

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

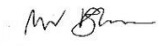
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Space Studios
Vaughan Street
Manchester
M12 5FQ

U R B A N
G R E E N



QUALITY MANAGEMENT

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NON-TECHNICAL EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Space Studios are proposing to develop land at Space Studios, Vaughan Street in Manchester (hereafter referred to as ‘the site’). The proposals include the erection of a new build of 2nr 20,000Sq. ft, including studio stages, workshop, offices and support facilities.

Urban Green have been appointed to complete a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site. The objectives of the assessment are to identify habitats on site and determine the suitability for any ‘protected and/or notable’ species may occur on site, with consideration of potential impacts on nearby designated sites. Mitigation recommendations are provided to aim to minimise potential impacts on ecology, due to the proposed development.

Following the survey work, the key recommendations are summarised in the following table:

Current Site Use and Adjacent Site Use	The site is currently used as a car park and an ornamental garden, located within a wider business park. Residential housing is located to the south and west.
Potential Impacts on Designated Sites	No potential impacts on designated sites nearby to the site are anticipated to the occur due to the proposed development. The site is located at a sufficient distance from nearby designated sites, and the proposed development activities have been considered.
Habitats	The site comprised of predominantly bare ground bound by scattered trees, ornamental shrub and scrub. The northern aspect of the site comprised an ornamental garden of amenity grassland and introduced shrub.
Ecological Constraints	The site is of limited ecological value, with suitable habitats for notable bird species. Rock spray cotoneaster (<i>Cotoneaster horizontalis</i>) and small-leaved cotoneaster (<i>Cotoneaster microphyllus</i>) were identified within the introduced shrub and is listed as a non-native invasive species.
Recommended Ecological Mitigation	If any vegetation requires removal, it should be completed outside of the breeding bird season (March to September, inclusive). If this is not feasible, a Nesting Bird Check is to be completed by a qualified ecologist no more than 48 hours before removal is to be completed. It is recommended that the cotoneaster is eradicated from site by a specialist contractor before construction commences.
Recommended Further Surveys and Reports	No further surveys or reports are deemed necessary to inform the proposed application.
Recommended Ecological Enhancements	The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) highlights the requirement for planning policies and decisions to conserve and enhance the natural environment. The proposed development provides the opportunity to enhance the site and ecological enhancements have been recommended.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Scheme

Space Studios are proposing to develop land at Space Studios, Vaughan Street in Manchester (hereafter referred to as ‘the site’). The proposals include the erection of a new build of 2nr 20,000Sq. ft, including studio stages, workshop, offices and support facilities.

Urban Green have been appointed to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the site.

The author of the report is Katie Bird, MEnvSci, ACIEEM, Senior Consultant Ecologist at Urban Green. Katie has experience providing ecological consulting services for a range of development schemes across the UK, including residential, commercial mineral extraction and road infrastructure schemes. Katie holds a bat Class 2 surveying licence and has been accredited on multiple European Protected Species Licences for bats.

1.2 Site Context

The site is located at National Grid Reference SJ 86800 96900 and comprises a total area of approximately 1.4ha (see Figure 1).

