

Technical Note

Project Mayfield, Manchester
Subject Mayfield Site Compound
Project no 0046688
Date 23 November 2023

Revision	Description	Issued by	Date	Approved (signature)
00	Updated ecological surveys	JR	23/11/2023	MLS

1 Introduction

Buro Happold has been appointed by Landsec U+I to undertake ecology services, including an updated preliminary roost assessment of existing buildings, of an area within the footprint of a submitted planning application for a Mayfield Site Compound located to the south east of Manchester Piccadilly Station, in central Manchester (137072/FO/2023).

The updated preliminary roost assessment was commissioned following comments received from the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) on the planning application. The buildings on site have previously been subject to survey and assessment by Buro Happold and Penny Anderson Associates in affiliation with the wider Mayfield development area, within which the proposed redline for the planning application in question sits wholly within. The comment received by GMEU, which this Technical Note seeks to address, is as follows:

"Bats

The bat assessment is dated 2016. This is no longer valid. Current guidance is that the maximum age of a report prior to a full resurvey is 3 years. Whilst the building were assessed as negligible risk, the buildings are not of a type with no risk. Bats also have been recorded roosting elsewhere on the Mayfield Site. Given Current guidance states it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development is established before the planning permission is granted (UK Government Guidance within the ODPM Government Circular 06/2005), I recommend that:

Prior to determination a updated bat assessment is carried out by a suitably experienced bat worker. The assessment should include as a minimum a visual inspection of the existing roof space for evidence of bats and exterior of the building for potential bat access points. Should the property be assessed as more than low risk, further information will be required prior to determination."

This Technical Note has been prepared to present the findings of an updated ecological site walkover and preliminary roost assessment survey conducted on 16th November 2023.

1.1 Site context

The Mayfield Site Compound, hereafter referred to as the 'proposed development', is situated in central Manchester to the south east of the Manchester Piccadilly train station (OS central grid reference: SJ 85317 97524). The development area, hereafter referred to as the 'site', is located wholly within the wider redline of the Mayfield development area and is located immediately to the east and south of Mayfield Park. The site is divided north-south by Hoyle Street into two areas (as illustrated in Figure 1-1). The site is bordered by the A635 and a line of urban trees to the southeast, the raised railway to the north and northeast, a recently regenerated area of Mayfield Park and a cleared area of land to the west. The wider landscape is dominated by dense urban development, with industrial and residential buildings and busy roads.

This Design Note has been prepared for the sole benefit, use and information of Landsec U+I for the purposes set out in the Design Note or instructions commissioning it and shall be subject to the express contract terms with Landsec U+I. BH assumes no liability or responsibility for any reliance placed on this Design Note by any third party. All concepts and proposals are copyright © 1976 – 2023 Buro Happold. All rights reserved. Issued in commercial confidence.

The current development proposal comprises the site's clearance and the demolition of the buildings for a temporary construction compound. It intends to provide an interim use of this part of the Mayfield development site, where built plots are not intended to come forward until later in the phasing programme for the development. The proposed compound area is intended to support the construction of the Phase 1 development plots within Mayfield as well as other neighbouring infrastructure developments until July 2030.

