

Charles Street

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal





Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

Charles Street, Manchester

Reference:81-566-R1-2

Date: December 2023



PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL REPORT

Charles Street,
Manchester

Prepared for:
Gardiner & Theobald LLP

Report Ref: 81-566-R1-2
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Site Address	Charles Street, Manchester, M1 7DE
Coordinates	E 384238, N 397487
Site Area	Approximately 0.037 ha
Current Site Use and Adjacent Site Use	The site comprised an area of hardstanding that was colonised by vegetation in parts. The site is currently part of an active building site, with a single-storey portacabin (the site office) and associated construction equipment within the site.
Designated Sites	No designated sites lie within 1 km of the site. However, the site lies within the Impact Risk Zones of Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which lies approximately 5.9 km north-west of site. No significant increase in air pollution is anticipated at site based on current proposals, therefore a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) will not be required. In addition, two Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) are within 1 km of the site boundary. Furthermore, as per the criteria listed on MAGIC Mapping (accessed November 2023), no further consultation with Natural England is required.
Survey Results	The site was found to comprise hardstanding which had been colonised in small areas by vegetation. A single-storey temporary building was also within the site boundary. No ecological constraints were identified on site.
Conclusions	No further surveys are required to inform a planning application. Pollution prevention measures are to be in place during the construction phase.



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

E3P were commissioned by Gardiner & Theobald LLP to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal at Charles Street, Manchester, hereafter referred to as “the site”.

This report has been prepared by Zach Squire-Watt BSc (Hons), MSc, QCIEEM, Graduate Ecologist at E3P. Zach has undertaken multiple Preliminary Ecological Appraisals and condition assessments for various projects across the UK.

1.2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Development proposals include the construction of a 15-storey purpose-built student accommodation building.

1.3. SITE LOCATION

The site is located within Manchester city centre, with York Street and Charles Street defining the site’s western and southern boundaries, respectively. Oxford Road lies approximately 80 m west. A railway line lies adjacent to the site’s northern boundary. Two watercourses, the River Medlock, and the Manchester Ship Canal, lie approximately 50 m north-west and 180 m north respectively. Please refer to Figure 1.1 for the approximate site location.

FIGURE 1.1 APPROXIMATE SITE LOCATION



1.4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal are as follows:

-  Identify the major habitats present.
-  Ascertain the presence or potential presence of any legally protected species and habitats.
-  Recommend any further surveys or mitigation that may be required.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal comprises a desk study and site walkover. This survey has been completed as a baseline assessment of the site, and as such please see the end of the report for further surveys and mitigation proposed.



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. DESKTOP STUDY

The following sources of information and ecological records were consulted:

- ✳ MAGIC – A web-based interactive mapping system, on which geographic information regarding key environmental schemes and designations are collated, including details of statutory conservation sites, accessed October 2023.
- ✳ Aerial mapping and ordnance survey maps.
- ✳ Local data records, including GMLRC – The Greater Manchester Local Record Centre, received 31st October 2023.

A 1 km search area was utilised for the data search, with this being deemed an appropriate distance for the Zone of Influence of the site. The 1 km search was selected due to the size of the site and the site largely being made up of man-made habitats. The site's built-up urban surroundings within Manchester city centre have also been taken into account, which have limited value for wildlife.

The data search included the request for details of protected and notable species of flora and fauna within 1 km of the central grid reference of the site. In addition, a request was made for any non-statutory designated sites within 1 km of the site boundary.

Please note that a lack of up-to-date records does not confirm absence of a species from the area. Lack of records may simply be a result of a lack of protected species surveys being undertaken within the local area.

2.2. VEGETATION AND HABITATS

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the proposed development site was undertaken by Zach Squire-Watt with assistance from Conor Evans BSc, MRes, QCIEEM Consultant Ecologist, on 23rd October 2023. The weather was dry, still and overcast.

The walkover survey was undertaken to the standard methodology as detailed by the JNCC Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey, 2010. The assessment follows the methodology as per "Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal" (CIEEM, 2017).

A vegetation and habitat plan has been produced for the proposed development site and the immediate surrounding area (please refer to Appendix I). The mapping is based on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee Phase I Habitat Survey Methodology (JNCC 2010).

Searches were made for uncommon, rare and statutorily protected plant species, those species listed as protected in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and species which are indicators of important and uncommon plant communities. All plant nomenclature follows Stace (2019).

Searches were carried out for the presence of invasive species, including those listed on the revised (April 2010) Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) including Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*).



