



ECOLOGYSOLUTIONS

Part of the ES Group

PROJECT L4,
HAYES, LONDON

Ecological Assessment

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APPENDIX 1

Information downloaded from Multi-Agency Geographic
Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background & Proposals

- 1.1.1. Ecology Solutions was commissioned in July 2021 by Nicholas Webb Architects PLC to undertake an ecological assessment of the site known as Project L4, Hayes, London (see Plan ECO1).
- 1.1.2. The current proposals are for the existing buildings on site to be demolished and replaced with new industrial buildings and associated landscaping, including green walls and green roofs.

1.2. Site Characteristics

- 1.2.1. The site comprises hardstanding and buildings, with a small area of gravel (see Plan ECO2). It lies within an existing industrial estate east of the centre of Hayes. The north and west of the site are bounded by industrial buildings and the Yeading Brook runs along the eastern boundary, with further industrial buildings beyond the brook. To the south lies the Hayes and Yeading United Football Club and its associated facilities.

1.3. Ecological Assessment

- 1.3.1. This document assesses the ecological interest of the site. The importance of the habitats within the site is evaluated with due consideration given to the guidance published by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)¹.
- 1.3.2. Where necessary, mitigation measures are recommended to safeguard any significant existing ecological interest within the site and, where appropriate, potential enhancement measures are put forward and reference made to both priority species and priority habitats (formerly referred to as BAP species / habitats).

¹ CIEEM (2018). *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine*. Version 1.1 – updated September 2019. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

- 2.1. The methodology utilised for the survey work can be split into three areas, namely desk study, habitat survey and faunal survey. These are discussed in more detail below.

2.2. Desk Study

- 2.2.1. In order to compile background information on the site and the surrounding area, Ecology Solutions contacted Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL).
- 2.2.2. Further information on designated sites from a wider search area was obtained from the online Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)² database. This information is reproduced in Appendix 1, and where appropriate on Plan ECO1.

2.3. Habitat Survey

- 2.3.1. A habitat survey was undertaken in July 2021 in order to ascertain the general ecological value of the site and to identify the main habitats and associated plant species located within the site.
- 2.3.2. The site was surveyed based around extended Phase 1 survey methodology³, as recommended by Natural England, whereby the habitat types present are identified and mapped, together with an assessment of the species composition of each habitat. This technique provides an inventory of the basic habitat types present and allows identification of areas of greater potential which require further survey. Any such areas identified can then be examined in more detail.
- 2.3.3. Using the above method, the site was classified into areas of similar botanical community types, with a representative species list compiled for each habitat identified.
- 2.3.4. All the species that occur in each habitat would not necessarily be detectable during survey work carried out at any given time of the year, since different species are apparent in different seasons. Nonetheless, it is considered an accurate and robust assessment has been made of the botanical interest given the habitat types present, and the species that were recorded.

2.4. Faunal Survey

- 2.4.1. Obvious faunal activity, such as birds or mammals observed visually or by call during the surveys, was recorded. Specific attention was paid to any potential use of the site by protected species, priority species, or other notable species.

² <http://www.magic.gov.uk>

³Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2010). *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey – a Technique for Environmental Audit*. England Field Unit, Nature Conservancy Council, reprinted JNCC, Peterborough.

Bats

- 2.4.2. The site was surveyed to assess its potential to support bats in July 2021.
- 2.4.3. All trees within the site were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats. Features typically favoured by bats or evidence of past use by bats were searched for including:
- Obvious holes, e.g. rot holes and old Woodpecker holes;
 - Dark staining on the tree, below the hole;
 - Tiny scratch marks around a hole from bats' claws;
 - Cavities, splits and or loose bark from broken or fallen branches, lightning strikes etc.; and
 - Very dense covering of mature Ivy over trunk.
- 2.4.4. The buildings present on site were subject to an external assessment to ascertain their potential for roosting bats.
- 2.4.5. The probability of a building being used by bats as a summer roost site increases if it:
- Is largely undisturbed;
 - Dates from pre-20th Century;
 - Has a large roof void with unobstructed flying spaces;
 - Has access points for bats (though not too draughty);
 - Has wooden cladding or hanging tiles; and/or
 - Is in a rural setting and close to woodland or water.
- 2.4.6. Conversely, the probability decreases if a building is of a modern or pre-fabricated design / construction, is in an urban setting, has small or cluttered roof voids, has few gaps at the eaves or is a heavily disturbed premises.
- 2.4.7. The main requirements for a winter / hibernation roost site is that it maintains a stable (cool) temperature and humidity. Sites commonly utilised by bats as winter roosts include cavities / holes in trees, underground sites and parts of buildings. Whilst different species may show a preference for one of these types of roost site, none are solely dependent on a single type.

Badgers

- 2.4.8. The site was thoroughly searched for evidence of Badger *Meles meles* setts. The surveys comprised two main elements: firstly, searching thoroughly for evidence of Badger setts. For any setts encountered each sett entrance was noted and plotted, even if the entrance appeared disused. The following information was recorded:
- i) The number and location of well used or very active entrances; these are clear of any debris or vegetation and are obviously in regular use and may, or may not, have been excavated recently.
 - ii) The number and location of inactive entrances; these are

not in regular use and have debris such as leaves and twigs in the entrance or have plants growing in or around the edge of the entrance.

- iii) The number of disused entrances; these have not been in use for some time, are partly or completely blocked and cannot be used without considerable clearance. If the entrance has been disused for some time all that may be visible is a depression in the ground where the hole used to be together with the remains of the spoil heap.

2.4.9. Secondly, evidence of Badger activity such as well-worn paths, run-throughs, snagged hair, footprints, latrines and foraging signs was recorded, where present, so as to build up a picture of the use of the site by Badgers.

