

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal



Manchester College, Quay Street

26th September 2023

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**Tyler
Grange**



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Summary

- S.1. This report has been prepared by Tyler Grange Group Limited on behalf of Henry Boot Developments in relation to the Manchester College St John's Centre on Quay Street, Manchester which is proposed for demolition and re-development, details of which are provided in **Appendix 2**.
- S.2. This report outlines the findings of a preliminary ecological appraisal of the proposed development, which is focussed around a preliminary roost assessment of the building at the site. Due to the absence of semi-natural habitat within or adjacent to the site, the proposals would not result in any adverse impacts on statutory or non-statutory nature conservation sites, notable habitats or other protected/notable species other than roosting bats and nesting birds.
- S.3. The building at the site did not contain any features suitable for roosting bats.
- S.4. The proposed development at the site is therefore unlikely to result in any impact on individual bats or local bat populations and no further surveys to support this assessment are considered necessary.
- S.5. Ecological enhancement of the site has been recommended through provision of bird and bat boxes at the site.



Section 1: Introduction

- 1.1. This report has been prepared by Tyler Grange Group Limited on behalf of Henry Boot Developments.
- 1.2. The site is the Manchester College St John's Centre building on Quay Street, Manchester and is proposed for demolition and redevelopment into a 16 storey office building (Use Class E(g)), with flexible ground floor uses (Use Class E), rooftop amenity space and works to facilitate public realm improvements, details of which are provided in **Appendix 2**.
- 1.3. The site location is shown in **Figure 1.1** and is centred on Ordnance Survey reference SJ 83206 98132.

