

Ecological Appraisal

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Executive Summary

An Ecological Appraisal, comprising an extended UK Habitat survey, has been undertaken at Victoria Business Park, Prospect Way, Knypersley, Biddulph, Stoke-on-Trent, ST8 7PL on Friday 20th February 2026 to support the planning application for the installation of two modular buildings.

The onsite habitats comprise of artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface and other developed land. These habitats are of no ecological value, supporting no vegetation and offering no opportunities for wildlife. Therefore, no Phase 2 surveys were required.

Given the nature of the habitats and the small-scale footprint of the proposed development, negligible impacts are predicted on all ecological receptors, including protected species and off-site priority habitats.

Precautionary working measures have been provided for highly mobile nocturnal wildlife, such as bats and common mammals, which may occasionally pass through the site or adjacent to it, due to off-site vegetative habitats being present in the surrounding area. This includes sensitive lighting design (if lighting is required) and covering excavations/pipes, to ensure compliance with legislation.

The habitats on Site generate zero biodiversity value and there are no onsite priority habitats. Therefore, a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment is not required for the proposed development as it satisfies the de minimis exemption conditions.



1. Introduction

1.1 Brief

Portakabin Ltd. (the Client) is seeking planning permission for the installation of two single storey modular buildings (the Proposed Development) at Victoria Business Park, Tunstall Rd, Knypersley, Stoke-on-Trent ST8 7PL, centred at National Grid Reference (NGR) SJ 87921 55543 (the Site). The Client has requested that Arthian provide the fees for an Ecological Appraisal to support the planning application and determine whether the proposals are exempt from BNG.

The aim of the instructed work was to:

- Understand the broad habitat types and their suitability for protected and notable species;
- Assess any potential impacts and effects from the proposed development.

1.2 Purpose of this Report

This report has been produced to document the methods, results and conclusions from the ecology work undertaken in respect of the proposed development. This report has been intended to be submitted as part of the planning application.

1.3 Site Location

The Site is located within Victoria Business Park, which includes office and vehicle space. The Site is predominantly hardstanding. The Site is c. 4km north of the city centre of Stoke-on-Trent. The vicinity of the business park is present to the north, east and south of the Site and a woodland block to the west of the Site. The Site Location Plan is shown in Figure 1 in Appendix A.

1.4 Proposed Development

The Proposed Development involves the installation of two single storey modular buildings to be used as office and toilet buildings. There will be no soft landscaping as part of the proposed development.



2. Methodology

2.1 Desk Study

The desk study was informed by a review of existing available information provided by web-based resources such as Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) (see Table 1). Ordnance Survey (OS) maps and aerial imagery were used to gain contextual information about the Site.

Table 1: Desk Study Information

Source	Information Sought (search buffer from Site)
MAGIC	• Designated sites of international importance, including SPAs, SACs and Ramsar sites (1km) • Designated sites of national importance, including SSSIs and National Nature Reserves (1km) • Priority habitats listed on Section 41 on NERC Act (0.25km) • Granted European Protected Species (EPS) Licences (1km) • Ponds (500m)

2.2 UKHab Survey

A UK Habitat Classification survey was undertaken on Friday 20th February 2026 by an Arthian Ecology and Biodiversity Consultant. The survey followed the standard methodology for the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Version 2.0 (UKHab Ltd, 2023).

In addition to the mapping and description of habitats, the survey was ‘extended’ to include incidental observations of protected and/or notable species and the potential for such species to occur on site (and in the surrounding landscape where relevant). The extended element of the survey was based on the professional judgement. Where specific assessment methodologies were used, they are described in more detail in the following sections.

The weather conditions at the time of the survey are shown in the table below.

Table 2: Survey Weather Conditions

Parameter	Recorded Figure
Temperature (°C)	9
Cloud Cover (in Oktas)	8
Wind Speed (Beaufort Scale)	3
Precipitation	Light rain throughout survey

2.3 Commuting and Foraging Bats



A Daytime Bat Walkover (DBW) of the Site was undertaken to observe, assess and record any habitats suitable for bats to roost, commute and forage both on Site and in the surrounding area, following Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) good practice guidelines (Collins, 2023).

