

60A WOOD ROAD, WHALLEY RANGE

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

May 2023

DRAFT



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Site Address	60A Wood Road, Whalley Range, M16 8BL
Grid Reference	SJ 82445 94851
Approximate Site Area	0.3ha
Current Site Use	Currently the site forms an apartment building with associated footpaths and soft landscaping. Habitats within the site are currently unmanaged but the building is tenanted.
Designated Sites within Zone of Influence	The site falls within the Impact Risk Zone of Rochdale Canal SAC/SSSI located approximately 8.9km northeast of the site. The site is sufficient distance from the canal that no negative impacts are expected to occur.
Notable Habitat Features	No notable habitats were identified within the site.
Notable Species Applicable to the Assessment	• Bats (Potential roosting, foraging, and commuting) • Breeding birds. • Common amphibians • Badger • Hedgehog
Mitigation Recommendations	• Nesting bird check if vegetation clearance is to commence within breeding bird season (March to September inclusive) • Lighting mitigation for bats • Soft felling technique for trees with low bat roosting potential • Precautionary Working Methods for badger
Recommended Further Surveys and Assessment	Minimum of one Nocturnal Emergence Bat Survey due to the building being assessed as having low bat roosting potential.
Recommended Ecological Enhancements	• Bat and bird boxes. • Planting of linear features such as hedgerows and trees. • The inclusion of 'hedgehog highways'.

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	4
1.1.	SCOPE & PURPOSE	4
1.2.	LOCATION	4
1.3.	OBJECTIVES	4
2	METHODOLOGY	5
2.1.	DESK STUDY	5
2.2.	VEGETATION AND HABITAT ASSESSMENT	5
2.3.	FAUNA ASSESSMENT	5
2.4.	PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT	5
2.5.	BAT ACTIVITY ASSESSMENT	6
2.6.	SURVEY LIMITATIONS	6
2.7.	PROPORTIONALITY	7
3	SURVEY RESULTS.....	8
3.1.	SITE CONTEXT	8
3.2.	DESIGNATED SITES	8
3.3.	PRIORITY HABITATS	8
3.4.	HABITATS	8
3.5.	SPECIES	9
4	MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS	16
4.1.	DESIGNATED SITES	16
4.2.	HABITATS	16
4.3.	SPECIES	16
5	FURTHER SURVEYS AND CONCLUSION	19
5.1.	NOCTURNAL BAT SURVEY (SUMMER ROOSTING).....	19
5.2.	CONCLUSION	19
6	BIBLIOGRAPHY	20

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. SCOPE & PURPOSE

1.1.1. Collington Winter Environmental Ltd was commissioned by Mr Stuart Lark to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) at 60A Wood Road, Whalley Range. This report has been prepared to inform a planning application for the demolition of an apartment building and the erection of seven new residential dwellings with associated car parking and soft landscaping.

1.1.2. The author of this report is Caitlin O'Connor, Ecologist. This project is overseen and managed by Katie Bird MEnvSci, ACIEEM Principal Ecologist at Collington Winter Environmental Ltd. Katie is highly experienced managing schemes and has produced many ecological reports to inform planning management plans.

1.2. LOCATION

1.2.1. Please refer to Figure 1.1 for the site location. The site is in Whalley Range, an area in the City of Manchester, approximately 2 miles southwest from the city centre within a residential area.

Figure 1.1 Site Location



1.3. OBJECTIVES

1.3.1. 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 or notable species or habitats.
- Identify any mitigation or further survey required and opportunities for strategic wildlife enhancements and long-term management.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1. DESK STUDY

2.1.1. An initial desk-based assessment of the site was undertaken to collate baseline data. The desk study included:

- Review of Magic.gov.uk website for details of any designated sites, notable habitats and presence of European Protected Species Licences.
- Review of aerial and OS maps for habitat information, as well as determining locations of potential waterbodies to be considered in the assessment.
- Review of potential habitat links on and off site, to determine the potential zone of influence of the proposed development.
- On site consultation with the landowner which provided valuable information regarding historic land use and known species and habitats present within the site.

