

EXTENDED PHASE HABITAT SURVEY AND DAYTIME BAT SURVEY

LAND OFF AMBERLEY DRIVE,
WYTHENSHAW, MANCHESTER

REV. C

JANUARY 2023

CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION	2
2.0	METHODOLOGY.....	5
3.0	RESULTS	6
	HABITATS (FIRST SURVEY AND PARCEL – OCTOBER 2021)...	6
	HABITATS (SECOND SURVEY AND PARCEL – AUGUST 2022)	
		11
	PROTECTED SPECIES	15
	INVASIVE SPECIES	18
	PROTECTED SITES.....	18
4.0	ASSESSMENT.....	19
5.0	CONCLUSION	21
6.0	REFERENCES.....	22
	APPENDIX A PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP	23

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Site Information

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd (RHE) was commissioned in October 2021 by Wythenshawe Community Housing Group (WCHG) to carry out an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and daytime bat survey of land off Amberley Drive, Wythenshawe, Manchester (O.S. grid reference: SJ 8112 8802 – see Figure 1). RHE was commissioned again by WCHG in July 2022 to carry out an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey on an adjacent parcel of land (O.S. grid reference: SJ 8117 8789 – see Figure 2). The whole site is outlined in Figure 3. The proposed development sites currently comprise poor semi-improved grassland, tall ruderal herb, scattered trees and scrub, amenity grassland, continuous scrub and running water. The site is surrounded by residential development.

