

4B Albany Road, Chorlton, Manchester

Extended Phase 1 Habitat

& Daytime Bat Survey

2023



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Executive Summary

Development Details

The client is proposing a residential development, hereafter referred to as the '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

Ecological features of interest are common throughout the UK and include habitats such as amenity grassland, continuous and scattered scrub and ephemeral. The remaining site consists of sealed surface and a warehouse with associated offices. There are no designated protected sites adjacent to the site or within 1km of the site and no evidence or presence of protected species. Invasive non-natives are present on the site, consisting of Montbretia.

Outcomes

Further survey works are not considered necessary on the site. The Phase 1 Habitats present on the site are common throughout the UK. No nationally rare or locally rare plant species were located during the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey. No evidence of bat activity was found within the warehouse building. The warehouse is in very good condition and does not possess any bat roosting features. The internal space is well-lit by daylight and holds a poor thermal capacity due to the construction and no roof voids are present. Given the results of the survey, the warehouse is considered to offer negligible bat roost suitability. No further survey works are considered necessary. General recommendations to bring biodiversity gain to the site are detailed within the Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme¹.

¹ Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme - 4B Albany Road, Chorlton, Manchester - 2023



1. Introduction

1.1 Project Brief

- 1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2023 by Bowsall Developments Ltd to carry out an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Daytime bat Survey of land and buildings at 4B Albany Road, Chorlton, Manchester (O.S. grid reference: SJ 81774 94276 – see Figure 1).

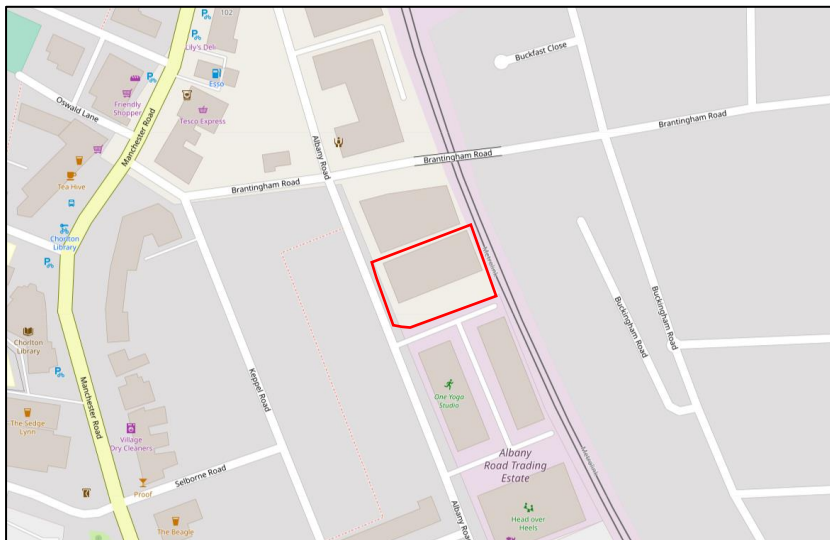


Figure 1. Map showing the location of the site courtesy of © OpenStreetMap Contributors

- 1.1.2 The proposed development site is a warehouse with office space, associated parking, amenity grassland with ephemeral vegetation, continuous and scattered scrub to the rear of the property. The site is located in an industrial estate, surrounded by commercial units with the Metro Link to the east and private dwellings to the west.

Description of Development

- 1.1.3 The site will be the subject of a planning application for the levelling of the site and the construction of an apartment complex with parking and landscaping.

1.2 Scope of Work

- 1.2.1 The Client commissioned Rachel Hacking Ecology to carry out the following works: (omit as required)
- Record the extent, type, and condition of habitats within and next to the site



- Search for signs of protected species and assessment of the potential of habitats and features to support protected and notable species
- Carry out targeted surveys to record assemblages of species and/or protected and notable species
- External and internal survey of buildings, searching for evidence of bat activity and assessing the potential for bat roosts.
- Survey for invasive, non-native species on the site

1.3 Site Visit Information

Surveyor Details

- 1.3.1 Joe Cooper BSc (Hons), MRes visited the site on 2nd February 2023. Joe is an experienced ecologist with over 5 years of survey experience and holds a Natural England Class 2 Bat Licences (Licence no's: 2022-10780-CL18-BAT).