2.2. VEGETATION AND HABITAT ASSESSMENT

2.2.1. An Ecological Appraisal of the site was undertaken by Caitlin O'Connor and supervised by Katie Bird, Principal Ecologist. The survey was undertaken on the 19th of May 2023. The weather was overcast, wind speed 2/8 (Beaufort), 12°C, and light rain throughout.

2.2.2. The walkover survey was undertaken broadly in line with standard UK HAB Methodology. The assessment is undertaken with consideration of methodology as per "Preliminary Ecological Appraisal" (CIEEM, 2018).

2.2.3. A UK HAB Plan has been produced and is presented in the Appendix of this report. Standard methodology has been used, though adjustments have been made based on judgement to demonstrate habitats in a clearer manner, or where standard guidance does not fit the conditions found on site.

2.3. FAUNA ASSESSMENT

2.3.1. A search for signs of protected and notable species of fauna was undertaken during the site walkover. This included both field signs of species, as well as potential for species to be present based on habitat availability.

2.3.2. The searches broadly included the following:

- Assessment of waterbodies on site and within 250m of the site boundary, and terrestrial habitats for suitability to support notable amphibians.
- Searches for field signs of, and habitat suitability for bats.
- Suitability of habitats to support reptiles, and searches for incidental field signs.
- Searches for field signs of badger (*Meles meles*), including setts, mammal paths, snuffle holes, badger hair and latrines to indicate activity.
- Searches of watercourses for signs of water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*), white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) and otter (*Lutra lutra*), and assessment of habitat availability for the species.
- Assessment of the suitability of habitats to support notable birds and recording any field sightings of birds during the walkover.
- Assessment of the sites ability to support notable invertebrates and flora.
- Searches for non-native invasive species.

2.4. PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT

2.4.1. A Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) of the site was undertaken by Caitlin O'Connor and supervised by Katie Bird who holds a Class 2 Bat Survey Licence from Natural England (Reference 2020-48950-CLS-CLS).

2.4.2. The survey was undertaken following guidance set out in Collins (2016). This includes undertaking a detailed internal and external inspection of any features to compile information on potential and actual bat entry/ exit points, roosting locations and evidence of bats.

2.4.3. The buildings were assessed as per categories listed in Table 4.1 Collins (2016) and reproduced in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Assessment Criteria for Bat Roosting Potential

Bat Roosting Potential	Description
Negligible	Negligible 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 habitats to be used on a regular basis by larger numbers of bats.
Moderate	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats, but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
High	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and for longer periods of time.

2.5. BAT ACTIVITY ASSESSMENT

2.5.1. The commuting and foraging assessment methodology is based on information contained within the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines 3rd edition (Collins, 2016). The categorisation within this report is based on that set out in Table 5, which is used as a basis for determining the requirement for further surveys and/or mitigation.

Table 2.2 Assessment Criteria for Bat Activity Value

Suitability	Description
Negligible	No features on site suitable for use by commuting and foraging bats.
Low	Habitat that could be used by small number of commuting bats such as; defunct hedgerow, isolated features not well connected to surrounding habitat or Isolated habitat that could be used by a small number of foraging bats such as a lone tree or patch of scrub.
Moderate	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by commuting bats such as lines of trees, scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat connected to wider landscape that could be used for 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 or foraging bats such as; river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees or woodland edge. Site is close to or connected to known roosts.

2.6. SURVEY LIMITATIONS

- 2.6.1. This survey does not constitute a full botanical survey. Key species for each habitat type have been identified to give a broad representation of habitats present within the site.
- 2.6.2. It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no investigation can ensure the complete characterisation of the natural environment. This survey does not constitute a full botanical survey. Plant species may have been under-recorded, unidentifiable, or not visible due to a number of factors including the time of year the survey was carried out.
- 2.6.3. The protected species assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species occurring on the site. This is based on the suitability of the habitat, known distribution of the species in the local area (provided by data searches) and any direct evidence within the survey area.
- 2.6.4. The findings of this report represent the professional opinion of qualified ecologists and do not constitute professional legal advice. The client may wish to seek professional legal interpretation of the relevant wildlife legislation cited within this document.
- 2.6.5. The local data search had not been received at the time of completing the report. Species that may be present in the local area have been anticipated due to the structure and type of habitats surrounding the site. Once received, the report will be amended to include data from The Greater Manchester Local Records Centre (GMLRC). Overall,

this is not considered a constraint to the report.