The broad habitats present within and around the site were also assessed to determine their level of suitability for commuting and foraging and commuting bats and categorised as per the table below.

Table 4: BCT Guidelines for Assessing the Potential Suitability for Bats

Potential Suitability	Potential flight-paths and foraging habitats
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines, or generate/shelter insect population available for foraging bats).
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly for foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

2.4 Badger

A badger (*Meles meles*) survey was carried out at the Site, plus within a 30m buffer outside of the Site boundary (where accessible), in accordance with published guidance (Harris, et al., 1989). The survey included a search for setts, badger pathways, latrines, footprints, badger hairs and feeding signs such as snuffle holes.

A sett is defined as a single, isolated hole, or series of holes that are connected underground. Setts can be categorised according to main, annexe, subsidiary or outlying (Harris, et al., 1989). Setts were assessed as being in current use ('Active') or not in current use ('Inactive') at the time of the survey in accordance with Natural England guidance (Natural England, 2009).



3. Results

3.1 Designated Wildlife Sites

There are no statutory designated wildlife sites within 1km of the Site.

3.2 Priority Habitats

There are five areas of deciduous woodland (DWOOD) within 250m of the Site:

- c. 20m west of the Site;
- c. 55m west of the Site;
- c. 100m south of the Site;
- c. 130m southwest of the Site;
- c. 195m southwest of the Site.

3.3 Habitats On Site

The onsite habitats are shown in Figure 2 in Appendix B and photographs are found in Appendix C.

3.3.1 u1c – Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface

The dominant habitat on Site is artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface, comprising compacted earth and crushed aggregate. The ground is porous and lacks any plant life due to heavy vehicle traffic and active industrial use. This habitat has been mapped with secondary code 804 car park as it is used as a transit and storage yard.

3.3.2 u1b6 - Other developed land

A sealed surface, comprising asphalt, makes up the entrance to the Site in the northeast extent.

3.4 Protected Species Assessment

3.4.1 Badger

There were no setts or evidence of badger recorded on Site or within 30m of the Site.

The Site is unsuitable for badgers as it comprises developed land only which offers no suitable sett building habitat such as grassland, hedgerows or woodlands with free draining soils. There are negligible impacts predicted on badger.

3.4.2 Bats

The Site had no roosting habitat such as woodlands, mature trees or buildings, therefore roosting bats are scoped of consideration.

The Site had no foraging and commuting habitat such as woodland edges, treelines, hedgerows or streams, therefore negligible impacts predicted.



Whilst the Site itself has no suitability, there is an offsite woodland c.20m west of the Site which potentially provides suitable foraging habitat and therefore, bats may occasionally pass over the Site when commuting through the wider landscape. Precautionary working measures for nocturnal wildlife (including wildlife) has been detailed in Section 4; although the overall predicted impact on foraging and commuting bats of the development is considered negligible.

3.4.3 Birds

There is no suitable habitat for birds as it is developed land only, which provides no breeding or foraging opportunities. Birds are scoped out of further consideration.

3.4.4 Great Crested Newt and Other Amphibians

A web-based search using MAGIC revealed there are two ponds within 500m of the Site which were not separated by significant barriers to dispersal. These were not accessed at the time of the habitat survey; therefore, aerial imagery has been used to describe them. Pond 1 (P1) is c. 180m south of the Site and is located within deciduous woodland. Pond 2 (P2) is c. 175m south of the Site and appears to be a spillway or outfall area to a drainage ditch and is therefore potentially unsuitable habitat for great crested newt as spillways provide no still-water breeding habitat, unstable and dry substrate and is subject to periodic fast-flowing water.

The onsite habitats are unsuitable for great crested newt as it is developed land only, which lacks vegetation and offers no foraging or sheltering opportunities and no safe movement corridors. Although P1 has potential suitability for great crested newt and even if they present, great crested newt will not disperse into the site as there is no suitable habitat within it, and the habitat immediately surrounding the pond provides more suitable terrestrial habitat that great crested newt could utilise (woodland and grass).

