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Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd, Roselands, Suite 1, 3, Cross Green, Formby, L37 4BH

Inspection & Assessment in relation to Bats & Breeding Birds

March 2023

St Margaret's Chambers

5 Newton Street

Manchester

M1 1HL

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Surveyor	Mr. H. Mulligan Qualifying CIEEM
Author	Mr. H. Mulligan Qualifying CIEEM
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Reviewed by	Mr. J. Pescod Qualifying CIEEM
Review date	20/03/2023
Approved by	Mrs. K. Wilding CEnv MIEMA ACIEEM
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Executive Summary

As part of an application for listed building consent at St Margaret's Chambers on Newton Street, Manchester, Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd carried out a daytime preliminary roost assessment in relation to bats with an inclusive inspection for breeding birds in February 2023. The survey was commissioned by Atelier MB Ltd; proposals are understood to involve the conversion of the building.

Detailed methods, findings, conclusions and recommendations are presented throughout the report; however, the reader should be aware of the following **Key** points:

Bats: Based upon the findings of the survey, covered through sections 6.0 – 7.0 of the report and supported by **Appendix I**, St Margaret's Chambers is determined to offer '**Negligible**' bat roost potential in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust – Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd ed. (2016); no further surveys are required in relation to bats.

Table 4.1 Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement.		
Suitability	Description Roosting habitats	Commuting and foraging habitats
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats.

Breeding Birds: No implications are applicable in relation to Schedule 1 specially protected bird species such as peregrine falcon and black redstart and no surveys in relation to these species are required. Notwithstanding, the building features protruding ledges/window sills and other miscellaneous architecture that offer potential future nesting opportunities for both species. If the work is undertaken during the months of March-September then a final inspection of the roof is recommended immediately prior to the commencement of any external works; this should be carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist with knowledge of peregrine and black redstart nesting preferences. Only when the ecologist is satisfied that neither species will be impacted by the proposals should any demolition works be able to commence. While no evidence of breeding birds was identified during the inspection, the building has the potential to support common bird species associated with Manchester city centre such as gulls and pigeons, for example. If any nesting birds are identified at any stage of the work schedule, the applicant should be aware that breeding birds are protected at the nest - reckless or intently disturbing the birds would constitute an offence being committed and works should be moved or timed away from the nest until the birds have moved on/chicks successfully fledged.

Biodiversity Enhancement: As a means of enhancement and aiding the design of the scheme in keeping with local and national planning policy considering biodiversity net-gain principles, the proposals may consider incorporating wildlife friendly provisions in addition to those described. Further recommendations, regarding birds, native species and invertebrates are provided within **Appendix II**.

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction & Reasons for Survey

2.0 Protected Species & Their Requirements

3.0 Protected Species in Greater Manchester

4.0 Survey Methodology

5.0 Limitations

6.0 Desk Study Results

7.0 Field Study Results

8.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

9.0 Bibliography

Appendix I: Site Photographs

Appendix II: Biodiversity Enhancement: General Recommendations

1.0 Introduction & Reasons for Survey

- 1.1 As part of an application for listed building consent at St Margaret's Chambers on Newton Street, Manchester (see **Figure 1.1**), Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd carried out a daytime preliminary roost assessment in relation to bats with an inclusive inspection for breeding birds in February 2023. The survey was commissioned by Atelier MB Ltd; proposals are understood to involve the conversion of the building.



Figure 1.1 – Red line boundary of St Margaret's Chambers (Google Earth, 2021-22)

- 1.2 The aim of the survey was to ascertain if the building on site was of value to bats whilst an assessment for birds was also carried out. If any potential roost features (PRFs) were found to be suitable for bats, or signs of use were observed, then more detailed surveys would be recommended i.e. dusk / dawn emergence / re-entry surveys during the main active season of bats which is May – August (extending into September).
- 1.3 If additional surveys are required following the initial site visit, this report will outline the details of those further requirements.
- 1.4 If it was determined that bat(s) or their roost / place of rest / shelter will be subsequently impacted by the works then a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) would be legally required to proceed with the development.
- 1.5 If evidence indicated breeding birds may be impacted by proposals, tailored recommendations would be made accordingly, species pending.
- 1.6 As part of the local authority's planning policies and obligations to the Planning Framework, ecological surveys are generally required prior to planning permission being granted where protected / priority habitats and species are, or may be present, that could be affected by the proposals for which the application seeks consent. Where more detailed surveys are recommended by the ecologist, following an initial daytime investigation, then Local Planning

Authorities (LPA), on the advice of their ecological advisors, will not grant permission until such time that all relevant information is gathered.