3. ECOLOGICAL FEATURES

3.1. Habitat surveys were undertaken within the site by Ecology Solutions in July 2021.

3.2. The following main habitat / vegetation types were identified within the site:

- Buildings;
- Hardstanding;
- Gravel;
- Yeading Brook River Corridor.

3.3. The location of these habitats is shown on Plan ECO2 and described individually below.

3.4. Buildings

3.4.1. There are two buildings on site, Building B1 and Building B2 (see Plan ECO2).

3.4.2. Building B1 is in the eastern area of the site. The building is currently in use, occupied by the Trinity Data Centre. It is a two-storey brick-built structure with large windows (see Photograph 1). A secondary part of the building is a metal structure with a pitched roof (see Photograph 2).

3.4.3. Building B2, in the western area of the site, is split into a number of units (see Photograph 3). All of the units appear occupied, used as vehicle MOT garages. It is a single-storey brick-built structure with a pitched asbestos roof. Some of the unit walls are clad with metal sheets and skylights are also present in the roofs of some units.

3.5. Hardstanding

3.5.1. A significant proportion of the site comprises hardstanding. The areas around the buildings are dominated by hardstanding associated with car parking and site access.

3.5.2. There is a Cherry *Prunus avium* in the centre of the hardstanding area between the two buildings (see Photograph 4), as well as some scattered Hazel *Corylus avellana*. The rest of the hardstanding on site is largely devoid of vegetation.

3.6. Gravel

3.6.1. In the southeast corner of the site, there is a small area of gravel (see Photograph 5). At the time of survey, this gravel area was seen to support a number of opportunistic species. These species include: Ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*, Bristly Oxtongue *Picris echioides*, Prickly Lettuce *Lactuca serriola*, Sun Spurge *Euphorbia helioscopia*, Cleavers *Galium aparine*, Narrow-leaved Ragwort *Senecio inaequidens*, Olive *Olea europaea*, Hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*, Common Mallow *Malva sylvestris*, Common Nettle *Urtica dioica*, Redshank *Persicaria maculosa*, and Woody Nightshade *Solanum dulcamara*.

3.7. Yeading Brook River Corridor

- 3.7.1. The Yeading Brook river corridor runs along the eastern boundary of the site. The brook itself is not visible from the site owing to dense vegetation cover (see Photograph 6). Nevertheless, Silver Birch *Betula pendula*, Ivy *Hedera helix*, Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, and Hazel were seen from the bank top.

3.8. Background Records

- 3.8.1. Records of Japanese Knotweed *Fallopia japonica*, Giant Hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum*, Butterfly Bush *Buddleja davidii*, Spanish Bluebell *Hyacinthoides hispanica*, and Snowberry *Symphoricarpos albus* were returned by the data search. These species are all categorised as invasive species in London by the London Invasive Species Initiative (LISI). LISI is a sub-group of the London Biodiversity Partnership which encourages better coordinated and partnership working to prevent, reduce and eliminate the impacts caused by invasive non-native species across the city.
- 3.8.2. The closest records were of Giant Hogweed, observed approximately 0.04km southeast of the site boundary in 2015 and Japanese Knotweed, observed approximately 0.1km east of the site in 2014. Both these species are listed on Schedule 9 Part II of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), this makes it an offense to cause them to grow in the wild.

4. WILDLIFE USE OF THE SITE

- 4.1. General observations were made during the surveys of any faunal use of the site, with specific attention paid to the potential presence of protected species.

4.2. Bats

- 4.2.1. The two buildings on site (labelled B1 and B2 on Plan ECO2) offer negligible opportunities for roosting bats. Additionally, there are no trees on site that offer any opportunities for bats.
- 4.2.2. The site is of very little interest to any locally present bat species, with no foraging habitat provided. The Yeading Brook along the eastern boundary is likely to provide some limited foraging and dispersal opportunities, but bats are unlikely to stray onto the main development footprint of the site as it offers no opportunities. There are better opportunities for locally present bats in the wider area, for example, Minet Country Park.
- 4.2.3. Records of three bat species were returned by the data search. These include one record of Daubenton's Bat *Myotis daubentonii*, nine records of Common Pipistrelle Bat *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, and four records of Soprano Pipistrelle Bat *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*.
- 4.2.4. All three of these species were observed at the closest recorded location to the site, approximately 0.43km southeast of the site boundary in 2014. The most recent record for bats was of Common Pipistrelle recorded in 2016 at a location approximately 1.1km southeast of the site.
- 4.2.5. A Natural England European Protected Species (EPS) licence was granted in 2011 for a location approximately 4.6km east of the site for the destruction of a resting place of Common Pipistrelle.

4.3. Badgers

- 4.3.1. No Badger setts or field signs that could be attributed to this species were recorded within or immediately adjacent to the site. The site offers negligible opportunities for this species.
- 4.3.2. Two Badger records were returned by the data search, both recorded in 2014, however the locations of these records have not been disclosed.
- 4.3.3. No further consideration to this species is required as part of this appraisal.

4.4. Otter

- 4.4.1. The Yeading Brook does provide some potential for dispersing Otter *Lutra lutra*. However, the brook is subject to frequent light and noise disturbance. No evidence of Otter was recorded on site, and no records were returned for this species from the desk study. It is therefore considered highly likely that this species is not present in the locale and will therefore not be utilising the brook.

4.5. Water Vole

- 4.5.1. The Yeading Brook does not provide any opportunities for Water Vole. The modified nature of the brook is not the favoured habitat of Water Vole. The high level of disturbance is also likely to act as a deterrent for this species.
- 4.5.2. No records of Water Vole within the last ten years were returned by the data search.

4.6. Hedgehog

- 4.6.1. No evidence of Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* was recorded on site. The site offers negligible opportunities for this species.
- 4.6.2. Two Hedgehog records were returned by the data search, the closest of which was recorded in 2016 approximately 0.7km southwest of the site.