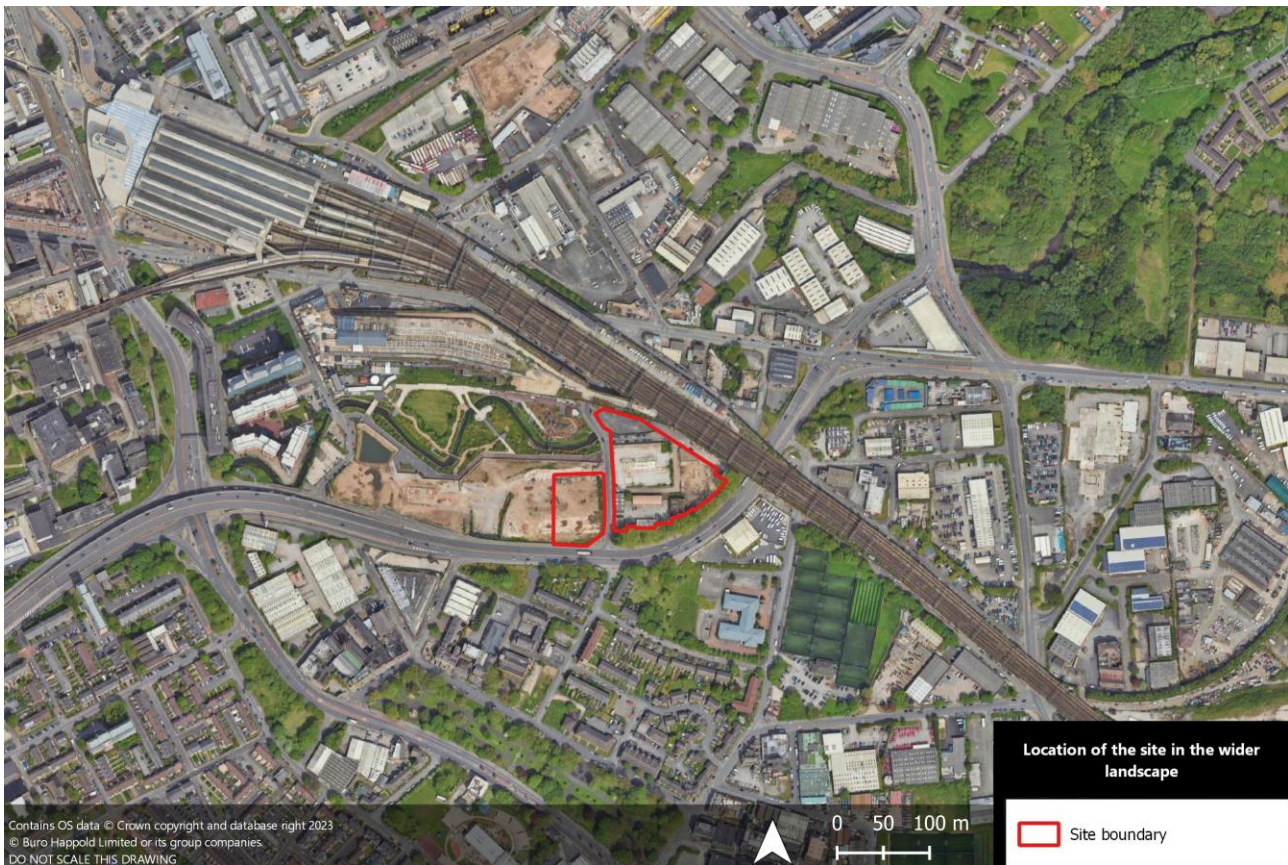


Figure 1-1 Location of the site in the wider landscape

1.2 Methods

1.2.1 Desk study

The methods included an updated desk study comprising an ecological data search on the open-access Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website for statutory designated sites, priority habitats and records of granted protected species licenses within 1km of the site. In addition, the previous ecological survey work carried out for the Mayfield development on site was also reviewed and considered as part of this assessment. The reviewed documents included:

- Buro Happold Engineering (November, 2017) Ecological Assessment and Bat Inspection;
- Buro Happold Engineering (November, 2017) Bat Survey Report;
- Penny Anderson Associates (March, 2019) Ecological Assessment;
- Penny Anderson Associates (March, 2019) Bat Inspection and Emergence Survey Report – Building B2 and Culverts B24/B26; and
- Buro Happold (June, 2023) Update Ecology Strategy with Biodiversity Net Gain – Phase 1.

1.2.2 Updated field surveys

The updated field survey was conducted on 16th November 2023 by two experienced ecologists from Buro Happold, including a Natural England Bat Class 1 Licence holder to undertake the updated preliminary roost assessment survey of the buildings. The survey was undertaken in good weather conditions, with the day being dry throughout.

