

UoM Squirrels Bar

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal



Stantec UK Limited

Prepared for:
University of Manchester

10/04/2025

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Project/File:
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UoM Squirrels Bar

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UoM Squirrels Bar

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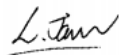
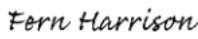
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Executive Summary

Stantec UK Ltd was commissioned by the University of Manchester to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for a proposed development at Fallowfield, Manchester. The appraisal comprised of a desk study to identify ecological constraints to the proposals; and to outline further surveys and likely avoidance, mitigation and enhancement requirements during the construction phase of the development.

Proposals are for the relocation of the University of Manchester Squirrels Bar which will involve the construction of a single-storey building on area of predominantly hard-standing, in Fallowfield, Manchester.

There were two statutory designated sites within 10 km of the Site. One Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Highfield Country Park LNR, was identified within the 2 km search area. One European designated Special Area of Conservation (SACs), Rochdale Canal SAC, was identified within 10 km of the Site.

The Site lies within the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for several SSSIs all in excess of 2km from the Site. These include Rochdale Canal SSSI, Huddersfield Narrow Canal SSSI and Hollinwood Branch SSSI which is the closest c. 7.2km north-east of the Site. However, due to the type of development (commercial), the small scale and localised nature of the planned works and the lack of hydrological connectivity, consultation with Natural England is not required. The development will have a negligible impact on SSSIs.

There were no records of granted European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences for bats highlighted within 2 km of the Site or for Great Crested Newt (GCN) within 500 m of the Site. A pond is present c. 300 m north-west of the Site however, habitat connectivity is limited with the A6010 and built environs likely a barrier to GCN dispersal.

There are no Habitats of Principal Importance (HPIs) present on the Site, several parcels of HPI deciduous woodland are present within 2 km of the Site, with the closest c. 20 m south-west of the Site, extending to the south. A parcel of HPI traditional orchard is also present c. 590 m west of the Site. The development will have a negligible impact on these surrounding HPIs.

There are no watercourses present at the Site, however there are several brooks and ditches within the 2 km search area, the closest being Gore Brook c. 570m north of the Site. The closest river to the Site is the River Mersey c. 4 km south-east of the Site however there is no direct hydrological connectivity to these watercourses from the Site. The development will have a negligible impact on these habitats.

Based on a review of aerial imagery, habitats within the Site were of overall low intrinsic ecological value, predominantly consisting of modified grassland with scattered trees and hardstanding.



Recommended further surveys:

- A pre-works nesting bird check if any vegetation clearance is carried out within the nesting bird season (March to September inclusive).

Mitigation measures for the Proposed Project may include the following:

- Avoidance of working at night or implementation of a bat-sensitive lighting scheme if this is not possible.



Acronyms / Abbreviations

Acronym / Abbreviation	Full Name
UKHab	UK Habitat Classification
PEA	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
HPI	Habitat of Principal Importance
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SPA	Special Protection Area
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
PRF	Potential Roost Feature
GLTA	Ground Level Tree Assessment
UoM	University of Manchester
LPA	Local Planning Authority
SBI	Site of Biological Interest
NERC	Natural Environment and Rural Communities
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
IRZ	Impact Risk Zone



1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

Stantec UK Ltd was commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in connection with the relocation of the University of Manchester property “Squirrels Bar” in Fallowfield, Manchester hereafter referred to as the ‘Site’ (**Appendix A**). The Site is located at an approximate central Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference of SJ 85995 94165.

1.2 Project Context

1.2.1.1 Site Location

The Site is located within Fallowfield, Greater Manchester, approximately 4.5 km south-east of Manchester city centre and 5.6 km north-west of Stockport town. The Site is approximately 0.12 ha in size and lies within the grounds of The Armitage Sports Centre of the University of Manchester (UoM). Immediately surrounding the Site included sports pitches directly to the south and east, Firs Botanical Grounds of UoM to the west and student accommodation buildings to the north. The wider environment comprised predominantly of residential properties with public urban parks to the north-east. The location of the Site is shown on Figure 1.

1.2.1.2 Proposed Development

The Site currently comprises a hard standing car park area for The Armitage Sports Centre of the UoM with a parcel of grassland with scattered trees in the western area of the Site. The proposed development consists of the construction of a single-storey building at the Site. The outline proposed development plans are detailed in **Appendix A** – Figure 2.

1.3 Purpose of the PEA

The PEA is required to determine any potential ecological constraints and opportunities that may influence the proposed development. It is intended as a tool to inform the development design and to identify where further study is needed to inform an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) should this be required. The Site boundary is shown on **Appendix A1**. This appraisal presents a summary of ecological features which are, or have the potential to be, ecological constraints. It provides outline recommendations for avoidance, mitigation, and enhancement measures which are likely to be required. A summary of the legislation in respect of any potential protected/notable species (refer to **Appendix D**).

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of this PEA report are to provide:

- Outline survey methodologies with reference to relevant survey guidance;
- A description of the ecological baseline, identifying any likely ecological constraints to the future development of the Site;



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- Set-out the requirement for further ecological surveys to inform an assessment of the Proposed Development impacts; and,
- Identify any opportunities for ecological mitigation or enhancements that should be considered to enable legal and policy compliance of future development.



2 Methodology

2.1 Overview

This section sets out the methodology used to inform the PEA of the Site, including a desk study, UK Habitat (UKHab) Classification survey (UK Hab Ltd. 2023) and an assessment of the potential of the habitats to support protected and notable species was undertaken, including a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) and Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) for potential bat roost features. The methods for the PEA follow the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Details of survey limitations and survey personnel are also included.

2.2 Study Area

The study area for the field survey comprised the footprint of the Site as shown on Figure 1. For the desk study, the study area was extended up to 500 m for a search of waterbodies, up to 2 km for protected and notable habitats and species, up to 2 km for locally and nationally designated sites for nature conservation and up to 10 km for European / internationally designated sites for nature conservation.

2.3 Desk Study

A desk study was completed for the Site in March 2024. The desk study included a review of ecological baseline information available in the public domain.

Information relating to statutory designated areas for nature conservation, notable habitats (including Habitats of Principal Importance) and consented European Protected Species licence applications and licence return data was obtained using the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website. A search of ponds / waterbodies from within 500 m of the Site was also undertaken using freely available OS mapping (1: 25,000).



2.4 UK Hab Survey

A UKHab walkover of the Site was carried out and primary habitat types were identified to at least Level 3, with effort made to classify them to Level 4 or 5 where possible to do so (i.e. where sufficient characteristics or plant species could be identified to meet the relevant definitions) (UKHab Ltd, 2023). The current management of habitats and associated features were noted and assigned UKHab secondary codes where relevant.