4.7. Birds

- 4.7.1. The habitats present on site provide limited nesting and foraging opportunities for birds. The Yeading Brook river corridor along the eastern boundary provides the most interest for birds.
- 4.7.2. A large number of bird records were returned by the data search. Records of eight species protected under Annex I of the Birds Directive or Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were returned. These include Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*, Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*, Red Kite *Milvus milvus*, Common Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*, Redwing *Turdus iliacus*, Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*, Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*, and Hobby *Falco Subbuteo*.
- 4.7.3. Of the Annex I and Schedule 1 birds, the closest record was that of a Kingfisher in 2014, approximately 0.43km southeast of the site. The most recent record was that of a Red Kite recorded in 2017 at a location approximately 1.3km northwest of the site.
- 4.7.4. In addition, the desk study returned six species listed as Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 or UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species (BAP). These include House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*, Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*, Skylark *Alauda arvensis*, Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*, Grasshopper Warbler *Locustrella naevia*, and Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*. Of these, House Sparrow was the closest species recorded, approximately 0.4km southeast of the site boundary in 2014.
- 4.7.5. Additional records of notable species were also returned in the search area, although none of these were recorded within or immediately adjacent to the site.

4.8. Reptiles

- 4.8.1. The site is not considered to offer any opportunities for reptile species given the lack of suitable grassland habitats.

- 4.8.2. No records of reptile species within the last ten years were returned by the data search. On account of the general paucity of the habitats within the site for reptiles, no further consideration to this group is required as part of this appraisal.

4.9. **Amphibians**

- 4.9.1. No amphibians were recorded within the site during the survey work. The site does not support any suitable aquatic or terrestrial habitat for this group. There are no suitable waterbodies within or immediately adjacent to the site for this group, with the Yeading Brook not supporting any suitable breeding opportunities for amphibians, including Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus*.
- 4.9.2. There are no off-site ponds within 250m of the site boundary. The watercourses present within 500m of the site, namely the Grand Union Canal and the River Crane, do not support any suitable breeding opportunities for amphibians.
- 4.9.3. No records from within the last ten years were returned by the data search for protected amphibian species. No further work for this group is necessary.

4.10. **Invertebrates**

- 4.10.1. Given the habitats present it is likely a limited number of common invertebrate species would be present within the site. However, there is no evidence to suggest that any rare or notable species would be present.
- 4.10.2. Four invertebrate species listed as a Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 were returned by the data search: Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*, Stag Beetle *Lucanus cervus*, White-letter Hairstreak *Satyrrium w-album*, and Brown Hairstreak *Thecla betulae*.
- 4.10.3. The closest record was a Small Heath, approximately 0.49km southwest of the site boundary in 2017.

5. ECOLOGICAL EVALUATION

5.1. The Principles of Ecological Evaluation

- 5.1.1. The guidelines for ecological evaluation produced by CIEEM propose an approach that involves professional judgement, but makes use of available guidance and information, such as the distribution and status of the species or features within the locality of the project.
- 5.1.2. The methods and standards for site evaluation within the British Isles have remained those defined by Ratcliffe⁴. These are broadly used across the United Kingdom to rank sites so priorities for nature conservation can be attained. For example, current Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designation maintains a system of data analysis that is roughly tested against Ratcliffe's criteria.
- 5.1.3. In general terms, these criteria are size, diversity, naturalness, rarity and fragility, while additional secondary criteria of typicalness, potential value, intrinsic appeal, recorded history and the position within the ecological / geographical units are also incorporated into the ranking procedure.
- 5.1.4. Any assessment should not judge sites in isolation from others, since several habitats may combine to make it worthy of importance to nature conservation.
- 5.1.5. Further, relying on the national criteria would undoubtedly distort the local variation in assessment and therefore additional factors need to be taken into account, e.g. a woodland type with a comparatively poor species diversity, common in the south of England, may be of importance at its northern limits, say, in the border country.
- 5.1.6. In addition, habitats of local importance are often highlighted within a local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). The London BAP has been considered as part of this assessment and are referenced where relevant.
- 5.1.7. Levels of importance can be determined within a defined geographical context from the immediate site or locality through to the International level.
- 5.1.8. The legislative and planning policy context are also important considerations and have been given due regard throughout this assessment.

5.2. Habitat Evaluation

Designated Sites

- 5.2.1. **Statutory Sites.** There are no statutory designations of nature conservation value within the site.

⁴ Ratcliffe, D A (1977). *A Nature Conservation Review: the Selection of Biological Sites of National Importance to Nature Conservation in Britain*. Two Volumes. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

- 5.2.2. The nearest statutory designated site is Yeading Meadows Local Nature Reserve (LNR), approximately 2km northwest of the site. The 29.96ha meadow is dominated by grasses and wildflowers hosting an array of insect species, including Roesel's Bush-cricket *Metrioptera roeselii*, shield bugs *Pentatomoidea* sp., skipper butterflies and moths *Hesperiidae* sp., in addition to Narrow-Leaved Water-Dropwort *Oenanthe silaifolia*, and Common Spotted-Orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*.
- 5.2.3. Given the small size of the development and the intervening distance, it is considered unlikely that the redevelopment of the site will have any direct or indirect adverse effects upon this designated site, be it during the construction or operational phases.
- 5.2.4. **Non-statutory Sites.** There are no non-statutory designated sites of nature conservation within the site.
- 5.2.5. The Yeading Brook runs along the eastern site boundary, which forms part of the Yeading Brook, Minet Country Park and Hitherbroom Park Site of Borough Importance Grade 1. This site covers approximately 67.86ha, and comprises areas of recently created rough grassland, areas of older natural meadow and damp and aquatic habitats. The brook and country park support a wide range of flora, including Pale Persicaria *Persicaria lapathifolia*, Squirrel-tail Fescue *Vulpia bromoides*, Musk Mallow *Malva moschata*, Lesser Reedmace *Typha angustifolia*, Arrowhead *Sagittaria sagittifolia*, and Pepper Saxifrage *Silaum silaus*.
- 5.2.6. The Grand Union Canal and associated towing path runs approximately 0.075km from the eastern site boundary, a Site of Metropolitan Importance (SMI), known as London's Canals which covers approximately 189.66ha. The London's Canals SMI contains species-rich grassland, scrub, hedges, copse and a river. The canal supports a wide range of aquatic flora, amongst which include a number of locally uncommon species. These include Narrow-leaved Water Plantain *Alisma lanceolatum*, Rigid Hornwort *Ceratophyllum demersum*, and Shining Pondweed *Potamogeton lucens*. Many waterside plants, including several London rarities, also grow on the brickwork and banks of the canal.
- 5.2.7. Owing to the close proximity of the Yeading Brook, standard industry safeguards must be implemented during the proposed construction works to prevent potential pollution (e.g. dust, noise, lighting and surface run-off) entering the brook and surrounding areas. It is advised that no lighting falls directly onto the brook. The proposed enhancements of invasive shrub removal and lifting of the canopy will promote an increase in the establishment of aquatic and marginal species.
- 5.2.8. If the above mitigation measures are implemented, it is considered unlikely that any adverse impacts will occur on the sites detailed above.

