Simon's House, Wavell Road Wythenshawe

Protected Species Report

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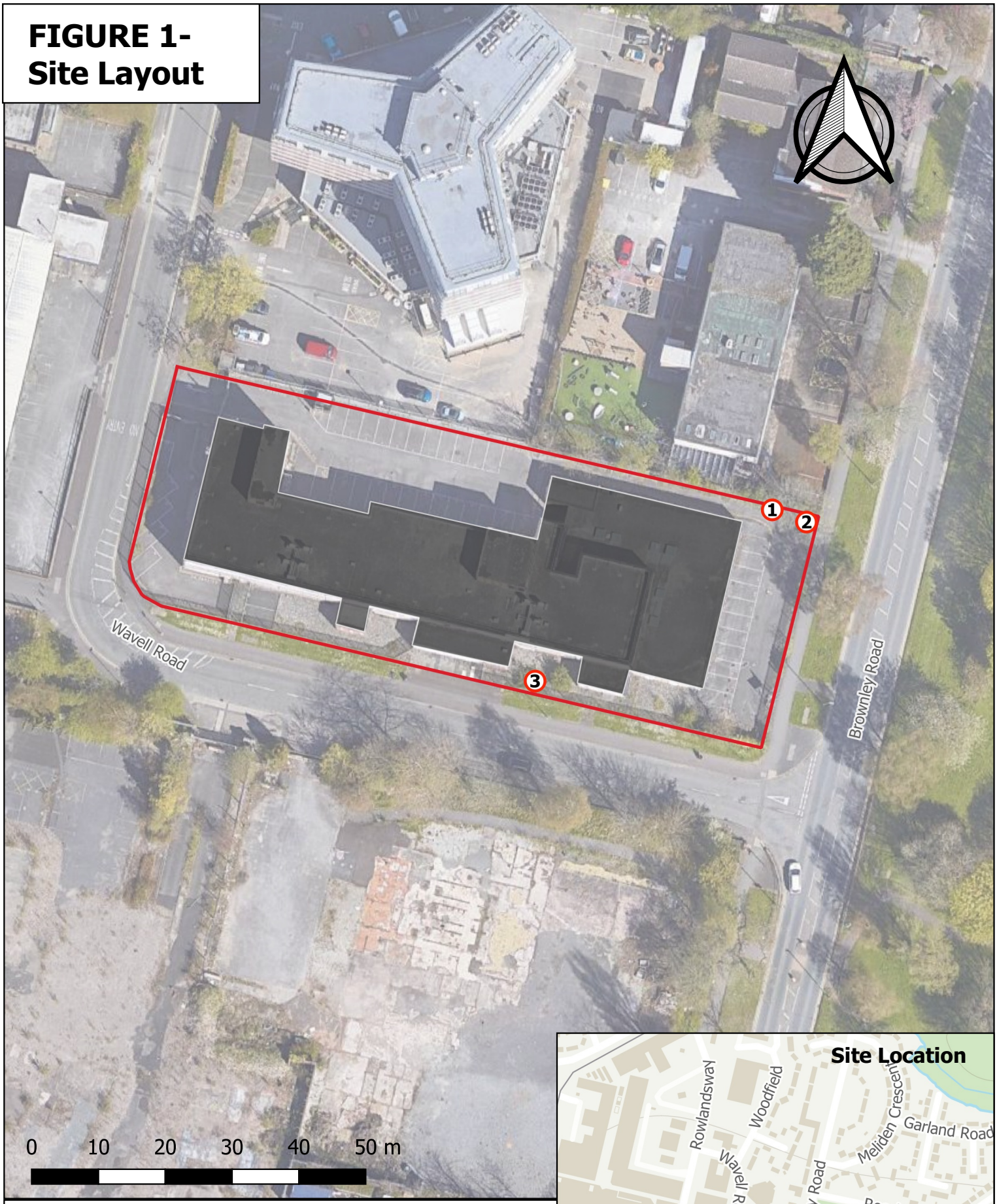
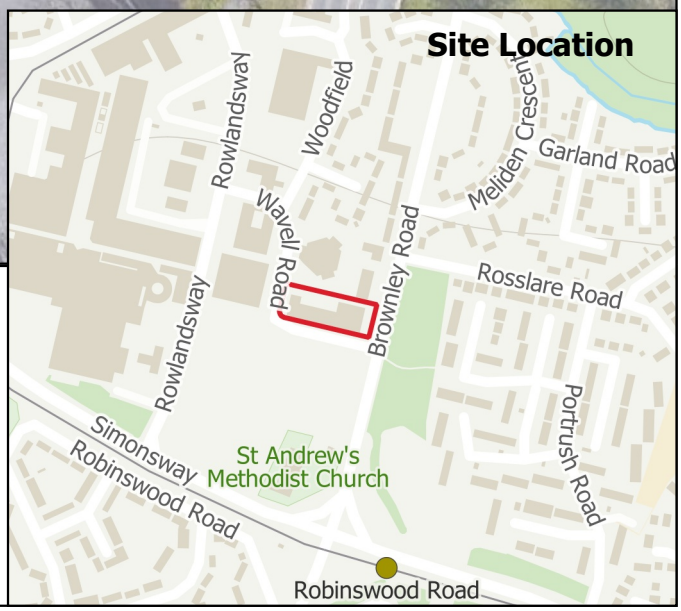
FIGURE 1- Site Layout





