
EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY & DAYTIME BAT SURVEY

SOVEREIGN BUSSINESS PARK, HUYTON, LIVERPOOL

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Site Information

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2022 by Walker Sime to carry out an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey & Daytime Bat Survey at Sovereign Business Park, Huyton, Liverpool. The site is situated in the north-east corner of Huyton Industrial estate (O.S. grid reference: SJ 45646 89764 – see Figure 1). The proposed development site currently comprises an area of an industrial estate comprised of hardstanding on which stand several warehouses and office buildings stand. With amenity grassland and an area of tall ruderal herb with scrub and trees on the boundary of an industrial estate. The commercial developments within the industrial estate lie to the north, east and south of the development with residential development lying to the west

An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey is required to provide an overview of the habitats present within the site and to assess any potential protected species issues on the site. A daytime bat survey is required to assess the potential use of the property by bats.

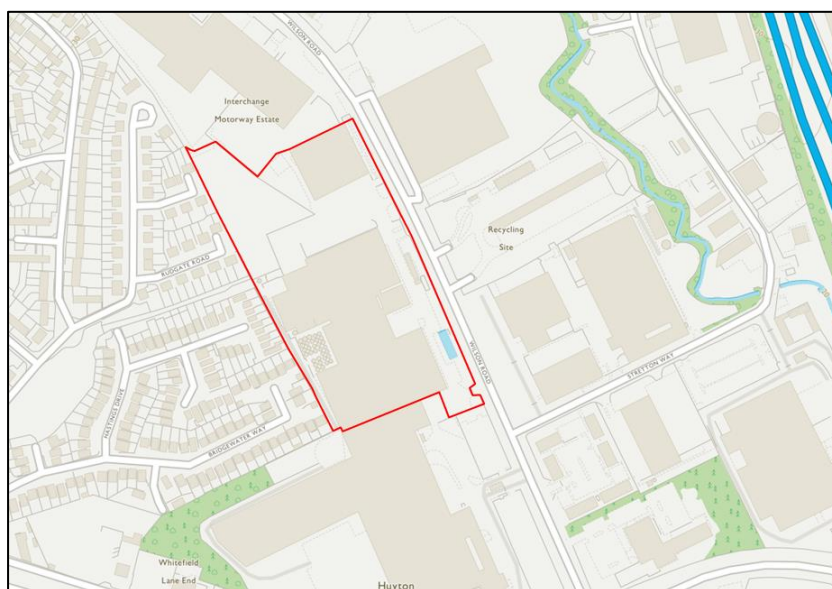


Figure 1 showing the location of the site

Description of Development

- 1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application for the commercial development of the site, which will include demolition of some of the buildings. New car parking and landscaping is proposed within the scheme

Biodiversity in Planning

- 1.3 Biodiversity is a material consideration, and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have a requirement to consider biodiversity and protected species when determining planning applications. Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) gives specific reference to minimising the impacts of development on biodiversity. Local and Neighbourhood plans also provide guidance towards protecting and enhancing biodiversity, including priority habitats and notable species.



2.0 METHODOLOGY

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.1 A Phase 1 Habitat survey was undertaken to JNCC standards (JNCC, 2010). The site was walked and each habitat was assigned a Phase 1 habitat category. Species lists were taken at locations of botanical interest. All botanical nomenclature follows Stace, 2019. A Phase 1 map was produced showing habitat boundaries.
- 2.2 During the Extended Phase 1 survey, the habitats were assessed for their potential to support protected species. This included, for example, looking for signs of Badger activity (e.g. setts, paths, latrines and hairs on fences), assessing any waterbodies on site or near the site for their potential to support Great Crested Newt
- 2.3 The site was also surveyed for invasive, non-native plant species such as Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed.

Daytime Bat Survey

- 2.4 A daytime bat survey of the site was undertaken to search for, and to assess the potential for, a bat roost.
- 2.5 An external assessment of the affected buildings on the site was undertaken, which included, for example, looking for gaps between any soffit boards and walls, gaps between window frames and the walls, and looking for bat droppings on the walls and window ledges. An internal assessment was also carried out, with particular focus on gaps in walls, cracks in roof beams, and any evidence of bat activity, such as bat droppings, in the internal spaces.
- 2.6 A ground-level assessment of any trees affected by the proposals was also undertaken. This involved a search for potential roosting features (PRF's), including peeled bark, knot holes and branch splits.
- 2.7 A pair of close-focussing binoculars, a high-powered torch and, where necessary, an endoscopic camera, were used to search for evidence of bats.

