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# Land at Redby Street, Openshaw, Manchester

## Ecological Assessment Report

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# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Background**

Kingdom Ecology have carried out an Ecological Assessment of an approximately 0.28ha of disused land located either side of Redby Street, Openshaw, Manchester, M11 2FP (National Grid Reference SJ 8784 9744). Survey has been carried out as part of a proposed planning application to redevelop the site to provide a new school with associated parking and playground. The location of the study site is shown on Figure 1 in the Appendix.

The purpose of the assessment was to identify any potential ecological constraints to the proposed development.

Field survey was undertaken on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2023. Surveys were carried out by Richard Roe (BSc, MSc, MIEEM, CEnv). Richard has extensive experience of undertaking protected species and habitat surveys as a professional ecological consultant with over twenty years' experience.

## **1.2 Purpose of Report**

This report provides and outlines the findings of the field survey undertaken in April 2023.

Surveys aimed to identify habitats and species which are either of importance in terms of their conservation value or are afforded statutory legal protection. The presence of such habitats or species would form a material consideration during the planning process and could pose a constraint to the redevelopment of the site.

The field surveys comprised of an ecological walkover survey with a search for habitats that could support any protected species.

Following a description of the survey findings and an evaluation of habitats at the site, the report goes on to make recommendations for further works, mitigation and ecological enhancement measures where relevant.

## **1.3 Relevant Legislation**

### **1.3.1 Birds**

All wild birds in England and Wales are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird, or take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or its eggs.

## 2 Field Survey Methods

### 2.1 Survey Aims and Objectives

The survey aim was to assess the site as to its ecological importance by assessing the value of habitats and their suitability to support any protected or notable species. The purpose of this was to highlight any ecological constraints associated with future development proposals.

Field survey comprised of an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, this included an assessment of habitats at the site in terms of their suitability to support any other protected species including breeding birds.

Species that are considered unlikely to be significantly affected by the proposed development, even if known to be present in the general vicinity, were 'scoped out' of the assessment.

### 2.2 Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

#### 2.2.1 Methods

An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the study site was undertaken on the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2023. Survey was carried out following standard methodologies as described in the '*Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey - a technique for environmental audit*' (JNCC, 2004<sup>1</sup>).

The aims of the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey were to:

- identify and map all areas of semi-natural habitat within the study area;
- provide a botanical description of the semi-natural habitats surveyed;
- identify areas or habitats that are of particular ecological interest for nature conservation and which require more detailed investigation;
- provide additional information regarding incidental observations of protected species and the potential of habitats to support such species.

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<sup>1</sup> JNCC (2004) '*Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey - a technique for environmental audit*'

A habitat map was produced and lists of dominant or notable vascular plant species were recorded in each of the major habitat types where relevant. Typical habitats recorded at the site are also shown in photographs in the Appendix.

The field survey was carried out in early-April. This is not an ideal time of year to carry out botanical assessments of some habitat types (including grassland and brownfield sites) as some plant species may not be evident and so may be missed. However, it is considered that the survey gathered sufficient information to accurately determine and characterise broad habitats present.

## 3 Survey Results

### 3.1 Site Description

The study area comprises of an approximately 0.28ha area of disused land located either side of Redby Street, Openshaw.

Historically, the land either side of Redby Street supported rows of Victorian terraced housing. However, this was cleared several decades ago. Historic aerial imagery dates back to 2000 and shows the site as having remained largely disused until the present day with an advertising board fitted at the site around 2000.

The historic aerial imagery shows habitats at the site as being similar to those recorded in 2023 and comprising of a disused car park enclosed by grassland and scrub vegetation. It appears from some of the historical aerial imagery that vegetation at the site has been occasionally cut back. Current habitats are typical of areas of disused land comprising largely of bramble, stands of continuous and scattered scrub plus areas of bracken and rank grassland.

The site is situated within an urban setting. Redby Street runs through the centre of the site and is located between the busy A635 Ashton Old Road at its northern end and Whitworth Street at its southern end. Further areas of disused land comprising a further rank grassland and bramble extend to the east and west of the site.

