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GVA

MAYFIELD DEPOT, FAIRFIELD ROAD MANCHESTER

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

November 2013

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your earth our world

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GVA

Mayfield Depot, fairfield Road manchester

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

November 2013

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[redacted]

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Wardell Armstrong LLP was commissioned by GVA to undertake an Ecological Appraisal at a proposed development site at Mayfield Depot, Manchester (Central Grid Reference Number: SJ850 976), hereafter referred to as "the site". This report has been produced with reference to current guidelines for preliminary ecological appraisal (Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM 2012)) and British Standard BS 42020:2013 (BSI 2013) which involves the evaluation of potential ecological constraints based on Extended Phase I (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC 2010)) survey data and background desk study.

1.1.2 The purpose of the appraisal is to satisfy the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), identifying the likely presence of ecological features within or near the application site that could potentially pose a constraint to the proposed development. The following ecological features have been considered:

- Statutory and non-statutory designated conservation areas;
- UK and local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats;
- Legally protected species;
- UK and local BAP species; and
- Invasive species.

1.1.3 This report also seeks to identify any requirement for further specialist survey where the initial assessment cannot be relied upon to adequately determine presence or reliably infer absence of protected species/taxa. Mitigation and enhancement opportunities are also discussed.

1.1.4 Appendix 1 contains the relevant legislation and policy information relating to ecology.

1.2 Background Information

1.2.1 The site occupies the location of the old Mayfield Rail Station which previously served as an overflow station for Manchester Piccadilly. The building has had various uses since closure of the station and is currently being used as a warehouse and distribution depot. The current planning application seeks to apply for a change of use of the building from its current use to a conference and leisure/dance event facility. Such a change would require significant refurbishment.

1.3 Site Context

1.3.1 The site is located in central Manchester and comprises a disused train station building and associated ancillary buildings for the purposes of this report the site is divided into two separate areas

1: The lower internal level. This section comprises the disused rail station /warehouse situated beneath the disused platform. This is divided into three sections by existing walls. In addition a flat roofed annex to the building is connected to the northern aspect of this building which was previously used for offices.

2: The upper platform level. This section comprises the disused rail platform area. All track infrastructures have been removed with the exception of the hard core base material and concrete platforms; the roof of this section has also been removed. This section is displaying regeneration of natural habitat in the form of ephemeral vegetation and immature broadleaved woodland.

1.3.2 The River Irwell runs approximately 35m to the south of the site. This water course is culverted upstream and downstream of the site. Piccadilly train station is situated immediately to the north of the site and existing mixed use development is located to the south, west and east of the site.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk Study

2.1.1 The desktop study was informed by review of existing available information provided by Greater Manchester Ecology Unit for a 1km search radius from the sites central grid reference. Ordnance Survey (OS) and satellite mapping was also used to gain contextual habitat information.

2.1.2 Specific information was sought for:

- Statutory designated sites;
- Locally designated sites;
- Protected and priority species; and
- Local BAP priority species.

2.2 Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

2.2.1 Wardell Armstrong LLP carried out an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the site on 5th November 2013. The survey broadly followed the 'Extended Phase 1' methodology (Institute of Environmental Assessment (IEA), 1995 and JNCC 2010). Each of the main habitats were classified according to the relevant criteria including vegetation composition.

2.2.2 In addition to the mapping and description of habitats, incidental observations of protected and/or BAP priority species and the potential for such species to occur on site (and in the surrounding landscape where relevant) were also noted.

2.2.3 Specific habitat features are mapped on Drawing LE12107/001 & 002 with appropriate reference numbers identifying buildings and trees of particular note

2.3 Bat Roost Potential (BRP)

2.3.1 In addition to the above in order to determine the potential for bats to use buildings on site a Bat Roost Potential (BRP) assessment was undertaken. Such an assessment was undertaken in accordance 'Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines 2nd Edition, BCT (2012) and involved external and internal (where possible and applicable) searches of the buildings to identify potential access points, roost features and bat field signs such as staining, droppings and feeding remains. An internal inspection was undertaken for signs of bats as described above, as well as the presence of live or dead bats.

