
EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY

LAND OFF HILTON LANE, PRESTWICH,
MANCHESTER

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Site Information

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2021 by NC Architecture to carry out an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of land off Hilton Lane, Prestwich, Manchester (O.S. grid reference: SD 80930 02414 – see Figure 1). The proposed development site currently comprises areas of poor, semi-improved grassland, tall, ruderal herb and continuous scrub. Residential and commercial development is located to the north, south and east of the site. Woodland is located to the west within Prestwich Country Park.

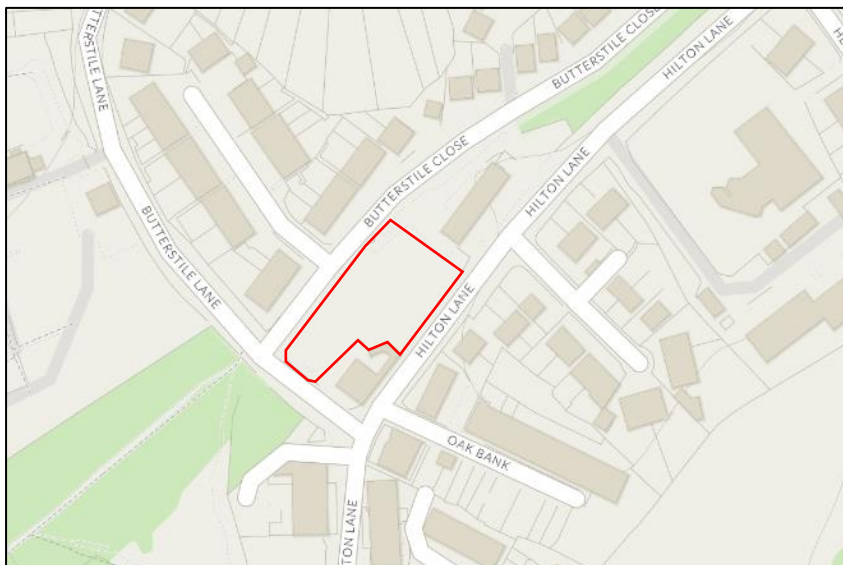


Figure 1 showing the redline boundary of the site

Description of Development

- 1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application for residential development.

Biodiversity in Planning

- 1.3 Biodiversity is a material consideration, and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have a requirement to consider biodiversity and protected species when determining planning applications. Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) gives specific reference to minimising the impacts of development on biodiversity. Local and Neighbourhood plans also provide guidance towards protecting and enhancing biodiversity, including priority habitats and notable species.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.1 A Phase 1 Habitat survey was undertaken to JNCC standards (JNCC, 2010). The site was walked and each habitat was assigned a Phase 1 habitat category. Species lists were taken at locations of botanical interest. All botanical nomenclature follows Stace, 2019. A Phase 1 map was produced showing habitat boundaries. An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey is required to provide an overview of the habitats present within the site and to assess any potential protected species issues on the site.
- 2.2 During the Extended Phase 1 survey, the habitats were assessed for their potential to support protected species. This included, for example, looking for signs of Badger activity (e.g. setts, paths, latrines and hairs on fences), assessing any waterbodies on site or near the site for their potential to support Great Crested Newt.
- 2.3 The site was also surveyed for invasive, non-native plant species such as Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed.

Personnel and Seasonal Timing

- 2.4 Ben Crossthwaite (Senior Ecologist) carried out the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey on the 18th October 2021. Ben is an experienced ecologist and fully trained in botanical surveys and protected species assessments. October is not considered to be within the optimal time of year for botanical surveys however, a thorough assessment could still be undertaken. The weather at the time of the survey was overcast, cool and dry.

Survey Constraints

- 2.5 The site was fully accessible and there were no survey constraints.



3.0 RESULTS

HABITATS

- 3.1 The Phase 1 Habitat Map can be found at the back of the report. The habitats on the proposed development site are described below.

Poor, Semi-improved Grassland

- 3.2 This habitat is the most abundant on site (see Photograph 1). The grassland is currently unmanaged and appears to have been this way for some time, resulting in a relatively diverse sward structure. Abundant grass species include Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus*, Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne* and Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*. Herbaceous species present comprise Broad-leaved Dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, Common Ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, Bird's-foot Trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg., Horsetail species *Equisetum* sp., Common Sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Red Clover *Trifolium pratense*, Mosses, Common Vetch *Vicia sativa*, Yarrow *Achillea millefolium* and Common Mouse-ear *Cerastium fontanum*.



