PLANNING AND
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EGERTON ROAD
FALLOWFIELD

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PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY REPORT

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of any likely ecological issues and provide recommendations for mitigation with respect to the area of land proposed for development, situated off Egerton Road, Fallowfield. The scope of any further survey and assessment works required to obtain planning consent, in accordance with the guidance of *Planning Policy Statement 09 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation* and *ODPM Circular 0605 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation Statutory Obligations* is also provided.

1.2 In that respect, a walk-over survey was carried out to evaluate the baseline ecological status of the site. This comprised an extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey following survey methodology described in NCC (1990) and IEA (1995). Where applicable, a simplified version of the methodology outlined in Rodwell (1991, 1992, 1995 & 2000) was incorporated for identification of National Vegetation Classification (NVC) communities. This was supplemented by a general vascular plant species survey of the whole site using the 'walkabout method' as described in Kirkby (1988) and an assessment of habitat suitability for animals, in particular protected species such as badger, bats, water voles and great crested newts.

1.3 The survey was carried out on the 17th September 2010 and updated on the 2nd December 2011.

2.0 EXISTING SITUATION

2.1 The land in question, as indicated on the "red line" site plan, comprises the site of a former institutional building (St John's Ambulance), associated hard-standing including car parking areas and footpaths, and formally landscaped areas.

2.2 At the time of survey, the land was found to have been partially cleared with all buildings removed and the cleared areas become vegetated-over with a variety of habitats ranging from a sparse covering ephemeral and short-perennial vegetation, to dense tall-ruderal vegetation and continuous scrub. The only vegetation remaining from the original site is the former landscaped areas mainly lawns and shrub-beds, and the mature vegetation along the periphery of the site comprising a number of relatively large trees and shrubs.

2.3 With the exception of the ruderal vegetation which has developed on the recently cleared areas, no long-established semi-natural vegetation occurs on site. Furthermore, being located within a built-up urban area surrounded on all sides by either busy roads or residential housing and other buildings, there is no connecting habitat or linkage with any existing green corridors, the site being effectively isolated in that respect.

Habitat and Vegetation Communities

2.4 The following habitats and vegetation communities (where determinable) were recorded.

NCC/RSNC[1] Habitat	NVC[2] Communities
Broadleaved Woodland (Mature Trees)	No discernible vegetation communities
Scrub: dense continuous Scrub: scattered	W21 *Crataegus monogyna-Hedera helix* scrub W24 *Rubus fruticosus-Holcus lanatus* underscrub community
Grassland: neutral, semi-improved (in mosaic with tall-ruderal vegetation)	MG1 *Arrhenatherum elatius* grassland (fragmentary) OV23 *Lolium perenne-Dactylis glomeratus* community
Improved Grassland	MG6 *Lolium perenne-Cynosurus cristatus* grassland MG7 *Lolium perenne* leys and related grasslands
Tall herb and fern: tall ruderal	OV24 *Urtica dioica-Galium aparine* community OV25 *Urtica dioica-Cirsium arvense* community OV26 *Epilobium hirsutum* community OV27 *Epilobium angustifolium* community
Cultivated/disturbed land: ephemeral/short perennial	OV10 *Poa annua-Senecio vulgaris* community OV21 *Poa annua-Plantago major* community OV22 *Poa annua-Taraxacum officinale* community OV28 *Agrostis stolonifera-Ranunculus repens* community

[1] Nature Conservancy Council and Royal Society for Nature Conservation habitat classification (NCC, 1990)

[2] National Vegetation Classification communities (Rodwell, 1991)

2.5 All the habitats and vegetation communities recorded on site are common and widespread throughout Greater Manchester and Great Britain as a whole and are typical of heavily disturbed and cultivated or urbanized land. The only habitats of longevity or of any relative importance are the mature trees and mature shrubs which mostly occur along the site boundaries, though none of these are of particular importance beyond site level and are of greater importance in respect of habitat for other species rather than in their own right.