Habitats

- 5.2.9. The habitats within the site consist of common and widespread species and are in themselves of low botanical interest, being dominated by hardstanding and buildings.
- 5.2.10. The Yeading Brook river corridor is of some ecological value and will be

subject to enhancements. The crown lifting of some of the trees along the watercourse, as well as targeted removal of invasive species (see below), will provide enhancements by providing increased light to the channel and promoting an increase in the establishment of aquatic and marginal species. The incorporation of the proposed green roof and wall planting will enhance the quality of habitats presently on site and improve the botanical interest, in turn, promoting the use of the site by wildlife.

Invasive Non-Native Species

- 5.2.11. Butterfly Bush, an LSI species, was recorded along the northern boundary within the site.

- 5.2.1. Species are categorised according to the level of concern. Butterfly Bush is classed as LSI 3, which are:

Species of high impact or concern which are widespread in London and require concerted, coordinated and extensive action to control/eradicate. These species are species currently causing large scale impacts across London and LSI supports area or catchment wide partnership working to ensure this.

- 5.2.2. It is noted that the control of species listed under the LSI is not a legal requirement (with the exception of Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed), nonetheless where works are proposed within or close to the Butterfly Bush on site, all reasonable measures should be taken to prevent the spread of this plant species. Where vegetation is to be removed the material should be disposed of at an approved facility. Removal of this species as part of the development of the site would be an enhancement on the existing situation.

5.3. Faunal Evaluation

Bats

- 5.3.1. **Legislation.** All bats are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and included on Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ("the Habitats Regulations"). These include provisions making it an offence to:

- Deliberately to kill, injure or take (capture) bats;
- Deliberately to disturb bats in such a way as to significantly affect: -
 - (i) be likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or rear or nurture their young; or to hibernate or migrate; or
 - (ii) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong;
- To damage or destroy any breeding or resting place used by bats;
- Intentionally or recklessly to obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter or protection (even if bats are not in residence).

- 5.3.2. The words deliberately and intentionally include actions where a court can infer that the defendant knew that the action taken would almost inevitably result in an offence, even if that was not the primary purpose of the act.

- 5.3.3. The offence of damaging (making it worse for the bat) or destroying a

breeding site or resting place is an absolute offence. Such actions do not have to be deliberate for an offence to be committed.

- 5.3.4. In accordance with the Habitats Regulations the licensing authority (Natural England) must apply the three derogation tests as part of the process of considering a licence application. These tests are that:
1. the activity to be licensed must be for imperative reasons of overriding public interest or for public health and safety;
 2. there must be no satisfactory alternative; and
 3. the favourable conservation status of the species concerned must be maintained.
- 5.3.5. Licences can usually only be granted if the development is in receipt of full planning permission.
- 5.3.6. **Site Usage.** The results of the external survey work undertaken highlighted no evidence of bats and the building structures offer negligible potential to support roosting bats. There are no other areas of habitat within the site that offer foraging or dispersal opportunities for locally present bats. The Yeading Brook along the eastern boundary offers greater opportunities for both foraging and dispersing bats.
- 5.3.7. **Mitigation and Enhancement.** The survey work carried out on site has recorded negligible potential for roosting bats, with no further survey work considered necessary. In the unlikely event that any bats are discovered during the works, work will cease, advice sought and potentially a Natural England EPS licence will be obtained.
- 5.3.8. The proposed green roof and wall planting on site will provide enhanced foraging opportunities for locally present bats.
- 5.3.9. It is recommended that a sensitive lighting scheme is designed with due regard to the potential presence of bats, particularly along the eastern boundary of the site by the Yeading Brook⁵.
- 5.3.10. New landscape planting based around native species and the addition of trees may encourage use of the site by bats through providing enhancements on existing foraging resources.
- 5.3.11. In order to enhance roosting opportunities on site, bat boxes could be installed on new buildings to elevate the overall roosting opportunities across the site and wider area.

Birds

- 5.3.12. **Legislation.** Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is concerned with the protection of wild birds, whilst Schedule 1 lists species that are protected by special penalties. All species of birds receive general protection whilst nesting.

⁵ Institution of Lighting Professionals and the Bat Conservation Trust (2018) *Guidance Note 08/18, Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK – Bats and the Built Environment series*.

