

**Extended Preliminary Ecological Assessment
for a vacant plot at 207-209 Bury Old Road**

Heaton Park

Prestwich

Bury District

Greater Manchester

ref. 70561

By

Dave Bentley

Entomology and Ecology Services

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 A vacant plot of previously developed land at 207-209 Bury Old Road, Heaton Park, Prestwich, Bury District (SD 8242 0371) and an adjacent gravel garden plot on Infant Street (SD 8240 0371) were surveyed together to the CIEEM Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisals Second Edition 2017 and for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) by Dave Bentley Entomology and Ecology Services on 4th July 2024. This is a lawned over demolition site as can be seen from Ordnance Survey maps held by the National Library of Scotland and has most likely been developed since Prestwich's earliest times. The application is to build a block of 7 flats and car parking spaces.

1.2 The site (a "small site") within the red line measures 595 square metres or 0.0595 Hectares in total and consists of a lawn area on Bury Old Road between shops, and a communal garden which is only accessible from the car park of the block of flats at the south end of Infant Street. A section of pavement and roadway of Infant Street is also in the red line area. The lawn is NOT g4 Modified grassland as it is deliberately created on a demolition site and managed as a lawn and has not been "modified" from natural g1 Acid grassland, g2 Calcareous grassland or g3 Neutral grassland. It is actually, with the rest of the application, u1d Suburban mosaic of developed and natural surface. "Definition: small scale mosaic of developed and natural surface as in housing and gardens in suburban areas." The lawn is not a "827 garden" per UKHab as it not within the curtilage of housing so remains unclassifiable as this level. UK Hab page v states "Habitat Origin is critical information about certain habitat types, relating to their historical origin or formation and is particularly important for those habitats that can be substantially altered or created by humans..."

The lawn area includes a paving strip adjacent to number 211 = 8.7 square metres; u1b developed land; sealed surface.

The lawn area includes half the concrete base of a public bench on Bury Old Road = 1 square metre; u1b developed land; sealed surface.

The grassed area of the managed lawn (the red line area does not include an access strip adjacent number 205) = 443.79 square metres; not g4 but simply part of u1d. The best fit would be 827 garden as this is not a small park.

There is a circular derelict flower bed in the gravel garden = 3.88 square metres; 846 flower bed.

The rest of the gravel garden = 95.97 square metres; 829 unvegetated garden.

The paving area and section of Infant Street to be remade for access = 41.66 square metres; u1b developed land; sealed surface.

A polygon and circle measure feature map measurer found online was used.

1.3 The site has no Priority Habitat or Irreplaceable Habitats, and no Protected or Priority Species. It is not a Site of Biological Importance, is not in a Wildlife Corridor, and Bury Council's Feature of Ecological Value policy does not apply.

1.4 David Bentley conducted the survey. He has been in conservation since 1983 and has been a professional ecologist since 1993.

1.5 The CIEEM Guidelines are explicit in what is required to be assessed and provided:

- * A Habitat Survey Map.
- * A desk study. In this case the NBN Atlas and iRecord were consulted.
- * An assessment of the possible presence and likely importance of the following:
 - Plants
 - Fungi
 - Terrestrial and aquatic invertebrates
 - Fish (where relevant, based on an assessment of any watercourses and water bodies present);
 - Amphibians (including both breeding and terrestrial habitat)
 - Reptiles
 - Breeding, wintering and migratory birds
 - Bats (including potential roost sites, and foraging and commuting habitats/features)
 - Other protected or priority mammal species, as relevant.
- * Mapping of any stands of non-native invasive plant species
- * Recording of any incidental sightings of priority or protected species, or field signs of such species.
- * Box 1 of the PEA Guidelines discusses Protected and Priority Species information and this is stated to include Protected and Section 41 Priority Species and Priority Habitats and also Red Data listed taxa and indeed Nationally Scarce taxa, as well as Birds of Conservation Concern Red (most declining) and Amber listed taxa. The JNCC Taxon List names the plethora of higher plants, bryophytes, fungi and wild animals, including invertebrates that are considered scarce.
- * BNG requires we consider the impact of the development on nearby Priority Habitats.