Weather

- 1.3.2 The weather at the time of the survey was cold and bright with scattered clouds. The site conditions were suitable for a full assessment to be undertaken.



2. Methods

2.1 Field Survey

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.1.1 In accordance with JNCC guidelines² 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.
- 2.1.2 During the walkover habitat and features were assessed for their suitability to support of protected and notable species in accordance with CIEEM guidelines³. Field signs of protected, notable, and invasive non-native species, if encountered, were mapped, and described.

Bats

- 2.1.3 The exterior of the site was surveyed from the ground using binoculars, a high-powered torch. Features offering potential access to roosting bats were recorded. Such features may include suitable gaps in roof coverings, gaps behind external cladding/facia and gaps in masonry.
- 2.1.4 Evidence indicating the presence of roosting bats was also searched for. This may include staining from fur oil around roost entry points.
- 2.1.5 The interior of the site, including the roof void, was surveyed to identify any evidence indicating use by roosting bats. Such evidence may include bat droppings, feeding remains, urine splashes, live or dead bats and staining from fur oil on timbers.
- 2.1.6 Any trees on the site that are to 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.

Nesting Birds

- 2.1.7 A pair of close-focusing binoculars were used to survey the site for signs of active nesting, including birds carrying nesting material, alarm calling or adults returning to the nest to feed young.

² Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2010). *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A Technique for Environmental Audit*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough

³ Chartered Institute of Ecologists and Environmental Managers (2017). *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*. Chartered Institute of Ecologists and Environmental Managers, Winchester.



2.2 Mitigation Hierarchy

2.2.1 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. Results

3.1 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 2.

Table 1. Designated Sites			
Name	Status	Location/distance	Interest
Chorlton Ees & Ivy Green	Local Nature Reserve	1km	Meadows, Wildflowers and Woodland
Broad Ees Dole	Local Nature Reserve	1.8km	Wildlife refuge
Chorlton Water Park	LNR	2.1km	Nationally important for wildfowl and developing woodland

- 3.2.2 The desk study identified that the site was located within the Impact Risk Zone of four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which include Brookheys Covert SSSI, Rossmere SSSI and RAMSAR, Astley & Bedford Mosses SSSI, and Rochdale Canal SSSI. The proposed development will not require the Local Planning Authority to consult with Natural England.

3.3 Habitats

Amenity Grassland

- 3.3.1 An area of amenity grassland is located to the west of the site and is positioned on an embankment (see Photograph 1). Dominant grass species include Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne* with frequently occurring herbaceous species including Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg., White Clover *Trifolium repens* and Groundsel *Senecio vulgaris*. The habitat is in poor condition as it fails the core criteria and passes 4 of the condition assessment criteria. This habitat is in poor condition and of low distinctiveness.



Photograph 1 showing the amenity grassland

Ephemeral Short Perennial

- 3.3.2 The strip of land to the rear of the site is described as ephemeral short perennial, with vegetation having encroached on areas of bare ground (Photograph 2). Species included within this habitat are Curled dock *Rumex crispus*, Ground-elder *Aegopodium podagraria*, Yarrow *Achillea millefolium* and Rosebay Willowherb *Chamaenerion angustifolium*. The habitat is in moderate condition as it passes 2 of the core condition assessment criteria. This habitat is in moderate condition and of low distinctiveness.



Photograph 2 showing the ephemeral short perennial

Continuous and Scattered Scrub

- 3.3.3 A patch of continuous scrub is located in the northwest and southeast corner of the site (see Photograph 3 and 4). Patches of scattered scrub are located along the fence line to the rear of the building. Species included within this habitat are Butterfly bush *Buddleja davidii*, Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur*, Oregon-grape *Mahonia aquifolium* and Montbretia *Crocasmia x crocosmiiflora*. The habitat is in moderate condition as it passes 2 of the core condition assessment criteria. This habitat is in poor condition and medium distinctiveness.



