

63-65 Upper Chorlton Road,
Whalley Range

Ecological Appraisal

2023



RACHEL
HACKING
ECOLOGY

Client	Terra Nova Developments Limited
Project Title	63-65 Upper Chorlton Road, Whalley Range
Project Reference	RHE.3856.01
Project Leader	Simon Holden
Contact Details	simon@rachelhackingecology.co.uk

	Name	Position	Date
Author	Megan Johnson	Junior Ecologist	19/07/2023
Reviewer	Simon Holden	Associate Ecologist	28/09/2023
Revision			



RACHEL
HACKING
ECOLOGY

The Stables
Paradise Wharf
Ducie Street
Manchester
M1 2JN

0161 465 8971

www.rachelhackingecology.co.uk

mail@rachelhackingecology.co.uk



RACHEL
HACKING
ECOLOGY

Report Contents

Executive Summary	3
1. Introduction	4
2. Methods	6
3. Results	9
4. Assessment	15
5. Recommendations	16
Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation	18
Appendix 2: Survey Data	21



Executive Summary

Development Details

The client is proposing a development at 63-65 Upper Chorlton Road, Whalley Range M16 7RQ, hereafter referred to as the 'site'.

This report describes the ecological features of the site and its surroundings and assesses the potential impacts of the development on the ecological interest. Recommendations are provided so that the development is compliant with biodiversity policy and legislation.

Ecological Interest

The site has a moderate level of ecological interest. Ecological features of interest include the presence of a transitional roost used by a small number of Common Pipistrelle bats, as well as trees and shrubs that offer potential to support nesting birds.

Outcomes

If works will affect the roof/facia a bat mitigation licence will be required to avoid the risk of an offence.

Mitigation measures are identified to ensure the proposed development can be undertaken with minimal risk to bats.

Enhancement opportunities are identified to demonstrate compliance with planning policy requirements.



1. Introduction

1.1 Project Brief

- 1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2023 by Terra Nova Developments Limited to carry out an Ecological Appraisal of land at 63-65 Upper Chorlton Road, Whalley Range, hereafter referred to as the 'site'. The site is located at O.S. grid reference: SJ 82797 95624 (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Map showing the location of the site

- 1.1.2 The site comprises a large detached residential dwelling located in an urban area surrounded by residential properties with mature trees and gardens.

Description of Development

- 1.1.3 The site will be the subject of a planning application for the redevelopment of the site.

Relevant Planning History

- 1.1.4 Previous planning applications have been approved for work to trees located on the site (Ref.: 109101/TCA/2015/S1; 114801/TCA/2016; and 118564/TCA/2017).
- 1.1.5 Planning permission was approved for the conversion of bedsit flats into self-contained flats and construction of disabled access ramp at the front of the site in 2000 (Ref. No: 059644/FO/SOUTH1/00).
- 1.1.6 Planning permission was approved for the conversion of two houses into eight two-person living units in 1984 (Ref. No: 20900).

1.2 Scope of Work

1.2.1 The Client commissioned Rachel Hacking Ecology to carry out the following works:

- Desk-based study to obtain details of designated sites within a specified search area.
- Record the extent, type, and condition of habitats within the site.
- Search for signs of protected species and assessment of the potential of habitats and features to support protected and notable species.
- Undertake dusk emergence bat surveys to establish the status of roosting bats and inform mitigation requirements.



2. Methods

2.1 Desk Study

- 2.1.1 The Magic Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside) was interrogated for the presence of Statutory Designated Sites (and European Protected Species licences) within 2km radius of the site.
- 2.1.2 The Impact Risk Zones for any SSSI within 5km of the site was checked to determine whether the Local Planning Authority will need to consult with Natural England.

2.2 Field Survey

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.2.1 In accordance with JNCC guidelines¹ the site was walked over and the habitats and features of ecological interest were mapped and described. Habitats and features of particular interest were target noted.
- 2.2.2 During the walkover habitat and features were assessed for their suitability to support of protected and notable species in accordance with CIEEM guidelines². Field signs of protected, notable, and invasive non-native species, if encountered, were mapped, and described.

