

Manchester Communications Academy,
Lathbury Road Site, Manchester
Ecological Appraisal
2024



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Client McArdle Sport Tec

Project Title MCA, Lathbury Road Site

Project Reference RHE.4224

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Revision	Ben Crossthwaite	Senior Ecologist	04/09/2024



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Executive Summary

Development Details

The client is proposing the expansion of a MUGA pitch and a car park at Manchester Communications Academy, Lathbury Road, Manchester, hereafter referred to as the 'application 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. Much of the land is modified grassland. The individual trees and broadleaved woodland offer the most ecological value, providing foraging and nesting habitat for birds.

Outcomes

No further survey work is required because features with potential to support protected species will not be adversely affected by the proposed development.

Install bat roosting and bird nesting boxes on trees across the development.

Further assessment, site design and mitigation will be necessary to achieve 10% Biodiversity Net Gain, to comply with legislation and local planning policy.



1. Introduction

1.1 Project Brief

- 1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2024 by McArdle Sport Tec to carry out an ecological appraisal of land on site. The site is located at O.S. grid reference: SD 86010 00896 (see Figure 1).

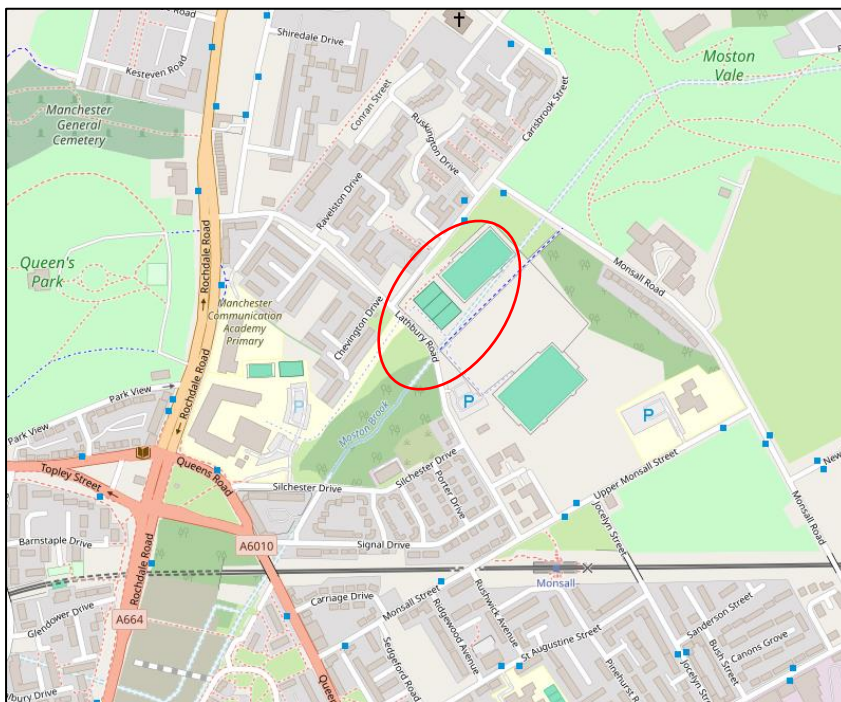


Figure 1. Location Map courtesy of Open Street Map

- 1.1.2 The proposed development site largely comprises poor, semi-improved grassland, sealed surfaces, a small section of broadleaved woodland and scattered trees. Residential development is located in the wider landscape, with amenity parklands located in the vicinity of the site.

Description of Development

- 1.1.3 The site will be the subject of a planning application for the expansion of an existing MUGA pitch and a car park.

1.2 Scope of Work

- 1.2.1 The Client commissioned Rachel Hacking Ecology to carry out the following works:
- Desk-based study to obtain details of designated sites, protected and notable species within a specified search area.
 - Record the extent, type, and condition of habitats within and next to the site.
 - Calculate the baseline and post-development 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 Ben Crossthwaite (Senior Ecologist) visited the site on 6th June 2024. Ben has more than 9 years' of professional experience and has carried out Extended Phase 1 Habitat Surveys and biodiversity net gain assessments at numerous sites throughout England.