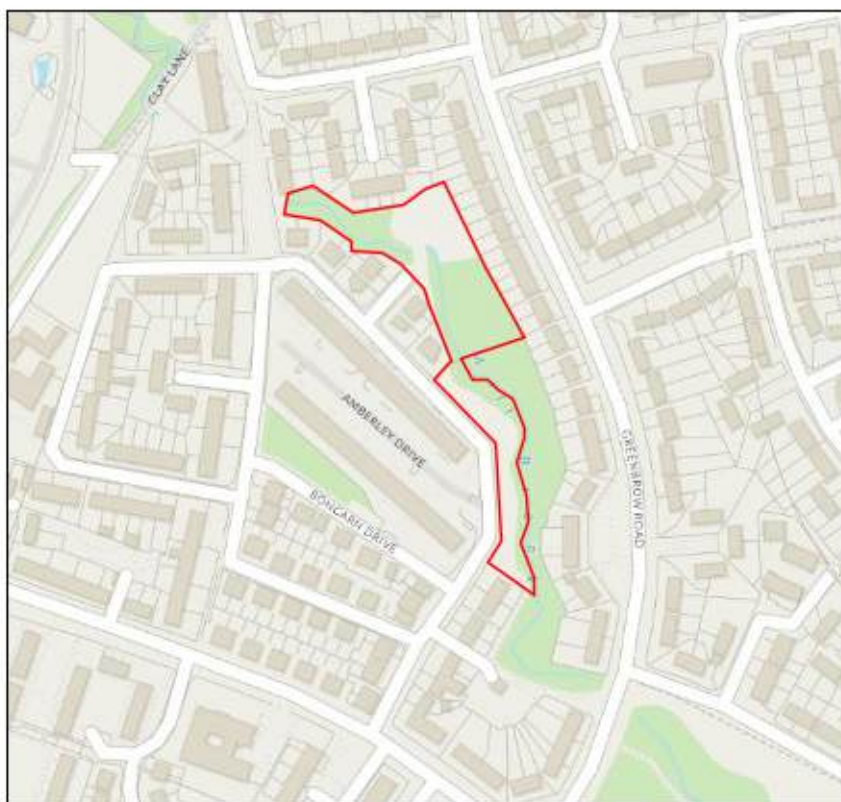


Figure 1 showing the location of the first survey area in 2021

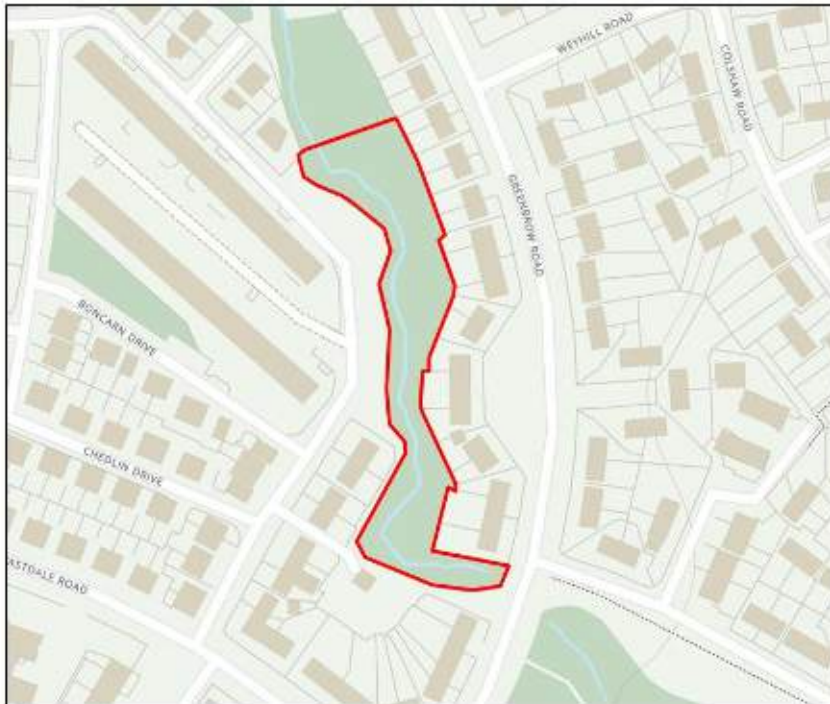


Figure 2 showing the location of the second survey area in 2022

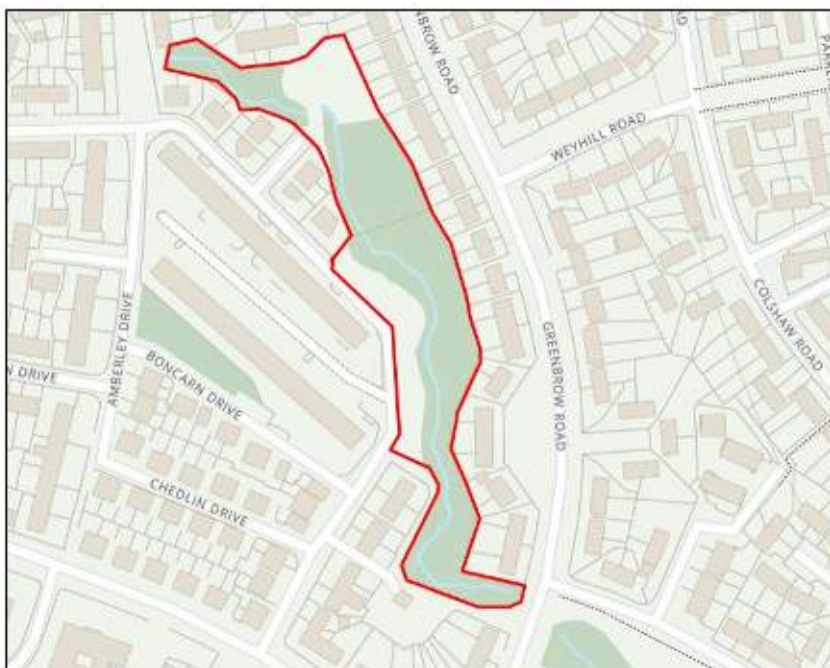


Figure 3 showing the redline boundary of the entire site

Description of Development

- 1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application for residential development, associated access and landscaping.

Biodiversity in Planning

- 1.3 Biodiversity is a material consideration, and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have a requirement to consider biodiversity and protected species when determining planning

applications. Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) gives specific reference to minimising the impacts of development on biodiversity. Local and Neighbourhood plans also provide guidance towards protecting and enhancing biodiversity, including priority habitats and notable species.