The field surveys included an ecological site walkover to assess any changes in habitats since the last habitat survey, an updated roost assessment of the remaining buildings within the site, and an updated appraisal of the site for its potential to support other protected, priority or notable species.

The entire site was walked by both ecologists, noting changes from the previous ecological surveys and identifying where further habitat establishment may have occurred. Consideration was made throughout for the potential of any habitats within the site to support protected, priority or notable species and to identify any potential ecological risks that may need to be considered with site clearance for the proposed development and use of the site as a compound area.

The buildings were assessed in accordance with the latest available bat survey guidelines¹ by an experienced and licenced ecologist and a supporting assistant ecologist. The survey made use of binoculars and high-powered torches to support the investigation of any potential roosting features identified, in accordance with the licence held.

1.3 Limitations

Not all buildings were open and internally accessible during the bat roost assessment survey. This is not considered a significant limitation to the survey as those that were open exhibited that the internal spaces are typically open to the roof. Additionally, these open roof voids identified that the structure is typically steel framed with composite, or other material, corrugated sheet type roofing, with limited roosting potential for bats. From external assessment, all buildings were identified to have similar roofing sheets, and so roosting potential of the roof space was considered likely to be similar across all of the buildings.

The central area of the site was not accessible due to the enclosing fencing not providing an access gate. The area was visible through the fence and appeared to include unsealed surface supporting sparse buddleia and ephemeral species assemblages similar to other accessible areas of the site during the survey. Therefore, this is not considered to be a significant limitation to the survey results.

No other limitations were encountered during the survey.

2 Results

2.1 Desk study

2.1.1 Designated sites

Two statutory designated sites are recorded within 1km of the site boundary. Stretches of the Rochdale Canal, designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). There are no other statutory designated sites within a 1km search area for the site.

Previous reports relating to the Mayfield development identify that there are two Sites of Biological Interest (SBIs) within 1km from the site – Rochdale Canal, Stott's Lane - Ducie Street Basin SBI and Ashton Canal SBI. The Rochdale Canal provides habitat for regionally and internationally important species such as floating water plantain *Luronium natans*, and the Ashton Canal is recognised as important for its submerged aquatic flora.

It is considered unlikely that the proposed use of the site as a compound by Mayfield Site would result in adverse impacts on these statutory and non-statutory designated sites, and so they are not considered further within this Technical Note.

2.1.2 Habitats

The data search did not return any priority habitats within the site boundary. The priority habitats within 1km of the site include deciduous woodland located about 250m south of the site as well as the River Medlock, which is both a UK and a Manchester priority habitat. The river is culverted beneath the northern portion of the site, but has recently experienced enhancement to its previously channelised form as part of the establishment of the Mayfield Park, immediately to the east of the site boundary.

¹ Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

The previous habitat surveys undertaken for the wider Mayfield development area, the most recent of which was in 2019, identified a number of habitats across the site area considered in this Technical Note. Self-established habitats across the site included broadleaved woodland, introduced shrub and ephemeral/ short perennial vegetation on unsealed surfaces (Figure 2-1). The site was otherwise found to be dominated by hard standing, buildings and spoil storage in the north and west of the site.