2.7. PROPORTIONALITY

2.7.1. Collington Winter Environmental Ltd provide recommendations in line with the British Standard for Biodiversity (BS42020). Within BS42020, proportionality is encouraged for both ecologists and Local Authority Decision Makers and Consultees. Please refer to the below extract from Section 5.5 of BS42020.

“The work involved in preparing and implementing all ecological surveys, impact assessments and measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development. Consequently, the decision-maker should only request supporting information and conservation measures that are relevant, necessary and material to the application in question. Similarly, the decision-maker and their consultees should ensure that any comments and advice made over an application are also proportionate.”

NOTE 1 This approach is enshrined in Government planning guidance, for example, paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework for England [41].

NOTE 2 The desk studies and field surveys undertaken to provide a preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) might in some cases be all that is necessary.”

3 SURVEY RESULTS

3.1. SITE CONTEXT

3.1.1. The site is located within Whalley Range, a residential area in Manchester, approximately 2 miles southwest from the city centre. The site is surrounded by residential properties on all aspects and bordered by College Road along the southern and western. The area comprises heavily of soft landscaping including urban trees which are anticipated to provide some value for local birds and bats. However, the site is not connected to any ecologically valuable habitats by linear commuting features such as hedgerows, railway lines, or waterways. As such, it is anticipated that habitats on site will have site only significance.

3.2. DESIGNATED SITES

3.2.1. The following Local Nature Reserves are located within 5km from the site boundary, based on a consultation with Magic.gov.uk:

- Chorlton Ees & Ivy Green LNR is located approximately 1.9km southwest from the site boundary and comprises former sewage works where there are now meadows, wildflowers, and woodland walks.
- Broad Ees Dole LNR is located approximately 2.6km southwest from the site boundary and is an important wildlife refuge in the busy Sale Water Park site. Although there are no footpaths leading through the Dole, the footpaths around the perimeter of the site provide excellent viewpoints to watch the bird life for which the site is so important.
- Chorlton Water Park LNR is located approximately 2.9km south from the site boundary and forms a former gravel pit managed for people and wildlife and is nationally important for wildfowl. The site has a recently extended wildlife pond with wheelchair accessible dipping platform and a specially planted bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*) area with fruit trees and gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) for cover. Other habitats include developing woodland areas and rough grassland.
- Stenner Woods and Milgate Fields Didsbury LNR is located approximately 4.9km southeast from the site boundary. Stenner Woods is an area of wet woodland dominated by crack willow trees (*Salix alba*), much of the ground being submerged in water throughout most of the year. The Wardens will leave dead trees standing where it will not be hazardous to do so. Beetle larvae and other invertebrates inhabit trees, which turns them into ladders of food for birds such as great spotted woodpeckers (*Dendrocopos major*) and tree creepers (*Certhia familiaris*).
- Wythenshaw Park LNR is located approximately 4.8km south from the site boundary and comprises a variety of Woodland habitats in and around the park, three of which are sites of biological importance. Also, wildflower meadows and formal beddings.
- Trafford Ecology Park LNR is located approximately 4km southwest from the site boundary. Habitats include a lake, ponds, meadows, wet meadows, and woodlands.

3.2.2. No other statutory sites are located within 5 km of the site boundary.

3.2.3. The site also falls within the Impact Risk Zone of the following Statutory Site, based on consultation with MAGIC:

- Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This site is located approximately 8.9km northeast of the site. This site is designated for the significant populations of floating water-plantain (*Luronium natans*) and diversity of pondweed species (*Potamogeton sp.*) supported within the predominantly mesotrophic waters.

3.3. PRIORITY HABITATS

3.3.1. Consultation with Magic.gov.uk highlighted the presence of the following Priority Habitats within 1km of the site boundary.

