

29 November 2023

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Richborough Estates Limited & Lone Star Land

## RE: LAND AT UPPER HEYFORD. APP/C3105/W/23/3326761: ECOLOGICAL ADDENDUM

RammSanderson Ecology Ltd (RS) were commissioned by Richborough Estates and Lone Star Land in 2021 to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment (EIA) to assess the ecological constraints to the proposed outline planning application (hereafter referred to as the Scheme) for the erection of up to 230 dwellings, creation of new vehicular access and all associated works.

An extended Phase 1 habitat survey was undertaken alongside surveys to assess the potential of trees and buildings on Site to support bat roosts, a water vole survey and Environmental DNA (eDNA) surveys of waterbodies to detect Great Crested Newt (GCN) presence. These surveys recorded trees on Site with bat roost potential, a positive GCN eDNA result for one pond on Site and a red kite nest. No evidence of water vole was recorded however (RammSanderson Ecology, 2021<sup>1</sup>).

The Scheme was also supported by a Biodiversity Impact Assessment utilising the DEFRA Metric. The scheme was shown to demonstrate a measured net gain of 12.32% in habitat units and 38.26% in linear hedgerow units.

In addition, a third party entomological report was prepared for the Scheme which evaluated the site as being District (Low) importance (Conops Entomology 2021<sup>2</sup>).

It is understood that planning was refused for the Scheme with two reasons for refusal and neither refer to ecology which was not a contested matter as referenced in ecological consultee response dated 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023 (see Appendix 1). The response made recommendations for a number of conditions, of which RS are in full agreement with and consider that these be readily achievable under the proposed Scheme.

In response to the planning refusal the client team are seeking to appeal. As part of this it was advised that, owing to time lapsed, an update ecological appraisal be undertaken to determine the current site baseline status. This is in accordance with standard industry best practices (CIEEM, 2019<sup>3</sup>).

RS were commissioned to update the ecological baseline surveys ahead of an appeal being lodged to ensure accurate and up to date ecological baseline data was to hand. This was to fundamentally revisit, where applicable, the Ecological Impact Assessment conducted in 2021 and the validity of the mitigation recommendations contained therein.

An update survey was conducted in 2023 by RS. This update survey combined a Phase 1 Habitat Survey, Ground level Tree assessment and riparian mammal survey. An update to the eDNA survey for GCN was not considered necessary following Natural

<sup>1</sup> RammSanderson Ecology (2021). Ecological Impact Assessment of land at Heyford Park – North

<sup>2</sup> Conops Entomology Ltd. (2021). Land at Upper Heyford An Invertebrate Assessment A report for: Ramm Sanderson 01 November 2021. Report number: 37.21

<sup>3</sup> Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), 2019. 'Advice Note: on the Lifespan of Ecological Report and Surveys'. Winchester: CIEEM.



England guidance and owing to the prior knowledge pertaining to this species locally (4 Acre Ecology limited 2019<sup>4</sup>). The surveys in 2021 confirmed presence and the ability to mitigate and licence the site with the information to hand was deemed sufficient and proportionate to inform District Level Licencing.

The survey was led by Chloe Newbery BSc (Hons), whom has been a professional ecologist for four years and has the required competencies (Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management) to undertake this type of survey (including FISC Level 3). The Morph survey was lead by Maisie Ryan who has been a professional ecologist for the past two years and holds the certification required to undertake this type of survey. The surveys were undertaken in suitable weather conditions as per the table below.

**Table 1: Survey Conditions**

Abiotic Factor	Survey 1
Survey type	Updated PEA, GLTA, Water Vole Survey and Morph
Date completed	07/07/2023
Temperature (°C)	25
Wind speed (Beaufort Scale)	1
Cloud cover (Oktas Scale)	0
Precipitation	0

The surveys concluded that there were no material changes to the sites baseline conditions. The habitat typologies and floral species composition remained consistent with the 2021 surveys as did the UKHABS condition valuations. In addition, the species specific surveys did not find any material differences in the species found with no water vole recorded, no badger evidence recorded and trees identified as having High and Moderate potential for roosting bats, all retained within the Scheme. The desk study was also updated with no further amendments with respect to locally identified species or Impact Risk Zones with respect to nationally and internationally designated sites.