2.4 Nomenclature

2.4.1 Vascular plant names follow '*New Flora of the British Isles'* (Stace 1997) with vernacular names as provided in the Botanical Society of the British Isles website (BSBI, 2013). All other flora and fauna names follow those on the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Gateway (NBN, 2013). The common and scientific name of species/taxa is provided (if available) when first mentioned in the text, with only the vernacular name referred to thereafter.

2.5 Assessment Limitations

2.5.1 Ecological surveys are limited by factors that affect the presence of plants and animals such as time of year, weather, migration patterns and behaviour. The survey was undertaken in November and therefore the survey data may not be representative of other times of year.

2.5.2 The absence of desk study records cannot be relied upon to reliably infer absence of a species/habitat. Often, the absence of records is a result of under-recording within the given search area.

2.5.3 The above constraints are not considered likely to have significantly affected the conclusions drawn within this report.

2.6 Quality Assurance & Environmental Management

2.6.1 All Ecologists employed by Wardell Armstrong are members of CIEEM, and are bound by its code of professional conduct. All surveys and assessments have been undertaken with reference to the recommendations given in BS 42020.

3 RESULTS AND EVALUATION

3.1 Statutory and Non- Statutory Designated Sites

3.1.1 There are no statutory designated sites within 1km of the site.

3.1.2 Table 1 identifies qualifying UK BAP priority and Manchester Biodiversity Project (BP) HAP within 1km of the site.

Table 1 Summary of UK BAP and Manchester BP HAP within 1km search area.

Habitat type	BAP listing	Approximate distance and direction from the site (m)	Potential Constraint?
Woodland habitat	UK BAP priority habitat (Lowland wood-pasture and parkland) Manchester Biodiversity Project Habitat Action Plan (HAP)	2 sites located 465m SE & 605m E of the site.	No – The site lies wholly outside these woodland areas. The site is isolated from woodland areas by existing urban development and infrastructure.

3.2 Habitats

3.2.1 All habitats within the survey area are described in Table 2, below, together with an indication of their BAP status, according to the definitions given in *UK BAP Priority Habitat Descriptions* (Anon 2008 updated 2010) and within the Manchester Biodiversity Project. The table also provides an evaluation of their potential to constrain development, indicated with bold text.

3.2.2 The location and extent of habitats is shown on Drawing LE12107/001 & 002, Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Results.

3.2.3 Photographic plates are displayed in appendix 2.

Table 2: Habitat Description and Evaluation

Phase 1 Habitats	UK BAP	LBAP	Potential Constraint?
Broadleaved –semi natural woodland (photographic plate1) A narrow strip of broadleaved semi-natural woodland was recorded along the southern boundary of the upper platform level. Tree species were dominated by silver birch *Betula pendula* with additional presence of common hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* , elder *Sambucus nigra*, and goat willow *Salix caprea . Ground flora was dominated by bramble Rubus fruticosus, common nettle Urtica dioica, false oat-grass Arrhenatherum elatius, common hawkbit Leontodon hispidus, Yorkshire-fog Holcus lanatus and red fescue Festuca rubra.*	×	×	No – floral species recorded are common and widespread throughout lowland habitats in UK. Works within such habitats can be undertaken without the risk of significantly affecting the conservation status of this habitat type.
Ephemeral vegetation (photographic plate 1) Ephemeral vegetation was recorded growing over hardcore material were old rail tracks were located on the upper platform level. Vegetation was sparse but included common hawkbit, mouse ear hawkweed *Hieracium pilosella*, common ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*, bramble, red fescue, false oat-grass, and Yorkshire-fog.	×	×	No - floral species recorded are common and widespread throughout lowland habitats in UK. Works within such habitats can be undertaken without the risk of significantly affecting the conservation status of this habitat type.

3.3 Species

3.3.1 The presence/potential presence of protected and/or invasive species recorded during site survey or within the desk based study are displayed within table 3 along with an assessment of potential constraints such species could have to the proposed works on site.