Plant species recorded within each habitat type were assessed against the DAFOR scale where the coverage or abundance of a species within a habitat type or habitat compartment is assigned a classification as follows:

- Dominant - >75% coverage
- Abundant - 51 - 75% coverage
- Frequent - 26 - 50% coverage
- Occasional - 11 - 25% coverage
- Rare - 1 - 10% coverage

The survey was extended to include an assessment of the potential of the Site to support protected or notable species and to gather information on any likely ecological constraints or opportunities associated with the development of the Site.

Habitats and vegetation types present inside the Site were digitally mapped in the field using Field Maps and notable, rare or scarce plant species, including other features of ecological interest such as invasive non-native species and evidence of or features with suitability to support protected and notable species, were assigned a Target Note (TN).

The value and sensitivity of ecological features present in the Site was determined based on the guidance given in 'Guidelines on Ecological Impact Assessment' (CIEEM, 2024). Individual ecological receptors (habitats and species) that could be affected by the proposed Site development were assigned levels of importance for nature conservation. The highest level is International, then decreasing in order of importance through UK, national, regional, county, local, and lastly site level within the zone of influence (as set out in Section 2.2).

2.5 Protected and Notable Species

Any evidence and/or incidental observations of protected species observed during the UKHab survey were recorded. An assessment of the suitability of the habitats present to support protected and notable species was also undertaken, with the assessment methodology for each species/species group detailed below. Legislation relating to all habitats and species is summarised in **Appendix D** and with full details available to review at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk>.

2.5.1 Amphibians

The Site was assessed with regards to its potential to support GCN and common amphibians during their terrestrial and aquatic life stages, including a desk-based search of OS mapping and aerial imagery for waterbodies and ditches within 500 m of the Site which are not separated from the Site by a significant barrier to amphibian dispersal i.e. major roads, built environs, large rivers.



2.5.1.1 GCN Risk Zones

Natural England's GCN Risk Zone dataset was reviewed in order to understand the potential presence of GCN in the local area and the likelihood of the species being associated with the Site. This dataset identifies areas where the likely distribution of GCN has been categorised into district zones relating to GCN occurrence and the level of impact development is likely to have on GCN. Zones are split into Red, Amber and Green and are described as follows:

- Red zone – contains key populations of GCN, which are important on a regional, national or international scale and include designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest for GCN;
- Amber zone – contains main population centres for GCN and comprise important connecting habitat that aids natural dispersal; and,
- Green zone – contains sparsely distributed GCN and are less likely to contain important pathways of connecting habitat for this species.

2.5.2 Badger

Site habitats were assessed for their suitability to support, including the presence of evidence of activity by, badger *Meles meles*. The survey followed standard survey methodology detailed in 'Surveying Badgers' (Harris et al., 1989) and the approach as described in 'The History, distribution, status and habitat requirements of the badger in Britain' (JNCC, 1990). This included surveying for badger setts, latrine/dung pits, foraging marks, feeding signs (e.g. snuffle holes), footprints, badger hairs and pathways located at and within 30 m of the Site, where access is possible. When searching for potential sett presence, areas with suitable topography and/or vegetation for sett building were the focus, along with habitats favoured for foraging such as woodland, hedgerows and grassland, where present.

2.5.3 Bats

2.5.3.1 Ground Level Tree Assessment

A GLTA (where access was possible and deemed safe) was also undertaken, with the survey carried out in accordance with Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023). Binoculars were used to identify Potential Roost Features (PRFs) on trees at the Site.

A note was made of any features (such as cracks, holes, crevices, or ivy) that may provide suitable roosting opportunities for bats. Each tree was assessed according to the criteria in Table 2.1. Only trees supporting potential roosting features (PRFs) were recorded and their locations mapped. Photographs if relevant are provided in **Appendix C**.

Table 2.1 Guidelines for categorising the potential suitability of trees/PRFs on a proposed development site for bats, to be applied using professional judgement (Collins, 2023).

Bat Roost Potential Level	Description
None	Either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any.
FAR	Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree.
PRF-I	PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lacking suitable surrounding habitats.
PRF-M	PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.



2.5.3.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment

Buildings and structures were assessed for PRFs via an external PRA. The survey was followed the guidance set out in current best practice guidance (Collins, 2023). The survey was carried out from the ground using binoculars and a high-powered torch as necessary. Any suitable PRFs (such as cracks, holes or crevices) that may provide suitable roosting opportunities for bats were recorded. Habitats at the Site were also assessed for their suitability to support foraging and commuting bats. The assessments were conducted in accordance with the criteria in Table 2.2 below, which is adapted from good practice guidelines (Colins, 2023).

Table 2.2 Criteria for potential suitability for roosting bats and, foraging and commuting bats

Potential Suitability	Roosting Habitat Structure	Potential Flight Paths and Foraging Habitats
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features.	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flightpaths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter and protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site but could be used by individual hibernating bats).	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flightpaths such as gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which establishes after presence is confirmed).	Continuous habitat connected to wider landscape that could be used for flightpaths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens.
High	A structure 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 period due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flightpaths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses, and grazed parkland. Site is close and well connected to known roosts.



2.5.4 Birds

In 2021 a re-assessment of Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) was published by Stanbury et al. (2021) defining rare and threatened bird species on two lists (Red and Amber) which describe the level of threat to each species of concern.

'Red' is the highest conservation priority, with species needing urgent action due to either a historical decline in breeding population, severe (>50%) decline in breeding or non-breeding population, or severe decline in breeding range over 50 years or more. 'Amber' is the next most critical group, with species with this status due to either recovery from red list criterion, being classed as rare breeders in the UK, moderate (>25%) decline in breeding or non-breeding population or moderate decline in breeding range over 25 years or more. These categories are followed by 'Green', indicating that the species are relatively unthreatened.

Habitats at the Site were assessed for their potential value to breeding and wintering/passage birds.

2.5.5 Invertebrates

Site habitats were assessed for their suitability to support protected and notable invertebrates, to determine whether further targeted survey is required. Any habitat features such as sheltered sunny areas, habitat mosaics, habitat interfaces etc. and suitable habitat recorded, including aquatic habitat.

2.5.6 Otter and Water vole

A review of OS mapping and aerial imagery for the potential presence of watercourses at, and within 50 m of the Site which are not separated from the Site by a significant barrier to dispersal for riparian species, was undertaken. Watercourses and ditches located at and within 50 m of the Site were subject to an assessment of their suitability for otter *Lutra lutra* and water vole *Arvicola amphibius*, where they could be accessed at the time of the survey.

2.5.7 Reptiles

Habitats on the Site were assessed for their suitability to support basking, foraging, sheltering and hibernating reptiles, notably with reference to their connectivity with other areas of suitable habitat within the wider landscape.