Habitats to the north and south of the site largely comprise of industrial and commercial properties. Areas of semi-natural habitat or habitats of significant biodiversity value within proximity to the site are limited. The Study Site's location is shown on Figure 1 in the Appendix.

Habitats recorded at the study site are shown on Photographs and target noted on Figure 2 in the Appendix. Habitats identified at the site are described below.

### 3.2 Habitats and Protected Species

#### 3.2.1 Habitats

As previously described, the site has been largely disused since at least 2000.

Redby Street runs north to south through the centre of the site. Redby Street itself is a short length of narrow, cobbled street with a railway track running at its centre. Redby Street has been sealed with earth bunds at either end and so is no longer in use.

There are further earth bunds running alongside Redby Street. There is an area of disused former car park located to the west of Redby Street.

This area of car park is also enclosed within earth bunds. The earth embankments are overgrown with bramble, rank grasses and scattered scrub/young trees.

There is an advertising board located at the north-east corner of the site. Habitats around the advertising board comprise of mown amenity grassland. To the south of the advertising board there is an area of continuous bracken and areas of dense bramble.

None of the habitats at the site are considered to be of any significant biodiversity value.

No evidence of any non-native invasive plant species was recorded at the site.

Recorded habitats are shown in photographs in the Appendix and are target noted on Figure 2. Habitats and Targets Notes are described in greater detail in Table 1 below.

*Table 1- Target Note Descriptions*

| <i>Target Note</i> | <i>Description</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1                  | This is a short, earth embankment running along the western edge of Redby Street. Habitats on the embankment comprise principally of dense bramble scrub with some woody scrub present including young sycamore. There are patches of rank grassland throughout and extending down the western slope of the bund. Grasses present include cock's foot, red fescue and Yorkshire fog. Herbs typical of such rank grassland habitats were recorded including common ragwort, broadleaved dock, dandelion and tufted vetch. There are also patches of rosebay willowherb.                                                                                                    |
| 2                  | This is an area of former, tarmacked car park. The area has been disused for many years and so has developed pioneer vegetation with mosses and sedum and has developed thin soils at its edges. There are patches of scattered scrub throughout the area of car park including buddleia, silver birch and willow. Some areas of sparse grassland have colonised the thin soils at the fringes of this area. Grasses include red fescue and cock's foot. Herbs present within the grassland areas include common ragwort, Michaelmas daisy and dandelion. The car park area is also enclosed with further, short earth bunds which are also overgrown with dense bramble. |
| 3                  | The areas of bramble habitat extend towards the northern boundary of the site where there is an area of fly -tipped rubble. There is also some woody scrub in this location including stands of dogwood, elder, dog rose and young poplar trees. Further mature poplar trees are located immediately to the west of the site boundary.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 4                  | The dense bramble habitat continues to the east of Redby Street. There is some scattered scrub present amongst the bramble including dog rose and hawthorn.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

| <i>Target Note</i> | <i>Description</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5                  | There is a small area of continuous bracken located in this area. There are patches of raspberry interspersed amongst the bracken.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 6                  | There is a large advertising board in this location. The board is mounted on an area of paving stones. There are areas of mown amenity grassland located around the advertising sign. The grassland supports Yorkshire fog and red fescue with typical amenity grassland herbs including daisy, dandelion, ribwort plantain, white clover and common ragwort.                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 7                  | This is the length of embankment running along the eastern edge of Redby Street. The embankment comprises of areas of rank grassland with scattered scrub. As elsewhere, the grassland comprises of Yorkshire fog, red fescue and cock's foot with occasional patches of tufted hair-grass. Herbs present include Michaelmas daisy, evening primrose, dandelion, cleavers, field horsetail, ragwort, creeping thistle and tufted vetch. There is scattered scrub throughout the grassland comprising of bramble and buddleia. |
| 8                  | This is a small area of rank, unmanaged grassland located on an embankment alongside Ashton Old Road. The grassland comprises of Yorkshire fog, red fescue and cock's foot with dandelion, broadleaved dock and bramble.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

### **3.2.2 Protected Species**

The site supports a variety of scrub habitats including young poplar and sycamore trees, stands of willow and dogwood plus dense bramble scrub.