Personnel and Seasonal Timing

- 2.8 Kate Reed (Senior Ecologist) carried out the first part of the Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey on the 15th June 2021. The second part of the Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey and Daytime Bat survey on the 14th February 2022 by Andy Harmer (Principle Ecologist) and Sam Harmer (Senior Ecologist). All the surveyors experienced ecologist and fully trained in botanical surveys and protected species assessments. June is an optimal month for botanical work. February is a sub-optimal time for botanical work however due to the habitats present on the site a throughout assessment could be made at this time. Daytime bat surveys can be undertaken at any time of year. The weather at the time of the survey of both surveys was clear and dry.

Survey Constraints

- 2.9 The site was fully accessible. There were negligible constraints to the survey.



3.0 RESULTS

Description of Habitats

- 3.1 The Phase 1 Habitat Map can be found at the back of the report. The habitats on the proposed development site are described below.

Bare Ground

- 3.2 The majority of the site is covered with hardstanding, surrounding the buildings and used as car parking (See Figure 1).



Photograph 1 showing the hardstanding

Amenity Grassland

- 3.3 Areas of amenity grassland are present on the site (see Photograph 2). The edges of the hardstanding are covered with ephemeral short perennial vegetation (see Photograph 2). This is composed of Yorkshire Fog *Holcus Lanatus*, Annual Meadow-grass *Poa annua*, Groundsel *Senecio vulgaris*, Broad-leaved Willowherb *Epilobium montanum*, Common Nettle *Urtica dioica*, Colt's-foot *Tussilago farfara* and Bryophytes.



Photograph 2 showing the amenity grassland

Marshy Grassland

- 3.4 An attenuation area on the site support marshy Grassland (see Photograph 3), this is covered with a raised deck. Species within the marshy grassland include Bulrush *Typha latifolia*, Soft-rush *Juncus effusus*, Curled Dock *Rumex crispus*, Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus* and Common Ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*.



Photograph 3 showing the marshy grassland

Buildings and other Structures

- 3.5 Large warehouse buildings and offices are present on the site as well as smaller cabins and utility units.



Photograph 4 showing some of the buildings on site

Tall Ruderal Herb

- 3.6 The dominant habitat on site, covering the northern section is an area of tall ruderal herb (see Photograph 5). This is composed of Rosebay Willowherb *Chamaenerion angustifolium*, Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., Common Nettle *Urtica dioica*, Foxglove *Digitalis purpurea*, Cleavers *Galium aparine* and Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense*.





Photograph 5 showing the tall ruderal herb

Ephemeral Short Perennial/Tall Ruderal Herb Mosaic

- 3.7 This southern part of the site has an ephemeral short perennial and tall ruderal herb mosaic that has developed over the compressed hardcore substrate (see Photograph 6). Frequently occurring species here include Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, Soft-Rush *Juncus effusus*, Yorkshire Fog *Holcus Lanatus*, Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, Creeping Cinquefoil *Potentilla reptans*, Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens* and White Clover *Trifolium repens* and Ribwort Plantain. Occasionally occurring species include Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera*, Marsh Orchid *Dactylorhiza* sp., Perforate St. John's Wort *Hypericum perforatum* and Fox-and-Cubs *Pilosella aurantiaca*.



Photograph 6 showing the ephemeral short perennial/ tall ruderal herb mosaic



Ephemeral Short Perennial

- 3.8 A band of hardstanding covered with moss occurs in the north of the site (see Photograph 7). This has been mapped as ephemeral short perennial habitat.



Photograph 7 showing the ephemeral short perennial

Continuous and Scattered Scrub

- 3.9 Continuous scrub is present on the northern and western boundary of the site and also patchily within the tall ruderal habitats on site (see Photograph 8). This is composed of Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., with occasional Willow *Salix* sp., Elder *Sambucus nigra*, Silver Birch *Betula pendula* and Honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*. Scattered scrub is also present on the site (see Photograph 9). This is composed of Dog Rose *Rosa canina*, Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Willow *Salix* sp., Elder *Sambucus nigra* and Elm *Ulmus* sp.