- Deciduous woodland is located approximately 15m south of the site in relation to trees in The British Muslim Heritage Centre.
- Parkland and pasture as well as deciduous woodland habitats are located approximately 930m northwest from the site boundary in relation to Alexandra Park.

3.4. HABITATS

3.4.1. Please refer to Drawing 20-913 – 001 for the UK HAB Map for the site. Photographs of the site are presented in the Appendix.

MODIFIED GRASSLAND

3.4.2. The northern portion of the site comprised unmanaged modified grassland surrounding an apartment building. Species included perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), bird's eye speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), broadleaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), and common nettle (*Urtica dioica*).

INTRODUCED SHRUB

3.4.3. A block of introduced shrub was in the south-eastern corner of the site comprising entirely of cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*).

MIXED SCRUB

3.4.4. Several blocks of unmanaged scrub were located throughout the site, including south of the apartment block, and along the northern and eastern aspects of the site.

3.4.5. Scrub along the northern aspect was dominated by bramble with occasional sycamore saplings (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), elm (*Ulmus procera*), and common nettle.

3.4.6. Scrub south of the building included beech and sycamore saplings, holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), common nettle, cherry laurel, bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), common toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*), drooping sedge (*Carex pendula*), rose-of-Sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus*), and common dandelion.

BROADLEAVED TREELINE

3.4.7. A treeline extends across the southern aspect of the site and includes holly, sycamore, chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), and elm. The understorey was sparsely vegetated with only common nettle, sycamore saplings, and wood avens (*Geum urbanum*) identified.

INDIVIDUAL TREES

3.4.8. Several large trees were located within the site including T1, T2, and T3 – as detailed within the Tree Survey Schedule Layout (Land Forces, 2023). T1, T2, and T3 are all mature common beech trees (*Fagus sylvatica*).

SPARSELY VEGETATED LAND

3.4.9. The southern portion of the site comprised predominantly soil with occasional vegetation. Much of the ground was covered in leaf litter and was heavily sheltered by the canopies of the southern treeline, and individual trees. Occasional species included ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), common dandelion, wood sedge (*Carex sylvatica*), ragwort, annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*), wood avens, Welsh poppy (*Papaver cambricum*) and Spanish bluebell (*Hyacinthoides hispanica*).

DEVELOPED LAND; SEALED SURFACE

3.4.10. One apartment building is located on the site and is surrounded by concrete footpaths. A concrete access road is also located along the eastern aspect of the site.

3.5. SPECIES

FLORA

3.4.11. Modified grassland and sparsely vegetated land had limited floristic diversity due to the canopy cover of trees within the site. No notable plant species were identified within the survey, and it is unlikely to support important flora.

INVERTEBRATES

- 3.4.12. The scrub habitats may provide some value for foraging invertebrates within the local area. Flora species on site such as ragwort will provide suitable food resources.
- 3.4.13. Overall, notable invertebrates may utilise the site for foraging but are not thought to utilise the site in significant numbers.

AMPHIBIANS

- 3.4.14. One EPSL for great crested newts was located within 5km from the site boundary. EPSM2009-1142 was located approximately 4.1km northwest and allowed for the destruction of a resting place for great crested newt between 28/09/2010-31/10/2011.
- 3.4.15. No ponds were located onsite or within 250 m of the site boundary. As 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), great crested newts are not anticipated to be present on site (English Nature, 2001).
- 3.4.16. The site comprised of unmanaged habitats which may provide suitable foraging resources and cover for common amphibians such as common toads (*Bufo bufo*). Ornamental water bodies may be located within nearby residential gardens which may provide suitable conditions for breeding common amphibians.
- 3.4.17. The presence of great crested newts within the site is reasonably discounted, though common amphibians may occur on site.

REPTILES

- 3.4.18. The site provides limited value for reptiles, due to a lack of sizable suitable habitats. Small blocks of scrub along the northern and eastern aspects of the site may provide some value for reptiles. However, the site is not connected to any ecologically valuable habitats such as waterways, railways, or hedgerows which would encourage reptiles to use the site.
- 3.4.19. Reptiles are not anticipated to be on site and are not considered further.

