

Manchester Communication
Academy (Silchester Street Site)
Habitat Management and
Monitoring Plan
2024



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Client	Lancaster Maloney Martin Limited
Project Title	Manchester Communication Academy, Silchester Street Site
Project Reference	RHE.4057
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	Name	Position	Date
Author	Ben Crossthwaite	Senior Ecologist	22/12/2024
Reviewer			
Revision	Ben Crossthwaite	Senior Ecologist	21/01/2025



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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd was commissioned in 2024 by Lancaster Maloney Martin Limited to provide a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan for the site at Manchester Communication Academy. The site is the subject of a planning application for the construction of two new school buildings and a MUGA facility, and associated access and landscaping.
- 1.1.2 An Ecological Appraisal was undertaken in 2024 by Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd. This report included a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, which identified management requirements for onsite and off-site mitigation proposals. This document aims to address the management and monitoring requirements for the proposed habitats both on and off-site for a 30-year period.

2. Description of Proposals

- 2.1.1 The site is located off Silchester Street, Manchester, O.S. grid reference: SD 85898 00780 (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Map showing the locations of the sites courtesy of Google Maps

- 2.1.2 The development site currently comprises amenity grassland, hardstanding, poor, semi-improved grassland and scattered trees. The site is surrounded by commercial and residential development.

Moston Brook and associated broadleaved woodland habitat is located directly adjacent to one of the development locations.

2.1.3 The development will utilise the site, causing the loss of many of the existing habitats, including modified grassland and individual trees.

2.1.4 As part of the BNG offsetting, an off-site Blue Line area is proposed to be used for BNG mitigation.

2.1.5 The onsite landscaping and off-site mitigation include the following habitats:

On site

- Modified grassland
- Urban trees

Off-site

- Species-rich modified grassland
- Tree planting

3. Ecological Trends and Constraints

3.1.1 The site does not support any protected species such as Great Crested Newt or Bats. The habitats on site are ubiquitous locally and nationally.

4. Management Aims, Objectives and Targets

4.1.1 The core management aims, objectives and targets on the development site and the off-site mitigation site are:

1. Create, manage and monitor the modified grassland – includes retained.
2. Create, manage and monitor the species-rich modified grassland.
3. Create, manage and monitor the individual trees – includes retained.
4. Create, manage and monitor the bird and hedgehog boxes.

5. Management and Prescriptions

5.1.1 This document outlines the creation, management and monitoring of the proposed habitats to ensure they meet the target conditions set out in the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment.



Objective 1 – Create, Manage and Monitor the Modified Grassland

Creation

- 5.1.2 The onsite proposals include the retention of modified grassland (poor condition).

Management

- 5.1.3 The current mowing schedule of these area of grassland are to be continued.

Monitoring

- 5.1.4 To maintain the target condition of poor, set out in the Statutory Metric Calculation Tool document as part of the BNG Assessment, the following criteria must be achieved by the end of year 1.
- Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens).
 - Cover of Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is less than 20%.
- 5.1.5 The modified grassland will be monitored by a suitably experienced ecologist or trained member of the management team, proficient in botanical identification. The monitoring will aim to recommend management changes to achieve the desired condition.

Objective 2 – Create, Manage and Monitor the Species-rich Modified Grassland

Creation

- 5.1.6 The sites proposals include the implementation of species-rich modified grassland in the 'mitigation area'. This will increase species-richness and diversity and management will reduce the amount of competitive species within the sward.
- 5.1.7 Soil will be prepared by raking to a fine tilth and sowing with an appropriate seed mix at the recommended rate. Seed should be rolled to ensure good soil contact, but not covered. Sowing should be undertaken in April or September ideally.

Management

- 5.1.8 During the first 2-3 years undesirable species such as Docks and Nettles may appear. These should be hand-pulled or treated with an approved herbicide.
- 5.1.9 During Year 1 the grassland should be mown to 50mm and arisings removed to a compost heap. This should be repeated every two months.
- 5.1.10 Once established, mowing should be undertaken in spring and autumn. Grass should be cut to a height of no less than 75mm. Arisings should be removed to a compost heap. Uncut areas should be left around the edges each cut to provide habitat for insects.

Monitoring

- 5.1.11 To achieve the target condition of good, set out in the Statutory Metric Calculation Tool document as part of the BNG Assessment, the following criteria must be achieved by the end of year 4.
- There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m² present, including at least 2 forbs.



- Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm).
- Any scrub developing in the grassland area is to be removed.
- Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.
- Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas.
- Cover of Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is less than 20%.

5.1.12 The specie-rich modified grassland will be monitored by a suitably experienced ecologist or trained member of the management team, proficient in botanical identification. The monitoring will aim to record the species that have established, note any species that have failed to germinate and suggest further seeding or the use of plug plants, to ensure the final sward composition reflects the seed mixture used.

Objective 3 – Create, Manage and Monitor the Individual Trees

5.1.13 The trees will provide pollen and nectar source for invertebrates and nesting and foraging habitat for birds.

Creation

5.1.14 The planting can take place in suitable weather conditions and in spring or autumn. Bark mulch will be applied to the tree planting areas. All newly planted specimens must be watered and weeded regularly. The plants will be protected using canes and biodegradable guards. The trees should be pruned and managed as required.

5.1.15 Maintenance to vegetation suitable for nesting bird should be done outside of the nesting bird season (generally March to August) to protect nesting birds. If works to the vegetation needs to occur during the nesting season, then a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior to work commencing.

Management

5.1.16 Replace dead or diseased specimens when required.

5.1.17 The trees should be pruned and managed minimally. Maintenance to vegetation suitable for nesting bird should be done outside of the nesting bird season (generally March to August) to protect nesting birds. If works to the vegetation needs to occur during the nesting season, then a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior to work commencing.

Monitoring

5.1.18 To achieve the target condition of moderate, set out in the Statutory Metric Calculation Tool document as part of the BNG Assessment, the following criteria must be achieved by the end of year 27.

- The tree is a native species.



- There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.
- More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.

5.1.19 The trees will be monitored by a suitably experienced ecologist or trained member of the management team, proficient in botanical identification. The monitoring will aim to record the species that have established, note any species that have failed to establish and suggest further planting to ensure the final composition reflects the original mixture used.

Objective 4 – Create, Manage and Monitor the Bird and Hedgehog

5.1.20 The installation of bird boxes on retained trees and hedgehog boxes on site will be provided (see Appendix 3).

Creation

5.1.21 Three, Eco small bird boxes (or equivalent) are to be erected on site. The bird boxes are to be positioned at a minimum height of 3 metres. None of the boxes will be positioned facing south.

5.1.22 Three Hedgehog boxes are proposed on site. These are to be situated in areas of low disturbance along the eastern site boundary.

Management

5.1.23 No management required.

Monitoring

5.1.24 The boxes will be monitored annually. If the boxes have failed or have been damaged, these are to be replaced at an appropriate time of year.

6. Personnel

6.1.1 The habitat creation work must be undertaken by a landscaping team (appointed by Quince Homes Ltd) with experience of creating the desired habitats.

6.1.2 The future management of the site after the completion of the construction of the site should be undertaken by a management team (appointed by Quince Homes Ltd). Suitably experienced ecologists or competent and trained members of the management team must undertake the monitoring of the ecologically valuable habitats.



7. Monitoring

- 7.1.1 The created habitats on site will be subject to a monitoring scheme for 30 years. The purpose of the monitoring is to assess if these habitats have become established and have not declined in ecological value since the completion of the development, and to provide recommendations on changes to the management plan to increase the quality of these habitats if required.
- 7.1.2 The monitoring of the retained and newly created habitats will be undertaken at regular intervals in the 30 year period, as shown in Table 1. Monitoring reports shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) no more than 2 months following monitoring visits during years 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 30.

Table 1. Monitoring Frequencies Per Habitat	
Habitat	Monitoring Frequency
Grasslands	Years 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30
Individual Trees	Years 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30

- 7.1.3 Where monitoring shows a habitat is declining, it may be necessary to make changes to the work schedule, in terms of timings, to bring about beneficial change and halt decline.

