AMENITYTREE

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING CONSULTANTS

Full Assessment of Biodiversity

Version 3
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Prepared for: Neo Projects

Site: Apollo Public House

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

Amenity Tree was commissioned by Neo Projects to undertake a site visit and compilation of UK habitats plan and DEFRA habitat condition sheet in consideration of the baseline ecological value of the site to advise a planning application for re development under The Environment Act 2021 'nature and biodiversity', which allows for biodiversity gain in the planning system.

1.2 Site location and context

The site is located within the Miles Platting area of Manchester in an urban environment and enclosed by existing residential land uses. The habitat on site comprises of building including areas of hard standing, introduced and amenity grass.

1.3 Report purpose and legislative background

The scope of the Assessment is therefore:

- Assessment of the habitats within the site in accordance with the UK Habitats Classification (UK Habitats Classification Working Group, 2018).
- Completion of Condition Assessments of each habitat in accordance with those presented in The Biodiversity Metric 4.1 23rd July 2024.

2. Survey Methods

2.1 Vegetation and Habitats

2.1.1 A habitat survey walkover was conducted in October 2024 (in accordance with JNCC, 2010) which confirmed the habitats present. Appendix 1 is the habitat mapping based on the UK Habitat Classification system (UK Habitats Classification Working Group, 2018) which details those habitats listed below.

The extent of the red line for the demolition application is to be used for the purposes of this BNG assessment as below



2.1.2 Table 1 details the UK Habitat classifications / BNG metric habitat descriptors, area coverage and condition assessment result. Whilst on the site the habitat survey searched for all plants including those that are considered rare, uncommon or are statutorily protected such as those listed in schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended).

UK Habitat Classification	Total Area Coverage (Ha.)	Condition Assessment
Urban sealed surface and building	0.042	na
Modified Grassland	0.083	Poor
Total	0.1250	

Table 1 UK Habitat classifications, area coverage and condition assessment

The condition assessment for the modified grassland is below

	Condition Assessment Criteria	Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m^2 present, including at least 2 forbs (these may include those listed in Footnote 1). **Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition.** Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m^2 (excluding those listed in Footnote 1), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.	No	No forbs present
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	No	
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Yes	
D	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.	Yes	
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens)[2].	Yes	
F	Cover of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is less than 20%.	Yes	
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species[3] (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA[4]).	Yes	
	Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)		No
	Number of criteria passed		5

Condition Assessment Result (out of 7 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved ×/✓
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Good (3)	
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Moderate (2)	
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4 - 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)	Poor (1)	Poor

2.1.3 Site strategic significance

The strategic significance of a site will be determined by areas included within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) produced for a region. The LNRS for Greater Manchester is in design and not available, and it therefore has no status in the planning system. As a LNRS has not yet been published, alternative documents can be used to assign strategic significance.

A review of local plans and policies did not highlight the site as an area designated for nature recovery and therefore cannot achieve 'high strategic significance'. As a LNRS is yet to be produced the site can be assessed for 'low strategic significance' based on the urban setting of the site's location.

2.2 Surveys results

2.1 The biodiversity baseline value of the site is calculated by the Statutory Metric and reproduced below for the main site in habitat units. The metric has provided the final biodiversity units.

On-site baseline	*Habitat units*	0.17
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00

There is no site hedge baseline

2.3 Limitations

The survey was conducted in the optimal survey period for vascular plants as determined by JNCC, 2010 and broad species and habitats were identifiable.

Habitats have been assessed to determine whether they meet those described in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan – Priority Habitat descriptions which are used to form Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

3. History of site

The recent history of the site can be examined using historic aerial imagery. The site does not appear to have changed in recent history.