Daytime Bat Survey

- 2.2.3 The exterior of the site was surveyed from the ground using binoculars and a high-powered torch. Features offering potential access to roosting bats were recorded. Such features may include suitable gaps in roof coverings, gaps behind external cladding/facia and gaps in masonry.
- 2.2.4 Evidence indicating the presence of roosting bats was also searched for. This may include bat droppings on walls, windows or on the ground below roost entrances or staining from fur oil around roost entry points.
- 2.2.5 Trees on the site were given a ground-level assessment, searching for Potential Roosting Features (PRFs), such as flaking bark, woodpecker holes, knot holes and limb splits.

¹ JNCC (2010). *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A Technique for Environmental Audit*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough

² CIEEM (2017). *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Bat Emergence Surveys

- 2.2.6 Two dusk emergence surveys were undertaken in accordance with current guidelines³. Three surveyors monitored the building, to ensure complete coverage for any emerging bats. The emergence surveys began 15 minutes before sunset and continued for 90 minutes after sunset. The surveyors used Echometer Touch 2 Pro and Bat Scanner bat detectors to record the echolocations of bats.

2.3 Site Visit Information

Surveyor Details

- 2.3.1 The Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey and Daytime Bat survey was undertaken by Simon Holden BSc (Hons), MCIEEM (Associate Ecologist) and Megan Johnson BSc (Hons) (Junior Ecologist) on 19th July 2023. Simon has 18 years' professional experience and a Level 2 class survey licence for bats (ref: 2019-42937-CLS-CLS).
- 2.3.2 The bat emergence surveys were undertaken by Megan Johnson (Junior Ecologist), Samuel Adshead and Steve Smith (Assistant Ecologists) on 15th August and 6th September 2023. All surveyors are experienced and trained in nocturnal bat surveys.

Site Conditions

- 2.3.3 The weather during the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey was dry, slightly cloudy, and warm.
- 2.3.4 Conditions during the dusk emergence surveys are shown at Appendix 2.

Surveyor Positions

- 2.3.5 Figure 2 shows the locations of the surveyors (yellow stars) during the surveys.

³ Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.



Figure 2 showing the surveyor positions (yellow stars)

3. Results

3.1 Survey Constraints

- 3.1.1 Field survey results are valid for a limited duration and no investigation can provide a complete description and characterisation of a site. The composition of habitats and species can change depending on environmental variables and the mobility of species, so the results of a study become less reliable over time. In some cases, surveys that are 3 years old may be acceptable for a project assuming that habitats have not significantly changed in the intervening period, but for protected species it is likely that survey data will need to be no more than 18 months old.
- 3.1.2 Survey constraints and how these were addressed are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Survey constraints and mitigated response.	
Constraint	Mitigated Response
No internal access was available during the survey. It is possible that evidence of roosting bats may have been unrecorded.	The assessment concluded that the building offers low potential to support roosting bats. A dusk emergence survey was recommended to establish the status of bats.

3.2 Designated Sites

- 3.2.1 No statutory or non-statutory designated sites were identified within the study area.
- 3.2.2 The site is not within an Impact Risk Zone.

3.3 Habitats

Bare Ground/Ephemeral/short perennial

- 3.3.1 Hardstanding (tarmac) dominates the site, as the access drive, parking area and a large portion towards rear of the site (see Photograph 1). This is developed land/sealed surface.
- 3.3.2 Ephemeral/short perennial vegetation has established over areas of bare ground, including unsealed ground which dominates the southeastern side of the rear of the site.





Photograph 1 showing bare ground to the rear of the site

Scrub

- 3.3.3 Patches of continuous scrub are present at the front and rear of the site (see Photograph 2). Species include Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* Agg., Buddleja *Buddleja davidii*, Holly *Ilex aquifolium* and Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*.



Photograph 2 showing the scrub located at the front of the site

Scattered Trees

- 3.3.4 Several scattered trees are present on site including mature and semi-mature trees (see Photograph 3). A mature Common Lime *Tilia x europaea* covered in Ivy stands at the boundary of the site toward the front of the building. Beech *Fagus sylvatica* trees line the southern boundaries of the site. Three tagged willow trees are located in the southeastern corner of the site. Other species include Ash and Holly.