Legal Context

- 1.4 All bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit), which make it an offence to:
 - Deliberately kill, injure or capture a bat;
 - Deliberately disturb bats;
 - Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat.
- 1.5 The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) contains further provisions making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:
 - Obstruct access to any structure or place which any bat uses for shelter or protection; or
 - Disturb any bat while occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.
- 1.6 Proposed development works that are likely to disturb or destroy bats or their roosts will need to obtain a licence from the relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (i.e. Natural England) prior to work commencing.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.1 A Phase 1 Habitat survey was undertaken to JNCC standards (JNCC, 2010). The site was walked, and each habitat was assigned a Phase 1 habitat category. Species lists were taken at locations of botanical interest. All botanical nomenclature follows Stace, 2019. A Phase 1 map was produced showing habitat boundaries. An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey is required to provide an overview of the habitats present within the site and to assess any potential protected species issues on the site.
- 2.2 During the Extended Phase 1 survey, the habitats were assessed for their potential to support protected species. This included, for example, looking for signs of Badger activity (e.g. setts, paths, latrines and hairs on fences), assessing any waterbodies on site or near the site for their potential to support Great Crested Newt, Water Vole and Otter.
- 2.3 The site was also surveyed for invasive, non-native plant species such as Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed.

Daytime Bat Survey

- 2.4 The trees were given a ground-level assessment to search for any potential roosting features that could be utilised by bats. Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) include suitable branch splits, knot holes, woodpecker holes, rot holes, lightning strikes, and flaked bark.

Personnel and Seasonal Timing

- 2.5 Ben Crossthwaite (Senior Ecologist) carried out the first Phase 1 and Daytime Bat surveys on 20th October 2021. Ben is an experienced ecologist and fully trained in botanical surveys and protected species assessments. Ben is experienced and fully trained in protected species surveys and holds a Natural England Level 2 Class Survey Licence for bats (Licence Ref: 2020-48541-CLS-CLS). October can be a sub-optimal time of the year for botanical work, however due to the type of habitats present on site, a thorough assessment could be undertaken. The weather at the time of the survey was overcast and mild with light showers. Daytime bat surveys can be undertaken at any time of year.
- 2.6 Simon Holden (Associate Ecologist) and Thomas Moss (Ecologist) carried out the second Phase 1 survey on the adjacent parcel of land on 8th August 2022. Simon and Thomas are experienced ecologists and fully trained in botanical surveys and protected species assessments. August is an optimal time of the year for botanical work. The weather at the time of the survey was sunny and dry. Daytime bat surveys can be undertaken at any time of year.

Survey Constraints

- 2.7 The site was fully accessible. There were no constraints to either survey.

3.0 RESULTS

HABITATS (FIRST SURVEY AND PARCEL – OCTOBER 2021)

- 3.1 The Phase 1 Habitat Map can be found at the back of the report. The habitats on the proposed development site are described below.

Amenity Grassland

- 3.2 This habitat is prominent across the southern part to the site, running parallel between Mill Brook to the east and Amberley Drive the west. The grassland appears to be regularly mown and species assemblage is of low diversity, dominated by Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne*. Herbaceous species include Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Broad-Leaved Dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg., Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, Red Clover *Trifolium pratense* and White Clover *Trifolium repens*.



Photograph 1 showing an area of amenity grassland

Scattered Trees

- 3.3 Scattered trees are found across the site, particularly within the northern part. The tree ages range from juvenile to semi-mature (see Photograph 2). Species comprise Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur*, Alder *Alnus glutinosa*, Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Wild Cherry *Prunus avium*, Apple *Malus* sp., Elder *Sambucus nigra*, Crack Willow *Salix fragilis*, Pear *Pyrus* sp. and Fig *Ficus carica*.



Photograph 2 showing some of the scattered trees on site

Ornamental Hedgerow

- 3.4 A small, intact Cherry Laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* hedgerow forms part of the northern site boundary (see Photograph 3). This is supplemented with fencing.



