101 Queens Road, Cheetham Hill

Manchester

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Report

2025

Client	Create It Studios
Project Title	101 Queens Road, Cheetham Hill
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Report Contents

Executive Summary 3

1. Introduction 4

2. Methods 6

3. Results 8

4. Assessment 12

5. Recommendations 14

Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation 16

Appendix 2: Habitats and Target Notes 20

Appendix 3: UK Habitats Classification Map 24

Appendix 4: Proposed Layout 25

Executive Summary

Development Details

The client is proposing residential development at 101 Queens Road, Cheetham Hill, Manchester, 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

The site has a low level of ecological interest.

Outcomes

No further ecology surveys are required.

Standard mitigation measures will avoid the risk of impacts to nesting birds and mammals.

The proposed development is predicted to result in a net loss of biodiversity units. To achieve mandatory 10% net gain, it will be necessary to either modify the landscaping proposals and/or purchase units from a third-party provider.

1. Introduction

1.1 Project Brief

1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited (RHE) was commissioned in 2025 by Create It Studios (the Client) to carry out an Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment of land at 101 Queens Hill Road, Cheetham Hill (the 'site'). The site is located at O.S. grid reference: SD 8465 0050 (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Map showing the location of the site © Bing Maps

1.1.2 The site comprises a small plot with several young trees. The land beyond the site consists of mainly commercial and residential developments, in a built-up area with limited connectivity to wider habitats. The River Irk flows approximately 0.64km east of the site.

Description of Development

1.1.3 The site will be the subject of a planning application to build a residential apartment block with associated car parking spaces and landscaping.

1.2 Scope of Work

1.2.1 The Client commissioned RHE to carry out the following works:

- 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 Jasmin West (Ecologist) and Bethany Halfpenny (Junior Ecologist) visited the site on 22nd July 2025.

Weather

1.3.2 The weather at the time of the survey was overcast with intermittent rain. There was an average temperature of 18 °C.

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 1km radius of the site.

2.1.2 The site was checked to determine if it is located within an Impact Risk Zone for any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and if so, whether the Local Planning Authority will need to consult Natural England.

2.1.3 Given the limited extent of the proposed development, it was not considered proportionate to undertake a data search.

2.2 Field Survey

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

2.2.1 In accordance with JNCC guidelines[1] 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 guidelines[2]. Field signs of protected, notable, and invasive non-native species, if encountered, were mapped, and described.

Bats

2.2.3 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.

[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

2.3.1 During the site walkover the ecological condition of each habitat was assessed in accordance with the Defra (2024) guidelines[3]. Habitat types recorded and mapped during the field survey were converted from the JNCC system to the UK Habitat Classification system[4].

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] The_Statutory_Biodiversity_Metric_-_User_Guide_.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)

[4] UKHab-v2.01-July-2023-Final-2.pdf. 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 No statutory or non-statutory designated sites were identified within the study area.

3.2.2 The desk study identified that the site is located within the Impact Risk Zone of Rochdale Canal and Hollinwood Branch Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest. 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. The habitats plan is contained in Appendix 3, and the proposed site layout is contained in Appendix 4. Condition Assessments are supplied as a separate spreadsheet.

Other Neutral Grassland

3.3.2 Other neutral grassland comprises the majority of the site. Species include Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus*, Field Horsetail *Equisetum arvense*, Common Vetch *Vicia sativa*, Bird's-foot Trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, Ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, Ground Elder *Aegopodium podagraria*, Zigzag Clover *Trifolium medium* and Rushes *Juncus* are present.

3.3.3 In small parts of the habitat Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. was recorded.

3.3.4 Other neutral grassland habitats on site are in poor condition, cover 0.048ha and account for 0.19 habitat units.

Mixed Scrub

3.3.5 At the northern and southwestern corners of the site mixed scrub habitats exist. Species include Butterfly Bush *Buddleja davidii*, Bramble, Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense*, Hedge Bindweed *Calystegia sepium*, Ground Elder, Dog Rose *Rosa canina* and Rosebay Willowherb *Chamaenerion angustifolium*.

3.3.6 At the northeastern corner of the site a large pile of discarded rubbish is present (TN1).

3.3.7 Mixed scrub habitats on site are in poor condition, cover 0.021ha and account for 0.08 habitat units.

Tall Ruderal

3.3.8 At the southwestern border of the site a portion of tall ruderal habitat exists. Species include Broadleaved Dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, Ragwort, Ground Elder and Bramble.