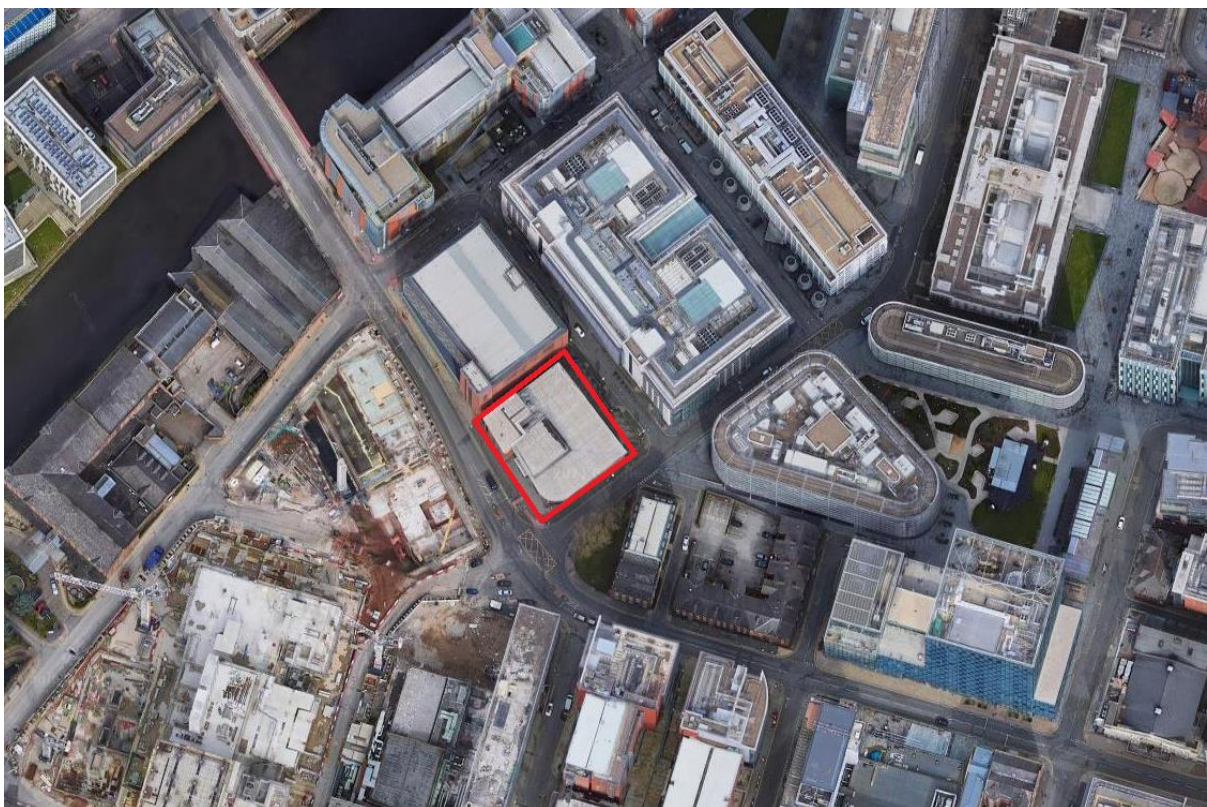


Figure 1.1: Site location highlighted by red boundary. ©Google Maps 2021

Purpose

- 1.4. This report:
 - Uses available background data and results of field survey to describe and evaluate the ecological features present within the likely 'zone of influence'¹ of the proposed development;
 - Describes the actual or potential ecological issues and opportunities that may arise as a result of the sites' future redevelopment;

¹ Defined as the area over which ecological features may be subject to significant effects as a result of activities associated with a project and associated activities (CIEEM 2016)

- Describe the results of the bat survey, in order to assess the potential impacts of the scheme on bats;
- Where appropriate, makes recommendations for mitigation of adverse effects and ecological enhancement, to ensure conformity with policy and legislation listed in **Appendix 1**; and
- Identifies further work required to inform a future planning application if relevant.

1.5. This assessment and the terminology used are consistent with the 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland' (CIEEM, 2019)², and 'Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2019)³

² Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester. <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Combined-EcIA-guidelines-2018-compressed.pdf>.

³ Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Guidelines-for-Preliminary-Ecological-Appraisal-Jan2018-1.pdf>



Section 2: Methodology

Data Search

- 2.1 A desk study was undertaken in December 2021. The aim of the data search was to collate existing ecological bat records for the site as a whole, and the surrounding area. Obtaining existing records is an important part of the assessment process as it provides information on issues that may not be apparent during a single survey, which by its nature provides only a 'snapshot' of the ecology of a given site.
- 2.2 The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside website⁴ was accessed for information on the location of statutory designated nature conservation sites within a 10km radius (for sites of European designation) and 2km (for sites of national designation) of site. It was also used to assess the presence of any permitted bat licences in the area.
- 2.3 Due to the scale of the proposals and absence of any semi-natural habitat within the site, a data search request to the local ecological record centre was not considered necessary.

Inspection of Structures and Habitat Survey

- 2.4 A detailed external inspection, including rooftop inspection, of the building was undertaken to determine the presence of features that may support bat roosting directly or allow access to features further within the structure of the buildings.
- 2.5 An internal inspection of the upper floor plant rooms was also undertaken to determine the presence of suitable internal features or direct evidence of use by bats.
- 2.6 This survey followed standard methodologies outlined within Bat Survey for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines (Collins 2016), Bat Workers' Manual (3rd Edition) (Mitchell-Jones, A.J. and McLeish, A.P., 2004) and Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Mitchell-Jones, A.J., 2004).
- 2.7 The inspection was undertaken on 9th September 2021 by Steven Coyne (Natural England Bat Survey Level 2 (CL18) Class Licence – Registration Number 2015-14981-CLS-CLS) who was assisted by Nicholas Bell (Natural England Bat Survey Level 1 (CL17) Class Licence – Registration Number 2018-37985-CLS-CLS).
- 2.8 The weather conditions during this surveys were, 20°C, wind 1 (Beaufort), intermittent light rain showers and 80% cloud cover.
- 2.9 The potential of the building to support roosting bats was categorised against the criteria described in **Table 2.1**.

⁴ <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>



Table 2.1: Roost assessment criteria (adapted from Collins, 2016)

Suitability	Roosting Habitats
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on-site likely to be used by roosting bats.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation).
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 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 long periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection conditions and surrounding habitat.

Assessment of Habitats

- 2.10 An assessment of the habitats within the development boundary and immediately adjacent was assessed initially from aerial imagery and then during the site visit. A habitat survey was undertaken at the same time as the roost assessment. It was noted, however that the site entirely comprises a single building surrounded by hardstanding pavements/roads. No semi-natural habitats exist within the site or adjacent to it.
- 2.11 The potential of the habitats to commuting and foraging bats was categorised against the criteria described in **Table 2.2**.

Table 2.2: Habitat assessment criteria (adapted from Collins, 2016)

Suitability	Commuting and foraging habitats
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by commuting bats.
Low	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitats. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or patch of scrub.
Moderate	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland.



