

Former Burnage Cricket Club
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

2025

Client	Views Holdings Ltd
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Executive Summary

Development Details

The client is proposing residential development at the Former Burnage Cricket Club, Manchester, hereafter referred to as the 'site'.

This report describes the ecological features of the site and its surroundings and assesses the potential impacts of the development on the ecological interest. Recommendations are provided so that the development is compliant with biodiversity policy and legislation.

Ecological Interest

The site has a low level of ecological interest. Suitable habitat for nesting birds and Hedgehog is present.

Baseline habitats score 2.43 habitat units and 0.12 hedgerow units.

Outcomes

Proposed habitats are predicted to deliver 1.4 habitat units **(-42.57%)** and 2.02 hedgerow units **(+1557.2%)**. No specific mitigation is required for habitat loss, but to demonstrate 10% Biodiversity Net Gain will require offsetting. The applicant will purchase units from a third-party provider. Measures to avoid impacts to birds and mammals are outlined. Enhancement opportunities are identified.



1. Introduction

1.1 Project Brief

- 1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2024 by Views Holdings Ltd to carry out an ecological appraisal of land at the Former Burnage Cricket Club, Kingsway, Burnage, hereafter referred to as the 'site'. The site is located at O.S. grid reference: SJ 863 929 (386372, 392908) (see Figure 1).



Figure 1 Site location (Bing Maps)

Description of Development

- 1.1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application for a Residential Development with associated access, infrastructure and landscaping.

Relevant Planning History

- 1.1.3 No previous ecology surveys have been undertaken and no previous planning applications were identified on Manchester City Council's planning portal.

1.2 Scope of Work

- 1.2.1 The Client commissioned Rachel Hacking Ecology to carry out the following works:
- Record the extent, type, and condition of habitats within and next to the site
 - Calculate the baseline biodiversity units
 - Search for signs of protected species and assessment of the potential of habitats and features to support protected and notable species

1.3 Site Visit Information

Surveyor Details

- 1.3.1 Simon Holden *MCIEEM* (Associate Ecologist) visited the site on 2nd July 2024. Simon has 19 years' professional experience.

Weather

- 1.3.2 The weather at the time of the survey was dry and still and approximately 15°C.



2. Methods

2.1 Desk Study

- 2.1.1 The Magic website (Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside) was interrogated for the presence of Statutory Designated Sites within a 2km radius of the site
- 2.1.2 The site was checked to determine if it is located within an Impact Risk Zone of any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and if so, whether the Local Planning Authority will need to consult Natural England.
- 2.1.3 Local Planning Authority (LPA) Policy maps were interrogated for the locations of non-statutory designated sites.

2.2 Field Survey

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.2.1 In accordance with JNCC guidelines¹ the site was walked over and the habitats and features of ecological interest were mapped and described. Habitats and features of particular interest were target noted.
- 2.2.2 During the walkover habitat and features were assessed for their suitability to support protected and notable species in accordance with CIEEM guidelines². Field signs of protected, notable, and invasive non-native species, if encountered, were mapped, and described.

Bats

- 2.2.3 The exterior of the buildings on site was surveyed from the ground using binoculars and a high-powered torch. Features offering potential access to roosting bats were recorded. Such features may include suitable gaps in roof coverings, gaps behind external cladding/facia and gaps in masonry.
- 2.2.4 Evidence indicating the presence of roosting bats was also searched for. This may include bat droppings on walls, windows or on the ground below roost entrances or staining from fur oil around roost entry points.

¹ JNCC (2010). *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A Technique for Environmental Audit*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough

² CIEEM (2017). *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

- 2.2.5 Any trees on the site that are to be affected by the proposals were given a ground-level assessment, searching for Potential Roosting Features (PRFs), such as flaking bark, woodpecker holes, knot holes and limb splits.

2.3 Biodiversity Net Gain

- 2.3.1 During the site walkover the ecological condition of each habitat was assessed in accordance with the Defra (2023) guidelines³. Habitat types recorded and mapped during the field survey were converted from the JNCC system to the UK Habitat Classification system⁴.
- 2.3.2 Habitat data including type, area (or length), condition and strategic location were uploaded to the Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculator spreadsheet to determine the baseline value of the site.
- 2.3.3 The post-development value was calculated by inputting data from the landscape proposals.

