

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal



Redevelopment of Deacon Business Park
21st February 2023



**Tyler
Grange**

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Summary

- S.1. This report has been prepared by Tyler Grange Group Ltd for EEIP II Arundel Propco 2 Holdings Limited. It sets out the findings of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) to inform a Full Planning Application for the 'Redevelopment of Deacon Business Park', Knowsley, L33 7RX (hereafter referred to as 'the site'), which involves the demolition of existing industrial accommodation and erection of warehouse (Use Class B8) with ancillary offices (Use Class E(g)), reconfigured points of access, new security gatehouses and associated works..
- S.2. The site is located within Deacon Business Park, Knowsley at National Grid Reference SJ 42529 97568 measuring approximately 8.86 hectares; the site is predominantly composed of the existing warehouse unit, with the remaining area comprising hardstanding, in the form of tarmac and concrete parking bays. Small areas of scattered trees and amenity grass are present along the western boundary while dense scrub populates the northern and southern boundary. A small area of broadleaved woodland is also present in the northwest corner of the site.
- S.3. The findings of the desk study, Extended Phase 1 habitat survey and preliminary roost assessment noted the following:

Potential effects on statutory and non-statutory conservation designations:

- a) There were no European designated sites within 10km of the site. There are no nationally designated site within 2km of the site.
 - b) There are two Local Nature Reserves (LNR's) within 2km of the site, which are statutory local designations. All designated sites within a 2km buffer are considered to be sufficiently distant as to avoid direct adverse impacts from the proposed works if the outlined mitigation strategies are implemented. However, the proposed development could lead to increased levels of air pollution. It is therefore recommended that a traffic/ air quality assessment is undertaken in order to establish potential impacts on the LNR's.
- S.4. Habitats within the site are all of negligible importance. The landscape scheme has improved the post-development biodiversity value of the site through increased tree planting, and ornamental shrub planting.

Potential effects on protected and priority species:

- a) Amphibians: Negligible potential for amphibians (including great crested newt) to be present within the site aquatically or terrestrially;
- b) Bats: **Moderate** potential for roosting bats has been identified on the warehouse building. Further surveys will be required to confirm presence or likely absence of bats.
- c) Birds: Limited suitable breeding habitat for birds. Through pre-clearance checks of any vegetated areas required for removal and through the planting of new native trees, any negative impacts to birds will be avoided and compensated for, and;



Hedgehog: Badger, reptiles, water vole, otter: negligible potential for these species to utilise this site – no further action is required.

- S.5. In conclusion, it is considered that development within the site of the scale proposed would be in conformity with both Local and National legislation and planning policies relating to biodiversity. Opportunities also exist to enhance the biodiversity value of the site with a detailed landscaping scheme. All potential effects on protected/ notable protected species would also be avoided or adequately mitigated.



Section 1: Introduction, Context and Purpose

Introduction

- 1.1. This report has been prepared by Tyler Grange Group Ltd for Gerald Eve LLP. It sets out the findings of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) to inform a planning application for proposals at Deacon Business Park, Knowsley (hereafter referred to as 'the site'), which involves the demolition of an existing industrial building and the erection of a new storage and distribution warehouse of circa 41,000 sq m / 440,000 sq ft, within the development footprint.
- 1.2. The site is located on Moorgate Road North at National Grid Reference SJ 42529 97568 measuring approximately 8.91 hectares. It is understood that the ecology work is required to accompany a full planning application for the demolition of the existing industrial building and construction of a new storage and distribution warehouse, with associated infrastructure and landscaping.

Purpose

- 1.3. This report:
 - Uses available background data and results of field survey to describe and evaluate the ecological features present within the likely 'zone of influence' of the proposed development.
 - Describes the actual or potential ecological issues and opportunities that may arise as a result of the sites' future redevelopment.
 - Where appropriate, makes recommendations for mitigation of adverse effects and ecological enhancement, to ensure conformity with policy and legislation listed in **Appendix 1**; and
 - Identifies further work required to inform a future planning application if relevant.
- 1.4. This assessment and the terminology used are consistent with the 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland' (CIEEM, 2019), and 'Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2019)



Section 2: Methodology

Data Search

- 2.1. The aim of the data search is to collate existing ecological records for the site as a whole, and the surrounding area. Obtaining existing records is an important part of the assessment process as it provides information on issues that may not be apparent during a single survey, which by its nature provides only a 'snapshot' of the ecology of a given site.
- 2.2. The data search has been undertaken for a 10km radius around the site for European statutory sites, 2km radius around site for national statutory sites and non-statutory sites, and a 2km search radius was utilised for protected and priority species records.
- 2.3. Merseyside BioBank (MB) was contacted for details of protected and priority species and non-statutory sites. The information from MB was requested on 25th October 2022 and received on 31st October 2022. Where relevant records were identified, the information provided has been incorporated into the report with due acknowledgement.
- 2.4. The Multi-Agency Geographic Information (MAGIC) for the Countryside website was accessed for information on the location of statutory designated nature conservation sites within a 10km radius (for sites of European designation) and 2km (for sites of national designation) of site.
- 2.5. Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council was consulted for details of relevant local planning policies and supplementary planning guidance.
- 2.6. The Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan (MBAP) was consulted for priority habitats and species subject to conservation action, to assist with the evaluation of ecological features and to inform site enhancement strategies.

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.7. An 'extended' Phase I habitat survey was undertaken on 7th November 2022 by Miss Olivia McKechnie; Miss McKechnie is an experienced field ecologist who is a member of CIEEM. The technique was based upon Phase I survey methodology. As the standard Phase I Habitat survey methodology is largely concerned with vegetation communities only, the survey was 'extended' in accordance with the *Guidelines for Baseline Ecological Assessment* (IEA 1995) to include:
 - Preliminary searches for evidence of protected or conservation-notable species/ species-groups (including bats; great crested newts; badger; water vole; reptiles; and otter), and for habitats or features likely to support them if direct evidence is absent; and
 - The identification of other constraints (e.g. non-native invasive plant species) or opportunities (e.g. opportunities for micro-siting or enhancement) that may be present at the Site.
- 2.8. Note was taken of the more conspicuous fauna and any evidence of, or the potential for, the presence of protected notable flora and fauna. A basic inventory of the habitats and a representative species list for the site was produced. Where access allowed, adjacent habitats were also considered in order to assess the site within the immediate landscape and to provide



information with which to assess possible impacts within the immediate landscape surrounding the site.

