

AtkinsRéalis

Postal Street **Ecological Appraisal: 2025** **Update**

Final report

Prepared by LUC

March 2025



AtkinsRéalis

Postal Street
Ecological Appraisal: 2025 Update

Project Number
 13208

Version	Status	Prepared	Checked	Approved	Date
1.	Issue 01 – Update to the 2022 Assessment	E. Mayhead	S.Swindlehurst	S.Swindlehurst	20.02.2025
2.	Issue 02 – Client comments addressed	E. Mayhead	S. Swindlehurst	S. Swindlehurst	20.03.2025

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Project Background

1.1 LUC was previously appointed in March 2022 by Faithful and Gould (now AtkinsRéalis) to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain assessment for the proposed residential and commercial development on Postal Street in the Northern Quarter of Manchester City Centre. In August 2022, LUC was also appointed to carry out a nocturnal bat survey of the building on Site. The results of the PEA, BNG Assessment and nocturnal bat survey were reported within an Ecological Assessment report (LUC, 2022)¹.

1.2 LUC were contacted by AtkinsRéalis regarding the development site in October 2024. The scheme had been paused shortly after our assessment was undertaken in 2022 and the proposed development was not submitted to planning. Pre-construction works at the site resumed in 2024 and the car park and single-storey building (commercial units along Newton Street) was demolished in July 2024 under a Section 80 Demolition Notice.

1.3 LUC were appointed in December 2024 to carry out an updated ecological assessment to support submission to planning in 2025.

Site Description

1.4 The Site is located on Postal Street, in the Northern Quarter. The national grid reference for the site is SJ 84727 98449 with the nearest post code of M1 1EE. The Site is bound by Postal Street to the north-east, Newton Street to the north-west, Faraday Street to the south-west and Dean Street to the south-east (Site Location Plan, Appendix A).

1.5 In 2022, the Site comprised of a single storey building of commercial units, along Newton Street and a car park along Dean Street.

1.6 Since the car park and building were demolished in 2024, the Site now consists entirely of compacted hardstanding, bound by wooden hoarding and vehicle access gate.

¹ LUC (2022) Postal Street Ecological Assessment. October 2022. Project number 11990.

Proposed Development

1.7 The Postal Street development comprises a residential development which, will involve the construction of an eight story building. The project is being delivered by This City, a housing delivery vehicle owned by the Manchester City Council. The building will comprise a reception and commercial units on the ground floor, with seven floors above with apartments (Proposed Site Plan, POST-HBA-SW-00-DR-A-20-1002, Appendix B). The design provides 126 residential units. This consists of a mixture of one and two bedroom accommodation across 1 apartment block. There will also be secure cycle storage, and a communal area.

1.8 The current design reflects the recommendations of the 2022 LUC report. Landscape Plans for this assessment were provided by Re-Form Landscape Architecture. A green roof will sit in the centre of the building above the commercial units on the first floor (Landscape Plan, Appendix C). This will comprise a wildflower mix. .

1.9 Construction is programmed to take place between Spring 2026 – Autumn/winter 2027.

Policy and Legislation

1.10 This report has been prepared in accordance with relevant legislation and planning policy. The following documents are of particular relevance:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) by The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019;
- The Wildlife and Countryside (W&C) Act 1981 (as amended);
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2000 (as amended);
- Environment Act 2021;
- The National Planning Policy Framework (published 2024);
- Manchester City Council Local Plan²;
- The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan for Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan 2022 to 2039³ sets out the following Policy JP-G8: *A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity*, which requires

development to follow the mitigation hierarchy and deliver measurable net gains for biodiversity.

- Notably, the Planning and Infrastructure Bill was published on 11th March 2025, which proposes substantial changes to the planning system, with emphasis on a 'strategic' approach to delivering nature recovery within the next five years. Whilst the shape of, or route to enactment or policy change, is yet to be defined, site based ecological assessment is currently still required.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

1.11 Statutory BNG came into existence in February 2024, which requires all relevant development types to provide a minimum of 10% net gain in biodiversity⁴, with select exemptions. Postal Street is a development type which is exempt from delivering BNG, due to "De-minimis"⁵, which is described as follows:

A development that does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than:

- 25 square metres (5m by 5m) of on-site habitat
- 5 metres of on-site linear habitats such as hedgerows

1.12 The 'pre-development' Site does not contain any habitats, either at the 2022 baseline, nor in its current state (as of February 2025), therefore, the project is exempt from delivering BNG.

