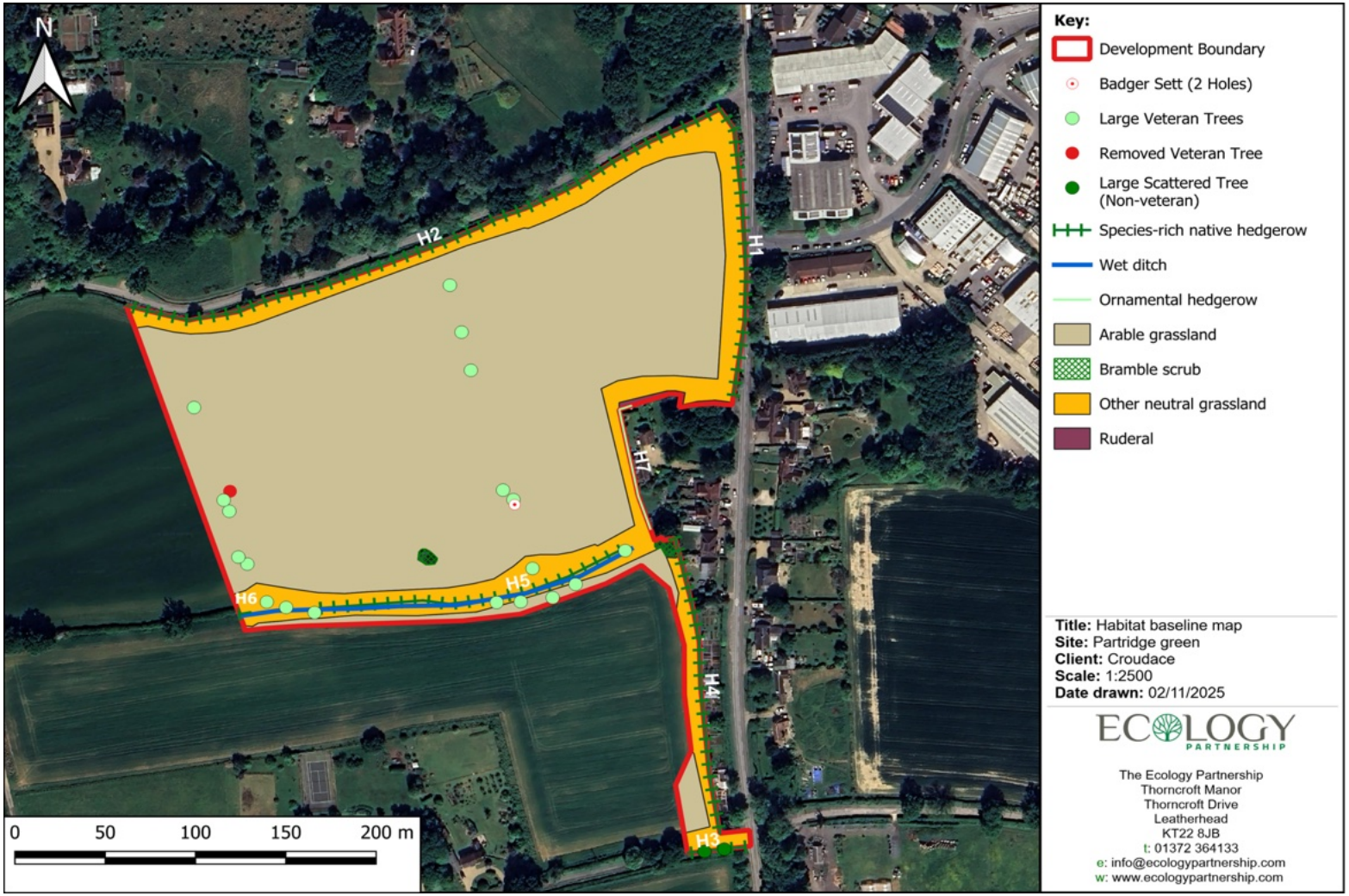
Description	Photograph
Photograph 1: Showing the presence of P1 located to the southwest of the site.	
Photograph 2: Showing the area of dense bramble scrub present along part of the eastern boundary of the site.	
Photograph 3: Showing the southernmost extent of the site facing south.	

Photograph 4: Showing an overview of the arable land within the site as well as some of the mature trees present, facing west.	
[redacted]	[redacted]
Photograph 6: Showing the group of trees G10 along the western boundary of the site, with the northernmost having been removed.	

Photograph 7: Up-close picture of the remaining tree stump from G10	
Photograph 8: Showing an overview of the arable land within the site as well as some of the mature trees present, facing east.	

Photograph 9: Showing some of the Schedule 9 variegated yellow archangel within the tall ruderal habitat on site.	

Appendix 2: Habitat Map



The Ecology Partnership Ltd

Thorncroft Manor

Thorncroft Drive

Leatherhead

KT22 8JB

Tel: 01372 364 133

www.ecologypartnership.com

Approved: Alexia Tamblyn MA (Oxon) MSc CEcol CEnv MCIEEM FRGS

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