- 5.3.13. **Site Usage.** The habitats on site provide limited opportunities for birds, with the Yeading Brook river corridor along the eastern boundary providing limited opportunities for both nesting and foraging birds.
- 5.3.14. As a precaution to avoid a possible offence, it is recommended that removal of any suitable nesting habitats be undertaken outside the breeding season (March to July inclusive) or checked for nesting birds by a trained ecologist immediately prior to removal. In the event that an active nest is encountered during clearance works, a 5m buffer zone around the nest will be put in place until all the young have fledged.
- 5.3.15. Proposals for the site will include the establishment of green roofs and walls, which will offer an increase in foraging opportunities for birds.
- 5.3.16. The new landscape planting should seek to include a number of fruit-bearing species to offer a foraging resource.
- 5.3.17. A variety of bird boxes could be incorporated into the design to provide enhanced nesting opportunities on site. Boxes such as Schwegler 1SP Sparrow Terraces and Schwegler 17 Swift Box would provide nesting opportunities for London priority species and could be attached to the proposed new buildings.

6. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 6.1. Planning policy for development in Hayes is administrated at three principal levels, nationally through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), regionally through the London Plan and locally through the London Borough of Hillingdon Local Plan.

6.2. National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

- 6.2.1. Guidance on national policy for biodiversity and geological conservation is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in March 2012, revised on 24 July 2018, 19 February 2019 and again on 20 July 2021. It is noted that the NPPF continues to refer to further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity and geological conservation and their impact within the planning system provided by Circular 06/05 (DEFRA / ODPM, 2005) accompanying the now-defunct Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9).
- 6.2.2. The key element of the NPPF is that there should be “a presumption in favour of sustainable development” (paragraphs 10 to 11). It is important to note that this presumption “does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site” (paragraph 182). ‘Habitats site’ has the same meaning as the term ‘European site’ as used in the Habitats Regulations 2017.
- 6.2.3. Hence, the direction of Government policy is clear. That is, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is to apply in circumstances where there is potential for an effect on a European site, if it has been shown that there will be no adverse effect on that designated site as a result of the development in prospect.
- 6.2.4. A number of policies in the NPPF are comparable to those in PPS9, including reference to minimisation of impacts to biodiversity and provision of net gains to biodiversity where possible (paragraph 174).
- 6.2.5. The NPPF also considers the strategic approach that Local Authorities should adopt with regard to the protection, maintenance and enhancement of green infrastructure, priority habitats and ecological networks, and the recovery of priority species.
- 6.2.6. Paragraphs 179 to 181 of the NPPF comprise a number of principles that Local Authorities should apply, including encouraging opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments; provision for refusal of planning applications if significant harm cannot be avoided, mitigated or compensated for; applying the protection given to European sites to potential Special Protected Areas (SPA), possible Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), listed or proposed Ramsar sites and sites identified (or required) as compensatory measures for adverse effects on European sites; and the provision for the refusal for developments resulting in the loss or deterioration of ‘irreplaceable’ habitats – unless there are ‘wholly

exceptional reasons' (for instance, infrastructure projects where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat) and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

- 6.2.7. National policy therefore implicitly recognises the importance of biodiversity and that with sensitive planning and design, development and conservation of the natural heritage can co-exist and benefits can, in certain circumstances, be obtained.

6.3. Regional Planning Policy

The London Plan (March 2021)

- 6.3.1. The new London Plan was published in March 2021. This document sets out a framework for how London will develop over the next 20-25 years.
- 6.3.2. The policy areas within the London Plan are formed by six Good Growth objectives to ensure that London's growth is Good Growth. These policies are: GG1 Building strong and inclusive communities; GG2 Making the best use of land; GG3 Creating a healthy city; GG4 Delivering the homes Londoners need; GG5 Growing a good economy; and GG6 Increasing efficiency and resilience.
- 6.3.3. Of these objectives, GG2 is concerned with protecting and enhancing London's open spaces, including the Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land, designated nature conservation sites and local spaces. It also seeks to promote the creation of new green infrastructure and urban greening, including aiming to secure net biodiversity gains where possible.
- 6.3.4. Six new policies have been introduced specifically relating to green infrastructure and the natural environment.
- 6.3.5. *Policy G1 Green Infrastructure* states that green features in the built environment, such as street trees and green roofs, should be planned, designed and managed in an integrated way to achieve multiple benefits.
- 6.3.6. *Policy G2 London's Green Belt* states that the Green Belt should be protected from inappropriate development.
- 6.3.7. *Policy G5 Urban Greening* requires major developments to incorporate measures such as high-quality landscaping (including trees), green roofs, green walls and nature-based sustainable drainage.
- 6.3.8. *Policy G6 Biodiversity and Access to Nature* requires the protection of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). Boroughs should also support the protection and conservation of priority species and habitats that sit outside of the SINC network and promote opportunities for enhancing them using Biodiversity Action Plans.
- 6.3.9. *Policy G7 Trees and Woodlands* is concerned with the protection of these features, including 'veteran' trees and ancient woodland not already in a protected site and identifying opportunities for tree planting in strategic locations. It encourages the retention of existing trees, wherever possible, and the planting of new trees as part of new developments.

- 6.3.10. *Policy SI17 Protecting and Enhancing London's Waterways* states developments should support biodiversity improvements, and that proposals along London's canal network should respect their local character, environment and biodiversity.

6.4. **Local Planning Policy**

Local Plan: Part 1 – Strategic Policies

- 6.4.1. This Local Plan document was adopted in November 2012 and is central to Hillingdon's Development Plan. It contains three policies of particular relevance to nature conservation issues.
- 6.4.2. *Policy EM2: Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land and Green Chains* concerns the assessment criteria for development proposals relating to these categories of open space.
- 6.4.3. *Policy EM3: Blue Ribbon Network* enshrines the Council's commitment "to promote and contribute to the positive enhancement of the strategic river and canal corridors and the associated wildlife and habitats" through measures such as developer contributions.
- 6.4.4. *Policy EM7: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation* lists various measures to preserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity. These include actions under the London and Hillingdon Biodiversity Action Plans as well as the protection of designated sites, appropriate contributions from developers, the provision of green roofs, living walls and sustainable drainage systems, and "the provision of biodiversity improvements from all development, where feasible".