2 METHODS

- 2.1 The survey morning was on 4th July 2024. The site was accessed from both Bury Old Road and from Infant Street. All PPE was cleaned beforehand to meet biosecurity needs.
- 2.2 It was a slightly breezy, sunny summer morning with a few drops of rain at the end of the survey.
- 2.3 Plants were examined and noted to DAFOR rating. Moss samples and a few (dead or seeding) plant samples were collected for examination under a microscope. The site habitat was assessed with UKHab Ltd 2023 UK Habitat Classification Version 2 (at <https://www.ukhab.org>).
- 2.4 Any fly tipped larger items located were lifted to look beneath and examine. This can locate amphibians, signs of small mammals, invertebrates.

- 2.5 A representative invertebrate assessment was made of this simple, mostly bare or lawn site by lifting debris on the edge of the site to look for soil invertebrates.
- 2.6 This is not a breeding bird survey but the habitat was assessed for use by breeding birds.

3 DESK STUDY

- 3.1 A search of old maps on the National Library of Scotland website revealed the site has been a developed site for many years (e.g. developed on the 1840s OS Map) but there is no clue as to when the site was cleared and turned into a lawn/garden. It was shown built on at the time of the Council Unitary Development Plan map base.
- 3.2 A search of NBN Atlas and iRecord revealed no records for the site itself.
- 3.3 However in the locality mammals recorded in these suburbs are Hedgehog (Section 41, Red Data Vulnerable), Pipistrelle Bat species (Protected species), Fox, Wood Mouse, Brown Rat and Grey Squirrel.
- 3.4 There are no mapped ponds in the vicinity and none within 500m.
- 3.5 The birds recorded (with their statuses) in the local urban area (note records of wetland, woodland and open grassland birds found at Heaton Park opposite are excluded as the habitat in the application site is not the same):

Swift (Red), Swallow, House Martin (Red), Jackdaw, Magpie, Jay, Carrion Crow, Rook (Amber), Woodpigeon (Amber), Collared Dove, Rock Dove, Black-headed Gull (Amber), Bullfinch (Section 41, Amber), Goldfinch, Chaffinch, Greenfinch (Red), Blue Tit, Great Tit, Coal Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Goldcrest, Song Thrush (Section 41, Amber), Mistle Thrush (Red), Starling (Section 41, Red), Blackbird, House Sparrow (Section 41, Red), Dunnock (Section 41, Amber), Wren (Amber), Robin, Ring-necked Parakeet (Alien), Pied Wagtail.
- 3.6 A variety of beetles from records collected long ago to very long ago from Prestwich can be found on iRecord and NBN Atlas.

4 RESULTS OF FIELD SURVEY

- 4.1 A Habitat Survey Map is appended below. There are no Schedule 9 Invasive Alien Invasive plants to map.
- 4.2 10 native grass species, 33 native flowering forb and similar species, 5 native woody species (including Bramble) and 8 moss and liverwort species were recorded. Additionally 6 non-native taxa were recorded (including Sycamore). All of the species are common in England and Greater Manchester. None of the alien species are Schedule 9 Alien Invasives and none are problematic locally. The species lists are given below (D = Dominant, A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional, R = Rare, V = Very, L = Locally). In this account one DAFOR is

presented for the whole survey. The UKHab criteria present with the size of the plots are presented in the Introduction to this report.

- 4.3 Lawn area on Bury Old Road.** This is a rectangular open plot with Bury Old Road to the east and a public bench partially inset into the grassland there, a metal palisade fence of the existing block of flats on the west side. The southern boundary runs a footpath distance from the building to the south side through the lawn area. The northern boundary is stepped and includes a paved strip at the foot of the building wall to number 211.
- 4.4 There is no fence to the southern boundary or the eastern boundary of the lawn area. The northern and western boundary to the lawn area consist of palisade fencing or the building wall of number 211. The gravel garden is ringed with paladin fencing to the north and west sides, and a palisade fence on the east side adjoining the lawn and on the south side.

