



# Wild Service

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Site Name	Land at Christ College Site B
Prepared by	Olatz Gartzia
Date	29/11/2017

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## **Site description**

The Site is located in the centre of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, near the north-western end of town. It was previously used as a playing field but has been left unmanaged. It measures approximately 2.1ha in area and the central grid reference is SO 93414 22947.

The Site is surrounded by a mostly urban landscape, and is bordered by housing to the west and south, the railway line to the east and an industrial estate to the north.

## **Methodology**

An extended Phase 1 habitat survey of the Site was undertaken on 7 November 2017 following standard methods<sup>1</sup>. Phase 1 habitat survey provides a rapid means of classifying broad habitat types in any given terrestrial Site.

The survey was 'extended' by considering the suitability of the Site to support notable or protected flora or fauna. Detailed surveys were not completed for these species; however, based on an understanding of species ecology, consideration was given to the Study Area's potential to provide sheltering or foraging habitat and/or connectivity to allow dispersal between populations.

The Study Area was also inspected for signs of any invasive plant species subject to legal controls e.g. Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) or Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*).

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<sup>1</sup> Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). 2010. *Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey: A technique for environmental audit*. JNCC, Peterborough.

## Results

Habitat descriptions are set out below. While considering this information, reference should be made to the Phase 1 habitat map presented in **Figure 1** and the target notes in **Table 1**. The habitats identified on Site included semi-improved grassland with scattered trees and scrub.

**Table 1: Target Notes.**

Target Note	Description
1	There were areas of scattered scrub within the Site.

### *Semi-improved grassland*

The majority of the Site was composed of a field of semi-improved grassland (**Photo 1**). The grassland had abundant cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*), soft brome (*Bromus hordeaceus*) with frequent tormentil (*Tormentilla erecta*) and occasional dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* agg.), timothy-grass (*Phleum pratense*) and curly dock (*Rumex crispus*). Other species such as creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) and yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) were also present but were rare.



**Photo 1: Semi-improved grassland on Site, previously used as playing fields.**

Near the Site boundary on the eastern end of the Site, the grassland had occasional bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and hedge woundwort (*Stachys sylvatica*) as well as bundles of tree seedlings such as hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and goat willow (*Salix caprea*).

### *Scattered scrub*

The northern, southern and western boundaries of the Site had patches of scattered scrub (**Target Note 1; Photo 2**). The scrub present towards the northern and southern ends of the Site was composed of abundant bramble with frequent nettle, and occasional hedge bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*), hedge bedstraw (*Gallium mollugo*) and cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*). White dead-nettle (*Lamium album*), creeping thistle and Buddleja (*Buddleja davidii*) were also present within the scrub, but were rare.

On the scrub present on the western end of the Site, there was also noted an abundance of an ornamental scrub species.



**Photo 2: Scattered scrub at the boundaries of the Site.**

### **Evaluation and Discussion**

No protected species were recorded during the survey, although the habitats present provided opportunities for protected species.

#### *Breeding birds*

The habitats on Site provided suitable habitat for breeding birds, including the scrub, and scattered trees.

#### *Reptiles*

With a mosaic of habitats, the Site has potential to hold populations of reptiles such as slow worm. The grassland provides basking and foraging habitat within the Site, while the stone ballast on the railway line to the east of the Site provide refuge and hibernacula for reptiles.

#### *Badger*

The Site is suitable for badger foraging. Well-worn badger paths were present within the Site near the fence by the railway line.

#### *Hedgehog*

The scrub and grassland provide suitable habitat for hedgehog.

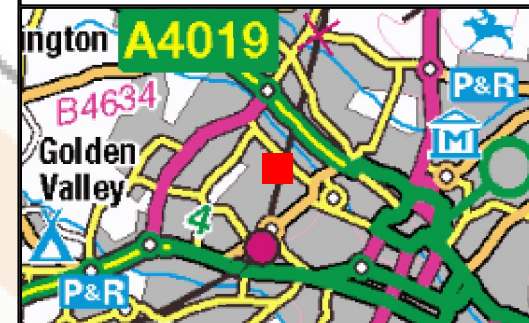
### **Further Surveys**

Due to the potential for protected species to be present on site, the following surveys may be recommended prior to the commencement of works;

- Birds – no specific survey is recommended, but vegetation scheduled for removal between March and August must be checked for evidence of breeding birds;
- Badger – a pre-commencement survey for badger survey within 30m of the Site should be completed three months, at most, prior to development commencing; and
- Reptiles – presence/absence survey.