There is no terrestrial or aquatic habitat within the site, therefore great crested newt and other amphibians are likely absent from the site and scoped out of further consideration.

3.4.5 Invertebrates

The absence of floral resources, substrate diversity, or refugia means the Site offers no foraging, breeding, or overwintering opportunities for invertebrates. As such, the proposed works are assessed as having no impact on invertebrates.

3.4.6 Reptiles

There are no suitable on-Site habitats for reptiles due to the presence of developed land; sealed surface which provides no foraging, commuting or sheltering habitats for reptiles, therefore reptiles are likely absent from the Site and scoped out of further consideration.

3.4.7 Other Mammals

There is no suitable foraging or sheltering habitats on Site due to the presence of developed land, sealed surface and a lack of vegetation. Precautionary working measures are detailed in Section 4.

3.4.8 Invasive Animal Species



There was no evidence of invasive animal species using the Site.



4. Assessment of Effects and Mitigation

4.1 Off-Site Priority Habitats

The installation of two modular buildings is predicted to have no impacts on the off-site DWOOD areas because all works will be confined within established hardstanding more than 20m from the woodland edge. Modular buildings are constructed off-site and placed into the site, meaning minimal construction. With the woodlands distanced >20m from the Site boundary and >50m from the placement of the buildings, there is no encroachment into root protection areas, no meaningful disturbance to woodland structure or function, and temporary construction activity will be of low magnitude and short duration, resulting in no measurable effect on the ecological integrity of the woodlands.

4.2 Habitats and Biodiversity Net Gain

The proposed development is exempt from biodiversity net gain by the de minimis exception as:

- The development does not impact on any onsite priority habitat, as none are present within the site;
- The only onsite habitats are artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface and other developed land, which both have a biodiversity habitat value of zero under the statutory biodiversity metric; and
- There are no other habitats with the site.

4.3 Protected Species

4.3.1 Bats

Whilst the habitats onsite are unsuitable for foraging and commuting bats, the surrounding off-site habitat such as tree lines are suitable and therefore there may be the occasional foraging or commuting bats adjacent to the Site, which have potential to be impacted by light spill.

There is currently no lighting plans provided, however the use of external lighting should be avoided or reduced to the minimum required for its intended purpose, during both construction and operation. Where external lighting is to be used, it will be informed by the ecologist and should follow Guidance Note 8 Bars and Artificial Lighting (ILP, 2023) to avoid impacts on wildlife.

4.3.2 Other Mammals

All trenches and excavations should be covered overnight or left with a ramp, and pipes capped off overnight to prevent wildlife from becoming trapped.

Prior to works commencing each day, contractors should conduct a visual check of working areas, including any stored materials, trenches and machinery bases to ensure no wildlife is present.

Should any distressed or injured animal be found on Site (albeit unlikely), all works should cease, and an ecologist should be contacted. Following mitigation, the effects will be negligible (not significant) on other mammals.



5. Conclusion

The Site comprises artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface and other developed land with no natural or semi-natural habitats. As a result, there is no suitability for notable or protected species, and no significant impacts are predicted as a result of the development.

Whilst the site itself has no suitability, precautionary working measures have been recommended to ensure compliance with legislation and to safeguard any common mammals or other wildlife that may occasionally pass through the Site, due to off-site vegetative habitats being present in the surrounding area.