3.3.2 The detailed Bat Roost potential assessment is presented table 4.

Table 3: Protected Species Evaluation

Species/taxa	**Source**	**Status**[1]	**Supporting Habitat**	**Potential Constraint?**	**Further surveys required**
Bats	Desk based study	EPS, WCA,BAP,	The River Medlock is situated approximately 35m to the south of the site. This water course is considered likely to provide a wildlife corridor for commuting bats. In addition the trees located on the upper platform level offer potential foraging habitat for bat species. The building on site is also considered likely to support roosting bats (see table 4).	Yes – Bat droppings were recorded within the building indicating presence of a bat roost (see table 4). Works have the potential to disturb roosting bats.	Yes – Activity surveys required to determine species and usage of roost.
Nesting birds	Site survey	WCA	Habitats present within the upper platform level have the potential to provide nesting habitat for a number of bid species, in addition The building interior has the potential to support nesting feral pigeon.	Yes – Works undertaken during the breeding season have the potential to disturb nesting birds.	Yes – Pre-works nesting bird check.
Black redstart		WCA, LBAP	The mix of habitat types located within the upper platform level appear suitable to support foraging and breeding black redstart.	Yes – Works undertaken during the breeding season have the potential to disturb nesting black redstart.	Yes – Surveys to determine use of the platform area by this species should be undertaken prior to carrying out any site clearance works.

[1] EPS – European Protected Species, WCA – Wildlife and Countryside Act, A1 – Annex 1 (Birds Directive),BA – Protection of Badgers Act, BAP – Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species

Table 4: Bat Roost potential Assessment

Building section	Description	Bat Roost Potential
1	A long narrow open room with brick walls and a curved brick lined ceiling. All brickwork appeared well pointed in this area with no obvious potential roost locations. No obvious external access to this section from outside; although open access was available via internal doorways connecting to other areas of the building.	High – Droppings recorded under potential roost area and within section 3.
2	A large open building with high ceilings (approx 4m from ground level), walls within this section were moderately well pointed with occasional gaps within the brickwork. Numerous potential access points were recorded along the southern wall in the form of open window areas. The ceiling is brick lined and also moderately well pointed with occasional gaps and open access to the upper level via a semi enclosed ramp. Five bat droppings were recorded immediately beneath a gap in the ceiling brickwork located within 10m of an open window area. Access to sections 1 & 3 was available in the form of open doorways.	
3	A large open building with high ceilings (approx 4m from ground level), walls within this section were moderately well pointed with occasional gaps within the brickwork. Numerous access points were recorded along the southern wall in the form of open window areas. The ceiling is brick lined and also moderately well pointed with occasional gaps. Scattered bat droppings were recorded in close proximity to the doorway leading to section 2 indicating that foraging activity takes place in this section.	
4	A single storey brick built annex to the main building previously used as offices. Walls of this building were well pointed and offered no potential access to the wall cavity. This section had a flat roof which was in severe need of repair as indicated by significant leakage areas where rain was entering the building (and had done for some time) through the roof.	

4 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Potential Constraints

4.1.1 The following species (receptors) have been evaluated as being potential ecological constraints:

- Bats
- Black redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*
- Nesting birds (general).

4.1.2 Potential effects, requirements for further survey, and mitigation are discussed below for each of the identified potential constraints.

Bats

4.1.3 The results of the above surveys indicate that the interior of Mayfield Depot is highly likely to support roosting bats. Given the low numbers of field signs recorded in proximity to the roost feature it is considered likely that this roost may be used by low numbers of non breeding females or males intermittently throughout the summer. In order to identify what species of bat uses this building for roosting purposes and to confirm the status of the roost feature it will be necessary to undertake a series of activity surveys in accordance with Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines 2nd Edition, BCT (2012). Such surveys would involve a minimum of 3 dusk emergence/dawn re-entry surveys undertaken during the optimum time of year (May – September). The results of the activity surveys would be used to inform a European Protected Species Licence application which would be required prior to undertaking works which may significantly affect bats using this roost.