BIRDS

- 3.4.20. The site provides a range of potential breeding habitats for a variety of birds in association with the individual trees, scrub, and treeline habitats. During the survey, woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*) and nut hatch (*Sitta europaea*) were identified within beech trees in the site.
- 3.4.21. Ground nesting birds are not anticipated to be on site due to the site's residential location which is anticipated to cause disturbance. The apartment building was inhabited at the time of survey which is also anticipated to cause disturbance which will deter ground nesting birds. The building did not present any nesting opportunities.
- 3.4.22. Overall, ground nesting birds are not anticipated to be present on site, but the treelines may be used by a range of other bird species.

BATS

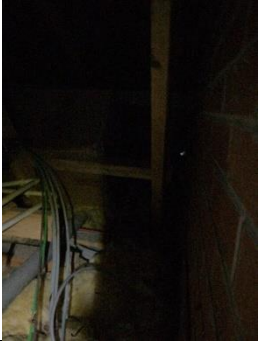
- 3.4.23. The following EPSLs were located within 3km from the site boundary:
- 2018-35287-EPS-MIT was located approximately 1.2km northeast from the site boundary and allowed for the damage and destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle between 05/06/2018-30/09/2019.
 - 2015-15443-EPS-MIT-1 was located approximately 1.4km southwest from the site boundary and allowed for the destruction of a resting place for brown long-eared bat between 20/10/2015-19/10/2020.
 - 2015-7649-EPS-MIT was located approximately 2.4km northwest from the site boundary and allowed for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle between 27/03/2015-31/12/2015.

- 2017-28375-EPS-MIT was located approximately 2.7km northwest from the site boundary and allowed for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle and natterer's bat between 13/04/2017-30/06/2022.
- EPSM2013-5575 was located approximately 2.8km northeast from the site boundary and did not allow for the damage or destruction of a resting place or breeding site for common pipistrelle between 23/05/2013-30/09/2016.
- 2018-38076-EPS-MIT was located approximately 2.9km southeast from the site boundary and allowed for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle between 01/12/2018-30/09/2019.
- 2015-13055-EPS-MIT was located approximately 2.9km southeast from the site boundary and allowed for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle between 01/08/2015-01/09/2020.

- 3.4.24. A further 26 EPSLs for bats were located within 5km from the site boundary – predominantly relating to Manchester City Centre.
- 3.4.25. One building was located within the site which was subject to a PRA. The building comprised a three-storey apartment building with a red brick exterior. The external brickwork was in overall good condition with no cracks or missing mortar. However, a small amount of brickwork was missing surrounding a pipe on the western aspect of the building which may potentially provide access into the cavity wall.
- 3.4.26. Windows and doors were in overall good condition and did not present any PRFs or potential access points to the internal aspect of the building.
- 3.4.27. The roof tiles were colonised by vegetation such as mosses which made it difficult to determine if any tiles were lifted or cracked. From ground level, the roof appeared in good condition apart from two lifted tiles on the extension on the western aspect of the building. The lifted tiles may provide a PRF or potential access to the loft area.
- 3.4.28. Soffits across the extent of the building were in moderate condition with some deterioration on the northern and western aspects of the building which present PRFs for bats.
- 3.4.29. Internally, no feeding remains, or bat droppings were identified within the loft space. Only one instance of natural light was observed within the loft space on the southern aspect of the building, but it is unknown what external feature it came from but demonstrates a potential access point to the loft. Structural beams within the loft space were in good condition with no cracks that would present PRFs for crevice dwelling bats. The roofing felt was also in good condition – limiting the loft space's value for roosting bats.
- 3.4.30. Overall, the building was assessed as having '**low**' bat roosting potential due to confirmed access to the loft space by external lighting, potential access into the cavity wall on the western aspect, and a couple of lifted roof tiles. Low bat roosting potential refers to structures with "one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically" (Collins, 2016). The roost is unlikely to be used on a regular basis by a larger number of bats.
- 3.4.31. Please see Table 3.1 for a summary of photos of the building.

Table 3.1 Building PRA Summary

Description	Photograph
Northern aspect of the building	

Roofing tiles colonised with vegetation.	
Deteriorated soffits.	 
Beams and roofing felt within the loft space.	
Natural lighting coming in from the southern aspect of the building.	