Section 3: Results and Evaluation

Protected Sites

- 3.1. The site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation site. The nearest statutory site is the Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation (SAC) some 6.5km distant. The proposals would not affect this site or any others in the locality due to the distances concerned. Impacts on protected sites are negligible and will not be discussed further.

Habitats

- 3.2. The site comprises entirely of the Manchester College building, surrounded by built form. The adjacent environment is similarly concentrated built form. Such habitat is of negligible ecological importance, and requires no mitigation for its loss. Impacts regarding habitats are negligible and will not be discussed further.

Protected/Notable Species

- 3.3. The site comprises a fairly modern building in Manchester city centre. It contains no habitat to support any protected/notable species other than roosting bats and nesting birds. Impacts on all faunal groups except for bats and birds are therefore negligible and will not be discussed further.

Bats

- 3.4. The building at the site was a four-storey brick-built building with a flat roof (see Figure 1.1 and Photograph 1-5).
- 3.5. No suitable potential roost features or access points were recorded.
- 3.6. The plant rooms on the upper floor were inspected and no direct evidence of bat use was recorded.
- 3.7. The site is therefore considered of **Negligible potential** to support roosting bats and no nocturnal bat surveys are considered necessary to support this assessment.
- 3.8. No negative impacts on bat species are predicted as a result of the proposed development.
- 3.9. The habitat immediately adjacent which is a dense urban environment with few greenspace areas would offer very little potential for commuting or foraging bats. However, the river Irwell is located approximately 150m north-west of the site and may offer suitable habitat for commuting and foraging bats.
- 3.10. There is very limited potential for nesting birds to utilise the building within the site, although gulls may utilise the flat roof for nesting. To this end, works affecting the roof should either be completed outside of the core nesting season (i.e. completed between September and February inclusive), or preceded by a check for nests by a suitably experienced ecologist.
- 3.11. As the proposed new building would be close to suitable habitat for bats (canal), an opportunity exists to create opportunities for the development to have a positive impact on bat species.



- 3.12. By incorporating integrated bat boxes into the design of the new building this would offer new roosting opportunities in the area to benefit bat species.
- 3.13. In addition, by incorporating swift boxes into the design of the new building additional ecological enhancement for other species will be achieved.



Appendix 1: Site Photographs



Photograph 1: The south-west aspect of the building



Photograph 2: The southern corner of the south-east aspect of the building





Photograph 3: The northern corner of the south-east aspect of the building



Photograph 4: The north-east and north-west aspect of the building





Photograph 5: The rooftop of the building



Appendix 2: Legislation and Planning Policy

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012 (as amended).

- A2.1 The Habitat Regulations transpose EEC Council Directive 92/43 (The Habitats Directive) into UK law. The regulations place duty upon the relevant authority of the UK government to identify sites which are of importance to the habitats and species listed in Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive. Those sites which meet the criteria are, in conjunction with the European Commission, designated as Sites of Community Importance, which are subsequently identified as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) by the European Union member states. The regulations also place a duty upon the UK government to maintain a register of European protected sites designated as a result of EC Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (The Birds Directive). These sites are termed Special Protection Areas (SPA) and, in conjunction with SACs, form a network of sites known as Natura 2000.
- A2.2 The regulations also provide for the protection of individual species of fauna and flora of European conservation concern listed in Schedules 2 and 4, respectively. Schedule 2 includes species such as otter and great crested newt for which the UK population represents a significant proportion of the total European population. It is an offence to deliberately kill, injure, disturb or trade these species in the UK. Schedule 4 plant species are protected from unlawful destruction, uprooting or trade under the regulations.

Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

- A2.3 The NERC Act 2006 places a duty on authorities to have due regard for biodiversity and nature conservation during the course of their operations. Section 41 of the Act requires the publication of a list of habitats and species publish which are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. The Section 41 list is used to guide authorities in implementing their duty to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981

- A2.4 The WCA, as amended, consolidates and amends pre-existing national wildlife legislation in order to implement the Bern Convention and the Birds Directive. It complements the Conservation (Natural Habitats. &c.)
- A2.5 Regulations 1994 (as amended), offering protection to a wider range of species. The Act also provides for the designation and protection of national conservation sites of value for their floral, faunal or geological features, termed Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).
- A2.6 Schedules of the act provide lists of protected species, both flora and fauna, and detail the possible offences that apply to these species.