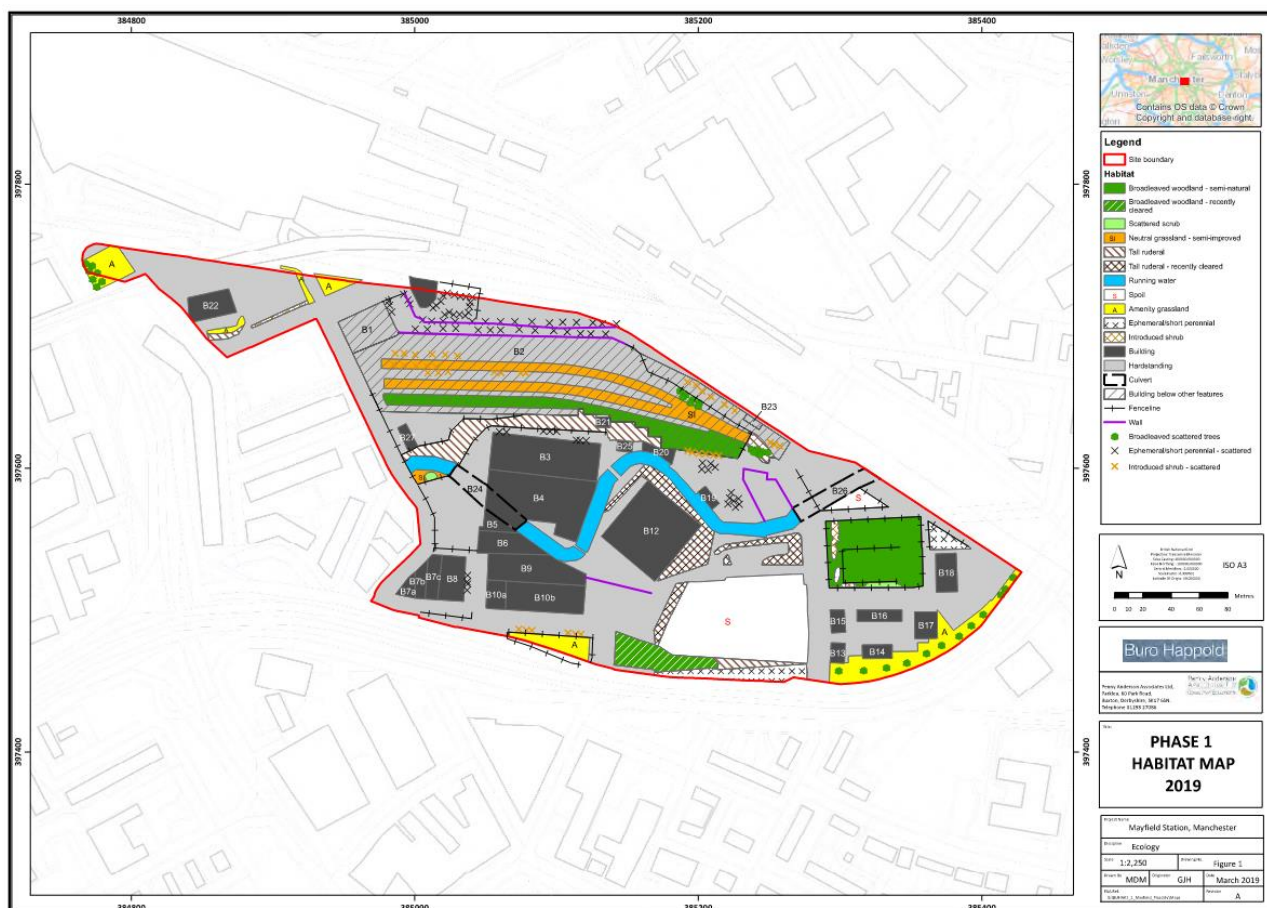


Figure 2-1 2019 habitat survey results for the wider Mayfield development, demonstrating broadleaved woodland, introduced shrub and ephemeral/ short perennial vegetation with the proposed Mayfield Site Compound area.

The creation of the Mayfield Park, which opened in September 2022, and the associated improvements to the River Medlock corridor, provide new ecologically valuable habitats to support a number of local and UK biodiversity priority species, including bat, bird and invertebrate species. The habitats created include urban green space, a priority habitat within the Manchester BAP. Further, the creation of the Mayfield Park delivered a network of green infrastructure, including landscaping with native species and replacement tree planting, incorporating wildlife planting for pollinators and providing habitat features. Whilst the Mayfield Park is offsite, it is in close proximity to the northern west boundary of the application area.