- 2.9. The weather conditions for the survey were overcast throughout. The wind was calm and the temperature was 6°C.

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

- 2.10. A preliminary bat roost assessment (PBRA) of the buildings and trees present within the site was undertaken to assess their potential to support roosting bats. This survey was undertaken alongside the 'extended' Phase 1 habitat survey. The surveys followed standard methodologies which are described below.
- 2.11. The survey comprised a ground level inspection of all trees to determine the potential of each tree to support roosting bats. During this survey, Potential Roost Features (PRFs) that may be used by bats, as identified within the BCT Good Practice Guidelines, were sought. These included the following:
- Woodpecker holes, rot holes, knot holes arising from naturally shed branches and man-made holes;
 - Hazard beams and other vertical or horizontal cracks and splits (such as frost-cracks) in stems or branches;
 - Partially detached platy bark;
 - Cankers;
 - Other hollows or cavities, including butt-rots;
 - Partially detached ivy with stem diameters in excess of 50mm; and
 - Bird, bat or dormouse boxes.
- 2.12. Evidence of the presence of bat roosts was also sought. These signs include:
- Bat droppings in, around or below a PRF;
 - Odour emanating from a PRF;
 - Audible squeaking at dusk or in warm weather; and,
 - Visible staining below a PRF.
- 2.13. In addition to the on-site trees, the exterior of any onsite buildings were also surveyed, which comprised an external inspection to assess the likelihood of use by roosting bats and to inform the need for further surveys and/ or mitigation. Buildings were then categorised as providing negligible, low, moderate, or high bat roost potential, in line with the current BCT guidelines.
- 2.14. Externally, the building was inspected from ground level and the inspection focussed on identifying features suitable for roosting bats to gain access to potentially suitable roosting areas.



This included gaps behind soffits/ fascia's, under lifted lead flashing, under lifted roof tiles, around windows and within masonry.

- 2.15. The potential of each tree and the building at the site to support roosting bats has been categorised against the criteria described below in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: Categorising Potential Bat Roost

Suitability	Description of Roosting Habitats
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on-site likely to be used by roosting bats.
Low	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/ or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e., unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation). A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.
Moderate	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
High	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection conditions and surrounding habitat.

Limitations

- 2.16. The main warehouse building was very large so couldn't assess/see the whole building from ground level so may have missed features. There were also some crevices identified on north western corner of the building however there was no full inspection possible due to limited access. Moreover, there was no internal access to any of the onsite buildings, therefore internal inspections were not possible. This limitation was taken into consideration when evaluating the overall potential for the building to support roosting bats.
- 2.17. The findings of this report are valid at the time of writing. Owing to the dynamic nature of ecological resources, if more than 12 months have elapsed since the report was written, advice should be sought to determine whether update work is required. The findings of the report should not be relied upon without this advice.
- 2.18. This report is also partly based on 3rd party data held by the Local Record Centre, which Tyler Grange Group Ltd. cannot guarantee the accuracy of.

Evaluation

- 2.19. The evaluation of habitats and species is defined in accordance with published guidance (CIEEM, 2019). The level of importance of specific ecological feature is assigned using a geographic frame



of reference, with international being the most important, then national, regional, county, district, local and lastly, within the site boundary only.

- 2.20. Evaluation is based on various characteristics that can be used to identify ecological features likely to be important in terms of biodiversity. These include site designations (such as SSSIs), or for undesignated features, the size, conservation status (locally, nationally or internationally), and the quality of the ecological feature. In terms of the latter, quality can refer to habitats (for instance if they are particularly diverse, or a good example of a specific habitat type), other features (such as wildlife corridors or mosaics of habitats) or species populations or assemblages. In the case of the evaluation of the value of fauna at the site, an assumed valuation of each ecological feature has been given based on the habitats observed at the Site during the initial survey. Where further surveys are required, the valuation may be subject to variation following the interpretation of survey results.

Quality Control

- 2.21. All ecologists at Tyler Grange Group Ltd are members of CIEEM, or are working towards membership and act under the direction of members, and abide by the Institute's Code of Professional Conduct.



Section 3: Ecological Features and Evaluation

Site Context

- 3.1. The site is located on Moorgate Road North at National Grid Reference SJ 42529 97568 measuring approximately 8.91 hectares. The site is surrounded largely by urban development, a mixture of residential and industrial units. Adjacent (off-site) to the north, east and south are a large warehouse units with a small area of scrub to the southeast, while to the west is residential developments. The majority of the site comprises hardstanding, in the form of the warehouse building with tarmac and concrete parking areas, with a small area of amenity grassland distributed across the site. Both the eastern and western boundaries are dominated by amenity grassland.

Protected Sites

European Statutory Designated Sites

- 3.2. There are no sites of European designation within 10km of the site.

Nationally Designated Sites

- 3.3. There are no nationally designated sites within 2km of the site, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) and the site does not fall within a SSSI impact risk zone.

Locally Designated Sites

- 3.4. There are two locally designated sites within 2km of the site. All of which are Local Nature Reserves, which are statutory designated sites, owned and managed by the local authorities. They are:
- **Croxteth Local Nature Reserve (LNR)** - The reserve has woodland, rough grassland and pasture, several ponds and is bounded by the River Alt. A variety of birds breed in the woodland and the ponds are good for plants such as water dropwort (*Filipendula vulgaris*) dragonflies.
 - **Acornfield Plantation Local Nature Reserve (LNR)** - Predominantly mature broadleaf woodland of birch, oak and sycamore. The centre of the site has a lowland basin mire dominated by sphagnum moss *Sphagnum sp.* and soft rush *Juncus effusus*. Other habitats include a pond, stream, drainage channels, acidic and neutral grasslands, bracken and rhododendron thickets.

Habitats and Flora

- 3.5. A review of the MAGIC system identified priority habitat within 2km of the site.
- 3.6. Although the above habitats have been identified as part of the desk-based study, the site does not contain or provide similar habitat types or has direct linkages to them.
- 3.7. The habitats present across the site are summarised below, along with a description of the composition of the main plant species present and an assessment of their value.



- Buildings
- Broadleaved woodland
- Hardstanding
- Amenity Grassland
- Dense Scrub
- Introduced Shrub
- Scattered Trees
- Invasive Species

Buildings

- 3.8. Nine buildings were identified onsite, full building descriptions and photographs are provided in **Table 3.1** below.