- 1.7 In accordance with *Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice principles for development* (CIEEM *et al*, 2019) the site visit also aims to identify enhancement opportunities for biodiversity in line with national and local planning policy.

2.0 Protected Species & Their Requirements

Bats

- 2.1 All British bats and their **roosts are afforded full protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) and are listed in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019) (EU Exit). When dealing with cases where a European Protected Species (all UK bats) may be affected, a planning authority is a competent authority within the meaning of Regulation 7 of the Regulations, and therefore has a statutory duty, as the local authority, to have due regard to the provisions of the Regulations in the exercise of its functions.

2.2 Uses of Buildings by Bats

- a) Summer breeding roost (May-August)
- b) Hibernation roost (October-March)
- c) Transitional or temporary roost (other months)

- 2.3 Roost selection is often closely correlated to suitable foraging habitat within a reasonable commuting distance from the roost and different sites are used depending upon insect densities and abundance; climatic conditions can also affect their ability to successfully forage. All British bats are insectivorous.

*** The term roost is generically referred to as a place that bat/s use for the any of the above reasons, however it should be noted that under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019) (EU Exit) (Regulation 43 (d) the term roost is not used but refers to "a breeding site or resting place of such an animal" and is afforded legal protection. The roost, breeding site or resting place of bats, which ever terminology is used is legally protected whether or not bats are in occupation.*

Birds

- 2.4 All wild birds, no matter how common, their eggs, young and nests, whilst being built or occupied, are protected under both the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA 1981) and Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC Act 2006). Birds listed on Schedule 1 of the WCA 1981, for example peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), are afforded a greater level of protection and are protected also from disturbance.
- 2.5 Any work that would damage an occupied nest, eggs or young of breeding birds must be avoided; any damage to nests that may occur as a result of the development should be outside of the main breeding bird season (March – August). On occasions nests can become unoccupied during the breeding season but the status of the nest(s) should be determined by a suitably experienced ecologist before any damage takes place.

Policy

- 2.6 Paragraph 180 of the National Policy Planning Framework (as revised in July 2021) states:

When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;

b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and,

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

- 2.7 Policy EN15 of the Manchester Core Strategy 2012 to 2027, titled Biodiversity & Geological Conservation, echoes this national focus on ecological conservation, and states:

"Developers will be expected to identify and implement reasonable opportunities to enhance, restore or create new biodiversity, either on-site or adjacent to the site, contributing to linkages between valuable or potentially valuable habitat areas where appropriate..."

and:

"Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, developers will be required to provide appropriate mitigation and/or compensation", "It is important to recognise that brownfield sites often contain diverse and valuable biodiversity."

- 2.8 Where more detailed surveys are recommended by the Ecologist following a daytime assessment, then the Local Planning Authority, upon the advice of their ecological advisors, should not determine an application until such time that all relevant information is gathered, i.e. – until all required survey work has been completed. This is in accordance with the obligations placed upon Local Authorities in the exercise of its functions by way of its duties under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2019 (EU Exit).

