



Wythenshawe Town Centre Regeneration

Wythenshawe

Preliminary Ecological Assessment

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Executive Summary

Site Details	The site is located within Wythenshawe approximately 1.5 miles north of Manchester Airport. The central grid reference is SJ 82641 86985.
Proposals	The proposals are for the demolition of a single storey retail unit, enhancements of the public realm and the refurbishment of vacant retail space and upper floors into a Culture Hub.
Designated Wildlife Sites	The site does not fall within or adjacent to any designated wildlife sites.
Important Ecological Features	The site has limited ecological value and does not provide suitable habitat for any protected or notable species. Bat species were recorded within 2km of the site boundary.
Recommendations	Replacement shrub and herbaceous planting around the site would help provide habitat and serve to increase habitat connectivity. Measures should be taken to deter pigeons from nesting within the buildings at the earliest opportunity.

This Executive Summary is not a substitute for the full report. Refer to the full text of this report for further detail.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Environment Partnership (TEP) was commissioned by Kier Construction in December 2024 to undertake ecological services including an Ecology Desk Study and Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) for the proposed refurbishment of vacant retail space within Wythenshawe town centre, south Manchester.
- 1.2 This PEA report includes details of the methods employed and any limitations of the surveys undertaken. Results are provided with supporting maps, together with an evaluation of the ecological features within the site, an assessment of the potential impacts associated with the development proposals and requirements for mitigation. The assessment has been undertaken with due consideration for current best practice guidelines (CIEEM 2017a¹, 2018²).
- 1.3 An Ecological Desk Study has been produced to support this PEA, reported under separate cover (TEP Report Ref: 10890.001). This PEA report should read in conjunction with the Desk Study.

