



Darwin Green 1

Ecological Assessment Infrastructure Application Landscape Mound

Produced for Barratt Homes

By Applied Ecology Ltd

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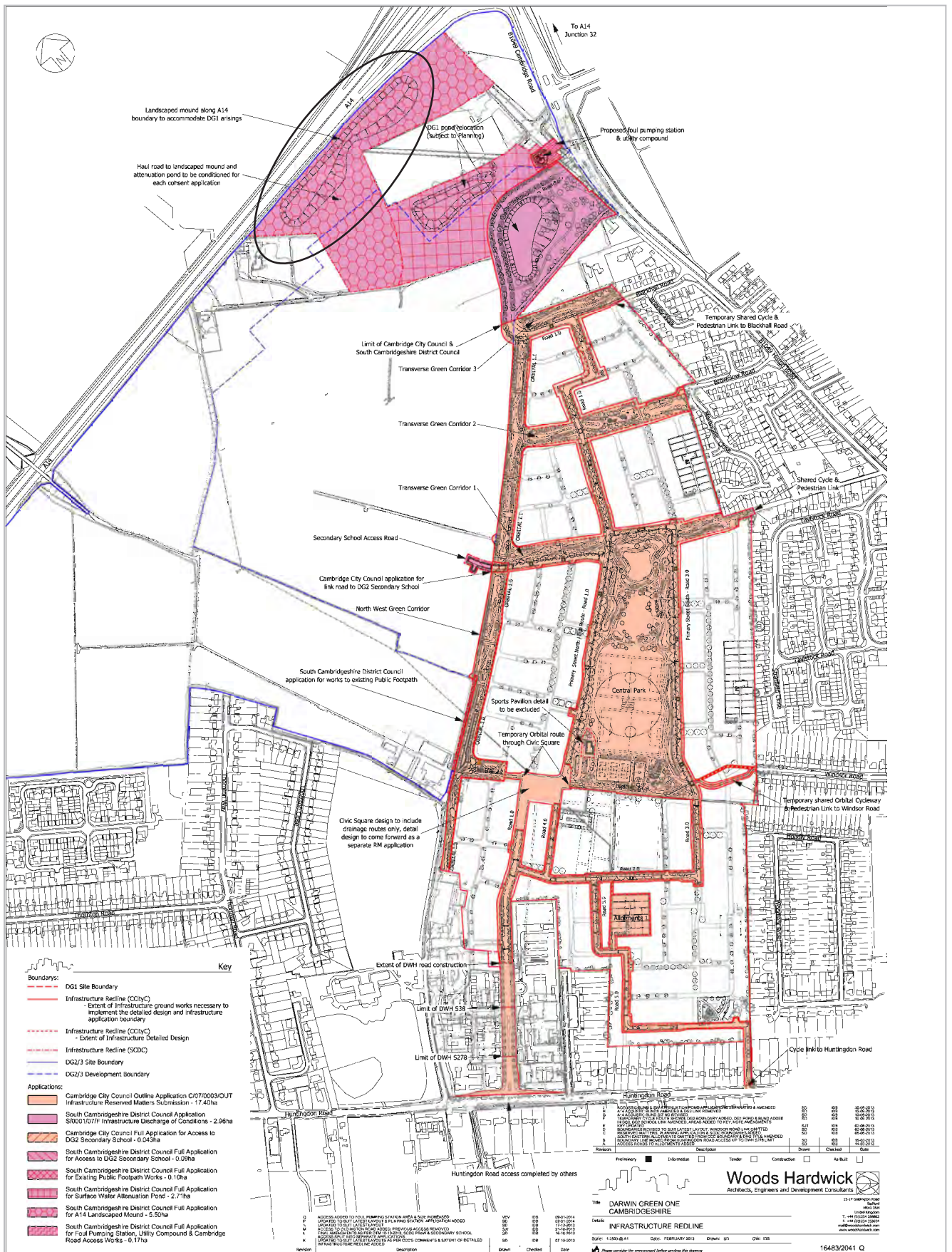


1 Introduction

Background

- 1.1 Applied Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Bidwells, on behalf of Barrett Eastern Counties, to complete an assessment of proposals to construct a landscape mound in the location shown by **Figure 1.1**.
- 1.2 The proposed development forms part of a new residential community called Darwin Green 1 (DG 1) located on the northern outskirts of the City of Cambridge on land that is primarily agricultural and dominated by large arable fields within the administrative area of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
- 1.3 The land areas that would be developed were subject to a walkover ecology survey on 16 October 2013 by an ecologist from AEL and have been subject to historic ecological survey and assessment to support the DG1 planning application.





Darwin Green 1 - Infrastructure Development
Figure 1.1: Location of proposed landscape mound



2 Survey Approach & Findings

Survey Approach

- 2.1 The land area circled by **Figure 1.1** was subject to a walkover survey by Dr Duncan Painter CEnv MCIEEM on 16 October 2013.
- 2.2 As highlighted previously, the land has been subject to previous ecology survey by AEL as part of a wider assessment of the potential ecological effects of the Darwin Green development.

Survey Findings

- 2.3 The landscape mound occupies land that is comprised of semi-improved pasture grassland divided into small grassland paddocks by electric fencing to provide grazing for horses. The grassland has low inherent ecological interest and possessed no signs of protected animal species.
- 2.4 A large standing dead oak tree *Quercus* sp. occurs within the proposed bund. The tree possessed no visible bat roost features at ground level, but was large enough to mean that potential bat roost features such as splits, hole and crevices may not have been visible by ground level inspection. It is likely that the tree would need to be felled in advance of bund construction.
- 2.5 A stand of bramble *Rubus fruticosus* with badger sized tunnels entering into it at ground level also occurs within the proposed location of the bund, and would be lost under the bund. The bramble was too dense to survey effectively but may support a hidden badger sett within it.
- 2.6 The locations of the features described above are shown by **Figure 2.1**.





Notes

1. Standing dead oak tree
2. Stand of bramble that may support a badger sett



Darwin Green 1 - Infrastructure Development
Figure 2.1: Ecological features



3 Conclusion & Recommendations

Conclusion

- 3.1 Construction of the proposed landscape mound impacts habitats that are of low ecological and biodiversity value. However, construction operations could potentially result in adverse impacts on protected animal species, and specific mitigation is recommended to minimise risk to legally protected species.

Recommendations

- 3.2 The following ecological mitigation is recommended:
- The standing dead oak should be regarded as a potential bat roost tree and be inspected for signs of roosting bats in advance of being felled – the use of tree climbing equipment or a mobile cherry picker would be necessary to enable a detailed inspection. An alternative approach would be to complete a bat activity survey of the tree during the bat active season (May to September) to check for the presence of bats immediately before the tree is felled. If bats are confirmed as being present, the tree should be retained or felled under the auspices of a Natural England European Protected Species licence. Consideration should be given to use of soft felling the tree in sections depending upon the follow-up survey findings.
 - The stand of bramble should be removed by hand under ecological supervision outside of the bird nesting period and checked for the presence of badger setts. If present, a sett would need to be closed under the auspices of a Natural England licence if it is not possible to retain it. The sett closure period during which time NE would issue a licence for sett destruction in July to November inclusive. The sett would have to be worked around with a suitable stand-off outside of the sett closure period.