3.0 Protected Species in Greater Manchester

- 3.1 Up to ten bat species have been recorded in Greater Manchester, most of which use built structures, notably occupied residential properties, for roosting. All bats feature on the local biodiversity action plan for the area; the most frequently encountered bat species is the common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) which will roost in building crevices, and its abundant status in Manchester is reflected throughout the UK.
- 3.2 All wild birds (with only minor exceptions) and their nests whilst being built or containing eggs or dependant young are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Some species are, however, subject to a greater level of protection, for example the peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) and black redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*), which are both listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), with nests of birds from these species being protected from disturbance as well as destruction. Both species are known to be resident and breed in urbanised, often derelict, areas within Manchester city centre. The peregrine is increasing in distribution due to successful conservation efforts on a national scale and improved protection through legislation; contrastingly, black redstart is red-listed on Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC 4) with fewer than 100 breeding pairs in the UK; decline in Manchester is part-attributed to the regenerative works across the city resulting in the loss of nesting sites and feeding areas. This species has its own action plan within Greater Manchester; both species' should be considered in planning in terms of provision of nesting opportunities and the creation of feeding areas for Black Redstart.

4.0 Survey Methodology

- 4.1 As part of the Inspection & Assessment in relation to Bats & Breeding Birds report, a desk-top and field-based study is conducted. Methods for both components of the appraisal are given below.

Desktop Study

- 4.2 Prior to a site visit a desktop study was conducted using online resources to obtain information pertaining to any sites afforded statutory (e.g. SSSI) and non-statutory (e.g. LWS) designations within 2.0 kilometres of the site boundary. To do so, the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGiC – provided by DEFRA) was accessed to gather such information; this particular interactive mapping service was also used to locate any locally granted European Protected Species Mitigation Licenses (EPSMLs) and species records to further inform conclusions concerning such species in the context of the study site and its proposed development.
- 4.3 Historic satellite imagery was reviewed using sources such as Google Earth (© 2022/23) to help establish past use of the land and determine the nature of adjoining and extending habitats; such information aids in the understanding of how the site might interact with its surroundings ecologically and its value in that context, and how the development may impact at a wider scale.
- 4.4 A commercial data request to the Local Environment Records Centre serving the area – in this case Greater Manchester Local Record Centre – has not been sourced and is justified through application of the following recent guidance:

1) The Guidelines for Accessing, Using and Sharing Biodiversity Data in the UK (CIEEM, 2020) states:

“It is generally expected that a desk study, including a data search, will be a key part of the ecological surveys or reports produced to inform a planning application. Freely available web-based sources of data and contextual information should always be used; in some cases, it may be acceptable to not undertake a data search with the LERC or other relevant NSS or local interest groups, for example:

*ii) Situations where the **data search would be extremely unlikely to provide information needed to inform the assessment, due to the scale and location of the proposed development**. The appropriateness of excluding a data search will need to be judged on a case-by-case basis as, in most situations, it will be essential to carry out such a search even if the development is very small or is likely to have a low impact. It can be very difficult to demonstrate that a data search would not have provided relevant information without obtaining and reviewing those data.*

*iii) In some cases for Preliminary Roost Assessments of buildings in **low impact / small-scale scenarios, such as an extension to a residential property, loft conversions (full or partial)**, installation of Velux/dormer windows, single modern agricultural or similar building conversion or demolition; however, it should not be assumed that data searches are never required for such scenarios and this must be judged on a case by case basis and justified accordingly.*

2) The Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017) also states:

“Very occasionally it might be possible to carry out a robust PEA without obtaining LERC/NBDC/CEDaR data; this will usually only apply to low impact or small-scale projects

(e.g. by virtue of size, extent, duration of works, magnitude and locality), and should be determined on a case-by-case basis."

- 4.5 As exemptions as made **bold** above can be applied at St Margaret's Chambers, whilst following best practice, it is considered unnecessary to conduct a commercial data request following the desk study effort and daytime assessment at this time, which offers a proportionate level of survey effort. If, however, a data search is considered necessary by the Local Authority advisory body to inform the ecological impact assessment following any further surveys recommended in this report, a proportionate data search should be commissioned with results interpreted into the conclusions and recommendations of a re-issued / updated report.