KEY

Study Site

Target Note

Map data ©2023 Google

Introduction

1.1 Background

EnviroSolution Limited have carried out a Protected Species Assessment of a two-storey, mid-century office building (Simon's House), located at Wavell Road, Wythenshawe, Manchester, M22 5RA (National Grid Reference SJ 8286 8789).

The assessment has been carried out to identify any ecological constraints which should be considered during proposed works to redevelop the site.

Field surveys were undertaken on 8th February 2023. Surveys were led by Richard Roe (BSc, MSc, MIEEM, CEnv). Richard has extensive experience of undertaking habitat and protected species and habitat surveys as a professional ecological consultant with over twenty years' experience.

1.2 Purpose of Report

This report provides and outlines the findings of initial field surveys undertaken at the site.

Surveys aimed to identify habitats and species which are either of importance in terms of their conservation value or are afforded statutory legal protection. The presence of such habitats or species would form a material consideration during the planning process and could pose a constraint to the redevelopment of the site.

The field surveys comprised of an ecological walkover survey with a search for habitats that could support any protected or notable species.

Following a description of the survey findings and an evaluation of habitats at the site, the report goes on to make recommendations for further works, mitigation and ecological enhancement measures where relevant.

1.3 Protected Species Legislation

1.3.1 Birds

All wild birds in England and Wales are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird, or take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or its eggs.

1.3.2 Bats

All British bat species are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and through their inclusion in Schedule II of the Habitats Regulations 2010 which transpose Annex II of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora ("EC Habitats Directive") which defines European protected species of animals.

British bats species are afforded further protection by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Taken together, this legislation makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture bats.
- Deliberately disturb bats, whether at roost or not.
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to bat roosts.
- Possess or transport bats, unless acquired legally.
- Sell, barter or exchange bats.

A bat roost is interpreted as "any structure or place, which any wild bat uses for shelter or protection." (Bat Conservation Trust 2016[1]). A bat roost is protected whether or not bats are present at the time.

All species of British bat are considered a European Protected Species (EPS). The Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations (2010) provide derogation against certain offences which could potentially affect an EPS through the EPS Licensing system.

[1] Bat Conservation Trust (2016) 'Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines 3rd Edition'

2 Field Survey Methods

2.1 Survey Aims and Objectives

The survey aim was to assess the site as to its ecological importance by assessing the value of habitats and their suitability to support any protected or notable species. The purpose of this was to highlight any ecological constraints associated with future development proposals.