Photograph 3 showing the scattered trees

3.4 Species

Bats

- 3.4.1 The building is a two-storey detached building of brick construction, with a pitched slate tiled roof (see Photograph 4). The brickwork is intact and there are three dormers at the front of the building and wooden bargeboards on gables.
- 3.4.2 From the front elevation several slipped and damaged roof tiles were recorded (see Photograph 4) as well as lifted metal flashing, providing potential access points.



Photograph 4 showing the front elevation

- 3.4.3 Gaps are present between the fascia and masonry on the sides of the building (see Photographs 5 and 6) providing potential access points.



Photograph 5 showing gaps behind the wooden fascia on the north elevation



Photograph 6 showing gaps under the fascia on the south elevation

- 3.4.4 On the rear of the property the brickwork and roof tiles are intact. The windows are well sealed however several open windows were recorded (see Photograph 7).



Photograph 7 showing the rear elevation and an open window

- 3.4.5 A basement is present, but this is fitted with steel grilles and no access points were recorded.
- 3.4.6 No PRFs were recorded on any of the trees on site.

Nesting Birds

- 3.4.7 The site supports suitable nesting habitat for birds, within the mature shrubs and trees.

Bat Emergence Surveys

- 3.4.8 During the first survey two Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* bats were seen emerging from near the eaves at left corner of the the southeastern elevation of the building (see Photograph 8). No bats were recorded emerging during the second survey.



Photograph 8 showing the emergence locations on the southeastern elevation

- 3.4.9 Moderate levels of bat activity were recorded around the site during the surveys with Common Pipistrelle recorded foraging and commuting around the yard area. Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and Noctule *Nyctalus noctule* were also heard in the surrounding area.

4. Assessment

4.1 Impacts on Designated Sites

- 4.1.1 No impacts to any statutory or non-statutory designated sites are anticipated due to the absence of any impact pathways.

4.2 Impacts on Habitats

Bare Ground/Ephemeral/Short perennial and Continuous scrub

- 4.2.1 These habitats are of negligible ecological importance. Their loss is not significant, and no specific mitigation is required.

Scattered Trees

- 4.2.2 It is assumed the trees on site will be retained. In the absence of mitigation there is potential for trees to be damaged during construction through soil compaction or physical damage from machinery.

4.3 Impacts on Species

Bats

- 4.3.1 The surveys indicate that the site supports a transitional roost used by two Common Pipistrelles. This species is common and widespread and a transitional roost is of importance at the site level.
- 4.3.2 Should the proposed development include works to the roof or facia this could result in impacts to bats and their roosts, should these be present. Impacts could include individual bats being killed or injured and roosts could be damaged or destroyed.

Birds

- 4.3.3 In the absence of mitigation, clearance of scrub and shrubs could result in impacts to nesting birds, should these be present.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Mitigation Measures

Bats

- 5.1.1 **Should the proposed development involve works to the roof or fascia, a licence will be required prior to works to avoid the risk of an offence.** A licence can only be obtained once planning permission has been granted. The site meets the criteria for registration under the Bat Mitigation Class licence.
- 5.1.2 Mitigation measures will include the following:
- Prior to licensable works, a licensed ecologist will deliver a toolbox talk to the contractors to ensure they are aware of the status of bats, where bats may be found and what to do should a bat be encountered.
 - A bat box will be installed on a suitable retained tree on site.
 - The licensed ecologist will undertake a check for bats and supervise the soft demolition of potential roosting features, this will include stripping the roof tiles by hand.
 - Should any bats be present, the licensed ecologist will capture them and transfer them to a bat box.
 - Once the ecologist is satisfied that there are no bats present, works can continue unsupervised.
 - In the event that a bat is encountered at any time during unsupervised works, the works will pause and the ecologist will be contacted and will attend site to advise on how to proceed.

Habitats

- 5.1.3 Retained trees should be protected by fencing in accordance with a Tree Protection Plan produced by an arboricultural consultant.

Nesting Birds

- 5.1.4 Impacts on nesting birds should be avoided by carrying out any scrub or shrub removal outside of the bird breeding season (March - August). If vegetation has to be cleared during the bird breeding season checks immediately before clearance by a suitably qualified ecologist will be required. If nesting activity is detected work in that area will need to stop until the ecologist considers that nesting activity is finished.