Photograph 8 showing an area of continuous scrub on the site



Photograph 9 showing one of the scattered scrub on site

Wetland Vegetation

- 3.10 An area wetland occurs on the site (see Photograph 10). It is possible that this holds water during the periods of heavy rainfall but was dry at the time of the survey. Species here include Bulrush *Typha latifolia*, Common Spike-rush *Eleocharis palustris*, Soft-rush *Juncus effusus*, Yorkshire Fog *Holcus Lanatus*, Cyperus Sedge *Carex pseudocyperus* and Horsetail *Equisetum* sp.





Photograph 10 showing the wetland vegetation

Scattered Trees

- 3.11 Scattered trees occur on the site (see Photograph 11), these are all semi-mature. Species include Willow *Salix* sp., Elder *Sambucus nigra*, Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and Turkey Oak *Quercus cerris*.



Photograph 11 showing one of the Scattered Trees

Site Boundaries

- 3.12 The site boundaries are marked with a metal fence or are open to the remainder of the industrial estate.



PROTECTED SPECIES

Great Crested Newt

- 3.13 Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* is a European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit) and the species is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.14 1 pond exists on the site, this is the attenuation pond (see Photograph 3 above). The pond was dry at the time of both surveys and has a decking installed over the basin which will result in it being heavily shaded. No other ponds exist within 205m of the site boundary. The site supports suitable Great Crested Newt terrestrial habitat, all the habitats on site could provide cover from predation as well as foraging and community opportunities.

Bats

- 3.15 All bat species are European Protected Species. This is implemented in the UK through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit). Bats are also protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Daytime Bat Survey

- 3.16 Two warehouses are present on the site, both were the subject of a daytime bat survey, and were otherwise fully accessible. Two smaller buildings are present on the site, there was no internal access to these buildings.
- 3.17 The largest of the two warehouses is comprised of three units and an infill section. The exterior walls are constructed from brick which is all in good condition (see Photograph 12) with all the bricks and mortar complete and no areas of damage or reassessing mortar. The upper sections of some of the walls and the whole of other walls are clad with corrugated metal panels in places (see Photographs 13 and 14). All the cladding is complete with all the panels lying flush to each other. Windows are present within some of the brick sections these are all in good condition and lie flush with the brickwork.



Photograph 12 showing the exterior brickwork



Photograph 13 showing the corrugated metal panel on the upper walls



Photograph 14 showing the corrugated metal panels covering the entire rear walls

- 3.18 There are different roof types on each section of the warehouse, they are either pitched or flat and are constructed from corrugated metal panels with skylights throughout, all appear to be well maintained although due to the shallow pitch of some roofs it was not possible to view them in their entirety (see Photograph 15). A small section of the roof above the offices is hipped this too is in good condition.



Photograph 15 showing some sections of the roof at the rear of the building

- 3.19 A large canopy area constructed from corrugated metal panels is also associated with this warehouse (see Photograph 16). This is attached to the northern elevation of the building, it is all complete in good condition and well-sealed with the adjoining building.



Photograph 16 showing the large canopy on the northern elevation

- 3.20 The internal spaces within the warehouse are large and open to the roof (see Photographs 17 and 18). The roofs are supported by a metal frame which is complete throughout and does not support any features that bat bats could exploit for roosting such as crevices. The office spaces within the warehouse have false ceiling, with the space above used for services such as lighting (see Photographs 19 and 20). No evidence of bat activity such as bat droppings was found within the warehouse.



Photograph 17 showing one of the large internal spaces



Photograph 18 showing another of the large internal spaces



Photograph 19 showing one of the office spaces



Photograph 20 showing the space above one of the offices

- 3.21 The second warehouse is smaller and lies in the north of the site. The external walls are constructed from brick (see Photograph 21). This is all complete and intact with no missing or damaged bricks or mortar. A small amount of corrugated metal cladding is present on the eastern elevation (see Photograph 22) this is all in good condition and lies flush to the brickwork beneath. Metal shutters are present along the southern elevation of the building which are all in good condition, a small gap is present at the top of the shutter which could provide a potential access point for bats (see Photograph 23).



Photograph 21 showing the roof void above the main house



Photograph 22 showing the section of metal cladding



Photograph 23 showing a gap above one of the metal shutters

- 3.22 The roof the smaller warehouse is a saw-tooth roof with multiple pitches (see Photograph 24). The roof appears to be in good condition with all the roofing panels flush to each other. The vertical section support skylights which are all in position and do not support any damage.