Hardstanding

- 3.9. Hardstanding roads, car park and pavements comprised of concrete and tarmac (**Photograph 1**). Some had been colonised in places by groundsel *Senecio vulgaris*, ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, buttercup species *Ranunculus spp.*, and dandelion *Taraxacum spp.* **Negligible Ecological Value.**



Photograph 1: Showing examples of hardstanding and amenity grass throughout the site.

Amenity Grassland

- 3.10. Amenity grassland bordered the East and Western boundary of the site with smaller patches present in the northeast corner and along the southern site boundary (**Photograph 1**). Species included Dandelion., ribwort *Plantago lanceolata*, plantain *Plantago spp.*, buttercup species *Ranunculus spp.*, daisy *Bellis perennis*, clover species *Trifolium spp.*, ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris* and cleavers *Galium aparine*. **Negligible Ecological Value.**



Broadleaved Woodland

- 3.11. Broadleaved woodland (**Photograph 3**) formed part of the northern site boundary comprising mature and semi mature silver birch *Betula pendula* pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, hazel *Corylus avellana* and franchets cotoneaster *Cotoneaster franchetii* (none invasive). **Local Ecological Value.**



Photograph 2: Showing Broadleaved Woodland

Dense Scrub

- 3.12. Dense scrub was present on the northern boundary and south of the amenity grassland on the southern boundary comprising bramble *Rubus fruticosus* willow herb species *Epilobium spp.* michaelmas daisy elder *Sambucus nigra*, dog rose *Rosa canina*, spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, broadleaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, buddleia, dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* and bindweed species *Convolvulus arvensis*. **Negligible Ecological Value.**



Photograph 3: Showing dense scrub

Hedgerow

- 3.13. Newly planted (1 meter tall 0.5 wide) hedgerow (H1) extending from the western site boundary to broadleaved woodland. The hedge had plastic guards present and comprised hawthorn, with



occasional hazel, field maple *Acer campestre*, broom *Cytisus sp.* and dogrose *Rosa canina*.
Negligible Ecological Value.



Photograph 4: Showing hedgerow H1.

Introduced Shrub

- 3.14. Introduced shrub was present within amenity grassland and adjacent to hardstanding car park. The shrubs were managed and comprised Chinese privet *Ligustrum sinense*, holly *Ilex spp.*, spindle *Euonymus europaeus* and perforate st. john's wort *Hypericum perforatum*. **Negligible Ecological Value.**



Photograph 5: Showing an example of introduced shrubs on site.

Scattered Trees

- 3.15. Semi-mature and mature scattered trees were present within the amenity grassland across the site and dense scrub in the north-east of the site, comprising silver birch, cherry species *Prunus spp.*, weeping willow *Salix babylonica* rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, elder *Sambucus nigra*, goat willow *Salix caprea*, cypress species *Cyparis sp.*, crab apple *Malus sylvestris* and sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* (examples of the scattered trees can be seen in **Table 3.2**). Due to the low amount of scattered trees in the local area, the limited amount of trees onsite, may provide good foraging



and sheltering opportunities for local fauna and are therefore considered to be of **Local Ecological Value**.

Invasive Species

- 3.16. Within the understory of the broadleaved woodland there was rhododendron. There was also invasive wall cotoneaster *Cotoneaster horizontalis* present within the woodland at SJ 42516 97745 and field horsetail *Equisetum arvense* an invasive plant species (but not subject to statutory controls) was present within the hardstanding to south of the site. **Negligible Ecological Value.**



Photograph 6: Showing wall cotoneaster.

Protected and Priority Fauna

Amphibians

- 3.17. Merseyside BioBank (MB) provided seven records of Great Crested Newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* and 13 records of smooth newt *Lissotriton vulgaris* within a 2km radius of the site. However, there are no open waterbodies or ponds located within the site boundary, thus providing no suitable breeding habitat for GCN and other amphibians. There have been one pond identified within 500 meters of the site, however the roads surrounding the site pose a significant barrier for dispersal. As the site predominantly comprises hardstanding with very little vegetation, the site provides no GCN or amphibian terrestrial habitat, and they are considered to be **likely absent from the site**. They will not be discussed further in this report.

Bats

- 3.18. Merseyside BioBank returned 72 records of bat species within 2km of the site. The following species were recorded: common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, pipistrelle species *Pipistrellus spp.*, brown long-eared Bat *Plecotus auritus* and noctule *Nyctalus noctule*, daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*, myotis species *Myotis spp.*



Preliminary Roost Assessment

- 3.19. During the phase I survey and preliminary roost assessment, all trees and buildings on site were checked for bat roosting potential, which were considered to provide negligible - moderate bat roosting potential. A full description and the bat roosting potential for both buildings and trees are provided in **Table 3.1** and **3.2** respectively.

Table 3.1: Buildings and Bat Roosting Potential

Building Number	Description and Roosting Potential	Photographs
B1	Security building which was single storey with a flat roof and red brick walls and wooden windows frames. No roosting features were identified. Negligible Roosting Potential	
B2	B2 comprised a large warehouse building, it was single and double storey with a flat roof. Walls comprised corrugated metal sheeting with a metal barge board which was found to be in a good condition. The lower section of wall comprised brick with metal window frames generally good condition. Negligible Bat Roosting Potential	
B2a	On the south-eastern aspect of B2 a red brick annex plant room was present with a pitched tiled roof and flat roof in good condition. crevices were present in the brickwork and there was a wooden barge board with a suitable gap beneath to provide suitable roosting for bats. Missing bricks on the southern aspect of the annex allowed access to cavity wall, potentially allowing a large number of bats to roost. There was also a large hole on the northern aspect of the annex in brickwork allowing internal access and access to cavity wall for bats. Furthermore, along the eastern aspect there was an area of concrete that appeared damaged and could potentially provide roosting opportunities. A missing metal sheet on the eastern aspect created a crevice between the metal sheet and the red brick under it which could be suitable for roosting bats. Moderate Bat Roosting Potential	 