Photograph 3 showing the continuous scrub



Photograph 4 showing additional scrub

3.4 Species

Bats

- 3.4.1 The building is a brick-built warehouse on hardstanding which is currently occupied as a place of business (see Photograph 5). The warehouse building is in good material condition. The brickwork and mortar is all intact with no missing bricks or cracks. The eastern end of the warehouse features a number of offices with uPVC windows and doors which are well sealed and flush with the brickworks (see Photograph 6)



Photograph 5 showing the building on site



Photograph 6 showing the doors and windows

- 3.4.2 The roof of the warehouse is in good condition and pitched, constructed from steel beams, corrugated panelling and fibre glass skylights (see Photograph 7). The roof edges are sealed with moulded metal sheeting which creates a seal between the corrugated cladding on the walls and the roof (see Photograph 8).



Photograph 7 showing the roof



Photograph 8 showing the gable end

- 3.4.3 Internally warehouse space is open to the roof and no roof voids exist (see Photograph 9). The roof has internal boarding that creates a gap between the external panelling (see Photograph 10). The internal space is light and draughty. No evidence of bat droppings or bat activity was found.



Photograph 9 showing the internal roof



Photograph 10 showing the underside of the roof

- 3.4.4 The metal beams are in excellent condition, holding no gaps or cracks at the wall that could be exploited by roosting bats (see Photograph 11). The internal walls are exposed brick work which is in excellent condition. The western end of the warehouse features internal office space, which is well sealed and finished to a high standard (see Photograph 12). Office ceiling tiles create small voids between the roof and the internal ceiling however no access is available from the outside. No evidence of bat droppings or activity was located within the office spaces.



Photograph 11 showing the metal beams



Photograph 12 showing the office ceiling tiles

4. Assessment

4.1 Development Context

- 4.1.1 The following assessment assumes that the development proposals will involve the loss of all of the habitats on site. It is recommended a suitable landscaping scheme is created to help mitigate the loss of the habitats on site. A landscape scheme should include the creation of a variety of species-rich habitats, including replacement grassland, introduced shrub and hedgerows which involve the planting of native pollinator friendly shrub planting, as well as a high ecological value mixture of ornamental planting where appropriate. Bird, bat boxes and bee bricks will also be incorporated into the façades and roof of the buildings proposed on site as well as insect hotels and brash piles to enhance the net gain as detailed within the Biodiversity Enhancement Plan⁴

4.2 Impacts on Designated Sites

- 4.2.1 There are three statutory sites within 3km from the site boundary all of which are Local Nature Reserves.
- 4.2.2 The nearest non-statutory site is Chorlton Ees Site of Biological Importance (SBI). This is approximately 1.1km to the southeast of the site and is encompassed by Chorlton Ees & Ivy Green LNR. All of these sites are geographically isolated from the site by urban development and an adverse impact on the qualifying features is not anticipated.
- 4.2.3 Increased recreational pressure is a consideration within the local area however, many local parks are closer than that of Chorlton Ees SBI & Ivy Green LNR which will likely offset the pressures of increased population within the area. Indirect impacts such as air pollution, drainage and runoff water is also a consideration, however the development is proposed within a previously built up area with the necessary infrastructure to withstand increased use. Adverse impacts are not anticipated on the local wildlife site.

4.3 Impacts on Habitats

Amenity Grassland

- 4.3.1 The loss of this habitat will have a negligible impact because it is widespread and common. The proposals include equivalent habitat elsewhere on the site upon completion of the construction phase.

⁴ See footnote 1

Continuous & Scattered Scrub

- 4.3.2 The scrub will be removed during the construction phase, but replacement planting will offset the short-term loss upon completion of the construction phase.

Ephemeral short perennial

- 4.3.3 The ephemeral vegetation to the rear of the warehouse building will be removed during the construction phase, but replacement planting will offset the short-term loss upon completion of the construction phase and provide suitable pollinator friendly species for invertebrate foraging opportunities.

4.4 Impacts on Species

Bats

- 4.4.1 Bats and their habitats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Seven bat species are also listed as Species of Principal Importance under the provisions of the NERC Act 2006.
- 4.4.2 It is considered that the warehouse building holds negligible potential to support a bat roost. No signs of roosting bats were found, and the building possesses no roof voids, is constructed from materials not easily exploited by bats and is in a sub-optimal location. Bats are not considered a constraint on the site.