These areas of scrub offer suitable bird nesting habitat. Given the habitats present and the site's urban location, it is likely that the site would support only common garden and woodland bird species.

The trees present at the site are all relatively young and have not developed any obvious suitable features for roosting bats (e.g. splits, woodpecker holes, cavities or cervices). The site is therefore considered to be unsuitable for roosting bats.

Habitats at the site are relatively isolated from other areas of semi-natural habitat by the surrounding road network and commercial buildings. Consequently, it is considered very unlikely that any other protected or notable species (e.g. hedgehog) would be present at the site.

## 4 Evaluation and Recommendations

### 4.1 Habitats

#### 4.1.1 Overview

Development proposals will affect an approximate 0.28ha area of disused land located either side of Redby Street, Openshaw. A habitat survey was completed with the field survey conducted in early-April.

Given the timing of the survey work, some plant species may not yet have been evident and it was therefore not possible to provide a complete list of plant species present. Nevertheless, survey is likely to have characterised broad habitats present.

The area of land appears to have been disused for many years and has developed habitat that are typical of such neglected sites including areas of rank, unmanaged, neutral grassland, bramble scrub, bracken and other scattered woody scrub. The areas of grassland are likely to be species-poor and dominated by coarse grasses with bramble throughout.

Such habitats are commonly occurring in similar areas of disused land, nevertheless, the habitats present are considered to be of minor biodiversity value and are likely to offer habitats for common invertebrates and urban birdlife. The site offers a small but potentially valuable habitat resource for local wildlife within a landscape that is largely developed.

Recommendations to enhance the biodiversity value of the proposed development are provided in Section 4.3.

### 4.2 Protected Species Recommendations

#### 4.2.1 Site Clearance

Where proposals would require the removal of scrub habitats, this should avoid taking place during the breeding bird season (March-September inclusive).

Where this is not possible, a check for breeding birds should be carried out immediately prior to the start of works by an appropriately qualified ecologist.

If during works any nesting birds are found, works should immediately stop and further advice should be sought from an appropriately qualified ecologist.

## **4.3 Ecological Enhancements**

It is recommended that opportunities to enhance the ecological value of the final development area are taken.

### **4.3.1 Bat and Bird Box Plan**

It is recommended that the overall site be enhanced for bats and breeding birds. This can be achieved through the installation of bat boxes (recommended model Habibat 003) and sparrow and swift nest boxes (recommended models Schwegler 1SP and Schwegler No.16 Swift Box or similar) into proposed buildings at the development site.

The bat and bird boxes can be built into the brick walls of the proposed buildings so as to remain visually unobtrusive.

The precise location, model and number of bat and bird boxes should be determined by an appropriately qualified ecologist.

### **4.3.2 Plants for Pollinators and Birds**

The development proposals should also aim to maximise the biodiversity of landscaping proposals at the site.

The landscaping design for the development will include new trees and planting. It is recommended that new planting includes species which can provide nectar sources for insects and berries/fruits for invertebrates and birds.

The following small/medium sized tree species are recommended as they offer suitable foraging opportunities to various native wildlife (including birds and invertebrates): rowan, wild cherry, crab apple, silver birch, holly, and willow.

Areas of new shrubbery should include suitable nectar sources for insects. The Royal Horticultural Society provides a list of suitable plants for invertebrates (see [rhs.org.uk/plantsforpollinators](https://www.rhs.org.uk/plantsforpollinators)).

It is recommended that this list is consulted when producing detailed landscaping designs for the site.