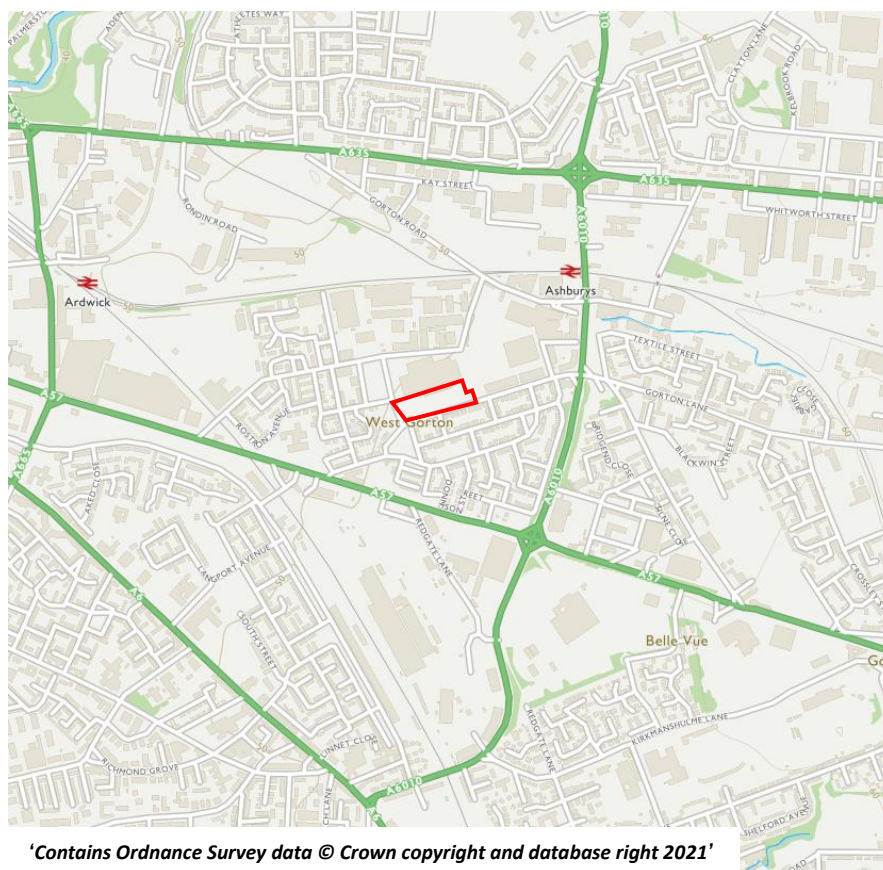


Figure 1 – Site Extent

The site is located in a densely urban area of west Gorton, approximately 3.5km from the centre of Manchester. Gorton Park, a large, landscaped park and recreational area is present approximately 1km to the southeast of the site. Due to the site’s location close to the city centre, there is a high level of

disturbance from main roads which are present approximately 600m north, 350m east and 300m south of the site and railway lines which are present approximately 325m north of the site.

1.3 Purpose of this Report

This report has been produced to set out the methods, results, and conclusions of a PEA. The purpose of the PEA report is to identify habitats on site and determine the site's potential value for protected and/or notable fauna and flora, with the addition of potential impacts on designated sites. This will inform the need for any further ecological surveys and/or mitigation to minimise the potential impacts on ecology on site and within the local area.

Further information and details of UK legislation for those species which are formally protected is defined in Appendix 1, which are considered throughout the assessment.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) and other Local Planning Policies are considered with the PEA. Ecological enhancements are advised to be in line with relevant Planning Policies.

2 Methods

The PEA assessment and Report follows the good practice methodology as detailed within the *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal* (CIEEM, 2019).

2.1 Desk Study

2.1.1 Online Resources and Local Records Centre

Due to the size and being located within a predominantly urban area of Manchester, a 1km Local Data Search was conducted as it is deemed an appropriate distance for the Zone of Influence.

Sources of information used in the desk study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 – Desk Study Sources of Information

Source	Date Consulted	Information Sought
MAGIC website (www.magic.gov.uk)	14/06/2021	Locations of statutory designated sites within 1km of the site boundary. Locations of the designated sites within the National Site Network (Ramsar, SAC and SPA) within 5km of the site boundary. Locations of European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) and Class Licences within 1km.
Natural England (https://designatedsites/.naturalengland.org.uk/)	14/06/2021	Relevant statutory designated site citations.
Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) (https://jncc.defra.gov.uk/)	14/06/2021	Information on European wildlife sites. Details of relevant Section 41 species and habitats.
Greater Manchester Ecology Unit	24/06/2021	Locally designated wildlife sites within 1km of site boundary. Records of protected and notable species within 1km of the site boundary.
Greater Manchester Local Biodiversity Action Plans	14/06/2021	Species and habitats which are given special conservation status at the local level.

MAGIC was also searched to assess whether the site fell within any Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) associated with a statutory designated site or a site forming part of the National Site Network. IRZ's have been identified by Natural England for use by Local Planning Authorities to assess planning applications for likely impacts on these sites and to determine when to consult Natural England for further advice.

2.2 Field Survey

2.2.1 Vegetation

The site was subject to a field survey on 10th June 2021, by Katie Bird, Senior Ecologist at Urban Green. The weather conditions were 20°C, no cloud cover (0/8 oktas), no wind or precipitation.

The methods were based on the standard methodology as detailed by *JNCC Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey* (JNCC, 2010). A Phase 1 Habitat Plan has been produced to demonstrate habitats within the proposed development and the surrounding area. The mapping techniques are based on *the Phase 1 Habitat Survey* (JNCC, 2010) guidance. Plant common and latin names were taken from the *Online Atlas of British and Irish Flora* (<https://www.brc.ac.uk/plantatlas/>), a continually updated directory of plant nomenclature developed in partnership by the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland, the Biological Records Centre, the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, and the JNCC.

Flora species listed as protected in the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) and species which are indicators of important and/or uncommon habitats, were searched for during the survey.

Species abundance is described using the DAFOR scale as shown in Table 2. Percentages are an approximate indication rather than a quantitative measure.