Photograph 3 showing the Cherry Laurel hedgerow

Bare Ground/Ephemeral/Short Perennial

- 3.5 A small section of bare ground/ephemeral/short perennial is located on the western site boundary in the northern part of the site and appears to form part of a former access track (see Photograph 4). Species present include mosses, Red Clover, Common Ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, Daisy *Bellis perennis*, Dandelion, Ribwort Plantain *Plantago*

lanceolata, Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, Annual Meadow-grass *Poa annua* and Perennial Sow-thistle *Sonchus arvensis*.



Photograph 4 showing the area of bare ground/ephemeral/short perennial

Continuous Scrub

- 3.6 This habitat is located in the southern half of the site, between the linear area of amenity grassland and Mill Brook (see Photograph 5). Abundant species include Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., Pedunculate Oak, Hazel *Corylus avellana*, Rosebay Willowherb *Chamaenerion angustifolium* and Elder.



Photograph 5 showing an area of continuous scrub on site

Poor Semi-improved Grassland

- 3.7 This habitat is located across the northern part of the site. The grassland is unmanaged, resulting in a tall sward-height (see Photograph 6). Dominant grass species are Cock's-foot, False Oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* and Creeping Bent *Agrostis capillaris*. Commonly occurring herbaceous species are Common Nettle *Urtica dioica*, Broad-leaved Dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, Dandelion., Hedge Bindweed *Calystegia sepium*, Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense*, Cow Parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris* and Herb Robert *Geranium robertianum*.



Photograph 6 showing the poor semi-improved grassland on site

Tall Ruderal Herb

- 3.8 Tall ruderal herb dominates the northern part of the site and is also present in the southern part (see Photograph 7). Abundant species are Bramble., Common Nettle, Cock's-foot, Raspberry *Rubus idaeus*, Hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*, Cleavers *Galium aparine*, Rosebay Willowherb, Ivy *Hedera helix* and Atlantic Ivy *Hedera helix* ssp. *hibernica*.



Photograph 7 showing an area of tall, ruderal herb on site

Scattered Scrub

- 3.9 Scattered Scrub is located across the tall ruderal herb and poor, semi-improved grassland habitats in the northern part of the site. Abundant species are Elm *Ulmus* sp., Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Cherry Laurel, Elder, Snowberry *Symphoricarpos albus* and Crack Willow.

Running Water

- 3.10 Mill Brook runs through the northern part of the site and continues south, parallel to the eastern site boundary of the southern part of the site. The gentle flowing water is between 10-20cm deep with a channel width of 50-100cm (see Photograph 8). The watercourse on site is heavily shaded by the surrounding trees and tall ruderal herb with no aquatic or marginal vegetation present. The earth banks are steep and largely void of vegetation, and the substrate consists of leaf litter and general detritus.



Photograph 8 showing a section of Mill Brook

Boundaries

- 3.11 The sites peripheral and intra-site boundaries are marked with fencing.

HABITATS (SECOND SURVEY AND PARCEL – AUGUST 2022)

- 3.12 The Phase 1 Habitat Map can be found at the back of the report. The habitats on the proposed development site are described below.

Broadleaved Woodland

- 3.13 This habitat dominates the site, running parallel to Mill Brook on both sides of the bank (see Photograph 9). The woodland is relatively mature, closed canopy and is dominated by Hazel and Ash. Other tree species present include Holly, Field Maple *Acer campestre*, Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Pedunculate Oak, Wild Privet *Ligustrum vulgare* and Goat Willow *Salix caprea*. The woodland ground flora was sparse and was dominated by Ivy. Other ground flora includes Wood Avens *Geum urbanum*, Bramble and Ground-elder *Aegopodium podagraria*.



Photograph 9 showing the broadleaved woodland

Running Water

- 3.14 Mill Brook runs through the site (see Photograph 10). The water level was low and barely flowing at the time of survey. The watercourse was approximately 1m wide and 2cm deep with a silt substrate. The banks of the brook sit at approximately 45°. No macrophytes are present on the surface or banks of the brook. An outfall discharges to the brook towards the south of the site (see Photograph 11). Litter is present in a dried area of the brook (see Photograph 12).