2.4 Mitigation Hierarchy

- 2.4.1 Mitigation measures should be embedded within the site layout design and planning application process. Measures during the construction phases should be included in a Construction Environmental Management Plan: Biodiversity (CEMP). This process from proposal to implementation needs to consider the 'mitigation hierarchy' of avoid, reduce, compensate, and enhance:
- Aim to avoid negative effects through the design process.
 - Mitigate if negative effects cannot be avoided.
 - Use compensation measures to offset residual impacts.
 - Identify and implement opportunities to enhance biodiversity.

³ Defra (2023) The Statutory Biodiversity Metric: User Guide (draft). November 2023.

⁴ Butcher, B., Carey, P., et al. (2020). UK Habitat Classification – Habitat Definitions V1.1. at <http://UKhab.org>

3. Results

3.1 Survey Constraints

- 3.1.1 Field survey results are valid for a limited duration and no investigation can provide a complete description and characterisation of a site. The composition of habitats and species can change depending on environmental variables and the mobility of species, so the results of a study become less reliable over time. In some cases, surveys that are 3 years old may be acceptable for a project assuming that habitats have not significantly changed in the intervening period, but for protected species it is likely that survey data will need to be no more than 18 months old.
- 3.1.2 No internal access was made into the building as it was currently occupied. It is possible that evidence indicating use by bats was present but went unrecorded.

3.2 Designated Sites

- 3.2.1 No statutory or non-statutory designated sites were identified within 1km.
- 3.2.2 The site is not located within an Impact Risk Zone.

3.3 Habitats

- 3.3.1 Target Notes are provided at Appendix 2 and the habitats survey plan is contained in Appendix 3.
- [Amenity Grassland](#)
- 3.3.2 Dominant species comprise Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus*, Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, and White Clover *Trifolium repens* (see Photograph 1). This habitat is in poor condition as it contains less than 6 species per m². It scores 1.66 habitat units.
- 3.3.3 Minor areas of tall ruderal herb and scattered scrub are present around the boundaries and in small mounds. These comprise common species including Common Nettle *Urtica dioica*, Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg..



Photograph 1 showing the amenity grassland from a drone

Ephemeral/Short Perennial

- 3.3.4 A small area of bare ground is colonised by ephemeral species including Black Medick *Medicago lupulina*, Goldmoss Stonecrop *Sedum acre*, Ribwort Plantain, Cat's-ear *Hypochaeris radicata*, and Common Ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris* (see Photograph 2). This habitat is in moderate condition as it fails the structural diversity criterion and scores 0.29 habitat units.



Photograph 2 showing ephemeral vegetation

Ornamental Hedgerow

- 3.3.5 A line of mature Leylandii *Cupressus x leylandii* trees are present along the southeast boundary with Mauldeth Road (see Photograph 3). Small lengths of Cherry Laurel planting are also present. These are classed as non-native ornamental hedgerows. This habitat is of very low distinctiveness and scores 0.16 hedgerow units.



Photograph 3 showing Leylandii along the southeastern boundary

Buildings & Hardstanding

- 3.3.6 Two buildings are present within the site. B1 is a large, detached structure with rendered walls and a predominantly flat roof (see Photograph 4). B2 is a timber outdoor bar. Hardstanding is present around the buildings. Buildings and hardstanding are classed as Developed land; sealed surface in the metric. These habitats score zero habitat units.



Photograph 4 showing B1 (on right) and B2 (on left)



Figure 5 showing B2

3.4 Species

Amphibians

- 3.4.1 There are no ponds within 250m of the site. There is negligible potential for Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* to be present. Amphibians are unlikely to be present and are not considered further.

Birds

- 3.4.2 The hedgerows on site offer suitable habitat for nesting birds. B2 could be used by nesting birds, although no evidence of this was recorded.

Badger

- 3.4.3 No evidence of Badger was recorded during the survey. The amenity grassland offers suitable foraging habitat.