4.1.4 In addition to the above it is considered that the building's interior has the potential to form a winter hibernation roost for bats. Due to the nature of the high ceilings associated with this derelict building it was not considered possible to undertake further investigation in relation to hibernating bats. However all construction/demolition works within this site should aim to avoid the hibernation period (November - February) in order to avoid disturbing hibernating bats.

4.1.5 The above survey results are valid for 12 months, if the works do not commence within 12 months of the date of these surveys then update surveys may be required.

4.2 Mitigation and Licensing

Licensing

Should the above surveys confirm the presence of a bat roost then a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) will be required in order to carry out refurbishment works within the building interior. This will ensure compliance with the relevant protective legislation pursuant to bats and their roosts.

Mitigation

4.2.1 The following provisions for bats are recommended:

- Installation of four wall mounted or pole mounted 'woodcrete' bat boxes within the upper platform level of the site, to provide roosting opportunities prior to and during refurbishment works;
- Two in-built 'woodcrete' bat boxes to be located within a suitable area on external walls (preferably on upper platform level where effect of noise are less likely to have an effect on roost usage). Exact locations of the bat boxes would be confirmed during discussions with the client and a Natural England Bat Licensed ecologist;
- Confirmed roost access points and parts of the building most likely to support roosting bats are removed under the supervision of a Natural England bat licensed ecologist. Supervised demolition would be further detailed within the EPSL application documents.

4.2.2 The above mitigation recommendations are subject to agreement with the LPA when considering the planning application for this site and Natural England when applying for the EPSL.

Timing

4.2.3 Natural England have a minimum statutory processing period of 30 working days to assess EPSL applications, this processing period (along with contingency for any necessary re-submissions) should be considered when designing a works schedule for this project.

Birds

4.2.4 Black redstart

4.2.5 Although no black redstart were recorded during the survey it should be noted that habitats recorded on the upper platform level of the site have the potential to provide suitable foraging and nesting habitat for this species. It should also be noted that the site borders the black redstart priority area identified by the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Project. This area highlights the zone within Manchester where black redstarts have been recorded within the last 5 years. Based on habitat suitability within the site and location in relation to the priority area it is considered possible that black redstart may use the upper platform level of the site for foraging and breeding.

4.2.6 Black redstarts are protected under schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), 'amber' listed Birds of Conservation Concern and a species action plan has been prepared by the Manchester Biodiversity Partnership which indicates only 2 -3 pairs breed in Manchester. It is also noted that the species is considered to be in decline within Manchester due to redevelopment and loss of brownfield sites which support this species. It is therefore recommended that the habitats recorded within the upper platform area on site are preserved in order to maintain potential habitat for this species. In the event that works are likely to adversely affect suitable black redstart habitat then it is recommended that a detailed survey is carried out at the appropriate time of year (April – July). Should black redstart be recorded then appropriate mitigation would need to be designed and implemented as part of the change of use refurbishment works.

Nesting Birds

4.2.7 In addition, habitats on the upper platform level have the potential to form nesting habitat for a number of other bird species (the lower level is also likely o provide nesting habitat for feral pigeon). It is therefore recommended that any vegetation clearance or internal works that could disturb nesting birds are undertaken outside of the usual bird breeding season (normally taken to be March – September). If such timescales cannot be accommodated, it is recommended that a check for the presence of active nests, and nesting birds should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist 24hours prior to works commencing. Any active nests should be

identified and protected subject to the relevant legal provisions until the nesting attempt is complete.

5 REFERENCES

5.1.1 British Standards Institute (2013) Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development.

5.1.2 Hundt (2012). Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines (2nd Edition). Bat Conservation Trust: London.

5.1.3 Institute of Environmental Assessment, (1995) *Guidelines for Baseline Ecological Assessment*.

5.1.4 Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management. (2012). *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*.

5.1.5 Joint Nature Conservation Committee, *Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey: A technique for environmental audit* (2007), English Field Unit, Nature Conservancy Council.

