



Levenshulme Service Station Cringle Road, Manchester

Ecological Assessment Report

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Kingdom Ecology have carried out an Ecological Assessment of an approximately 0.2ha area of land located adjacent to Levenshulme Service Station at the corner of Cringle Road and Stockport Road, Levenshulme, Manchester, M19 2RE (National Grid Reference SJ 8780 9340).

Survey has been carried out as part of a proposed planning application to extend the service station with new jet wash bays, car charging bays works compounds and electricity substation. The location of the study site is shown on Figure 1 in the Appendix. The purpose of the assessment was to identify any potential ecological constraints to the proposed development.

Field survey was undertaken on the 2nd November 2021. Surveys were carried out by Richard Roe (BSc, MSc, MIEEM, CEnv). Richard has extensive experience of undertaking protected species, habitat and botanical surveys as a professional ecological consultant with over twenty years' experience.

1.2 Purpose of Report

This report provides and outlines the findings of the field survey undertaken in November 2021.

Surveys aimed to identify habitats and species which are either of importance in terms of their conservation value or are afforded statutory legal protection. The presence of such habitats or species would form a material consideration during the planning process and could pose a constraint to the redevelopment of the site.

The field surveys comprised of an ecological walkover survey with a search for habitats that could support any protected species.

Following a description of the survey findings and an evaluation of habitats at the site, the report goes on to make recommendations for further works, mitigation and ecological enhancement measures where relevant.

1.3 Relevant Legislation

1.3.1 Birds

All wild birds in England and Wales are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird, or take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or its eggs.

1.3.2 Bats

All British bat species are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and through their inclusion in Schedule II of the Habitats Regulations 2010 which transpose Annex II of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora ("EC Habitats Directive") which defines European protected species of animals.

British bats species are afforded further protection by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Taken together, this legislation makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture bats.
- Deliberately disturb bats, whether at roost or not.
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to bat roosts.
- Possess or transport bats, unless acquired legally.
- Sell, barter or exchange bats.

A bat roost is interpreted as "any structure or place, which any wild bat uses for shelter or protection." (Bat Conservation Trust 2016¹). A bat roost is protected whether or not bats are present at the time.

All species of British bat are considered a European Protected Species (EPS). The Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations (2010) provide derogation against certain offences which could potentially affect an EPS through the EPS Licensing system.

¹ Bat Conservation Trust (2016) 'Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines 3rd Edition'

2 Field Survey Methods

2.1 Survey Aims and Objectives

The survey aim was to assess the site as to its ecological importance by assessing the value of habitats and their suitability to support any protected or notable species. The purpose of this was to highlight any ecological constraints associated with future development proposals.

Field survey comprised of an ecological walkover survey, this included an assessment of habitats at the site in terms of their suitability to support any other protected species including breeding birds and roosting bats.

Species that are considered unlikely to be significantly affected by the proposed development, even if known to be present in the general vicinity, were 'scoped out' of the assessment.

2.2 Survey Methods

2.2.1 Ecological Walkover Survey

An Ecological Walkover of the site was undertaken on the 2nd November 2021. Survey was carried out following standard methodologies as described in the '*Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey - a technique for environmental audit*' (JNCC, 2004²).

The aims of the Habitat Assessment were to:

- identify and map all areas of semi-natural habitat within the study area;
- provide a botanical description of the semi-natural habitats surveyed;
- identify areas or habitats that are of particular ecological interest for nature conservation and which require more detailed investigation;
- provide additional information regarding incidental observations of protected species and the potential of habitats to support such species.

² JNCC (2004) '*Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey - a technique for environmental audit*'

A habitat map was produced and lists of dominant or notable vascular plant species were recorded in each of the major habitat types where relevant.

2.2.2 Bat Tree Scoping Survey

A visual inspection of trees present was made to assess their bat roosting potential. The inspection was made from ground level during daylight conditions using binoculars and a high-powered torch to assess the potential of any cracks and holes to support bat roosts, and to search for evidence of bat use such as droppings, scratch marks, staining etc. The survey was undertaken on the 2nd November 2021.

In addition to identifying actual bat roosts the surveys also aimed to assess the suitability of the trees to support bats and consequently the likelihood of a bat roost being present that did not exhibit obvious field signs.

Roost suitability was assessed by examining structural features and surrounding habitat. Structural features that could influence the suitability of a tree to support roosting bats include:

- frost cracks
- trunk and branch splits
- woodpecker holes
- rot holes where branches have been removed
- hollow sections of trunk, branches and roots
- loose bark
- cavities beneath old root buttresses and coppice stools
- dense ivy
- bat or bird boxes

Important habitat features surrounding individual trees, which could influence roost potential include; whether the trees are in a semi-rural or parkland location, proximity to a significant linear feature (e.g. watercourse, mature hedgerow, wooded lane) or proximity to known bat roosts etc.

