
EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY

SOVERIGN BUSINESS PARK, HUYTON

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Site Information

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2021 by Walker Sime to carry out an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of land at Sovereign Business Park, Huyton, Liverpool. The site is situated in the north-east corner of Huyton Industrial estate (O.S. grid reference: SJ 45547 89824 – see Figure 1). The proposed development site currently comprises 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.

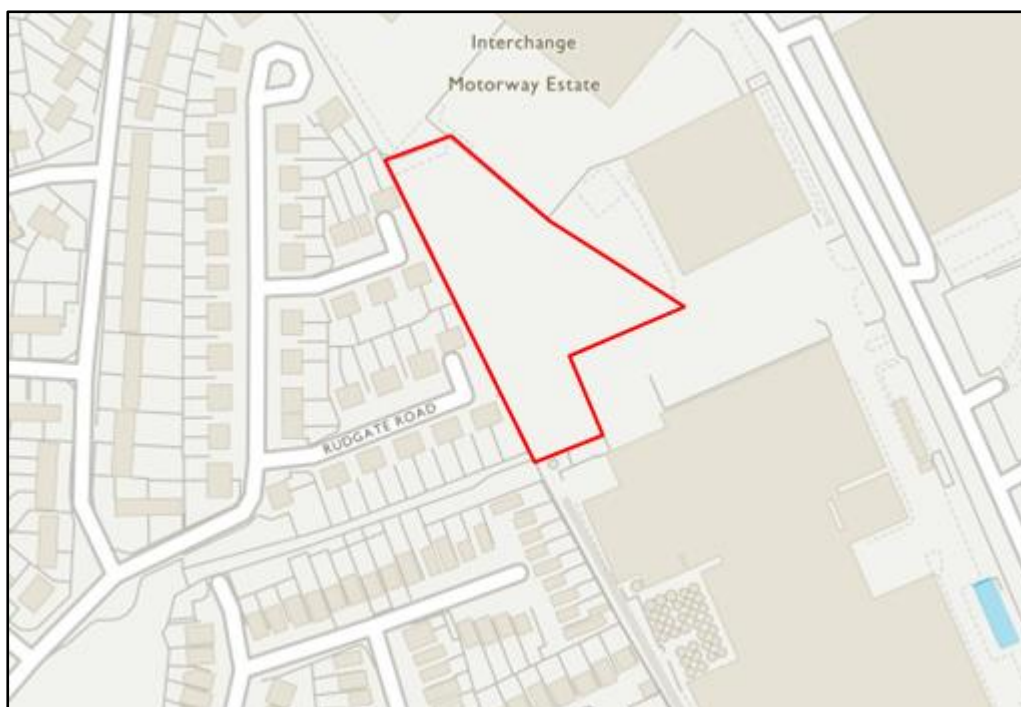


Figure 1 showing the location of the site

Description of Development

- 1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application for the commercial development of the site including the construction of industrial units, carparking, landscaping and access.

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 (February 2019) 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.

Personnel and Seasonal Timing

- 2.4 Kate Reed (Senior Ecologist) carried out the daytime bat survey on the 15th June 2021. Kate is an experienced ecologist and fully trained in botanical surveys and protected species assessments. June is an optimal month for botanical work. The weather at the time of the survey was sunny and dry.

Survey Constraints

- 2.5 The site was fully accessible. There were no constraints to the survey.



3.0 RESULTS

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.

Tall Ruderal Herb

- 3.2 The dominant habitat on site, covering the northern section is an area of tall ruderal herb (see Photograph 1). 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 1 showing the tall ruderal herb

Ephemeral Short Perennial/Tall Ruderal Herb Mosaic

- 3.3 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 2). 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 2 showing the ephemeral short perennial/ tall ruderal herb mosaic

Ephemeral Short Perennial

- 3.4 A band of hardstanding covered with moss occurs in the north of the site (see Photograph 3). This has been mapped as ephemeral short perennial habitat.



Photograph 3 showing the ephemeral short perennial

Continuous and Scattered Scrub

- 3.5 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 4). 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 5). This is composed of Dog Rose *Rosa canina*,



Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Willow *Salix* sp., Elder *Sambucus nigra* and Elm *Ulmus* sp.



Photograph 4 showing an area of continuous scrub on the site



Photograph 5 showing one of the scattered scrub on site

Wetland Vegetation

- 3.6 An area wetland occurs on the site (see Photograph 6). 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 *Juncus bulbosus*, Common Spike-rush *Eleocharis palustris*, Soft-rush *Juncus effusus*, Yorkshire Fog *Holcus Lanatus*, Cyperus Sedge *Carex pseudocyperus* and Horsetail *Equisetum* sp.





Photograph 6 showing the wetland vegetation

Scattered Trees

- 3.7 Scattered trees occur on the site (see Photograph 7), these are all semi-mature. Species include Willow *Salix* sp., Elder *Sambucus nigra*, Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and Turkey Oak *Quercus cerris*.



Photograph 7 showing one of the Scattered Trees

Site Boundaries

- 3.8 The site boundaries are marked with a metal fence.



PROTECTED SPECIES

Great Crested Newt

- 3.9 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).
- 3.10 No waterbodies exist on the site. Only 1 pond exists within 250m of the site boundary, this is an attenuation within the wider industrial estate (see Photograph 8). This was dry at the time of the survey and has a decking installed over the basin which will result in it being heavily shaded. 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.



Photograph 8 showing the pond within 250m of the site

Bats

- 3.11 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).
- 3.12 No buildings exist on site. The semi-mature trees were assessed from the ground for features that could be used by bats for roosting such as damaged limbs or woodpecker holes. No such features occur. It is possible that bats use the site for foraging.

Badger

- 3.13 Badgers *Meles meles* are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). 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.

- 3.14 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

- 3.15 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.
- 3.16 The grassland habitats across the site are sub-optimal for ground-nesting birds. The proximity to elevated perches for predatory birds such as the surrounding woodland, fencing and streetlights and use from walkers (including dog walkers) reduce the suitability for ground-nesting birds.

INVASIVE SPECIES

- 3.17 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

3.18 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 – 4.8km south-east of the site

3.19 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.

3.20 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 625m to the north-east of the site.
- Ox Lane Wood, Tarbock which lies 1km 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 tall ruderal herb and continuous scrub with scattered trees and scrub and a small wetland area. 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 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 No ponds exist on the site, the wetland area was dry at the time of the survey but may hold water during periods of heavy rainfall. One pond occurs within 250m of the site boundary this is an attenuation pond and was also dry at the time of the survey, the pond is heavily shaded by a manmade structure and is isolated by hardstanding and short mown amenity grassland from any suitable Great Crested Newt terrestrial habitat or other potential breeding habitat. 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

- 4.5 No buildings or trees with features suitable for roosting bats exist on site. The site could be used by bats for foraging. No further bat survey work is considered necessary.

Badger

- 4.6 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

- 4.7 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

- 4.8 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

- 4.9 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 625m 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.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

- 5.1 Further survey works will be undertaken to accommodate an update to the original proposals. The details of which will follow in subsequent reports due for completion in 2022.
- 5.2 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

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

Habitat Enhancement

- 5.4 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