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## 5 Appendix

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**

*Photograph 1 - Habitats present at Target Note 1*



*Photograph 2 - Habitats present at Target Note 1*



*Photograph 3 - Habitats present at Target Note 2*



*Photograph 4 - Habitats present at Target Notes 4 and 5*



*Photograph 5 - Habitats present at Target Note 7*



*Photograph 6 - Habitats present at Target Note 8*



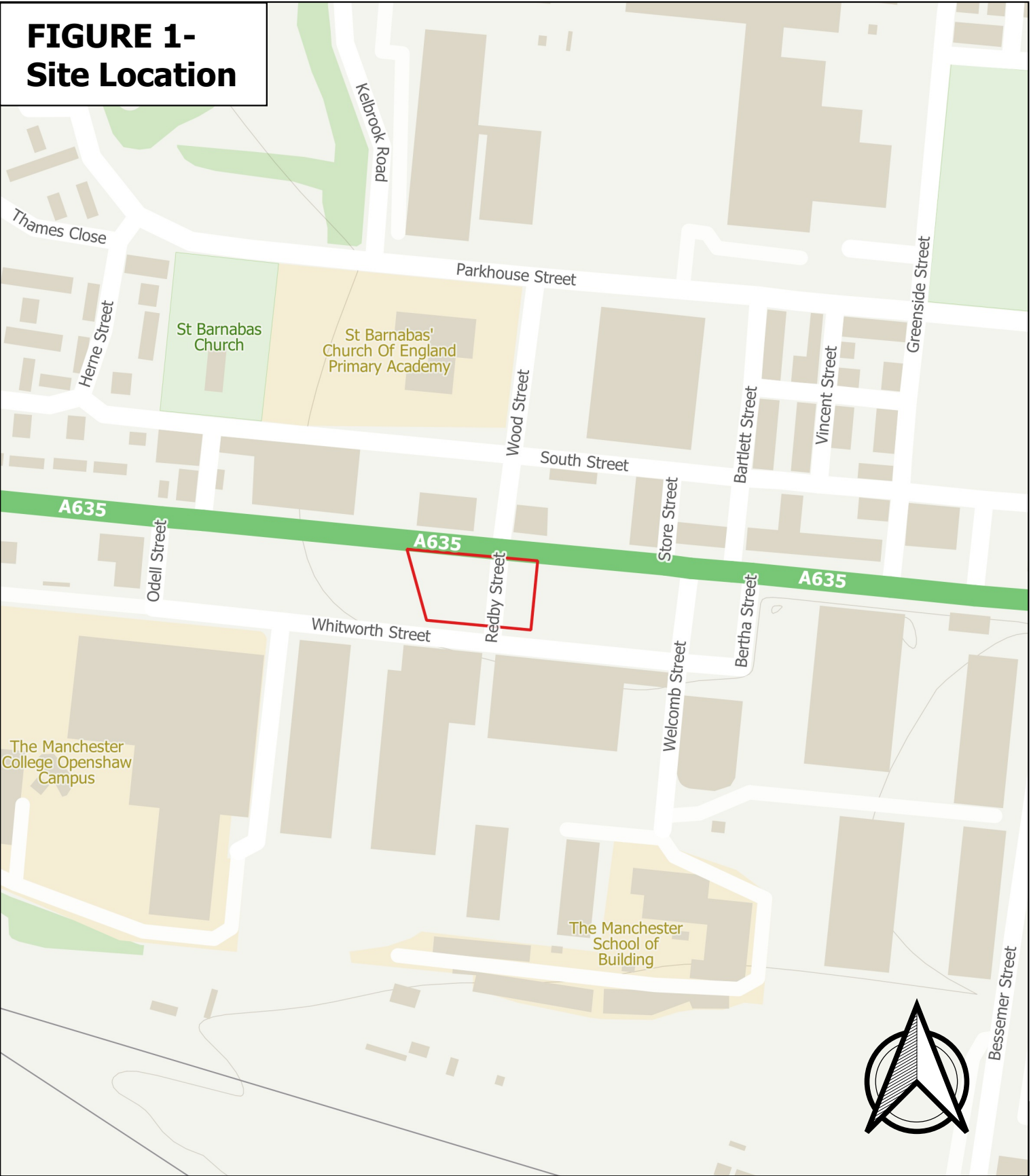
*Photograph 7 – West side of Site*



