



Land at Halsnead Garden Village Phase 3 Whiston, Knowsley

Appendix 7.2 – Phase 1 Habitat Survey

Prepared For: Taylor Wimpey
Document Reference: Appendix 7.2
February 2026 - Version 1.0

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Project Name:	Land At Halsnead Garden Village Phase 3
Location:	Fox's Bank Ln, Whiston, Widnes L35 3SS
Document Title:	Phase 1 Habitat Survey
Client:	Taylor Wimpey
Prepared by:	The Environment Partnership Ltd
Office:	Warrington
Document Ref:	Appendix 7.2

Document history and status:

Version	Date	Description of Issue	Author	Checked	Approved
1.0	February 2026	Original Issue	JCh	EH	KSC

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Environment Partnership (TEP) was commissioned by Taylor Wimpey in May 2024 to carry out a Phase 1 Habitat Survey to support a planning application for a Proposed Development of the site known as Land at Halsnead Garden Village Phase 3 in Whiston, Knowsley (hereafter known as 'the Site').

Site Location & Context

- 1.2 The Site is centred at National Grid reference 347329 (Easting), 389861 (Northing) and is within the administrative area of Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council. It is bound to the north by Halsnead Caravan Park, beyond lies a field and the under construction Land south of Lickers Lane residential scheme (under planning application reference 20/00399/OUT). To the east, the Site is bound by the consented and under construction Fox's Lane residential scheme under planning application reference 20/00417/FUL, beyond which lies Fox's Bank Lane and Blundell's Hill Golf Club. The M62 Motorway bounds the south of the Site, beyond which lies Symmetry Park. To the west, the Site is bound by an area of woodland (with an associated pond known as 'Big Water'), beyond which lies the consented and under construction land north of M62 motorway residential scheme under planning application reference 18/00283/HYB, with Windy Arbor Road and the M62 Motorway further west.
- 1.3 The wider area beyond the Site is predominantly residential in nature, further characterised by pockets of woodland, industrial development, the local and strategic road network, and open fields.

Scope

- 1.4 This technical report provides baseline information on the habitats and flora present within the site and any additional context regarding habitat and flora identified as ecological features from the Ecological Desk Study (**Appendix 7.1 – Desk Study**). Potential ecological effects upon any notable habitats or flora which may be present within or adjacent to the Site are also identified.
- 1.5 The objectives of this technical report are to:
- Detail the methods and results of the Phase 1 habitat survey;
 - Identify features of ecological value within the site, such as legally protected species or habitats of importance to biodiversity; and

- Identify any non-native invasive species within the site and provide advice regarding removal or management.

1.6 An assessment of the potential impacts associated with the development proposals and requirements for mitigation are presented within the ES Chapter 7 Ecology and Nature Conservation.

2.0 Survey Methods

Desktop Study

- 2.1 In line with current best practice (CIEEM, 2016¹, 2017b²), information regarding designated sites, notable habitats and existing protected and notable flora species records of the past decade, within a 2km minimum radius of the wider site was collated and reviewed to inform this technical report. Further detail regarding ecological zones of influence (EZOI) applied for different ecological features and the sources of information included are presented in the Ecological Desk Study (**Appendix 7.1 – Desk Study**).
- 2.2 In brief, key data sources included Natural England (open source data), Environment Agency (open source data); Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted January 2026), Merseyside Biobank Local Records Centre (2024) and North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) and a review of relevant (within the past ten years) species records.
- 2.3 Statutory designated wildlife sites were searched for as follows (EZOI applied for each is indicated in brackets):
- Ramsar sites (10 km);
 - National Sites Network (10 km), includes Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA);
 - Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (5 km);
 - National Nature Reserve (NNR) (5 km);
 - Marine Nature Reserve (MNR) (5 km); and
 - Local Nature Reserves (LNR) (2 km).
- 2.4 Non-statutory designated wildlife sites were searched for within 2km of the Site.
- 2.5 Notable habitats were searched for within 500m of the Site. Notable habitats may include those listed under any of the following:
- Ancient woodland;

¹ CIEEM (2016) Guidelines for Accessing and Using Biodiversity Data. Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management

² CIEEM (2017b) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd Edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management

- Main rivers;
- Habitats of principal importance (HPI) as listed by the requirements of Section 41 (S41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006³; and
- Local Biodiversity Action Plan Habitats (LBAP).