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## Legend

- Site boundary
- SI Semi-improved grassland
- Scrub
- ① Target note

## Phase 1 Habitats Map

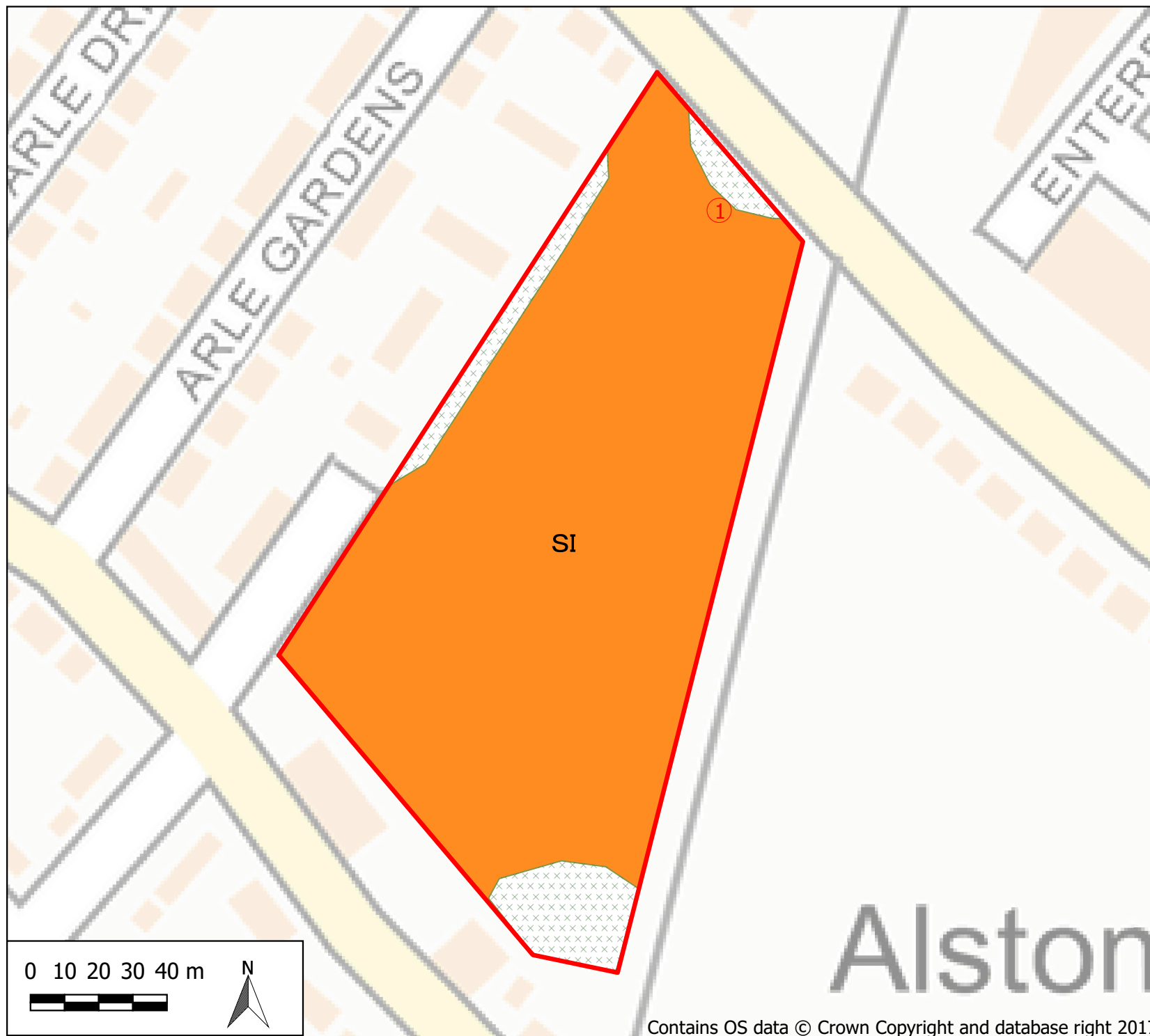
Land at Christ College Site B

Date: 7 November 2017

Scale: 1:2,500

Drawn by: OG

Drawing: Figure 1



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