5.1.6 Stace. C. A, '*New Flora of the British Isles'* (1997), Cambridge University Press.

APPENDIX 1 – LEGISLATION AND POLICY SUMMARY

Appendix 1 – Legislation and Policy Summary

Legislation for Species

Species	Legal Status
European Legislation	
Bats, Dormouse, Otter, Wild Cat, Great Crested Newt, Natterjack Toad, Sand Lizard, Smooth Snake, Large Blue Butterfly	These animals and their breeding sites or resting places are protected under Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (and as amended), which makes it illegal to: • Deliberately capture, injure or kill any such animal or to deliberately take or destroy their eggs; • Deliberately disturb[2] such an animal; and • Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal. European Protected Species (EPS) licenses can be granted by Natural England in respect of development to permit activities that would otherwise be unlawful under the Conservation Regulations, providing that the following 3 tests (set out in the EC Habitats Directive) are passed, namely: • The development is for reasons of overriding public interest; • There is no satisfactory alternative; and • The favourable conservation status of the species concerned will be maintained and/or enhanced. Under Regulation 9(5) of the Conservation Regulations, Planning Authorities have a duty to 'have regard to the requirements of the EC Habitats Directive' i.e. LPA's must consider the above 3 'tests' when determining whether Planning Permission should be granted for developments likely to cause an offence under the Conservation Regulations.
Domestic (UK) Legislations	
Bats, Dormouse, Great Crested Newt, Heath Fritillary, High Brown Fritillary, Large Blue, Marsh Fritillary, Natterjack	These animals receive full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended), which makes it illegal (subject to certain exceptions) to:

[2] Under the Conservation Regulations, disturbance of protected animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely to: (i) impair their ability to survive, breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young or to hibernate or migrate; (ii) significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species in question.

Species	Legal Status
Toad, Pine Martin, Otter, Red Squirrel, Sand Lizard, Smooth Snake, Swallowtail, Water Vole, Wildcat	• Intentionally kill, injure or take any such animal; • Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct any place used for shelter or protection by any such animal; and • Intentionally or recklessly disturb such animals while they occupy a place used for shelter or protection.
Nesting Birds	All wild birds (as defined by the act) are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended), which makes it illegal (subject to exceptions) to: • Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird; • Take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or eggs of any wild bird.
WCA Schedule 1 listed Birds	Additional protection is provided to birds listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended). In addition to the offences detailed above relating to all wild birds, it is illegal to: • Intentionally or recklessly disturb any bird listed on Schedule 1, or their dependent young while nesting.

Policy Summary

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act imposes a legal duty on Planning Authorities to 'have regard' to the conservation of biodiversity when considering planning applications.

Section 41 of the NERC Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of species and habitats of principal importance for conserving biodiversity in the UK. Such Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Habitats and Species (2007) do not offer the species any specific protection but help to highlight the species importance at a national level. This list is used by Local Planning Authorities to identify the species and habitats that should be afforded priority when applying the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The NPPF underpins the Government's planning policies for England and how these are to be applied. The central theme of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This presumption does not apply where development requiring Appropriate

Assessment under the Birds or Habitats Directives is being considered, planned or determined.

The NPPF states:

> *'When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles:*
>
> - *if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;*
> - *proposed development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) likely to have an adverse effect on a SSSI (either individually or in combination with other developments) should not normally be permitted. Where an adverse effect on the site's notified special interest features is likely, an exception should only be made where the benefits of the development, at this site, clearly outweigh both the impacts that it is likely to have on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest and any broader impacts on the national network of SSSIs;*
> - *development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be permitted;*
> - *opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged;*
> - *planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss; and*
> - *the following wildlife sites should be given the same protection as European sites: potential Special Protection Areas (SPA) and possible Special Areas of Conservation (SAC); listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on European sites, potential SPAs, possible SACs, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.'*

The NPPF requires the Planning Authority to have a responsibility to promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations, linked to national and local targets, and identify suitable indicators for monitoring biodiversity in the plan. In addition, the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

APPENDIX 2 – PHOTOGRAPHIC PLATES



Plate 1. Showing ephemeral vegetation and woodland habitat recorded on the upper platform level.