2.3. FAUNA

A thorough search of the site for signs of protected species of fauna was undertaken during the site walkover. These searches considered the following:

- ✳ Suitability of any ponds to support notable amphibians, and the suitability of the site's terrestrial habitats to support amphibians.
- ✳ Suitability of the site to support reptiles by way of habitat structure and refuge piles, as well as links to the wider landscape.
- ✳ Signs of badgers (*Meles meles*), by way of setts, mammal paths, foraging signs or latrines to indicate usage of the site by the species.
- ✳ Search of any watercourses for signs or suitability for water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) and otter (*Lutra lutra*) by way of burrows, resting places, holts and foraging signs.
- ✳ Suitability of the site to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats.
- ✳ Suitability of the site to support notable bird species.
- ✳ Suitability of the site to support notable invertebrates.
- ✳ Search of the site for any invasive species.

2.4. PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

The Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken by Zach Squire-Watt with assistance from Conor Evans on the 23rd October 2023.

The survey involved undertaking a systematic search of the structures, searching for signs of bats, or spaces where bats would be able to access. The methodology followed that described in *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, 4th Edition (Collins, 2023)*.

The structures were categorised for their bat roosting potential as described in Table 2.1 in accordance with Collins (2023).

TABLE 2.1 BAT ROOSTING POTENTIAL CLASSIFICATION OF STRUCTURES

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
NONE	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year.
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



CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
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 and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats.
MODERATE	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
HIGH	A structure 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.

2.5. SURVEY LIMITATIONS

This survey was undertaken in October and as a result of seasonal vegetation die back, it is possible that some species of flora may have been missed or misidentified. It is possible that some invasive/non-native species could have been missed during the survey, however considering the urban habitats on-site, and lack of habitat present, this is not considered to be a major constraint.

Access to all areas within 30 m of the site was also not possible due to much of the surrounding area being built-up private development, therefore field signs of badger could not be determined however due to the urban nature of the surroundings this was not considered to be a major constraint.

These constraints have been taken into consideration during the assessment.



3. SURVEY RESULTS

3.1. SITE CONTEXT

The site is located on Charles Street and is currently a construction storage area. A single-storey temporary building, the site office associated with the construction works, was located within the site boundary. The site comprised exclusively hardstanding, which had been colonised by vegetation in small areas. Due to the expanse of man-made habitats the site is anticipated to have limited ecological value.

A railway line is present approximately 10 m north of the site's northern boundary. This is likely to provide commuting features for terrestrial mammals and provide refuge along the tree-lined sections of the tracks. The railway line may also support roosting bats and nesting bird species within the underlying brick archways.

Two watercourses are within proximity to the site. The closest is the River Medlock, which at its nearest point lies approximately 50 m north-west of the site boundary, while Manchester Ship Canal lies approximately 180 m north of site. They are also expected to act as essential aquatic habitat for species in an urban location and may provide valuable foraging resources for aquatic fauna, including waterfowl, Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*) and otters. The watercourses are also likely to act as key commuting features, providing connectivity to habitats across the wider landscape.

An area of open mosaic habitat lies approximately 280 m west. This type of habitat is often found in previously developed land and can provide habitat for terrestrial mammals such as hedgehog and brown hare (*Lepus europeaus*), as well as notable invertebrate assemblages. However, intense urban development limits connectivity to the site.

No waterbodies are within the site boundary or within 250 m of the site.

3.2. DESIGNATED SITES

No designated sites are within 1 km of the site boundary. However, the site lies within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) of Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Located approximately 5.9 km north-east, the canal is designated as an SSSI for its diverse assemblage of aquatic flora, including floating water-plantain (*Luronium natans*), as well as several species of *Potamogeton* pondweeds. Other notable species include water violet (*Hottonia palustris*), reed-sweet grass (*Glyceria maxima*) and the locally uncommon royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*). Rochdale Canal has also been designated an SAC for the presence of floating water-plantain, an Annex II species.

The proposed development includes the construction of a multi-storey student accommodation building. Given that the development is car-free, an increase in traffic due to proposals would not be seen. As such, no impact on the floating water-plantain due to changes in air quality is anticipated, therefore a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) will not be required. The proposed plans will not require further consultation with Natural England to proceed.

Two Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) are within 1 km of the search area: Ashton Canal (West) SBI, located approximately 940 m north-east, and Rochdale Canal SBI: Stott's Lane to Ducie Street Basin, located approximately 950 m north-east of site. Both SBI's are designated for their aquatic flora assemblages and floating water-plantain, present due to their connection with Rochdale Canal. Standard pollution prevention measures will be sufficient protection for these two sites, please refer to Section 4 for more details.



3.3. HABITATS

The main habitats encountered during the survey are described in the following subsections. Please refer to Appendix I for the Phase 1 Habitat Plan.