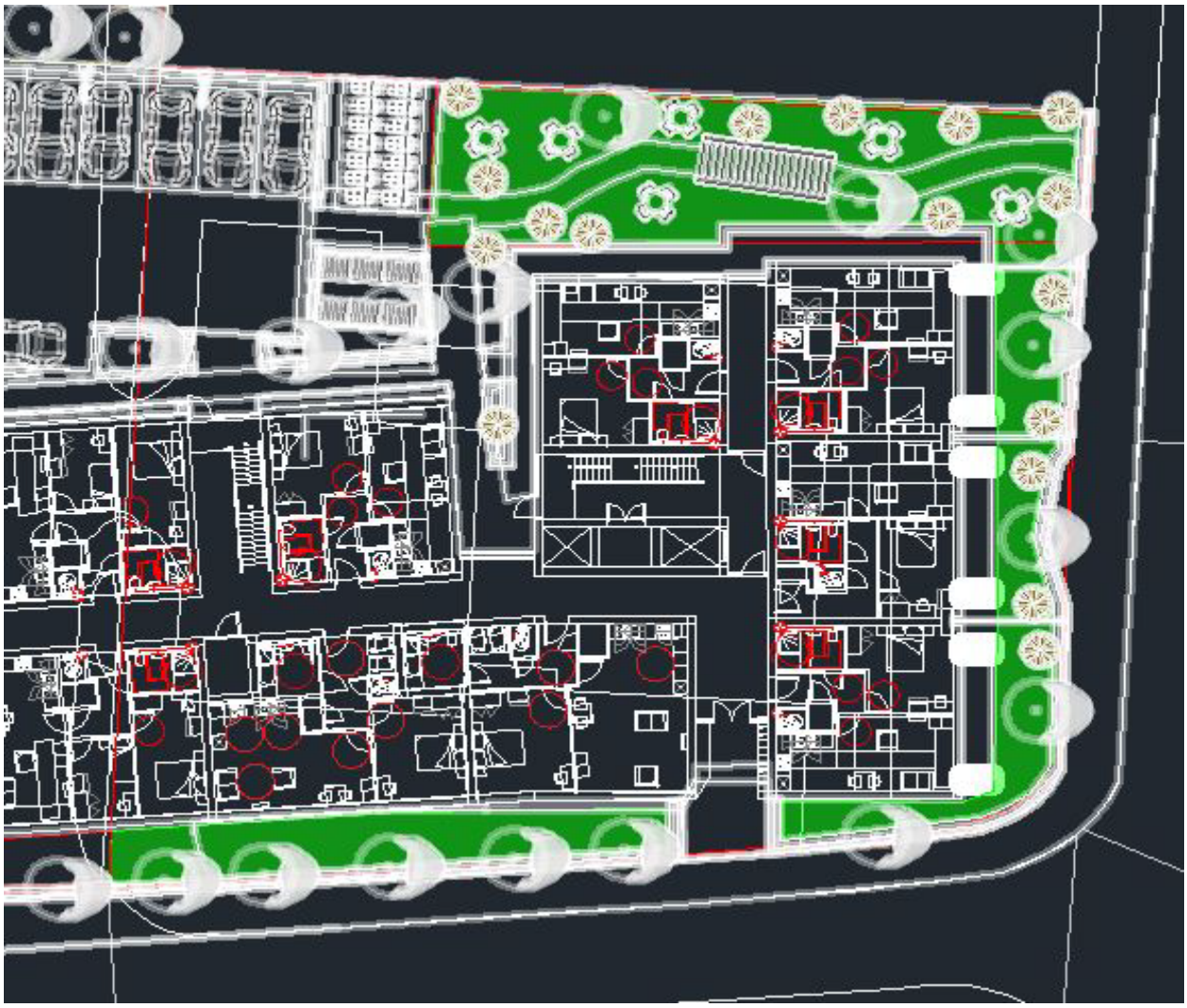
4. Opportunities for enhancement

4.1 Much of the site contains modified grassland which could be retained and enhanced within the new development.

The use of urban trees will help to achieve to a mandatory 10% .

4.2 Evaluation and Assessment - Proposed habitat creation and enhancement

- The total greenspace consists of 49Sqm, 180Sqm = 0.0229Ha.



If all greenspace is outside private gardens, it can be managed externally by a committee, then enhancements can be made.

1 229Sqm of retained modified grassland enhanced into neutral grassland in moderate condition (all areas hatched above).

No other on-site habitat enhancements apply. Four urban trees are proposed. The total proposed coverage of these in the habitat creation within the metric is as 0.0163ha.

4.2 Habitat creation methods – Urban trees

Recommended Species: At least 70% of trees should be native species found in the local area, taking into account the requirement to plant trees that will be appropriate for anticipated changes in climate.

Considerations:

• Trees will adapt to natural conditions. Additional watering will only be required during a particularly long dry spell

Trees are to be planted within the tree planting season (October to March inclusive).

• Up to 30% of street trees will not establish and therefore supplementary planting over the following three years will be required to achieve prescribed numbers over the longer term.

Creation Methodology:

• Advanced nursery stock trees or larger will be planted within optimal tree planting season (October to March inclusive).