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000

- A2.7 The CROW Act, introduced in England and Wales in 2000, amends and strengthens existing wildlife legislation detailed in the WCA. It places a duty on government departments and the



National Assembly for Wales to have regard for biodiversity and provides increased powers for the protection and maintenance of SSSIs.

- A2.8 The Act also contains lists of habitats and species (Section 74) for which conservation measures should be promoted, in accordance with the recommendations of the Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio Earth Summit) 1992.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), September 2023

- A2.9 The updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was revised in September 2023 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It replaces the first National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012. Paragraph 11 states that:

"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development."

- A2.10 Section 15 of the NPPF (paragraphs 170 to 177) considers the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. Paragraph 170 states that planning and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

"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); 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; and minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures"

- A2.11 Paragraph 171 states that plans should distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.

- A2.12 Paragraph 174 states that in order to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- a) "Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity."

- A2.13 When determining planning applications, Paragraph 175 states that local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying 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 reasons⁵⁸ and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity."

A2.14 As stated in paragraph 176 the following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

- a) "potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation.
- b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and
- c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites."

A2.15 Paragraph 177 states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment because of its potential impact on a habitats site is being planned or determined.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM Circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System

A2.16 ODPM Circular 06/05 was prepared to accompany PPS9, however continues to be valid, and material in the consideration of planning applications since PPS9's replacement by the NPPF. ODPM Circular 06/05 provides guidance on applying legislation in relation to nature conservation and planning in England.

A2.17 Part I considers the legal protection and conservation of internationally designated sites (namely candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs), SACs, potential Special Protection Areas (pSPAs), SPAs and Ramsar sites) and Part II considers the legal protection and conservation of nationally designated sites, namely Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Part III considers the protection of habitats and species outside of designated areas (particularly UK Biodiversity Action Plan species and habitats, which it states are capable of being a material consideration in the preparation of local development documents and the making of planning decisions. Part IV considers species protected by law and states that the presence of a protected species is a material consideration in the consideration of a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat and that 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.

A2.18 UK bat species are protected by European and National legislation together with national and local planning policy.

A2.19 As European protected species, all UK bats receive legal protection in England under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (HabRegs) (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended).

A2.20 In addition, planning policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) requires planning authorities to consider bats (alongside other protected species) when determining planning applications and to ensure that development proposals do not lead to an adverse effect on the conservation status of bats or other protected species.

A2.21 Four species of bat barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein's *Myotis bechsteinii*, greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros* are designated as Annex 2 species which under the HabRegs, important sites for these species can be designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC).

A2.22 Several species of bats barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein's *Myotis bechsteinii*, brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus*, greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula* and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* are listed as species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. These are the species found in England which were identified as requiring action under the UK BAP and which continue to be regarded as conservation priorities under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.

A2.23 All British species of bat are listed on Schedule 2 of the HabRegs as a European protected species (EPS) of animal. Regulation 41 (1) makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture or injure a bat;
- Deliberately disturb a bat; or
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat.

A2.24 The definition of disturbance of animals within the HabRegs relates to disturbance which is likely to:

- impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young,
- impair their ability to hibernate or migrate
- affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species

A2.25 All British bats are listed in Schedule 5 of the WCA and in England and Wales are protected under Section 9 subsections 4b, 4c and 5 which makes it an offence to:

- Disturb any bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; or



- Obstruct access to any structure or place which any such animal uses for shelter or protection;

A2.26 All British bats are also listed under Schedule 6, Section 11 of the WCA 1981 (as amended), which states that bats cannot be killed or taken by certain methods, such as traps and nets, poisons, automatic weapons, electrical devices, smoke / gases etc.

A2.27 Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006, which states that decision-makers such as Local Planning Authorities must have regard to Species of Principal Importance (SoPI) in all their activities, including when making decisions on planning applications.