2.1.3 Species

A record of a bat species - common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, was returned about 200m south from the site on the MAGIC data search. The Mayfield Regeneration Development Bat Surveys conducted in 2017 recorded the presence of multiple common pipistrelle bats and bat roosts within the Mayfield site and a single Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii* commuting along the River Medlock corridor. All roosts were recorded outside of the site boundary assessed within this Technical Note. The river corridor west of the site boundary was considered to be the most important habitat for bats within the survey area. Bats were recorded foraging along the river corridor and occasionally entering the culvert in the north of the site. Also, a day roost for approximately five common pipistrelle bats, was found in the culvert within the Mayfield boundary. Roosts have since been affected on site by the use of the Depot building and the de-culverting of the River Medlock. Mitigation roosting spaces are in place across the Mayfield Park, including two boxes mounted on the eastern end of the Depot building and within the restored river wall structure of the River Medlock.

Previously, no evidence of roosting bats was found within the buildings that are on site, and the buildings were considered to offer negligible potential at the time of the previous survey (see Figure 2-2). The previous reports describe

the on site buildings as modern structures of brick and metal with no features suitable for use by bats on the interior or exterior.

The site also includes the Hoyle Street culvert. Surveys in 2017 identified that the culvert may be used by roosting pipistrelle bats, however a detailed inspection of the culvert in 2019 failed to identify roosting spaces. A cautious approach has since been applied to the culvert to minimise potential disturbance from construction activity works in case that a roost is present somewhere within the structure.