• Suitable wooden stakes will be used to support the trees.

• Weeds will be controlled around the base of the trees by applying organic mulch (10cm depth in a 50cm buffer around trees), this will also assist with water retention. This will be applied in early summer until trees are successfully established (minimum 3 years).

Modified grass (enhanced)

Neutral grassland shall be enhanced over 0.0229Ha to a moderate condition. The created elements shall conform to the following.

Objectives:

• To create a level, attractive and even grass sward with uniform colour and height.

• To enhance appearance and visual interest and introduce species diversity.

Maintenance Operations:

• Maintain a sward length within the limits of 30-60mm and edges kept neat and tidy.

• Remove arisings from site. Arisings shall also be removed from all paths and roads and taken off site.

• When necessary, grass areas shall be sprayed with a suitable approved selective herbicide in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations to control injurious or invasive weeds. Alternatively spot treatment of isolated weed growth may be carried out by hand. All arisings shall be removed from site.

• Reinstatement by re seeding of damaged, defective or bare areas shall be carried out as appropriate. Any dips or holes within the grass shall be filled as above to restore even falls and re seeded if necessary.

• Where necessary compacted areas shall be aerated with the appropriate equipment in the autumn.

• At no time shall machinery get closer than 500mm to any tree trunk. Damage must be avoided to trunks when using a strimmer.

• Depressions to be filled in over time by adding a top dressing and over seeding, using a sandy soil

• Collect litter and dispose off site on each visit

The enhanced area of modified grassland will require the following techniques to achieve a moderate condition.

Seeding with Flower Rich Grass Mix (EL1 Flowering Lawn Mix), to create a sward with 20% wildflowers. The mix includes 22 species indicative of this

habitat type, such as crested dog's-tail, bent, yarrow, as well as indicators of higher quality grassland such as black knapweed and oxeye daisy.

Preparation of the ground through deep rotavating/soil ripping, removal of weeds by cultivation or herbicide treatment prior to sowing. Sowing in late summer/autumn (late August – October) or spring (April – May). Seeds surface sown at rate of 20kg/ha and firmed in using a roller.
The wild flower and grass species in this mix (EL1) are perennial; they will be slow to germinate and grow and will not usually flower in their first growing season. There will often be a flush of annual weeds from the soil in the first growing season. Control annual weed growth in the first season by re is easily controlled by repeated mowing.

Mow newly sown flowering lawns regularly (every 7 -10 days during growing season) throughout the first year of establishment. Cut to a height of 40-60mm, removing cuttings if dense. This will gradually develop a good sward structure, help maintain balance between faster growing grasses and slower developing wild flowers, and control annual weeds.

Once established, mow regularly as a lawn but not too short (25-40mm). To permit flowering, mowing can be relaxed from late June. Cut again when the sward gets untidy (after 4-8 weeks). Mowing may be suspended earlier in the year to allow cowslips to flower. Heavy quantities of cuttings should be collected and removed from site.

5. Summary conclusion

The sites habitats are currently generally low in biodiversity unit value due to the condition. There are some options for enhancing the existing modified grassland and creating further grassland of better quality than at the baseline aswell as including urban trees.

All greenspace is outside private gardens, hence it can be managed externally by a committee, then the propsoed enhancements of grassland and creation of urban trees can be made. The site can satisfy the trading rules and achieve the mandatory 10% on site.

On-site baseline	*Habitat units*	0.17
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	0.19
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
On-site net change (units & percentage)	*Habitat units*	0.03
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
Off-site baseline	*Habitat units*	0.00
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	0.00
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	*Habitat units*	0.00
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	0.03
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	*Habitat units*	0.00
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00

FINAL RESULTS

Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	0.03
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	15.57%
	Hedgerow units	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Habitat units	10.00%	0.17	0.18	0.00
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

Appendix 1 Habitat mapping based the UK Habitat Classification system

Nelson Court

1 to 64

Apollo

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THORNDEN ROAD

El

Sub Sta

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UK Habitat Classification

KEY

u – urban sealed surface and building

u – urban introduced shrub

g4 – modified grassland

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Client:
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Project:
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12351

Detail:
UK Habitat Classification Key - Overview

Drawn By:	Date:	Scale:
SB	24.09.2024	NTS

Drg No:	Revision:
TR-01-Sheet 1	V1

Appendix 2 Habitat Condition Assessments and metric