8. Contingencies

- 8.1.1 The work will be managed and monitored using the on-site personnel with supervision from the ecologist.
- 8.1.2 If an active bird nest is found during the works, work will stop, and the ecologist will be contacted. A 4metre buffer zone will be implemented around the active nest and no disturbance will take place to the nest. Once the nest is deemed inactive (i.e. once the chicks have fledged) then work can commence.
- 8.1.3 If any part of the landscaping fails or is inadvertently damaged, then the habitat will be re-created immediately, such as sowing more species rich grassland or replacing planted trees and scrub stands.
- 8.1.4 Any non-native invasive species found on the site should be eradicated as soon as possible using a suitable methodology. This could be the use of selective herbicides or digging up and either burying or removal from the site, depending on the species and extent of spread of the plant.



9. Work Schedule

- 9.1.1 The Work Schedule (see Appendix 1) sets out the annual requirements and restrictions of management. The work to create the habitats is expected to commence within spring 2026. The 30 years HMMP will kick in at the time of commencement.



Appendix 1. Work Schedule and Management Tasks

Habitat	Annual Management Tasks, Work Schedule – To be implemented for a minimum of 30 years														
	Task	Timing of Works Restrictions												Constraints	Details
		J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D		
	Annual cutting vegetation suitable for nesting birds: - Trees													All Nesting Birds	Vegetation may be cut between March and September, but a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior (within 24 hours) to the works commencing.
Bird Boxes	The initial installation of bird boxes on suitable retained trees, as identified in the landscaping plan can be undertaken at any point.													All Nesting Birds	Replacement of the boxes can only be undertaken outside bird nesting season, or by a suitably qualified ecologist.
Hedgehog Boxes	The initial installation of can be carried out any point. Th location would preferably be on the eastern site boundary, adjacent to the woodland.													Hedgehog torpor/hibernation season	Replacement of the boxes can only be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist.
Species-rich Modified Grassland	Year 0 - Creation of species-rich grassland – scarification of the soil, sowing seeds and watering.													No specific species restrictions	Should any protected species be found during the management, then works should stop and an ecologist be contacted for advice.
	Year 1 – The grassland will be cut to 50mm, eight weeks after seedlings appear. This process will be repeated every two months through to September. All arisings to be removed and composted to prevent adding nutrients to the soil.													No specific species restrictions	Should any protected species be found during the management, then works should stop and an ecologist be contacted for advice.