2.6 Pre-existing records for notable species were reviewed from the combined data sources, where found from within approximately 2km of the Site. Notable species include those listed under any of the following:

- Protected plant species under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (WCA8);
- Invasive non-native plant species under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (WCA9);
- Invasive non-native species under the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019 (IAS);
- Species of principal importance (SPI) as listed by the requirements of S41 of NERC;
- North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan Species (LBAP).

Limitations

- 2.7 Species records can provide a useful indication of the species present within the search area, although the absence of a given species from the dataset cannot be taken to represent actual absence.
- 2.8 Information provided by third parties, including publicly available information, is assumed to be correct at the time of publication.

³ Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.

3.0 Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 3.1 An Extended Phase 1 habitat survey was completed by suitably qualified TEP ecologist (certified to a minimum Level 3 under the Field Identification Skills Certification⁴). This survey was completed on 11th June 2024, and an updated walkover was undertaken on 8th December 2025.
- 3.2 Surveys were carried out in accordance with the Phase 1 habitat assessment methods (JNCC, 2010⁵) and Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017b⁴). The method records the habitat types present within the survey route, based on the JNCC descriptions. Plant species were identified in accordance with the New Flora of the British Isles (Stace, 2019⁶) and recorded as target notes using the DAFOR⁷ scale, where relevant.
- 3.3 The survey was expanded to include off-site habitats, owned by the client, and adjacent to the Site in order to provide context where access or site lines allowed. Adjacent habitats were viewed from accessible locations within the Site boundary. Habitats are displayed with the Site boundary in **Figure 7.1**.

Limitations

- 3.4 Any ecological survey represents a snapshot of ecological conditions at the time of survey; ecological conditions may change over time. Efforts to identify dominant plant species for the purposes of characterising broad habitat types do not constitute a detailed botanical survey.
- 3.5 The Phase 1 survey was undertaken within the optimum season of May to October. There were therefore no seasonal limitations to the Phase 1 habitat survey. The updated walkover was undertaken outside of the optimum survey season, however, it was possible to distinguish broad habitat types during the walkover, and it is considered unlikely that species composition would have changed since the Phase 1 habitat survey.

⁴ A national skills certification scheme operated by Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland. FISC 4 is the competency level recommended for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) field assessments

⁵ JNCC (2010) Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey – a technique for environmental audit

⁶ Clive Stace (2019) New Flora of the British Isles

⁷ DAFOR = Dominant, Abundant, Frequent, Occasional & Rare

4.0 Results

Desktop Results

- 4.1 Full details regarding designated sites are provided within the Ecological Desk Study (**Appendix 7.1 – Desk Study**).

Local Biodiversity Action Plans

- 4.2 The North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) includes local habitat action plans for the following priority habitats of relevance to the Site:

- Conifer woodland
- Lowland mixed broadleaf woodland
- Wet woodland
- Lowland wood-pasture and parkland
- Urban trees
- Lowland acid grassland
- Lowland heathland
- Urban grassland
- Coastal sand dunes
- Field boundaries
- Urban Green infrastructure
- Lowland raised bog
- Canals
- Ponds
- Reedbeds
- Coastal saltmarsh

Habitats and Flora

Pre-existing Data

- 4.3 The Ecological Desk Study identified multiple areas of deciduous woodland and some areas of ancient woodland adjacent and within 250m of the Site.
- 4.4 Habitats of ecological value present in and around the site are described below and illustrated in **Figure 7.1**. Target notes (TN), full species lists and photographs illustrative of the habitats described are provided in Appendix A.

Semi-natural broadleaved woodland

- 4.5 There is a small area of semi-natural broadleaved woodland in the northwest corner of the Site, which extends beyond the Site boundary (TN4). This is an area of ancient woodland known as Old Wood (LWS). Tree species include sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, oak *Quercus robur*, goat willow *Salix caprea* and small leaved lime *Tilia cordata* with hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, and elder *Sambucus nigra* forming the understorey. Woodland flora such wood avens *Geum urbanum* was also noted.

Dense/continuous scrub

- 4.6 Along the northern boundary of the Site, adjacent to Halsnead residential park, lies a boundary of scattered scrub and scattered trees as well as some areas of dense/continuous scrub. As this backs onto the residential gardens there are more ornamental species found here such as cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*, Lawson cypress *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*, and spruce *Picea sp.* as well as some English oak trees, privet *Ligustrum ovalifolium*, dog rose *Rosa canina* and goat willow in the northeast corner (TN3). There is also a patch of dense/continuous bramble *Rubus fruticosus agg* scrub present in the northeast corner of the Site within the modified neutral grassland area and a patch of dense/continuous mixed willow *Salix sp.* scrub in the south.