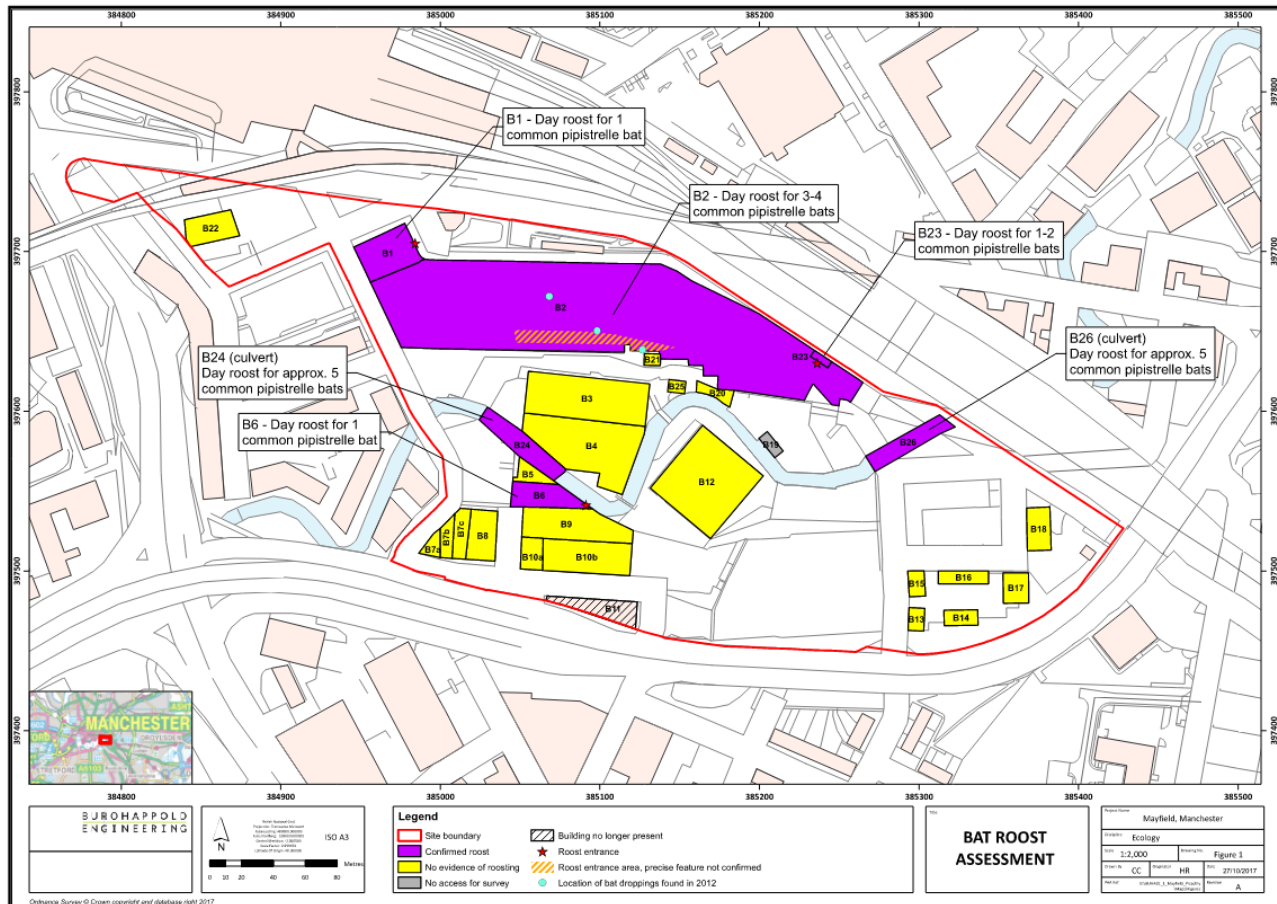


Figure 2-2 The 2017 bat survey results plan of identified bat roosts within the wider Mayfield Development area.

The results of other previous ecological surveys for the Mayfield development, identified habitats suitable for foraging and nesting birds. These included semi-natural habitats, some buildings, and scattered trees. Because of the brownfield nature of the baseline site, it was considered to have a suitable habitat for the black redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*, a rare breeder in the UK known to occur near the Mayfield site, although targeted surveys did not identify any on site. Birds that were recorded on site during breeding bird surveys undertaken in 2017 were generally common and widespread species that are often associated with urban, or more developed, areas. Such species included wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*, dunnock *Prunella modularis*, blackbird *Turdus merula*, great tit *Parus major*, blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*, robin *Erithacus rubecula* and feral pigeon *Columba livia domestica*. Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* and bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*, were also recorded flying over the site, but were not considered to use the site.

The development of the Mayfield Park included the installation of new bat boxes within parts of the retained river wall, as well as features to support wagtails, kingfishers, generalist bird species and invertebrates and significantly increased the habitats suitable for many species.

2.2 Field survey

2.2.1 Habitats

Due to interim works that have been undertaken on site, associated with the construction of Mayfield Park and activation of the wider Mayfield development, the site was found to have a lower ecological value than what was previously recorded in habitat surveys undertaken to support the Mayfield planning application (see section 2.1.2). Habitats

removed as part of the Mayfield development have approved mitigation in place as part of the development proposals submitted within the previous planning application relating to the site, which is in part delivered by the Mayfield Park, and therefore, does not need to be considered as part of this planning application.

During the field survey, it was found that the habitats previously recorded on site as discussed in the desk study section, have largely been removed. This includes the area of broadleaved woodland in the centre of the site, which is now a cleared site dominated by an unsealed substrate with scattered ephemeral vegetation growth in places, and some buddleia establishing (Figure 2-3). This is typical across the northern, eastern, central and western portions of the site which have been cleared and are no longer in active continuous use. The northern and western sections of the site (Figures 2-4 and 2-5, respectively) do show signs of occasional use as car parking and material storage areas.

The western area of the site still has remnant use as an area of spoil deposition and an area where waste from park management and maintenance appears to be stored and managed. Spoil deposition is not at the rate of the previous site use as a recycling plant area, although there is clear signs of ongoing disturbance from vehicles through the area. There is a small strip of dense buddleia scrub that has established between two fence lines on the border of the western parcel of the site and Hoyle Street (Figure 2-6).

The southern area of the site, which contains the remaining buildings on site and is otherwise dominated by hard standing, remains in active use at the time of the survey. The building units continue to be occupied by a variety of industry uses. There is some vegetation growth to the north of the building area, where it borders Rachel Street and a single tree is present, which will be lost as part of the proposed development (Figure 2-7).