3.4.32. The trees on site were also subject to a PRA, as detailed in Table 3.2. the Tree references have been cross referenced with the Tree Survey Schedule Layout (Land Forces, 2023).

Table 3.2 Tree PRA Summary

Tree Reference	Description	Photograph
T1	A mature common beech tree in the centre of the site at National Grid Reference: SJ 82472 94834. The tree had a split on the southern aspect, approximately 30cm from the ground which leads into the trunk. The tree was assessed as having 'low' bat roosting potential.	
T2	A mature common beech tree in the centre of the site at National Grid Reference: SJ 82474 94834. A split was identified approximately 40cm from the ground but did not lead into the trunk. The tree was assessed as having 'low' bat roosting potential.	
T3	A mature common beech tree in the north-eastern corner of the site. The tree is of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs, but none were seen from ground level. The tree was assessed as having 'low' bat roosting potential as precautionary.	
T13	A sycamore tree in the northern aspect of the site. The tree has dense common ivy cover which is often favoured by bats. The tree was assessed as having 'low' bat roosting potential.	

T10	A horse chestnut along the northern aspect of the site. The tree has dense common ivy cover which is often favoured by bats. The tree was assessed as having 'low' bat roosting potential.	
T11	A sycamore along the northern aspect of the site. The tree has dense common ivy cover which is often favoured by bats. The tree was assessed as having 'low' bat roosting potential.	

3.4.33. All trees identified in the Table were assessed as having **'low'** bat roosting potential due to cracks and holes in the mains stem, maturity of the trees and dense ivy cover. Low bat roosting potential for trees is defined as "A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only limited roosting potential" (Collins, 2016).

3.4.34. The habitats on site may provide value for foraging bats due to unmanaged scrub and mature trees which will attract invertebrate prey. The treeline along the southern aspect of the site may also be used for commuting. The structures on site were assessed as providing some potential value for roosting bats in relation to individual trees and the existing apartment block.

BADGER

3.4.35. No signs of badger presence were recorded within the site or the surrounding 30 m during the site visit.

3.4.36. No suitable sett building habitats were identified on site. The site is not connected to any ecologically valuable habitats that badgers may commute to using the site. Overall, it is not likely that badgers are present on site but cannot be completely discounted due to their resilience to anthropogenic activity.

OTHER TERRESTRIAL MAMMALS

3.4.37. Given the habitats present within the site including scrub, it is anticipated that hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) could be present within the site.

3.4.38. The site is anticipated to have limited value for brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*) due to the sites use for residential purposes and are not considered present.

NON-NATIVE INVASIVE SPECIES

3.4.39. No non-native invasive species were observed during the survey.

SPECIES DISCOUNTED FROM ASSESSMENT

- 3.4.40. Water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*), otter (*Lutra lutra*), beaver (*Castor fiber*) and white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) have been discounted from assessment as no aquatic habitats are located on site or within proximity. The closest aquatic habitat is located approximately 970m east of the site boundary, relating to the lake in Alexandra Park. The lake is sufficiently separated from the site by anthropogenic barriers as such no negative impacts would occur on aquatic species during the proposed development.
- 3.4.41. Hazel Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) mainly occur in southern counties, especially in Devon, Somerset, Sussex, and Kent. There are few recorded localities north of the Midlands, though they are present in parts of the Lake District and in scattered Welsh localities (Matthews et al, 2018). The species are not generally known to be present within the Greater Manchester area (Wembridge et al., 2016). The habitats on site are of limited value due to limited areas of extensive woodland and scrub. As such, the species are reasonably discounted from site.
- 3.4.42. Red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) has been discounted from the assessment. Red squirrel populations are limited to small areas of northern England and are not known to be present in the Greater Manchester area; with no previous records returned in the data search. It is anticipated that high abundances of grey squirrel are present within this region (Shuttleworth/RSST n.d.). This species will displace red squirrel through competition as well as cause increased red squirrel mortality through the spread of squirrel pox (The Mammal Society, 2020).