Building Number	Description and Roosting Potential	Photographs
B3	Comprised a disused security office and plant room with red brick walls and a flat concrete and roofing felt roof with wooden window frames. Rotting window frames created crevices that could be used for roosting. There was a damaged concrete slab above a window that formed a crevice between concrete overhang and window frame western aspect and damaged brickwork present on the southern aspect surrounding the doors that may provide roosting features for bats. There was a crevice between concrete roof and wall on the northern aspect. Low Bat Roosting Potential	
B4	Comprised a metal plant room container, possessing no roosting features. Negligible Bat Roosting Potential	
B5	Comprised a small single room red brick building with a flat roof. There was no access to the eastern, northern or southern aspect due to dense scrub present. Some crevices visible on north western corner of the concrete. Low Bat Roosting Potential	
B6	A double height warehouse building, comprised of redbrick and metal sheeting on all aspects, with a flat roof. There were no roosting features identified. Negligible Bat Roosting Potential	



Building Number	Description and Roosting Potential	Photographs
B7	Comprised a metal water tower with no roosting features. Negligible Bat Roosting Potential	
B8	Comprised a one-storey, well-sealed plant room with a flat roof, possessing no roosting features. Negligible Bat Roosting Potential	
B9	Comprised a red brick two-storey flat roof plant rooms, with no roosting features. Negligible Bat Roosting Potential	

Table 3.2: Trees and Bat Roosting Potential

Tree Number	Description and Roosting Potential	Photographs
1	<i>Silver Birch</i> – semi-mature ~5 meters tall with small amount of lifted bark. Low Bat Roosting Potential	



Building Number	Description and Roosting Potential	Photographs
2	<i>Cherry species</i> – mature, ~7 meters tall with lifted bark. Low Bat Roosting Potential	
3	<i>Silver Birch</i> - ~10 meters tall, with considerable ivy cover. Low Bat Roosting Potential	
4	<i>Silver Birch</i> - ~10 meters tall, with considerable ivy cover. Low Bat Roosting Potential	



Building Number	Description and Roosting Potential	Photographs
5	<i>Silver Birch</i> - ~10 meters tall, with considerable ivy cover. Low Bat Roosting Potential	
6	<i>Silver Birch</i> - ~10 meters tall, with considerable ivy cover. Low Bat Roosting Potential	
7	<i>Lombardy Poplar</i> - mature, ~20 meters tall. Low Bat Roosting Potential	

- 3.20. The dominant habitat type on site was hardstanding with small areas of scattered trees, which provides very little foraging habitat for bats on the site. However, the small area of woodland with scrub in the north of the site may provide some, relatively small foraging opportunity. The onsite buildings may offer some roosting opportunities in the form of potential cavities behind brickwork.



- 3.21. Due to the reasons outlined above, the site in general is considered to be of low ecological value for bats. Buildings **B3** and **B5** were graded as having **low bat roosting potential**, with the annexe of **B2 (B2a)** being graded as providing **moderate bat roosting potential**. Therefore, in line with best practice guidance buildings with a 'Low' potential for roosting bats require a minimum of one additional nocturnal bat survey while buildings with a 'Moderate' potential to support roosting bats require a minimum of two additional nocturnal surveys, in order to assess likely presence/absence of bats and if present, categorise the type of bat roost based on species and number of bats present.

Badgers

- 3.22. MB returned no records of badger *Meles meles* records within 2km of the site and no records of badger setts within proximity to the development. Moreover, the hardstanding comprising the majority of site provides sub-optimal habitat for badger; they are **likely absent from the site** and will not be discussed further in this report.

Birds

- 3.23. Merseyside BioBank returned records of 30 bird species within the study area. Of these, 30 species records of birds that are of Conservation Concern (BoCC) or listed as a priority species were returned within 2km of the site boundary within the past 20 years that are relevant to the site. Of these species, those that are relevant to the site were: Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*, Dunnock *Prunella modularis*, House martin *Delichon urbicum*, house sparrow *Passer domesticus*, starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, song thrush *Turdus philomelos*, and swift *Apus apus* (full details can be made available on request).
- 3.24. The small area of woodland, scrub and scattered trees on-site provide suitable foraging and nesting habitat for a range of common woodland species such as those listed above, which have been returned in the local record search.
- 3.25. The site is considered unsuitable for ground-nesting birds due to its small size, enclosed nature, urban surroundings, and presence of structures obscuring sightlines restricting site suitability. Additionally, no other habitats were recorded on-site or adjacent to the site with the potential to support any Schedule 1 species, and no such relevant species were recorded during surveys.
- 3.26. As the site comprises habitat types that are considered largely unsuitable for rare, protected and notable species the site would support no more than individuals, single pairs or a very small assemblage of birds. As such, notable and protected bird species are **likely absent from the site**. However, recommendations have been made throughout Section 4 to enhance the site for this species group.

Hedgehog

- 3.27. MB returned 35 records of Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* within 2km of the site, with the closest record ~0.56km south of the site. Due to the suitable habitat for foraging and sheltering hedgehog remaining very low/absent from the site; hedgehog are considered to be **likely absent from the site**,



Otter and Water Vole

- 3.28. There were 54 records of European Water Vole *Arvicola amphibius* returned from MB; the closest record was 1.26km southeast of the site associated with the Knowsley Brook. There were no records of otter *Lutra lutra* found within 2km of the site. There are no suitable habitats for otter and water vole either on site, or immediately adjacent to it, therefore are considered to be **likely absent from the site** and will not be discussed further in this report.

Reptiles

- 3.29. No records of reptiles were returned by MB; the site contains no habitat with the potential to support any species of reptile, nor is it connected to any adjacent habitat of suitability for this species group given the urban context of the surrounding land, reptiles are **likely absent from the site** and will not be discussed further in this report.

Other Species

- 3.30. The site has a low potential to be used by other individual Section 41 species not discussed prior, the site provides no suitable habitat to support brown hare, or other notable mammal species.



Section 4: Considerations in Respect of Future Development

Site Context

- 4.1. The proposed plans (**Appendix 2: Proposed Landscape Strategy**) indicate that the majority of the site will remain largely similar, with the main development comprising the creation of a new storage and distribution warehouse. Most of the existing habitats within the site are considered to provide negligible ecological importance, other than the scattered trees which provide local ecological importance. However all trees and hedgerows are to be retained as part of the development.

European Designated Sites

- 4.2. There are no European designated sites on the proposed site and there are no European designated sites within 10km of the site.

Nationally Designated Sites

- 4.3. There are no nationally designated sites on the proposed site, or within 2km of the site.

