
**Grey Mare Lane
Beswick, Manchester**

**Preliminary Ecological
Appraisal**

June 2024

Issue Status

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 This Ecological Appraisal has been prepared by Anthony Nickson Ecology Ltd on behalf of Great Places Housing Group. The report will accompany a planning application for the construction of a residential development on existing land off Grey Mare Lane, Beswick, Manchester (hereinafter referred to as the “site”).

1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 The site is situated in East Manchester (NGR: SJ 86941 98292) immediately west of Grey Mare Lane and north of Newcombe Close. The habitats within the site comprise hardstanding, modified grassland and urban trees, with some small, developing areas of scrub.
- 1.2.2 The wider landscape is dominated by residential developments, commercial developments and the Manchester City Football Stadium and Training Ground development with pockets of public greenspace including parks, cemeteries and woodland belts (ref. Figure 1).



Figure 1. Site location

1.3 Planning

- 1.3.1 Biodiversity is a material consideration to the planning process and consideration must be given to the protection, retention and improvement of existing biodiversity features. As the proposed residential development will have a significant impact on the site and adjacent habitats, consideration should be given to potential protected and notable sites, habitats and species which may be present within and/or adjacent to the site by the planning authority when considering the development proposals.
- 1.3.2 This report will allow the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to assess the impact of the proposed development on any applicable ecological features present within and/or outside of the site.

1.4 Objectives

1.4.1 The survey was commissioned to accompany a planning application for the construction of a residential development on the site. The aim of the survey was to:

- Describe and map the habitats present on the site;
- Assess any potential impact on protected sites, habitats and/or species;
- Identify where further surveys may be required; and
- Provide recommendations to protect and enhance site ecology.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Desktop Study

- 2.1.1 A review of ecological information held by the local record centre, Greater Manchester Local Records Centre (GMLRC), was undertaken alongside other publicly accessible online sources to identify any protected and notable sites, habitats, and species within a 2km radius of the application site.
- 2.1.2 In addition to the consultation process, a review of the local and national planning framework was carried out, including:

National Policy

- National Planning Policy Framework, July 2021
- Habitats and Species of Principal Importance, August 2010

Local Policy

- Manchester's Core Strategy Development Plan 2022- 2025, Adopted 11 July 2012
- Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan

2.2 Site Survey

Habitat Survey

- 2.2.1 The site was initially visited on 26 April 2024 to carry out a UK Habitat survey and revisited on 15 May 2024 to acquire further information for a separate Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment. Surveys were carried out during the period which is considered optimal for botanical assessment. Environmental conditions during the habitat survey included 50% cloud cover with temperatures reaching 11oC. Surveys were conducted by Olivia Leversedge. Olivia is a graduate ecologist with over 3 years' experience in terrestrial habitat and protected species surveys. She has attended accredited UK Habitat Classification training and is a Qualifying member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).
- 2.2.2 The UK Habitat survey involved identifying the habitat types present within the site and defining their boundaries. Each distinct habitat was assigned to a UK Habitat Classification code as set out in UKHAB v2. Discrete primary habitat types were assigned to a Level 3 code or above where possible and accompanied with relevant secondary codes where applicable. Using the information collated on the survey, a map was produced on QGIS defining the habitat types and their boundaries. This map has been provided within Appendix I of this report.
- 2.2.3 Botanical species list for each of the habitats were produced during the survey, with reference to the DAFOR scale (D = Dominant, A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional, R = Rare). Botanical nomenclature follows Streeter (2016).
- 2.2.4 In addition, areas of grassland within the application site were subject to quadrat sampling to inform on species diversity and richness. A total of five 1m x 1m quadrats were placed randomly across the grassland and their locations documented with the use of What3words. All species contained within the samples were recorded with a measure of relative abundance according to the Domin scoring system (refer to Table 1 below).

Table 1. Domin values as measures of relative abundance

Cover	Domin
91-100%	10
76-90%	9
51-75%	8
34-50%	7
26-33%	6
11-25%	5
4-10%	4
<4% (many individuals)	3
<4% (several individuals)	2
<4% (few individuals)	1

Protected Species

- 2.2.5 The presence, evidence and/or suitability for the site to support protected and/or notable species was recorded during the site walkover to advise on any ecological constraints and/or the requirement for further surveys. Based on the desktop study and the habitats present within the application boundary, particular attention was paid to the following species.

Bats

- 2.2.6 All British bat species and their roosts are protected under European Law (The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010) and UK Law (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended). As such it is an offence to undertake the following acts:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill bats;
- Damage or destroy a breeding or resting place;
- Obstruct access to their resting or sheltering places; and
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it's in a structure or place of shelter or protection.

Habitat Suitability Assessment

- 2.2.7 Initially, a review of publicly accessible online mapping systems was undertaken to assess the habitats present on site and in the surrounding area. The review assessed the suitability of the habitats to support and provide connectivity for commuting and foraging bats in accordance with BCT Good Practice Guidelines (BCT, 2023) (ref. Table 2).

Table 2. BCT Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape

Suitability	Potential flight-paths and foraging habitat
None	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 as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by a small numbers of foraging bats such as a line tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats 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 to and connected to known roosts.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

- 2.2.8 During the site survey, a ground level tree assessment (GLTA) of the existing trees was undertaken. The GLTA involved an external inspection of each tree was to search for, and assess the potential for, a bat roost to be present.
- 2.2.9 The inspection involved a visual examination of each tree from the ground using close-focusing binoculars to search the trunk and the canopy for potential roosting features (PRFs). A high-powered torch was used to inspect cavities or shaded areas of the tree. Feature of trees commonly used by bats for roosting and shelter, and field signs that may indicate use of trees by bats, were also recorded. Potential roosting features that may be used by bats include:
- woodpecker holes;
 - rot holes;
 - hazard beams;
 - other vertical or horizontal cracks and splits (such as frost cracks) in stems or branches;
 - partially detached platey bark;
 - knot holes arising from naturally shed branches, or branches previously pruned back to the branch collar;
 - man-made holes (e.g. cavities that have developed from flush cuts) or cavities created by branches tearing out from parent stems;
 - cankers (caused by localised bark death) in which cavities have developed;
 - other hollows or cavities, including butt-rots;
 - double-leaders forming compression forks with included bark and potential cavities;
 - gaps between overlapping stems or branches; and
 - partially detached ivy with stem diameters in excess of 50mm.
- 2.2.10 The trees were then assessed in accordance with BCT Good Practice Guidelines (BCT, 2023) for assessing the potential suitability of roosting habitats in structures (ref. Table 3).

Table 3. Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats based on the presence of suitable roosting features within a structure.

Suitability	Roosting habitat in structures
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).
Negligible	No obvious habitat features in site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate 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 or hibernation). A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.
Moderate	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
High	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.

Birds

2.2.11 All birds, their nests and eggs are protected at the nest under UK Law (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended). As such it is an offence to intentionally undertake the following acts;

- Kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built; and
- Take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

2.2.12 Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

2.2.13 Habitats within the site with potential to support nesting birds were identified along with any evidence of active nesting and/or breeding.

2.3 Limitations

2.3.1 The Preliminary Roost Assessment of the trees on-site was undertaken in April during a period of peak foliage growth. Foliage in some cases obscures the view of trees from ground-level inspection therefore extra time and care was taken to ensure that the trees were inspected to the surveyor's best ability and subsequently the time of year was not considered a constraint on the survey.

3.0 Results

3.1 Desktop Study

International/National Statutory Sites

- 3.1.1 The desktop study did not identify any internationally or nationally protected sites within the 2km search area. The closest site is the Rochdale Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), approximately 4,195m east of the site.

Local Statutory Sites

- 3.1.2 The desktop study identified a single Local Nature Reserve (LNR) within a 2km radius of the application site, Clayton Vale, approximately 910m northeast of the site.

Non-Statutory Sites

- 3.1.3 The desktop study confirmed there are four Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) within a 2km radius of the application site. The identified SBIs are as follows:

- Ashton Canal (west), approximately 520m northeast of the site;
- Bank Bridge Meadow, approximately 920m north of the site;
- Rochdale Canal: Stott's Lane to Ducie Street Basin, approximately 1.4km northwest of the site; and
- Clayton Vale, approximately 1.5km northeast of the site.

Protected Species

- 3.1.4 The following results are of protected species recorded within the 2km search area.

Bats

- 3.1.5 The local record centre provided 26 roost records and 135 general bat records (from observations and surveys) within the 2km search area. See Table 4 for summary of results.

Table 4. Summary of local record centre bat records

Species	Roost Records	General Records	Closest Record
Bat species (<i>Chiroptera</i> sp.)	1	0	The roost record is approximately 1.45km east of the site. The 2010 record has no further information.
Mouse-eared bat species (<i>Myotis</i> spp.)	0	1	The general record is approximately 1.25km east of the site. The 2020 record has no further information.
Daubenton's bat (<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>)	0	6	The closest general record is an observation of four individuals in flight over a fishing pond at Clayton Vale LNR. The observation of four individuals in flight over a fishing pond, approximately 1.5km northeast of the site.
Pipistrelle bat species (<i>Pipistrellus</i> spp.)	9	7	The closest record is from a single roosting adult disturbed during the removal of external boarding, approximately 520m west of the site.
Common Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>)	9	107	The closest roost record is a Natural England roost record, approximately 725m southwest of the site.

			The closest record is of two individuals in flight adjacent to the Etihad Campus, approximately 315m southeast of the site.
Soprano Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>)	0	11	The closest general record from the adjacent Etihad Campus, approximately 570m southeast of the site.
Brown Long-eared bat (<i>Plecotus auritus</i>)	1	0	The roost record is a probable BLE roost within a warehouse building, approximately 1.35km south of the site.
Noctule (<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>)	0	3	The closest general record is approximately 1.25km east of the site. The 2020 record has no further information.

- 3.1.6 A review of information available on DEFRA's Magic Map identified three granted EPS licences for bats within the 2km search area. Details of the licences are summarised below in Table 5.

Table 5. Summary of granted EPS licences (DEFRA's Magic Map)

Date of licence	Species on licence	Approximate location	Permitted actions
2020 - 2031	Common Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>)	1.2km west of the site	Destruction of a breeding site and resting place
2019 - 2020	Common Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>)	1.4km northwest of the site	Destruction of a resting place
2016	Common Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>)	1.8km west of the site	Destruction of a resting place

Water vole

- 3.1.8 The local record centre provided a single water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) which is located approximately 1.5km northeast of the site.
- 3.1.9 A review of publicly available online maps found no water courses or other suitable habitat for water voles within proximity to the site. As water voles are unlikely to be impacted by the proposed development of the site no further consideration for water vole is provided within this report.

Badger

- 3.1.10 The local record centre confirmed the presence of badger within a 2km radius of the site. The exact locations of the records are confidential.

Hedgehog

- 3.1.11 The local record centre provided eight records of hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) within the 2km search area. The closest record is approximately 1.2km northwest of the site.

Birds

- 3.1.12 The local record centre provided 124 records for 17 bird species within the 2km search area, including species which are known to nest in habitats represented within the site boundary (urban trees), such as song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) and starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*).

3.2 Site Survey

Habitat Description

- 3.2.1 The site is approximately 0.38 ha and consists of modified grassland, other developed land, sparsely vegetated urban land and urban trees.

g4 Modified grassland

Secondary codes: 106

Habitat area: 0.1145 ha

Condition: Good

Corresponding Biodiversity Metric category:
Grassland - Modified grassland

- 3.2.2 Modified grassland lawns and verges occur to the north and west site boundary. Areas of grass site were tall at the time of the survey whereas other areas had been mown to a short height (ref. plates 1 & 2). Grassland habitats throughout the site are likely to be subject to a regular management regime due to its location to support its aesthetic and amenity function as a landscaped urban perimeter habitat. This is supported by a review of satellite imagery.
- 3.2.3 A list of the species identified within the grassland is provided in Table 6.

Table 6. Modified grassland species list with scale of relative abundance (DAFOR)

Common name	Scientific name	DAFOR
Annual meadow grass	<i>Poa annua</i>	D
Yorkshire fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	O
Red fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i> agg.	O
False oat-grass	<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	R
Creeping buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	LF
Meadow buttercup	<i>R. acris</i>	R
Cuckoo flower	<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	R
Wavy bittercress	<i>Cardamine flexuosa</i>	R
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.	R
Ragwort	<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>	R
White clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	R
Common mouse-ear	<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	R
Herb robert	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	R
Geranium	<i>Geranium</i> sp. (garden variety)	R
Ribwort plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	R
Greater plantain	<i>Plantago major</i>	R
Curled dock	<i>Rumex crispus</i>	R
Broad-leaved dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	R
Willowherb	<i>Epilobium</i> sp.	R
Creeping thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	R
Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>	R
Wood avens	<i>Geum urbanum</i>	R
Ivy-leaved speedwell	<i>Veronica hederifolia</i>	R
Common vetch	<i>Vicia sativa</i>	R
Chickweed	<i>Stellaria</i> sp.	R

3.2.4 Quadrat sampling of the grassland attained an average of 6.2 species per metre square. The survey data is summarised in Table 7.

Table 7. Modified grassland quadrat sampling results

Species	Q1 what.3.words ///racks.undulation. spends	Q2 what.3.words ///mugs.inspector .preps	Q3 what.3.words ///warns.round .older	Q4 what.3.words ///finger.book.voters	Q5 what.3.words ///fits.ever.winter
Annual meadow grass (<i>Poa annua</i>)	9	9	8	9	8
Creeping buttercup (<i>Ranunculus repens</i>)	2	1	4	2	2
Dandelion (<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.)	1	2	4	2	4
Yorkshire fog (<i>Holcus lanatus</i>)	6	6	7	6	6
White clover (<i>Trifolium repens</i>)	2	1	-	-	1
Common mouse-ear (<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>)	-	1	-	-	-
Red fescue (<i>Festuca rubra</i>)	-	-	6	5	-
Wavy bittercress (<i>Cardamine flexuosa</i>)	-	-	2	-	-
Ribwort plantain (<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>)	-	-	1	-	1
Broad-leaved dock (<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>)	-	-	1	-	-
Meadow buttercup (<i>Ranunculus acris</i>)	-	-	-	1	-
Total no. of species	5	6	7	6	6

u1b6 Other developed land

Secondary codes: N/A

Habitat area: 0.1277 ha

Condition: N/A

Corresponding Biodiversity Metric category:
Urban - Developed land; sealed surface

- 3.2.5 Developed land within the site comprises tarmac roads, pavements, and a concrete car park.

u1f Sparsely vegetated urban land

Secondary codes: 82

Habitat area: 0.1352 ha

Condition: Poor

Corresponding Biodiversity Metric category:
Urban - Vacant or derelict land

- 3.2.6 There is a derelict area to the east of the site which is fenced off and has no public access. This area of the site is currently operating as a site compound and contains two shipping containers amongst various construction affiliated paraphernalia. The site compound contains the foundations of a demolished building and a tarmac area which was previously used for parking. The habitats are typically represented by concrete and tarmac hardstanding (developed land; sealed surface), with scattered patches of developing *Buddleja davidii* and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) scrub, and colonisation of ground-level ruderal species typical of urban waste ground, principally occurring along the fence line and in gaps between the concrete foundations. The general character is shown in photo plates 3 – 6.
- 3.2.7 A list of the species documented within the derelict site is provided in Table 8.

Table 8. Sparsely vegetated urban land species list with scale of relative abundance (DAFOR)

Common name	Scientific name	DAFOR
Butterfly bush	<i>Buddleja davidii</i>	LO
White clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	R
Common mouse-ear	<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	R
Rosebay willowherb	<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	LF
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.	F
Yorkshire fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	R
Common nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	R
Colt's foot	<i>Tussilago farfara</i>	O
Curled dock	<i>Rumex crispus</i>	R
Broad-leaved dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	R
Ribwort plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	F
Herb Robert	<i>Geranium robertanum</i>	R
Fleabane	<i>Erigeron</i> sp.	R
Spear thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	R
Procumbent pearlwort	<i>Sagina procumbens</i>	LF
Common ragwort	<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	R
Red fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i> agg.	R
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	LO
False oat-grass	<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	R

u1 Scattered trees

Secondary codes: 32

Habitat area: 0.2443 ha

Condition: Various

Corresponding Biodiversity Metric category:
Individual trees - Urban tree

- 3.2.8 There is a total of 15 urban trees occurring within the site boundary. The trees appear to be mature specimens that are planted in rows along the perimeter of the carpark and roads, seemingly as part of the original landscaping design of the site.
- 3.2.9 The trees include an individual Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) (T1; ref. plate 7) growing within a pavement planting pit, several trees within areas of modified grassland which comprise the species lime (*Tilia* sp.) (T2; ref. plate 8), two Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) (T3 & T5; ref. plate 9 & 10), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) (T4; ref. plate 11) and three whitebeam (*Aria edulis*) (T6, T7 & T8; ref. plate 12 - 14), along with a line of seven ornamental oak trees, thought to be *Quercus palustris* (T9 – T15; ref. plate 15).
- 3.2.10 The location of each tree is shown in the UK Habitat map in Appendix I and indicated by the relevant reference code.

Protected Species

Bats

Habitat Suitability Assessment

- 3.2.11 The site is situated in a highly modified landscape surrounded by residential properties, city amenities and other urban-associated development and infrastructure with foraging habitat limited to urban street trees, residential gardens and amenity greenspaces.
- 3.2.12 The site itself provides some limited and low value foraging habitat (urban trees and modified grassland) which may be used by a small number of bats. However, due to the site's location, it is only likely to support bats such as *Pipistrellus* species, which are tolerant to urban environments.
- 3.2.13 The site is fragmented from areas of more extensive and better-quality foraging and commuting habitat in the wider environment by major road networks and urban developments with high levels of artificial lighting.
- 3.2.14 Based on the habitats present within the site and in the surrounding landscape, in addition to the records provided in the data search, the site is deemed as having low suitability as foraging and commuting habitat.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

3.2.15 A total of fifteen trees were subject to a GLTA. The results of this assessment are presented within Table 9.

Table 9. Summary of the GLTA of trees within/adjacent to the application site

Tree ref.	Notes	Suitability
T1	Minimal areas of damaged bark and some snapped branches. Not suitable PRFs.	Negligible
T2	No PRFs identified.	Negligible
T3	Some peeling and lifting bark on main trunk. No suitability as a PRF.	Negligible
T4	Small areas of loose and lifted bark (ref. plate 16). Rot hole in removed limb at approximately 2.5m (ref. plate 17). The hole appears to be damp with no internal space visible from ground level inspection.	Low
T5	Some small areas of peeling bark. Minimal suitability as a PRF.	Negligible
T6	Small hollow on western side of main trunk at approximately 3m (ref. plate 18). Frost crack on northern side (ref. plate 19). On inspection, these features appeared to offer no crevices or internal space for roosting bats.	Low
T7	No PRFs identified.	None
T8	No PRFs identified.	None
T9	No PRFs identified.	None
T10	No PRFs identified.	None
T11	No PRFs identified.	None
T12	No PRFs identified.	None
T13	No PRFs identified.	None
T14	No PRFs identified.	None
T15	No PRFs identified.	None

Badgers

3.2.16 There is no suitable habitat for badgers within or adjacent to the site that may facilitate foraging, commuting or sett construction. As badgers are unlikely to be impacted by the proposed development of the site no further consideration for badgers is provided within this report.

Hedgehog

3.2.17 The grassland areas may provide some very limited commuting and foraging habitat. However, connectivity between the site and more optimal hedgehog habitat is poor due to busy road networks adjacent to the site. Therefore, the site is considered to be of very little value for hedgehogs.

Birds

3.2.18 The trees within and adjacent to the site boundary provide suitable habitat for nesting birds during the breeding season (March to September).

3.2.19 During the survey, two bird nests were identified within T13 and T15, identified as pigeon and magpie nests. Additionally, a pair of great tits were observed mating in T5.

4.0 Evaluation

4.1 Desktop Study

International/National Statutory Sites

- 4.1.1 The desktop study confirmed that there are no internationally or nationally protected sites within the 2km search area.

Local Statutory Sites

- 4.1.2 The desktop study identified a single local statutory site, Clayton Vale LNR, which is located approximately 910m northeast of the application site.
- 4.1.3 There is no connectivity between the site and the LNR. The proposed redevelopment of the site is not anticipated to have any impact on the qualifying features of the LNR.

Non-Statutory Sites

- 4.1.4 A total of four SBIs were identified within a 2km radius of the application site. The closest is Ashton Canal (west), located approximately 520m northeast of the site.
- 4.1.5 The impact of the proposal occurs at a site-level only and will have minimal impact on the habitat linkage and migration of foraging / commuting habitat between the site and the SBIs. The proposal is anticipated to have no impact on SBIs identified within the desktop study.

4.2 Site Survey

Habitats

- 4.2.1 The habitats recorded within the application site are common throughout the UK. No nationally rare or locally rare plant species were documented during the UK Habitat survey.

Bats

- 4.2.2 The desktop study identified several records of bat roosts within the surrounding landscape, mainly comprising common pipistrelle bats.
- 4.2.3 The site provides some limited foraging opportunity which is largely fragmented from extensive and higher quality habitat by road networks and dense urban development. The proposal, which indicates the removal of four medium sized trees, will have a low impact on the available habitat for bats, considering the site location and the availability of more optimal habitat in the wider landscape.
- 4.2.4 The preliminary roost assessment concluded that two trees have low suitability to support roosting bats (T4 & T6), of which one (T4) is proposed to be removed to facilitate the redevelopment. The PRFs identified on these trees had low suitability as roosting sites. Given the urban location of the trees and the assessment of the trees, the site is found to be unlikely to support roosting bats though may support individual or very small numbers of bats with a tolerance to urban environments, such as *Pipistrellus* species.

Hedgehog

- 4.2.5 The site provides very limited foraging and commuting habitat for hedgehog, with more favourable habitat for this species available within the wider landscape. The site facilitates no connectivity between these areas. The redevelopment of the site is not anticipated to have any negative impacts on hedgehogs, though, due to their unfavourable conservation status, it is good practice to adopt hedgehog friendly infrastructure into the design plan.

Birds

- 4.2.6 The urban trees within the site provide suitable habitat for nesting birds during the breeding season. However, given the presence of more favourable habitat available in the wider landscape, the redevelopment of the site is considered to have a negligible impact on the availability of nesting habitat for breeding birds.

5.0 Recommendations

- 5.1.1 The implementation of the following recommendations will ensure the project complies with all relevant wildlife legislation, policy and guidance. The recommendations are based on baseline site conditions accurate at the time of survey on 26 April 2024.

Bats

- 5.1.2 Low suitability to support a bat roost was identified in T4 & T6 during the preliminary roost assessment on 24 April 2024. T4 is scheduled to be removed under the current redevelopment proposal.
- 5.1.3 No evidence of roosting bats was observed during the inspection of this tree. However, it should be noted that bat absence is very difficult to prove definitively due to their mobility and size, and single or small numbers of bats are able to roost in extremely small space. Any tree works to T4 or T6 should be undertaken taking Reasonable Avoidance Measures. The trees should be section felled under the supervision of a level 2 bat licenced ecologist and sections inspected for bats once removed.
- 5.1.4 If, during any felling works, a bat, or an accumulation of bat droppings is discovered at any time, work is to temporarily cease whilst a bat ecologist is contacted for guidance and assistance. This can be Anthony Nickson (0161 828 2200), any licensed bat worker, or the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) helpline (0845 1300 228).

Hedgehogs

- 5.1.5 Erection of fences should include 'hedgehog highways' (ref. plate 20) to prevent entrapment and to allow hedgehogs to move through the site post-development. Hedgehog highways are simply a gap in a fence or between fenceposts to facilitate dispersal. The method is an effective and inexpensive way of enabling migration and dispersal of hedgehogs, particularly in urban settings where hedgehogs are increasingly found.

Birds

- 5.1.6 All bird species are protected at their nest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Due to the suitable habitat (semi-improved grassland, dense/continuous scrub, broadleaved scrub woodland and urban trees) present for nesting birds, it is recommended that site work takes place outside the peak bird breeding season (March to September).
- 5.1.7 If site works or activities to any habitats where any nesting birds may be present is to be undertaken within the nesting season, then an appropriately qualified ecologist will be required to undertake a site walkover to visually assess potentially suitable nesting habitat for active nests within the construction zones. If active nests are discovered, then site works must cease until the nest is deemed inactive or until a suitable Precautionary Working Method Statement is developed.

Site Enabling Precautionary Measures

- 5.1.8 Serious damage is often caused during enabling works. For this reason, enabling works should be avoided until protective fencing has been erected around the site to avoid any accidental and unnecessary impacts to common fauna which may pass through during enabling or construction phases of the development.
- 5.1.9 In the unlikely event that any protected fauna is found during development, then all works must cease immediately and advice sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

Biodiversity Enhancement

5.1.10 The following ecological enhancements should be incorporated into the development:

- The increased structural integrity of modern developments reduces the potential for birds and bats to utilise modern buildings for nesting and roosting therefore the project should integrate a variety of bird and/or bat boxes.
- Maximising native tree and other vegetation planting will provide recognizable fruit and nectar sources for local birds and invertebrates and will enhance the biodiversity of the development.

External Lighting

5.1.11 The impact of light to biodiversity within the site, and in particular bats and flying invertebrates should be mitigated through the implementation of a sensitive lighting strategy.

5.1.12 The existing site is already impacted by artificial lighting, particularly to the north boundary from streetlamps along the A662. To minimise further impacts to biodiversity within the site, in particular reference to bats and flying invertebrates, the development should seek to implement a sensitive external lighting strategy that includes:

- Downward directed lighting with a tightly controlled distribution to minimise the impact of backwards light spill
- Use of LED lighting sources to filter UV and limit the amount of UV light produced to minimise the attraction to insects and reduce unnatural behaviour stimulated by lighting.

6.0 References

Advice Note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports & Surveys, CIEEM, April 2019

Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th Edition, Bat Conservation Trust, 2023

Collins Wildflower Guide, 2nd Edition, Streeter, 2016

Countryside and Wildlife Act, 1981

EU Habitats Directive, 1994

Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan, view at https://gmlrc.org/projects/gm_bap/

Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd Edition, CIEEM, December 2017

Habitats and Species of Principal Importance, JNCC, August 2010

Habitats and Species of Principal Importance, view at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/habitats-and-species-of-principal-importance-in-england>

Manchester's Core Strategy Development Plan 2022 - 2025, Manchester City Council, Adopted 11 July 2012

National Planning Policy Framework, Department for Communities and Local Government, December 2023

UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0, 2023

Appendix A - UK Habitat Map



Legend	
	Developed land; sealed surface 0.1277 ha
	Modified grassland 0.1145 ha
	Vacant or derelict land 0.1352 ha
	Medium sized urban trees 0.2443 ha
	Application boundary 0.3774 ha

Project: Grey Mare Lane Beswick, Manchester	
Drawing Title: UK Habitat A-1 On-Site Habitat Baseline	
Date: 23/05/2024	Revision: 01

Appendix B - Photograph Plates

Plate 1: Recently mown modified grassland lawn



Plate 2: Tall areas of modified grassland verge

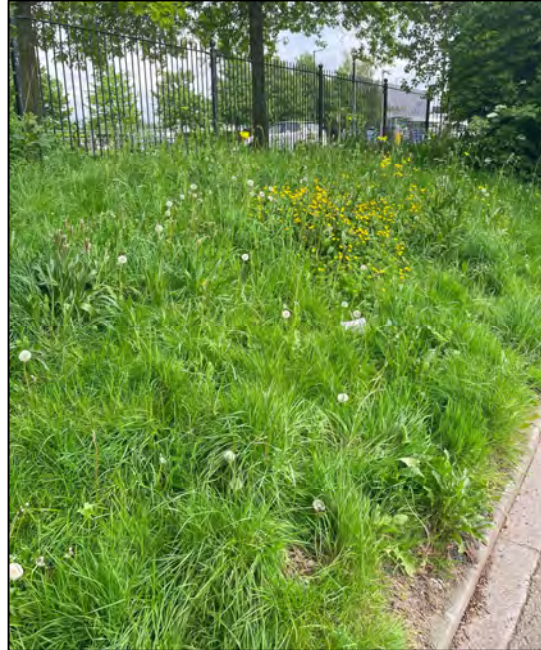


Plate 3: Derelict area to the east of the site



Plate 4: Derelict area to the east of the site



Plate 5: Derelict area to the east of the site



Plate 6: Modified grassland and tree line to the north of the site



Plate 7: Norway maple (T1)



Plate 8: Lime (T2)



Plate 9: Sycamore (T3)



Plate 10: Sycamore (T5)



Plate 11: Hawthorn (T4)



Plate 12: Whitebeam (T6)



Plate 13: Whitebeam (T7)



Plate 14: Whitebeam (T8)



Plate 15: Pin oak (T9 – T15)



Plate 16: Loose and lifted bark on T4



Plate 17: Rot hole in removed limb on T4



Plate 18: Small hollow on T6



Plate 19: Frost crack on T6



Plate 20: Hedgehog highway example