Photograph 10 showing the running water



Photograph 11 showing the outfall



Photograph 12 showing the litter

Continuous Scrub

- 3.15 The western boundary between the site and the amenity grassland that borders Amberley Drive contains a dense area of continuous scrub (see Photograph 13). Woody species include Blackthorn and Bramble. Herbaceous species comprise of Common Nettle, Herb-Robert, Common Ragwort, Rosebay Willowherb and Reed Canary-grass *Phalaris arundinacea*.



Photograph 13 showing the continuous scrub

Tall Ruderal Herb

- 3.16 Stands of tall ruderal herb occur on the eastern and western sides of Mill Brook (see Photograph 14). Abundant species are Bramble, Common Nettle, Cock's-foot, Hogweed, Cleavers, and Rosebay Willowherb. There is a small patch of *Cotoneaster* sp. on the western side of the site along the boundary of the residential gardens within the tall ruderal vegetation.



Photograph 14 showing the tall ruderal vegetation

PROTECTED SPECIES

Great Crested Newt

- 3.17 Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* (GCN) is a European Protected Species (EPS) under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and the species is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.18 No ponds exist on site or within 250m of the site boundary. The poor semi-improved grassland, tall ruderal herb, woodland, and continuous scrub offer suitable cover and foraging habitats for amphibians.
- 3.19 No impacts to GCN or other amphibians are considered likely and these species are not considered further.

Bats

- 3.20 All bat species are European Protected Species. This is implemented in the UK through the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Bats are also protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC, 2006).
- 3.21 The trees on site were assessed against the criteria in Table 1 (taken from Collins, 2016).

Table 1 - Assessing Trees for Bat Roosts		
Roost Suitability	Features	Further Work
Negligible	Generally used where a tree offers no suitability for bats. This category is also used where a feature has been inspected and found not to contain any features of use to bats.	No further surveys required.
Low	A tree of sufficient size or age to contain potential roost features but only with very limited roosting potential once inspected.	No further surveys required.
Moderate	A tree with one or more potential roost sites but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.	At least one emergence or re-entry survey.
High	A tree with one or more potential roost sites that are suitable for use by a large number of bats on a regular	At least two emergence and/or re-entry surveys.

	basis and for longer periods of time.	
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Potential Roosting Features in Parcel 1 – 2021 Survey

- 3.22 The trees were surveyed from the ground using binoculars where necessary. One tree on site was found to support Potential Roosting Features (PRF). This is a Pedunculate Oak tree located on the western boundary in the northern part of the first parcel, supporting numerous PRFs (see Photograph 15).



Photograph 15 showing the Oak tree on site and one of the PRFs

Potential Roosting Features in Parcel 2 – 2022 Survey

- 3.23 Three trees on site were found to support PRFs. One Ash tree towards the western boundary of the site was found to contain a Woodpecker hole and peeled bark and deemed to have moderate roost suitability. Pedunculate Oak trees to the south-western and southern areas of the site were found to contain limbs of deadwood (see Photograph 16). These trees were deemed as having low roost suitability.



Photograph 16 showing an Oak tree with PRFs

- 3.24 The woodland habitat on site offers suitable bat foraging habitat.

Badger

- 3.25 Badgers *Meles meles* are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). These Acts, for example, make it illegal to disturb a Badger whilst it is in a sett, to kill, injure or take a Badger and to obstruct the entrance to a Badger sett.
- 3.26 No Badger sett was located on the site or immediately adjacent to either parcel. No evidence of Badger activity such as latrines or snuffle holes was located during either survey.

Nesting Birds

- 3.27 All bird species are protected at their nest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
- 3.28 The trees, scrub and hedgerow on site offer nesting habitat for a range of common bird species.

Otter and Water Vole

- 3.29 Otter *Lutra lutra* is a European Protected Species. This is implemented in the UK through the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Otters are also protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC, 2006).
- 3.30 Water Vole *Arvicola amphibius* is fully protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This makes it an offence to:

- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection.
 - intentionally or recklessly disturb Water Voles whilst occupying a structure or place used for that purpose.
 - intentionally kill, injure, or take Water Voles.
- 3.31 The steep, earth banks of Mill Brook offer suitable burrowing habitat for Water Vole. However, no burrows or evidence of Water Vole was recorded during either survey.
- 3.32 Otters are unlikely to use Mill Brook due to the lack of foraging opportunities and the isolated location.
- 3.33 The proposed development is unlikely to result in any impacts to Otter or Water Vole and these species are not considered further.