Photograph 24 showing the roof of the smaller warehouse

- 3.23 The internal space of the warehouse is comprised of a series of large open rooms, all are open to the roof (see Photographs 25 and 26). The roof is supported by a metal frame which is complete and intact and does not support any suitable roosting opportunities for bats. Signs of water ingress are present throughout suggesting the roof is no longer fully watertight. Offices are also present in this warehouse which have

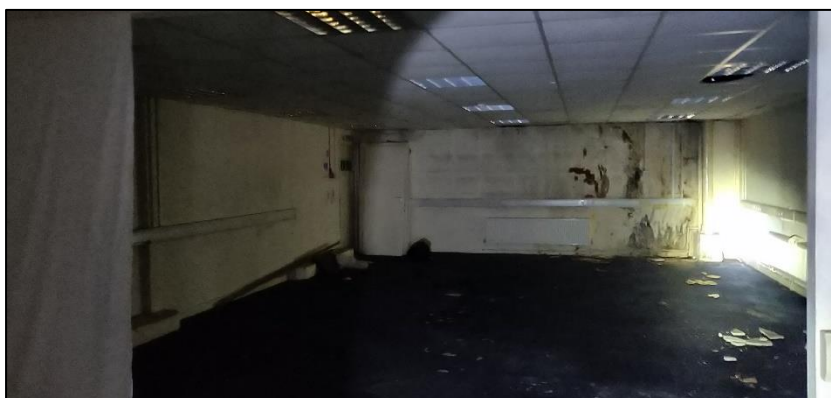
a false ceiling, the small cavity above is open to the roof and support service wires and pipes.



Photograph 25 showing the interior space of the smaller warehouse



Photograph 26 showing another section of the smaller warehouse internally



Photograph 27 showing an office space in the smaller warehouse

- 3.24 The other buildings and structures on site were not accessed internally but appear to be well-sealed from the exterior inspection. The largest of these additional structures is a single storey brick-built unit with a flat roof (see Photograph 30). It is well maintained with no potential access points for bats. All the roof edges are sealed with capping material which is all complete. Other structures include the gate hut (see Photograph 31) a small single-storey structure with a flat-roof which also appears to be extremely well-sealed.



Photograph 30 showing the single-storey building



Photograph 31 showing the gate hut

- 3.25 The trees on site are young to semi-mature and were all inspected from the ground for bat roosting features, such as cavities, limb damage or peeling bark. No such features or staining or evidence of bat use could be found associated with these trees. Bats use linear landscape features for foraging and commuting and it is possible that bats forage and commute over the site.

Badger

- 3.26 Badgers *Meles meles* are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)/The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011. These Acts, for example, make it illegal to disturb a Badger whilst it is in a sett, to kill, injure or take a Badger and to obstruct the entrance to a Badger sett.
- 3.27 No Badger sett was located on the site or immediately adjacent to the site. No evidence of Badger activity such as latrines or snuffle holes was located on site.

Nesting Birds

- 3.28 All bird species are protected at their nest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011.

- 3.29 The site supports suitable nesting habitat for nesting birds within the scattered trees, continuous and scattered scrub some of the warehouses may also provide suitable nesting opportunities.

INVASIVE SPECIES

- 3.30 Japanese Rose *Rosa rugosa* occurs on the site (see Photograph 9), this is a non-native, invasive species as listed on Schedule 9 of The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to allow this species to spread in the wild.



Photograph 9 showing some of the Japanese Rose on site

PROTECTED SITES

- 3.31 No statutory protected sites lie on the site or immediately adjacent to the site boundary. Two statutory protected sites are located within 5km of the site:
- Childwall Woods Local Nature Reserve (LNR) – 3.8km west of the site
 - Clinton wood LNR – 4.7km south-east of the site
- 3.32 The site lies within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone, which lists certain types of development that may have a deleterious impact on protected sites nearby, in these cases the LPA may consult Natural England for advice on any potential impacts the proposed development may have on the nearby protected sites.
- 3.33 No non-statutory protected sites exist on or adjacent to the site. Two non-statutory protected sites are located within 1km of the site:
- Stadt Moers Q3 and Q4 which lies 530m to the north-east of the site.
 - Ox Lane Wood, Tarbock which lies 815m to the south of the site.