The survey comprised of an ecological walkover survey, which included an assessment of habitats at the site in terms of their suitability to support any protected species including bats and breeding birds.

Species that are considered unlikely to be significantly affected by the proposed development, even if known to be present in the general vicinity, were 'scoped out' of the assessment.

The survey also aimed to identify opportunities for ecological enhancement and to inform potential mitigation measures, if required, to ameliorate any negative impacts attributable to the proposed works.

2.2 Survey Methods

2.2.1 Ecological Walkover Survey

An initial Ecological Walkover of the site was undertaken on the 8th February 2023.

The aims of the walkover survey were to:

- identify areas or habitats that are of particular ecological interest for nature conservation and which require more detailed investigation;
- provide a broad botanical description of habitats present;
- provide additional information regarding incidental observations of protected species or non-native, invasive species;
- to assess the site as to its ecological importance by assessing the value of habitats and their suitability to support any protected or notable species (including badgers, bats and breeding birds).

A map of the study site is shown in Figure 1. Typical habitats recorded at the site are also shown in photographs in the Appendix.

2.2.2 Daytime Bat Inspection

The building was assessed as to its suitability to support bats following standard methodologies prescribed in English Nature's *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* (Mitchell-Jones 2004)[2] and the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines* 3rd Edition (BCT 2016)[3].

Survey, comprising of an inspection of the interior and exterior of the building, was undertaken during daylight conditions using binoculars and a high-powered torch. The survey was undertaken during daylight hours on the 8th February 2023.

In addition to searching for evidence of an actual bat roost the survey also aimed to assess the suitability of the building to support bats and consequently the likelihood of a bat roost being present but with no obvious field signs.

Survey assessed the building's roost suitability by examining structural features and the surrounding habitat. Structural features that will influence the suitability of a building to support roosting bats include the presence of a roof void; access points into a building including gaps beneath barge boards, gaps under lead flashing, gaps within masonry, loose tiles etc, complexity of any roof void, daytime light levels in roof void etc.

Important habitat features surrounding the structures which could influence roost potential include: whether the structure is in a semi-rural or parkland location, proximity to a significant linear feature (e.g. watercourse, mature hedgerow, wooded lane) or an area of woodland etc.

Taking account of these architectural and habitat features, the building was assigned a level of roost suitability. This assessment considered roost suitability criteria as summarised in Table 1 below and taken from the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines* 3rd Edition.

[2] Mitchell-Jones, A.J. 2004. Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, Peterborough.

[3] Bat Conservation Trust (2016) 'Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines 3rd Edition'

3 Survey Results

3.1 Site Description and Habitats

The study area comprises of a two-story, mid-century office building. The site covers an area of approximately 0.35ha with office building extending to approximately 1700m^2. The site is located on the corner of Wavell Road and Brownley Road, Wythenshawe, Manchester. The office building is currently vacant.

The site is located within an urban setting. Immediate surrounding habitats are highly modified comprising principally of commercial/industrial units with wider residential housing. However, there is an area of parkland located immediately to the east of the site on the opposite side of Brownley Road. The park comprises of managed grassland and scattered trees.

There are also pockets of broadleaved woodland located to the north-east and south-east of the site, at a distance of between 300-500 m including Park Wood, Gorse Covert, Ash Wood and Hatchetts Wood. Other than the areas of woodland and parkland, surrounding habitats are considered to be of very low value for foraging bats.

The habitats at the site itself are also highly modified and comprise of the main office building plus areas of hardstanding parking. The site is enclosed by palisade fencing.

There are some limited patches of ruderal vegetation around the fringes of the site including buddleia, sow thistle, broadleaved willowherb and ivy. There are also some self-seeded tree saplings present including silver birch, willow, sycamore and poplar.

There are scattered young trees around the perimeter palisade fencing comprising of ash, silver birch and sycamore. There is a small patch of ornamental shrubbery comprising of pyracantha located near the south-east corner of the site (Target Note 3).