2.5.8 White-clawed crayfish

A review of OS mapping and aerial imagery for the potential presence of watercourses at, and within 50 m of the Site which are not separated from the Site by a significant barrier to dispersal for white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* was undertaken. Watercourses located at and within 50 m of the Site were subject to an assessment of their suitability for white-clawed crayfish including a suitable substrate, any visible pollution etc., where they could be accessed at the time of the survey.

2.5.9 Other Species of Principal Importance

Habitats at and within 50 m of the Site were assessed for their potential to support any other mammal species including brown hare *Lepus europaeus*, harvest mouse *Micromys minutus*, hedgehog



Erinaceus europaeus, mountain hare *Lepus timidus*, pine marten *Martes martes*, polecat *Mustela putorius*, and red squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris*.

2.5.10 Invasive Non-Native Species

During the UKHab survey any evidence of Invasive Non-Native Species, plants and fauna, were recorded and target noted.

2.6 Survey Dates, Conditions and Personnel

The UKHab survey, baseline BNG assessment and PRA were undertaken on 8th April 2025 by two suitably qualified professional ecologists. The lead ecologist has 2 years of experience and both ecologists involved in the surveys are associated with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Weather on-site was sunny and dry at the time of survey with no cloud coverage and approximately 17°C.

2.7 Limitations

A UKHab survey is intended to provide a rapid assessment of habitats present within a Site and is not intended to replace detailed vegetation or targeted protected species surveys, where deemed necessary.

Species lists are intended to illustrate the general species richness of a particular area and draw attention to any species that may be considered uncommon or unusual. Species may have been missed on the basis of seasonal flowering periods. Further survey to fully assess botanical value is recommended in Section 4 of this PEA, where relevant.

It should be noted that desk studies do not provide an exhaustive list of all ecological information for any area and so cannot be relied on as the only source of information for any study area in question. They are, however, very useful in combination with field-based surveys to identify features of nature conservation interest that might be associated with a site. Given the small size of the site, its urban location, desk study records have not been obtained from the local record centre, and given our detailed assessment of the site habitats, this is not a significant constraint.

During the site visit, the only limitation was that no access was available to the internal of the building located off-site, directly north of the Site that has potential to support roosting bats.

2.8 Report Qualification

All survey work and reporting was undertaken by experienced and suitably qualified ecologists, in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct of CIEEM (CIEEM, 2023).

The surveys described here were undertaken in accordance with the best practice methodologies current at the time of commissioning. Site circumstances, scientific knowledge or methodological requirements can change during the course of a project, and these external factors may impact on the scope of subsequent work requirements.



Ecological surveys are limited by factors which affect the presence of plants and animals such as the time of year, migration patterns and behaviour. The absence of evidence of a particular species should not be taken as conclusive proof that the species is not present or that it would not be present in the future. However, the results of these surveys are nonetheless considered to be suitably robust to inform this PEA.

It should be noted that all ecological surveys have an expected validity period owing to the tendency of the natural environment to change over time. This validity period varies depending on the ecological feature and is also dependent on the degree of change in a site's management and overall landscape ecology. Where the potential for change is considered to be relevant to the Site, it is highlighted within the report below. It is generally advised that PEA reports are valid for between 18 months to two years.

This report does not purport to provide detailed, specialist legal advice. Where legislation is referenced, the reader should consult the original legal text, and/or the advice of a qualified environmental lawyer.



3 Results

The following section contains the results of the desk study, UKHab Survey, PRA and GLTA. Illustrative photographs from the Site are provided within **Appendix B** with a summary of relevant legislation and planning policy provided within **Appendix D**.

3.1 Desk Study

3.1.1 Statutory Designated Sites

A single statutory designated site of international importance was identified within 10 km of the Site. This was Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation (SAC). No Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites (including candidate/ proposed/ potential sites) were identified within the 10 km search area. Within 2 km of the Site a single statutory designated site of local importance, Highfield Country Park Local Nature Reserve (LNR) was identified to the east. No other statutory designated sites of local or national importance including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) were identified.

It should be noted that the Site lies within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for Rochdale Canal SSSI (c. 7.4 km north-east), Hollinwood Branch SSSI (c. 7.2 km north-east) and Huddersfield Narrow Canal SSSI (c. 8.6 km north-east). IRZ are used by local planning authorities (LPA) to determine if a proposed development is likely to affect a terrestrial SSSI and when to consult Natural England.

Table 3.1 Statutory Designated Sites within up to 10 km of the Site

Designation	Site Name	Reason for Designation	Distance and direction from the Site
LNR	Highfield Country Park	The urban reserve is a total of 28.5 ha. It comprises grassland, marshy grassland, scrub, wet woodland, ponds, relict hedges and plantation woodland. Fallowfield Brook runs through the site.	2 km east
SAC	Rochdale Canal	The SAC totals 24.86 ha and habitats include the canal waterbody. The primary reason for the selection of the site is for the Annex II species Floating water-plantain <i>Luronium natans</i> for which the canal supports a significant population as well as a wide range of pondweeds <i>Potamogeton spp.</i>	7.4 km north-east

The above statutory designated sites are of importance to nature conservation at a national (LNR) and international level (SAC).

3.1.2 Non-statutory Designated Sites

There are no non-statutory designated sites within 2 km of the Site, as identified by the Greater Manchester Local Record Centre online wildlife site database. The closest is Highfield Country Park c. 2.9 km west of the Site.



3.1.3 Habitats of Principal Importance

Habitats of Principal Importance were identified during the desk study as being present within 2 km of the Site. The HPI and their proximity to the Site are detailed in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Habitats of Principal Importance within 2km of the Site

HPI Type	Distance and direction from the Site
Deciduous / Broadleaved / mixed / woodland	Several small parcels within 2 km of the Site, predominantly to the north-west of the Site with the closest c. 20 m south-west of the Site.
Traditional orchard	One parcel 590 m west of the Site.
Watercourse	Gore Brook c. 570 m north Nico ditch c. 580 m north-west Cringle Brook c. 660 m south Shaw Brook 1.6 km south-east Platt Brook c. 1.8 km south-west

3.2 UKHab Survey

3.2.1 Overview

Habitats recorded on the Site, their distribution and composition are discussed in order of dominance below. Habitat locations and Target Notes depicting features of ecological interest are annotated in **Appendix A, Figure 2** and UKHab secondary codes are detailed in brackets. Site photographs are displayed at **Appendix B**. Target notes are also specified in **Appendix C**.

3.2.2 Habitats

The Site comprised the following primary habitat types:

- g4 Modified grassland [32 - scattered trees];
- u1b5 Developed land, sealed surface; and,
- u1f Sparsely vegetated urban land.

