
ECOLOGICAL WALKOVER

LAND OFF BRUNSWICK STREET, ARDWICK, MANCHESTER



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Site Information

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd was commissioned in 2021 by Brunswick Living Limited to undertake an Ecological Walkover with a Habitat Suitability Index on a parcel of land off Brunswick Street in Manchester (O.S. grid reference: SJ 85251 97078). The site is currently being cleared for future development. The site is surrounded by business properties, and amenities.

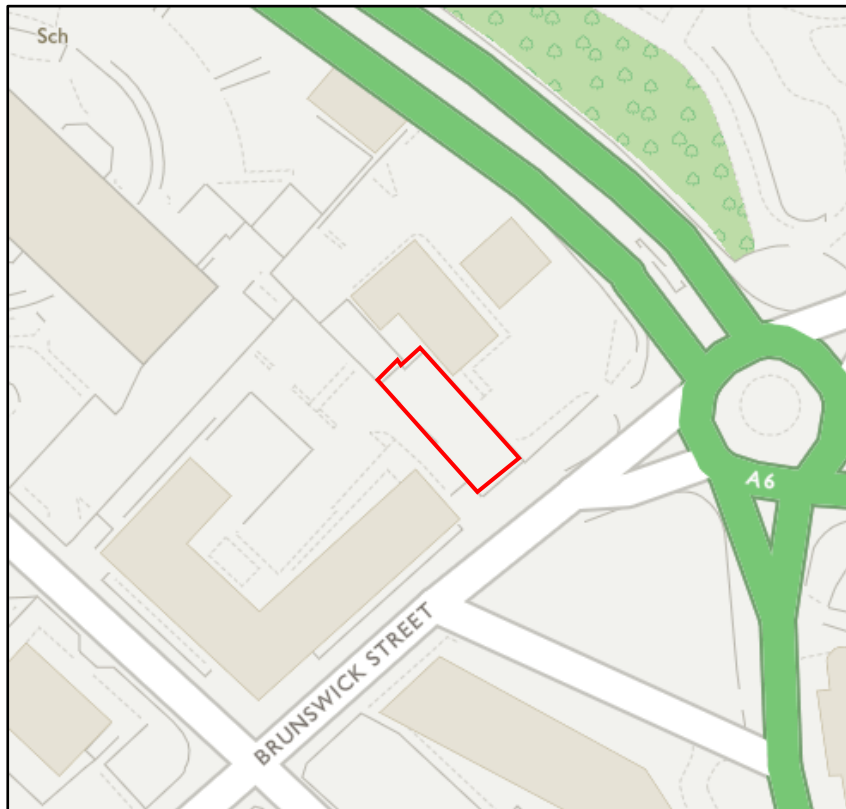


Figure 1 showing the location of the property.

Description of Development

- 1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application for the construction of a block of 16 flats. Preparation for this has been carried out involving the removal of all vegetation, and levelling of the site for ready for construction carried out under previously approved planning consent.

Biodiversity in Planning

- 1.3 Biodiversity is a material consideration, and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have a requirement to consider biodiversity and protected species when determining planning applications. Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) gives specific reference to minimising the impacts of development on biodiversity. Local and Neighbourhood plans also provide guidance towards protecting and enhancing biodiversity, including priority habitats and notable species.

Legal Context

- 1.4 Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* is a European Protected Species (EPS). It is listed under Annex IV of the EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora. This is implemented in the UK through The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and the species is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 1.5 All bat species are European Protected Species, implemented in the UK by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Bats are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC, 2006). It is illegal to disturb or damage a bat roost.
- 1.6 Badgers *Meles meles* are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). These Acts, for example, make it illegal to disturb a Badger whilst it is in a sett, to kill, injure or take a Badger and to obstruct the entrance to a Badger sett.
- 1.7 All bird species are protected at their nest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Great Crested Newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* is a European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit) and the species is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 1.8 The aim of the survey is to update the environmental assessment of the site to inform the planning application and to determine if further surveys may be required.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Ecological Walkover

- 2.1 An ecological walkover survey was carried out on the site to search for evidence of protected species. This included, but was not limited to, searching for Badger activity such as latrines, setts, and snuffle holes, assessing any waterbodies on site for their potential to support Great Crested Newt and assessing any trees and vegetation for their potential to support bats and nesting birds.
- 2.2 The habitats and botanical assemblages on site were also assessed, including a search for invasive, non-native species, such as Japanese Knotweed.

Personnel and Seasonal Timing

- 2.3 Joe Cooper (Ecologist) carried out the daytime bat survey on the 23rd March 2021. Joe is an experienced ecologist, fully trained in protected species surveys. The weather at the time of the survey was sunny with clear skies.

Survey Constraints

- 2.4 The property was fully accessible and there were no constraints.

3.0 ECOLOGICAL WALKOVER

Site Description

- 3.1 The site is mostly comprised of bare ground having been cleared of all vegetation ready for the construction phase of the development. There are some ephemeral short perennial species located at the entrance of the site and along the southern boundary including Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*, Rosebay willowherb *Chamerion angustifolium* and Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. Along the western and northern edge of the site are a number of Buddleia *Buddleja davidii* with some growing from the wall of the northern boundary.



Photograph 1 showing the site from the entrance.

- 3.2 The site includes piles of spoil, rubble and building materials scattered around a large pit which was the underground cellar of the pre-existing building located on the site (see Photograph 2).



Photograph 2 showing the cellar and spoil.



- 3.3 Due to the condition of the site, no habitats thought to be of any ecological value were identified during the walkover.
- 3.4 No mature trees or other vegetation are present on the site. No evidence of nesting birds was identified during the site visit including nests, eggs, or chicks.
- 3.5 No evidence of Badger *Meles meles* could be found on the site including setts, or signs of activity including digging or latrines were found on the site.
- 3.6 No ponds or suitable waterbodies exist on the site, or within 250m of the site. The site offers limited terrestrial habitat for Great Crested Newts *Triturus cristatus*.
- 3.7 No buildings or trees suitable for bat roosting are present on the site. The site is surrounded by residential properties, offering limited bat foraging and commuting opportunities. The surrounding area is well-lit by artificial lighting.
- 3.8 No non-native invasive plants
- 3.9 No statutory or non-statutory sites are present on the site or adjacent to the site. The nearest statutory protected site is the Hollinwood Branch Canal, Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which is approximately 6300m to the north east of the proposed development. At this distance, it is considered that the development will have no deleterious impact on the SSSI.

4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

- 4.1 In its condition, the site offers no ecological value and no suitable habitats for protected species. It is dominated by bare ground with some rubble and earth spoil heaps which offer little cover for wildlife. There is no significant vegetation present on the site and the small amounts identified are minimal, offering little ecological value.
- 4.2 Due to no evidence of protected species being identified during the survey. It is considered that there are no protected species constraints, and no habitat mitigation is required.

Habitat Enhancement

- 4.3 The development will involve the loss of the remaining habitats onsite to facilitate construction. Given this, general recommendations to bring biodiversity gain to the site are:
- Soft landscaping should include the provision of native and non-native flowering perennial species, to provide a pollen and nectar source for invertebrates.
 - Bird boxes and bat boxes could be erected on the newly constructed building or planted trees where possible.
 - Tree planting of native species where practically possible.

6.0 REFERENCES

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