Appendices

Appendix A: Figures

Figure 1	Site Location Plan
Figure 2	Pre-Development Habitat Survey Plan

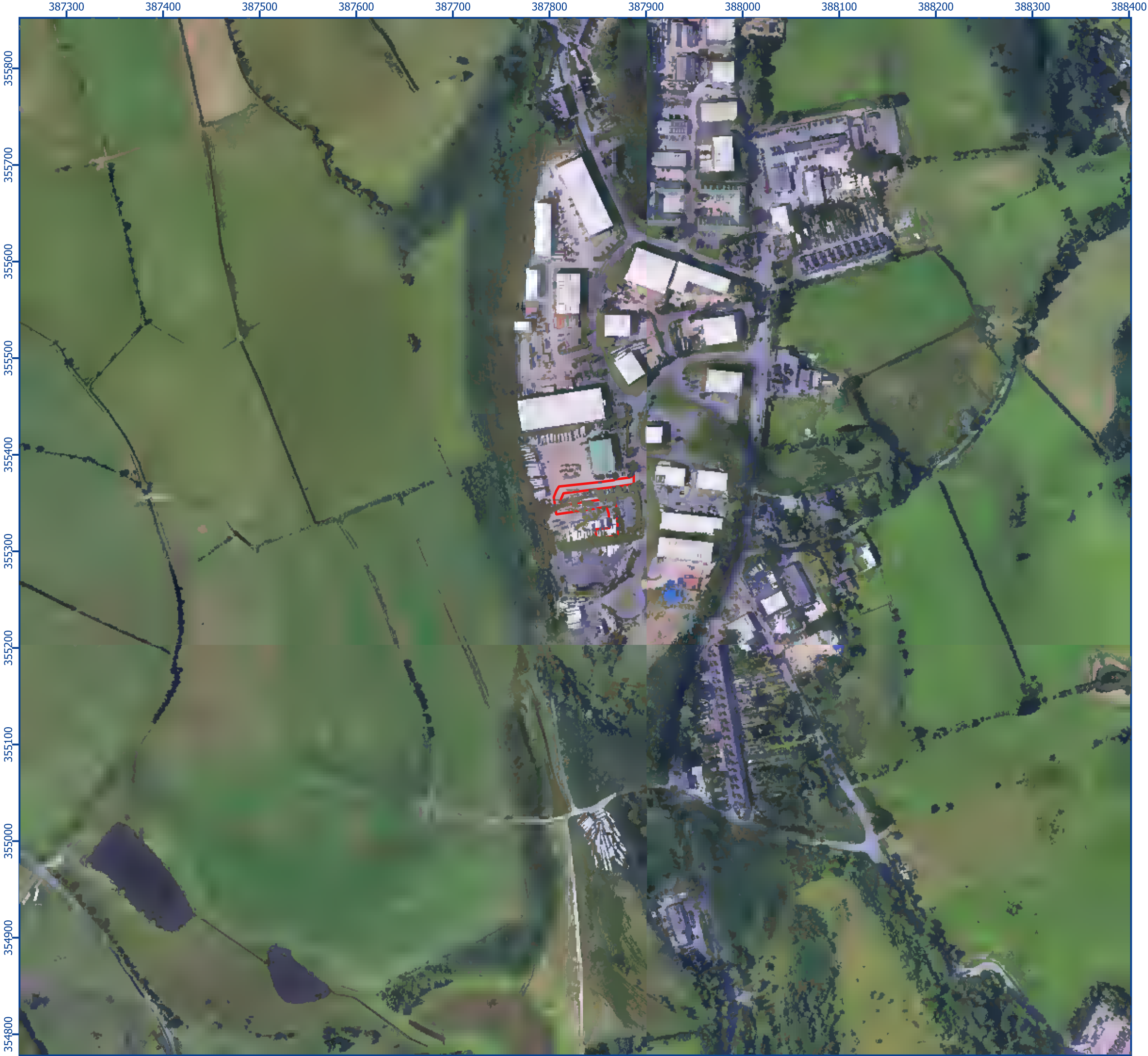


Figure 1 - Site Location Plan

Portakabin Ltd.

Victoria Business Park

Key:

 Site Boundary



Project Number: 322194	Scale at A3:
Drawn By: JD	1:3,836.180237
Reviewed By: AB	Version: Final
Projection: OSGB 1936/British National Grid - EPSG 27700	Issue Date: 19/02/2026

Figure 2 - UKHab
Pre-Development Plan

Portakabin Ltd.

Victoria Business Parl

Key:

-  Site boundary
-  u1b6 Other developed land
-  u1c Artificial unvegetated unsealed surface



Project Number: 322194

Drawn By: JD

Reviewed By: AB

Projection: OSGB 1936/British
National Grid - EPSG 27700

Scale at A3:

1:300

Version: Final

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Appendix B: On Site Photographs



Photo 1: u1c - Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface



Photo 2: u1b6 - Other developed land

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