Locally Designated Sites

- 4.4. There are two locally designated sites within 2km of the site: **Croxteth LNR** and **Acornfield Plantation LNR**.
- 4.5. There are no linking habitats between the site and the two LNR's, and are considered sufficient distance from the site as not to be directly impacted by the proposed development. However, as the proposals could lead to increased traffic activity, there is potential for increased levels of nitrogen during the operational phase of the proposed development. It is therefore recommended that a traffic/ air quality assessment is undertaken in order to establish potential impacts on the LNR's.

Habitats and Flora

- 4.6. All habitats within the site which require removal are considered to be of negligible ecological importance, therefore no mitigation is required to compensate for the loss of these habitats.
- 4.7. However, In order to comply with Knowsley's Local Plan Core Strategy 2016, which states that, "The Council will encourage proposals for new development to incorporate: Retention of existing trees, woodland, vegetation and other habitat features", and "appropriate planting of trees, other soft landscaping and installation of habitat features for the benefit of biodiversity".
- 4.8. The proposals have retained all existing trees and include further native tree planting, native soft landscaping and sustainable urban drainage system pond, to increase the biodiversity and ecological value of the site.



Fauna

Bats

- 4.9. As buildings B2, B3 and B5 will be impacted by the proposal, which could have the potential of destroying bat roosts, in line with professional guidelines for buildings assessed as providing 'Low' and 'Moderate' bat roost potential, a minimum of one and two nocturnal surveys respectively, during the months of May to August inclusive shall be conducted, in order to assess the likely presence or absence of roosting bats. It is therefore recommended that **B3** and **B5** are subject to **one nocturnal bat roost survey**, with **B2a** being subject to **two nocturnal bat roosts surveys** (one of which being a dawn survey). To summarise:

Buildings with Low bat roosting potential

- B3, B5 – Require one nocturnal bat roost survey between May and August inclusively.

Buildings with Moderate bat roosting potential

- B2a – Requires two nocturnal bat roost surveys, one of which being a dawn, between May and August inclusively.

- 4.10. The proposals do, however, provide an opportunity to increase roosting opportunities for bats within the site through the provision of a bat boxes on a suitable retained tree or integrated within the facades of the new buildings.

Birds

- 4.11. During the construction phase of the proposed works, all vegetation removal should be timetabled for outside 'core' nesting bird season (i.e. conducted between September and February) to avoid active nests and the legislation which is afforded to them. If this is not possible and clearance is required within the nesting bird season (i.e. between March and August inclusive), an experienced ecologist must be present at the time of any tree felling or scrub/ hedgerow clearance to check for evidence of active bird nests. If an active nest is found, a sufficient buffer zone will be implemented around the nest commensurate with the species, tolerance of human activity and stage of nesting. Works can only proceed within that area once a suitably qualified ecologist (SQE) has determined the nest is no longer active.
- 4.12. It should be noted that some species of bird (i.e. doves, pigeons) can nest year-round so even if site clearance activities are conducted outside of the 'core' nesting season, site contractors must show due diligence and cease works and seek advice from a SQE if they suspect the presence of an active nest.
- 4.13. To enhance the value of the site for nesting birds post-development it is recommended that a range of bird boxes targeting species of conservation concern are installed in appropriate positions on new buildings and/ or suitable retained trees where practicable. Species targeted should comprise house sparrow and swift.



Section 5: Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 5.1. Section 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published July 2021, states that planning and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by, amongst others, "identifying and pursuing opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity".
- 5.2. The DEFRA Biodiversity Metric 3.1 calculator is used to "measure and account for biodiversity losses and gains resulting from development". The calculator requires baseline data as well as information on habitats lost and created to calculate the total number of biodiversity units on site.
- 5.3. This section of the report provides the summary of the baseline biodiversity value of the site assessed against the proposed post-development biodiversity value.
- 5.4. As detailed in **Sections 2** and **3** of this report, an extended Phase I habitat survey of the site was undertaken by Tyler Grange April 2022. This data was used to determine the area and value of habitats currently on site (the 'baseline'). This data was then transposed into classification of UK Habitats to utilise within the Defra 3.1 metric.
- 5.5. The landscape strategy (see **Appendix 2**) was used in combination with the baseline data, to calculate the areas of retained and replacement habitats on site.
- 5.6. The calculator automatically assigns distinctiveness scores to each habitat, and the user inputs scores for condition, strategic significance and total area (in hectares); as per the guidance.
- 5.7. For these calculations, it is assumed that all existing/new habitats are of low strategic significance because the site not listed as a site within the local strategy.
- 5.8. The information above was then inputted into the metric, to determine the number of biodiversity units at baseline and at post-intervention (i.e. habitat creation + retention + enhancement). The metric then uses all these data to produce the total net unit and percentage change. The Defra metric is provided separate to this report. **Table 5.1** details the baseline habitat along with the Defra 3.1 Habitat classification that is used in the BNG metric, the area, the baseline biodiversity value.
- 5.9. The proposals within the site would require the loss of amenity grassland, dense scrub, and onsite buildings, in the absence of additional habitat creation the development would result in the loss of 2.27 biodiversity units. The landscape strategy (**Appendix 2**), propose to have ornamental scrub planting, amenity grassland, attenuation pond, tree planting and hardstanding features. **Table 5.2** below provides a summary of the on-site habitat creation measures proposed as part of the scheme.
- 5.10. With these habitat creation measures, the proposals overall would result in a **24.77%** gain in biodiversity value. **Table 5.3** below summarises the 'headline' results of the BNG assessment, taking account of the additional habitat creation on-site.