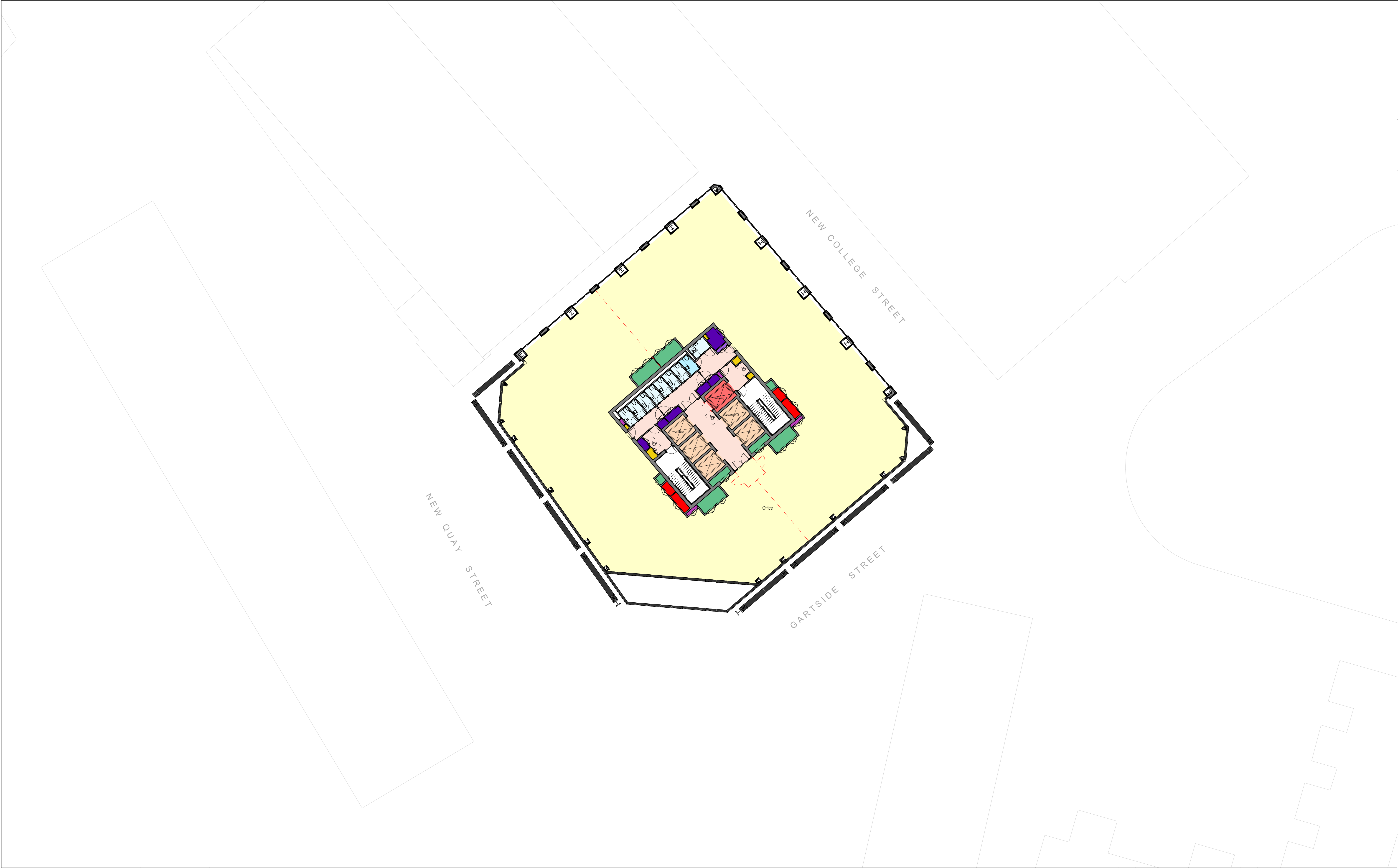
A2.28 The following bat species are SoPIs: barbastelle; Bechstein's; noctule; soprano pipistrelle; brown long-eared; greater horseshoe bat; and lesser horseshoe bat. These are the species found in England which were identified as requiring action under the UK BAP and which continue to be regarded as conservation priorities under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.

A2.29 All bat species are included in the Greater Manchester Local Biodiversity Action Plan.



Appendix 3: Site Proposals





Keyplan

North

Scale bar

SCALE 1: 200
m

Optional Split Tenancy

PG1

Issue for Planning

Sept23

RW

JAJ

No.

Revision

Date

Initial

Chk'd

EPR ARCHITECTS

+44 20 7952 7600

www.epr.co.uk

Colloco

New Quay St, Manchester M3 3BE

Proposed First Floor

Scale @A1

Status

Suitability

Revision

1 : 200

Planning

S2

- P01

Project Code

Originator

Zone

Level

Type

Rate

Class

Number

11383 - EPR - 00 - 01 - DR - A - 02-0501

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