A Grasses in lawn area:

Perennial Rye-grass (F)
Yorkshire Fog (O-F)
Annual Meadow-grass (OVLF)
Smooth Meadow-grass (O-F)
Rough Meadowgrass (O)
Red Fescue (O)
Common Bent (O-F)
Creeping Bent (O)
Cock's-foot (O)

Flowering Forbs in lawn area:

Creeping Buttercup (OLF)
Selfheal (O-LF)
Daisy (OLF)
Ribwort Plantain (O)
Cuckooflower (O-F)
White Clover (O-LF)
Common Mouse-ear (O-F)
Yarrow (VLF)
Thyme-leaved Speedwell (O)
Broad-leaved Dock (VO)
Dandelion (O)
Common Ragwort (VO)
Common Chickweed (R)
Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus Moss (OLF-LA)

B Roadside edge to lawn area:

Annual Meadow-grass
White Clover
Greater Plantain (LF)
Daisy
Dove's-foot Crane's-bill (VO)
Broad-leaved Willowherb (VO)
Dandelion

Pineappleweed (VO) (Alien - Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain)

Shepherd's-purse (Alien - Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain)

There are bollards inset into the lawn where herbicide has been applied.

- C** **In the centre of the lawn is a large and healthy Silver Birch tree.** The diameter at breast height (dbh) is c50cm, and the circumference is 172cm. Herbicide has been applied around the tree base. This is a Medium Tree for BNG purposes.

Plants ringing the tree are:

Perennial Ryegrass

Annual Meadow-grass

Rough Meadow-grass

Yorkshire Fog

Creeping Buttercup

Hoary Willowherb (O)

Daisy

Prickly Sow-thistle (R)

Smooth Sow-thistle (VO)

American Willowherb (Alien - Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain)

- D** **The western boundary of the lawn area (herbicide applied) has:**

Rough Meadow-grass

Red Fescue

Yorkshire Fog

Wood Avens

Herb Robert

Black Medick (R)

Creeping Buttercup

Short-fruited Willowherb

Broad-leaved Willowherb

Wavy Bitter-cress (LO)

Wall Speedwell (LO)

Thale Cress (VO)

American Willowherb (Alien - Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain)

Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus Moss

Kindbergia praelonga Moss (VLF)

- E** **Northern boundary to lawn area along palisade fencing:**

There are seven immature Sycamore trees with bases mostly in the neighbouring property but growing through the fence low down so as to produce most of the tree within the application site. As these would have to be removed they are listed here, west to east:

Sycamore dbh 13cm

Small Tree for BNG

Sycamore dbh 12cm and 12cm (two stems)

Small Tree for BNG

Sycamore dbh 8cm and 7cm (two stems)	Small Tree for BNG
Sycamore dbh 7cm and 7cm (two stems)	No BNG value
Sycamore dbh 12.5cm	Small Tree for BNG
Sycamore dbh 8cm and 8cm (two stems)	Small Tree for BNG
Sycamore dbh 13cm, 10cm and 10cm (three stems)	Small Tree for BNG

There is also an Ash tree totally growing in the neighbouring property to the north, save for some slender branches passing the boundary, sandwiched between the palisade fence and the building. It appears to have Ash Die Back Disease. It would most likely be removed to prevent damage to the adjacent property should that site become occupied again.

F The ground flora along the palisade fence on the northern boundary has:

Sycamore saplings (LF) (Alien - Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain)

Ash saplings (LO)

English Oak sapling (R)

Bramble (LVO)

There is also an uprooted tree stump with many woodworm holes

Rough Meadow-grass

Creeping Soft-grass (VLO)

Creeping Bent

Red Fescue

Cleavers (VLF)

Herb Robert

Wood Avens (O-LF)

Great willowherb (LF)

Nettle (LO)

Hoary willowherb

Dandelion

Broad-leaved Dock

Thyme-leaved Speedwell

G The northern edge of the lawn adjacent number 211 (herbicide applied) has:

Ash saplings

Rough Meadow-grass

Annual Meadow-grass

Creeping Soft-grass

Creeping Bent

Perennial Rye-grass

Yorkshire Fog

Red Fescue

Herb Robert

Wood Avens

White Clover

Smooth Sow-thistle

Dandelion

Broad-leaved Willowherb

Wall Speedwell

American Willowherb (Alien - Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain)

Pineappleweed (Alien - Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain)

H The gravel garden is mostly stone - here and there a few wild plants can be found:

A small Goat Willow grows into the gravel garden from the flats' lawned area. No BNG value.