4 MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. DESIGNATED SITES

- 4.1.1. The site is located within the Impact Risk Zone for Rochdale Canal SSSI, SAC located approximately 8.9km northeast of the site. It is anticipated that the designated site is a sufficient distance away and separated by anthropogenic barriers such as the residential areas, such that no impacts because of development are anticipated. A consultation with Natural England is **not** required due to the proposed development relating to residential dwellings.
- 4.1.2. Numerous LNRs are located within 1 km of the site boundary. There may be small increase of visitors to the nearby sites. However, based on the size of the scheme, which is an existing residential block and the proposed retention of green space on site, it is anticipated the potential impacts will not be of significance.

4.2. HABITATS

TREELINES AND INDIVIDUAL TREES

- 4.1.3. The Tree Survey Schedule Layout (Land Forces, 2023) detail recommendation measures that should be followed through the proposed development. Several trees are recommended to be removed to facilitate development.
- 4.1.4. Where possible, trees are to be retained and protected. Generally, the protection measures of retained trees will be through use of temporary protective demarcation fencing to protect the trees and shrubs. The fencing must extend outside the canopy of the retained trees and must remain in position until all plots have been developed to ensure protection is provided throughout the construction phase.
- 4.1.5. The fencing will be in accordance with BS 5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction: Recommendations.
- 4.1.6. It has been informed by the client that replacement tree planting at a 1:2 ratio will be completed to compensate for loss of any trees. It is recommended that the planting comprises native species and species known to be of value for the attraction of wildlife. This will include fruiting and flowering species.

4.3. SPECIES

AMPHIBIANS

- 4.4.1. Great crested newts were deemed unlikely to be present on site and no further consideration for the species is required. However, there is a possibility that common amphibians such as common toad may be present on site.
- 4.4.2. It is recommended that consideration of amphibian presence during habitat removal is considered. Any debris is to be cleared by hand, and any common amphibians located moved carefully, by hand, to outside of the impacted area.

BREEDING BIRDS

- 4.4.3. Breeding birds may utilise trees within the site for nesting.
- 4.4.4. Any vegetation removal should be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season (March to September, inclusive). If this is not possible, a suitably qualified ecologist should undertake a nesting bird check no more than 48 hours prior to removal. If nesting activity is observed, the nest(s) should be left in situ until the young have fledged. A suitable buffer will be maintained and determined by the ecologist.
- 4.4.5. When mature, new tree planting will provide nesting opportunities for breeding birds, compensating for the loss of habitat.

BATS

- 4.4.6. The building was assessed as having **low** bat roosting potential. It is understood that no bat surveys have been completed at the site to determine presence or absence of the species. It is recommended that a minimum of **one further nocturnal bat survey** is completed to understand the sites usage for roosting bats within the buildings and the sites value (see Section 5).
- 4.4.7. T1, T2, T3, T10, T11, and T13 were assessed as having **low** bat roosting potential. It is recommended that a soft felling technique is utilising which involves removing limbs separately and lowering them to the ground and then leaving for 24 hours before clearing. It is essential that any PRFs identified are left facing upwards to allow roosting bats to escape.
- 4.4.8. The habitat management of the site post development should aim to minimise use of insecticides and increase the invertebrate population which in turn will benefit bats. Whilst the proposed compensatory tree planting, will provide suitable foraging and commuting features within the site, post development.
- 4.4.9. Slow-flying species such as brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), which are known to be in the local area, are sensitive to lighting and may be impacted by the proposed development, should no mitigation for lighting be considered.
- 4.4.10. Any proposed lighting/existing lighting should follow the guidance outlined in the Institute for Lighting Engineers document "Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Lighting" (2005) and BCT's "Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK" (2018).
- 4.4.11. An External Lighting Scheme had not been produced on the writing of this report. As such, the following recommendations are to be considered within the scheme during its condition, to minimise impacts of lighting. The recommendations are as follows:
- Keep site lighting to minimum levels.
 - Luminaries should lack UV elements and preferably LED lighting with a warm white light should be used over cool white light (ideally <2700Kelvin).
 - Lighting should feature peak wavelengths greater than 550nm.
 - Light placement should be downward facing to prevent excess horizontal or vertical light spill.
 - The use of integrated fittings such as cowls, shields, louvres and hoods, that effectively contain light spill from unintended areas.
 - The use of hard landscaping features to block light and create dark corridors.
 - Avoid illuminating habitats of value.
 - Use of timed security lights should be set on motion-sensors and using short, 1-minute timers, to minimise light use.
 - Column heights of lighting can be considered to minimise light spill.