Flora

2.6 The plant species recorded during the site survey are listed within the table below.

Taxon Name	Common Name	Relative Abundance*
Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	R
Aegopodium podagraria	Ground Elder	R
Agrostis capillaries	Common Bent	O(LA)
Agrostis stolonifera	Creeping Bent	O(LF)
Arrhenatherum elatius	False Oat-Grass	O(LF)
Bellis perennis	Daisy	O
Betula pendula	Silver Birch	O(LF)
Buddleja davidia	Butterfly Bush	O(LF)
Chamerion angustifolium	Rosebay Willowherb	O(LF)
Cirsium arvense	Creeping Thistle	F
Cirsium vulgare	Spear Thistle	F
Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn	O(LF)
Dactylis glomerata	Cock's-foot	O(LF)
Epilobium hirsutum	Great Willowherb	O(LF)
Epilobium parviflorum	Hoary Willowherb	O
Fagus sylvatica	Beech	F(LA)
Fallopia japonica	Japanese Knotweed	O(LF)
Festuca rubra agg.	Red Fescue	F(LA)
Fraxinus excelsior	Ash	O
Galium aparine	Cleavers	O(LF)
Hedera helix	Ivy	F(LA)
Heracleum sphondylium	Hogweed	O
Holcus lanatus	Yorkshire-fog	F(LA)
Ilex aquifolium	Holly	R
Leontodon autumnalis	Autumn Hawbit	O
Lolium perenne	Perennial Rye-grass	F(LD)
Myosotis arvensis	Field Forget-me-not	O
Plantago lanceolata	Ribwort Plantain	O
Plantago major	Greater Plantain	F
Poa annua	Annual Meadow-grass	F(LA)
Poa trivialis	Rough Meadow-grass	F(LA)
Polygonum aviculare	Knotgrass	O
Ranunculus repens	Creeping Buttercup	F
Rubus fruticosus agg.	Bramble	F(LD)
Rumex obtusifolius	Broad-leaved Dock	F(LA)
Sambucus nigra	Elder	O
Senecio jacobaea	Common Ragwort	F
Senecio vulgaris	Groundsel	O
Taraxacum agg.	Dandelion	F
Tilia x vulgaris	Common Lime	O
Trifolium pratense	Red Clover	F
Trifolium repens	White Clover	F
Urtica dioica	Common Nettle	F(LD)
Vicia cracca	Tufted Vetch	F
Vicia sepium	Bush Vetch	F
* *Relative Abundance:* - D Dominant; A Abundant; F Frequent; O Occasional; R Rare; L Locally		

2.7 As for the habitats and vegetation communities, all plant species recorded are common and widespread, are early colonists, or are non-native species typical of heavily disturbed ground. No uncommon or otherwise important species were recorded. However, it should be noted that Japanese knotweed is an invasive species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act.

Fauna

2.8 No specific surveys for fauna were undertaken although, during the Phase 1 habitat survey, evidence for the presence of protected or otherwise important animal species was sought.

2.9 Little evidence of any fauna was noted due to the superficial nature of the survey and time of year. The site appears to be used by urban fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) and grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) activity was noted within the trees. However the availability of habitat suitable for foraging and burrowing by mammals is quite limited due to the disturbed nature of the site and general lack of suitable niches.

2.10 There was no conclusive evidence of badger (*Meles meles*) such as latrines or feeding signs and the potential for badgers accessing the site, which is entirely enclosed by housing and busy roads, is virtually zero.

2.11 There are no significant water bodies on site and no known ponds occur within 250m where there is direct habitat linkage. The site is therefore considered to be of little or no importance to great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*). A small depression near to the site entrance which was found to be water-filled at the time of survey is considered to be of little consequence and, whilst it may be used by common frog (*Rana temporaria*) from time to time, is unlikely to be used by any other amphibian species due to its limited size and likely temporary nature.

2.12 No buildings remain on site but a number of the larger mature trees are suitable for use by bats for roosting purposes. Many of the trees were found to have cavities and cracks and crevices in bark and, whilst a brief inspection revealed no conclusive signs of bat usage, roosting by bats at other times of year cannot be ruled out from a superficial survey such as this. Further investigation will therefore be needed in order to reach a firm conclusion.

2.13 Few birds were noted during the survey due to the limited time spent on site and time of year. For the same reason, it was not possible to determine which if any species breed on site. The following species were recorded within or close to the site boundaries and those that are expected to breed based upon suitability of habitat are highlighted in bold.

Species Name	Common Name
Columba palumbus	**Wood Pigeon**
Erithacus rubecula	Robin
Parus caeruleus	**Blue tit**
Parus domesticus	House Sparrow
Parus major	**Great tit**
Pica pica	**Magpie**
Streptopelia decaocto	**Collared Dove**
Sturnus vulgaris	Starling
Turdus merula	**Blackbird**

2.14 The habitats most suitable for breeding birds are the mature trees and mature shrubs which border the site, and to a lesser extent, the denser areas of tall-ruderal vegetation and scrub elsewhere on site. It is possible that a number of species in addition to those listed may also breed on site but these are not expected to be of particular importance due to the location, disturbed nature of the site and limited diversity of habitat, and any additional species that may occur at other times of year are most likely to comprise common, urban species.