Weather

- 1.3.2 The weather at the time of the survey was overcast, and mild with short showers.

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 (and European Protected Species licences) within a 2km radius of the site.
- 2.1.2 The site was checked to determine if it is located within an Impact Risk Zones for any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and if so, whether the Local Planning Authority will need to consult Natural England.

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 Any trees on or adjacent to the site that could be affected by the proposals were given a ground-level assessment, searching for Potential Roosting Features (PRF's), such as flaking bark, woodpecker holes, knot holes and limb splits.
- 2.2.4

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.



2.3 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 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. The extent of any habitats to be retained or enhanced was also entered into baseline worksheets.
- 2.3.3 The post-development masterplan was interrogated to determine areas of hard standing, buildings, and associated infrastructure. New, retained and enhanced habitats were classified and allocated a target condition, based on habitat type, location and management input. This information was uploaded to the metric spreadsheet to obtain a post-development value.
- 2.3.4 The pre- and post-development values were compared to determine whether the yield of biodiversity units achieved a deficit or gain.

2.4 Mitigation Hierarchy

- 2.4.1 Mitigation measures should be embedded within the masterplan 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.

3.2 Designated Sites

- 3.2.1 The desk study provided information on the designated sites listed below in Table 1.

Table 1. Designated Sites		
Name	Status	Location/distance
Boggart Hole Clough	Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	1.4km
Reservoirs at Harpurhey	Site of Biological Importance (SBI)	0.75km
Rochdale Canal, Stott's Lane – Ducie Street Basin	SBI	1.25km

- 3.2.2 The desk study identified that the site is located within the Impact Risk Zone of Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and SSSI. The proposed development will not require the Local Planning Authority to consult with Natural England.

3.3 Habitats

- 3.3.1 Target Notes and photographs are contained in Appendix 2 and the habitats survey plan is contained in Appendix 3. Condition assessments for grassland and individual trees are found in Appendix 4. The site plan is located in Appendix 5. Full botanical species lists can be provided on request.

Amenity Grassland - Modified Grassland

- 3.3.2 The site's amenity grassland, classified as modified grassland under the UK Habitat Classification system, is species-poor and regularly managed. Abundant species present are Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg., Daisy *Bellis perennis* and Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata*. The grassland is in 'poor' ecological condition as it fails Condition A, the essential criteria of the condition assessment. The modified grassland measures 0.021ha and provides 0.04 habitat units.

Scattered Trees - Individual Tree; Urban Trees

- 3.3.3 Twenty-eight individual trees are located around the site's peripheries. These are all juvenile trees and comprise Scarlet Oak *Quercus coccinea*, Grey Willow *Salix cinerea*, White Willow *Salix alba* and Silver Birch *Betula pendula*. All the trees on site are of moderate condition. The individual trees provide 2.75 habitat units.

Broadleaved Woodland

- 3.3.4 Broadleaved woodland is located in the south-eastern corner of the site, and is part of a wider woodland which spreads further to the east and south. The woodland lacks a diverse structure and is largely juvenile. The woodland comprises Alder *Alnus glutinosa*, Silver Birch *Betula pendula*, Goat Willow *Salix caprea* and Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*. The woodland is in poor condition, measures 0.018ha and provides 0.07 habitat units.

Hardstanding – Sealed Surfaces

- 3.3.5 A hardstanding footpath and existing MUGA pitch are located on site. These are both classified as sealed surface under the UK Habitat Classification system. The sealed surfaces do not require a condition assessment, measure 0.53ha and provides zero habitat units.