3.2.2.1 g4 Modified grassland [32 – Scattered trees]

Modified grassland comprises the western proportion of the Site. The sward was generally short, approximately 5-10 cm and regularly mown. Species richness was fairly low with approximately 4-5 species per square metre, although species did vary across the Site. The grass to forb ratio was approximately 70:30, though this does vary throughout the sward.

The grassland area was dominated by perennial rye grass *Lolium perenne* with abundant annual meadow grass *Poa annua* and frequent moss *Bryophyta* sp., occasionally occurring common daisy *Bellis perennis* and rarely occurring dandelion *Taraxacum* spp. agg.

Scattered ornamental trees were present within the parcel of grassland. A mature Japanese flowering cherry tree *Prunus serrulata* and a Chinese flowering crab apple tree *Malus spectabilis* were present along the northern boundary of the Site, and a tulip poplar *Liriodendron tulipifera* and three sweetgum trees *Liquidambar styraciflua* were present along the western boundary of the Site.



Modified grassland is listed on the LBAP as “urban managed greenspace” but does not qualify as a HPI. Trees are listed within the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (GM LNRS) but do not qualify as a HPI the habitat is common and widespread and is considered to be of ecological value at the site level only.

3.2.2.2 u1b5 Developed land, sealed surface

A large area of concrete comprises the remainder of the Site and is currently being utilised as a car park. No vegetation was present within this habitat.

3.2.2.3 u1f Sparsely vegetated urban land

A small area of sparsely vegetated urban land comprises the northernmost corner of the Site. This habitat is comprised of abundant moss with frequent annual meadow grass, occasional common groundsel *Senecio vulgaris* and common speedwell *Veronica persica*. Mouse ear cress *Arabidopsis thaliana* and Herb Robert *Geranium robertianum* rarely occurred.

3.2.3 Habitats of Principal Importance

No HPI are present at the Site.

3.3 Protected and Notable Species

Legislation with respect to the protected and notable species discussed in this section are summarised in **Appendix D**.

3.3.1 Amphibians

A review of the MAGIC dataset identified no EPS licences pertaining to Great Crested Newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus*, no records of GCN pond surveys 2017-2019 and no GCN class licence return data. The GCN risk zone status of the Site is Green, with the whole Site falling into this category indicating that the area contains sparsely distributed GCN and are less likely to contain important pathways of connecting habitat for this species.

There are no ponds or lakes within the Site boundary however there is one mapped lake within 500 m located c. 300 m north-west of the Site, the lake appears to be ornamental but may have the potential to contain fish. Common amphibians, notably common toad, can disperse greater distances from their breeding ponds compared to GCN. However, given there is limited to no connecting habitat from this pond to the Site and the potential of fish being present in the lake which may reduce the likelihood of GCN and other amphibians being present in the waterbody. GCN and other amphibians are unlikely to be associated with the Site and are therefore not discussed further in this report.

3.3.2 Badger

No signs of badger *Meles meles* activity or presence was observed during the ecological walkover and the habitats present at the Site and within the surrounding area were generally unsuitable for badger due to the lack of slopes/ woodland/ dense scrub for sett building and lack of foraging habitats and therefore badger are unlikely to be associated with the Site and are not discussed further in this report.



3.3.3 Bats

3.3.3.1 Roosting Bats

A review of the MAGIC dataset identified four EPS licences for bats within 2 km of the Site, approximately 1.6-1.8km NE, north and NW of the Site in Longsight. Two of the licences to the NW and north of the Site are for common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and allow for the destruction of a resting place only. The two licences NE of the Site are also for common pipistrelle but allow for the damage and destruction of a resting place, and dates from 2016-2021.

Two buildings are present off-site directly north and east of the Site. The building directly east of the Site displays negligible suitability to support roosting bats, whereas the building directly north of the Site displays moderate suitability to support roosting bats due; the slate roof had gaps under roofing slates and gaps within the brickwork and soffits which considered to be suitable Potential Roost Features (PRF).

Six trees are present on the Site. A GLTA undertaken at the Site assessed that the trees display negligible suitability to support roosting bats.

3.3.3.2 Foraging and Commuting Bats

Habitats at the Site have limited connectivity with suitable off-site habitat in the wider area including areas of green space associated with Fallowfield Campus to the west of the Site. Given this, the Site habitats are considered to display low suitability for foraging and commuting bats.

3.3.4 Birds

3.3.4.1 Breeding Birds

Habitats at the Site including the mature cherry trees and, off-site including the building directly north of the Site have the potential to provide suitable breeding habitat for a range of common bird species.

Bird species noted at the Site during the ecological walkover survey included robin *Erithacus rubicula* which were heard within the wider area. An old, disused nest was observed within the roofing soffits of the building directly north of the Site (see site photos in **Appendix B**) indicating that this building may be suitable for nesting in the future.

Site habitats provide suitable foraging, shelter and breeding habitats for a range of common bird species.

3.3.4.2 Overwintering/Passage Birds

Given the limited scale and habitat suitability of the Site, and the absence of a European designated site for wintering/passage birds within 2 km overwintering and passage birds are considered highly unlikely to be present and are not discussed further.

3.3.5 Hedgehog

The Site provides limited suitable foraging habitats for hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* and given the surrounding residential areas, it is possible that hedgehogs would be associated with the Site.



3.3.6 Reptiles

The developed land, sealed surface habitat present at the Site may be of suitability to basking reptiles. However, given the lack of suitable habitats bordering this area it is unlikely that reptiles would be associated with the Site, therefore reptiles are not considered further in this report.

3.3.7 Invertebrates

Aquatic invertebrates have been discounted from this report as there are no suitable habitats (watercourses or ditches) present at the Site.

Terrestrial invertebrates would likely utilise the flowering trees and species within the grassland as a food resource. These habitats would be used by common and widespread species and unlikely to support notable populations. However, these habitats are also likely to be impacted by the proposed development and therefore terrestrial invertebrates are considered further in this report.

3.3.8 Aquatic species

Aquatic species such as otter *Lutra lutra*, water vole *Arvicola amphibius*, White-Clawed Crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* and fish have been discounted from this report as there are no suitable habitats (watercourses or ditches) present at the Site.

3.3.9 Invasive Non-Native Species

No invasive non-native species were identified during the site visit.



4 Evaluation & Recommendations

4.1.1 Overview

This section provides a summary of the ecological constraints and opportunities associated with the proposed development, based on the results described in Section 3. Likely avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures along with recommendations for the delivery of ecological enhancement are identified which can be used to inform development design. Further recommended surveys are also detailed below which are required to robustly to assess the impacts of the Proposed Development and comply with relevant planning policy and legislation.

4.1.2 Designated Sites

There were two statutory designated sites within 10 km of the Site. One Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Highfield Country Park LNR, was identified within the 2 km search area. One European designated Special Area of Conservation (SACs), Rochdale Canal SAC, was identified within 10 km of the Site. However, given the localised nature of the planned works, no impacts to the LNR or SACs are anticipated.