Photograph 1 showing the poor, semi-improved grassland

Tall, Ruderal Herb

- 3.3 This habitat is found in the north-eastern corner of the site (see Photograph 2). Dominant species include Common Nettle *Urtica dioica*, Broad-leaved Dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense*, Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, Common Vetch *Vicia sativa*, Hedge Bindweed *Calystegia sepium*, Ivy *Hedera helix* and Atlantic Ivy *Hedera helix* spp. *hibernica*.





Photograph 2 showing the tall, ruderal herb

Scattered Trees

- 3.4 Scattered trees are located along the north-eastern and northern site boundaries (see Photograph 3). Comprising species include Cypress Species *Chamaecyparis/Cupressocyparis* sp., Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, Staghorn Sumac *Rhus typhina* and Alder *Alnus glutinosa*. The tree ages vary from juvenile – semi-mature.



Photograph 3 showing some of the scattered trees on site

Scattered Scrub

- 3.5 Scattered scrub is located across the entire site, with a particular presence across the poor, semi-improved grassland habitat as natural succession establishes (see Photograph 4). The scattered scrub is dominated by Goat Willow *Salix caprea*, Butterfly



Bush *Buddleja davidii*, White Poplar *Populus alba*, Silver Birch *Betula pendula*, Alder *Alnus glutinosa*, Staghorn Sumac *Rhus typhina*, Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur*, White Willow *Salix alba* and Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*.



Photograph 4 showing some of the scattered scrub on site

Continuous Scrub

- 3.6 This habitat is dominated by Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. Other commonly occurring species are Silver Birch *Betula pendula*, Hedge Bindweed *Calystegia sepium*, Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, Rosebay Willowherb *Chamaenerion angustifolium* and Wild Cherry *Prunus avium*.



Photograph 5 showing some of the continuous scrub on site



Bare Ground

- 3.7 This habitat consists of hardstanding, located in the north-western corner of the site.

Spoil

- 3.8 A spoil pile is located on the northern site boundary, comprising brash (see Photograph 6).



Photograph 6 showing the spoil pile on site

Poor, Semi-improved Grassland/Tall, Ruderal Herb

- 3.9 The successional nature of the site results in a habitat of poor, semi-improved grassland/tall ruderal herb (see Photograph 7). This habitat comprises species found in both the poor, semi-improved grassland and tall, ruderal herb habitats.



Photograph 7 showing an area of poor, semi-improved grassland/tall ruderal herb

Boundaries

- 3.10 The peripheral boundaries are marked with a combination of different fencing types and a large stone and brick wall.

PROTECTED SPECIES

Great Crested Newt

- 3.11 Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* is a European Protected Species (EPS) under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and the species is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.12 No ponds are located on site, or within 250 metres of the site boundary. The sites tall, ruderal herb, continuous scrub, poor, semi-improved grassland/tall ruderal herb and poor, semi-improved grassland habitats provide good terrestrial habitat for Great Crested Newt. However, these habitats are isolated within areas of bare ground and busy roads which are considered hostile habitats for Great Crested Newts.

Bats

- 3.13 All bat species are European Protected Species. This is implemented in the UK through the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Bats are also protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC, 2006).
- 3.14 No buildings are located on site. The trees on site were all inspected for Potential Roost Features (PRFs), such as cavities, limb damage or peeling bark. None of the trees were found to support such features. Bats use linear landscape features for foraging and



commuting and it is possible that bats forage and commute over the site, particularly the boundary tree belts and scrub.

Badger

- 3.15 Badgers *Meles meles* are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). These Acts, for example, make it illegal to disturb a Badger whilst it is in a sett, to kill, injure or take a Badger and to obstruct the entrance to a Badger sett.
- 3.16 No Badger sett was located on the site or immediately adjacent to the site. No evidence of Badger activity such as latrines or snuffle holes was located on site. However, a Fox *Vulpes vulpes* earth, with fresh spoil, is located on site (see Photograph 8). Foxes are protected under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. A sighting of a Fox was recorded on site, as well as a strong smell of Fox and tracks.



Photograph 8 showing the Fox den on site

Nesting Birds

- 3.17 All bird species are protected at their nest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.18 The scattered trees, tall, ruderal herb and scrub habitats offer suitable nesting habitat for birds.

INVASIVE SPECIES

- 3.19 Rhododendron *Rhododendron ponticum* is an invasive, non-native species and is listed on Schedule 9 Part II (plants) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The Rhododendron is located in the north-eastern corner of the site (see Photograph 9).