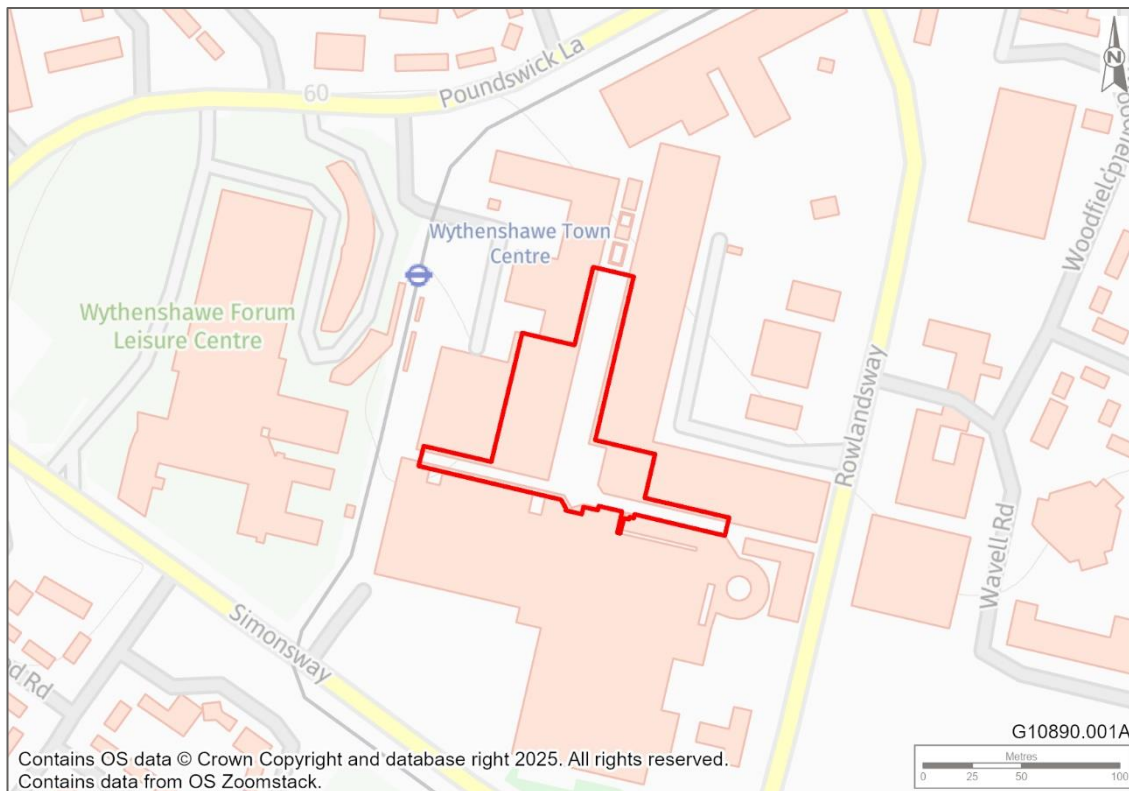
Site Location

- 1.4 The site (central grid reference SJ 82641 86985) is located within Wythenshawe, Manchester, east of the M56 and approximately 1.5 miles north of Manchester Airport. The surrounding landscape is predominantly commercial and residential with pockets of woodland, urban greenspace and private gardens.
- 1.5 The site location is depicted by the red line boundary shown in Figure 1.

¹ CIEEM (2017a) Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing, 2nd Edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management

² CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine version 1.2. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester

Figure 1: Site location and local context



Proposals

- 1.6 The proposals are for enhancements of the public realm and the refurbishment of vacant retail space and upper floors into a Culture Hub. Public realm works will include the demolition of two single storey retail units (No. 16 Hale Top and No. 36 The Birtles) and refurbishment of the central retail streets and canopy refurbishment. The Culture Hub refurbishment will include refurbishing the former Coop Department store to create a community Culture Hub.

Planning Context

- 1.7 The proposed development is at early design stage and therefore a PEA is required to identify key ecological constraints which have the potential to influence the planning strategy and will determine whether any further survey is necessary to support a planning application.
- 1.8 Relevant information regarding local planning policy is provided in the Ecological Desk Study (TEP Report Ref: 10890.001).
- 1.9 The following policies within Manchester City Council's Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan are of relevance to ecology and biodiversity:
- EN 9 – Green Infrastructure

■ EN 11 – Quantity of Open Space, Sport and Recreation

- 1.10 Under the National Planning Policy Framework 2024³ (NPPF), opportunities to achieve biodiversity net gain within developments should be pursued.

³ National Planning Policy Framework (2024). Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities *National Planning Policy Framework*

2.0 Methods

Desk Study

- 2.1 In line with current best practice (CIEEM, 2016⁴, 2017b⁵), information regarding designated sites, notable habitats and existing protected and notable species records of the past decade, within a 2km minimum radius of the site, was collated and reviewed to inform this ecological assessment. Further detail regarding ecological zones of influence (EZOI) applied for different ecological features and the sources of information included are presented in the Ecological Desk Study (TEP Report Ref: 10890.001).
- 2.2 In brief, key data sources included Natural England (open-source data); Manchester's Local Development Framework: Core Strategy (Adopted 2012), Greater Manchester Local Record Centre (GMLRC) and a review of relevant (within the past ten years) species records.
- 2.3 Statutory designated wildlife sites were searched for as follows (EZOI applied for each is indicated in brackets):
 - Ramsar sites (10km);
 - National Sites Network (10km), includes Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA);
 - Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (5km);
 - National Nature Reserve (NNR) (5km); and
 - Local Nature Reserves (LNR) (2km).
- 2.4 Non-statutory designated wildlife sites were searched for within 2km of the site, these may include:
 - Local Wildlife Site (LWS);
 - Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI);
 - Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC); and
 - Site of Biological Importance (SBI)

⁴ CIEEM (2016) Guidelines for Accessing and Using Biodiversity Data. Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management

⁵ CIEEM (2017b) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd Edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management