Table 2 – Key to Species Abundance

		Description	Indicative Percentage Ranges
D	Dominant	Covers most of the area	90% or greater
A	Abundant	Very common throughout the area.	50 – 90%
F	Frequent	Common or with many individuals.	20 – 50%
O	Occasional	Occurs in several places but not throughout. Populations are not large.	5 – 20%
R	Rare	Occurs in low numbers in relation to size of area.	Less than 5%
“L” will be used to indicate abundance in a localised area, e.g. LA = Locally abundant			

Any invasive species, including those listed on the revised (April 2010) Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) were noted during the field survey when sighted.

2.2.2 Fauna

A site search for field signs of protected and notable fauna was undertaken, and incidental sightings are detailed. The searches completed were as follows:

- Suitability of any ponds to support notable and protected amphibians, and the suitability of the site’s terrestrial habitats to support amphibians.
- Suitability of the site to support reptiles by way of habitat structure and refuge piles, as well as links to the wider landscape.
- Search of any watercourses for signs or suitability for white clawed-crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*), water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) and otter (*Lutra lutra*) by way of burrows, resting places, holts and foraging signs.
- Suitability of the site to support notable bird species. Bird nests and droppings of notable and protected bird species.

- Suitability of the site to support notable invertebrates.
- Search of the site for any invasive species.
- Badger (*Meles meles*) field signs such as setts, mammal, paths, snuffle holes and latrines.
- Suitability of the site to support notable terrestrial mammals including harvest mouse (*Micromys minutus*) and brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*).

2.3 Bat Assessment

2.3.1 Preliminary Roost Assessment

A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was carried out on the site buildings and trees using a high-powered torch and close-focussing binoculars.

The PRA methodology is based on information contained within the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidelines, 3rd edition (Collins, 2016). The categorisation within this report is based on that set out in Table 3, which is used as a basis for determining the requirement for further surveys.

Table 3 – Suitability of Buildings and Trees for Roosting Bats (adapted from Collins, 2016)

Category of Suitability	Typical Characteristics	Further Survey Requirements
High Roost Suitability	A structure/tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.	Three separate survey visits. At least one dusk emergence and a separate dawn re-entry survey. Surveys can be undertaken between May and September, with at least two surveys between May and August.
Moderate Roost Suitability	A structure/tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but are unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.	Two separate survey visits. One dusk emergence and a separate dawn re-entry survey. Surveys can be undertaken between May and September with at least one survey between May and August.
Low Roost Suitability	A structure/tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate condition and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis by larger numbers of bats.	Structures: one emergence/re-entry survey between May and August. Trees: No further survey required but precautionary methods of felling recommended.
Negligible Suitability	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.	No further work required.

2.3.2 Commuting and Foraging Bats

The site was assessed for its suitability for use by commuting and foraging bats.

The commuting and foraging assessment methodology is based on information contained within the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines 3rd edition (Collins, 2016). The categorisation within this report is based on that set out in Table 4, which is used as a basis for determining the requirement for further surveys.

Table 4 – Suitability of Site for Foraging and Commuting Bats (adapted from Collins, 2016)

Category of Suitability	Typical Characteristics
High Suitability	Continuous high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting or foraging bats such as; river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees or woodland edge. Site is close to or connected to known roosts.
Moderate Suitability	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by commuting bats such as lines of trees, scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat connected to wider landscape that could be used for bats for foraging such as; trees, scrub, grassland or water.
Low Suitability	Habitat that could be used by small number of commuting bats such as; defunct hedgerow, isolated features not well connected to surrounding habitat or Isolated habitat that could be used by a small number of foraging bats such as a lone tree or patch of scrub.
Negligible Suitability	No features on site suitable for use by commuting and foraging bats.

2.4 Constraints to the Survey

Whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no investigation could ensure the complete characterisation and prediction of the natural environment.

This PEA does not constitute a full botanical survey. The protected species assessment provides a view of the likelihood of protected species occurring on the site based on the known distribution of species in the local area and the suitability of the habitat.

It should not, however, be taken as providing a full and definitive survey of any protected species group.

Where a lack of records is found during the desk search for a defined geographical area, it does not necessarily mean that there is a lack of ecological interest; the area may be simply under-recorded.

The conclusions and recommendations detailed in this report are based upon the site redline boundary and the development proposals as outlined by the client at the time of writing. Should there be any changes to the site redline boundary or development proposals at a later stage, this assessment should be reviewed to determine whether any amendments or additional survey work is required.

The findings of this report represent the professional opinion of qualified ecologists and do not constitute professional legal advice. The client may wish to seek professional legal interpretation of the relevant wildlife legislation cited within this document.

2.5 Lifespan of Report

In accordance with CIEEM's Advice Note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys (CIEEM, 2019), the details of this report will remain valid for a period of **18 months** from the date of the survey (i.e. until 10/01/2023). After this date, this assessment should be reviewed to determine whether any updated surveys are required.