3.3.9 Tall ruderal habitat on site is in poor condition, covers 0.001ha and accounts for zero habitat units.

Ephemeral

3.3.10 At the eastern and southern boundaries, as part of tree understorey ephemeral habitats exist. Species include Bramble, Rosebay Willowherb, Ragwort, Field Horsetail and Dandelion *Taraxacum* agg. Mosses are also present.

3.3.11 At the southeastern corner of the site piles of discarded rubbish are present (TN2).

3.3.12 Ephemeral habitat on site is in poor condition, covers 0.01ha and accounts for 0.02 habitat units.

Individual Trees

3.3.13 A total of 33 young individual trees exist on site.

3.3.14 Twenty-six small trees are present. Species include Willow *Salix* sp., Silver Birch *Betula pendula*, Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Alder *Alnus glutinosa* and Aspen *Populus tremula*.

3.3.15 Seven medium trees are present. Species include Willow sp., Goat Willow *Salix caprea*, Elder *Sambucus nigra* and Alder.

3.3.16 Collectively, individual trees on site are in moderate condition, cover 0.2199ha and account for 1.76 habitat units.

3.4 Species

Badger

3.4.1 No setts or other signs of Badger *Meles meles* were recorded during the field survey and habitats present on site are considered sub-optimal for Badger sett creation, foraging and dispersal. Therefore, it is considered highly unlikely that Badger is present on site. This species is not considered further.

Bats

3.4.2 A search on the Defra MAGIC website showed one granted licence to destroy the resting site of Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* in 2012.

3.4.3 No trees on site offer potential roosting features (PRFs) for bats. The site offers sub-optimal foraging habitat for bats and is situated in a predominantly urban area with streetlighting.

Hedgehog

3.4.4 No signs of Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* were recorded during the survey. Habitats on site offer suitable foraging and refugia opportunities for Hedgehog although wider habitat is considered sub-optimal.

Birds

3.4.5 Trees and scrub on site offer a range of nesting opportunities for birds within the site. The site is not suitable to support ground nesting or aquatic birds.

Reptiles

3.4.6 The small portion of ruderal vegetation that exists on site offers sub-optimal foraging and refugia opportunities for reptiles. Wider urban habitat is also considered poor for reptiles with limited connectivity and barriers, including main roads, therefore making it unlikely that reptiles would be able to access the site. Furthermore, reptiles are very rare in Greater Manchester. As such it is considered highly unlikely that reptiles are on site and as a result of this, these species are not considered further.

Great Crested Newt and other Amphibians

3.4.7 There is no breeding habitat within 500m of the site boundary for Great Crested Newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus*. It is therefore considered highly unlikely that GCN are present on site and as a result this species is not considered further.

Invertebrates

3.4.8 Habitats present on site are not likely to support rare species or important assemblages of invertebrates and therefore invertebrates are not discussed further in this report.

3.5 Invasive Species

Plants

3.5.1 During the field survey Montbretia *Crocosmia x crocosmiiflora* was recorded in mixed scrub and other neutral grassland habitats.

4. Assessment

4.1 Development Context

4.1.1 The following assessment assumes that all habitats on site will be lost to facilitate the proposed development.

4.2 Impacts on Designated Sites

4.2.1 No impacts on designated sites are anticipated due to the absence of impact pathways.

4.3 Impacts on Habitats

4.3.1 Habitats on site are common and widespread, and any habitat loss would be significant at the site level.

4.4 Biodiversity Net Gain

4.4.1 The baseline habitat value within the red line development is 2.06 area units.

4.4.2 The proposed development includes a small portion of vegetated garden, expected to deliver 0.01 area units.

4.4.3 This represents a net loss of -99.62% in area units.

4.5 Impacts on Species

Hedgehog

4.5.1 There is a low risk of harm through entrapment should Hedgehogs access a construction site.

Bats

4.5.2 No impacts to roosting or foraging/commuting bats are likely. The site is in a well-lit area and likely to be used by small numbers of Common Pipistrelle, if at all.

Birds

4.5.3 Removal of trees and scrub on site has the potential to impact nesting birds, should these be present.

4.6 Invasive Species

Plants

4.6.1 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. Construction activities could result in the spread of this species to other sites through the transportation of soil and other material. Mitigation is recommended (see Section 5).