BADGERS

- 4.3.1. It is unlikely that badgers are present on site but have been discounted from assessment. As such, the following Precautionary Working Methods will be adhered to during construction phase to ensure that no badgers are impacted by the proposed development:
- All site operatives will be inducted to the potential presence of the species and the species legal protection.
 - All site operatives will be inducted as to identifying potential badger setts and should be vigilant if they suspect they locate a new sett during works and inform the site manager immediately. A minimum 20m buffer will be maintained from the potential sett until an ecologist has been to site.
 - All excavations will be battered at a 45-degree angle or ramps to be positioned to allow escape should animals become trapped.
 - All site machinery and materials will be appropriately stored to avoid harm to the species, notably between July and November each year when extra care is needed to avoid potential impacts on pregnant females.

TERRESTRIAL MAMMALS

- 4.4.12. European Hedgehog are anticipated to be present within the site and are a Species of Principal Importance. During habitat removal, any areas of dense vegetation should first be carefully hand searched to check for the

species. If identified during management, should be relocated carefully by hand to a location away from the working area. If any injured either species are located, they should be taken to a local vet.

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5 FURTHER SURVEYS AND CONCLUSION

5.1. NOCTURNAL BAT SURVEY (SUMMER ROOSTING)

- 5.1.1. The building was found to provide bat roosting potential and therefore, in accordance with Best Practice guidance (Collins, 2016) further nocturnal/ re-entry surveys should be undertaken between May-August (inclusive) to determine usage by roosting bats. It was assessed as **low** bat roosting potential; therefore, a minimum of **one further survey** is recommended with 3-4 surveyors.
- 5.1.2. The results of the further surveys will determine if any mitigation is required for roosting bats. If roosting bats are located within any of the buildings, a Natural England Mitigation Licence may be required for development to proceed. The Licence can only be obtained once planning permission has been granted and all wildlife conditions discharged. However, the bat emergence surveys must be undertaken prior to planning permission being applied for as they are a material consideration.

5.2. CONCLUSION

- 5.2.1 The site was situated within a predominantly residential estate with minimal links to ecologically valuable habitats within the local area. Habitats present on site included developed land; sealed surface, sparsely vegetated land, modified grassland, treelines, individual trees, scrub, and introduced shrub. The site was found to have value or potential value for bats, birds, common amphibians, and terrestrial mammals.
- 5.2.2 Specific enhancement recommendations include the following:
- Bat and bird boxes could be placed on the new buildings / retained trees. A plan to show the locations of these boxes and the specifications should be produced by a suitably qualified ecologist once the layout is finalised.
 - Planting of linear features such as hedgerows and trees between garden plots where possible, to add commuting features within the site.
 - The inclusion of 'hedgehog highways' to facilitate movement across the site. This includes holes of 13 x 13cm at the bases of fence panels, leaving a sufficient gap beneath gates and/or leaving brick spaces at the bases of brick walls.

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Description	Photographs
Sparsely Vegetated Land.	
Bramble scrub.	
Treeline along the western aspect of the site.	

Scrub	
Cherry laurel within the south-eastern corner of the site.	
Modified grassland	

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Drawing Title: Habitat Map
Date: 23/05/2023

Key:

- Site Boundary
- Modified Grassland
- Building
- Sparsely Vegetated Land
- Developed Land; Sealed Surface
- Scrub
- Introduced Shrub (Cherry Laurel)
- Horse Chestnut
- Sycamore
- Common Beech
- Line of Trees

Scale: 1:800

Drawn By: CO

Checked By: OC

Approved By: OC



Client: Mr Stuart Lark

Site: 60A Wood Road, Whalley

Project Number: 20-731 | Rev: 1.0

Collington Winter Environmental 2023