- 2.5 Notable habitats were searched for within 250m of the site. Notable habitats may include those listed under any of the following:
- Ancient woodland;
 - Main rivers;
 - Habitats of principal importance (HPI) as listed by the requirements of Section 41 (S41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006⁶; and
 - Local Biodiversity Action Plan Habitats (LBAP).
- 2.6 Pre-existing records for notable species were reviewed from the combined data sources, where found from within approximately 2km of the site. Notable species include those listed under any of the following:
- Protected animal species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (EPS);
 - Protected bird species under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (WCA1);
 - Protected animal species under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (WCA5);
 - Protected plant species under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (WCA8);
 - Invasive non-native plant species under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (WCA9);
 - Invasive non-native species under the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019 (IAS);
 - Species of principal importance (SPI) as listed by the requirements of S41 of NERC;
 - Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (PBA);
 - Red and Amber listed Birds of Conservation Concern (BRd/BAm)

⁶ Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.

Limitations

- 2.7 Species records can provide a useful indication of the species present within the search area, although the absence of a given species from the dataset cannot be taken to represent actual absence.

Habitats

Habitat Survey

- 2.8 A Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the site was completed on 17 December 2024. The method records the habitat(s) that can be safely accessed or viewed within and immediately surrounding the site.
- 2.9 Habitats are displayed within the site boundary on Drawing G10890.008.

Limitations

- 2.10 The habitat survey was undertaken outside of the optimum survey period of April to mid-October. Given the urban nature of the site and surrounding area and low ecological value of habitats present this was not considered to form an overriding constraint to the habitat survey work undertaken.

Fauna

- 2.11 Ordnance Survey maps and aerials were reviewed to identify potentially suitable habitats offsite within influence (e.g. dispersal distances for mobile species) of the site. The Ecological Desk Study identified any pre-existing records for protected and notable species within at least 2km of the site.

Roost Surveys

Preliminary Roost Assessment - Structures

- 2.12 A daytime Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of structures within the site was conducted by a licensed bat consultant aided by a health and safety assistant on 17 December 2024. PRAs include a detailed and systematic inspection of the exterior and interior of structures to search for evidence of use by roosting bats, to assess the suitability of features within structures to support roosting bats and to determine potential entry/ exit points that may be used by roosting bats. Evidence of bat roost presence may include:
- Live or dead specimens;
 - Droppings;
 - Scratch marks;
 - Staining; or

- Feeding remains.

- 2.13 Close focusing binoculars, a high-powered torch, an Explorer Premium digital endoscope camera and extendable ladders up to maximum ladder height of 3.8m were used, where appropriate, to search for any field signs of bats or features providing potential bat roost habitat. Examples of structural features often providing suitable roost habitat or internal access for bats include:
- Slipped roof tiles;
 - Splits in soffit boxes;
 - Lintels above doors and windows;
 - Gaps under fascia boards and cladding;
 - Loose or lifting lead flashing; and
 - Missing mortar and cavities in brickwork.
- 2.14 The PRA included inspections of two single-storey retail units (No. 16 Hale Top and No. 36 The Birtles) and the former Coop buildings. All external structures, including the canopies along the walkways, were also examined.
- 2.15 Following the PRA, structures were categorised with reference to Table 4.1 of the BCT 2023 Guidelines (Table 1) for their bat roost habitat suitability (high, moderate, low, negligible or none) as determined by their location, characteristics and potential roost features (PRFs).

Table 1: Guidelines for assessing the potential roost habitat suitability of structures for bats in accordance with Table 4.1 of the BCT 2023 Guidelines.

Potential Roost Habitat Suitability	Description
None	No habitat features within the structure 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).
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 on occasion.
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, protection, appropriate conditions (e.g., temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels etc.) 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 roosts and not a classic, cool/ stable hibernation site, but could be used by hibernating individuals).

Potential Roost Habitat Suitability	Description
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions (e.g., temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels etc.) and surrounding habitat, but which are unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (maternity or hibernation). Categorisation is irrespective of species conservation status.
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 periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions (e.g., temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels etc.) and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts e.g., maternity or classic, cool/ stable hibernation sites.