Table 5.1: Baseline habitat along with the Defra 3.1 Habitat classification used in the BNG metric, the area, the baseline biodiversity value

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Type	DEFRA 3.0 Habitat Type	Condition and Criteria	Area (ha)	Biodiversity Value (Units)	Post-development outcome
Building and hardstanding	Urban-Developed land; sealed surface	N/A	7.862	N/A	All Retained
Amenity grassland	Grassland-Modified grassland	Poor ✓ Physical damage evident in less than 5% of total grassland area ✓ Cover of bracken less than 20% ✗ 6-8 species per m² ✗ Sward height is varied ✗ Cover of bare ground between 1-5% ✓ Scrub accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area ✓ Absence of invasive non-native species, undesirables make up less than 5% of ground cover	0.840	1.68	
Broadleaved Woodland	Woodland and Forest – Other woodland; Mixed	Poor 1. Two age classes present (2 points) 2. No significant browsing damage evident in woodland (3 points) 3. No invasive species present in woodland (3 points) 4. Three to four native tree or shrub species across the whole woodland (2 point) 5. >80% of canopy tree and (3 points) 6. More than 40% open space (1 point) 7. No classes or coppice regrowth present (1 point) 8. Rapid tree mortality less than 10%, no pests or diseases and no crown dieback (3 points) 9. No recognisable NVC community at ground layer (1 point) 10. One or less storey across all survey plots (1 point) 11. No veteran trees (1 point) 12. Less than 25% deadwood (1 point) 13. More than 1 hectare of nutrient enrichment and/or more than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground (1 point)	0.062	0.25	All retained



Scattered/ dense scrub	Mixed Scrub	Poor ✓ Habitat is representative of UKHab description with at least 3 woody species ✗ There are clearings, glades or rides present ✗ There is a good age range ✓ There is an absence of invasive non-native species ✗ Scrub has well-developed edge	0.148	0.59	All Lost
Scattered trees	Urban trees	Moderate ✓ More than 70% of trees are native species ✓ Little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health ✓ Trees are immediately adjacent to other vegetation ✗ Tree canopy is predominantly continuous (NA) ✗ More than 50% of trees are mature or veteran ✗ Management regime has encouraged micro habitat sites for fauna	n/a	12.30	All Retained
Total			8.91	14.82	

Table 5.2: On-site habitat creation, the area, the baseline biodiversity value.

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Type	DEFRA 3.0 Habitat Type	Condition and Criteria	Area (ha)	Biodiversity Value (Units)
Building and hardstanding	Urban- Developed land; sealed surface	N/A	7.364	N/A
Amenity grassland	Grassland- Modified grassland	Poor ✓ Physical damage evident in less than 5% of total grassland area ✓ Cover of bracken less than 20% ✗ 6-8 species per m ² ✗ Sward height is varied ✗ Cover of bare ground between 1-5% ✓ Scrub accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area ✓ Absence of invasive non-native species, undesirables make up less than 5% of ground cover	1.343	2.59



Introduced shrub	Urban – Introduced shrub	Poor – Automatically assigned in the metric	0.004	0.01
Pond	Lakes- Ponds (Non-Priority Habitat)	Poor ✗ There is semi-natural habitat (i.e. moderate distinctiveness or above) for at least 10 m from the pond edge ✓ Less than 10% of the pond is covered with duckweed or filamentous algae ✓ The pond is of good water quality, with clear water (low turbidity) indicating no obvious signs of pollution ✗ The pond is not artificially connected to other waterbodies, either via streams, ditches or artificial pipework. ✓ Pond water levels should be able to fluctuate naturally throughout the year. No obvious dams, pumps or pipework. ✓ There is an absence of non-native plant and animal species ✓ The pond is not artificially stocked with fish. If the pond naturally contains fish, it is a native fish assemblage at low densities. ✗ In non-woodland ponds, plants, be they emergent, submerged or floating (excluding duckweeds), should cover at least 50% of the pond area that is less than 3 m deep. ✓ The surface of the non-woodland ponds is no more than 50% shaded by woody bankside species.	0.141	0.54
Scattered trees	Urban trees	Poor ✓ More than 70% of trees are native species ✓ Little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health ✗ Trees are immediately adjacent to other vegetation ✗ Tree canopy is predominantly continuous (NA) ✗ More than 50% of trees are mature or veteran ✗ Management regime has encouraged micro habitat sites for fauna	n/a	2.80
Total (Including Retained Habitats)			8.91	18.50



Table 5.3: 'headline' results of the BNG assessment.

On-site baseline	Habitat Units	14.82
	Hedgerow units	0.07
On-site post-intervention	Habitat Units	18.50
	Hedgerow Units	0.07
Total net unit change	Habitat Units	+3.67
	Hedgerow Units	+0.00
Total net % gain	Habitat Percentage	+24.77%
	Hedgerow Percentage	+0.00%



Section 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

- 6.1. With the implementation of the mitigation and enhancement measures described in **Section 4**, it is considered the proposed development could conform with relevant planning policy and legislation (see **Appendix 1**).
- 6.2. The Defra 3.1 Metric has calculated that the proposed development at this stage as illustrated on the attached landscape strategy and planting plan would amount to a net gain in biodiversity value of c. 3.67 biodiversity units, equating to a 24.77% net gain in biodiversity value.
- 6.3. In line with professional guidelines for buildings assessed as providing Low or Moderate bat roost potential, a minimum of one or two nocturnal survey, during the months of May to August inclusive shall be conducted respectively, in order to assess the likely presence or absence of roosting bats. Should bats be found roosting within the building, further survey may be necessary to determine the type of bat roost and therefore level of mitigation and whether a Natural England licence will be required for demolition or renovation works on the buildings.
- 6.4. Sensitive working methodologies throughout the construction phase will help reduce disturbance to wildlife on site. This should include:
 - Storing materials off the ground and ensuring excavations are left ramped;
 - The use of a sensitively designed lighting scheme to reduce impacts to foraging and commuting bats;
 - Carrying out works outside of the core nesting period for birds.
- 6.5. Works to remove ornamental scrub should be conducted outside of the core nesting bird season (March-August inclusive) or preceded by checks by an SQE.
- 6.6. Due diligence is expected by all contractors to check for active nests prior to and during construction, and if an active nest is identified an SQE should be consulted. Compensation and enhancement measures for birds should be factored into the new development and should include the installation of a series of bird boxes within retained trees.
- 6.7. A sensitive lighting scheme is to be included in the new development along with the installation of bat boxes within retained trees and on new warehouse building.



