AECOM

Technical Note

Project: **Hertfordshire Constabulary Headquarters redevelopment** Job No**: 60600329**

Subject: **Updated Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)**

Prepared by: **Max Wade** Date: **15th August 2022**

Checked by: **Caitriona Fenton** Date**: 18th August 2022**

Approved by: John Simmons Date: **25th August 2022**

Revised:

Summary

An extension to the 2020 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the Hertfordshire Constabulary Headquarters site was undertaken by AECOM on 9th August 2022 to assess the biodiversity value of three additional areas which have been included within the boundary of the proposed redevelopment[1]. Surveys were made of the habitats and a search made for the signs of any protected and other notable species as well as invasive species. The three areas were of low biodiversity value and no invasive species were found. An oak tree which will be retained in the dog handling area was assessed as having Low suitability to support roosting bats. The mitigation measures identified in the 2020 PEA are directly applicable to these additional areas. The proposed expansion of the SuDS pond and the new memorial garden provide the opportunity for biodiversity enhancement.

1. Introduction

1.1. An extension to the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken by AECOM in September 2020 (AECOM, 2020 (see references below)) was undertaken to assess the biodiversity value of three areas of the wider Hertfordshire Constabulary site which have been added into the boundary of the proposed redevelopment.

2. Method

2.1. A site visit was made on 9th August 2022 using the same method as for the PEA of September 2020. The three additional areas assessed in detail were: the relocation of the dog handling facility; the expansion of the SuDS pond; and the relocation of the memorial garden. Given the length of time since the PEA, in addition a brief walkover of the remainder of the Site was also undertaken to determine if there had been any changes in habitats or other site features that would alter the conclusions of the 2020 PEA. A check was also made for the invasive non-native plants listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) recorded in

[1] Vincent Gorbing (2022) Site Location Plan HCHQ-VGA- XX-XX-DR-AR-00100 P001

September 2020 and for any other such plants that might have colonised the Site since 2020. The check for these plants is reported in an additional Technical Note[2].

3. Results

3.1. The survey was undertaken on 9th August 2022 and full access was provided to the Site and the additional areas (see Figure 1). The conditions on the day were good for undertaking the survey though the region had been experiencing very warm and dry seasonal weather conditions. The latter did not constrain the survey.

Dog handling facility

3.2. The area identified to accommodate the dog handling facility consisted primarily of a gravel area with some moss growth and on the margins plants such as common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), common ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), scarlet pimpernel (*Lysimachia arvensis*), and wild mignonette (*Reseda lutea*).

3.3. A mature oak (*Quercus robur*) which will be retained within this part of the Site was recorded adjacent to but outside the headquarters boundary. Other younger oak trees, cherry trees (a species of *Prunus*), field maple (*Acer campestre*) and elder bush (*Sambucus nigra*) were present.

3.4. The area was surveyed for signs of any protected or otherwise notable species and for invasive non-native species scheduled on relevant legislation. None were found to be present. The oak, inspected to assess for bat roost suitability, was found to have Low roost suitability.

SuDS pond

3.5. The area over which the SuDS pond will be expanded was an ecotone (a gradient of habitats influenced by physical factors) based on soil moisture passing from dry grassland through soil of intermediate moisture to wet soil in the bed of the pond. Although the conditions were dry, the plants in the latter part of the pond indicated that the pond was intermittently wet. The plants were soft rush (*Juncus effusus*), bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*) and great willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*). The dry grassland was dominated by perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*) with scarlet pimpernel and docks (species of *Rumex*) and the intermediate grassland by bent grass (species of *Agrostis*) with areas of selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*) with teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*) on the margins. The three zones are all under significant pressure from grazing by rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*).

3.6. The area was surveyed for signs of any protected or otherwise notable species and for invasive non-native species scheduled on relevant legislation. None was found.

Memorial garden

[2] AECOM (2022) Hertfordshire Constabulary Headquarters redevelopment, Invasive non-native plant species management plan, Technical Note.

3.7. The area for the relocation of the memorial garden is immediately adjacent to the east of the SuDS pond and is grass dominated, an extension of the dry grassland as described for the SuDS pond. The area was identified as being under significant pressure from grazing by rabbit.

3.8. The area was surveyed for signs of any protected or otherwise notable species scheduled on relevant legislation. None was found.

4. Recommendations and Conclusion

4.1. The measures provided in the PEA report of 2020 (AECOM, 2020) with respect to mitigation are directly applicable to these additional areas to the Site. Those that are particularly pertinent are:

- avoiding vegetation clearance during the bird nesting season (February to September);
- measures to take should the oak tree need disturbing or pruning back; and
- the impact of rabbit on landscape planting (such as preventative fencing at memorial garden).

4.2. The expansion of the SuDS pond and the new memorial garden provide the opportunity for biodiversity enhancement. For the SuDS pond, this could be achieved by choosing an appropriate meadow seed mix with species less palatable to rabbits. For the memorial garden, choosing plants that provide nectar and pollen sources for insects across the seasons would make a valuable contribution to the biodiversity of the Site. For further detail, see the Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP)[3].

4.3. In conclusion, the additional areas to be included within the Site for proposed redevelopment have low biodiversity value in part due to the impact of rabbit grazing. Appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures are provided in the PEA report (AECOM, 2020) and the LEMP.