3.3.1. BUILDINGS, WALLS, AND HARDSTANDING

The site is made up of exclusively hardstanding which has been colonised in small areas by vegetation including greater plantain (*Plantago major*), perennial rye grass (*Lolium perenne*), false oat grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), cat's ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*), butterfly bush (*Buddleia davidii*), petty spurge (*Euphorbia peplus*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), rosebay willowherb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*) and wavy bittercress (*Cardamine flexuosa*).

One temporary portacabin was present within the site boundary and a low wall ran along the southern and western boundary, details of which are discussed in Appendix II.

PLATE 1 SHOWING AREA OF HARDSTANDING



PLATE 2 SHOWING THE ON-SITE BUILDING



PLATE 3 SHOWING WALL



3.4. PROTECTED AND NOTABLE SPECIES

3.4.1. AMPHIBIANS

Consultation with GMLRC did not identify any records of great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) with the 1 km search.



Consultation with MAGIC did not identify any great crested newt European Protected Species Licences within the 1 km search area, the closest licence was located approximately 4.5 km west of the site, active in 2010 to 2011 for the destruction of a great crested newt resting place. Further consultation with MAGIC did not identify any licence returns within 1 km of the site, the closest was approximately 4.9 km north-west of site and associated with a waterbody within Kersal wetlands known to have great crested newts present in 2014.

Great crested newts' upper dispersal limit is generally considered to be up to 250 m from a waterbody (though occurrence of greater distances does exist where habitat connectivity is of high quality) (English Nature, 2001). As such, the presence of great crested newts on-site is reasonably discounted as no waterbodies were located on or within 250 m of the site and no terrestrial habitat was present on site.

No records of common amphibians were recorded within 1 km of the search area.

The site offered no suitability for amphibians as no suitable habitat or foraging opportunities were present, therefore amphibians can be discounted from further discussion.

3.4.2. BATS

Consultation with GMLRC identified records of numerous bat species within the search area, including common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), *Myotis* sp. and Pipistrelle species. The closest record was a *Pipistrellus* sp. approximately 160 m north-west of site, associated with urban development close to Manchester Ship Canal.

Consultation with MAGIC Mapping identified the presence of numerous Natural England Bat Mitigation Licences, the details of which are shown in Table 3.1.

TABLE 3.2 BAT MITIGATION LICENCE DETAILS

REFERENCE	APPROXIMATE LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
EPSM2013-5575	540 m west of site	Active between 2013-2016 for the destruction of an common pipistrelle roost, though it is unknown if this was for a breeding or non-breeding roost.
2014-490-EPS-MIT	560 m north-east of site	Active between 2014-2017 for the destruction of a common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle non-breeding roost
2020-45213-EPS-MIT	660 m north-west of site	Active between 2020-2025 for the destruction of a common pipistrelle non-breeding roost
201-38955-EPS-MIT	680 m east of site	Active between 2019-2021 for the destruction of a common pipistrelle non-breeding roost
2018-33674-EPS-MIT	710 m north-west of site	Active between 2018-2040 for the damage and destruction of a common pipistrelle non-breeding roost
2020-50604-EPS-MIT	770 m east of site	Active between 2021-2022 for the destruction of a common pipistrelle non-breeding roost



REFERENCE	APPROXIMATE LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
EPSM2012-5061	870 m north-west of site	Active between 2012-2015 for the destruction of a brown long-eared bat (<i>Plecotus auritus</i>) breeding and non-breeding roost.
EPSM2012-4767	870 m north-west of site	Active between 2012-2013 for the destruction of a common pipistrelle non-breeding roost.

The majority of the site was assessed as having little potential for roosting bats due to a lack of suitable structures or trees. Due to its temporary nature and the lack of suitable features, the on-site building and wall were both assessed as having No bat roosting potential.

3.4.3. BADGER

Consultation with GMLRC identified records of badger within the 1 km search area. No badger setts or field signs of badger were located on-site or within 30 m of the site boundary where access was possible.

The site is assessed as having no suitability for badger as no sett-building opportunities were present within the site or within proximity of the site boundary. The site offered no foraging potential for badgers due to the expanse of hardstanding.

3.4.4. OTHER TERRESTRIAL MAMMALS

Numerous records of European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) were located within 1 km of the site boundary, the closest being approximately 410 m south-east of site and associated with an area of urban greenspace.

The site was assessed as having no suitability for hedgehogs, as no foraging or resting features were identified within the site boundary.

3.4.5. OTTER AND WATER VOLE

Consultation with GMLRC did not identify any records of otter or water vole within the 1 km search area.

No watercourses are present within the site boundary. The River Medlock and the Manchester Ship Canal lie approximately 50 m west and 180 m north respectively. The lack of suitable features within the site due to the expanse of hardstanding, as well as the urban development separating the site from both watercourses, otter and water vole can both be discounted from further discussion.