There is an adjacent patch of amenity grassland at the northwest corner of the site immediately outside of the site access gate with a mature cherry tree present.

There was no evidence of invasive, non-native plant species at the site.

The study site's location and site layout are shown on Figure 1 in the Appendix. Photographs of the site are also provided in the Appendix.

3.2 Protected Species

3.2.1 Bats Scoping Assessment

The study site comprises principally of a mid-century office building located on Wavell Road. The site has recently stopped operating as an office and is currently vacant.

Habitats at the site are highly artificial and of limited conservation value with the majority of the site comprising of buildings and areas of hardstanding carpark.

The building comprises of a two-story structure constructed of prefabricated concrete panels clad in pebble-dashing with flat roofs clad in mineral felt. The roofs are gravelled with short parapet walls extending above the roof height.

The interior of the building comprises of office space with plastered walls and false-ceilings. There are double-glazed windows throughout so the interior of the building is bright. The interior of the building was found to be of 'negligible' suitability for bats.

Externally, the building is in good condition and is tightly sealed. The roof is well sealed and tightly lined with mineral felt. Consequently, the building does not offer any potential bat access points to its interior or areas of suitable bat roosting habitat.

Taking all of these factors into account the building was assessed as being of '**negligible**' suitability for roosting bats.

There are two dead young/semi-mature trees present at the northeast corner of the site (Target Notes 1 and 2 on Figure 1). These have minor areas of lifting bark which offer some 'low' suitability potential bat roosting habitat. None of the other young trees present are considered to offer suitable roosting habitat for bats.

3.2.2 Breeding Birds

The areas of ornamental shrubbery and trees present could support nesting birds during the breeding bird season.

3.2.3 Other Protected or Notable Species

It is considered unlikely that any other protected species would be present at the site.

4 Summary & Recommendations

4.1 Habitats

4.1.1 Summary

EnviroSolution Limited have carried out an ecology scoping assessment of an office building located at Wavell Road, Wythenshawe, Manchester. Proposals are to demolish the building and to redevelop the site.

Habitats at the site comprise of the main office building, surrounding areas of hardstanding and some limited areas of vegetation. These mostly comprise of young trees around the perimeter of the site plus a small patch of ornamental shrubbery. Habitats at the site are highly modified and not considered to be of any significant biodiversity value.

There was no evidence of any invasive, non-native plant species at the site.

4.2 Protected Species

4.2.1 Bats

The daytime bat scoping inspection examined the office building with regards to its suitability to support roosting bats. The survey found the building to be of very limited suitability for roosting bats with no obvious potential bat roosting features identified whatsoever.

The building is located in a highly urbanised location, with limited areas of high-quality bat foraging habitat in immediate proximity to the site.

Taking this into account, the building was found to offer a '**negligible**' bat roosting potential.

There are two dead, young trees located near the north-east corner of the site (Target Notes 1 and 2 of Figure 2). The trees support some limited areas of lifting bark offering low value potential bat roosting habitat. It is considered to be unlikely that such features would be used by roosting bats.

As a precaution and where these trees must be felled, it is recommended that tree works are carried out in a careful manner. Once felled, trees should be left on the site for at least 24 hours before being chipped, to allow any unidentified roosting bats behind the lifting bark the opportunity to escape.

It is considered to be very unlikely that the site would support any active bats roosts.

4.2.2 Birds

The building itself does not offer any suitable habitat for nesting birds. Although of limited botanical value, the areas of shrubbery, and young trees present around the perimeter of the site could support nesting birds during the breeding bird season.

All wild birds in England and Wales are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird, or take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or its eggs.

It is therefore recommended that future development of the site including any vegetation clearance or management should be timed to avoid taking place during the breeding bird season (March-September inclusive).

Where this is not possible, a check for breeding birds should be carried out immediately prior to the start of works by an appropriately qualified ecologist.

If during works any nesting birds are found, works should immediately stop and further advice should be sought from an appropriately qualified ecologist.