2.6 Definitions

For the purposes of this report, the term 'protected and notable species' relates to:

- Species included on Schedules 2 and 4 of *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017*;
- Species included on Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended), excluding species that are only protected in relation to their sale (see section 9[5] and 13[2]);
- Invasive non-native species included on Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended);
- Species of principal importance for the conservation of/maintaining and enhancing biodiversity as required under: Section 41 of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006* (England), Section 7 of the *Environment (Wales) Act 2016*, Section 2[4] of the *Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004*;
- Local species of importance as identified within various local biodiversity action plans; and,
- Badgers, which are protected under the *Protection of Badgers Act 1992*.

3 Baseline Ecological Conditions

3.1 Desk Study

3.1.1 Site Location

The site lies within a predominantly urban area of West Gorton, with commercial and residential buildings present in the immediate vicinity. The Local Nature Reserves (LNR) Clayton Vale and Highfield Country Park are present 3km north and 3.5km south east, respectively, with open areas of grassland, scrub and woodland. The Hollinwood Branch Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), LNR and Rochdale Canal SSSI, Special Area of Conservation (SAC) are also present 5km north east and 5km north of the site, respectively, providing open water habitats. It is anticipated these habitats will provide suitable foraging resting and commuting resources within the local area for a variety of wildlife, such as birds, bats and other mammals.

Habitats within the surrounding area are limited to urban street planting and recreational parks with Gorton Park present within 1km of the site.

3.1.2 Designated Sites

One site forming part of the national site network of designated sites was located within 5km of the site boundary. Two statutory sites and two non-statutory designated sites were located within 5km of the site and are detailed within Table 6.

Table 6 – Designated Sites within the Search Areas

Designated Site	Approx. Distance from Site	Details
Non-statutory designated sites		
Clayton Vale LNR	3km north	A key green space of approximately four square miles comprising urban countryside which the river Medlock runs through.
Highfield Country Park LNR	3.5km south east	A 70-acre area of open grassland and woodland with Fallowfield Brook running through the area.
Statutory designated sites		
Hollinwood Branch Canal SSSI, LNR	5km north east	A 3.3-hectare designation. An important mesotrophic standing water system comprising open water, swamp and tall fen. Several regionally and nationally rare open water plant species are present.
Rochdale Canal SSSI, SAC	5km north	A 25.55-hectare designation. Important habitats for submerged aquatic plants and emergent vegetation present. Extensive colonies of nationally scarce SAC species floating water-plantain (<i>Luronium natans</i>) present. The canal also supports a number of waterside bird species.

The site also falls within the Impact Risk Zone of the Rochdale Canal SAC and SSSI. This site is located approximately 7.4km east of the site. This site is designated for the significant populations of floating water-plantain and diversity of pondweed species (*Potamogeton* sp.) supported within the predominantly mesotrophic waters.

3.1.3 Flora and Fauna

The following section summarises protected and/or notable species records that have been recorded within 1km of the site.

Birds

Three records of protected or notable birds were returned within 1km of the site as detailed in Table 7.

Table 6 – Protected or notable birds recorded within 1km

Scientific Name	Common Name	Protection	Closest Record to Site	
			Approx. Min. Distance (m)	Date
<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Song thrush	BoCC4*, S41****, LBAP	850m	2015
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Starling	BoCC4*, S41****, LBAP	850m	2015
<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	Little Ringed Plover	Sch. 1***	800m	2011

* Listed Red on the Bird of Conservation Concern 4 (2015)

** Listed Amber on the Bird of Conservation Concern 4 (2015)

*** Wildlife & Countryside Act (Sch 1, 5 & 8)

**** Listed on Section 41 (NERC Act, 2006),

Bats

Three records of bat roosts were returned during the data search, comprising of one brown longed bat roost located 400m east of the site, and two common pipistrelle roosts located 900m south west of the site. All species of bat returned are listed as Priority species on the Greater Manchester BAP and are listed on Section 41 of the NERC Act (2009).

MAGIC also detailed the presence of one granted EPSL within 1km of the site (Ref: 2015-17752-EPS-MIT). This licence was to allow destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) in 2016. It was located approximately 950m southwest of the site.

Hedgehog

One record of hedgehog were returned with 1km of the site, which was located 850m west of the site from 2015. Hedgehog are listed on Section 41 of the NERC Act (2009) and are a Priority Species on the Greater Manchester BAP.

No Records Returned

The data search returned no records for:

- Vascular plants
- Notable invertebrates
- White-clawed crayfish
- Great crested newt or other amphibian species
- Reptiles
- Hazel dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*)
- Harvest mouse

- Brown hare
- Red squirrel
- Otter
- Water vole
- Badger

In addition, a MAGIC search returned no granted EPSL relating to great crested newts present within 1km of the site.