A small Sycamore grows into the gravel garden from the flats' lawned area. No BNG value.

Ivy-leaved Toadflax (LF) (Alien - Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain)

Herb Robert

Groundsel (VO)

Bramble

Cleavers

Wood Avens

Great Willowherb

I No one tends the single circular raised brick edged flower bed. It has:

Field Horsetail (A)

Broad-leaved Dock

Dandelion

Herb Robert

Broad-leaved Willowherb

Curled Dock (R)

Wood Avens

Short-fruited Willowherb

Creeping Buttercup

Wavy Bitter-cress

Groundsel

American Willowherb (Alien - Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain)

Ivy-leaved Toadflax (Alien - Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain)

J The concrete base to the steel paladin fence has masses of small low mosses growing from it including:

Brachythecium rutabulum Moss

Bryum capillare Moss

Bryum argenteum Moss

Ceratodon purpureum Moss

Didymodon insulans Moss

K The Infant Street pavement within the application area has the following pavement edge plants:

Annual Meadow-grass

Annual Pearlwort (R)
 Thale Cress
 Common Mouse-ear
 Biting Stonecrop (R)
 Wood Avens
 Hoary willowherb
 Short-fruited Willowherb
 Groundsel
 Wall Speedwell
 Herb Robert
 Shepherd's-purse (Alien - Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain)
 Ivy-leaved Toadflax (Alien - Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain)
 American Willowherb (Alien - Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain)
 Canadian Fleabane (VO) (Alien - Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain)
Marchantia polymorpha Liverwort (R)

4.5 Fungi. The lawn area had a number of the common Mowers Mushroom *Panaeolus foenisecii*. As this is a created lawn on a demolition site it will not be of value to Waxcap CHEGD fungi species.

4.6 Invertebrates. All species/taxa encountered are common as the habitat, basically a garden, is common in the area and the UK.

Woodlice, Slugs, a Ground Beetle, a Rove Beetle, Worms, Centipedes, Garden Snail and Spiders were found under debris along the north boundary. Black Ants were disturbed in the pavement cracks. Of most interest was the 13mm wide Glass Snail *Oxychilus draparnaudi*, which may be an increasing alien species, and *Arcitalitrus dorrieni* an alien Landhopper.

4.7 Fish and amphibians. There are no waterbodies on site and no amphibians were found under debris. There are no ponds on Ordnance Survey maps within 500m metres and there are many barriers to amphibian dispersal. Amphibian distribution is well understood in Bury.

4.8 Reptiles. Nothing seen under debris and the habitat structure is wrong. Reptiles (other than dumped Terrapins) are virtually unknown in Bury District (and are unconfirmed where such vague records exist).

4.9 Breeding, wintering and migratory birds. There appears to be no potential bird nesting habitat on site, although typically a local authority will apply a planning condition to the removal of trees in order to protect nesting birds. A female Blackbird was seen passing across the site from Heaton Park, maybe to some of the mature gardens to the west. Heaton Park will draw any migrating or wintering birds away from this spot.