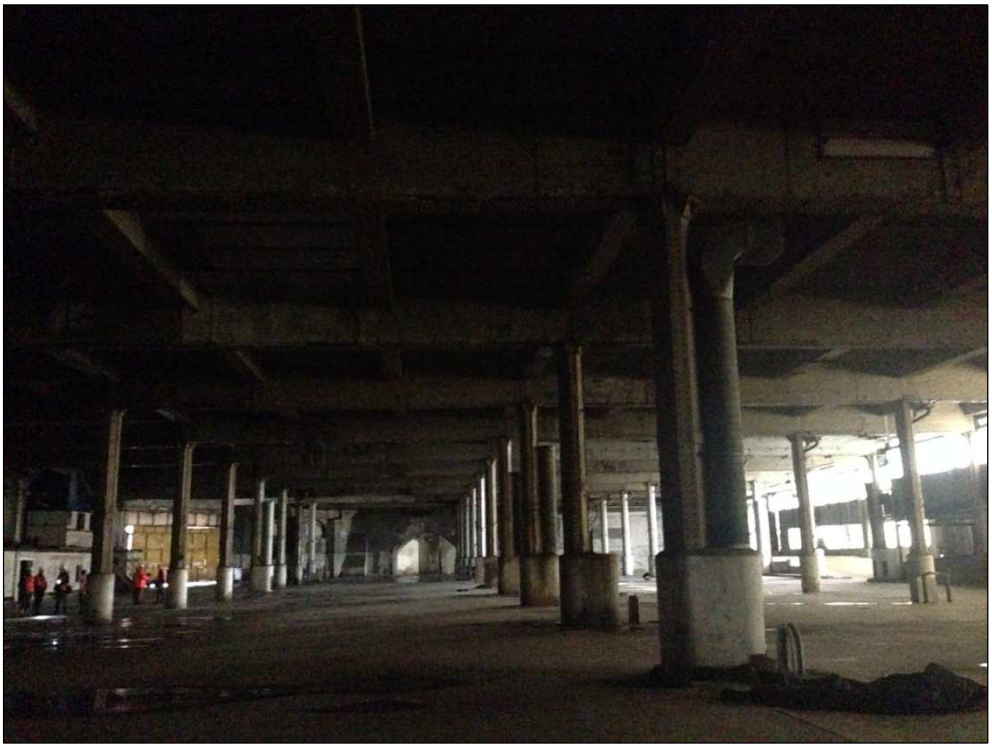

Plate 2. Showing interior of section 2 of lower internal level.



Plate 3. Showing potential roost location in section 2.



Plate 4. Showing bat dropping recorded beneath potential roost location in section 2.