3 Survey Results

3.1 Site Description

The study area comprises of a triangular patch of land located adjacent to the existing Levenshulme Shell and Londis Service Station. The A6 Stockport Road runs along the western boundary of the site whilst Cringle Road forms the eastern boundary. The existing service station forecourt forms the southern boundary.

The site principally comprises of mown amenity grassland with scattered urban/street trees. There is also a patch of ornamental shrubbery located alongside the edge of the service station forecourt. The site measures approximately 0.2ha in area.

The site is located within a highly urbanised setting alongside the busy A6 Stockport Road. Immediate adjacent habitats comprise of terraced, residential housing and shops with associated small gardens and yards. There are allotments located 50m to the north of the site behind Cringle Road and Highfield Country Park is located approximately 200m to the east of the site.

The site itself is isolated from other areas of greenspace by the surrounding roads and buildings. The site location is shown on Figure 1 in the Appendix. Habitats identified at the site are described below.

3.1.1 Habitats

Habitats recorded at the study site are shown on Photographs and Target Noted on Figure 2 in the Appendix.

The site itself comprises principally of mown, amenity grassland with scattered semi-mature urban trees comprising of 2 x silver birch, 2 x maple, 2 x ash, 1 x hawthorn, 1 x willow, 1 x cherry and 1 x semi-mature oak (Target Note 3 on Figure 2).

The grassland (Target Note 1 on Figure 2) is dominated by perennial rye-grass with occasional white clover, dandelion, creeping buttercup and ribwort plantain.

There is a patch of ornamental shrubbery with further tree planting located on the edge of the forecourt (Target Note 2) comprising of *Viburnum*, *Berberis* and laurel with willow, cherry and 8 x young birch trees.

The development proposals would result in the loss of the majority of the amenity grassland habitat, ornamental shrubbery and all trees apart from a maple on Cringle Road and two ash trees on Stockport Road.

None of the habitats within the site are considered to be of any particular botanical interest.

No evidence of non-native invasive species (e.g. Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam etc) was identified at the site.

3.1.2 Protected Species

The trees and shrubbery at the site could support nesting birds during the breeding bird season.

The trees were assessed as to their suitability to support roosting bats. None of the trees support any suitable bat roosting features (cavities, deep knot holes, splits, significant areas of lifting bark etc) and so it is considered to be very unlikely that any bats would be roosting at the site.

There is a semi-mature cherry tree at Target Note 3 which was observed to support some shallow wounds where limbs have been pruned but these do not provide suitable bat roosting opportunities as they are too shallow and too exposed.

It is considered very unlikely that the site supports any other protected species.

4 Evaluation and Recommendations

4.1 Summary

4.1.1 Habitats

The study site comprises of a triangular patch of amenity land located adjacent to the existing Levenshulme Shell Station and between the A6 Stockport Road and Cringle Road.

The site is located within the centre of Levenshulme and is isolated from other areas of greenspace by surrounding busy roads and buildings .

The land measures approximately 0.2ha in area and principally comprises of mown amenity grassland with scattered semi-mature urban trees of various species including ash, oak, cherry, maple and birch.

The habitats present are largely considered to be of limited biodiversity value. However, the semi-mature trees, whilst not of any significant botanical value, could offer some suitable refuge and foraging habitats to local wildlife including common invertebrates and birds.

The development proposals would result in the loss of the majority of the amenity grassland habitat, ornamental shrubbery and all trees apart from a maple on Cringle Road and two ash trees on Stockport Road.

4.2 Protected Species

4.2.1 Birds

The trees and shrubbery present could support nesting birds during the breeding bird season.

All wild birds in England and Wales are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird, or take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or its eggs.

Removal of any tall vegetation should be timed to avoid the breeding season (March-August inclusive).

Where this is not possible, a check for breeding birds should be carried by an appropriately qualified ecologist no more than 48 hours prior to the start of vegetation clearance works. If any nesting birds are found to be present, destruction of the nesting site will need to wait until the ecologist can confirm that all young birds have fledged.

4.2.2 Bats

The trees at the site are not considered to support any suitable features for roosting bats.

Nevertheless, it is recommended that care is taken during any felling works. If any bats or evidence of bat roosting activity is found, work should immediately stop and a licensed bat worker should be contacted for further advice.

4.2.3 Other Protected Species

The site is considered unlikely to support any other protected species.

4.3 Ecological Recommendations

Paragraph 175d of the National Planning Policy Framework states that 'opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged'.

It is therefore recommended that opportunities to enhance the ecological value of the development area are taken.

4.3.1 Plants for Pollinators and Birds

The development proposals should also aim to maximise the biodiversity of any landscaping proposals at the site.

The development will comprise of an extension to the existing service station with new jet wash bays, car charging bays works compounds and electricity substations.

However, the development may also include additional new landscaping. It is recommended that new planting includes species which can provide nectar sources for insects and berries/fruits for invertebrates and birds.

The following small/medium sized tree species are recommended as they offer suitable foraging opportunities to various native wildlife (including birds and invertebrates): rowan, wild cherry, crab apple, silver birch, holly, and willow.