Scattered Trees

- 4.7 To the west and south of this area of woodland lies a line of trees present on the western boundary of the Site (TN5) consisting of sycamore, silver birch *Betula pendula*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and black poplar hybrids *Populus nigra*. The understorey mainly consists of bramble *Rubus fruticosus agg.* with other species such as broad-buckler fern *Dryopteris dilatata* and cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris* also present.

- 4.8 Along the southern boundary of the Site is another tree line, bordering the M62 motorway embankment (TN6). This treeline is made up of a similar species composition to TN5 with the addition of goat willow, elder, rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* and aspen *Populus tremula*. Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* is also present in the understorey as well as horsetail *Equisetum sp*, and oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*.

Modified neutral grassland

- 4.9 The Site is made up of one field, although there is a distinctive split in the habitats present. In the north of the field there is modified neutral grassland (TN1) and in the south, the majority of the site is made up of tall ruderal growth (TN2).
- 4.10 The modified neutral grassland consists of abundant Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and frequent perennial rye grass *Lolium perenne* and includes other species such as creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*, willowherb species *Epilobium sp*, broad leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, white clover *Trifolium repens*, Fox-and-cubs *Pilosella aurantiaca* and herb-robert *Geranium robertianum*.

Tall ruderal

- 4.11 The remainder of the Site to the south (TN2) is made of tall ruderal herbs such as creeping thistle, knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, common ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica*, teasel *Dipsacus fullonum*, nettle *Urtica dioica* and self-set willow saplings *Salix sp*.
- 4.12 A small area of tall ruderal is also present in the northeast of the Site with similar species composition to the above.

Notable or Invasive Flora

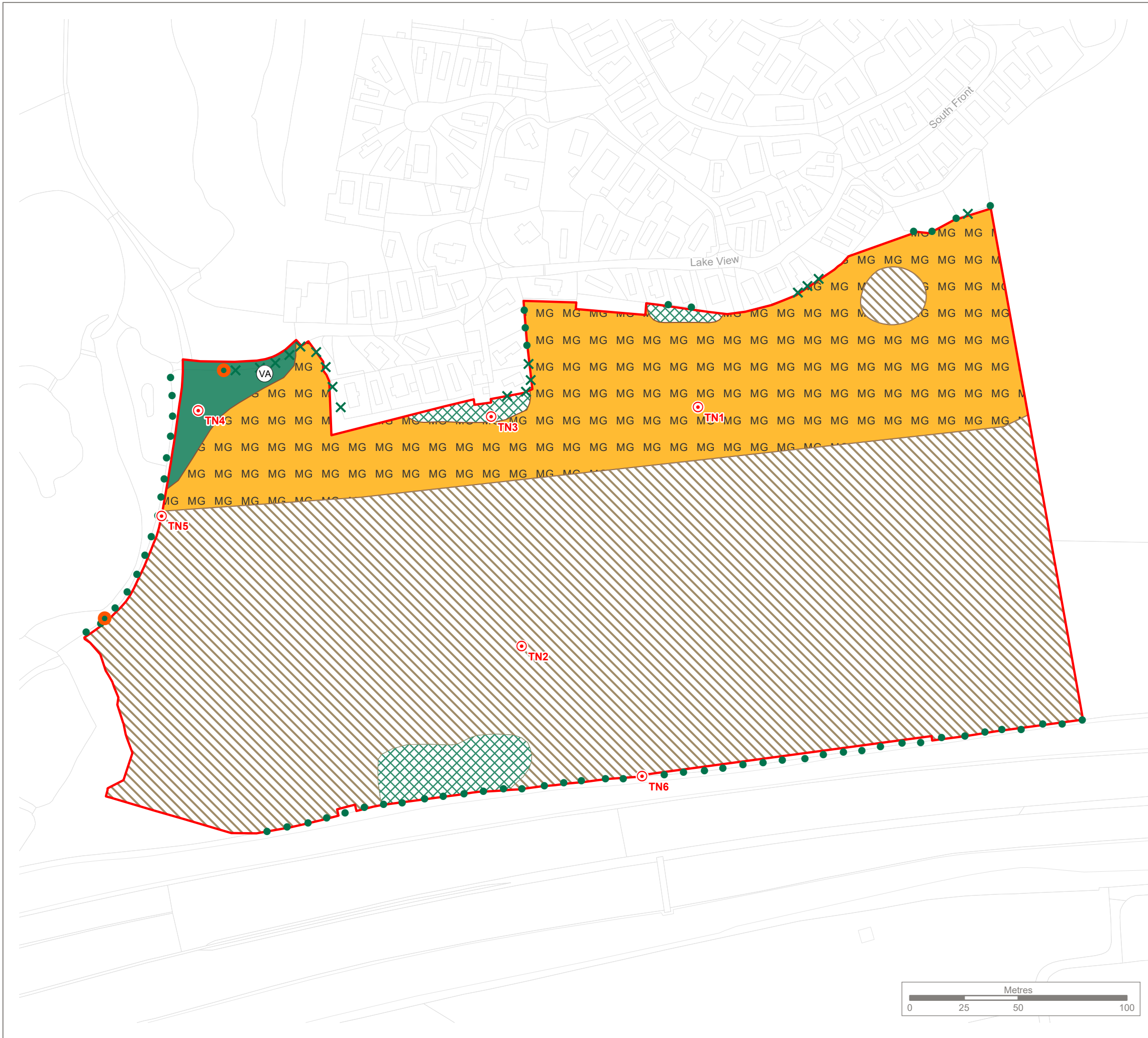
- 4.13 Variegated yellow archangel *Laminus galeobdolon* was noted within the woodland at TN4, on the northern boundary of the Site, in the northwest, near to the Woodend track.
- 4.14 There was also a small stand of Japanese knotweed *Reynoutria japonica* recorded approximately 130m from the northeastern border of the Site, adjacent to P18.
- 4.15 Notable floral species English bluebell (WCA8) was noted adjacent to the site in the west within the ancient woodland and Invasive species *Rhododendron ponticum* was also noted within the woodland directly adjacent to the site.