4.10 Bats. There are no trees or structures on site that could be used by hibernating or roosting Bats. The Silver Birch tree is free of Ivy and appears sound. The plot is potentially part of the

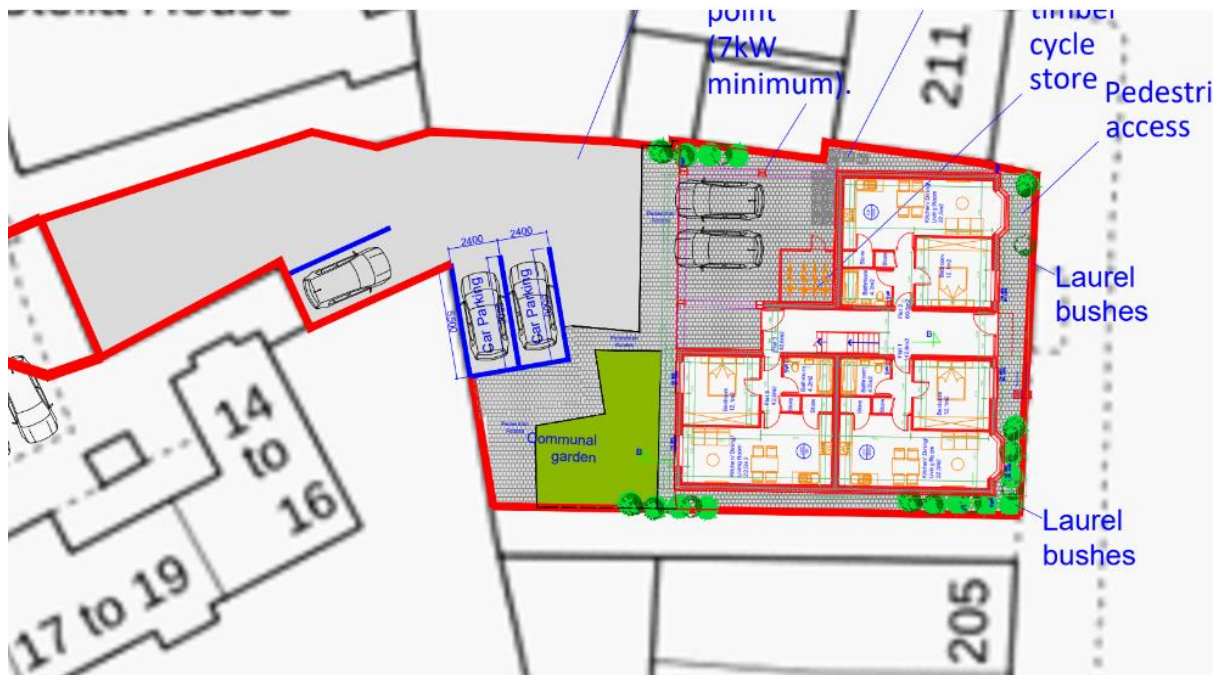
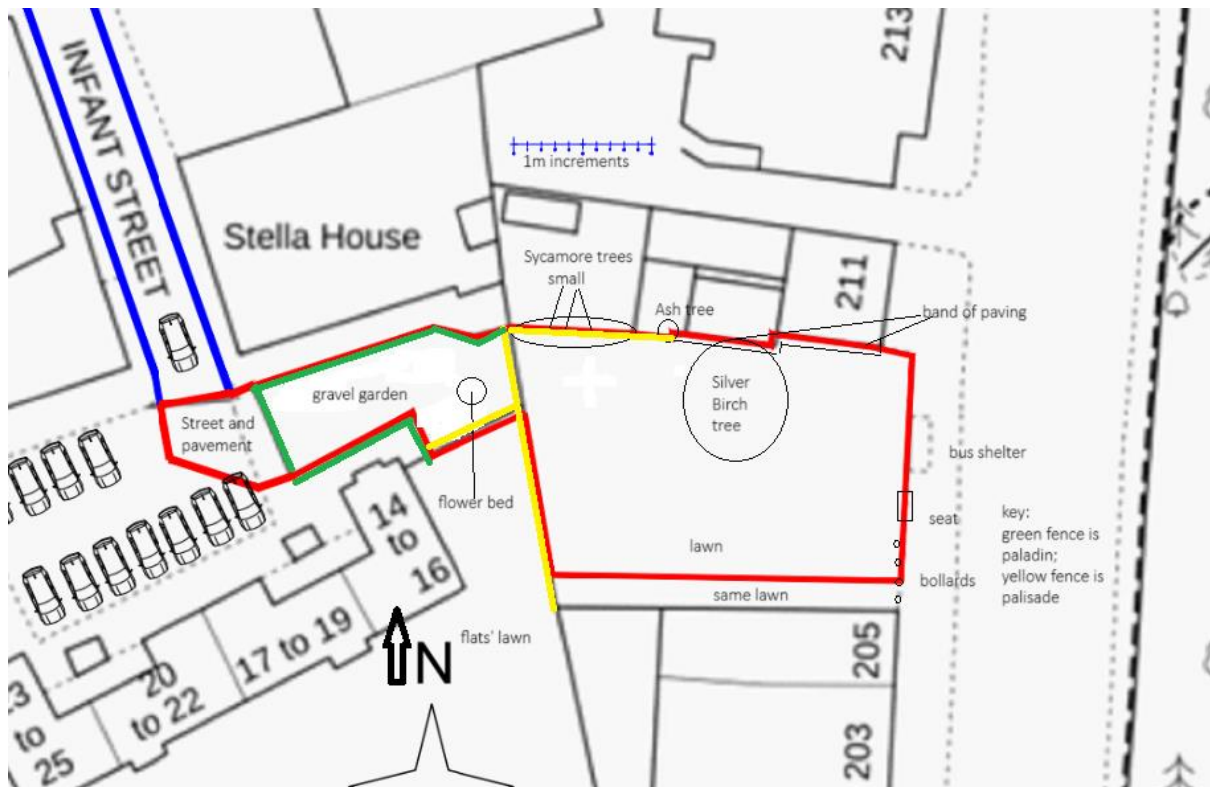
local feeding mosaic available to Bats but the value is negligible compared with the habitats in Heaton Park. Managed lawns typically produce fewer insects upon which bats can feed than long grassland.