Field Survey

- 4.6 In context with the above, a diurnal inspection and assessment of the building in relation to bats and breeding birds was conducted on the 14th of February 2023 in clear, cool conditions (2°C), wind 2/12 (Beaufort scale), 5% cloud, by the following surveyor (see **Table 4.1**):

Table 4.1 – Site surveyor credentials

Name	Description of most relevant credentials
Mr. H. Mulligan Qualifying CIEEM	• Trainee Ecologist with one year of training and experience, • MBIolSci in Biological Sciences (Zoology), • Accredited agent on the (Class 2) Natural England bat licence of Mrs. K. Wilding (CLS-14227).

- 4.7 Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) - Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd ed. (2016) states:

"The guidelines should be interpreted and adapted on a case-by-case basis according to site-specific factors and the professional judgement of an experienced ecologist. Where examples are used in the guidelines, they are descriptive rather than prescriptive."

- 4.8 The bat and breeding bird survey was conducted in tandem; the building was inspected for potential places that may be of value to bats or breeding birds, and to determine if evidence of use by either group was present; the interior was assessed with the aid of a high powered torch for evidence of bat use which mainly includes bat droppings and/or prey items, or incidental presence of live or dead animals, for example, and investigated for evidence of breeding birds which broadly involves a search for nesting materials, presence of pellets or accumulated faeces and/or dead juveniles/hatchlings, for example.
- 4.9 External elevations were investigated with the aid of high-powered torch and close focus binoculars (where necessary) for places that can be used as a roost by bats or as a means of ingress for bats and birds leading to areas of roosting/nesting potential. These features are typically referred to as potential roost features (PRF) concerning bats. All external features were able to be surveyed without constraint.
- 4.10 The surrounding habitat was also considered in terms of general suitability for bat and bird species associated with the local habitat types.

- 4.11 Criteria for roost assessment are based upon the determinants given in the Bat Conservation Trust - Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd ed. (2016): (see **Figure 4.1**).

Table 4.1 Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement.

Suitability	Description Roosting habitats	Commuting and foraging habitats
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by commuting or foraging 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 ^a 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 ^b). A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential. ^c	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 habitat. 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 a patch of scrub.
Moderate	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^a and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	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	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 potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^a and surrounding habitat.	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. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

^a For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance.

^b Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten et al., 2015). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in large buildings in highly urbanised environments.

^c This system of categorisation aligns with BS 8596:2015 Surveying for bats in trees and woodland (BSI, 2015).

Figure 4.1 – BCT guidelines extract

- 4.12 An assessment of the site was conducted when birds are outside of their breeding season (this is typically March – August inclusive). Trees (if present) were inspected for evidence of birds known to be present within the local area, encompassing both common and species protected under legislation, for example on section 41 of the Natural Environment Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act) or on the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP).
- 4.13 Additional to the site's capacity to support common species of bird, the area was subject to an assessment for capacity to support specially protected species such as peregrine falcon and black redstart, species protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) (as amended).
- 4.14 The results, conclusions and recommendations are based on a number of factors i.e.
- Practical experience of surveyor,
 - Knowledge of bat/bird species relevant to the site location and geographical range,
 - Nature of immediate/surrounding habitat in relation to foraging/commuting,
 - Presence/absence of roost potential,
 - Value of roost potential – if present.

- 4.15 The results, conclusions and recommendations of this report have been assessed by Mrs. K. Wilding, the Director of Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd, and her assessment is consistent with that of the surveyor Mr. Mulligan.

5.0 Limitations

- 5.1 The survey was conducted outside of the bat active season, therefore there was a lower probability of encountering direct evidence of bats. Potential roost features and suitability of potential roost features can, however, be adjudged as decisively as within the active season of bats, saving time and unnecessary delay to applicants, thus frequently the assessment can be as conclusive as if it was carried out in the active season. Timing is not, therefore, considered a constraint in this instance.
- 5.2 The survey took place outside the breeding bird season (typically March – September), therefore incidental breeding bird behaviour has a lower / negligible probability of being encountered. Suitability for breeding birds is readily identifiable all year round however, and often nesting material can attest to the presence of breeding birds, and as such timing is not considered a constraint in this instance.
- 5.3 While it is assumed that a loft space is present beneath each of the hipped sections of the roof, only the space above the most south-western hip could be accessed, with no other entry points. However, it is reasonably assumed that any spaces present are likely to be of the same character as the space that could be accessed. In considering potential constraints, no significant limitations were experienced that might adversely influence the results, conclusions, and recommendations of this report.