DRAWINGS

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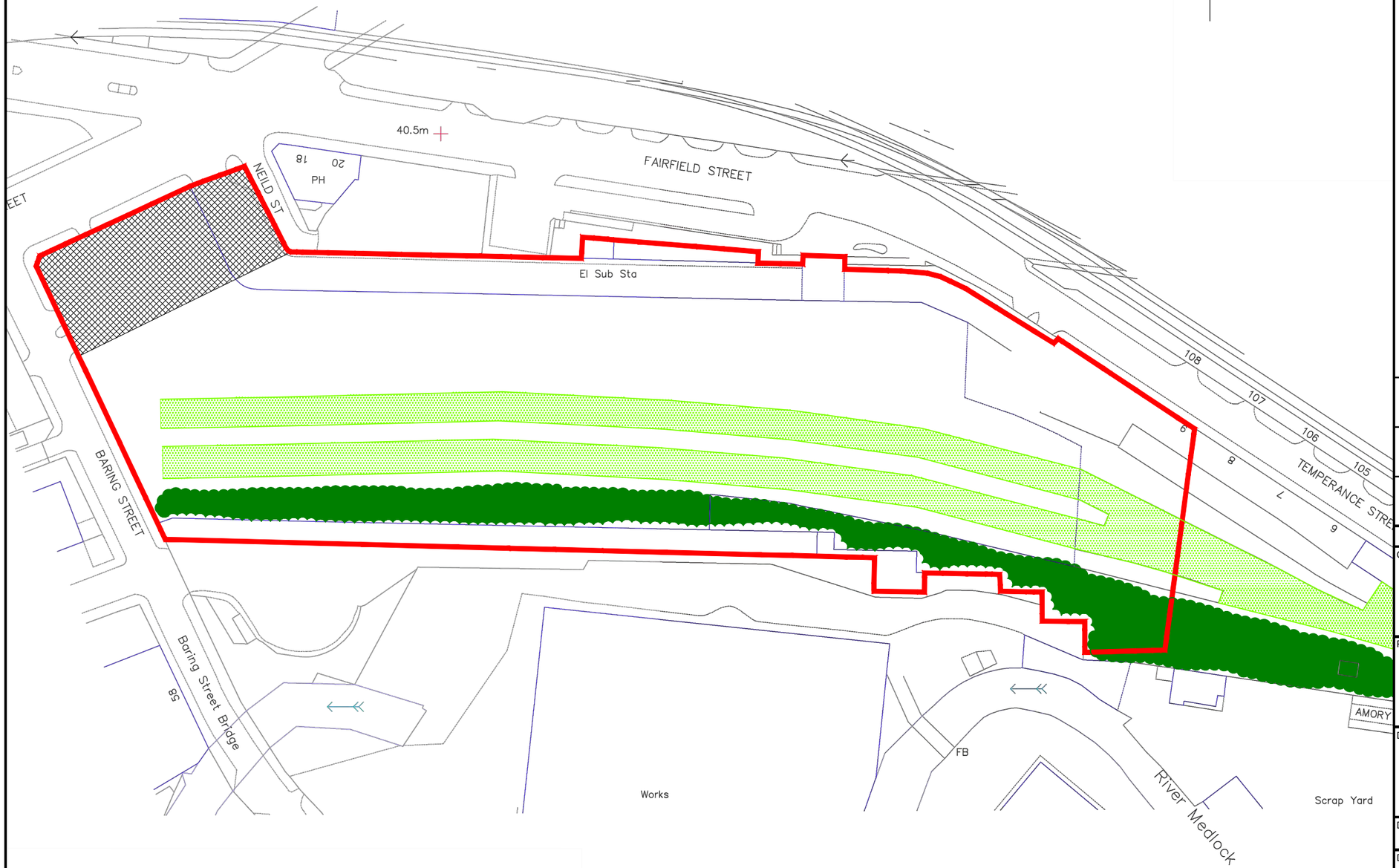
DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING | A3

REFERENCE

- SITE BOUNDARY
- NO ACCESS
- EPHEMERAL VEGETATION
- BROADLEAVED SEMI-NATURAL WOODLAND

NOTE

BASE PLAN PROVIDED BY THE CLIENT.