5. Recommendations

5.1 Further Surveys

5.1.1 No further surveys are required.

5.2 Mitigation and Enhancement Measures

5.2.1 Protection of ecological features (habitats and species) during the construction phase will be described in a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). Mitigation measures to protect, maintain and enhance ecological features during the operational phase of development will be described in a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP). Management Plans will contain Operational Aims and Objectives, Rationale for management, Prescriptions and schedules detailing the timing and responsibility for delivering the prescriptions. It is anticipated that the CEMP and HMMP will be provided as a planning condition in advance of the commencement of the proposed development.

Biodiversity Net Gain

5.2.2 The proposed development does not meet the mandatory requirement of 10% net gain. To achieve this, it will be necessary to deliver an additional 2.26 area units.

5.2.3 Given the proposed development it will not be feasible to deliver this on site and it will be necessary to purchase units from a third-party provider.

Invasive Non-native Species

5.2.4 Removal of Montbretia on site should following a suitable method statement to avoid the spread of the species.

Hedgehog

5.2.5 Vegetation clearance should be undertaken sensitively with contractors remaining vigilant for the potential presence of Hedgehog. Should any Hedgehogs be found they should be left to move away on their own or carefully moved to suitable cover in a place of safety.

5.2.6 To ensure that mammals are not trapped or harmed during the construction work, smaller excavation should be covered overnight. Larger excavations, if left overnight or for longer periods, should be ramped to enable animals to escape.

Bats

5.2.7 To enhance roosting opportunities for bats it is recommended that bat boxes/bricks are included on the proposed building. Boxes should be installed at eaves height facing southeast to southwest.

Nesting Birds

5.2.8 Impacts on nesting birds should be avoided by carrying out site clearance and similar operations outside of the bird breeding season (March-August). 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.

5.2.9 Swift bricks could be installed in the new building to provide nesting opportunities for species such as Swift *Apus apus* and House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*. Swift bricks should be installed at least 5m high facing northeast to northwest, ideally in groups of two or three.

Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) 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 187 and 193, shown below:

- 187. 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 and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;
  - 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.
- 193. 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 reasons70 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.

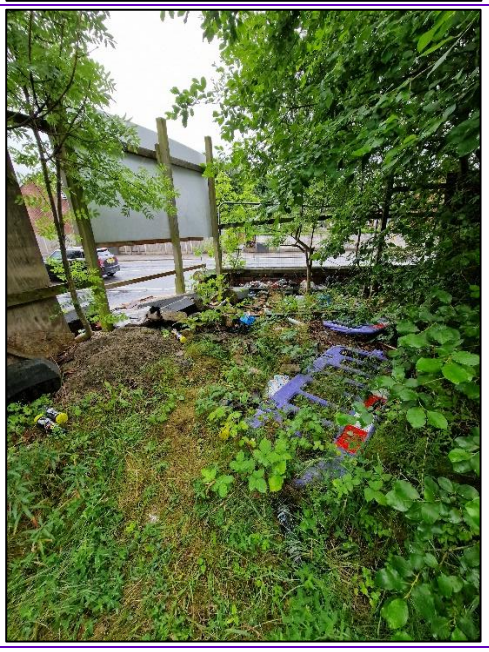
The Environment Act 2021 makes it mandatory for housing and development, subject to some narrow exemptions, to achieve at least a 10% net gain in value for biodiversity – a requirement that habitats for wildlife must be left in a measurably better state than before the development. Developers must submit 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.

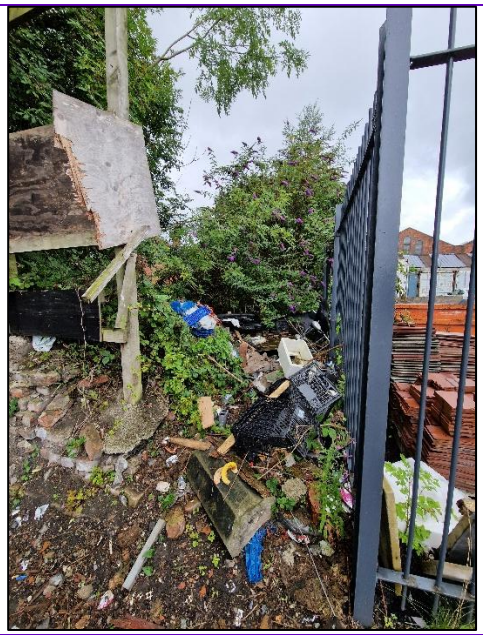
The Environment Act 2021 strengthens the duty on public authorities (NERC Act, 2006) to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity.