2.15 Invertebrates were not surveyed specifically and few were noted due to the limited amount of time spent on site. The majority of the site has very limited potential for invertebrates. The periphery of the site is likely to provide habitat for a moderate diversity of species although these are likely to be common species which have good dispersal mechanisms and which are typical of disturbed ground and habitats at an early stage of succession.

3.0 POTENTIAL IMPACTS

3.1 Likely Impact

3.2 The likely impact of the proposed development on the site surveyed is evaluated against the criteria laid out in the table below which is based on NATA (New Approach to Appraisal) as described in Byron H. (2000). This evaluation is based on the assumption that no mitigation works will be implemented.

Impact Assessment Table

Impact Magnitude	Nature Conservation Importance				
	Negligible	***Local***	***County***	***National***	***European***
Beneficial Effects	Non Significant	Non Significant	Non Significant	Non Significant	Non Significant
Nil Effect	Non Significant	Non Significant	Non Significant	Non Significant	Non Significant
Minor (short term or reversible effects)	Non Significant	Non Significant	Slight	Moderate	Moderate
Moderate (deterioration of feature	Non Significant	Slight	Moderate	Severe	Severe
High (loss of feature)	Non Significant	Slight	Moderate	Severe	Severe

3.3 The evaluation criteria for nature conservation importance are as follows:

European

Habitats which are listed in Annexe 1 of the Habitats Directive and are included as candidate or proposed Special Areas of Conservation (cSAC, pSAC).

Species which are listed under Schedule 2 of the Habitats Directive and form a population which would qualify the site for consideration as a Special Protection Area (SPA) or Special Area of Conservation.

National

Habitats which would meet the criteria for inclusion, or are included, within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Species which are part of a population or assemblage of species which would meet the criteria for inclusion, or are included, within an SSSI or are protected under Schedules 2, 5 or 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside act.

County

Habitats which would meet the criteria for inclusion or are included, within a second tier nature conservation site (SINC) or which form part of a local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) or Habitat Action Plan (HAP).

Species which are part of a population or assemblage of species which would meet the criteria for inclusion or are included as part of a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

Local

Habitats which are uncommon in the Fallowfield area

Species which are uncommon in the Fallowfield area

Negligible

Where none of the above will be affected

Unknown

Where there is currently insufficient information to make an assessment

3.4 Impact of the Development

The following impact assessment is based on the survey data as detailed above and information provided with regard to current development proposals.

Ecological Issues (Receptors)	Details and Impact Magnitude	Impact without Mitigation
Habitats, Vegetation Communities and Flora	The proposals will result in the loss or modification of virtually all semi-natural habitat within the site boundaries. However, the majority of the habitat that will be lost is of low nature conservation importance comprising mostly common species typical of disturbed or cultivated ground. Therefore, the impact magnitude in considered to be: **High: Local**	**Slight**
Mammals (Badger)	No signs of badger activity or setts were recorded on site or within at least 30m of development footprint boundaries. Therefore the impact magnitude of the proposed development is considered to be: **Nil Effect: National**	**Non Significant**
Mammals (Bats)	There are no buildings on site but a number of the mature trees that are proposed were for removal are suitable for bat roosting. Whilst no conclusive signs were found during the baseline site survey, the possibility of bats being present at other times of year cannot be ruled out at this stage. Survey was undertaken on the 29th September 2010, which concluded no roosting on site. The impact magnitude of the proposed development is considered to be:**Nil Effect: European**	**Non Significant**
Amphibians (Great Crested newts)	No ponds are known to occur within 250m of the site boundaries *where there is direct habitat linkage*. Based on current evidence, the impact magnitude of the proposed development is therefore considered to be: **Nil Effect: European**	**Non Significant**
Reptiles (Grass Snake)	No signs of any reptiles were found anywhere on site and their presence is considered to be unlikely in the general area. Therefore the impact magnitude resulting from the proposed development is considered to be: **Nil Effect: National**	**Non Significant**
Breeding Birds (general)	Potential breeding and foraging activity of a number of bird species has been recorded within the trees, shrubs and other rough vegetation within or closely adjacent to the development footprint. Removal, management or modification of vegetation during the bird breeding season (February to July inclusive) is likely to result in disturbance of birds and temporary loss of breeding habitat, however it is noted that	**Severe**

	there are no further tree works to be undertaken within the current proposals. The impact magnitude is therefore considered to be: **Moderate: National**	
Invertebrates	Whilst a small diversity of invertebrates such as hoverflies, butterflies and ground beetles are likely to occur across the site, no rare, uncommon or otherwise important invertebrates were recorded or are considered likely to occur within the development footprint area. The impact magnitude is therefore considered to be: **Nil Effect: Negligible**	**Non Significant**

4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Generally, the habitat and vegetation occurring within the development footprint are of limited nature conservation importance in their own right. Virtually all plant species and habitats recorded in this area are characteristic of disturbed, urbanized and cultivated land, or those of comparatively recent succession. Consequently, it is considered that no specific mitigation is necessary with respect to plants and habitats on the main part of the site.