INVASIVE SPECIES

- 3.34 A stand of *Cotoneaster* sp. is present along the western side of the second parcel along the boundary of the residential gardens within the tall ruderal vegetation. Several species of *Cotoneaster* are listed on Schedule 9 of The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

PROTECTED SITES

- 3.35 One statutory protected site lies within 2km of the proposed development site. This is Wythenshawe Park Local Nature Reserve (LNR) which is located approximately 1.3km north of the site boundary.
- 3.36 The site lies within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone, which lists certain types of development that may have a deleterious impact on protected sites nearby. The proposals for the site are not listed as a concern within the criteria.
- 3.37 The closest non-statutory protected site is Blackcarr Wood & Baguley Bottoms Site of Biological Importance (SBI) which lies 900m to the north-east of the site.

4.0 ASSESSMENT

HABITATS

- 4.1 The proposed development will result in the loss of the roadside amenity grassland and an area of continuous scrub and tall ruderal vegetation. These habitats are of low ecological importance and the loss is not significant beyond the site level. No specific habitat mitigation is necessary. The landscaping scheme should include a mixture of native trees, scrub and wildflower grassland where possible.
- 4.2 A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) should be followed during construction works to manage the risk of pollution and damage to adjacent habitats.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 4.3 Local planning policy requires developments to demonstrate biodiversity net gain. A Biodiversity Impact Assessment informed by use of the DEFRA metric 3.1 would quantify the predicted changes in habitat units resulting from the proposed development and inform mitigation requirements. Retained habitats (woodland and grassland) could be enhanced through appropriate management to maximise their value to wildlife. A Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) could be secured through an appropriately worded planning condition.

PROTECTED SPECIES

Bats

- 4.4 No trees with potential to support roosting bats are proposed to be affected by the proposed development. No further survey work or mitigation is required.
- 4.5 As the site may be used for foraging bats, any artificial lighting should avoid illuminating the retained woodland habitats.

Badger

- 4.6 The woodland and dense scrub on site offer suitable habitat for Badgers to create setts and it is possible that a sett could be created prior to the proposed development. A pre-works badger survey should be carried out to update the assessment and inform any mitigation requirements.

Nesting Birds

- 4.7 Vegetation removal has the potential to impact nesting birds. It is recommended any works to potential nesting habitats (trees and dense scrub) be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (which is generally March – August) unless a nesting bird survey is undertaken first. Should any active nests be identified, these would need to be protected by a suitable buffer until nesting is complete.

PROTECTED SITES

- 4.8 No impacts to protected sites are anticipated to result from the proposed development due to the lack of impact pathways between the proposed development site and protected sites.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 Protected species and biodiversity are a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a planning application. The presence of protected species, the effect of the proposed development and suitable mitigation, if required, must be established before planning permission can be granted.

5.2 The recommendations within this report will avoid the risk of potential impacts to protected species and priority habitats.

Enhancement Opportunities

5.3 General enhancement opportunities include:

- Soft landscaping should include the provision of native and non-native flowering perennial species, to provide a pollen and nectar source for invertebrates.
- Tree and shrub planting – where practical, native tree and shrub species should be planted.
- Bird and/or bat boxes should be incorporated within new buildings.
- ‘Hedgehog holes’ to be incorporated into any fencing.

5.4 Implementation of the recommendations within this report would ensure the proposed development is delivered in conformity with planning policy relating to nature conservation.

6.0 REFERENCES

Collins, J. (ed.). (2016). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd Edition*. Bat Conservation Trust. London.