1.13 The proposed green roof and landscape plan will, however, provide a measurable enhancement to the baseline, as it will provide soft landscaping features of value to invertebrates. This is in line with The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Policy JP-G8. The landscape proposals are described within Chapter 4.

²

https://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/200074/planning/6572/local_plan

³

https://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/500113/city_centre_regeneration/8270/places_for_everyone

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>

Chapter 2

Methodology

2.1 The Ecological Assessment comprised of a habitat survey, utilising UK Habitat Classification.

UK Habitat Classification

2.2 Habitat mapping was undertaken across the Site in line with the new UK Habitat Classification System survey methodology⁶.

2.3 The survey was undertaken on 11th February 2025 by Sofie Swindlehurst BSc (Hons) MSc MCIEEM CEnv. Weather conditions during survey were dry, cool and slightly overcast.

⁶ Butcher, B., Carey, P., Edmonds, R., Norton, L. and Treweek, J. (2020). The UK Habitat Classification User Manual Version 1.1

Chapter 3

Results

3.1 The habitat plan and site photos are presented in Appendix D and Appendix E.

3.2 There were no habitats, or other features which could support ecology present within the Site. The Site comprised entirely of compacted hardstanding, with the exception of a small rubble pile in the north western corner. The rubble pile, less than 1m in height, was recently created and isolated from any other features of ecological value.

3.3 The site boundary was enclosed by wooden hoarding and metal mesh vehicle access gate.

Landscape Proposals

3.4 The current development proposal includes a green roof at the centre of the building on the first floor. The final rationalised landscape proposals (1196-RFM-XX-00-DR-L-9004-S2-P01-Level 1 podium Planting Strategy, Appendix C) set out to create a green roof comprising a large number of wildflower species (28 species) and annual plants with some grasses and sedums. The seed mix contains species selected for their ability to absorb pollution and CO₂ within urban environments, and provide nectar and pollen rich native plants to support pollinators.

3.5 The green roof will incorporate a mix of UK provenance wildflowers and mycorrhizal fungi to support grassland establishment.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

4.1 The proposed development will provide pollinator habitat within an otherwise heavily developed urban area. The wildflower mix proposed for the green roof, include a diverse mix of native and locally appropriate species that will provide seasonal interest. Collectively these offer nectar- and pollen-rich plants for invertebrates of the urban environment, which is a minor enhancement in respect of the baseline, which was entirely developed land.

Appendix A

Site Location Plan

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No implied licence exists. This drawing should not be used to calculate areas for the purposes of valuation. Do not scale this drawing. All dimensions to be checked on the site by the contractor and such dimensions to be their responsibility. All work must comply with relevant British Standards and Building Regulations requirements. Drawing errors and omissions to be reported to the architect. To be read in conjunction with Architect's specification and other consultant information.

Rev	Description	Date
P.1	Issued for information	06.01.25
P.2	Issued for information	07.01.25

26-28 Hilton Street
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Project
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Manchester
M1 2EH

Drawing
Proposed Site Plan

Scale @ A1 1 : 200	Date 06/01/2024
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Drawn By JD	Checked By EC
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Job Number 210258	Status S0	Purpose of Issue For Information
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Drawing No. POST-HBA-ZZ-00-DR-A-20-0001	Rev P.2
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Appendix B

Proposed Site Plan (POST-HBA-SW-00-DR-A-20-1002)

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Status codes:		
S1 - Suitable for Coordination		
S2 - Suitable for Information		
S3 - Suitable for Review & Comment		
S4 - Suitable for Review & Authorization		
S5 - Suitable for Review & Acceptance		
A/n - Approved & Accepted as Stage complete		
Rev	Description	Date
P01	Issued for Coordination	21.02.25
P02	Issued for Coordination	26.02.2025
P03	Issued for Planning Submission Review	28.02.25
P04	Issued For Planning Submission Review	19.03.25

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Project
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Drawing
Proposed Floor Plan - Ground
Floor

Scale @ A1
1 : 100

Date
19.03.25

Drawn By
HECW

Checked By
JT

Job Number
210258

Status
S2

Purpose of Issue
For Information

Drawing No.
POST-HBA-SW-00-DR-A-080100

Rev
P04

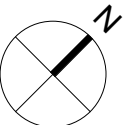
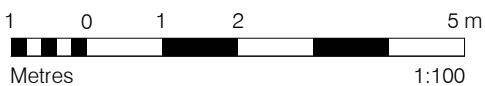