3.4.6. BREEDING BIRDS

Consultation with GMLRC identified numerous records of notable birds within the search area, including black redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*), dunnock (*Prunella modularis*), peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), herring gull (*Larus argentatus*), house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*), starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and yellow wagtail (*Motacilla flava*). The closest record was of herring gull approximately 100 m south of site; records were spread across the majority of Manchester city centre.



During the survey, magpie (*Pica pica*) and feral pigeon (*Columba livia domestica*) were identified within the site boundary. The site is assessed as having no suitability for common bird species due to a lack of suitable foraging or nesting habitat.

3.4.7. REPTILES

Consultation with GMLRC did not identify any record of reptiles within the 1 km search area.

The site was found to have no value for reptiles given the site was comprised exclusively hardstanding and, given this and the lack of records, reptiles can be discounted from further discussion.

3.4.8. INVERTEBRATES

The data search identified one notable invertebrate within the search area, cinnabar moth (*Tyria jacobaeae*) which is a local BAP species. The closest record was associated with an area of vegetation close to the River Medlock approximately 660 m east of site.

Overall, the presence of notable invertebrates within the site is reasonably discounted due to a lack of habitat.

3.5. INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES

Consultation with GMLRC did not identify any records of invasive species within the search area.

No invasive species were identified within the site boundary during the site walkover.



4. ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS AND MITIGATION

4.1. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

Development proposals include the construction of a multi-storey student accommodation building.

4.2. DESIGNATED SITES

Both the River Medlock and Manchester Ship Canal provide some connectivity between the site and Rochdale Canal SAC/SSSI, however standard pollution prevention measures have been determined as sufficient to protect these watercourses and prevent any disturbance to them or the adjoining designated site.

All best practice guidance relating to pollution will be adhered to in order to protect the River Medlock. This will include best practice use of refuelling machinery to avoid fuel spills. Site drainage is not considered a major constraint due to the distance between the site and nearby watercourses, however all site operatives will undergo a site induction which will brief them as to their working limits and legal responsibilities.

Best practice protection measures as detailed within PPG5 Pollution Prevention Guidelines (2007) are to be put in place to protect the watercourses. The following control measures would be required during any ground works and during the construction phase to ensure there are no impacts on the watercourses and water table or any wildlife utilising it:

- ✿ Turning off plant when not in use.
- ✿ Dampening of the operational areas will be regularly undertaken during dry weather conditions to avoid dust. Dust management will be extended to cover the plant and all operational areas and will be complied with throughout the period of development.
- ✿ Measures to prevent pollutants from entering ground and surface water is standard construction practice through the use of a bunded fuel storage and refuelling area at a discrete distance from any watercourses. However, given the distance from the site to River Medlock, this is not considered a major constraint.
- ✿ A 'Site Tidy' protocol is to be put in place on-site. All litter is to be appropriately controlled, whilst on-site materials are to be adequately stored over-night.
- ✿ All excavations will be battered at a 45-degree angle to allow escape should animals become trapped. If this is not feasible, a ramp will be installed or excavations will be covered.



5. FURTHER SURVEYS

No further surveys are required to inform a planning application.



6. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

In line with The Environment Act 2021, any sites with less than 25 m² of habitat are exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain. Since the site is exclusively hardstanding, a Biodiversity Net Gain report will not be required.



7. REFERENCES

- ✿ Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.
- ✿ CIEEM (2018). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine.
- ✿ Environment Alliance (2007). PPG5: Pollution Prevention Guidelines; Works and Maintenance In or Near Water; PPG5.
- ✿ Environment Act (2021). Chapter 3, Part 6 of the Environment Act 2021.
- ✿ JNCC (2010). Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey: A technique for environmental audit. English Field Unit, Nature Conservancy Council.
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- ✿ Stace, C. A. (2019). New Flora of the British Isles. Fourth Edition. Cambridge University Press.
- ✿ UK Habitat Classification Working Group (2018). UK Habitat Classification User Manual.
- ✿ Wildlife and Countryside Act (2010) Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

END OF REPORT



APPENDIX I

PHASE 1 HABITAT PLAN



Key:

- Site boundary
- Building
- Hardstanding
- Wall

Notes

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APPENDIX II STRUCTURE DESCRIPTIONS

REF.	DESCRIPTION	PHOTOGRAPH
B1	A single-storey temporary site office associated with the ongoing construction works. No features suitable. B1 was assessed as having No bat roosting potential.	
WALL	A low brick wall approximately 1 m high ran along the southern and western boundaries of the site. Cracks in the brick were visible but were superficial. No features suitable. The wall was assessed as having No bat roosting potential.	