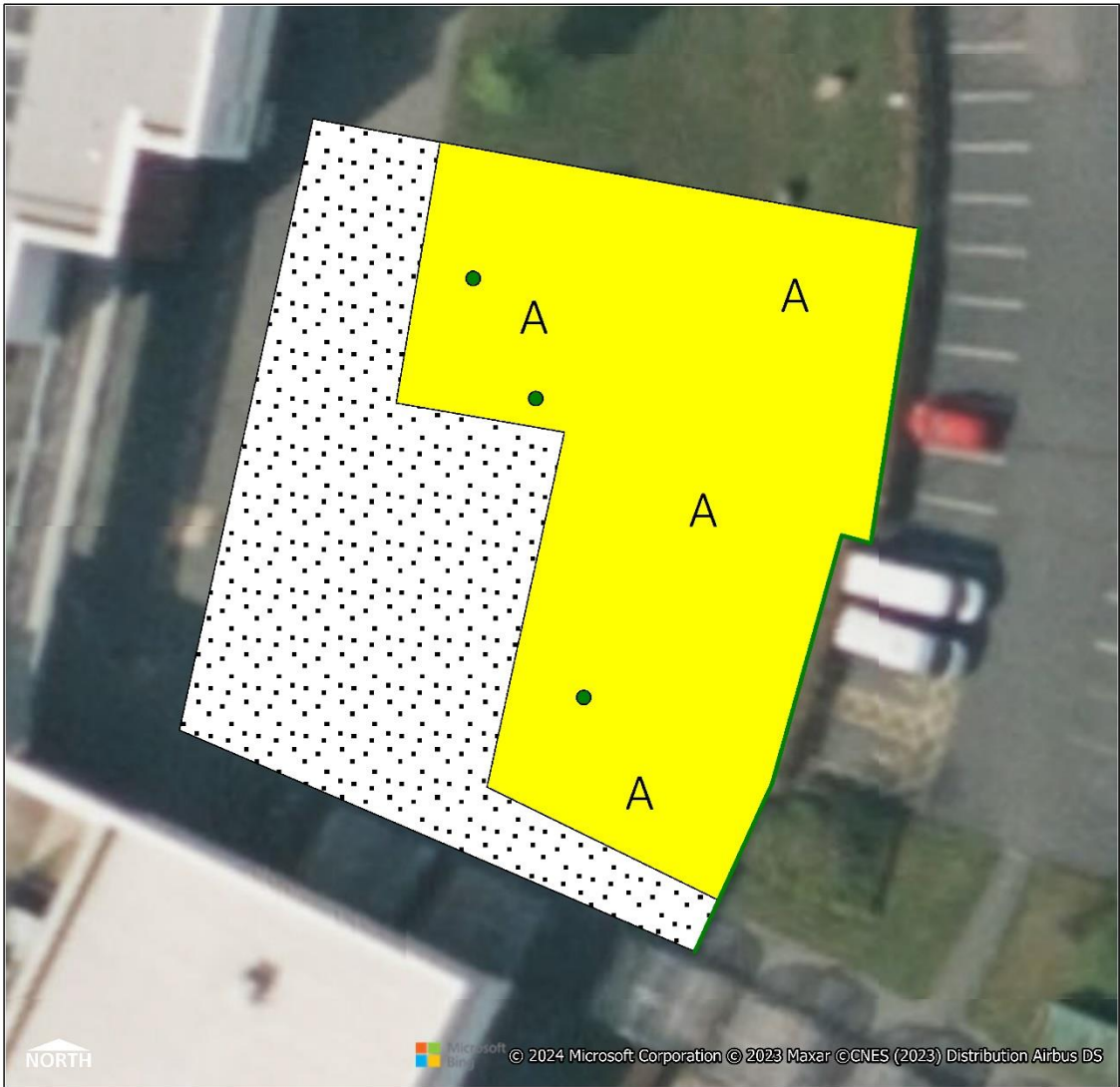


	Year 2-5 Spring cut – Cut to a height of 7.5cm, no later than April. Autumn cut – Depending on soil fertility and growth, one or two cuts will be carried out between the end of August and late November. The cut material is to remain in place for a few days, to allow the dropping of seeds, before it is raked up and removed from site.														No specific species restrictions	Should any protected species be found during the management, then works should stop and an ecologist be contacted for advice. Leave uncut areas around the edges each cut. Monitoring for Years 1-5
Individual Trees	Preparing the soil and planting new specimens.														All Nesting Birds	Vegetation may be cut between March and September, but a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior (within 24 hours) to the works commencing.
	Managed with an annual cut in the winter encourage bushy growth to keep the habitat edges defined. The cut material should be removed from the site.														All Nesting Birds	Vegetation may be cut between March and September, but a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior (within 24 hours) to the works commencing.
	Once planted and backfilled, the trees will be well-watered, and all weeds removed around them. Newly planted trees will be fitted with stakes and mulched.														No specific species restrictions	Should any protected species be found during the management, then works should stop and an ecologist be contacted for advice.
Monitoring	The following habitats will be monitored annually for 5 years: - Species-rich Modified Grassland - Trees														No specific species restrictions, although care should be taken when surveying the more ecologically valuable habitats where protected species may be encountered.	The purpose of the monitoring is to assess if these habitats have become established and to provide recommendations on changes to the management plan to increase the quality of these habitats if required, advise from suitable professionals should be sought as/if required.





Appendix 2. Existing Habitat Map



Phase 1 Habitat Map - Map 1 of 3

Key

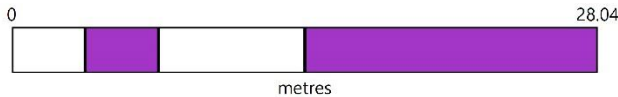
- Amenity Grassland
- Bare Ground
- Intact Hedgerow
- Scattered Tree