The line of mature trees and amenity grassland to the south of the site, bordering the Mancunian Way, will be retained and protected outside of the site boundary (Figure 2-8).



Figure 2-3 The central area of land that previously contained self-established broadleaved woodland, which has since been cleared.



Figure 2-4 The northern area of the site, currently in use for occasional car parking and storage within the arches.



Figure 2-5 The western area of the site, where some spoil remains. The area appears to be occasionally used to support maintenance and management of the Mayfield Park.



Figure 2-6 An area of dense buddleia growth between two fence lines in the western area of the site, adjacent to Hoyle Street



Figure 2-7 Vegetation growth, including a single semi-mature tree, along the building area boundary with Rachel Street



Figure 2-8 Line of mature trees to the south of the building area which will be retained and protected outside of the proposed development

2.2.2 Species

The buildings on site were re-assessed for their potential to support roosting bats. As identified in section 2.1.3, buildings B13 – B18 fall within the site boundary, all of which were previously identified to have negligible potential to support roosting bats at the time of the 2017 bat roost inspection surveys.

Since the previous surveys, building B18 has been demolished. Buildings B13 – B17 were reassessed, and all were considered to continue to have negligible potential to support roosting bats. All buildings remain in use and have limited roosting opportunities internally or on the external elevations of the buildings. The construction type, with metal cladding on the upper portions of the buildings (Figure 2-9), provide little suitable roosting space. Where there is exposed brick in the lower sections of the elevations, the mortar is generally in good condition with no features identified that are likely to provide access to a suitable cavity space for roosting.

The units that were open at the time of the survey confirmed that they remain open to the roof structure. Across the buildings, all roofs continue to be covered with corrugated roofing sheets of either composite or metal materials, affording little roosting potential for bats. Where visible, several of the roofs were also noted to include light panels, which creates a light environment within the buildings themselves, making the internal space unsuitable for roosting (Figure 2-10). It is therefore considered that all buildings on site continue to offer negligible potential for roosting bats.

The bat roost assessment also included a survey of the railway structure that forms the northern boundary of the site. This isn't recorded within the previous Mayfield development bat inspection surveys. The archways associated with the railway structure were largely damp, with numerous pipes draining water from the tracks above into the arches and down several of the walls of the structure (Figure 2-11). These areas were considered to offer negligible potential for roosting bats due to the inherently wet nature of any potential roosting access/ egress points here. In drier areas of the arches, some gaps were identified between where the layers of the arches meet without mortar (Figure 2-12). These could provide roosting space, although no evidence of roosting, such as droppings, was found beneath the openings. Additionally, there are some areas where there is missing mortar on the elevational brick work, which could afford a cavity roosting space (Figure 2-13). It is considered that these features have low potential to support roosting bats.

With regards to other species, the site generally has limited potential to support other species of note. A birds' nest was noted in the tree to be removed on the border of Rachel Street (Figure 2-7). The dense buddleia on the edge of Hoyle Street and the western parcel of the site may also have potential to support nesting birds due to the size and density of the vegetation growth here.

No other evidence or potential for protected, priority or notable species was identified during the survey.



Figure 2-9 The typical construction type of buildings B13-17.



Figure 2-10 Illustrating how the buildings are open to the roof and include lighting panels



Figure 2-11 Damp areas beneath the arches in the north of the site due to open pipes draining the trackway above.