Poor, Semi-improved Grassland – Modified Grassland

- 3.3.6 The site's poor, semi-improved grasslands, located in the southern and eastern parts of the site are classified as modified grassland under the UK Habitat Classification system. The grasslands have a more diverse species mix to that of the amenity grassland and the southern areas of this habitat lacks any formal management. Abundant species present are Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg., Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus*, Red Clover *Trifolium pratense*, Common Vetch *Vicia sativa*, Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, Cleavers *Galium aparine*, Creeping

Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*. The grassland is in good ecological condition, passing all the criteria of the condition assessment. The modified grassland measures 0.25ha and provides 1.5 habitat units.

3.4 Biodiversity Net Gain

- 3.4.1 The habitat unit baseline for the site is 2.53 units.

3.5 Species

Bats

- 3.5.1 The trees on site were found not to support potential roost features.
- 3.5.2 The trees and woodland on site provide potential foraging and dispersal routes for bats.

Badger

- 3.5.3 No evidence of Badger was found on site. The sites location is considered sub-optimal for Badger and it is unlikely Badger utilise the sites habitats. Badger is not considered further in this report.

Great Crested Newt and Other Amphibians

- 3.5.4 No ponds exist on site. A review of maps and aerial images shows that no ponds are located within 250 metres of the site boundary.
- 3.5.5 Given the lack of breeding habitat in the locality, particularly for Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus*, amphibians are not considered further in this report.

Hedgehog

- 3.5.6 The sites habitats and surrounding lands provide suitable foraging habitat for Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*.

Birds

- 3.5.7 The trees and woodland on site provide foraging and nesting habitat for passerine bird species.

3.6 Invasive Species

- 3.6.1 No non-native, invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981, are located on site.

4. Assessment

4.1 Development Context

- 4.1.1 The following assessment assumes that the grassland, woodland and trees on site will be lost to the development layout as shown in Appendix 5 below.

4.2 Impacts on Designated Sites

- 4.2.1 This section evaluates and describes potential impacts and assesses ecological effects on designated sites that are within the study area.
- 4.2.2 One statutory designated site lies within 2km of the site boundaries. One non-statutory designated sites lie within 1km of the site boundaries. The development site is geographically separated from designated sites, and there is no requirement for the Local Authority to consult with regards to potential impacts SSSI as a consequence of the proposed development. Any adverse impacts are not anticipated.

4.3 Impacts on Habitats

- 4.3.1 This section evaluates and describes potential impacts and assesses ecological effects on habitats that are within the study area.

Grassland

- 4.3.2 There will be a loss of modified grassland, however the impact will be at site level only due to the small scale and distinctiveness of the grassland.

Individual Tree

- 4.3.3 The loss of trees on site will have a negative impact at site level only. It is proposed tree planting of a variety of native species is included with mitigation plans.

Broadleaved Woodland

- 4.3.4 The broadleaved woodland on site is not priority woodland. This forms part of a wider woodland habitat with the fringe to be lost. The impact of the small loss of woodland habitat is to be at site level only due to the small scale and poor condition.
- 4.3.5 In the absence of mitigation, retained trees and woodland could be damaged through soil compaction leading to root damage.



4.4 Biodiversity Net Gain

- 4.4.1 Within the application site the baseline habitat units are 2.53 units. Post-development habitat units are zero.
- 4.4.2 For the proposed development to achieve an overall net gain for biodiversity it will be necessary to seek mitigation within via offsetting.

4.5 Impacts on Species

Bats

- 4.5.1 The woodland adjacent to the site offers good foraging and commuting habitat for bats. It is recommended this is protected as a 'dark zone' for bats and other fauna species through a sensitive lighting scheme.

Birds

- 4.5.2 If the felling of trees or removal of woodland is to be conducted during the nesting bird season, an adverse impact on nesting birds could occur. Although further mitigation measures will not be required, the development provides an opportunity for enhancement through the provision of nest boxes attached to mature trees and within the fabric of the new units.

Hedgehog

- 4.5.3 The site provides suitable habitat for Hedgehog. Therefore, the site clearance works should be undertaken using Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAM).



5. Recommendations

5.1 Further Surveys

- 5.1.1 There is no requirement for further survey work at this time. The initial site visit and desk study have proved to be sufficient to fully determine the impacts of the proposed development.