- 4.11 Mammals.** The NBN Atlas has records of Hedgehogs in the wider area. Hedgehogs are a Red Data Near Threatened Section 41 Priority Species of Principal Importance and the Local Planning authority has a legal Biodiversity Duty to seek to conserve the species. There are no potential Hedgehog shelter sites in the site. No Hedgehog droppings were found.
- 4.12 There are no Schedule 9 alien invasive plants.** Those alien species that are present are not considered detrimentally invasive.
- 4.13 Priority Habitats nearby.** MAGIC Map and the Priority Habitats Inventory shows Woodland Priority Habitat as near as 44m to the northwest over Whittaker Lane south of Metrolink, and also to the north east 51 m away in Heaton Park over Metrolink, and just across the main road the vast expanse of Wood Pasture and Parkland Priority Habitat of Heaton Park. The area of Heaton Park opposite was for decades a large site of post-war temporary housing now returned to grassland. There appears very little linkage between these Priority Habitats and the application site.

5 DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

- 5.1** If the site is to be developed it appears from the Small Sites Matrix that there needs to be an off-site solution for Biodiversity Net Gain for the deficit. The site is not a Priority Habitat, Irreplaceable Habitat, SBI, Wildlife Corridor or Feature of Ecological Value. Total BNG trees to be removed within the site is 1 Medium and 6 Small.
- 5.2** From The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide February 2024: "Principle 2 The use of this biodiversity metric does not override existing biodiversity protections, statutory obligations, policy requirements, ecological mitigation hierarchy or any other requirements. This includes consenting or licensing processes, for example woodlands"
- 5.3** A suitable planning condition is best applied in relation to clearing of the trees on site and on the boundary, in respect of nesting birds. Should lawn and boundary management cease and the grassland become tall and unmanaged then the planning condition would need to relate to all tall vegetation that might house nesting birds.
- 5.4** On balance there is no need for a planning condition in relation to Hedgehogs.
- 5.5** Boltonandburyswifts@outlook.com are happy to advise regarding the new British Standard BS42021 which recommends 1 Swift Brick (universal brick to be used by Sparrows too) per 1 residential property. Some local planning authorities seek new builds have such installed via planning conditions.
- 5.6** The architect's drawing provided shows the planting of new Laurel Hedges and these, though not native, can provide dense, evergreen foliage for use by nesting Blackbirds and other small birds.