Appendix 1: Policy and Legislation

Local Planning Policy

Knowsley Local Plan (Adopted 2016)

Policy CS2: Development Principles

A1.1 New development in Knowsley and the preparation of subsequent stages of the Local Plan will be expected to support the following development principles

Principle 4: Recognise environmental limits, protect and enhance environmental assets, enhance local character and promote quality of place by:

- Understanding and respecting the character and distinctiveness of places
- and landscapes;
- Protecting and enhancing the historic environment;
- Promoting good quality design and ensuring that development respects its setting taking into account relevant design requirements, and best practice;
- Maximising opportunities for the regeneration of previously developed land, including derelict or unsightly areas to improve the image of Knowsley and use land resources efficiently;
- Mitigating potential negative impacts of traffic growth and road traffic on highway safety, air quality, noise and health;
- Supporting policies relating to Green Infrastructure and the greening of towns and cities;
- Maintaining or enhancing the tranquillity of open countryside and rural areas;
- Maintaining or enhancing the quantity and quality of biodiversity and habitats, including potential impacts on nationally and internationally important sites for biodiversity;
- Addressing any issues of unstable land, resulting from Knowsley's legacy of minerals extraction; and
- Minimising negative impact upon flood risk, air quality, water quality, land quality, soil quality, and noise or vibration levels and ensuring any negative impacts are appropriately mitigated.

Development that will have an unacceptable impact upon any of the above will only be permitted where the benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the harm.

Policy CS8: Green Infrastructure

Maintenance and Enhancement of Knowsley's Existing Green Infrastructure

A1.2 Knowsley's existing Green Infrastructure and its beneficial functions will be protected, managed and/or enhanced, primarily to:

- Ensure more attractive and cleaner residential neighbourhoods;
- Sustain and promote biodiversity (including designated sites, priority habitats and protected and endangered species) in accordance with importance and contribution to ecological networks;



- Preserve the character and function of historic environments and valued landscapes;
- Mitigate the effects of climate change and flood risk;
- Mitigate air, water and noise pollution;
- Provide local opportunities for sport, recreation and allotments; and
- Provide sustainable transport linkages between residential neighbourhoods and easy access to employment and services.

A1.3 To achieve the above, planning powers and other interventions will be used to:

- Protect and enhance strategically important areas of greenspace;
- Ensure an appropriate quantity and improved quality of locally important open spaces, including outdoor sports provision (and ancillary facilities of appropriate scale);
- Promote effective movement of wildlife through a network of strategic green links, by protecting, maintaining and improving existing and new open spaces, water courses (including water quality) and biodiversity assets;
- Protect, enhance and/or introduce biodiversity into existing areas of Green Infrastructure, through integration into the design of new development and public realm projects;
- Improve accessibility for communities to greenspace offering leisure and recreation opportunities;
- Protect and where possible improve green paths and cycleways linking residential areas, existing strategic areas of greenspace, employment locations, local community services and leisure facilities;
- Work in partnership with other districts and relevant bodies at a landscape scale to minimise the impact of development upon Knowsley's existing biodiversity and geological assets, and sustain the protection afforded to internationally important sites, including supporting habitat, for biodiversity outside of the borough; and
- Deliver new integrated and functional Green Infrastructure that helps to mitigate and adapt to climate change, such as sustainable drainage systems, carbon capture and storage, soft landscaping and green roofs.

A1.4 Site allocations for greenspace will be identified in the Local Plan: Site Allocations and Development Policies document, with further guidance set out in the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document or future Supplementary Planning Document as appropriate.

Strategic Green Links

A1.5 Knowsley's strategically important green links are:

- Alt Corridor (Huyton) – stretching from Huyton Village through South Alt Park, Alt Park, Alt Meadows and into Stockbridge Village;
- Valley Corridor (Kirkby) – stretching through Valley Meadow, St. Chad's Park, Millbrook Park, Millennium Green and Mill Dam;
- Whiston to Cronton Corridor – stretching through Cronton, Stadt Moers Park and Whiston Greenway;
- Halewood Triangle – Halewood Park linkage with the Trans-Pennine Trail and to the national cycle network;
- M57 Green Belt Corridor; and



- Knowsley Hall Estate – including Knowsley Safari Park and Local Wildlife Sites.

Green Infrastructure within the Liverpool City Region

A1.6 Knowsley Council will work with partners to help deliver local and sub-regional programmes, initiatives and strategies to enhance Green Infrastructure.

Approach to Green Infrastructure and New Development

A1.7 New development must be served by Green Infrastructure to meet the needs of residents and the local environment, in a manner which will:

- Contribute to the creation of a high quality residential environment;
- Provide access to high quality open space for leisure and recreational purposes;
- Seek to protect, maintain and where possible enhance biodiversity within and around new developments according to their designation and significance to provide space for nature; and
- Provide adequate mitigation and/or, as a last resort, compensation for Green Infrastructure or biodiversity loss, in circumstances where harm resulting from the development is otherwise unavoidable.

Policy CS21: Greenspaces and Trees

Greenspace Protection

A1.8 In supporting the wider Green Infrastructure functions of urban greenspace in accordance with Policy CS8, the Council will provide and maintain quantitative, qualitative and accessibility standards for different types of public open space.

A1.9 New development which would result in the loss of urban greenspace, will not be permitted unless at least one of the following criteria are met:

- A surplus of provision for all types of greenspace would be maintained relative to local standards;
- The land is considered unsuitable in terms of size, location or character to prevent or address individual deficiencies of different types of greenspace relative to local standards;
- Appropriate mitigation is provided through replacement facilities of at least an equal quantity, quality and accessibility;
- The development is required to improve greenspace provision or for ancillary facilities to support sport or recreation; or
- Where the proposal relates to the loss of indoor or outdoor sports provision, and there is no evidence of future or continuing need for sports use, or alternatively only land incapable of forming a playing pitch or sporting facility is affected and its release accords with either clause 2)a) or 2)b).

A1.10 Irrespective of whether criteria in 2) are met, unless the benefits of a proposal clearly outweigh the loss of urban greenspace, development will be resisted where it would significantly harm any existing or potential special qualities of greenspace in the area in terms of:



- Visual amenity;
- Residential amenity;
- Biodiversity and environmental benefits;
- Historical, cultural or community value;
- Recreational benefits; or
- Physical and/or visual linkages between adjoining urban greenspaces

Accessible and Quality Greenspaces

A1.11 The Council will support improvements to existing and new areas of greenspace in accordance with best practice standards¹²⁷, to achieve the following requirements:

- Accessible, safe and secure locations for all members of the community to use;
- Clean and well maintained facilities, equipment and open spaces; and
- Conservation of natural features, wildlife, fauna, landscapes, buildings and other structural features, as appropriate.

A1.12 When considering proposals for new residential development, the Council will seek enhancements to greenspaces via on-site provision, new offsite provision or enhancement of existing off site provision through developer contributions secured by legal agreement in accordance with Policy CS27: Planning and Paying for New Infrastructure, the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document and/or a Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule, as appropriate.