The site appraisal recorded no material changes between the 2021 to 2023 surveys. Therefore, it was also not considered necessary or proportionate to update the entomology surveys due to the presence of the same habitats and similar composition of floristic species across the site offering the same larval/nectar and refugia opportunities and niches.

As such, it is concluded that, the impact appraisal and recommendations made within RammSanderson 2021 and Conops Entomological 2021 remain valid and appropriate to the client scheme. This letter should therefore be considered as a technical addendum to these reports. Furthermore, the BIA assessment provided in Metric 3.0 is not revisited following Natural England and DEFRA guidance owing to the fact that site conditions have not altered and that this was the metric in place at the time of the original submission and to which the scheme was reviewed against.

<sup>4</sup> 4 Acre Ecology limited (2019). Heyford Park, Oxfordshire Great Crested Newt Survey On Behalf of: The Dorchester Group

I trust this is to your satisfaction. Should you have any queries, or require any clarifications, please do not hesitate to call me directly.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Sanderson BSc MSc CEcol MCIEEM

Director

For and on behalf of RammSanderson Ecology Ltd.

Enclosures:

1: Ecological Comment to Planning Application 21/04289/OUT

## Rachel Tibbetts

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**From:** Katherine Daniels  
**Sent:** 07 February 2023 07:55  
**To:** DC Support  
**Subject:** FW: 21/04289/OUT

Please can this be added to DEF

Many thanks

Katherine

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**From:** Charlotte Watkins <Charlotte.Watkins@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 06 February 2023 17:07  
**To:** Katherine Daniels <Katherine.Daniels@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** 21/04289/OUT

OS Parcel 1570 adjoining and West of Chilgrove Drive and adjoining and North of Camp Road  
21/04289/OUT

With regard to the above application, an ecological assessment has been submitted. There are a number of ecological issues on site but should permission be granted these can currently be addressed through Condition. There is a need for a great crested newt licence to be gained prior to commencement of any works on site. The Ecological assessment suggests a district licence approach however no certificate has been submitted to show acceptance onto the scheme therefore currently the traditional licencing route will need to be followed. We should condition the need for a licence therefore and at the stage that layout is agreed, full mitigation details for GCN will need to be submitted.

A full lighting strategy needs to be conditioned which should be sympathetically designed to accommodate nocturnal wildlife with reference to latest guidance from the Bat Conservation Trust and the ILP.

Reptile surveys have not been carried out therefore reptile presence must be assumed. Significant mitigation for reptiles to ensure the population on site can remain stable will need to be included in the LEMP with measures to ensure their protection during construction clear within a CEMP. Dispersal from the site for reptiles should not be relied on given that it is surrounded by development or the road network.

A Red kite survey is required prior to commencement of any works on site, with a mitigation plan submitted and agreed.

A water vole survey is required prior to commencement of works with accompanying mitigation strategy submitted as required.

A CEMP should include details of all measures to be taken to protect retained vegetation, habitats and species on site during construction.

The site is acknowledged to be of importance to invertebrates and therefore the recommendations within the invertebrate survey report (appended to the EclA) should be incorporated into the design of the site. The recommendations include input from an invertebrate ecologist at full landscape design stage and an LEMP should clearly show how the invertebrate interest on site will be retained.

A Biodiversity Impact Assessment has been submitted which shows biodiversity net gain is achievable under the current illustrative layout and this would be acceptable. Some of the habitat conditions aimed for may be too ambitious unless public access to parts of the green space is sufficiently managed. The balance of amenity, recreational use and wildlife refuges/corridors should be made clear within management details in a LEMP. An updated BIA metric (DEFRA/NE 3.1 or successor) should be submitted at final layout stage and a clear monitoring scheme to ensure habitats reach the proposed condition ongoing should be included.

In addition to the proposed habitats on site, measures for invertebrates and hedgehog highways (as recommended within the ecological report) there should be additional wildlife enhancements included. CDC seeks the equivalent of one bat or bird box per dwelling integrated into the fabric of the new buildings to ensure their retention for the lifetime of the development (albeit these may be best clustered). These details should be included within the LEMP also.

Kind regards  
Charlotte

**Dr Charlotte Watkins**  
**Ecology Officer**

Tel: 01295 227912

Email: [Charlotte.Watkins@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk](mailto:Charlotte.Watkins@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk)

Communities Directorate

Cherwell District Council

[www.cherwell.gov.uk](http://www.cherwell.gov.uk)

My usual working hours are: Monday-Thursday mornings.