Habitat Survey Map:

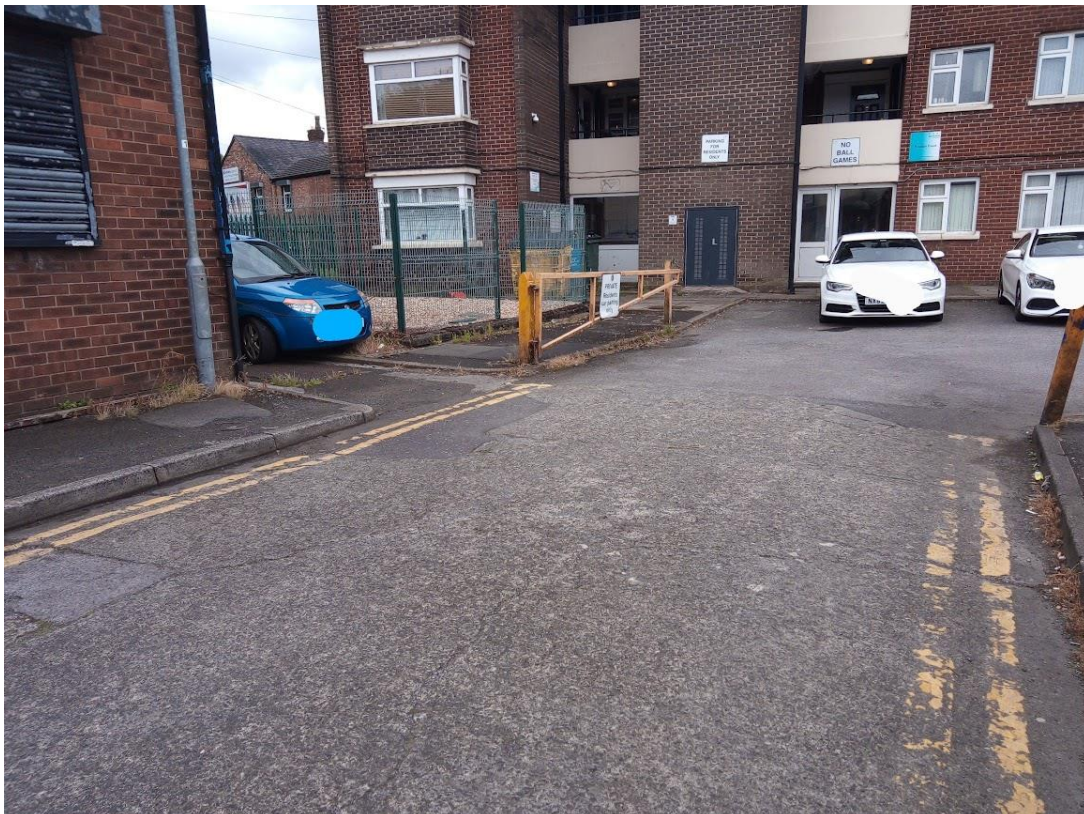


Above. Completed development with communal garden and laurel bushes in short hedges around perimeter.

