



Land East of Knowle Lane, Fair Oak, SO50 7DZ

Ecology Statement

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1.0 Ecological Statement

Introduction

- 1.1 Peach Ecology was commissioned in March 2020 to amend the ecological report for the Commercial Land to east of Knowle Lane (Grid Reference: SU 50475 18631).
- 1.2 The original Planning Permission (F/17/80640) was granted in January 2018 for a Hybrid Application seeking: 1) outline permission for thirty-four (34) dwellings with all matters reserved; and, 2) full permission for four (4) office buildings (B1a Use Class) including access, parking, landscaping, pumping station and associated works following demolition and clearance of site.
- 1.3 A new application was submitted in November 2018 (Appendix A) - Some small changes were proposed to the commercial element of this application, fundamentally increasing the floor area of building D making it into a “T” shape and units B&C will be increased by one storey. These minor changes had no significant additional impact on the ecology of the site or the adjacent Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), the existing site is bare earth with no ecological interest. Appropriate measures are in place to protect the SINC during and post construction. Up to date surveys for invertebrates and amphibians took place on the SINC, the Great Crested Newt (GCN) eDNA survey in 2018 proved to be negative so it is unlikely that GCN's will be impacted by the proposals. The management plan¹ for the SINC was updated accordingly with the detailed results of these surveys. A new swift box was included below the eaves on Building D in the design to mitigate the small increase in floor area. Permission was granted (F/18/83954) in December 2019.
- 1.4 Due to a change in market conditions the applicant is seeking to make further amendments to building D together with the construction of a new building, Building E, (Appendix B) to be located along the southern boundary. As part of the original permission two ponds, connected by a ditch, were created as part of a system to redirect excess water away from the commercial and residential sites. These ponds will be converted into a ditch and will be connected to the two new ponds constructed in the land adjacent to the SINC.
- 1.5 The previous ecology reports and statements by EDP in 2017² and Peach Ecology in 2018³ are still relevant to the scheme and should be read in conjunction with this statement and the new application.

Ecological Statement

Ongoing construction work

- 1.6 Construction work has commenced in line with the previous planning permission and as such the construction area is hardstanding and the footings of Buildings B and C is underway. The Impacts and Mitigation have been dealt with in relation to this in the previous reports by EDP and Peach Ecology.

¹ The existing management plan was produced in 2010 by The Environmental Dimension Partnership (EDP)

² The Update Ecological Appraisal (EDP, 2017)

³ Condition Discharge Statements for bats and badgers (Peach Ecology, 2018)

Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)

- 1.7 The 15m buffer between the SINC and construction area is mostly bare soil although plant species present include pendulous sedge, dock, gorse, dandelion, some new bramble, bristly ox-tongue, ribwort plantain, teasel, silverweed, nettles and buddleia. The new replacement pond will be constructed in this area under ecological supervision.
- 1.8 The SINC is potentially at risk of negative effects arising from vehicle encroachment during construction; changes in water quality and/or quantity of both the ground and surface water that 'feed' the marshy grassland and pond within both during construction and post construction. To safeguard the SINC during construction, it is recommended that mitigation measures such as the use of protective fencing and standard pollution prevention and control measures (e.g. silt trapping), are implemented as have been set out in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for the previously approved scheme – this can be updated as necessary.
- 1.9 Potential run-off impacts during the operational phase post construction have been addressed through the provision of storage tanks under the commercial and residential areas and the new proposed ponds adjacent to the SINC. The water flowing into the ponds will be silt trapped (as part of the Surface Water Drainage Strategy (SWDS) for the site) and the ponds will not only hold run-off but will create new wetland habitat adjacent to the SINC. The SWDS has been designed to ensure that there will be no significant changes in the volume or quality of water leaving the site (see Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy).

Pond

- 1.10 The existing pond (consisting of two separate ponds connected by a ditch) was dug approximately 1.5 years ago towards the end of 2018 and this has since become established with vegetation and water is present at a depth of approximately 300mm. Reed mace is growing in the pond along with greater and lesser pond sedge and the banks and sides of the pond are vegetated with dock, dandelion, white dead nettle, ivy and blackthorn. The new pond will be constructed first before the existing pond is converted into a ditch – both operations will be undertaken under ecological supervision. An eDNA survey was undertaken of the pond in the SINC in 2018 and this did not record the presence of Great Crested Newts therefore it is considered unlikely that GCN are present on site or in the newly dug pond.
- 1.11 The existing pond will be drained under ecological supervision and any animals or creatures of note will be moved to the new pond by hand.