Habitat Connectivity

- 4.16 To the west of the Site lies a moderately sized area of woodland with waterbodies and streams present, with grassland fields beyond that, to the northwest and connectivity to further grassland and woodland to the north. However, beyond these habitats listed, the Site has limited connectivity owing to the development bordering the north of the Site, the motorway to the south and the currently under construction development to the east of the Site, as well as further ongoing development to the north beyond Halsnead residential park.

Drawings

Figure 7.1 – Phase 1 Habitat Survey



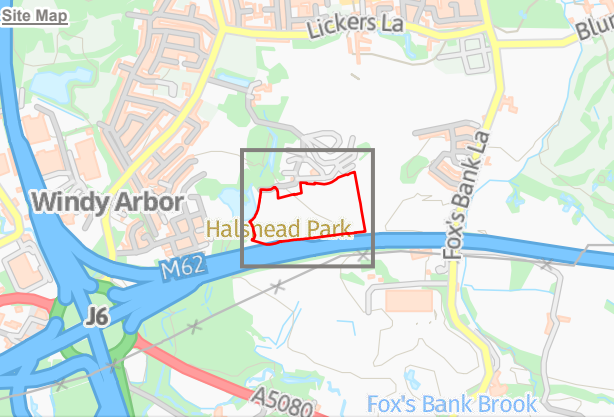
KEY

- Site boundary
- Target note
- Variegated Yellow Archangel
- Scattered scrub
- Scattered broad-leaved tree
- PRF-M: Tree with potential roost feature suitable for multiple bats
- Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland
- Dense/continuous scrub
- Modified neutral grassland
- Tall ruderal

Note:
The locations of habitats and habitat features are indicative.



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A	Site boundary change	MW	EH	30/01/2026
Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date



THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP

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Project
Halsnead Phase 3

Title
Figure 7.1 Phase 1 Habitat Survey - Phase 3

Drawing Number
G10586.004A

Drawn ET	Checked OH	Approved EH	Scale 1:1,750 @ A3	Date 02/02/2026
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Annex A: Target Notes