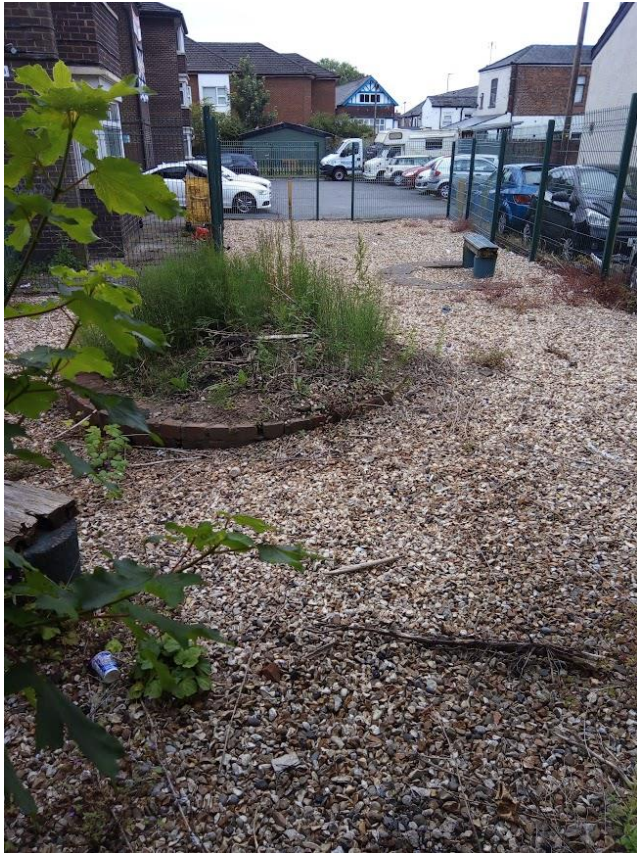
Below are photographs of the habitats on the combined site



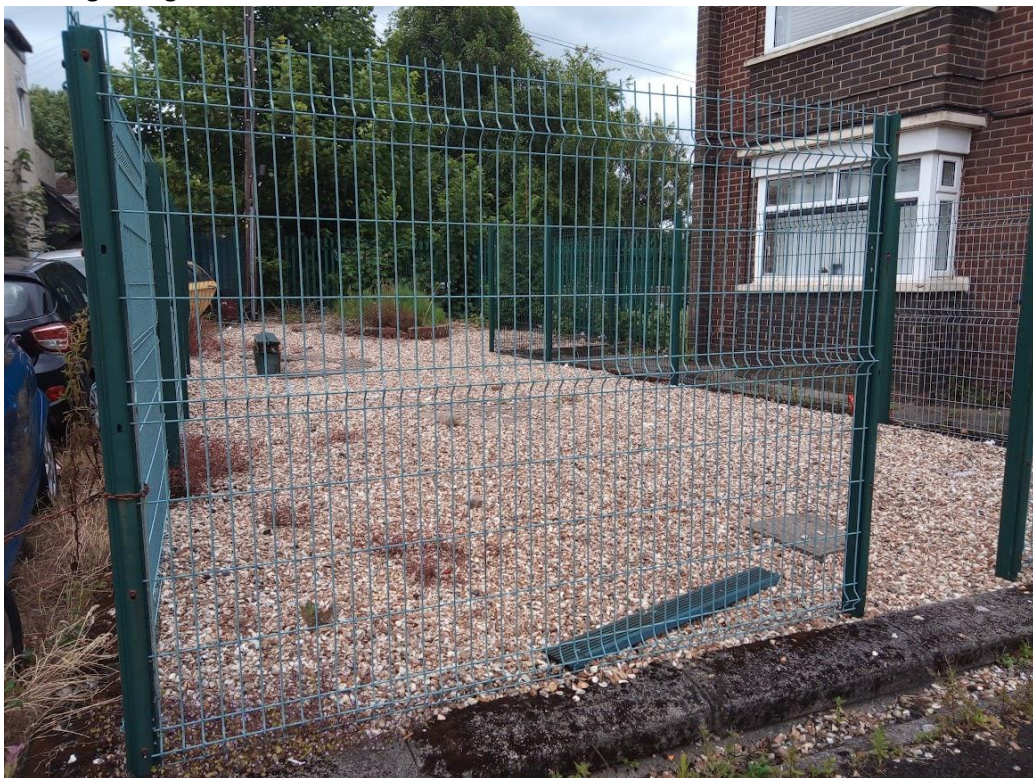
Above Infant Street pavement



Above Infant Street



Above gravel garden and circular flowerbed



Above gravel garden



Above Silver Birch Medium Tree



Above Row of Sycamore growing through NW boundary fence. Small Trees.



Above west boundary of lawn area with Sycamores (Small trees)



Above NW boundary of lawn area



Above north west boundary of lawn area



Above lawn area from southwest corner



Above Lawn area from north east corner (and bench)



Above sick Ash tree just outside site

END