Enhancement Opportunities

- 5.1.5 Bat boxes and bird boxes could be installed on suitable trees to enhance the value of the site for wildlife. A Hedgehog house could be installed along the boundary to the rear of the site. Any new fencing should include Hedgehog gaps (13cm x 13cm) to enable Hedgehogs to move through the site. These measures would demonstrate compliance with planning policy requirements for development to deliver enhancements for wildlife.
- 5.1.6 This report is considered to be valid for two years. After this, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted to assess its validity. An assessment update may be required.



Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021) describes the Government's planning policy for England and how it should be applied. Within this framework, the requirements in relation to biodiversity are included within several policies. The two most relevant to individual planning decisions are Paragraphs 174 and 180, shown below:

- 174. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
 - a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
 - b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
 - c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
 - d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures; etc...
- 180. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:
 - a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
 - b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
 - c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and



- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

Legislation

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CRow Act 2000) includes the notification and confirmation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). SSSIs can be notified for their floral, faunal, geological, or physiographical features. Protection against damaging operations and management of SSSIs is also included within the Act. Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) are zones around an SSSI account for the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified and identify development proposal which could have adverse impacts.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CRow Act 2000) protects native animals, plants and habitats. Under the Act it is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild animal listed on Schedule 5 and it is an offence to interfere with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturb animals occupying such places. The Act prohibits picking, uprooting or destroy any wild plant (or any attached seed or spore) listed in Schedule 8.

European Protected Species (EPS) such as bats, Hazel Dormouse, Otter, Natterjack Toad, Smooth Snake, Sand Lizard and Great Crested Newt are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CRow Act 2000) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The Acts make it an offence to:

- a) Deliberately capture, injure or kill an EPS;
- b) Deliberately impair an EPS's ability to survive, breed, reproduce, rear or nurture young; to hibernate or migrate; or significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the EPS.
- c) Possess or control live or dead EPS or any part of, or anything derived from a EPS;
- d) Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of an EPS;
- e) Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place that is used for shelter or protection by an EPS;
- f) Intentionally or recklessly disturb a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection that is occupied by an EPS.

All common herptiles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CRow Act 2000). Grass Snake, Slow Worm, Common Lizard, Adder are protected against intentional killing or injury.



Common Frog, Common Toad, Smooth Newt and Palmate Newt is protected against sale. In addition, all British reptiles, Common toad and Great Crested Newt are listed as Species of Principal Importance.

All nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage, or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb a species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act while they are nest building or at or near a nest with eggs or young, or to disturb the dependent young.

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 makes it an offence to wilfully, or to attempt to kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a Badger, or intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett. Interference of a sett includes disturbing badgers during occupation of a sett, or damaging or destroying a sett, or obstructing access to the sett.

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 places a duty on every public authority to have regard to conserving biodiversity. Section 41 of the same Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitats that are of 'Principal Importance' for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. The Secretary of State must take steps, as appear reasonably practicable, to further the conservation of those living organisms and habitats in any list published under this section. The list of species and habitats of principal importance currently includes 943 species and 56 habitats. These are the species and habitats found in England which are regarded as conservation priorities under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework

The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 protect 'important' hedgerows from destruction or damage. A hedgerow is 'important' if it (a) has existed for 30 years or more; and (b) satisfies at least one of the criteria listed in Part II of Schedule 1 of the Regulations. Under the Regulations, it is against the law to remove or destroy 'important' hedgerows unless permitted by the local planning authority.



Appendix 2: Survey Data

Table 2. Results from dusk emergence survey 1				
Survey Type	Date	Average Temp (°C)	Sunset	Weather
Dusk Emergence	15/08/2023	16	20:38	Mild, Slightly Cloudy
Results				
Two Common Pipistrelle recorded emerging from the left corner of the eaves on the southeastern elevation of the building at 20:56.				
Intermittent foraging activity from a number of Common pipistrelle bats between 20:56 and 21:50.				
Soprano Pipistrelle heard in the surrounding area at 21:39, 21:46 and 21:56.				
Noctule heard in the surrounding area at 21:26, 21:27 and 21:31.				

Table 3. Results from dusk emergence survey 2				
Survey Type	Date	Average Temp (°C)	Sunset	Weather
Dusk Emergence	06/09/2023	24	19:47	Dry, still, humid.
Results				
Sporadic foraging activity by up to two Common Pipistrelle bats between 20:14 and 21:11.				
No bats emerged.				