Invasive Species

- 4.4.3 Montbretia *Crocasmia × crocosmiiflora* is present within the site at SJ 81748 94280. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (Section 14 and Part II of Schedule 9) 1981 (as amended), it is an offence for Montbretia to be planted in the wild or otherwise cause it to grow in the wild.
- 4.4.4 It is not an offence to have Montbretia on your land, but it is an offence to allow the species to spread into neighbouring areas or to grow in the wild. Therefore, it will be necessary to ensure appropriate measures are in place to prevent development activities from causing further spread of the species to new areas.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Mitigation Measures

Habitats

- 5.1.1 It is recommended that a suitable landscaping scheme is provided that retains the existing trees and replaces the ornamental shrubs with native shrubs such as Guelder Rose *Viburnum opulus*, Broom *Cytisus scoparius*, European Gorse *Ulex europaeus* and Sweet Briar *Rosa rubiginosa*.

Nesting Birds

- 5.1.2 Impacts on nesting birds should be avoided, by carrying out site clearance and similar operations outside of the bird breeding season (April- August). Construction activities that might directly impact upon breeding birds should hence be limited to the September-February period.
- 5.1.3 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.
- 5.1.4 Nest boxes⁵ for House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*, Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* and Starling *Sturnus Vulgaris* to be installed into the fabric of the building are recommended as per the biodiversity enhancement plan. Boxes should be installed at least 3m above ground and should be installed on any elevation that is not south-facing.

Bats

- 5.1.5 Bat boxes⁶ for crevice dwelling bats such as Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* will be integrated into the fabric of the building as per the biodiversity enhancement plan. Boxes will be positioned at a minimum height of 4 metres, at the eaves of the roof, and if possible, on the south-facing elevation. Bat boxes should be installed away from potential predation risks and not directly above windows or doorways.
- 5.1.6 Bat foraging routes are protected from artificial lighting which would impact on the flight patterns of the bats. Artificial lighting schemes should be designed to avoid excessive lighting or directly illumination of bat roosts and/or existing vegetation on the site.

⁵ <https://www.ibstockbrick.co.uk/ecohabitat-products/>

⁶ <https://www.wildcare.co.uk/habibat-built-in-bat-box-001.html>



Invertebrates

- 5.1.7 The provision of three bee bricks⁷ installed at a height of more than 1m above ground level on a south facing wall will provide suitable habitat for a wide variety of solitary bee species.

Invasive Species

- 5.1.8 The removal of the Montbretia *Crocasmia* × *crocosmiiflora* must not cause the spread of the species. It should be treated with a suitable herbicide before removal and offsite disposal. The soil in which it was contained should be buried more than 1m deep or disposed off-site.

5.2 General Precautions

- 5.2.1 This report is considered to be valid for two years. After this, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted to assess its validity. An assessment update may be required.

⁷ See footnote 3



Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021) 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 174 and 180, shown below:

- 174. 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; etc...
- 180. 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