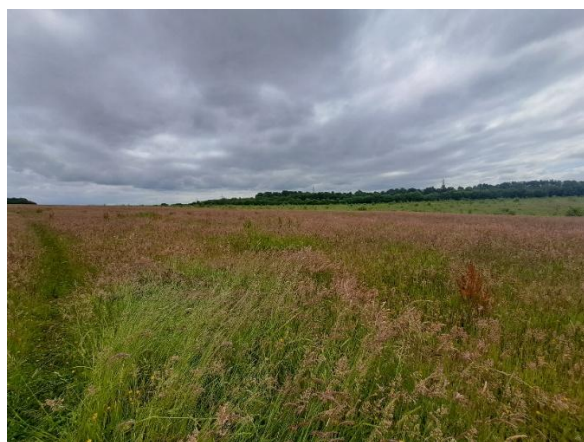
Target Notes Report

Survey 10586-1 Phase 1 Habitat Target Notes for Development Phase 3

Target Note TN1

Modified neutral grassland

<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog	A
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle	F
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Ryegrass	F
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock	F
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover	F
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy	O
<i>Chamaenerion angustifolium</i>	Rosebay Willowherb	O
<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>	Common Ragwort	O
<i>Pilosella aurantiaca</i>	Fox-and-cubs	O
<i>Poa annua</i>	Annual Meadow-grass	O
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow Buttercup	O
<i>Taraxacum sp.</i>	Dandelion species	O
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Nettle	O
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb-Robert	R
<i>Helminthotheca echioides</i>	Bristly Oxtongue	R
<i>Lysimachia arvensis</i>	Scarlet Pimpernel	R
<i>Plantago major</i>	Greater Plantain	R
<i>Rosa sp.</i>	Rose species	R
<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	Bramble	R
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	Curled Dock	R
<i>Trifolium dubium</i>	Lesser Trefoil	R
<i>Vicia sp.</i>	Vetch species	R



Target Note TN2

Tall ruderal with saplings throughout

<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Nettle	A
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle	F
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot	F
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow Buttercup	F
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Knapweed	O
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear Thistle	O
<i>Dactylorhiza sp.</i>	Marsh-orchid	O
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Red Fescue	O
<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>	Common Ragwort	O
<i>Pulicaria dysenterica</i>	Fleabane	O
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock	O
<i>Cirsium palustre</i>	Marsh Thistle	R

Dipsacus fullonum
Leucanthemum vulgare
Pilosella aurantiaca
Salix species

Teasel
Oxeye daisy
Fox-and-cubs
Willow species

R
R
R
R



Target Note TN3

Scrub adjacent to caravan park

Epilobium sp.
Hedera helix
Calystegia sp.
Crataegus monogyna
Juncus effusus
Rosa sp.
Acer campestre
Carex pendula
Iris pseudacorus
Quercus sp.
Sambucus nigra

Willowherb species
Ivy
Bindweed species
Hawthorn
Soft Rush
Rose species
Field Maple
Pendulous Sedge
Yellow Flag Iris
Oak species
Elder

F
F
O
O
O
O
R
R
R
R
R



TN4

Woodland in the northwest

<i>Acer psuedoplatanus</i>	Sycamore	A
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Oak	F
<i>Salix caprea</i>	Goat Willow	F
<i>Tilia cordata</i>	Small Leaved Lime	F
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	O
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	O
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder	O
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Wood avens	O



TN5

Scattered trees on the western boundary of the site

<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy	A
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore	F
<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>	Broad Buckler-fern	F
<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	Cut-leaved Cranesbill	F
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog	F
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	F
<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>	Rhododendron	F
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley	O
<i>Betula pendula</i>	Silver Birch	O
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	O
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Wood Avens	O
<i>Quercus robur</i>	English Oak	O
<i>Rosa sp.</i>	Rose species	O
<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	Bramble	O
<i>Salix caprea</i>	Goat Willow	O

Urtica dioica
Fraxinus excelsior
Populus nigra
Sambucus nigra
Vicia sp.
Tilia cordata

Nettle
Ash
Black Poplar agg.
Elder
Vetch species
Small-leaved Lime

O
R
R
R
R
R



TN6

Scattered trees on the southern boundary of the site

Acer pseudoplatanus
Equisetum sp.
Hedera helix
Salix species
Betula pendula
Cirsium vulgare
Corylus avellana
Dactylis glomerata
Quercus sp.
Crataegus monogyna
Fraxinus excelsior
Leucanthemum vulgare
Populus tremula
Prunus spinosa
Salix alba
Sambucus nigra
Sorbus aucuparia

Sycamore
Horsetail species
Ivy
Willow species
Silver Birch
Spear Thistle
Hazel
Cock's-foot
Oak species
Hawthorn
Ash
Oxeye daisy
Aspen
Blackthorn
White Willow
Elder
Rowan

F
F
F
F
O
O
O
O
O
R
R
R
R
R
R
R



KEY - D = Dominant, A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional, R = Rare

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