Bats

- 3.4.4 B1 appears well maintained and no suitable features for roosting bats were recorded. Occasional gaps around the roof of B2 were inspected closely and no evidence of use by bats was recorded. The buildings on site offer negligible potential to support roosting bats.
- 3.4.5 None of the trees on site offer potential to support roosting bats due to the absence of suitable features.
- 3.4.6 Small numbers of common species may forage along the site boundaries, but the site is in an urban location and offers low quality foraging habitat.

Hedgehog

- 3.4.7 Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* faeces were recorded on the amenity grassland. The site is likely to be used for foraging and commuting by Hedgehogs, which may also shelter on site.

3.5 Invasive Non-native Species

- 3.5.1 No species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were recorded.
Invasive non-native species are not considered further.



4. Assessment

4.1 Development Context

- 4.1.1 The following assessment assumes that habitats on site are lost to facilitate a residential development. The Proposed Site Plan is provided at Appendix 3.

4.2 Impacts on Designated Sites

- 4.2.1 No impacts to any statutory or non-statutory designated sites are likely due to the absence of impact pathways.

4.3 Impacts on Habitats

- 4.3.1 The habitats on site are widespread and of low distinctiveness. Their loss would be significant at the site level only.

4.4 Biodiversity Net Gain

- 4.4.1 The Statutory Biodiversity Calculation Metric spreadsheet '*Former Burnage Cricket Club BNG Metric*' is provided separately and should be read in conjunction with this report. The baseline habitats score 2.43 habitat units and 0.12 hedgerow units.
- 4.4.2 Proposed habitats are predicted to deliver 1.4 habitat units (-42.57%) and 2.02 hedgerow units (+1557.2%).

4.5 Impacts on Species

Birds

- 4.5.1 Removal of hedgerows and B2 could impact on nesting birds, should they be present.

Badger

- 4.5.2 No direct impacts to Badger are anticipated. There is a very low risk of harm should a Badger access the construction zone.



Bats

- 4.5.3 No impacts to bats or their roosts are anticipated. The site is adjacent to a main road and no impacts to foraging or commuting bats are likely to result.

Hedgehog

- 4.5.4 Fencing around new houses could prevent Hedgehogs accessing foraging and shelter habitat. Hedgehogs could be harmed during site clearance, should they be present.



5. Recommendations

5.1 Further Surveys

- 5.1.1 No further surveys are required.

5.2 Mitigation and Enhancement Measures

- 5.2.1 Protection of ecological features (habitats and species) during the construction phase will be described in a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). Mitigation measures to protect, maintain and enhance ecological features during the operational phase of development will be described in a Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP). Management Plans will contain Operational Aims and Objectives, Rationale for management, Prescriptions and schedules detailing the timing and responsibility for delivering the prescriptions. It is anticipated that the CEMP and BMP will be secured as a planning condition in advance of the commencement of the proposed development.

5.3 Biodiversity Net Gain

- 5.3.1 The Statutory Biodiversity Calculation Metric spreadsheet 'Former Burnage Cricket Club BNG Metric' is provided separately and should be read in conjunction with this report. The baseline habitats score 2.43 habitat units and 0.12 hedgerow units.
- 5.3.2 Proposed habitats are predicted to deliver 1.4 habitat units (-42.57%) and 2.02 hedgerow units (+1557.2%).
- 5.3.3 It is not possible to achieve 10% Biodiversity Net Gain on site. To achieve this it will be necessary to obtain an additional 1.28 habitat units. These will be obtained by the purchase of off-site units from a third-party provider.

5.4 Notable Species

Birds

- 5.4.1 Impacts on nesting birds should be avoided by carrying out site clearance and similar operations outside of the bird breeding season (March- August). If vegetation has to be cleared during the bird breeding season checks immediately before clearance by a suitably qualified ecologist will be required. If nesting activity is detected work in that area will need to stop until the ecologist considers that nesting activity is finished.



- 5.4.2 The site could be enhanced for birds by including nesting features suitable for Swift *Apus apus* and House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* in the new houses.

Bats

- 5.4.3 The site could be enhanced for bats by including bat roosting features within the new houses. Bat boxes should be installed at eaves height, facing southeast to southwest but not directly above windows or doorways.