Legend

- 1B1P Apartment
- 1B2P Apartment
- 2B3P Apartment
- 2B4P Apartment
- Commercial Use
- Front of House
- Back of House

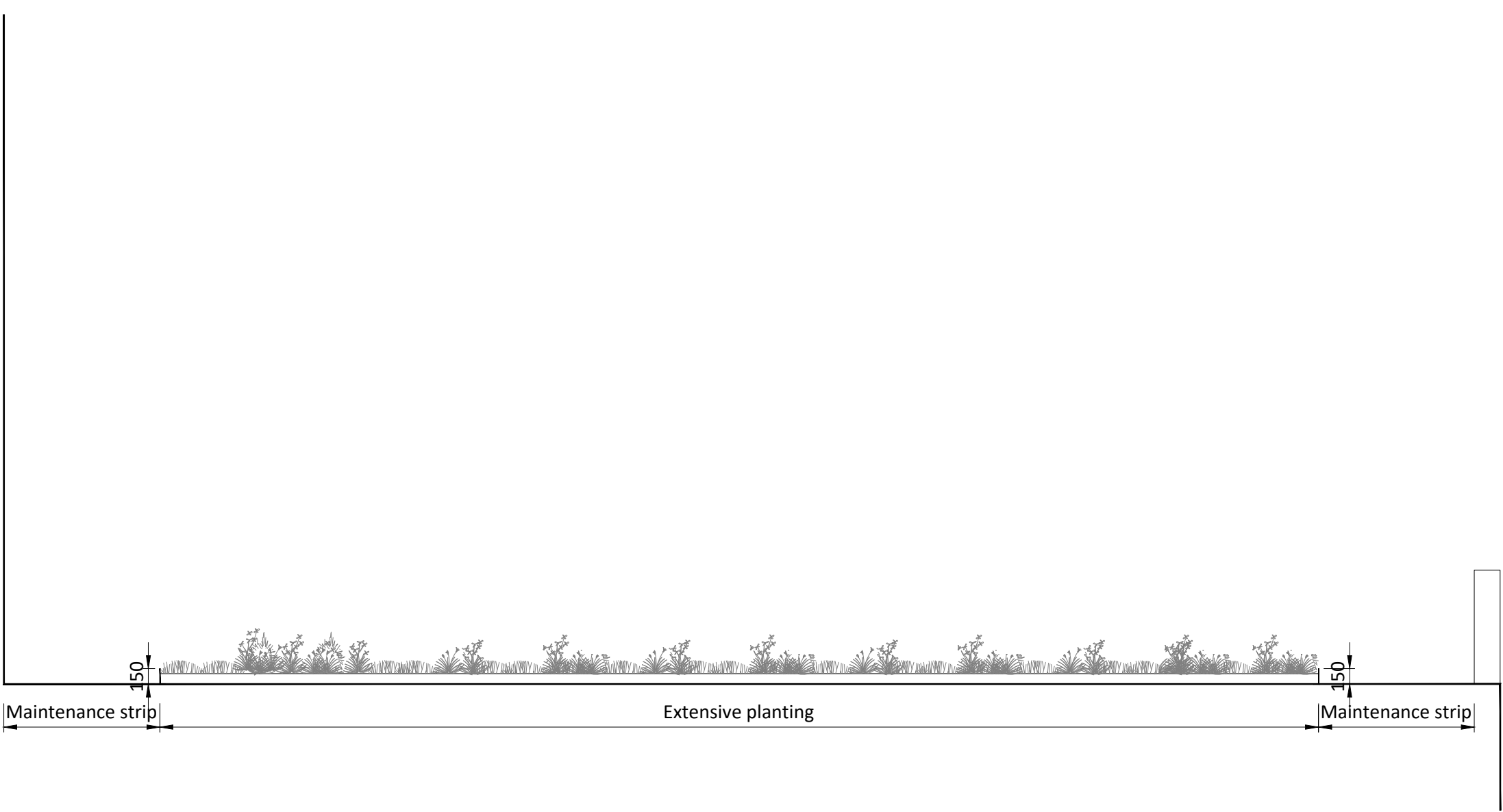
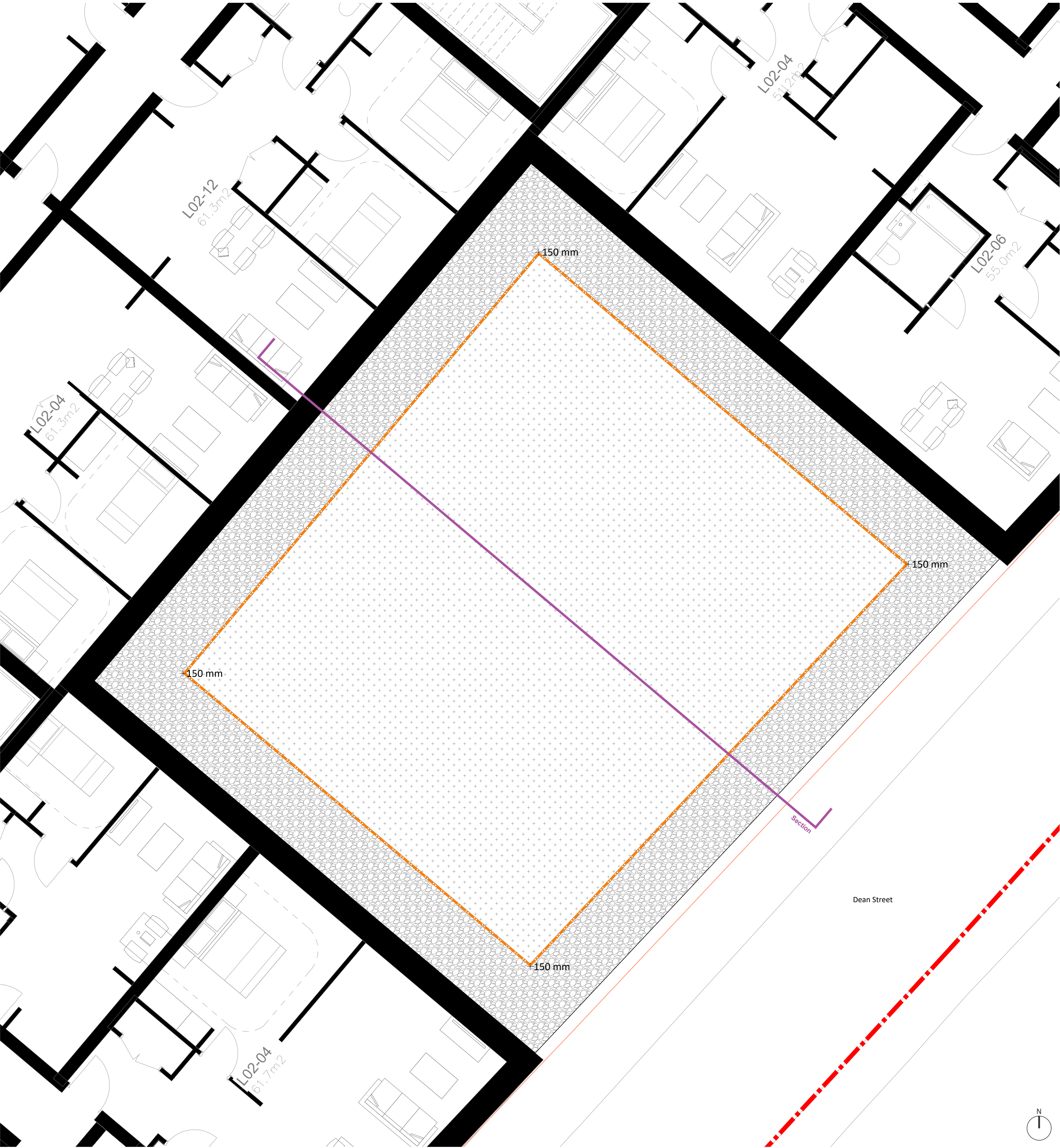
Access Doors