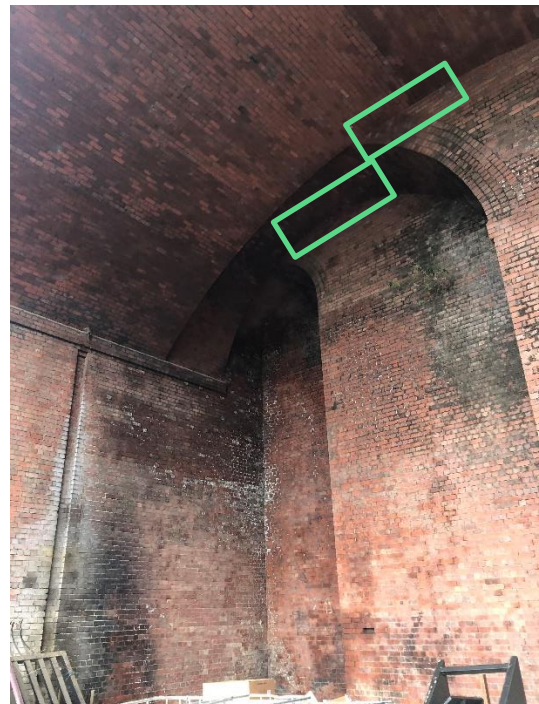


Figure 2-12 The location of gaps where the layered arches meet (in green)

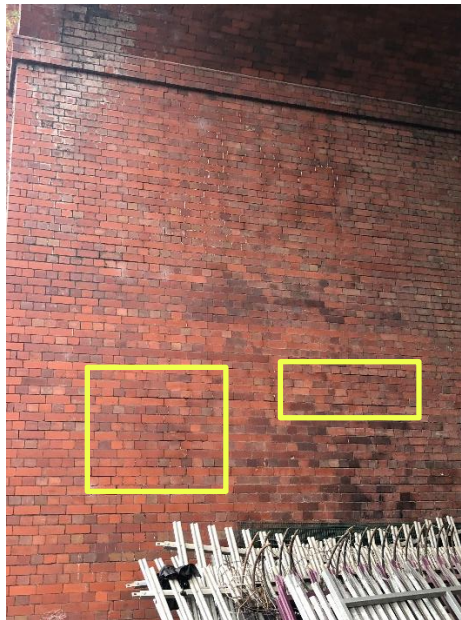


Figure 2-13 Gaps between brickwork due to missing mortar (in yellow)

3 Conclusion

The site currently has limited ecological value due to previously recorded habitats having been cleared as part of the works associated with the Mayfield development. Additionally, buildings B13 – B17 were considered to have negligible potential to support roosting bats, and so there is considered to be limited with regards to the demolition of the buildings as part of the proposed development.

It is therefore considered that there a limited ecological risks associated with the proposed development of the site and proposed use as a Mayfield Site compound area. The following outline mitigation actions that are considered appropriate for the intended use of the site:

- The railway arches on the northern boundary of the site were considered to support features that have low potential to support roosting bats. The arches will be retained as part of the works due to their association with the active railway structure. This area of the site is already used for material storage, with any potential roosts in the arches exposed to the associated disturbance of vehicle movement to transport materials in and out of the archways currently. Additionally, the potential roosting features were identified to be a good height above the material storage, and so is considered to be unlikely to be inadvertently blocked as a result of future use of the site. The only potential risk that is considered with regards to these potential roosting features is regard to security or other works-related lighting which may be required as part of the site use. If this is required, it should be designed to not illuminate the archways, and maintain a dark corridor along the face of the railway arches, which may form part of a commuting corridor for bats locally, although the Hoyle Street culvert beneath this part of the site is likely to provide the main commuting route in this location.
- Clearance of the tree on site and dense buddleia vegetation should be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (March – August inclusive) to avoid the potential for damage or destruction of active nests which would be unlawful under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- Site clearance and operation should seek to minimise indirect impacts on the adjacent Mayfield Park which may arise from uncontrolled noise, dust and lighting. It is considered that standard good construction and operational practice as would otherwise be required, would satisfy these requirements. No lighting columns, for security or otherwise, should be directed in a way that creates additional illumination on the Mayfield Park and, in particular, the River Medlock corridor.

It is considered that by applying the above mitigation actions, the proposed use of the site as a compound to support Mayfield Site's activities will not result in an adverse impact on ecology locally.