3.2 Field Survey

The site habitats and accompanying Target Notes are presented in the Phase 1 Habitat Map in Appendix 2.

3.2.1 Bare Ground

Much of the site comprised bare ground habitat utilised as a car park (see Photograph 1). Scattered vegetation was present on the edges of the habitats and included; colt's foot (*Tussilago farfara*), ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), common chickweed (*Stellaria media*), butterfly bush (*Buddleia davidii*), herb-Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), lady's mantle (*Alchemilla mollis*), and mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*).



Photograph 1 – Bare ground car park

3.2.2 Scattered Trees

Scattered trees were located on the periphery of the site and within a designated 'Japanese Garden' to the north (see Photograph 2). Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) and London plane (*Platanus x hispanica*) was the dominant species with occasional silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*), oak (*Quercus petraea*), red oak (*Quercus rubra*), birch (*Betula* sp), alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus* 'variegated') and Swedish whitebeam (*Sorbus intermedia*).



Photograph 2 – Scattered trees to the north of the site

3.2.3 Introduced Shrub

Areas of introduced shrub was located within the ‘Japanese Garden’ and the boundaries of the car park (see Photograph 3). Species included common box (*Buxus sempervirens*), dogrose (*Rosa canina*), rockspray cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*), small-leaved cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster microphyllus*), willow-leaved cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster salicifolius*), coralberry (*Symphoricarpos orbiculatus*) and scarlet firethorn (*Pyracantha coccinea* ‘Kasan’).



Photograph 3 – Introduced shrub

3.2.4 Building and Hardstanding

A tunnel was located within the northern aspect of the site boundary, in association within the adjacent commercial warehouse (see Photograph 4). It was constructed of plastic sheeting supported by metal frames.



Photograph 4 – Tunnel located on the northern aspect of the site

Hardstanding footpaths comprising of flags was present to the north, in associated within the northern offsite building (see Photograph 5).

3.2.5 Amenity Grassland

Scattered areas of amenity grassland was present on the eastern and northern aspect of the site (see Photograph 5). Dominant species included; perennial rye grass, Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and red fescue (*Festuca rubra*). Abundant species included; red clover (*Trifolium pratense*), common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* agg.) and creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*). Occasional species present included; common daisy (*Bellis perennis*), common chickweed, lesser trefoil (*Trifolium dubium*), ragwort, ivy (*Hedera helix*) and colt's foot.



Photograph 5 – Hardstanding and amenity grassland

3.2.6 Scattered scrub

Scattered scrub was located on the southwestern aspect of the site dominated by dogrose and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*).

3.3 Site Suitability for Protected and Notable Species

3.3.1 Species Discounted from Assessment

Water vole, otter and white-clawed crayfish have been discounted from assessment as no aquatic habitats are located on site or within proximity. The closest aquatic habitat is located over 1km from the site boundary.

Hazel dormouse mainly occur in southern counties, especially in Devon, Somerset, Sussex and Kent. There are few recorded localities north of the Midlands, though they are present in parts of the Lake District and in scattered Welsh localities (Matthews *et al.*, 2018). The species are not generally known to be present within the Manchester area (Wembridge *et al.*, 2016). The habitats on site are of limited value due to limited areas of extensive woodland and scrub. As such, the species are reasonably discounted from site.

Red squirrel have been discounted from the assessment. Red squirrel populations are limited to small areas of northern England and are not known to be present in the Manchester area; with no previous records returned in the data search. It is anticipated that high abundances of grey squirrel are present within this region (Shuttleworth/RSST n.d.). This species will displace red squirrel through competition as well as cause increased red squirrel mortality through the spread of squirrel pox (The Mammal Society, 2020).

3.3.2 Vascular Plants

No notable flora was noted during the field survey, with only common and widespread species observed. In addition, the data search did not return previous records of notable flora and it is not anticipated that these species would be present on the site.

As such, notable vascular plants are considered likely absent from the site.

3.3.3 Invertebrates

No deadwood, aquatic habitats or high floristic diversity was located on site which would provide an important resource for invertebrates during their life cycle. It is anticipated common species will be present though not in significant numbers due to the management and use of the site.

Overall, the presence of notable invertebrates within the site is reasonably discounted.

3.3.4 Amphibians

No ponds were located within site or within 250m of the site boundary. As great crested newts' upper dispersal limit is generally considered to be up to 250m from a waterbody (though occurrence of greater distances does exist), great crested newts are not anticipated to be present on site (English Nature, 2001).