- Residential Entrance
- Residential BoH
- Residential Fire Escape
- Commercial Entrance
- Commercial BoH (Potential)



Appendix C

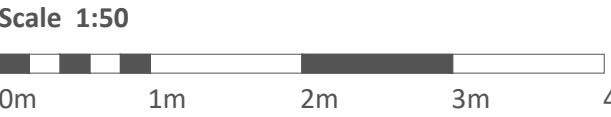
Landscape Plan (1196-RFM-XX-00-DR-L-9004-S2-P01-Level 1 podium Planting Strategy)



9004 Level 1 Podium Section

1:50

Key		Planting Strategy	Notes
	Planning application boundary	1. General The proposed planting scheme provides the following functions and aesthetic qualities; - Enhance biodiversity: A variety of species will offer habitat opportunities for insects and intern local bird and bat populations. - Offer seasonal interest, colour and to provide visual amenity.	1. All dimensions in mm, unless otherwise stated. 2. Scaling from drawing if printed incorrectly may lead to errors. 3. All information outside red line boundary shown for contextual purpose only. 4. All hatch patterns are indicative only unless stated otherwise.
	Proposed building	2. Extensive Planting The objective is to create seasonal diversity through the use of native seed mixes that offering visual amenity and an attractive environment for bees, butterflies and insects.	5. This drawing is to be read in conjunction all the re-form landscape architecture documentation. AND all relevant documentation from the design team Levels information on this drawing illustrates the design intent. The contractor is to check and verify all levels and dimensions against site survey information.
	Gravel surfacing	- BauderGREEN Flora 5 Seed Mix is a blend of UK provenance wildflower seed with additional tackifier and mycorrhizal fungi. Flora 5 is an urban seed mix based on the "London Mix" containing plants that are able to absorb pollution and CO ₂ . The mix is recognised by the RHS as 'Plants for Pollinators'.	6. Any discrepancies in the design information are to be brought to the attention of re-form landscape architecture, in writing, prior to commencement of construction works.
	Proposed metal edging	Flora 5 seed mix includes; Total number of species: 38 Wildflowers: 28 Annuals: 6 Grasses: 2 Sedum: 2	7. All proprietary products shall be installed in strict accordance with manufacturers written instructions. Refer to other consultants' drawings and specifications for the following design information: - Foundation details - Base course and/or sub bases design & specification - Waterproofing of any element - Levels & Drainage design and infrastructure - Lighting and ducting - Existing & proposed utilities
	Proposed extensive planting		8. Plant quantities are to suit site areas in accordance with scheduled plant densities.



18.03.25	Issue for planning	EK	EK	DL	P01
Date	Description of revision	Drawn by	Checked by	Approved by	Revision

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Project
POSTAL STREET, MANCHESTER
RF24-1196

Client
MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Document title
LEVEL 1 PODIUM PLANTING STRATEGY

Paper size
A1

Scale
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Status
FOR INFORMATION

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Drawing number
1196-RFM-XX-00-DR-L-9004