The Site lies within the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for several SSSI including Rochdale Canal SSSI (c. 7.4km north-east). However, due to the type of development (commercial), the small scale and localised nature of the planned works and the lack of hydrological connectivity, consultation with Natural England is not required for the proposed works as the development will have a negligible impact on the SSSI.

4.1.3 Habitats

The habitats present at the Site comprise modified grassland with scattered trees and developed land, sealed surface.

4.1.3.1 Habitats of Principal Importance

There are no HPis present on the Site. HPI habitats are present within the wider area with the closest an area of woodland approximately 20 m to the south-west of the Site. Given the small scale and localised nature of the proposed development, a negligible impact on HPI is predicted.

4.1.4 Protected and Notable Species

There is the potential for the development to impact nesting birds and roosting bats, primarily within the building directly north of the Site and potentially within the mature cherry trees present on the Site.

There is the possibility for European hedgehogs to be present on the Site and for terrestrial invertebrates to utilise the flowering trees and flowering species within the grassland habitat present on the Site.

4.1.4.1 Invasive and Non-Native Species

No invasive non-native species were observed on Site during the site visit.



UoM Squirrels Bar

Table 4.1 details the recommended further surveys, consultation, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures for each relevant ecological feature at the Site.

Table 4.1. Ecological Recommendations

Ecological Feature	Further Survey/ Consultation	Mitigation Measures	Compensation Measures	Enhancement Opportunities
Roosting / Foraging and Commuting Bats	N/A	If lighting is proposed during construction and/or operation, a lighting scheme should be developed in accord with Guidance Note 8: Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK (2023) – Bat Conservation Trust & Institution of Lighting Engineers and agreed with a suitably experience ecologist.	N/A	Enhancement opportunities may include provision of bat boxes
Nesting birds	A pre-works nesting bird check is recommended should the mature cherry trees present on the Site be affected by the proposed development and construction works are occurring during the nesting bird season (March to September inclusive)	N/A	N/A	Enhancement opportunities may include provision of bird boxes.
Hedgehogs	N/A	Implement best practice measures during the construction phase of the proposed development: Any trenches/pits excavated within the working area of the Site should either be covered over-night, or planks of wood should be secured within the trench at a 45-degree angle to allow hedgehogs to escape via a ramp should they fall in. Any temporarily exposed open pipe systems should be capped/ covered in such a way as to prevent hedgehogs from gaining access; and night working should be minimised.	N/A	N/A
Terrestrial invertebrates	N/A	N/A	N/A	Enhancement opportunities may include the planting of nectar rich species around the Site.



5 Conclusion

The purpose of this report was to undertake a PEA of a proposed development in the grounds of the Armitage Sports Centre in Fallowfield, Manchester. A desk study and extended UKHab survey were undertaken to determine the initial potential of the site to support protected and notable species and habitats and identify ecological constraints and future survey requirements.

Overall, the Site was of low intrinsic ecological value, being dominated by highly modified habitats (comprised of modified grassland with scattered trees and hard standing). These habitats were found to potentially support nesting birds within the more mature trees and potentially roosting bats in a building directly north of the Site.

The Site lies within the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for several SSSIs. However, due to the type of development (commercial), the small scale and localised nature of the planned works and the lack of hydrological connectivity, consultation with Natural England is not required for the proposed works. The development will have a negligible impact on these SSSIs.

Outline recommendations for avoidance and enhancement measures have been provided in this PEA for nesting birds, roosting, foraging and commuting bats, hedgehogs and terrestrial invertebrates, which are likely to be required in order that the works align with relevant legislation and policy.



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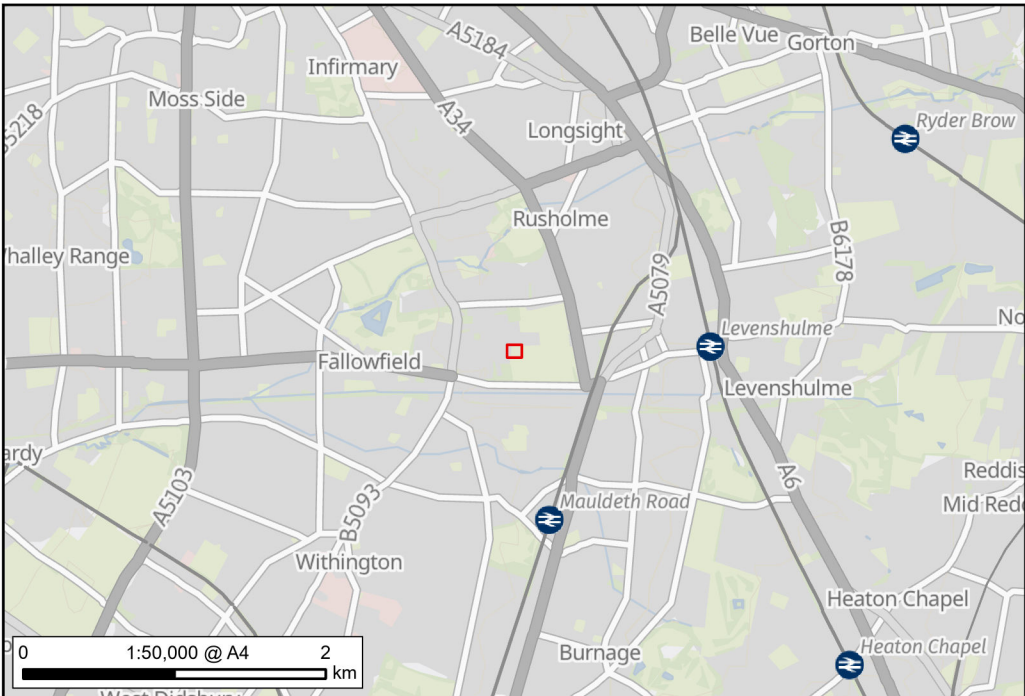