The site contains heavily managed habitat fragments surrounded by buildings and hardstanding. Negligible foraging resources or cover for common amphibians was present on site, and therefore the presence of amphibians on site is reasonably discounted, and not discussed further within this report.

3.3.5 Reptiles

Generally, reptiles require a mosaic of habitats. However, much of the site comprised a monoculture of bare ground and amenity grassland which lacked a variety of heights and structure that is important to reptiles to avoid predation (NARRS, 2007).

Overall, the habitats on site were of limited value and no records of the species group were identified. Reptiles are not considered to be present on site.

3.3.6 Birds

Ground Nesting

The site does not provide potential value for ground nesting birds due to the high level disturbance of the use of the site and adjacent.

Passerine

The scattered trees and scrub may provide value to nesting birds. Several passerine bird records within 1km were returned including starling and song thrush. The site may provide value for starling, but it is not anticipated to be of significant value in the local area.

3.3.7 Bats

Preliminary Roost Assessment

A PRA was completed on all structures and trees located on site and adjacent. All trees were assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential due to no PRFs or suitable holes/crevices deep enough for roosting opportunities being identified.

The building was constructed internally of plastic sheeting supported by metal frames. No PRFs were identified internally and externally, whilst the building was well sealed (see Photograph 6). As such, the building was assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential.



Photograph 6 – Internal aspect

Commuting and Foraging Bats

The habitats on site are anticipated to provide limited value for foraging bats due to comprising intensely managed, isolated patches of vegetation and unvegetated areas which will attract low numbers of invertebrate prey. The boundary features are anticipated to provide some commuting value though the site and adjacent habitats are anticipated to be well-lit via security and street lighting. The habitats on site appear to be generally common within the local area.

As such, the site was assessed as having low value for foraging and commuting bats.

3.3.8 Hedgehog

The broadleaved scrub habitats will provide suitable cover and foraging habitats for the species. Hedgehog are potentially present within the site.

3.3.9 Badger

No badger setts were noted on the site or within 30m where access was possible. Additionally, no evidence of badger activity was noted throughout the site, including snuffle holes, signs of digging, or latrines.

The habitats on site and within the surrounding area are anticipated to be of limited value for badger due to use, significant urban area, and habitats present are of limited value (i.e. parkland). It is not anticipated that badgers are within the local area and are not considered to be present on site.

3.4 Invasive Species

Small-leaved cotoneaster and rock spray cotoneaster were present on the site during the field survey and are listed under Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) as an invasive non-native species. It was located within the areas of introduced shrub, across the site.

4 Ecological Constraints and Recommended Mitigation

4.1 Proposed Development

The proposals include the erection of a new build of 2nr 20,000Sq. ft, including studio stages, workshop, offices and support facilities.

4.2 Designated Sites

The site is located within the impact risk zone for Rochdale Canal SAC and SSSI, this site is located approximately 5km north of the site. The development does not fall within any of the categories at this distance from the designated site which would require further consultation with Natural England. In addition, the Rochdale Canal SAC and SSSI is located a sufficient distance away from site. No impacts as a result of development are anticipated and no further mitigation or assessment is deemed necessary for the development to proceed.

4.3 Habitats

The site comprised habitats that were found to be widespread within the local area; however, they did contain value for wildlife such as birds and bats. The scattered trees are of highest value.

4.3.1 Broadleaved Trees

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) (Urban Green, 2021) has been produced outlining the extent of tree loss required and proposed measures to protect retained trees.

Generally, the protection measures of retained trees will be through used of temporary protective demarcation fencing to protect the trees and shrubs. The fencing must extend outside the canopy of the retained trees and must remain in position until all plots have been developed to ensure protection is provided throughout the construction phase. Full details regarding the status and condition of trees within the site can be found within the AIA carried out at this site (Urban Green, 2021).

The fencing will be in accordance with BS 5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction: Recommendations.

4.4 Fauna

4.4.1 Birds

Vegetation removal should be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season (March to September, inclusive). If this is not possible, a suitably experienced ecologist should check the habitat for breeding bird activity no more than 48 hours before clearance. If nesting activity is found, nests must be left in situ until the young have fledged.

It should be noted that not undertaking necessary vegetation clearance outside of the bird nesting season and subsequently relying on a nesting bird check during the bird nesting season frequently leads to delays in schedule. It is therefore strongly recommended to undertake vegetation clearance outside of bird nesting season to avoid such delays.

Landscape designs for this site should include plants of value to bird species, including fruiting and seed producing plants, to compensate for nesting habitats.

4.4.2 Bats

Habitats on site were of limited suitability for foraging bats due to their small extent and lack of floristic diversity which would attract invertebrates. Scattered trees within amenity grassland were likely of greatest value.