Project Name:
Manchester Communication Academy

Project Reference:
RHE.4057

Drawn By:
Ben Crossthwaite

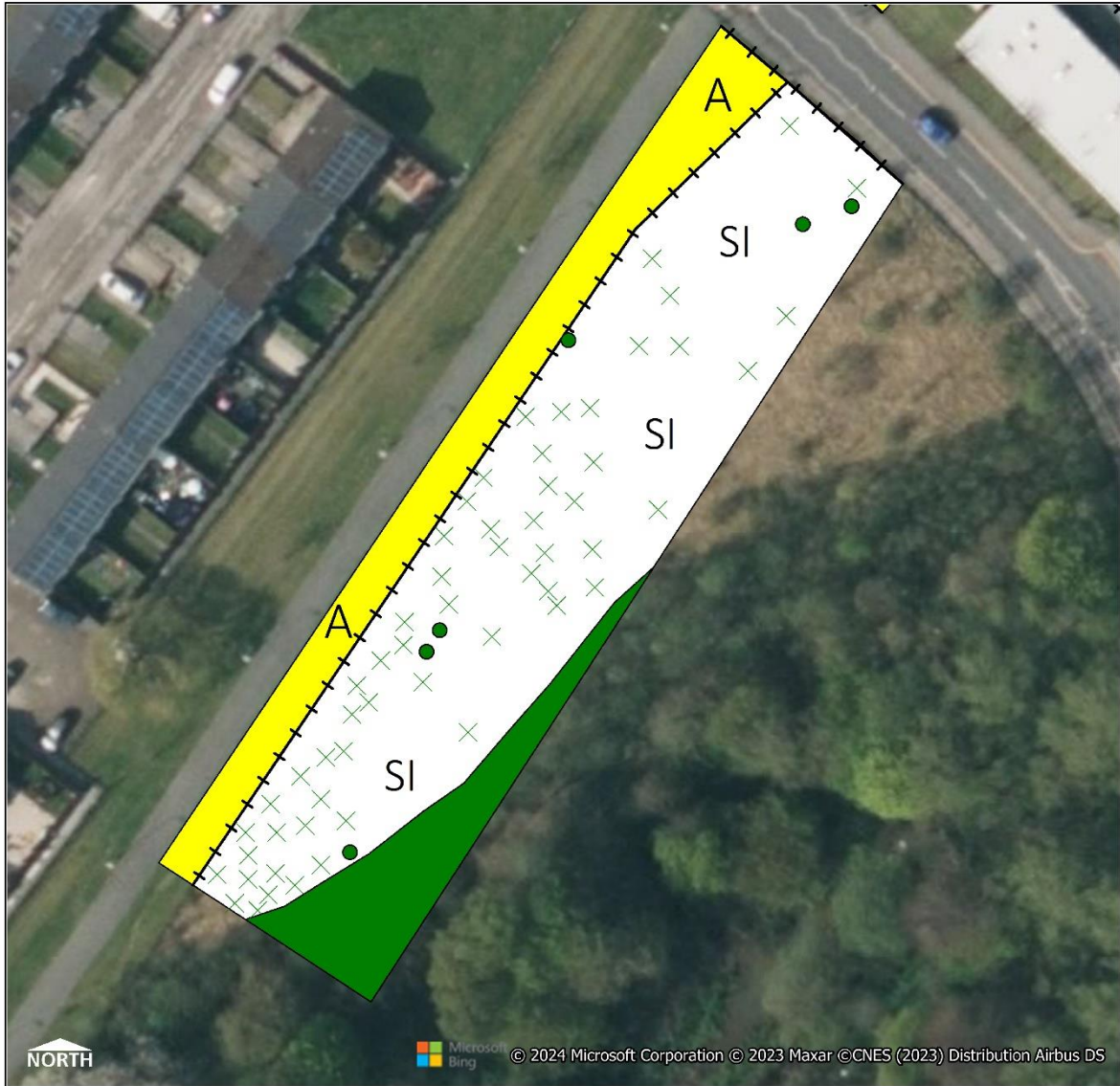
Date:
24/01/2024



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Phase 1 Habitat Map - Map 2 of 3

Key

- Amenity Grassland
- Broadleaved Woodland
- Poor, Semi-improved Grassland
- Scattered Scrub
- Scattered Tree
- Fence

Project Name:

Manchester Communication Academy

Project Reference:

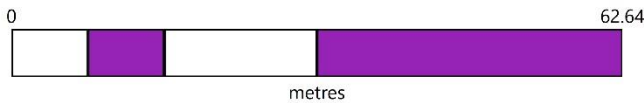
RHE.4057

Drawn By:

Ben Crossthwaite

Date:

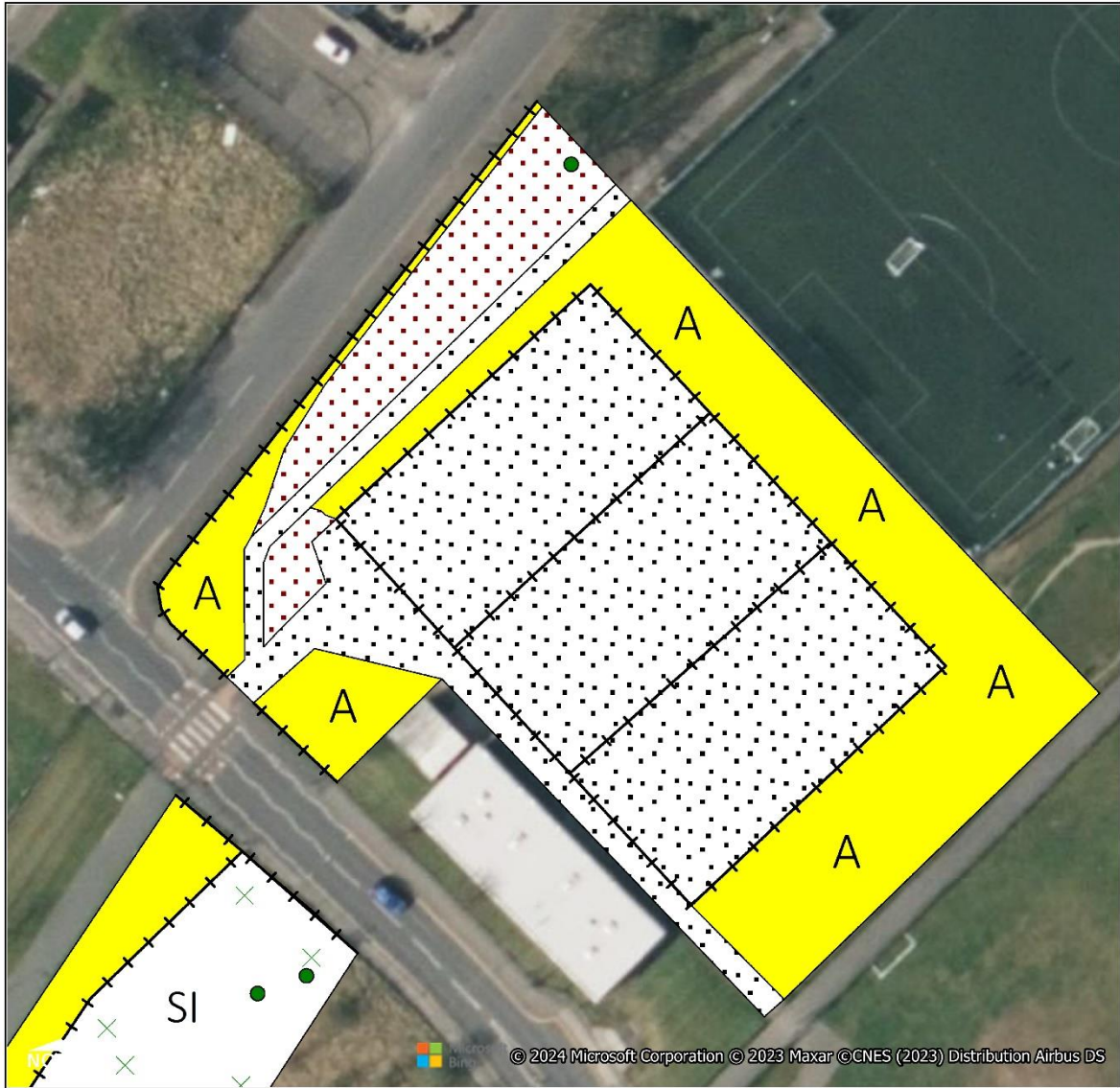
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Phase 1 Habitat Map - Map 3 of 3

Key

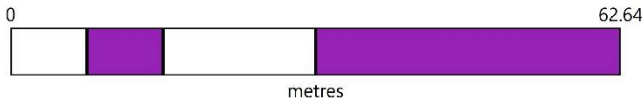
- A Amenity Grassland
- SI Poor, Semi-improved Grassland
- Bare Earth
- Bare Ground
- Scattered Scrub
- Scattered Tree
- Fence

Project Name:
Manchester Communication Academy

Project Reference:
RHE.4057

Drawn By:
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Date:
24/01/2024



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Appendix 3. Proposed Landscaping Plan