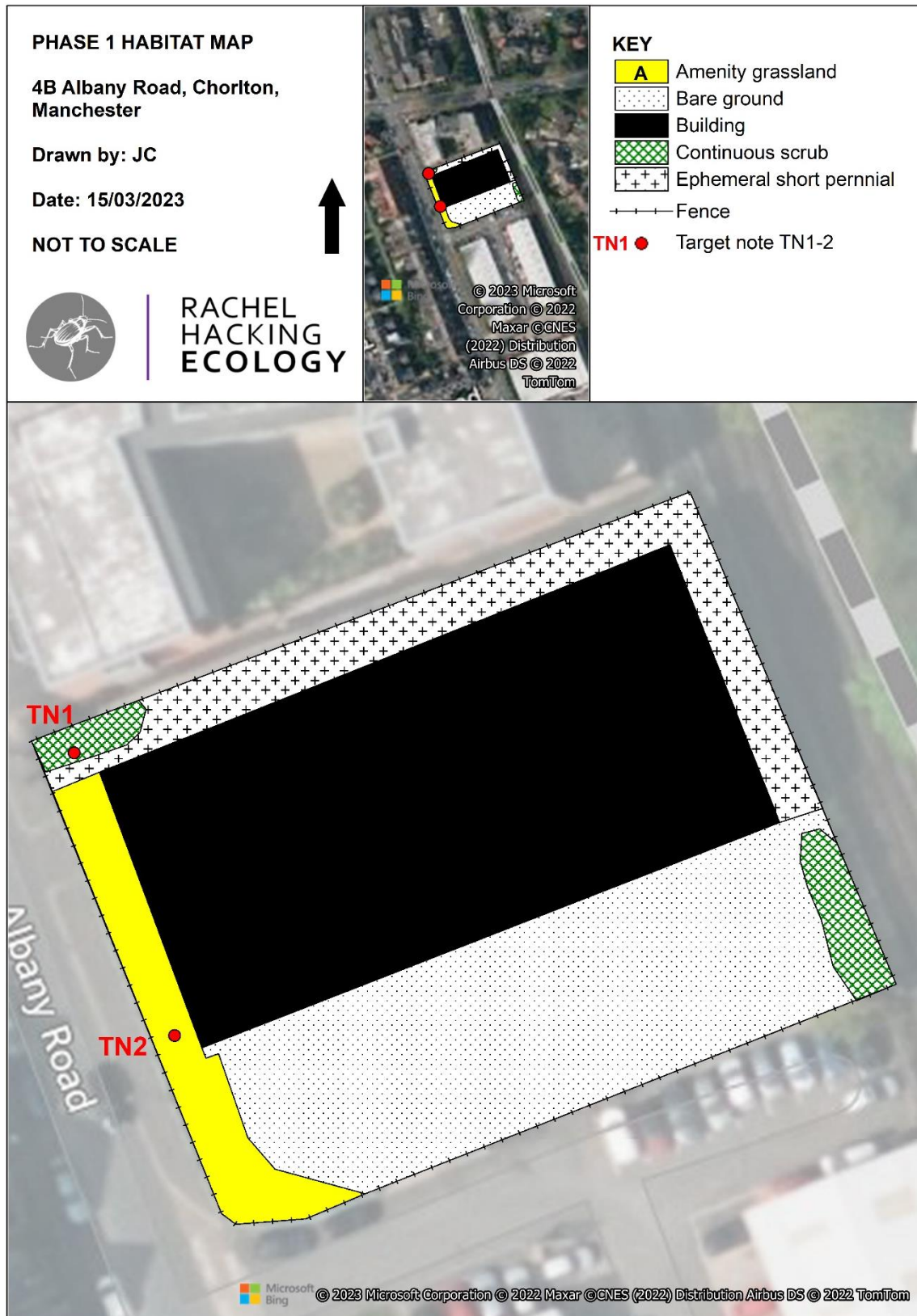
The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 protect 'important' hedgerows from destruction or damage. A hedgerow is 'important' if it (a) has existed for 30 years or more; and (b) satisfies at least one of the criteria listed in Part II of Schedule 1 of the Regulations. Under the Regulations, it is against the law to remove or destroy 'important' hedgerows unless permitted by the local planning authority.



Appendix 2: Target Notes

Table 2. Target Notes		
Reference No.	Habitat	Photograph
TN1	Invasive non-native	
TN2	Mammal resting place	

Appendix 4: Phase 1 Habitat Map



Appendix 5: Species Lists

Table 3. Species List		
Common Name	Latin Name	Abundance (or Notes)
Butterfly bush	<i>Buddleja davidii</i>	
Ground-elder	<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>	
Hemlock	<i>Conium maculatum</i>	
Common chickweed	<i>Stellaria media</i>	
Rosebay willowherb	<i>Chamaenerion angustifolium</i>	
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.	
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>	
Bittercress species	<i>Cardamine</i> sp.	
Common nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	
Broad-leaved dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	
Groundsel	<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	
Evening primrose	<i>Oenothera glazioviana</i>	
Ribwort plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	
Creeping bent	<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	
Spanish bluebell	<i>Hyacinthoides hispanica</i>	
Wood avens	<i>Geum urbanum</i>	
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	
Pedunculate Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	
Goat willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>	
Perennial rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	
Yorkshire fog	<i>Holcus Lanatus</i>	
Oregon-grape	<i>Mahonia aquifolium</i>	