5.2 Mitigation and Enhancement Measures

- 5.2.1 Protection of ecological features (habitats and species) during the construction and operational phases will be described in a Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP). The Management Plan will contain Operational Objectives, Rationale for management, Prescriptions and schedules detailing the timing and responsibility for delivering the prescriptions. It is anticipated that the BMP will be provided as a planning condition in advance of the commencement of the proposed development.

Habitats

- 5.2.2 Retained trees and woodland will be protected during construction phase through a root protection plan. These habitats should also be protected with a sensitive lighting scheme, which can be detailed within the CEMP. The protection of the ditch on site is to also be secured via a CEMP.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 5.2.3 For the proposed development to achieve an overall net gain for biodiversity it will be necessary to seek mitigation or compensation for any shortfall in units either by direct management of land by the applicant or the purchase of biodiversity units from a third party.
- 5.2.4 Scenario A is on-site mitigation. If on-site mitigation is insufficient to deliver a post-development 10% net gain for biodiversity, two other options are available:
- 5.2.5 Scenario B: the developer is unable to compensate all impacts on-site but is able to secure local compensatory habitat creation. This scenario is not modelled explicitly and would require making assumptions for what a development might look like.
- 5.2.6 Scenario C: the developer is unable to compensate on site and is unable to find local compensatory habitat in which to invest. Instead, they have to pay for their units through a biodiversity unit offsetting market.
- 5.2.7 This could be the LPA, DEFRA, The Environment Bank or another third-party landowner. 2.78 habitat unit credits would need to be purchased.



Bats

- 5.2.8 Bat boxes could be installed on suitable retained trees and newly constructed units to enhance roosting opportunities.

Nesting Birds

- 5.2.9 Impacts on nesting birds should be avoided by carrying out site clearance and similar operations outside of the bird breeding season (March- August). Construction activities that might directly impact upon breeding birds should hence be limited to the September-February period. 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.
- 5.2.10 Nest boxes could be installed on suitable retained trees and newly constructed units to enhance nesting opportunities for birds of conservation concern.

Hedgehog

- 5.2.11 Site clearance works are to be undertaken via a Hedgehog RAM. This can be imposed via a suitably worded condition.

Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023) 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 it (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.