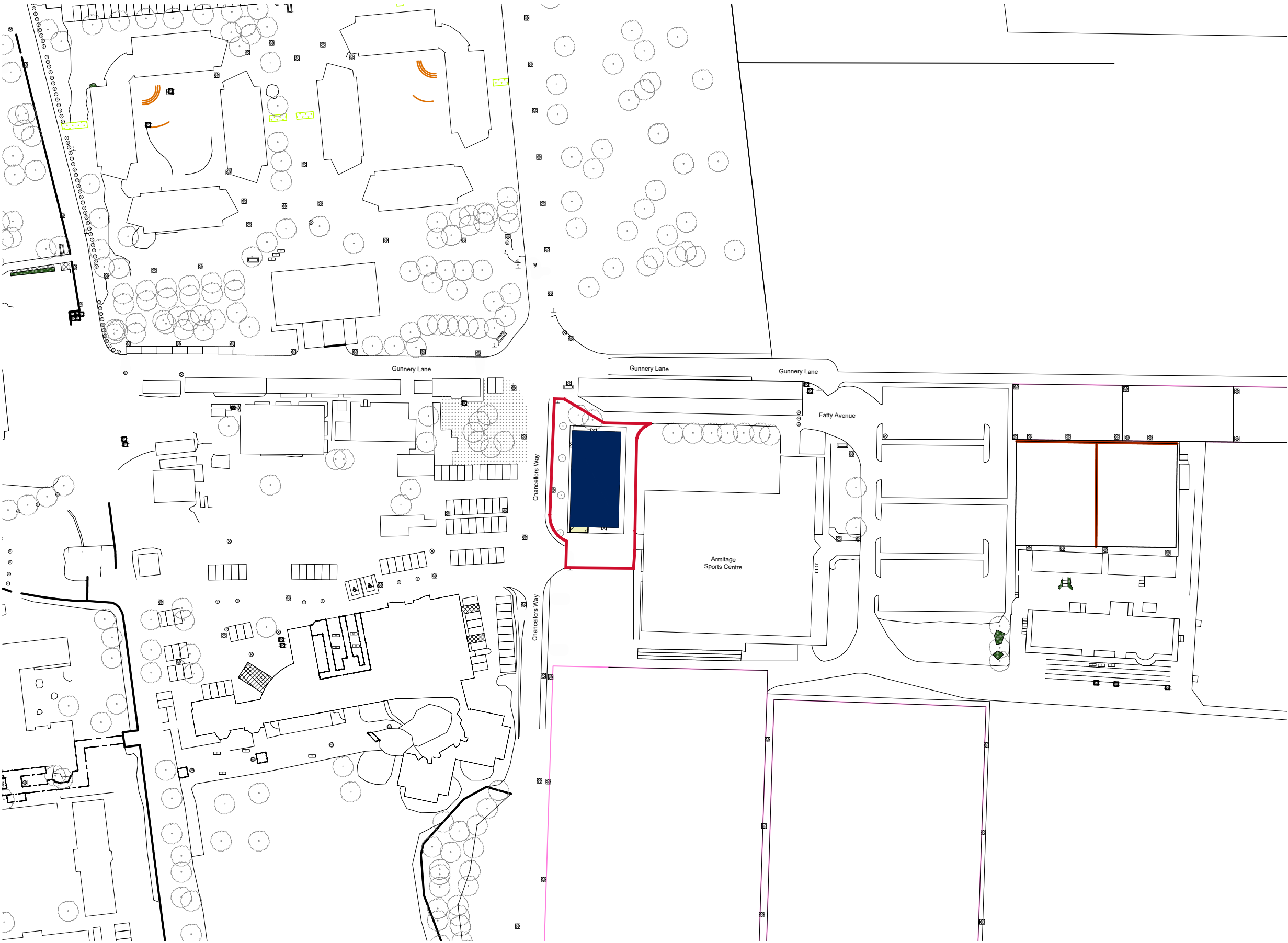
Appendices



Appendix A Figures







LEGEND

PLANNING BOUNDARY LINE

Rev	Description	Date
P01	First issue.	06/03/2025
P02	Updated to suit new site boundary	19/03/2025

Client:

UOM

Project Title:

SQUIRRELS BAR
REPROVISION

RLB ID:	Drawing Number:
004150	02

Drawing Title:

LOCATION PLAN

Stage:	Status:	Revision:
PLANNING	S0	P01

Date:	Size	Scale:
26/03/2025	A3	1:1250



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Do NOT scale this drawing. Check and verify ALL dimensions and levels and on site before work commences. For discrepancies or omissions contact Rider Levett Bucknall.

All work and materials to conform with current applicable statutory legislation and regulations.

All work to comply with Construction Design Management (CDM) 2015.

Drawings to be printed in colour, to the scale stated in the title block:

Print colour check (CMYK) Print size check 9mm

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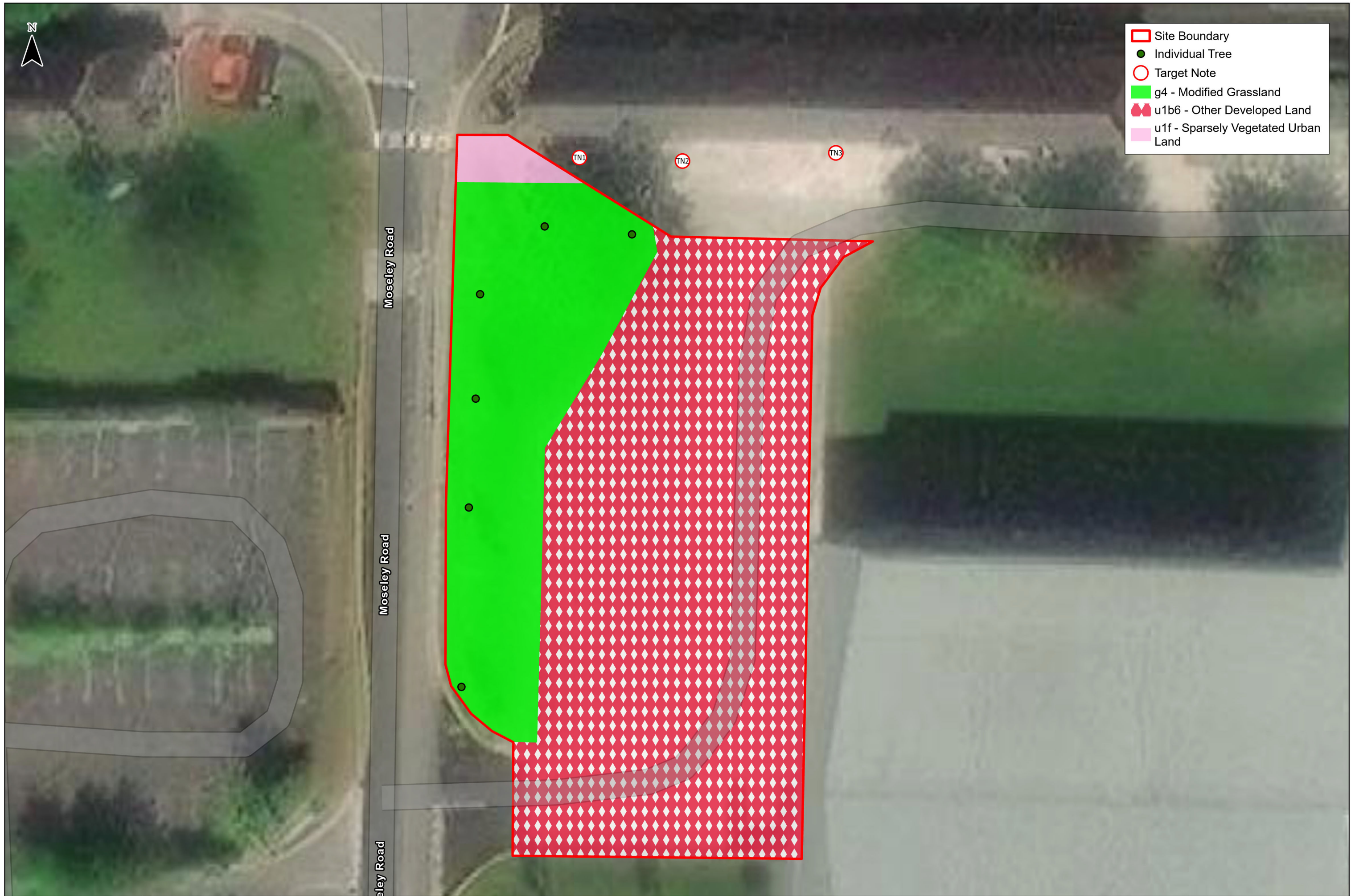
1m 2m 5m