Bats are sensitive to lighting and may be impacted by the proposed development, should no mitigation for lighting be considered.

Lighting mitigation should follow the guidance outlined in the Institute for Lighting Engineers document “Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Lighting” (2005) and BCT’s “Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK” (2018). The construction lighting may impact bats which are sensitive to light. Directional lighting will be achieved by angle and orientation of beam, use of a cowl, louvre or other light shield, or a combination of these.

An External Lighting Scheme had not been produced on the writing of this report. As such, the following recommendations are to be considered within the scheme during its condition, to minimise impacts of lighting. The recommendations are as follows:

- Keep site lighting to minimum levels.
- Luminaries should lack UV elements and preferably LED lighting with a warm white light should be used over cool white light (ideally <2700Kelvin).
- Lighting should feature peak wavelengths greater than 550nm.
- Internal lighting should be positioned away from windows to minimise light spill.
- Light placement should be downward facing to prevent excess horizontal or vertical light spill.
- The use of integrated fittings such as cowls, shields, louvres, and hoods, that effectively contain light spill from unintended areas.
- The use of hard landscaping features to block light and create dark corridors.
- Avoid illuminating any suitable bat habitats, particularly Red Brook and the Rochdale Canal, that are likely valuable commuting and foraging habitat for bats.
- Use of timed security lights should be set on motion-sensors and using short, 1-minute timers, to minimise light use.
- Column heights of lighting can be considered to minimise light spill.

4.4.3 Hedgehog

Hedgehog may be present on site, as such checks for hedgehogs should be carried out prior to removal of scrub and shrub habitats to avoid harming this species during works.

4.5 Invasive Species

Non-native invasive flora species were identified during the site walkover. As such, it is recommended, prior to the development, that the species should be eradicated following the most current guidance set out by the Environment Agency by a qualified contractor.

5 Further Surveys

No further surveys or assessments are deemed necessary to inform the relevant planning application.

6 Opportunities for Enhancement

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) highlights the requirement for planning policies and decisions to conserve and enhance the natural environment.

Paragraph 170 states that this should be achieved by (in terms of this assessment only):

- a) *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) *minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*

Specific enhancement recommendations for the site include the following:

- Bat and bird boxes could be placed on the new buildings / retained trees. A plan to show the locations of these boxes and the specifications should be produced by a suitably qualified ecologist once the layout is finalised.
- Planting of linear features such as hedgerows and trees where possible, to add commuting features within the site.

7 Conclusion

The PEA has met the objectives of the report, by demonstrating the following:

- The major habitats identified on site included bare ground, scattered trees, amenity grassland, introduced shrub, hardstanding and buildings.
- Potential ecological constraints identified included bats, nesting birds, hedgehogs, and the presence of a non-native invasive plant species and are detailed in Section 3.
- Mitigation recommendations to be completed prior and during the construction phase for bats, birds, hedgehogs, and non-native invasive species are detailed in Section 4.
- No further surveys are required to determine presence or absence and inform relevant mitigation requirements.
- General ecological enhancements are listed within Section 6.

8 References

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Appendix 1 – Relevant Legislation

Legislation relating to European Protected Species (e.g. bats, otter, great crested newt)

European Protected Species and their resting places (e.g. bat roosts) are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 transposed the European Union's 'Habitats Directive' (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (EC Habitats Directive) into UK law. The Regulations provide for the designation and protection of 'European Sites', the protection of 'European Protected Species' (EPS), and the adaptation of planning and other controls for the protection of European Sites. EPS are listed on Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take certain animals listed in Schedule 5;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy any structure or place which any wild animal specified in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; or
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which any such animal uses for shelter or protection.

In addition, under this legislation there are offences relating to sale, possession and control of wild animals listed in Schedule 5.

- Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 it is an offence to:
- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal listed as a European Protected Species;
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species in such a way as to be likely:
- to impair their ability:
 - to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or;
 - in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate, or;
- to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.
- Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal, or;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

In addition, under this legislation there are offences relating to possession, control sale and exchange of an EPS.

Great crested newt, otter and several species of bat are listed as a Species of Principle Importance (SoPI) under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

Legislation relating to breeding birds

All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and it is an offence, with certain exceptions, to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built;
- Intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird; and
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 while it is nest building or is in, on or near a nest with eggs or young; or disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 provides further protection for selected species (including peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), barn owl (*Tyto alba*), little ringed plover (*Charadrius dubius*) and black redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*) during the breeding season. If any person intentionally or recklessly disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; or disturb dependent young of such a bird. That person shall be guilty of an offence.