Limitations

- 2.16 The PRA was undertaken during suitable weather conditions and therefore there was no significant constraint to the external and internal inspections. Poor light conditions can cause PRFs to be missed, wind can blow away external signs e.g., droppings and rain can wash away droppings and make staining around roost entrances difficult to distinguish.
- 2.17 Evidence of potential bat roost presence such as urine splashes, fur-oil staining, scratch marks, odour, bat-fly *Nycteribiid* species pupal cases and feeding remains cannot be relied upon in isolation for confirmation of bat roosting. Bats can also leave no visible sign of their presence, particularly where there are hidden voids or crevices. Overall suitability of PRFs and surrounding habitats was therefore assessed during the PRA, rather than relying on signs of roosting to ensure proportional further surveys were undertaken to confirm presence/ likely absence of bat roosts within structures.
- 2.18 In combination, this data informed the ecological evaluation of the site, including suitability to support notable species and recommendations for further surveys or mitigation.

Preliminary Ecological Assessment Process

- 2.19 This PEA follows the published guidelines (CIEEM, 2018) and accepted best practice approach (BS42020:2013⁷) of the mitigation hierarchy whereby impacts are first avoided or, where this is not possible, reduced or mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated.
- 2.20 In summary, the following procedure was undertaken during this PEA:
- Describe the baseline and identify important ecological features;
 - Describe important ecological features and identify those which may potentially be affected by the site;
 - Identify potential impacts upon important ecological features and characterise the effect of such impacts (in respect of biophysical changes and taking account of relevant aspects of ecosystem structure or function);
 - Identify further survey work, if required to undertake an impact assessment;
 - Incorporate measures to avoid or reduce these effects;
 - Determine whether residual ecological effects are considered significant after avoidance or mitigation;
 - Identify appropriate compensation measures to offset significant residual effects; and
 - Identify opportunities for ecological enhancement.
- 2.21 Important ecological features are identified and valued, ecological impacts are characterised and assessed, and recommendations for appropriate mitigation, compensation and enhancement are made, in accordance with CIEEM guidance.
- 2.22 BS42020:2013 defines a significant effect as one “which is important, notable, or of consequence, having regard to its context”. CIEEM describes significance as “a concept related to the weight that should be attached to effects when decisions are made”. CIEEM defines an ecological effect as significant if it is “sufficiently important to require assessment and reporting so that the decision maker is adequately informed of the environmental consequences of permitting a project”.
- 2.23 BS42020:2013 sets out a practical approach to determining the significance of an ecological effect, applicable at all levels of decision making in legal and policy terms, as follows:
- will the effect on biodiversity influence the balance of planning considerations and therefore the decision as to whether planning permission is likely to be refused or granted; and

⁷ British Standards Institution (2013) BS 42020:2013: Biodiversity — Code of practice for planning and development. BSI Standards Limited, London

- if planning permission is granted, is the effect important enough to warrant the use of planning conditions and/or obligations to guarantee proposed measures or to impose restrictions, or to seek further requirements (e.g. for mitigation, compensation, enhancement, monitoring or management).

2.24 Significance is therefore assessed on a case-specific basis according to the importance of the ecological feature (wildlife site, habitat or species) within the conservation hierarchy, and the effect upon it.

Assumptions

2.25 Information provided by third parties, including publicly available information, is assumed to be correct at the time of publication.