4.2 Despite this, it should be noted that Japanese Knotweed occurs on site. This is a controlled species and must be removed and dealt with under licence (see details in section 6.0 below)

4.3 In terms of mitigating for animals, the two groups of species of most ecological significance are breeding birds and bats. With respect to breeding birds, since these are protected in general terms during the breeding season, as a legal requirement, no mature vegetation where birds may feasibly be nesting should be removed during the breeding season (February to July inclusive) until or unless these have first been checked by an ecologist. Following completion of site works, to compensate for loss of breeding habitat, proprietary bird boxes should be fitted to new buildings or any retained mature trees.

4.4 With respect to bats, the situation with regard to likely roosting in the mature trees has been assessed, and although activity to the periphery of the site, there is no roosting activity on site. Therefore no further action is required.

4.6 It should also be noted that there are no trees to be felled with the current proposals, however if felling is required, then an appointed ecologist she undertake an assessment to be reasonably satisfied that no bats are currently or have recently been roosting. Should any trees be found to support roosting bats or if there is any suspicion that this may be the case, as a legal requirement the tree or trees in question should be left intact and a licence from Natural England will be required before any works may continue.

5.0 REFERENCES

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6.0 LEGISLATIVE CONSIDERATIONS

Badgers

6.1 Badgers and their setts are protected under the following legislation:

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992
The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
The Protection of Animals Act 1911
The Abandonment of Animals Act 1960
Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

6.2 The primary legislation relevant to badgers in this case is the Protection of Badgers Act and the Wildlife and Countryside Act. With respect to the former, it is an offence to:

- Kill, injure or take a badger, or attempt to do so
- Ill-treat or be cruel to a badger
- Dig for badgers or use badger tongues
- Ring or mark badgers
- Sell or possess a live badger or possess a dead badger
- Send or deliberately allow a dog to enter a badger sett
- Disturb a badger when it is occupying a sett
- Damage or destroy a sett or obstruct access to a sett.

6.3 However, it should be noted that the legislation does not directly protect habitat used for foraging or migration.

6.4 With respect to any proposed development, any of the offences listed above may be permitted providing a licence has been issued by Natural England.

Birds

6.5 All nesting wild birds, with the exception of certain pest species, are protected under Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and barn owls are specially protected under Schedule 1 of the act where it is an offence to:

- Kill, injure or take any wild barn owl
- Take, damage or destroy any wild barn owl nest whilst in use or being established
- Take or destroy a wild barn owl egg
- Have in one's possession a wild barn owl or it's egg
- Disturb any wild barn owl whilst establishing a nest or whilst in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young
- Disturb any dependent young of wild barn owls.

Bats

6.6 All British bat species are listed and protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Schedule 2 of the Habitat Regulations 1994 where it is an offence to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or take (capture) bats
- Deliberately disturb bats (whether or not in a roost)
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to a bat roost
- Possess or transport a bat or any part of a bat unless acquired legally
- Sell, barter or exchange bats or parts of bats.

6.7 Where any bat roosts are affected by a proposed development, a licence from Natural England will be required before any development works can be implemented, *irrespective of whether or not planning consent has been given*. However, where no roosts are likely to be affected, no licence from Natural England is required.

Japanese Knotweed

6.8 Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 / Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 it is an offence to plant or otherwise encourage the growth of Japanese Knotweed. This could include cutting the plant or roots and disturbing surrounding soil if not correctly managed.

6.9 Any Japanese Knotweed polluted soil or plant material that is discarded, intended to be discarded or are required to be discarded is likely to be classed as 'controlled waste' and should be accompanied by appropriate Waste Transfer documentation. This means that any waste material, such as that arising from cutting, mowing or excavation, should be disposed of according to Section 34 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (Duty of Care) Regulations. This places a duty of care on all waste producers to ensure that any wastes are disposed of safely and that a written description of the wastes, and any specific harmful properties, is provided to the site operator.

6.10 The use of equipment which is likely to result in further spread of Japanese Knotweed, such as a flail mower, is strictly advised against.

6.11 The Environmental Protection Act 1990 provides legal support if Japanese Knotweed is causing a nuisance to private property. A private nuisance has been defined as an "unlawful interference with a person's use or enjoyment of land, or some right over, or in connection with it" (Read v Lyons & Co Ltd. 1945).