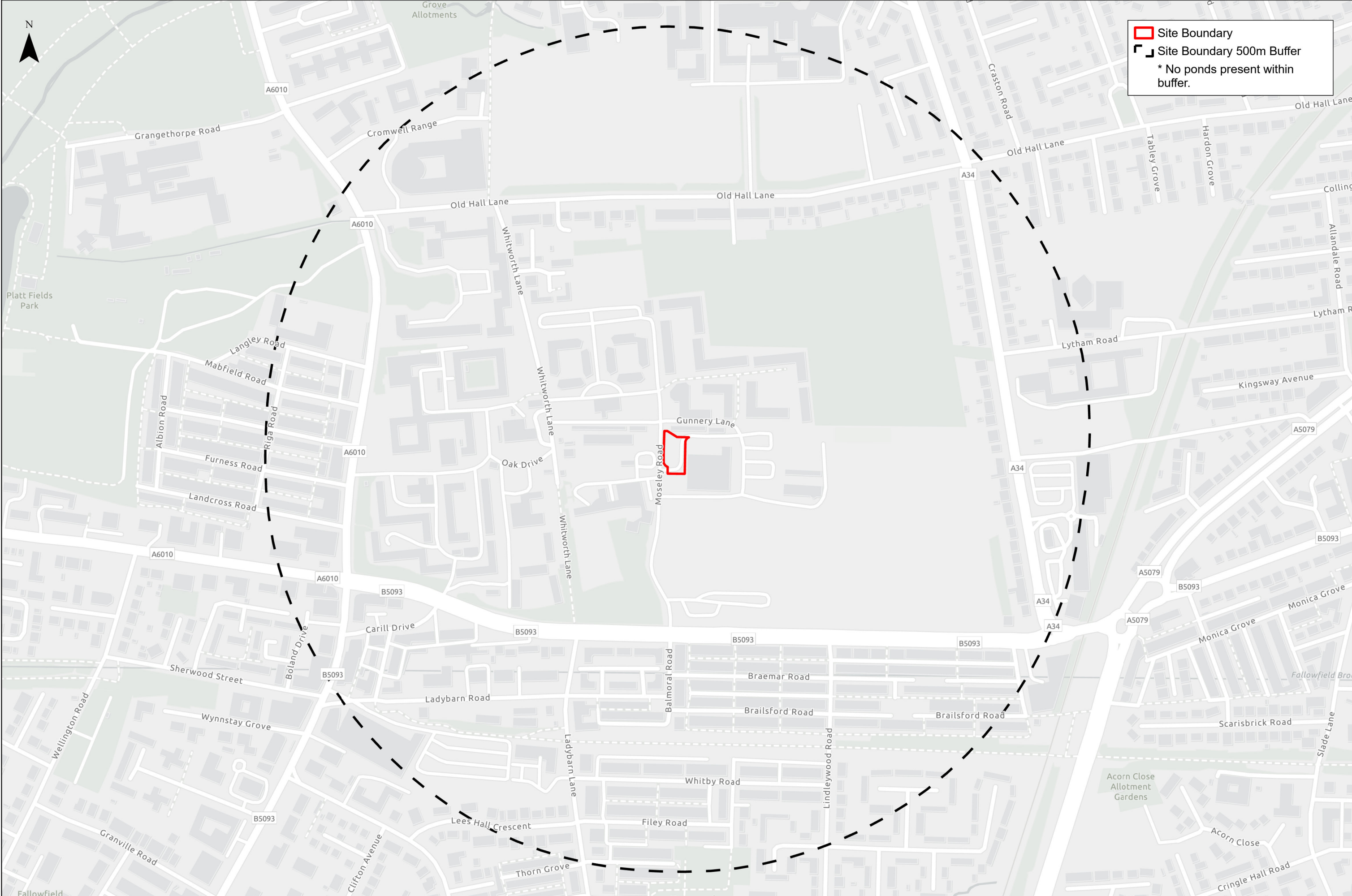
1:100

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Location Plan

SCALE : 1:1250





 Site Boundary
 Site Boundary 500m Buffer
 * No ponds present within buffer.