The Environment Act 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.

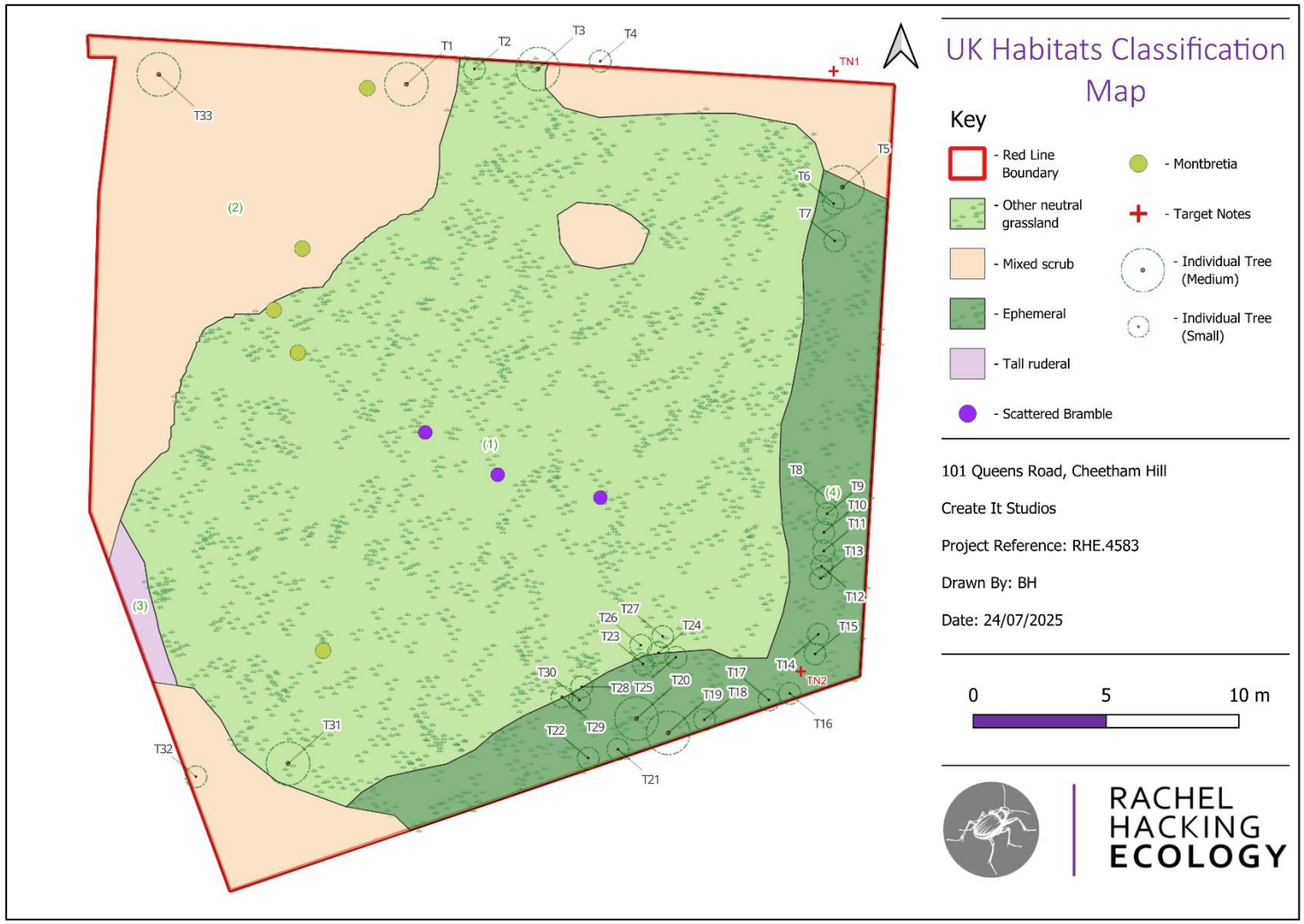
Appendix 2: Habitats and Target Notes

Reference No.	Habitat	Photograph
(1)	Other Neutral Grassland	
(2)	Mixed Scrub	

(3)	Tall Ruderal	
(4)	Ephemeral	
TN1	Discarded rubbish	

TN2	Discarded rubbish	
	Montbretia	

Appendix 3: UK Habitats Classification Map



Appendix 4: Proposed Layout