Local Plan: Part 2 – Revised Proposed Development Management Policies, Site Allocations and Designations

- 6.4.5. This Local Plan document comprises Development Management Policies, Site Allocations and Designations and a Policies Map. The document was written in October 2015 and the Council submitted the Local Plan Part 2 to the Secretary of State on 18 May 2018 and was adopted in January 2020.
- 6.4.6. *Policy DMHB 11: Design of New Development* states that all developments will be required to incorporate landscaping and tree planting in order to protect and enhance amenity, biodiversity and green infrastructure.
- 6.4.7. *Policy DMHB 14: Trees and Landscaping* states that developments will be required to retain or enhance existing landscaping, trees, biodiversity or other natural features of value. Proposals will also be required to provide a landscape scheme which includes character appropriate landscaping, which supports and enhances biodiversity and amenity. Where trees are proposed for removal, proposals for replanting of new trees on-site should be provided, or else include contributions to offsite provisions.
- 6.4.8. *Policy DMEI 1: Living Walls and Roofs and on-site Vegetation* states that all major developments should incorporate living roofs and/or walls into the development; suitable justification should be provided where living walls and roofs cannot be provided.

- 6.4.9. *Policy DMEI 5: Development in Green Chains* pertains to EM2: *Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land and Green Chains*. The policy states that development “*in Green Chains will only be supported if it conserves and enhances the visual amenity and nature conservation value of the landscape*” and makes reference to the potential to improve biodiversity in and around the area. Part 2 of the Policy states that “*any new development that meets the above criteria, particularly in areas deficient in Green Chains, will be required to provide new areas of habitat and amenity space, linking into existing Green Chains*”.
- 6.4.10. *Policy DMEI 6: Development in Green Edge Locations* states that any new development adjacent to Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation should “*incorporate proposals to assimilate development into the surrounding area by the use of extensive peripheral landscaping to site boundaries*”.
- 6.4.11. *Policy DMEI 7: Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement* states that existing features of biodiversity value within the site should be retained by new developments and that where the significant features would be unavoidably lost, features of equivalent biodiversity value should be provided on-site. The second part states that should the proposed development be on or in the vicinity of a site considered to have valuable ecological features, applicants “*must submit appropriate surveys and assessments to demonstrate that the proposed development will not have unacceptable effects. The development must provide a positive contribution to the protection and enhancement of the site or feature of ecological value*”.
- 6.4.12. *Policy DMEI 8: Waterside Development* states that any development on sites that adjoin or include a watercourse should, where feasible, secure the implementation of environmental enhancements to open sections of river or watercourse. Furthermore, “*any development located in or adjacent to watercourses should enhance the waterside environment and biodiversity by demonstrating a high design quality which respects the historic significance of the canal and character of the waterway and provides access and improved amenity to the waterfront*”. In addition to this, “*all development alongside or that benefits from a frontage on the Grand Union Canal will be expected to contribute to improvements to biodiversity improvements to the Canal*”.

6.5. Discussion

- 6.5.1. The proposals for the site would be judged against the policies summarised above. It is considered that the development site is of limited ecological interest. The site proposals include the incorporation of green roofs and walls which will enhance the quality of the habitats present, in line with regional and local policies listed above, including The London Plan *Policy G1 Green Infrastructure* and the Local Plan *Policy DMEI 1 Living Walls and Roofs and on-site Vegetation*. Mitigation and enhancement measures have been recommended to offset any potential adverse impacts. Taking these recommendations on board, it is considered that the relevant policy requirements will be met.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