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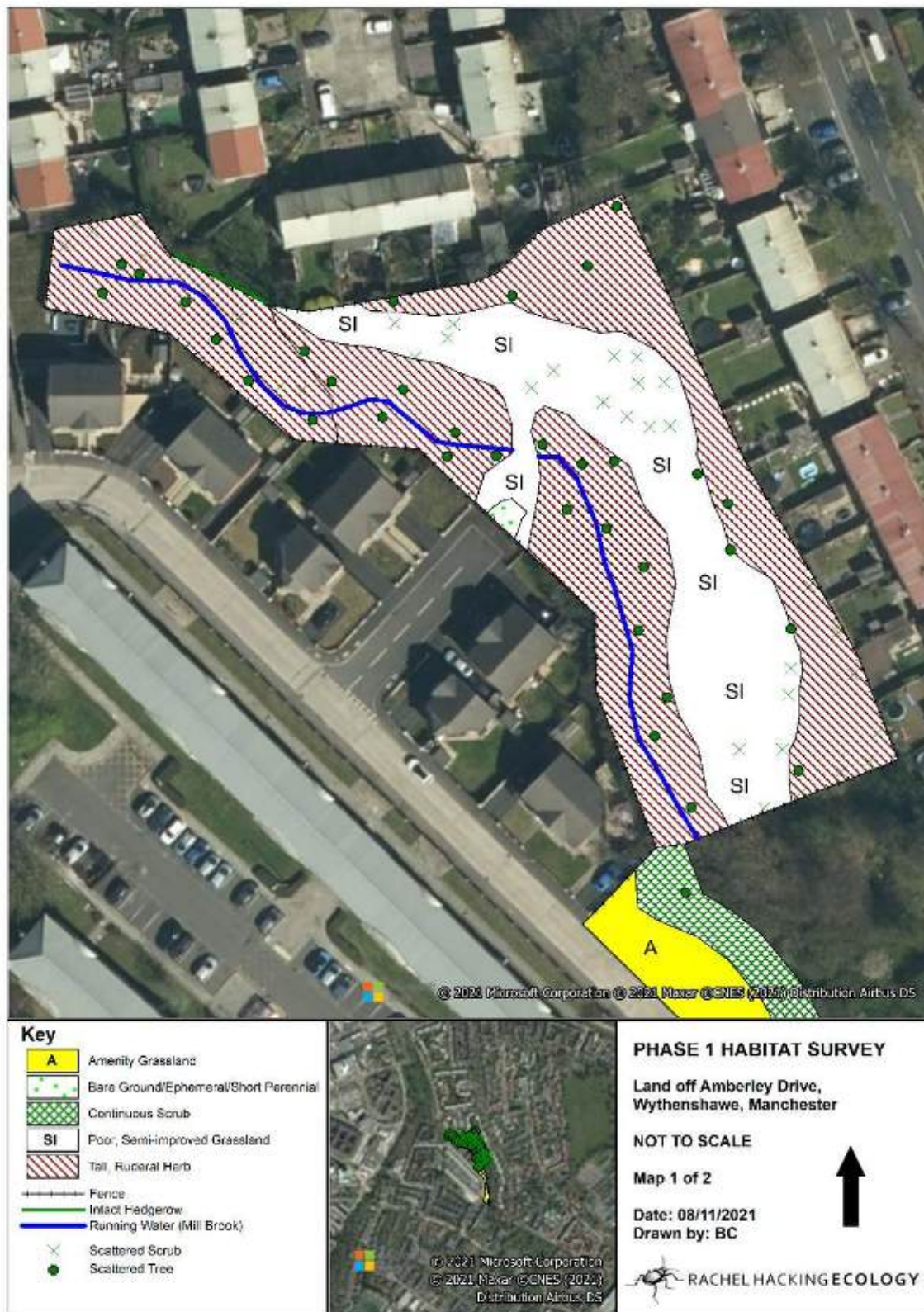
MAGIC mapping: www.magic.gov.uk. Defra, London