4.2.3 Other Protected Species

The site is considered unlikely to support any other protected species .

4.3 Ecological Enhancements

It is recommended that opportunities to enhance the ecological value of the development area are taken.

4.3.1 Bat and Bird Boxes

The proposed development should include provision for roosting bats and breeding birds. This can be achieved through the installation of bat boxes (recommended model Habibat 003) and sparrow nest boxes (model Schwegler 1SP) into the brick walls of the proposed buildings.

The precise location, model and number of bat and bird boxes should be determined by an appropriately qualified ecologist.

4.3.2 Plants for Pollinators and Birds

The development proposals should also aim to maximise the biodiversity of landscaping proposals at the site.

It is recommended that new planting incudes species which can provide nectar sources for insects and berries/fruits for invertebrates and birds.

The following small/medium sized tree species are recommended as they offer suitable foraging opportunities to various native wildlife (including birds and invertebrates): rowan, wild cherry, crab apple, silver birch, holly, and willow.

Areas of new shrubbery should include suitable nectar sources for insects. The Royal Horticultural Society provides a list of suitable plants for invertebrates (see rhs.org.uk/plantsforpollinators).

It is recommended that this list is consulted when producing detailed landscaping designs for the site.

5 Appendix

PHOTOGRAPHS

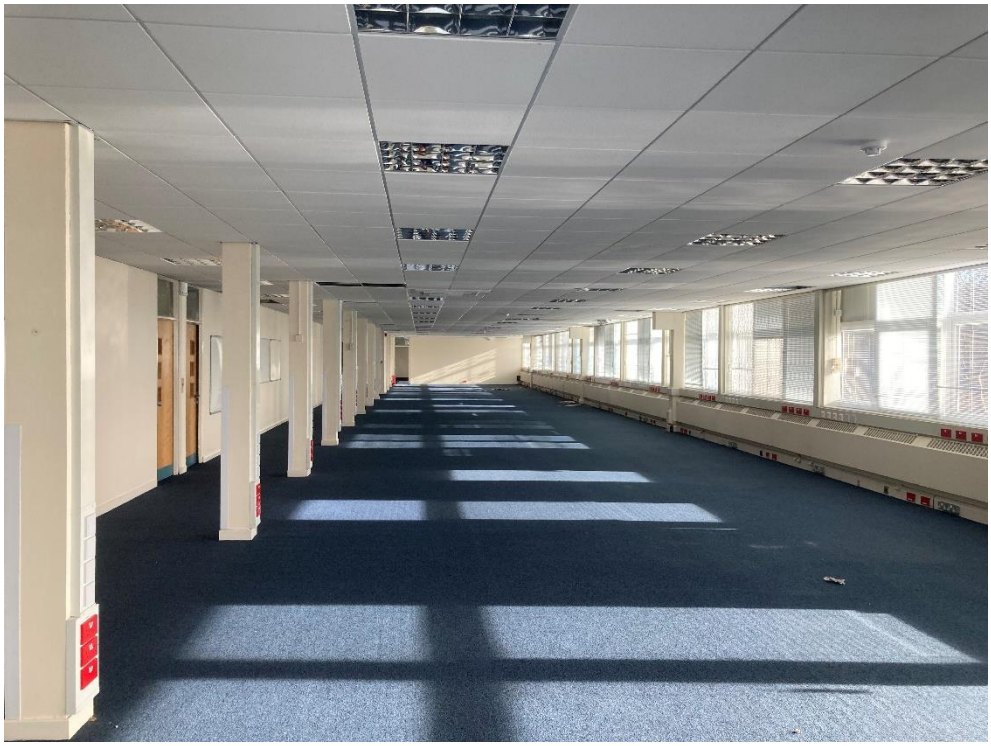
Photograph 1- Exterior of office building

Photograph 2- Exterior of office building

Photograph 3- Exterior of office building

Photograph 4- Roof of office building

Photograph 5- Interior of office building



Photograph 6- Dead trees at Targets Notes 1 and 2