Mammals

- 5.4.4 To ensure that any mammals are not trapped or harmed during the construction work, smaller excavations should be covered if left overnight. Larger excavations, if left overnight or for longer periods, should be ramped to enable animals to escape.

Hedgehog

- 5.4.5 Site clearance will be undertaken carefully to avoid risk of harm to Hedgehog.
- 5.4.6 Hedgehog gaps should be incorporated within any new fencing to allow Hedgehogs to access and move through the site.



Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) describes the Government's planning policy for England and how it should be applied. Within this framework, the requirements in relation to biodiversity are included within several policies. The two most relevant to individual planning decisions are Paragraphs 180 and 186, shown below:

- 180. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
 - a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
 - b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
 - c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
 - d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
 - e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
 - f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
- 186. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:
 - a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;



- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

Legislation

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CROW Act 2000) includes the notification and confirmation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). SSSIs can be notified for their floral, faunal, geological, or physiographical features. Protection against damaging operations and management of SSSIs is also included within the Act. Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) are zones around an SSSI account for the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified and identify development proposal which could have adverse impacts.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CROW Act 2000) protects native animals, plants and habitats. Under the Act it is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild animal listed on Schedule 5 and it is an offence to interfere with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturb animals occupying such places. The Act prohibits picking, uprooting or destroy any wild plant (or any attached seed or spore) listed in Schedule 8.

European Protected Species (EPS) such as bats, Hazel Dormouse, Otter, Natterjack Toad, Smooth Snake, Sand Lizard and Great Crested Newt are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CROW Act 2000) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The Acts make it an offence to:

- a) Deliberately capture, injure or kill an EPS;
- b) Deliberately impair an EPS's ability to survive, breed, reproduce, rear or nurture young; to hibernate or migrate; or significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the EPS.



- c) Possess or control live or dead EPS or any part of, or anything derived from a EPS;
- d) Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of an EPS;
- e) Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place that is used for shelter or protection by an EPS;
- f) Intentionally or recklessly disturb a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection that is occupied by an EPS.

All common herptiles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CROW Act 2000). Grass Snake, Slow Worm, Common Lizard, Adder are protected against intentional killing or injury. Common Frog, Common Toad, Smooth Newt and Palmate Newt is protected against sale. In addition, all British reptiles, Common toad and Great Crested Newt are listed as Species of Principal Importance.

All nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage, or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb a species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act while they are nest building or at or near a nest with eggs or young, or to disturb the dependent young.

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 makes it an offence to wilfully, or to attempt to kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a Badger, or intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett. Interference of a sett includes disturbing badgers during occupation of a sett, or damaging or destroying a sett, or obstructing access to the sett.

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 places a duty on every public authority to have regard to conserving biodiversity. Section 41 of the same Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitats that are of 'Principal Importance' for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. The Secretary of State must take steps, as appear reasonably practicable, to further the conservation of those living organisms and habitats in any list published under this section. The list of species and habitats of principal importance currently includes 943 species and 56 habitats. These are the species and habitats found in England which are regarded as conservation priorities under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework

The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 protect 'important' hedgerows from destruction or damage. A hedgerow is 'important' if (a) has existed for 30 years or more; and (b) satisfies at least one of the criteria listed in Part II of Schedule 1 of the Regulations. Under the Regulations, it is against the law to remove or destroy 'important' hedgerows unless permitted by the local planning authority.