Local Green Spaces

A1.13 Any Local Green Spaces Designations which are formally designated will be identified in the Local Plan: Site Allocations and Development Policies or future Neighbourhood Plans (if applicable). This designation will only be used where the greenspace concerned is:

- Reasonably close to the community it serves;
- Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- Local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

Enhancement of Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace and Tree Protection

A1.14 The Council will encourage proposals for new development to incorporate:

- Retention of existing trees, woodland, vegetation and other habitat features which offer a positive contribution to the local environment in terms of visual amenity, recreation value or biodiversity/wildlife interest;
- Appropriate planting of trees, other soft landscaping and installation of habitat features for the benefit of biodiversity; and
- Adequate replacement provision where tree loss is unavoidable, comprising two additional trees for every tree lost and taking account of species and size.



Policy CS24: Managing Flood Risk

A1.15 New development shall include flood mitigation measures, where necessary, to manage flood risk associated with or caused by the development. These measures shall be derived from the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), relevant FRA(s) or a local strategy for flood risk management, and:

- Be designed to contribute to the biodiversity of the borough unless it can be demonstrated that this would not be technically feasible;
- Incorporate a Sustainable Drainage System;
- Be fully described in the planning application; and
- Be funded by the developer, including long term maintenance.



Appendix 2: Proposed Landscape Strategy





-  Site Boundary
-  Retained mature vegetation
-  Proposed meadow grassland (Emorsgate EM1)
-  Proposed street trees
-  Proposed ornamental trees and shrubs
-  Proposed attenuation pond
-  Proposed staff amenity / outdoor breakout space



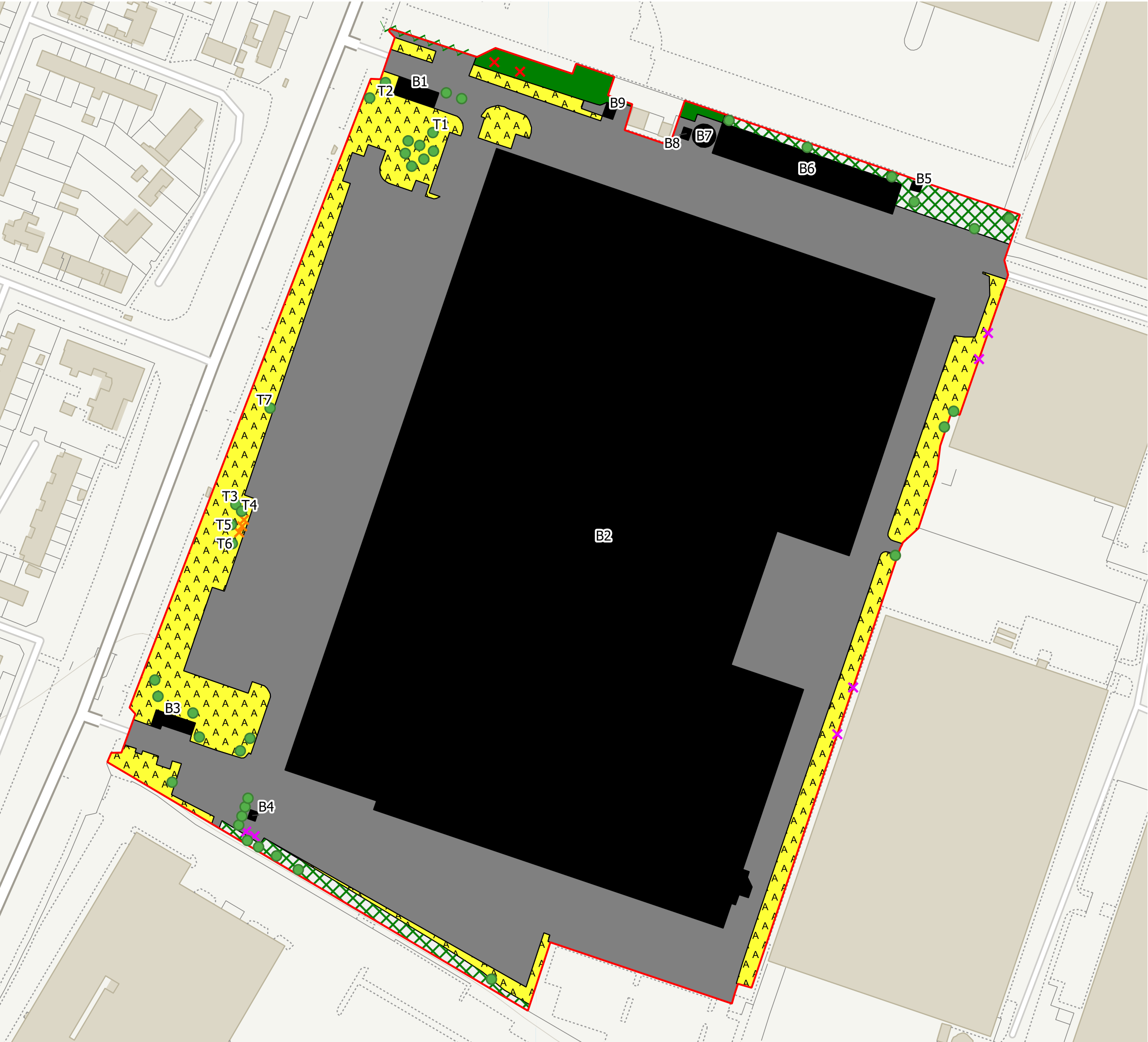
Project	Deacon Business Park, Knowsley
Drawing Title	Landscape Strategy Plan
Scale	Not to Scale
Drawing No	15353/P09
Date	December 2022
Checked	AB/CS



Plans:

Plan 1: Habitat Features Plan





- Redline Boundary
- Buildings
- Amenity Grassland
- Hardstanding
- Scrub - dense/continuous
- Broadleaved Woodland - semi-natural
- Scattered Tree
- Cotoneaster
- Rhododendron
- Field Horsetail
- Native Hedgerow



Project	Deacon Buisness Park, Knowsley
Drawing Title	Habitat Features Plan
Scale	As Shown (Approximate)
Drawing No.	15353/P10
Date	14/12/2022
Checked	ECG/NB



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