3.0 Results

Wildlife Sites

National Sites Network

- 3.1 Full details regarding designated sites are provided within the Ecological Desk Study (TEP Report Ref: 10890.001).
- 3.2 Two sites within the National Sites Network are located within 10km of the site:
- Rostherne Mere (Ramsar)
 - Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 1 (Ramsar)

Other Statutory Wildlife sites

- 3.3 One site within the National Sites Network is located within 5km of the site:
- Cotteril Clough (SSSI)
- 3.4 The site is not located within any SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs)

Local Wildlife sites

- 3.5 There are five non-statutory wildlife sites identified within 2km of the site:
- Park Wood (SBI)
 - Big Wood (SBI)
 - Painswick Park Meadow (SBI)
 - Heald Green Marsh (SBI)
 - Blackcarr Wood & Baguley Bottoms (SBI)
- 3.6 All designated sites are located at least 0.5km from the site and have no impact pathways relevant to the site or the proposed nature of the works, particularly given the urban setting of the site. No anticipated significant effect would arise upon these statutory wildlife sites, and they are therefore scoped out from further assessment.

Habitats

Pre-existing Data

- 3.7 No records of protected and notable species or non-native invasive species were returned in the data search on or adjacent to the site.

- 3.8 The site is entirely composed of developed land with sealed surfaces as illustrated in Drawing G10890.008.

Habitat Connectivity

- 3.9 The site had limited connectivity to the wider area due to the roads and commercial and residential developments which surround the site. There is some limited habitat connectivity with sections of woodland located east of the site boundary being suitable for commuting bats and birds.

Fauna

- 3.10 The potential for the site to support legally protected and notable species has been assessed using the results of the desk study and observations made during the survey of habitats within and immediately surrounding the site. Based on these observations, the habitats present within the site were assessed for their suitability for the following species:

■ Bats

- 3.11 Further consideration is given below to the likelihood for these species to be present within the site itself. This site itself does not provide suitable habitat for any other protected or notable species beyond those listed above, and there are no/limited records of other species within the area. Due to the limited nature of the works, no other protected or notable species beyond those listed above will be affected by the development.
- 3.12 The desk study returned several records for bat species within 2km of the site boundary for the last ten full years, full details of which are provided in the Ecological Desk Study (TEP Report Ref: 10890.001).

Roost Surveys

Preliminary Roost Assessment - Structures

- 3.13 The detailed findings and a photographic record of the PRA are presented at Annex A. A summary of the categorisations of structures within the site based on their location, characteristics and PRFs is provided in Table 2 below.
- 3.14 In summary no evidence of bats or suitable hibernation sites were identified and all three structures were assessed as having negligible bat roost habitat suitability.

Table 2: Summary of the categorisations of structures within the site based on their location, characteristics and PRFs.

Structure Reference	Categorisation of Potential Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
No.16 Hale Top	Negligible
No.36 The Birtles	Negligible

Structure Reference	Categorisation of Potential Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Canopy (16 and 36)	Negligible
Coop (19-25)	Negligible

- 3.15 A large number of pigeons were observed within the precinct. However, measures are in place to deter the pigeons roosting which will also deter any bats from using these areas.

4.0 Assessment of Potential Impacts

- 4.1 This section assesses the potential impacts on ecological features associated with the site described in Section 3.0.
- 4.2 Consideration is given to the 'mitigation hierarchy', i.e. that impacts are first avoided or where this is not practicable, mitigated and as a final resort, compensated (off-set).

Wildlife Sites

- 4.3 Given the intervening distances, the urban nature of the site and surrounding area, and the small-scale nature of the proposed works, no direct or indirect impacts are anticipated to designated sites.

Habitats

- 4.4 The post-development habitats present on site will be hardstanding/buildings and therefore unchanged from the existing ecological baseline with no habitats negatively impacted.

Fauna

Bats

- 4.5 Due to the nature of the structures, there were no viable access points, and the false ceilings allowed minimal light penetration. It is therefore highly unlikely that bats are roosting in these locations and no further surveys are required.
- 4.6 Given that the site comprises exclusively developed surfaces, it offers negligible opportunities for foraging beyond insects potentially being attracted to street lighting.

5.0 Mitigation and Enhancement

- 5.1 This section describes appropriate and proportionate measures for impact avoidance, mitigation and enhancement required or recommended to address the potential ecological effects described in Section 4.0.