Trees

- 1.12 The northern boundary consists of a line of semi-mature oak and ash trees with bramble and ruderals growing at this base and along the boundary. Two of the trees along the boundary were identified as dead by an arboriculturalist – these trees will be retained as standing deadwood although they can be made safe by removing limbs as necessary and felling the trees so that a stump of a suitable height remains that will not cause any harm to site users. The trees were checked for features suitable for roosting bats and none were found.

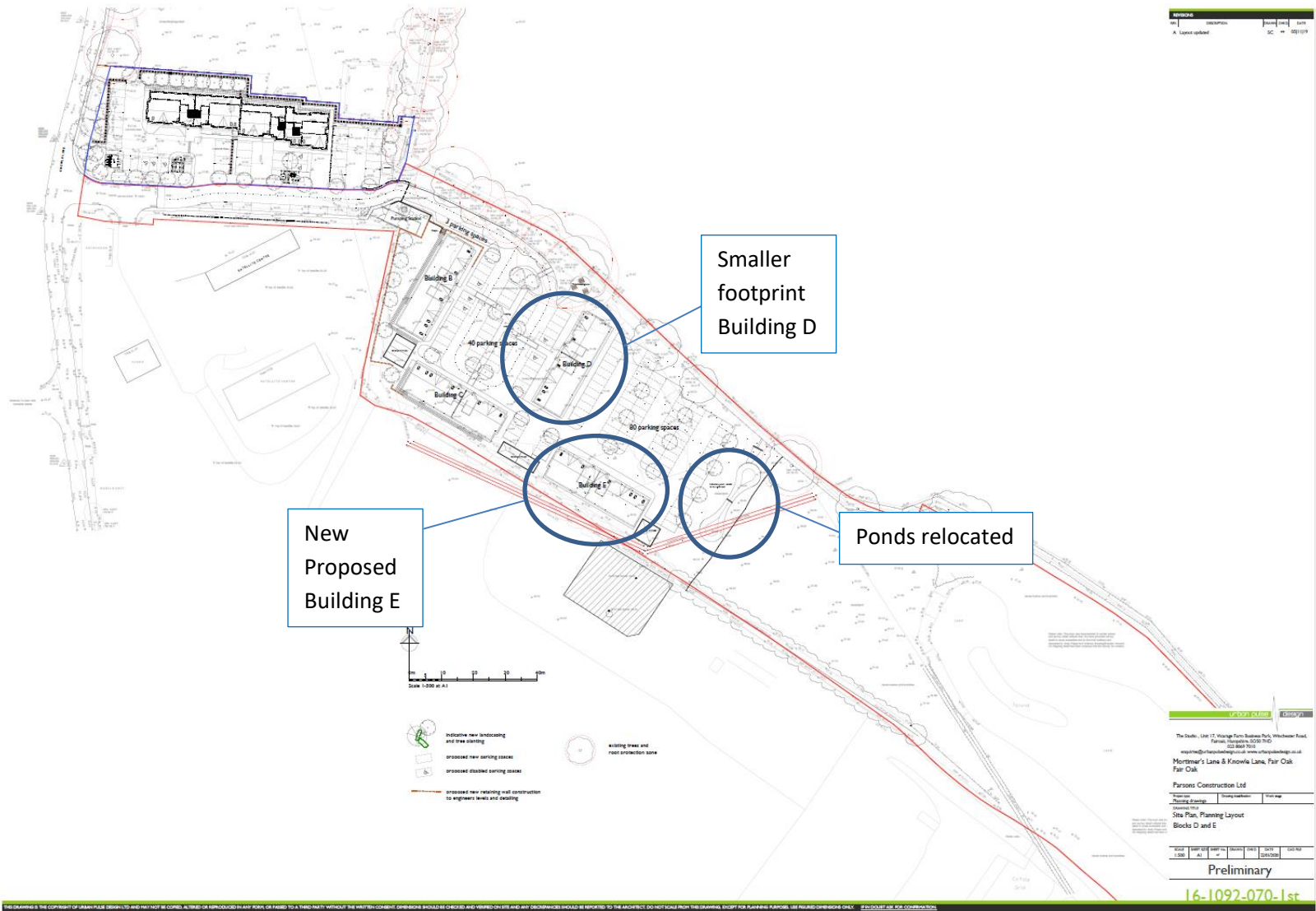
Additional ecological mitigation and enhancements

- 1.13 Building E will have no external lighting along the southern side as this could impact on bat foraging and commuting corridors along the site boundary hedgerow.
- 1.14 Two Schwegler swift boxes will be erected under the eaves or incorporated into the fabric of Building D and E.
- 1.15 At least 10 new native trees planted on site within the car park.