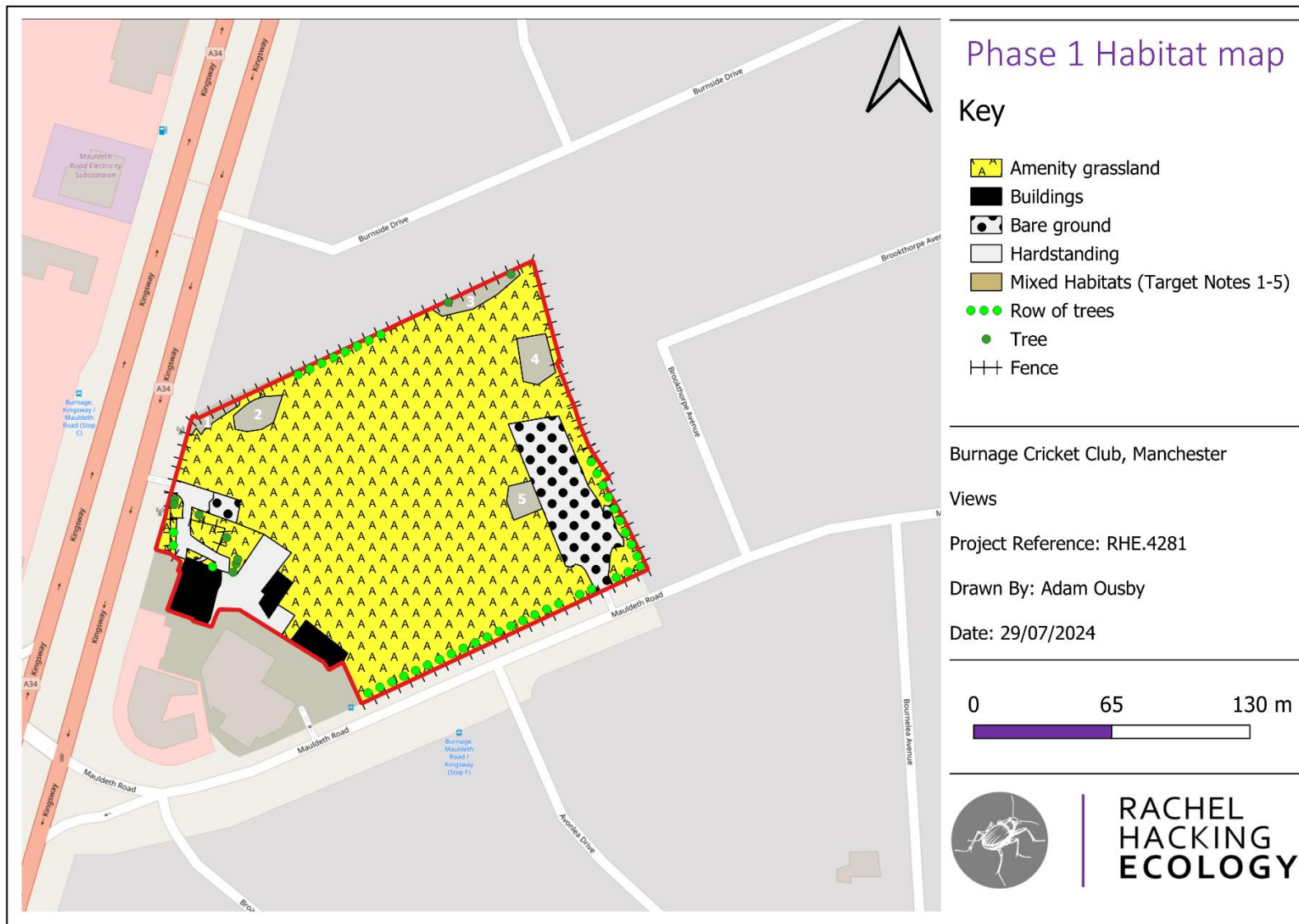
The Environment Bill 2021 makes it mandatory for housing and development, subject to some narrow exemptions, to achieve at least a 10% net gain in value for biodiversity – a requirement that habitats for wildlife must be left in a measurably better state than before the development. Developers must submit a ‘biodiversity gain plan’ alongside usual planning application documents. The local authority must assess whether the 10% net gain requirement is met in order to approve the biodiversity gain plan.

The Environment Bill 2021 strengthens the duty on public authorities (NERC Act, 2006) to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity.

The Environment Bill 2021 amends the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to introduce an additional purpose for granting a protected species licence in relation to development, ‘for reasons of overriding public interest’, and two additional tests for the granting of such licences: that there is ‘no other satisfactory solution’ and that granting the licence is ‘not detrimental to the survival of any the population of the species concerned’. These changes will reduce the scope for unlicensed activities to provide clear safeguards before licences can be granted, providing legal certainty and clarity to developers about their environmental obligations.



Appendix 2: Phase 1 Habitat Map



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