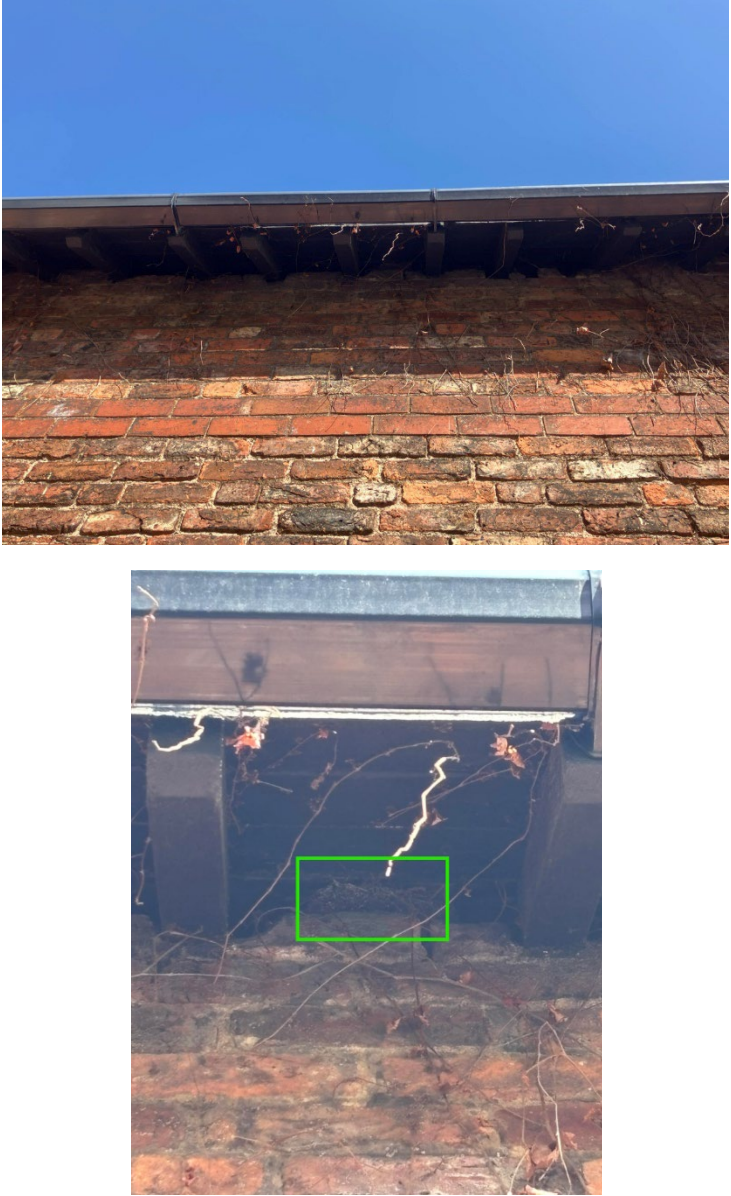
Appendix B Site Photographs

Description	Photo
Developed land, sealed surface habitat type - car park area	
Modified grassland area in west side of the Site with ornamental trees	

Description	Photo
Area of grassland most likely to be impacted by development	 A wide-angle photograph showing a large, mature tree with dense pink blossoms in the center. The tree is situated on a green lawn. In the background, there is a two-story brick building with several windows and doors. The sky is clear and blue.
Chinese crab apple and cherry trees in northern area of grassland	 A close-up photograph of a tree with pink blossoms, similar to the one in the first photo. The tree is in the foreground, and a brick building is visible in the background. The sky is blue.

Description	Photo
Area of sparsely vegetated urban land in north of the Site	
Building directly north of the Site	

Appendix C Target notes

Description	Photo
TN1 – gaps under soffits create access to building for roosting and old bird nest also at this location (NGR SJ 85992 94192)	

Description	Photo
TN2 – gaps in brickwork creating potential roost features	
TN3 gaps under roof slates PRF	

Description	Photo
Building directly north of the Site	

Appendix D Legislation and Planning Policy

D.1 Legislation

Table G1. Legislation Summary

Species denoted in **bold** are European Protected Species (EPS) under the Annex IV of the European Habitats Directive 1992 - [Link to legislation](#). Species with an asterix* are listed as Species of Principal Importance (SPI) under the UK Biodiversity Framework 2024 - Link to [Link to framework](#). An up to date list of SPI and the actions needed to improve the conservation status of these species is legislated for under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act 2006) Section 41 (S41) - [Link to legislation](#). Lists of SPIs and Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) are managed by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) - Links to [species lists](#) and [habitat lists](#).

Ecological Receptor	Legislation	Summary of Legal Protection
Badger	Protection of Badgers Act 1992	Legal protection of badgers and their setts - Link to legislation .
	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA 1981) Schedule 6ZA	It is an offence to kill or take a badger by trapping and snaring - Link to legislation .
	Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 (WMA 1996)	It is an offence to cause harm to a wild mammal with intent to inflict unnecessary suffering - Link to legislation .
Bats* (Seven species SPI)	WCA 1981 Schedule 5	Offences with respect to bats include impacts to individuals, their breeding and resting places and to their ability to survive, reproduce, breed, migrate, hibernate etc - Links to WCA legislation and CHSR legislation .
	The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (as amended) (EU Exit) 2019 (CHSR 2019)	
Birds	WCA 1981 Section 1	All birds are protected, with it being an offence to impact/kill/destroy any wild bird, their nests and their eggs - Link to legislation .
	WCA 1981 Schedule 1	Schedule 1 species are afforded greater protection, notably on their nests and on dependent young - Link to legislation .

D.2 Planning Policy

The revised NPPF (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2018) was issued on 12 December 2024. The NPPF states that *'planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

- *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;*
- *Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- *Maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- *Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures; and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;*
- *Preventing new and existing development from contributing to , being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions, such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- *Remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.'*

In respect of protected Sites, at paragraph 188, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to distinguish, at the plan level, *'...between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated Sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value...take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.'* A footnote to paragraph 188 refers to the preferred use of agricultural land of poorer quality if significant development of agricultural land is to take place.

Paragraph 192 refers to how plans should aim to protect and enhance biodiversity. Plans should: *'identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated Sites of importance for biodiversity [a footnote refers to ODPM Circular 06/2005 for further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity in the planning system], wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation;'* and to *'promote the conservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.'*

A list of principles which local planning authorities should follow when determining planning applications is included in the NPPF which includes the following;

- 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;
- Development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the Site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Species Scientific Interest; and
- Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Local Policy

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan

Policy JP-G8 (Manchester City Council, 2024) 'A net enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity' sets out the measures by which planning in the county and associated activities will seek a net enhancement of biodiversity resources including increasing the quality, quantity and extent of habitat, improving connections between habitats, enhancing management of existing habitats, protecting designated sites and facilitating greater access to nature.

Section 8.63 states "If our overall aims of a major net enhancement of biodiversity value and improved access to nature are to be achieved then all new development will have to play its part, each delivering a net gain in biodiversity. This could involve the protection and improvement of existing habitats, the creation of new ones, and/or the strengthening of connections between them. The Defra metric (DEFRA 3.0 or later) will be applied to new development proposals to calculate and demonstrate a measurable net gain in biodiversity of no less than 10%."

Manchester Core Strategy 2012-2027

Policy EN 15 states: Developers will be expected to identify and implement reasonable opportunities to enhance, restore or create new biodiversity, either on-site or adjacent to the site, contributing to linkages between valuable or potentially valuable habitat areas where appropriate, with reference to:

- the Manchester Biodiversity Strategy, which provides further details of priority habitats within Manchester and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement including corridors such as the Mersey, Medlock and Irk river valleys, the canals and disused railway lines and areas of managed greenspace particularly in parks;
- the Green Infrastructure Framework for Greater Manchester, which encompasses an ecological framework that seeks to guide and inform habitat creation and repair,

Manchester Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

The local Biodiversity Action Plan (Manchester City Council, 2024) sets out a programme of actions and targets for protecting and enhancing wildlife in Central Manchester. Each action plan includes targeted actions for relevant organisations, local groups and individuals to help focus the work of the Partnership in conserving and enhancing these species and spaces so future generations can continue to enjoy them.



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