*Photograph 8 – East side of Site*



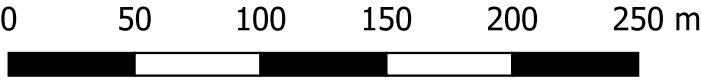
**FIGURE 1-  
Site Location**



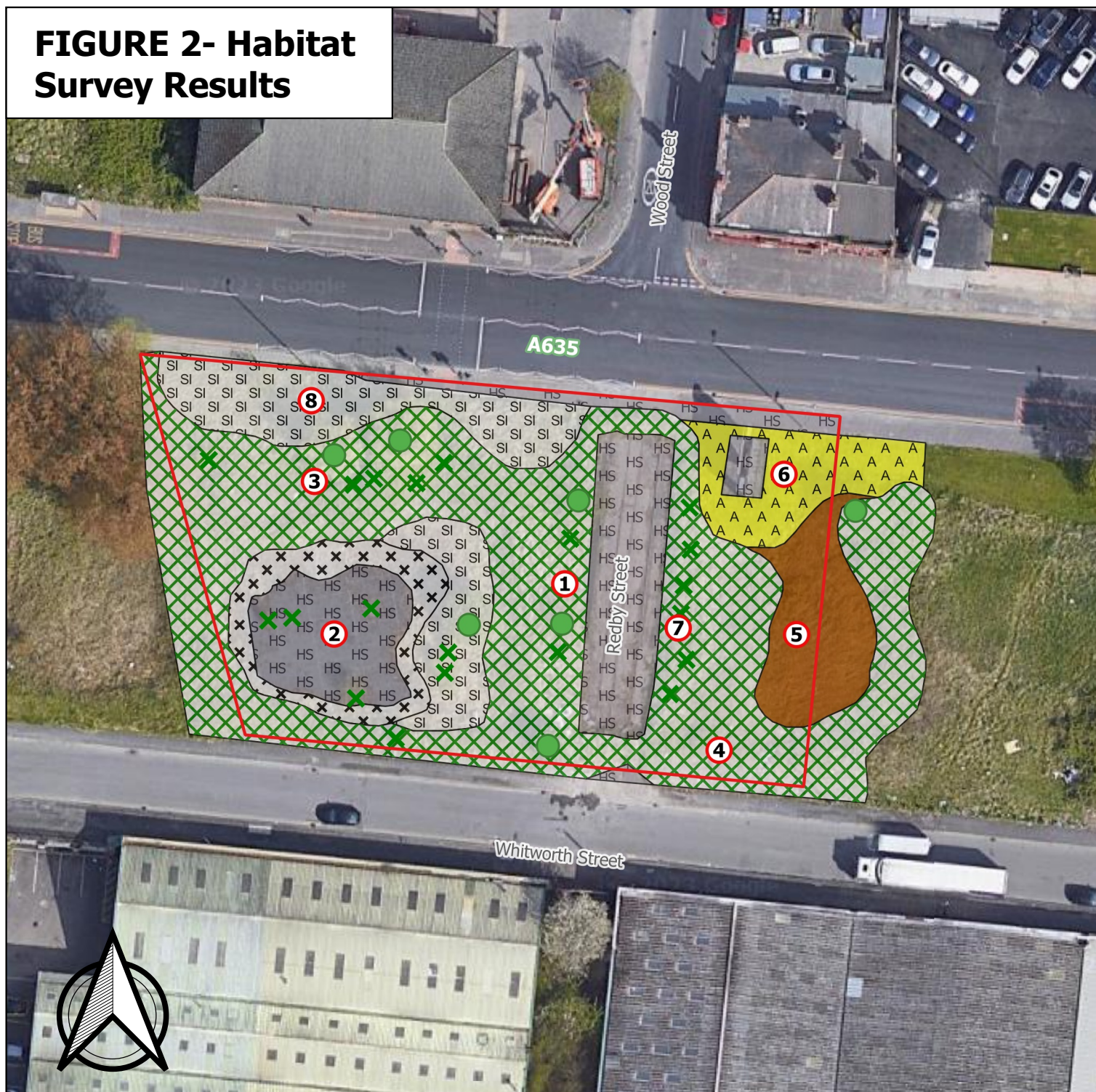
**KEY**



Study Site



**FIGURE 2- Habitat Survey Results**



## KEY



Study Site



Target Note



Scrub - dense/continuous



Poor SI grassland



Bracken - continuous



Amenity grassland



Disturbed land - short perennial



Hardstanding

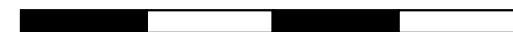


Scrub



Tree

0 10 20 30 40 m



Map data ©2023 Google