5. References

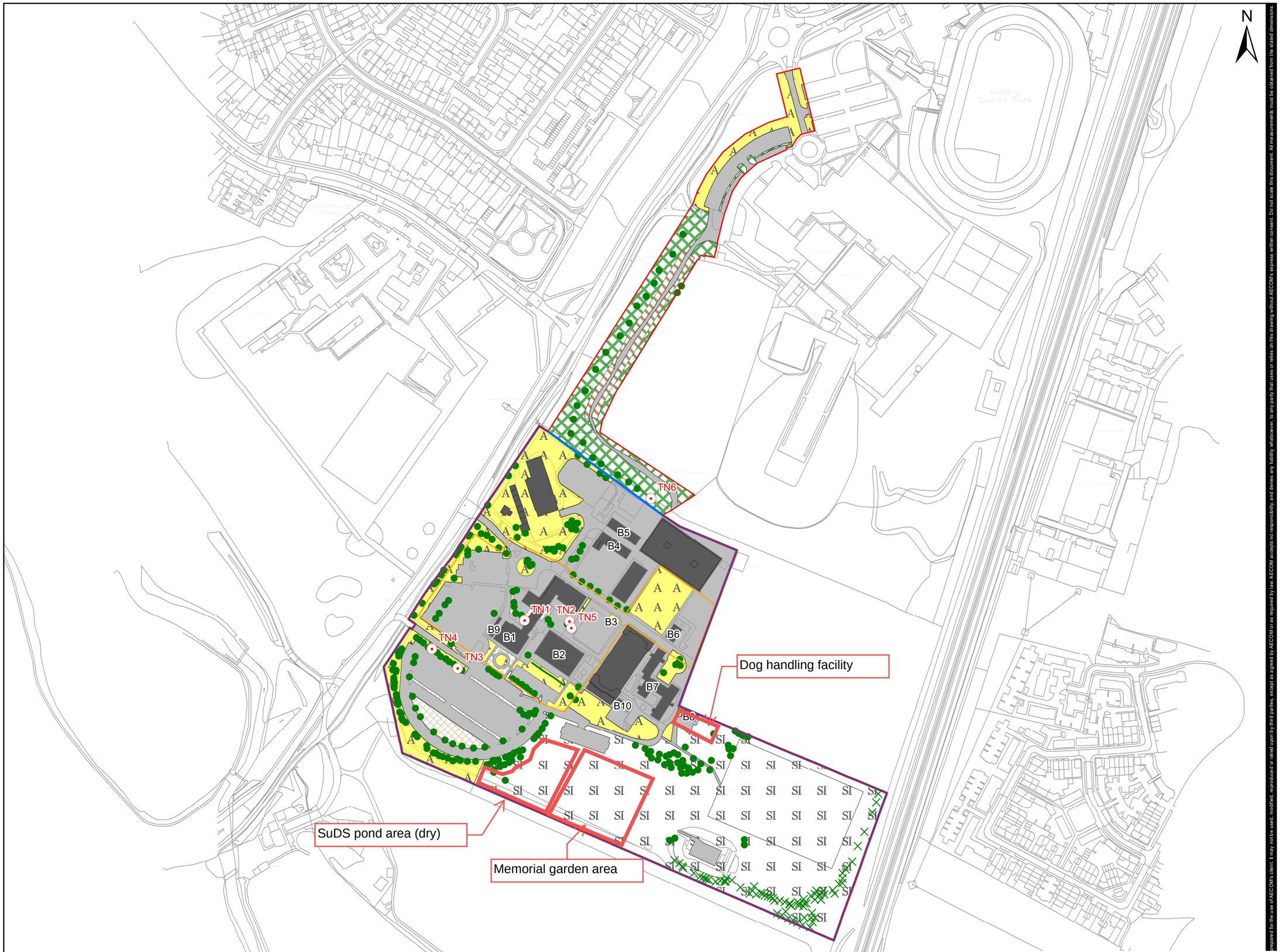
AECOM. 2020. Stanborough Headquarters Redevelopment: Preliminary Ecological appraisal. Report for Hertfordshire Constabulary.

[3] AECOM (2022) Hertfordshire Constabulary Headquarters redevelopment Landscape and Ecology Management Plan.

Figure 1. Phase 1 habitat map showing additional areas surveyed

Revision: 01 Drawn: VC Checked: AP Approved: EG Date: 06/07/2021

Filename: F:\Projects\Hertfordshire Constabulary HQ\02_Maps\AEC_ENV_ECO_Figure01_Phase1Habitat.mxd



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LEGEND

- Ecology Survey Boundary
- HCHQ Boundary
- Application Site Boundary
- Target Note

Phase 1 Habitat

- Individual Broad-leaved Tree
- Scattered Scrub
- Intact Hedge - Species-poor
- Building
- Cultivated/ Disturbed Land - Amenity Grassland
- Hard Standing
- Introduced Shrub
- Other Tall Herb and Fern - Ruderal
- Poor Semi-Improved Grassland
- Scrub - Dense/ Continuous

NOTES

Please note indictive site boundaries

ISSUE PURPOSE

FOR INFORMATION

PROJECT NUMBER

60600329

SHEET TITLE

Phase 1 Habitat

SHEET NUMBER

Figure 01