Revision
P01

© re-form landscape architecture

9004 Level 1 Podium Plan

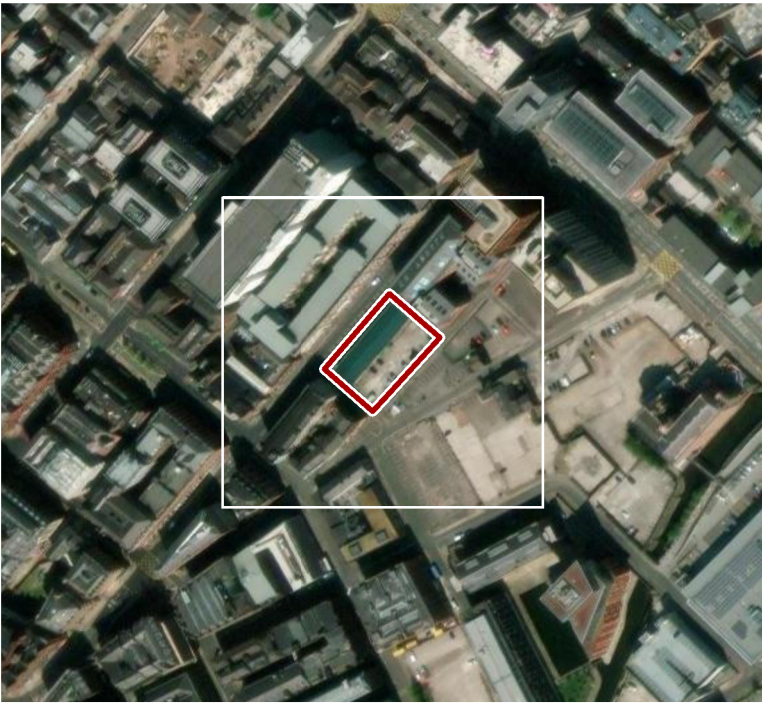
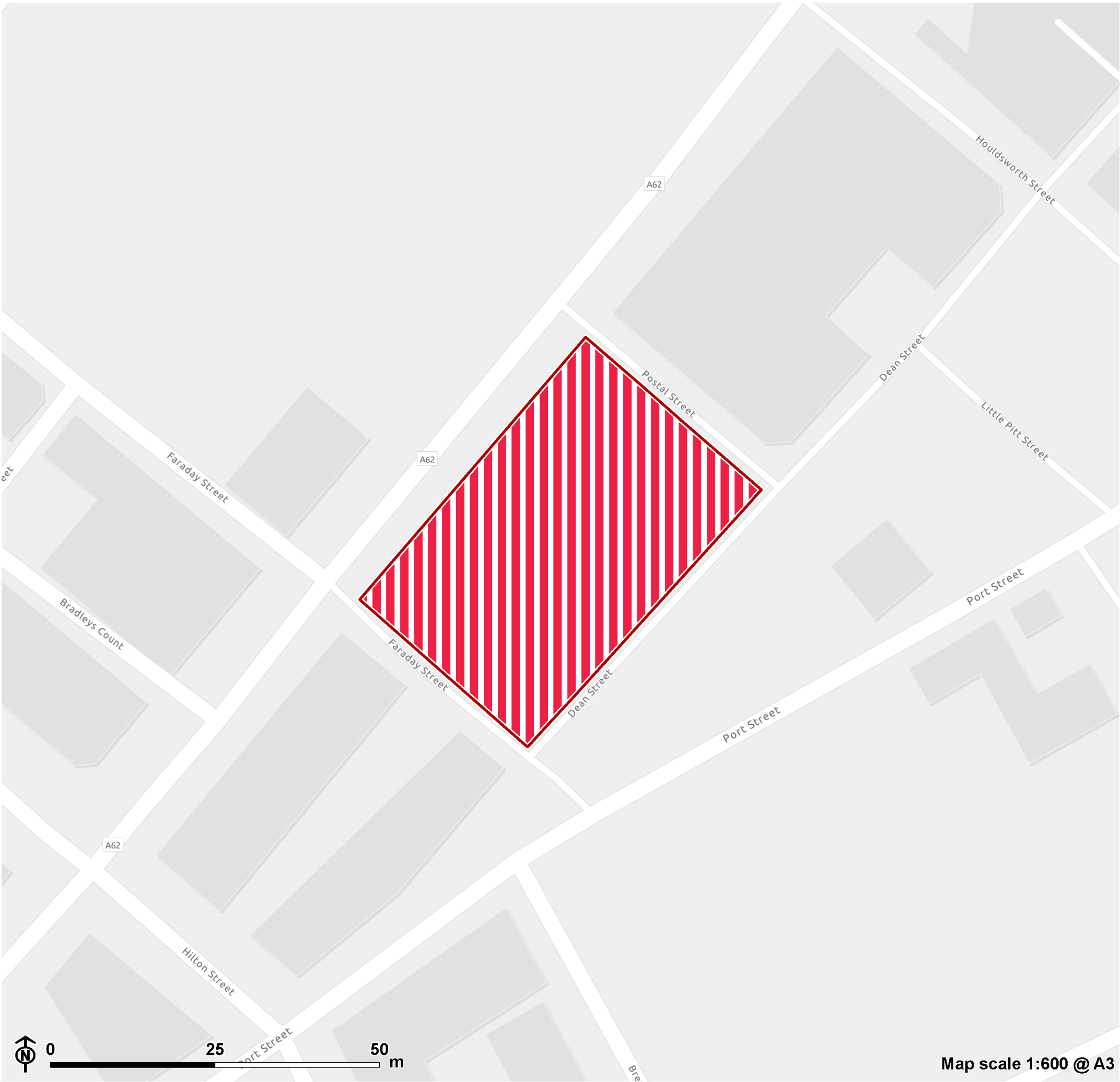
1:50

Appendix D

Habitat Plan (February, 2025)

Figure 1: Baseline UKHabs Habitat

- Site boundary
- UKHab habitat area**
- Developed land; sealed surface



Appendix E

Site Photos



Figure 1: View across site in north-western direction



Figure 2: View across site in northern direction