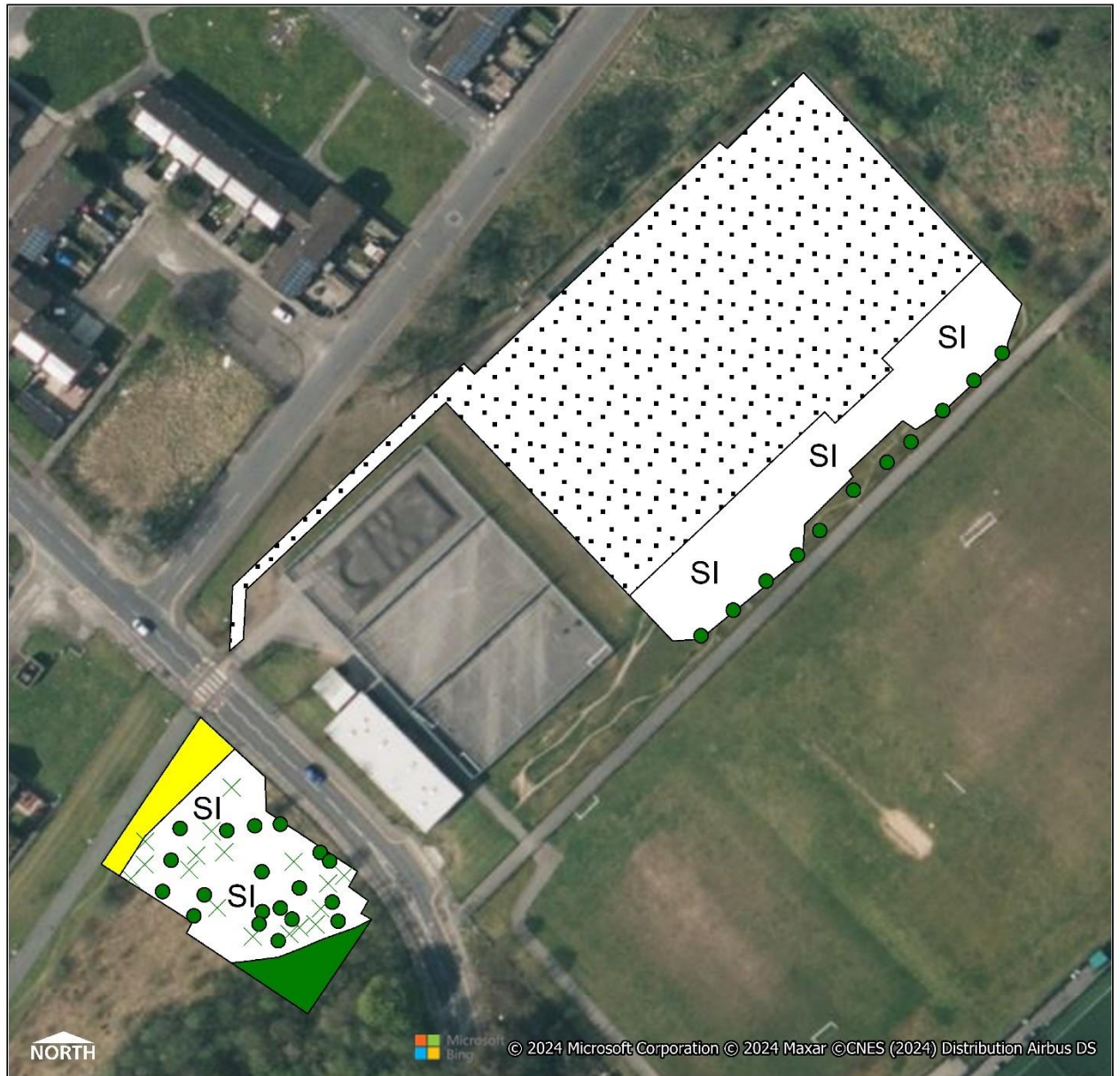
Appendix 2: Target Notes

Habitat/Reference	Photograph
Improved Grassland – Amenity Grassland	
Urban Trees	
Broadleaved Woodland	

Habitat/Reference	Photograph
Sealed Surfaces	
Modified Grassland – Poor, Semi-improved Grassland	

Appendix 3: Habitat Survey Plan





Phase 1 Habitat Map

Key

- Amenity Grassland
- Broadleaved Woodland
- SI Poor, Semi-improved Grassland
- . Hardstanding
- Scattered Scrub
- Scattered Tree

Project Name:

Manchester Communications Academy, Lathbury, Road, Manchester

Project Reference:

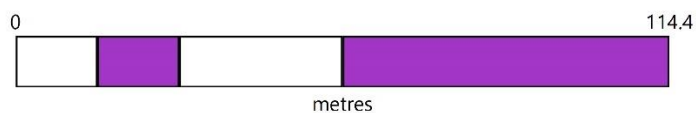
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Appendix 4: Condition Assessments

GRASSLAND LOW DISTINCTIVENESS – AMENITY GRASSLAND		
Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)
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.	No
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.	
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present).	
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.	
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁴).	

INDIVIDUAL TREES		
Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	No/Yes



INDIVIDUAL TREES		
Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	Yes
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).	No
D	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.	Yes
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	No
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Yes

GRASSLAND LOW DISTINCTIVENESS – POOR, SEMI-IMPROVED GRASSLAND		
Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)
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.	Yes
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.	Yes
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present).	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



GRASSLAND LOW DISTINCTIVENESS – POOR, SEMI-IMPROVED GRASSLAND		
Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)
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 <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> 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

Appendix 5: Site Layout