REVISION	DETAILS	DATE	DRAWN	CHK'D	APP'D

CLIENT

GVA

PROJECT

Mayfield Depot
Fairfield Street, Manchester
Preliminary Ecological Assessment

Preliminary

DRAWING TITLE

Upper Platform Level
PEA Mapping

DRG No.	SCALE	DATE
LE12107-001	1:1000 @ A3	14/11/13

DRAWN BY	CHECKED BY	APPROVED BY
JV		

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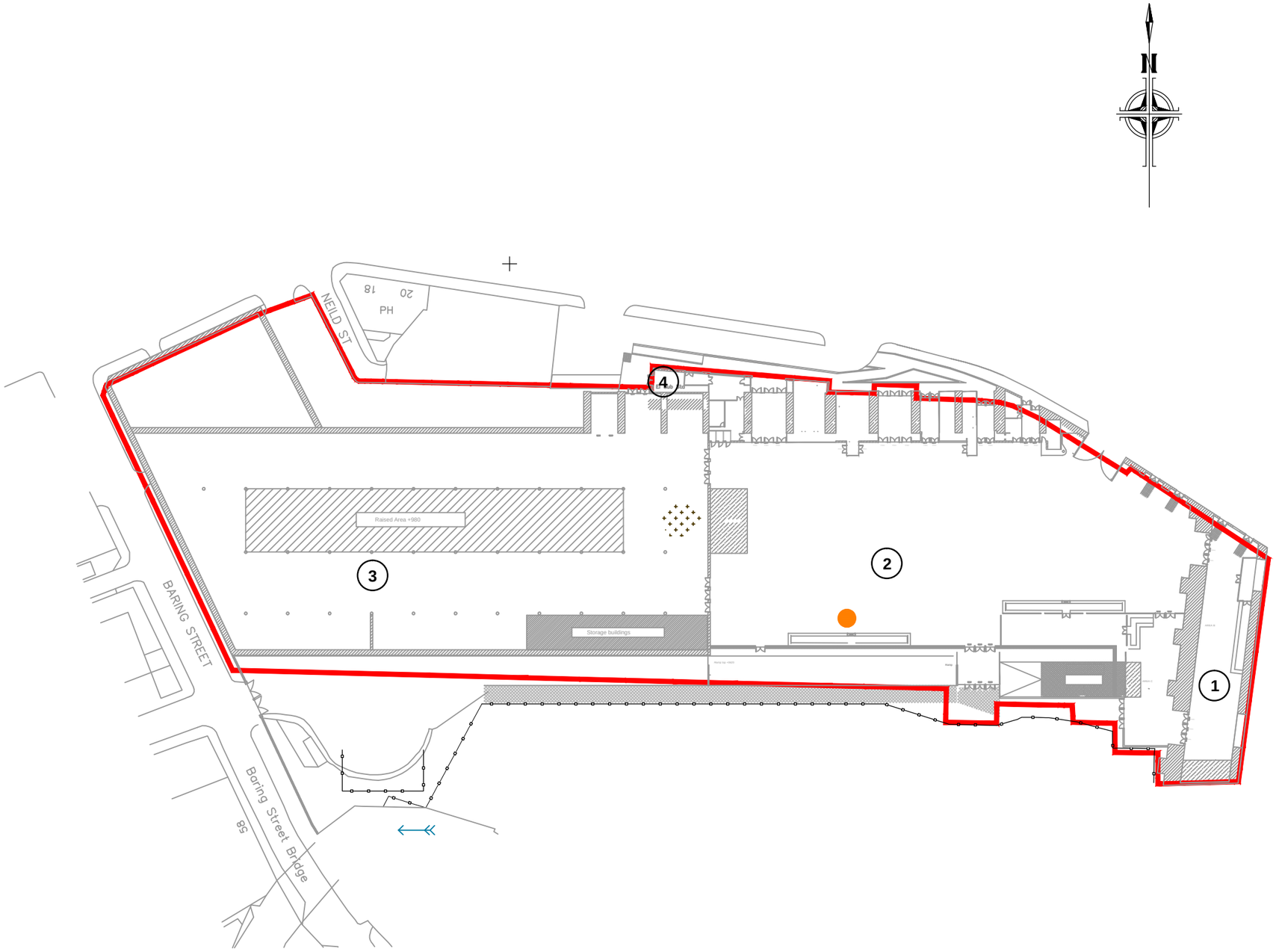

DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING | A3

REFERENCE

- SITE BOUNDARY
- POTENTIAL ROOST LOCATION AND DROPPINGS
- SCATTERED DROPPINGS
- 1 SECTION NUMBER

NOTE

BASE PLAN PROVIDED BY THE CLIENT.

REVISION	DETAILS	DATE	DRAWN	CHK'D	APP'D

CLIENT

GVA

Preliminary

PROJECT

Mayfield Depot
Fairfield Street, Manchester
Preliminary Ecological Assessment

DRAWING TITLE

Lower Internal Level
PEA Mapping

DRG No.	SCALE	DATE
LE12107-002	1:1000 @ A3	14/11/13
DRAWN BY: JV	CHECKED BY:	APPROVED BY:

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