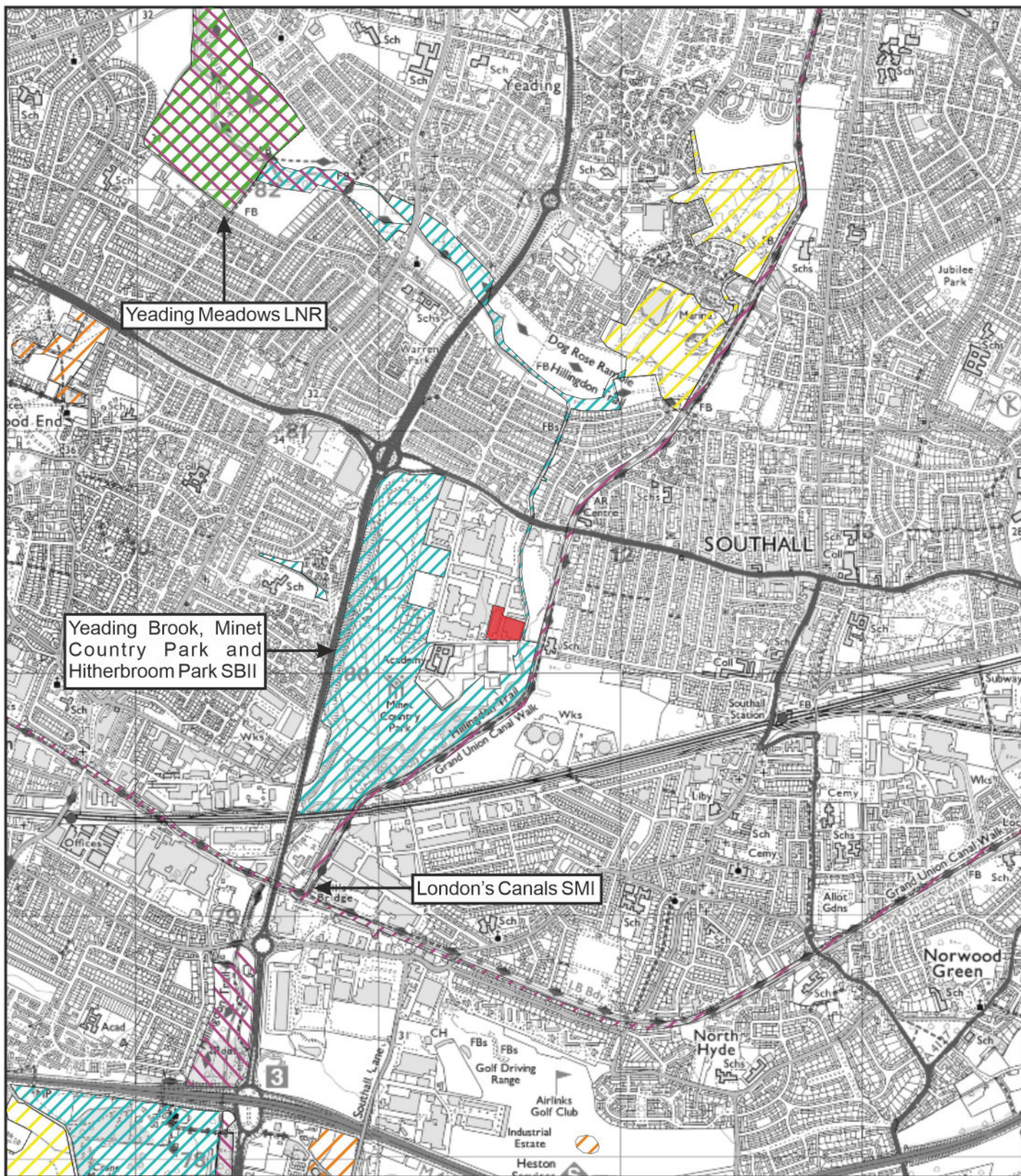
- 7.1. Ecology Solutions was commissioned in July 2021 by Nicholas Webb Architects PLC to undertake an ecological assessment of the site known as Project L4, Hayes, London.
- 7.2. The site lies within an existing industrial estate east of the centre of Hayes. The north and west of the site are bounded by industrial buildings and the Yeading Brook runs along the eastern boundary, with further industrial buildings beyond. To the south lies the Hayes and Yeading United Football Club.
- 7.3. The redevelopment of the site will provide new industrial buildings, complete with green walls and green roofs to enhance the habitats present. Enhancements will also be made to the Yeading Brook river corridor to promote an increase in the establishment of aquatic and marginal species.
- 7.4. The site was subject to an extended Phase 1 habitat survey in July 2021.
- 7.5. **Statutory Sites.** There are no statutory designations of nature conservation value within the site. The closest is Yeading Meadows Local Nature Reserve (LNR), approximately 2km northwest of the site. Given the size of the development and the intervening distance, it is considered unlikely that the redevelopment of the site will have any direct or indirect adverse effects upon this designated site, be it during the construction or operational phases.
- 7.6. **Non-statutory Sites.** The Yeading Brook, a Site of Borough Importance Grade 1, runs along the eastern boundary of the site. Standard industry safeguards should be implemented during demolition and construction to prevent potential pollution (e.g. dust, noise, lighting and surface run-off) entering the brook.
- 7.7. Overall, through the compensating and adoption of measures to avoid pollution, alongside the proposed enhancements, it is not considered significant adverse effects on the sites above would be likely.
- 7.8. **Habitats.** The habitats within the site consist of common and widespread species and are in themselves of low botanical interest. The Yeading Brook river corridor is of some ecological interest and will be subject to enhancements.
- 7.9. **Invasive Species.** Butterfly Bush is categorised as an invasive species in London by the London Invasive Species Initiative (LISI). This species was recorded within the site boundary. In accordance with best practice, it is advised this species is removed from site and omitted from any further landscaping of the site.
- 7.10. **Bats.** None of the buildings on site offer bat roosting potential. There are no other areas of habitat within the site that offer foraging or dispersal opportunities for locally present bats, with the Yeading Brook along the eastern boundary offering greater opportunities. Efforts should be made in the lighting design to minimise lighting duration, waste and spillage onto features that could be used by foraging and commuting bats. The provision of green roofs and walls will enhance foraging opportunities. Planting proposals should include a range of native species to encourage the use of the site by foraging bats. The provision of bat boxes will provide enhanced roosting opportunities.

- 7.11. **Badgers.** No Badger setts were recorded within the site or immediately adjacent to the site. The site does not offer dispersal and foraging opportunities for this species. No further consideration to this species is required.
- 7.12. **Otter.** No evidence of Otter was recorded during the site visit in 2020. The absence of field signs as well as the lack of records for this species within the area suggests that it is highly unlikely for Otter to be present on site.
- 7.13. **Water Vole.** The Yeading Brook does not provide any opportunities for this species.
- 7.14. **Hedgehog.** No evidence of Hedgehog was recorded on site. The site offers negligible opportunities for this species. No further consideration to this species is required.
- 7.15. **Birds.** The habitats present on site provide limited nesting and foraging opportunities for birds, with the Yeading Brook river corridor along the eastern boundary providing the most interest. As a precaution to avoid a possible offence, it is recommended that removal of any suitable nesting habitats be undertaken outside the breeding season (March to July inclusive) or checked for nesting birds by a trained ecologist immediately prior to removal. The provision of green roofs and walls will provide enhanced foraging opportunities. New planting based around native species would provide enhanced opportunities for nesting and foraging birds. A range of bird boxes could also be incorporated into the design to provide additional nesting opportunities.
- 7.16. **Reptiles.** The site does not provide opportunities for common reptile species.
- 7.17. **Amphibians.** The site does not support any suitable aquatic or terrestrial habitat for this group of species.
- 7.18. **Invertebrates.** The site is expected to support a limited assemblage of common invertebrates, but there is no reason to suspect any scarce or notable species are present.
- 7.19. Overall, the site is of limited ecological interest and there are no identified insurmountable constraints to the proposed development from an ecology and nature conservation perspective. Mitigation and enhancement measures have been set out for bats and birds. Measures have also been set out to ensure the enhancement of the Yeading Brook river corridor, and the proposed green roofs and walls will improve botanical interest and promote the use of the site by wildlife.