Photograph 9 showing the Rhododendron on site

PROTECTED SITES

- 3.20 No statutory or non-statutory protected sites lie on site or immediately adjacent to the site boundaries. Four statutory protected sites are located within 2.5km of the site boundary:
- Kersal Moor Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located approximately 700 metres east of the site boundary.
 - The Cliff/Kersal Dale LNR is located approximately 1km south-east of the proposed development site boundary.
 - Philip's Park LNR is located approximately 1.4km north-west of the site boundary.
 - Mere Clough LNR is located approximately 1.5km north-west of the site boundary.
- 3.21 The site lies within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone, which lists certain types of development that may have a deleterious impact on protected sites nearby. The proposals for the site are not listed within the criteria.
- 3.22 The nearest non-statutory protected site is Kersal Moor Site of Biological Importance (SBI). This is located approximately 700 metres east of the proposed development site at the nearest point.
- 3.23 Prestwich Country Park is located approximately 15metres west of the site boundary, on the opposite side of Butterstile Lane. However, this is not a non-statutory protected site.

4.0 ASSESSMENT

Habitats

- 4.1 The Phase 1 Habitats present on the site are common throughout the UK. No nationally rare or locally rare plant species were located during the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey.
- 4.2 The site comprises poor, semi-improved grassland, tall, ruderal herb, scattered scrub and trees, continuous scrub and poor, semi-improved grassland/tall, ruderal herb. These habitats offer a source of pollen and nectar for invertebrates, cover and foraging habitat for wildlife and nesting habitat for birds.

Development Context

- 4.3 The development proposals, at the time of this report was written, involve the loss of all the habitats on site. A suitable landscaping scheme implemented on site will help to mitigate for the loss of the existing habitats.

PROTECTED SPECIES

Great Crested Newt

- 4.4 No ponds are located on site, or within 250 metres of the site boundary. The sites habitats provide good terrestrial habitat for Great Crested Newt. However, due to the lack of breeding habitat in the locality, and the isolation of the site within areas of bare ground and busy roads, it is unlikely Great Crested Newt is present on site and no further survey work or mitigation is required.

Bats

- 4.5 No buildings are located on site. The trees on site were the subject of a ground-level assessment for PRF's. No such features were found, and it is considered the trees offer negligible bat roost suitability.

Badger

- 4.6 No Badger sett was located on the site or immediately adjacent to the site. No evidence of Badger activity was located. Badgers are not considered to be a constraint on development.

Fox

- 4.7 An active Fox earth is located on site. Fresh spoil was present outside the den, Fox tracks and a Fox sighting were recorded during the site survey. It is recommended the Fox earth is destroyed in a humanly manor, so as not to trap animals below ground.

Nesting Birds

- 4.8 The sites trees, tall, ruderal herb and scrub habitats offer suitable bird nesting habitat. It is recommended any works to potential nesting habitats be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (which is generally March – August) unless a nesting bird survey is undertaken first.

INVASIVE SPECIES

- 4.9 Rhododendron is located on site. It is recommended this species is eradicated from the site with the use of a recognised methodology prior to works commencing.

PROTECTED SITES

- 4.10 The nearest statutory and non-statutory protected site, Kersal Moor LNR, lies approximately 700 metres east of the site boundary. Expanses of commercial and residential development, and a golf course, lie between the proposed development and the protected site. Given the distances involved, the relatively small scale of the proposals and the buffer habitats between the sites, it is considered that the proposed development would have no deleterious effect on the protected sites.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Further Surveys

- 5.1 Protected species are a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a planning application. Following the findings from the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, the following survey may be required:

- **Fox** – It is recommended the Fox earth on site is destroyed in a humanly manor.
- **Nesting Bird** - It is recommended any vegetation clearance works are carried out outside the nesting bird season (generally March – August). If the works needs to be carried out within the bird nesting season, then a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior to work commencing.

Invasive Species

- 5.2 The Rhododendron located on site should be carefully removed using a recognised methodology. This should be digging out and removal off-site to a licensed landfill or digging out and deep burial with a suitable barrier membrane on site.

Habitat Enhancement

- 5.3 General recommendations to bring biodiversity gain to the site are:

- Soft landscaping should include the provision of native and non-native flowering perennial species, to provide a pollen and nectar source for invertebrates.
- Bird and bat boxes should be erected on the newly constructed buildings or retained trees where possible.
- Trees and shrub planting of native species where practically possible.
- ‘Hedgehog holes’ to be incorporated into the fencing of the site.

6.0 REFERENCES

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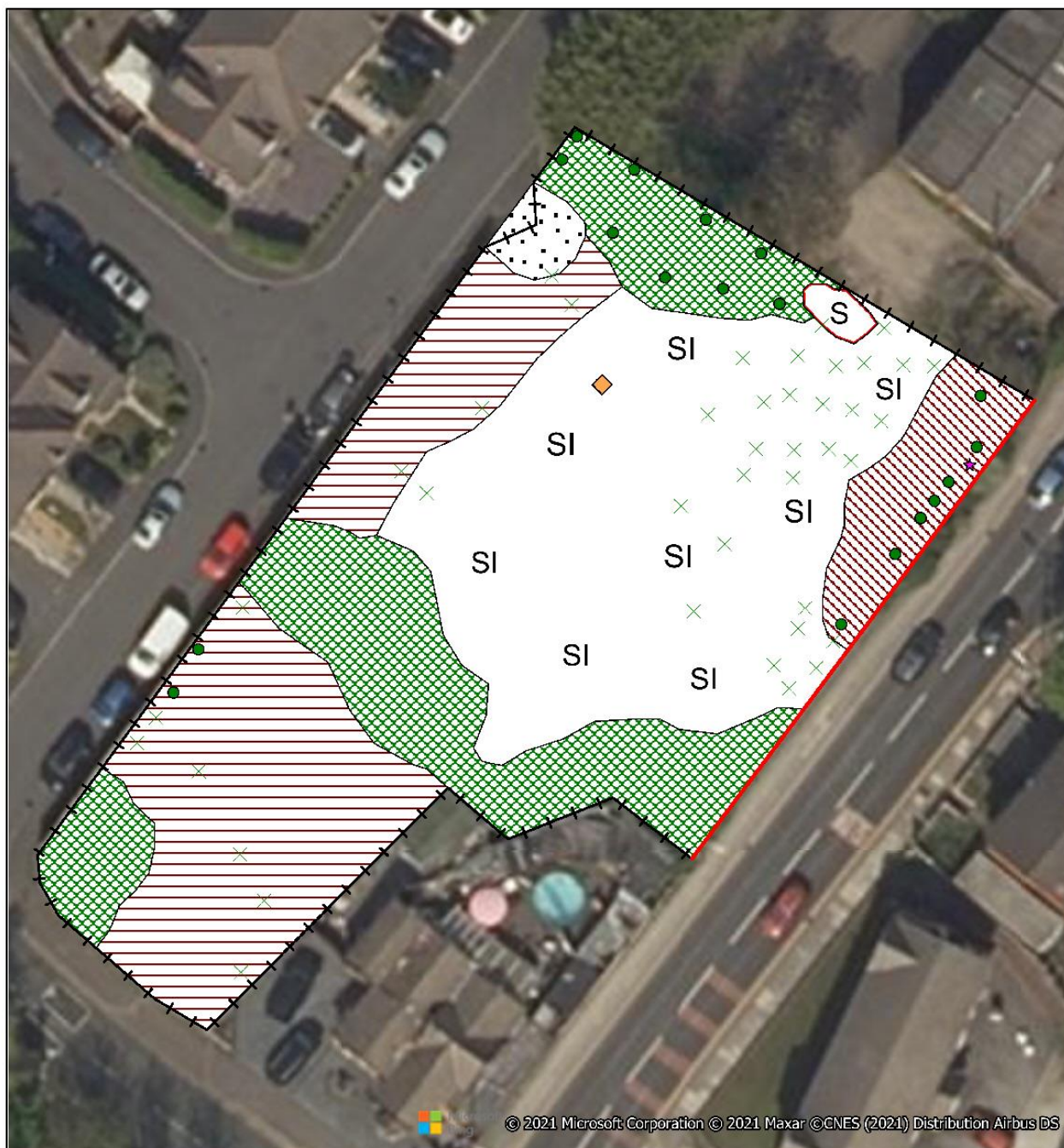
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APPENDIX A PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP



Key

- Bare Ground
- Continuous Scrub
- Poor, Semi-improved Grassland
- Poor, Semi-improved Grassland/
Tall, Ruderal Herb
- Spoil
- Tall, Ruderal Herb
- Fence
- Wall
- Fox Den
- Rhododendron
- Scattered Scrub
- Scattered Tree



PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP

Land off Hilton Lane,
Prestwich, Bury

NOT TO SCALE

Date: 10/11/2021

Drawn by: BC



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