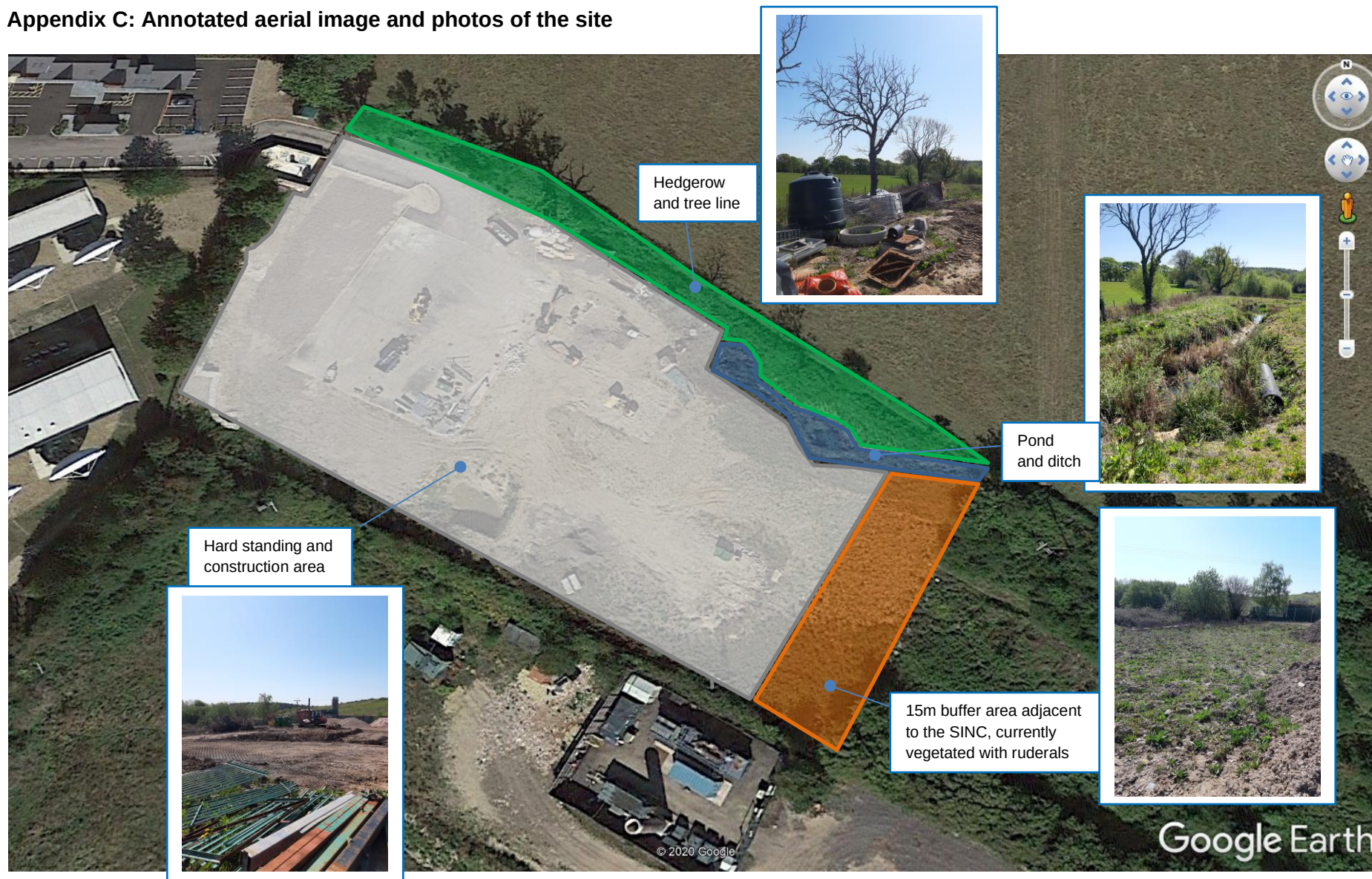
Appendix A: Site proposal plan for application 18/84480



Appendix B: Current proposals



Appendix C: Annotated aerial image and photos of the site



Appendix D: Ecological enhancement plan