A number of bird species are listed as SoPI under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Conservation status - Birds of Conservation Concern (Eaton et al., 2015)

The UK's leading bird conservation organisations have worked together on the third quantitative review of the status of the birds that occur regularly in the UK, updating the last review in 2011. The status of birds within the UK have been regularly monitored through a series of surveys, including the national Breeding Bird Survey, Common Bird Census, sea bird monitoring programs and wetland monitoring programs. The result of this review and continued monitoring is The Population Status of Birds in the UK, Birds of Conservation Concern 4: 2015.

Birds are assessed against criteria to place each species on one of three alert lists, red, amber or green. Red list species are considered to be of high conservation concern, being either globally threatened, having historical UK population declines, having a rapid population decline or breeding range contraction of 50% or more in the last 25 years.

Amber list species are considered to be of medium conservation concern as they meet one or more of the following criteria (but none of the red list criteria): Red listed for historical decline in a previous review but with substantial recent recovery (more than doubled in the last 25 years), a UK breeding range contraction of between 25% and 49%, a reduction of breeding or non-breeding population of 25-49% in the last 25 years, a 5-year mean of 1-300 breeding pairs in the UK, an unfavourable European conservation status, at least 50% of the UK breeding population found in 10 or fewer sites, or where the breeding population in the UK represents 20% or more of the European breeding populations.

Green list species are considered to be of low conservation concern. They include all regularly occurring species that do not qualify under any of the red or amber criteria are green listed. The green list also includes those species listed as recovering from Historical Decline in the last review that have continued to recover and do not qualify under any of the other criteria.

Legislation relating to invasive plant species

Several non-native invasive plant species including (but not limited to) Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*), Japanese rose (*Rosa rugosa*), variegated yellow archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*), rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*) and Japanese

knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) are listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended), which makes it an offence to ‘...plant or otherwise cause the species to grow in the wild’. This includes spreading or transferring contaminated soil from one area to another.

Estate Managers and landowners have a duty to pro-actively treat knotweed outbreaks. Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC), subsection 14ZA (1), makes it is an offence to sell, offer or expose for sale, or to have in one’s possession or transport for the purpose of sale, any Schedule 9 animal or plant or anything from which such an animal or plant can be propagated, including rhizomes of Japanese knotweed. Under subsection 14ZA (2) it is also an offence to publish or cause to be published any advertisement for the purchase or sale of these animals and plants.

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA 1990) contains a number of legal provisions concerning controlled waste. Any Japanese knotweed contaminated soil or plant material that is intended for discard is likely to be classified as controlled waste.

The Environmental Protection (Duty of Care) regulations 1991 also imposes a ‘duty of care’ on persons concerned with controlled waste, which includes any materials incorporating Japanese knotweed including soil, grass cuttings, general wastes and ash arising from the burning of knotweed. The duty applies to any person, who produces, imports, carries, keeps, treats or disposes of controlled waste. Failure to appropriately dispose of any material containing Japanese knotweed may lead to prosecution under Section 33 and 34 of the EPA 1990 and Section 14 (2) of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

If knotweed stands are to be treated with herbicides, The Control of Pesticides Regulations (1986) applies. These regulations require any person who uses a pesticide to take all reasonable precautions to protect the health of human beings, creatures and plants, safeguard the environment and in particular avoid the pollution of water. If pesticides are to be used in or near to a watercourse, the Environment Agency should be contacted, and approval must be sought (application to use herbicides in or near water).

Waste leaving the site must be handled responsibly and in accordance with the law at all stages between its production and final recovery or disposal. Waste must be transferred to an authorised person, who is either a registered waste carrier or exempted from registration by the Controlled Waste (Registration of Carriers and Seizure of Vehicles) Regulations 1991.

Additional legislation regarding the transport of Japanese knotweed contaminated materials is covered by the Hazardous Waste Regulations 2005 (HWR, 2005). This contains provisions about the handling and movement of hazardous waste. Consignment notes must be completed when any hazardous waste is transferred, which includes details about the hazardous waste properties and any handling requirements. Untreated Japanese knotweed is not classed as hazardous waste, but material containing knotweed which has been treated with certain herbicides, may be classified as hazardous waste.

If any waste soil or knotweed is sent for landfill either before or after treatment, it must go to a landfill that is authorised to receive it.

Appendix 2 - Habitat Map

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- Scattered Tree
- Fence
- Red Line Boundary
- Building
- Hardstanding
- Bare Ground
- Introduced shrub
- Amenity Grassland
- Scattered Scrub



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Project: **SPACE STUDIOS**

Title: **PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP**

Issue: **PLANNING**

Drawn: MC	Checked: KB	Approved: KB
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Project: UG893	Scale @ A3: 1:800	Date: 21/06/2021
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Dwg No: UG_893_ECO_HM_01	Revision: 01
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