Habitats

- 5.2 The proposed development will not result in the loss of habitat present on site. Due to their existing limited value in supporting wildlife there are currently no apparent implications with regards to the proposed development.
- 5.3 Native shrub and herbaceous planting of locally sourced stock around the site would help offset the developed areas and serve to increase habitat connectivity. Management of introduced shrub should be designed to allow species to flower and maintain varying canopy cover where possible.

Fauna

Bats

- 5.4 No evidence of bats roosting was identified in any of the buildings and all buildings were deemed to offer negligible roosting opportunities. Therefore, no further survey or mitigation is required in relation to bats. The bitumen felt roof on the Coop building and the metal sloping fronts of the walkway canopies may provide potential resting opportunities for bats. To mitigate the extremely unlikely possibility of bats being present, best practices will be followed, including the removal of these features under the supervision of a licensed bat consultant.
- 5.5 It is recommended that bat boxes are erected upon the buildings to provide commuting and roosting opportunities for bats owing to their recorded presence in the wider area.

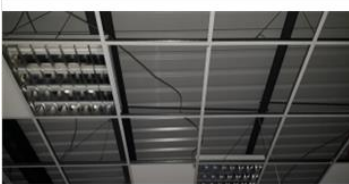
Additional Measures or Enhancement Recommended

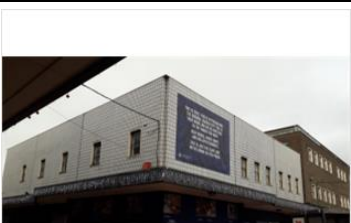
- 5.6 A large number of pigeons were observed within the buildings. Whilst no nesting was observed measures should be taken to deter pigeons from nesting in the buildings at the earliest opportunity.

Annex A: Preliminary Roost Assessment Results

Table 3: PRA findings and photographic record with potential roost habitat suitability categorisation based on their location, characteristics and PRFs.

No.16 Hale Top	Description of Exterior:	Metal pitch roof to front of building, backing onto to a flat concrete roof to the rear. Metal tiles are all tight fitting. Possible gaps under metal ridge cap but considered unsuitable for roosting bats due to poor thermal qualities and lack of grip.			
	Photos of Exterior:				
	Description of Interior:	False suspended ceiling below flat roof. The flat roof was metal panelled internally. Panels missing throughout the shop floor. Gap between ceiling and roof was inspected through the missing panels which allowed full coverage of the ceiling. No signs of bat activity were found (bats/droppings/urine staining/fur rubbing). No suitable roost crevices were identified in the area. To the rear of this unit is a kitchen area where mouse droppings were found on the suspended ceiling above the cupboard.			
	Photos of Interior:				
Categorisation of Potential Bat Roost Habitat Suitability		Negligible			