PLANS

PLAN ECO1

Site Location and Ecological Designations



KEY:

-  **SITE LOCATION**
-  **LOCAL NATURE RESERVE (LNR)**
-  **SITE OF METROPOLITAN IMPORTANCE (SMI)**
-  **SITE OF BOROUGH IMPORTANCE GRADE 1 (SBII)**
-  **SITE OF BOROUGH IMPORTANCE GRADE 2 (SBIII)**
-  **SITE OF LOCAL IMPORTANCE (SLI)**



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9903: PROJECT L4, HAYES, LONDON

PLAN ECO1: SITE LOCATION AND
ECOLOGICAL DESIGNATIONS

Rev: A
Sep 2021

PLAN ECO2

Ecological Features



KEY:

-  SITE BOUNDARY
-  BUILDING
-  HARDSTANDING
-  GRAVEL
-  YEADING BROOK RIVER CORRIDOR



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9903: PROJECT L4, HAYES, LONDON

PLAN ECO2:
ECOLOGICAL FEATURES

Rev: A
Sep 2021

PHOTOGRAPHS

PHOTOGRAPH 1: Exterior of Building B1



PHOTOGRAPH 2: Exterior of Building B1



PHOTOGRAPH 3: Exterior of Building B2



PHOTOGRAPH 4: Cherry in Hardstanding Area



PHOTOGRAPH 5: Gravel



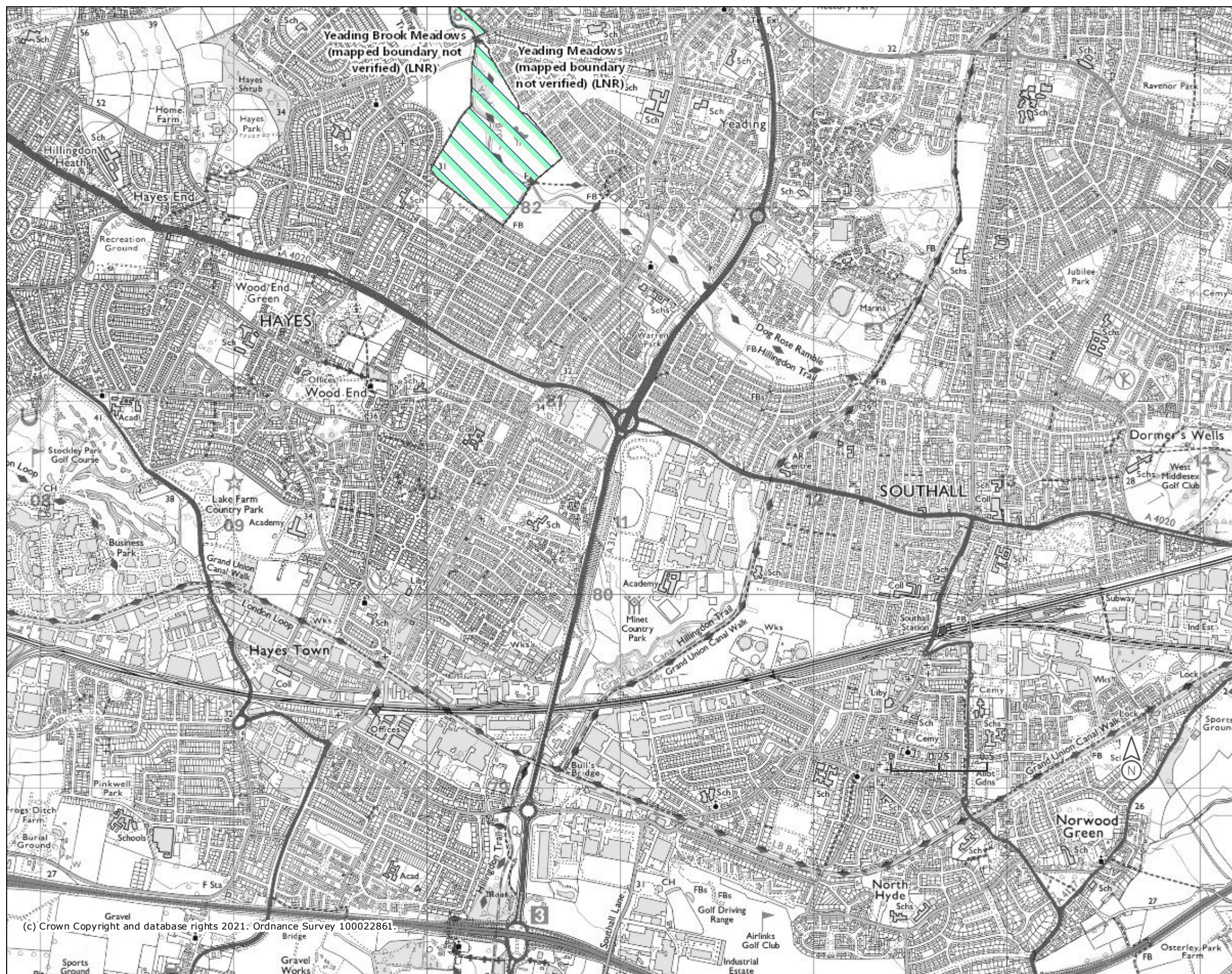
PHOTOGRAPH 6: Dense Vegetation Cover



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Information downloaded from Multi-Agency
Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)



Legend

-  Local Nature Reserves (England)
-  National Nature Reserves (England)
-  Ramsar Sites (England)
-  Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England)
-  Special Areas of Conservation (England)
-  Special Protection Areas (England)

Projection = OSGB36

xmin = 506000

ymin = 178000

xmax = 516000

ymax = 183100



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