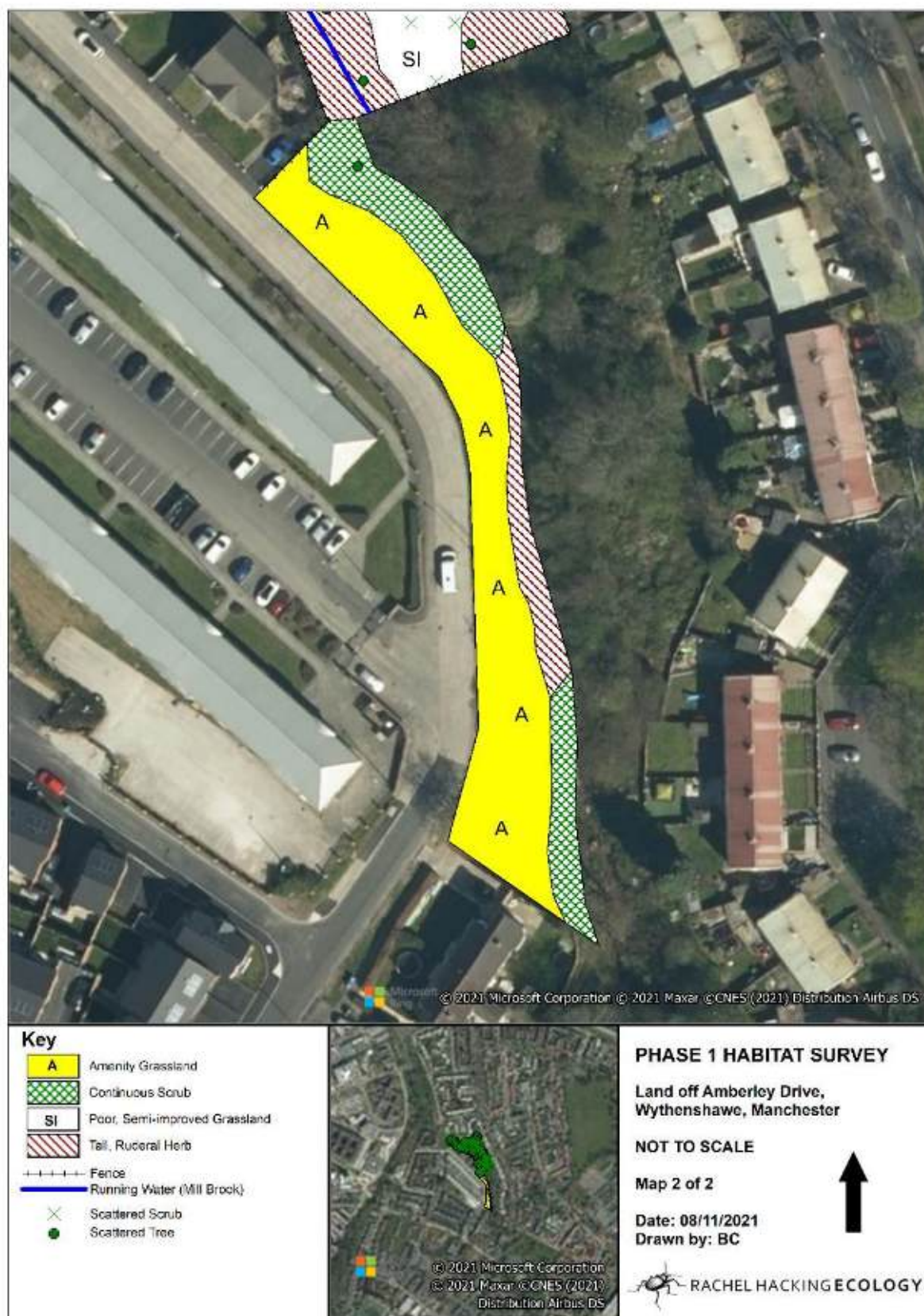
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APPENDIX A PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP





Phase 1 Habitat Map

Land off Amberley Drive,
Wythenshawe, Manchester

Drawn by: KR
Date: 16/08/2022

NOT TO SCALE



Key

-  Continuous Scrub
-  Semi-natural Broad-leaved Woodland
-  Tall Ruderal Herb
-  Fence
-  Running Water
-  Cotoneaster sp.
-  Tree with PRF