Areas of new shrubbery should include suitable nectar sources for insects. The Royal Horticultural Society provides a list of suitable plants for invertebrates (see rhs.org.uk/plantsforpollinators). It is recommended that this list is consulted when producing detailed landscaping designs for the site.

5 Appendix

Photograph 1 - Existing Service Station forecourt



Photograph 2 - Grassland habitats at Target Note 1



Photograph 3 - Trees at Target Note 3



Photograph 4 - Ornamental shrubbery at Target Note 2



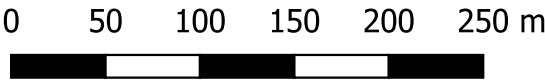
**FIGURE 1-
Site Location**



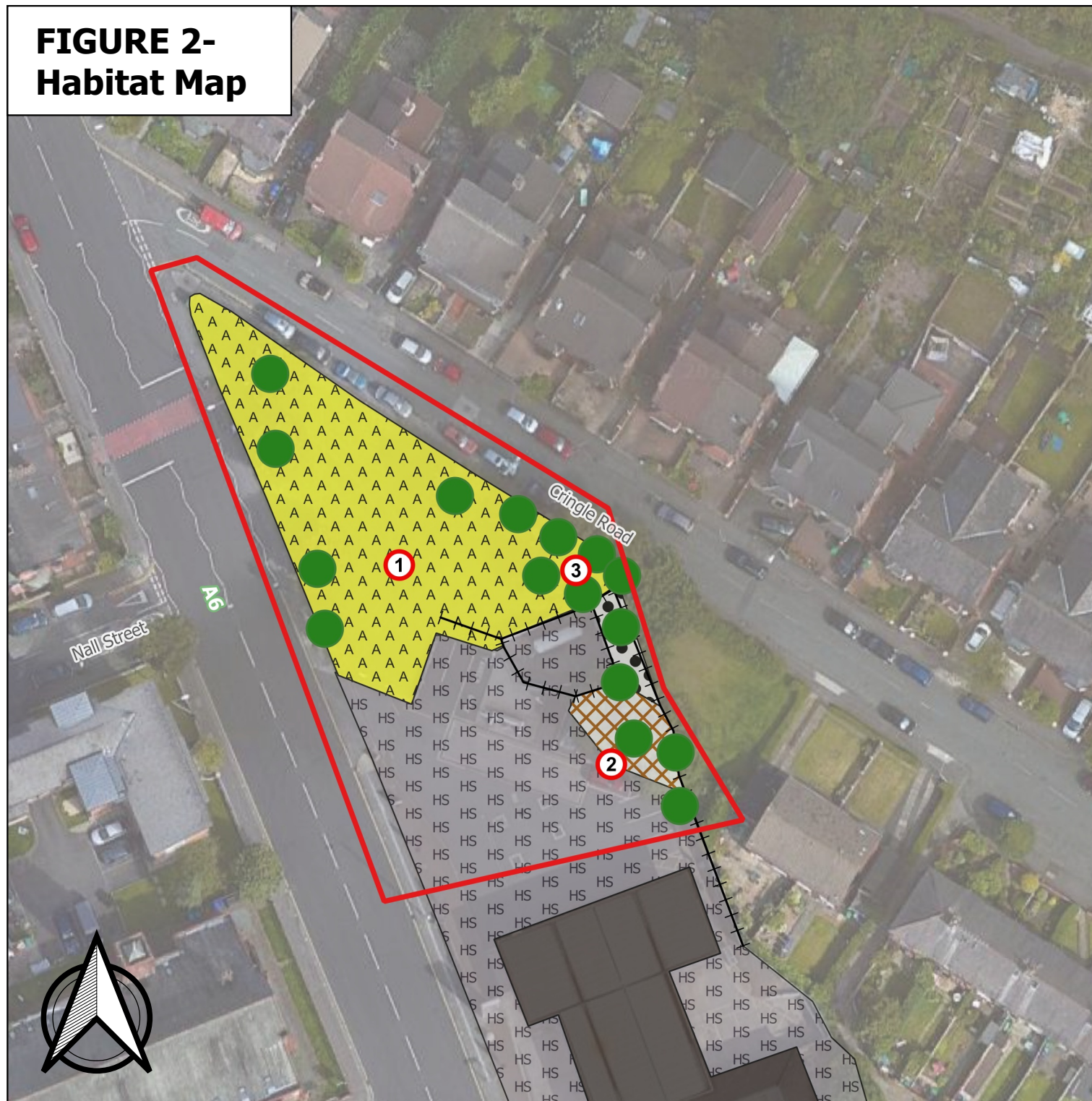
KEY



Study Site



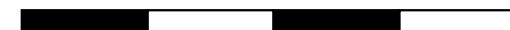
**FIGURE 2-
Habitat Map**



KEY

-  Study Site
-  Target Note
-  Tree
-  Fence
-  Amenity grassland
-  Introduced shrub
-  Bare ground
-  Hardstanding
-  Building

0 10 20 30 40 m



Map data ©2021 Google