4.0 ASSESSMENT

Habitats

- 4.1 The Phase 1 Habitats present on the site are common throughout the UK. No nationally rare or locally rare plant species were located during the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey.
- 4.2 The site comprises hardstanding, buildings, tall ruderal herb and continuous scrub with scattered trees and scrub and two small wetland areas. The habitats offer cover from predation, foraging habitat and a limited pollen and nectar source for invertebrates.

Development Context

- 4.3 The development proposals involve the construction of a new industrial development, with the demolition of the existing warehouses to creating parking an loss of the majority of the habitats on site. It is recommended a suitable landscaping scheme is created to help mitigate the loss of the habitats on site.

PROTECTED SPECIES

Great Crested Newt

- 4.4 Only 1 pond exists on the site, this was dry at the time of both site visits and supports terrestrial plant species suggesting it is dry for the most part. The decking installed over the pond area will result it in being continuously heavily shaded this pond is isolated from other suitable breeding habitat or terrestrial habitat by hardstanding and short mown amenity grassland from any suitable Great Crested Newt terrestrial habitat or other potential breeding habitat. The other wetland area on the site was also dry at the time of the survey but may hold water during periods of heavy rainfall.
- 4.5 The site provides suitable terrestrial habitat for Great Crested Newt within most of the habitats on site, however the site is isolated from any other suitable breeding habitat by hardstanding and short mown amenity grassland. The site and pond are situated within an urban setting and hold no habitat connectivity with any suitable breeding/terrestrial habitat. No further survey work is required, and Great Crested Newt is not considered to be a constraint on development at this time.

Bats

- 4.6 The buildings on site were the subject of a daytime bat survey, all of the buildings were found to be in good material good condition with no suitable access points of bats, other than above one of the metal shutters on the smaller building. The internal spaces of the warehouses are no longer in use and are cold. The rooms are open to the roofs and do not support any roof voids other than the small spaces above the false ceilings in the offices which are uninsulated spaces filled with service wires and pipes. Water ingress is present in the smaller of the two warehouses. No evidence of bat activity was found in any of the buildings on site. All the buildings on site are considered to offer **Negligible** potential to support a bat roost.

- 4.7 The trees on site are young to semi-mature, they do not support features that could be used by bats for roosting. It is possible that bats foraging over the site.

Badger

- 4.8 No Badger sett was located on the site or immediately adjacent to the site. No evidence of Badger activity was located. Badgers are not considered to be a constraint on development.

Nesting Birds

- 4.9 The site provides suitable habitat for nesting birds within the scrub, and scattered trees. If any work to these habitats will proceed within the bird nesting season (which is generally March-August), then a nesting bird check will be required immediately prior to any work.

INVASIVE SPECIES

- 4.10 Japanese Rose *Rosa rugosa* occurs on the site, this is a non-native, invasive species as listed on Schedule 9 of The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to allow this species to spread in the wild.

PROTECTED SITES

- 4.11 No statutory or non-statutory protected sites lie within the proposed development site or immediately adjacent. Two statutory protected sites lie within 5km of the site boundary. The closest site is Childwall Woods LNR which is located approximately 3.8km west of the site. Two non-statutory protected sites lie within 1km of the site boundary. The closest site is Stadt Moers Q3 and Q4 which lies 530m to the north-east of the site. At these distances, and with barrier habitats between the surrounding sites and the proposed development site, there is expected to be no deleterious impact on the protected sites from the development.
- 4.12 The site lies within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone, which lists certain types of development that may have a deleterious impact on protected sites nearby. The LPA may consult Natural England for advice on any potential impacts the proposed development may have on the nearby protected sites.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

- 5.1 Protected species are a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a planning application. The presence of protected species, the effect of the proposed development and suitable mitigation, if required, must be established before planning permission can be granted. Following the findings from the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, the following survey may be required:

- **Nesting Birds** - If any work to the scattered scrub needs to be carried out within the bird nesting season (which is generally March to August), then a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior to work commencing.

Invasive Species

- 5.2 The Japanese Rose should be eradicated from the site as a part of the proposed development.

Habitat Enhancement

- 5.3 General recommendations to bring biodiversity gain to the site are:

- Soft landscaping should include the provision of native and non-native flowering perennial species, to provide a pollen and nectar source for invertebrates.
- Bird boxes and/or bat boxes should be erected on the new buildings where possible.
- Trees planting of native species where practically possible.

6.0 REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP