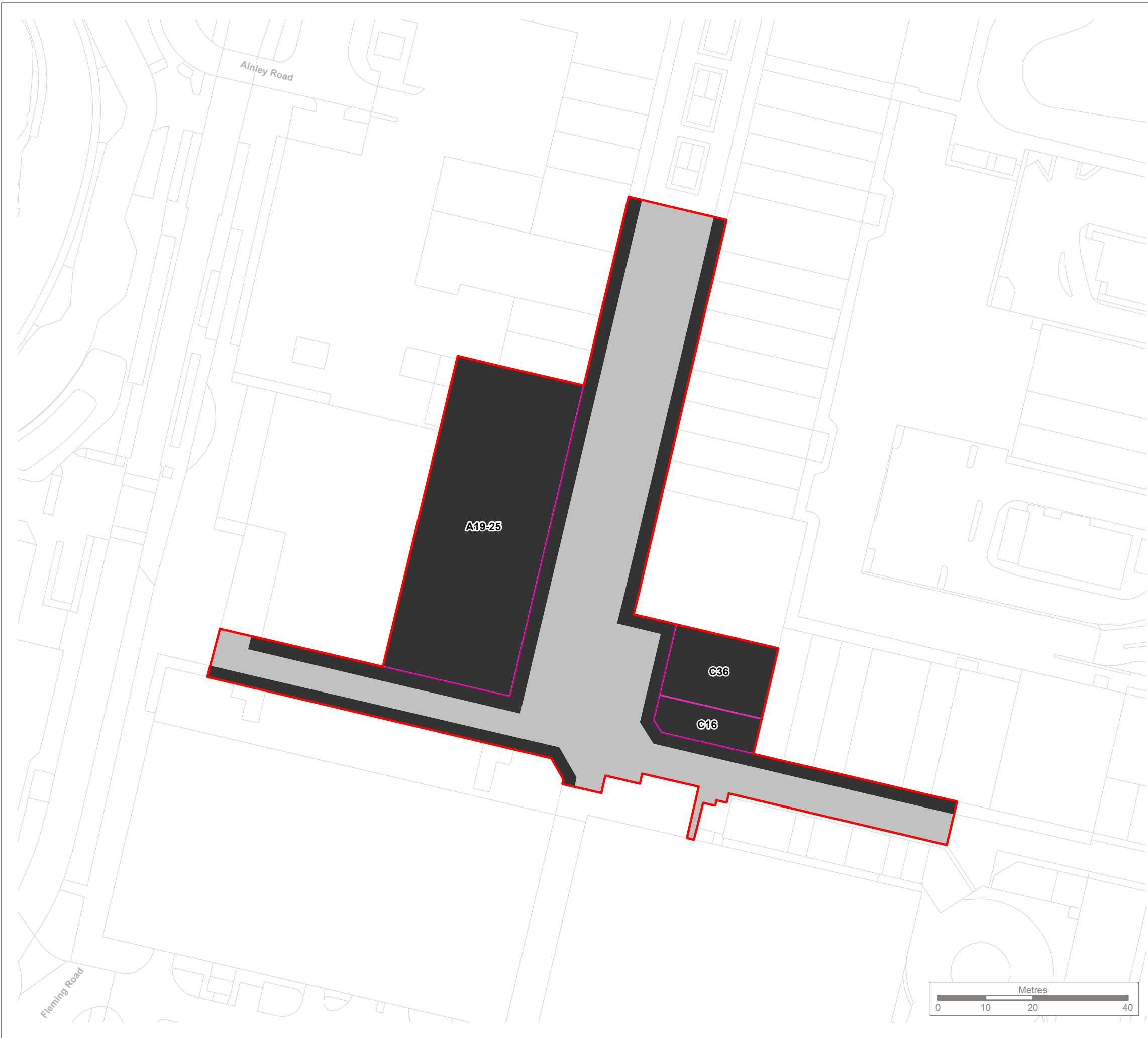
No.36 The Birtles	Description of Exterior:	Metal pitch roof to front of building, backing onto to a flat concrete roof to the rear. Metal tiles are all tight fitting. No evidence of light was observed on the inside of the roof area. Possible gaps under metal ridge cap but considered unsuitable for roosting bats due to poor thermal qualities and lack of grip. Pitched roof creates a canopy overhang above brick work front. Brick work in good condition. Anti pigeon mesh is in place under the canopy. The front wall of the shop comprises glass panels with no gaps.			
	Photos of Exterior:				
	Description of Interior:	False suspended ceiling below concrete flat roof. Panels missing throughout the shop floor. Gap between ceiling and roof was inspected through the missing panels which allowed full coverage of the ceiling. No signs of bat activity were found (bats/droppings/urine staining/fur rubbing). No suitable roost crevices were identified in the area. Walls between units constructed of breeze block with gap to panels on shop floor side. At the front of the shop the ceiling over the canopy comprises metal panels beneath the sloping metal roof.			
	Photos of Interior:				
Categorisation of Potential Bat Roost Habitat Suitability		Negligible			
	Description of Exterior:	Based on the structure of the canopy over buildings 16 and 36 the structure has a metallic sheet above the boarding. In some areas the boarding has blown due to water but there is no landing platform for bats.			

Canopy (16 and 36)	Photos of Exterior:	 		
Categorisation of Potential Bat Roost Habitat Suitability	Negligible			
Coop (19-25)	Description of Exterior:	2/3 storey flat roofed building. The flat roof is covered in bitumen felting. The exterior of the original coop building has a tiled exterior on the second floor. All the tiles were present. The ground floor is glass shop front panels that are all boarded up. The exterior of the adjoining building is brick with windows present and retail units on the ground floor that are still in use The roof of both buildings is flat roofed bitumen felted. There is a boiler house on the top of the coop building.		
	Photos of Exterior:	 		
	Description of Interior:	Shop Floor: Open showroom with two walls of windows that are now boarded up. To the rear are storage rooms and fitting rooms. As in previous buildings there is a suspended ceiling below a concrete floor. The interior walls are breezeblock with plaster board. No light is visible between the ceiling and false ceiling. There are no gaps to the outside. No evidence of bats present. First Floor: Asbestos is present in some walls of the first floor. These have been cordoned off. Large warehouse type space with heating system in ceiling, large metal pipes/vents in smooth metal to heating system. The internal wall is breezeblock. The ceiling is a combination of large and small concrete slabs. The floor is also concrete slabs. No obvious light entry other than windows. No evidence of bat presence and no bats found during survey.		

		Second Floor: Large open warehouse type space, flue/vents to heating system. Metal pipes were open and smooth but no external access. No evidence of bats or bat activity. Near the staircase a section of the wall had plasterboard but no suitable crevices were identified. Mesh grill present behind the louvred opening. Flat bitumen felting roof. No access points into the interior were identified. Internally no light visible, no crevices in the walls/ceiling. No droppings present on floor. No bats found.			
	Photos of Interior:				
					
Categorisation of Potential Bat Roost Habitat Suitability	Negligible				

Drawings

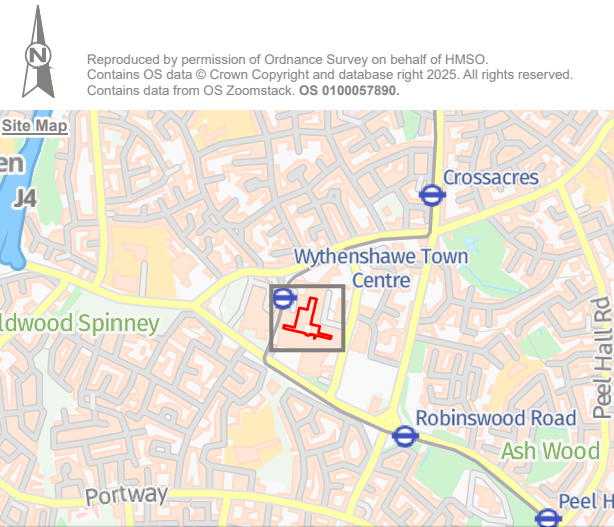
Drawing 1: Phase 1 Habitat Survey Map (Ref G10890.008)



KEY

- Site boundary
- Hardstanding
- Building
- Building surveyed for bats

Note:
The locations of habitats and habitat features are indicative.



A	Updated site boundary.	IJ	KS	30/01/2025
Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date



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Project
Wythenshawe Town Centre Regeneration

Title
Phase 1 Habitat Survey

Drawing Number
G10890.008A

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
IJ	BJ	LM	1:800 @ A3	27/01/2025

HEAD OFFICE WARRINGTON	MARKET HARBOROUGH	GATESHEAD	LONDON	CORNWALL
01925 844004 tep@tep.uk.com	01858 383120 mh@tep.uk.com	0191 605 3340 gateshead@tep.uk.com	020 3096 6050 london@tep.uk.com	01326 240081 cornwall@tep.uk.com