6.0 Desk Study Results

- 6.1 St Margaret's Chambers (referred to in-part as "the application site" and "the site") (circa 0.04 ha) is a Grade II listed building situated north-west of Newton Street within the highly urbanised city centre of Manchester, while also bordering Piccadilly to the south-west and Back Piccadilly to the north-east (see **Figure 6.1** below).



Figure 6.1 – Location of the application site (red boundary) within the landscape (© Google Earth Pro 2021/22)

- 6.2 The immediate habitat is comprised entirely of hardstanding and typical inner-city buildings such as apartments, hotels and industrial complexes within the city centre of Manchester; the aforementioned streets border three sides of the building, while Clayton House, another listed building, adjoins to the north-west. The site lies close to Piccadilly Gardens to the west, a busy city square featuring a tram stop and numerous restaurants and amenities, alongside a large pedestrianised area.
- 6.3 The extending environment continues in similarity to that of the immediate, with further expanses of dense urbanisation dominating in all directions from the site within the city centre, with numerous high-rise buildings, busy shopping districts and transport routes; natural habitats are limited to occasional urban trees and treelines, notably along the various canals throughout Manchester, and occasional distant urban parks such as Sackville Gardens, St Michael's Flags & Angel Meadow Park and Ancoats Green. Priority habitats in proximity to the application site are limited to a small number of patches of deciduous woodland, at the outer reaches of the considered radius (see **Figure 6.2**).
- 6.4 In respect to connectivity, the site has poor linkages to the abovementioned natural habitats with abundant infrastructure providing a significant barrier to dispersal for most terrestrial species; though access to the application site by avian fauna is considered possible, the habitat present surrounding the building is considered unfavourable. The protected species

most typically associated with the habitats described is the common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) bat, frequently associated with buildings in both urban and rural settings, and this species presence in surrounding landscape is likely.

NB: *Where quality habitat is present close to buildings then the percentage use of those buildings, by bats, increases given that roost opportunities are available and vice versa..*

6.5 There are no statutory designated sites within 2.0 kilometres of the application site, with the closest site being Clayton Vale Local Nature Reserve (LNR) approximately 3.0 kilometres to the east.

6.6 Given the lack of proximity to statutory designated sites in the wider area and the small scale of the proposed works, there are unlikely to be any direct impact upon any sites or their associated interest features. Where no impact to SSSI's is predicted, Natural England (NE) issue the following advice within their standing guidance on SSSI impact zones (NE, 2019):

"It is important to note that the SSSI IRZs only indicate Natural England's assessment of likely risk to the notified features of SSSIs. Where they indicate such a risk is unlikely, this does not mean that there are no potential impacts on biodiversity or the wider natural environment."

6.7 An online search of MAGiC maps revealed that 19 European Protected Species Mitigation Licences (EPSML) have been granted within a 2.0 kilometres radius of the application site (see **Figure 6.2**); one of these relates to a common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) maternity roost, and another to a brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*) maternity roost, with the rest relating to common pipistrelle day roosts, and the closest record located approximately 0.3 kilometres to the south

6.8 A search of the biological record database held by Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd, previously submitted data to the LRC, revealed the following protected species records within a 2.0km radius of the application site, listed below by ascending order of distance.

- 0.3 km north / 2018 / Common pipistrelle day roost
- 0.6 km south-east / 2016 / Day roost for up to five common pipistrelle
- 1.2 km east / 2019 / Day roost for up to three common pipistrelle
- 1.3 km east / 2020 / Common pipistrelle activity during dusk surveys
- 1.6 km west / 2016 and 2022 / Common pipistrelle activity during dusk surveys
- 1.8 km south / 2014 / Common pipistrelle day roost

St Margaret's Chambers, 5 Newton Street, Manchester, M1 1HL
Inspection & Assessment in relation to Bats & Breeding Birds

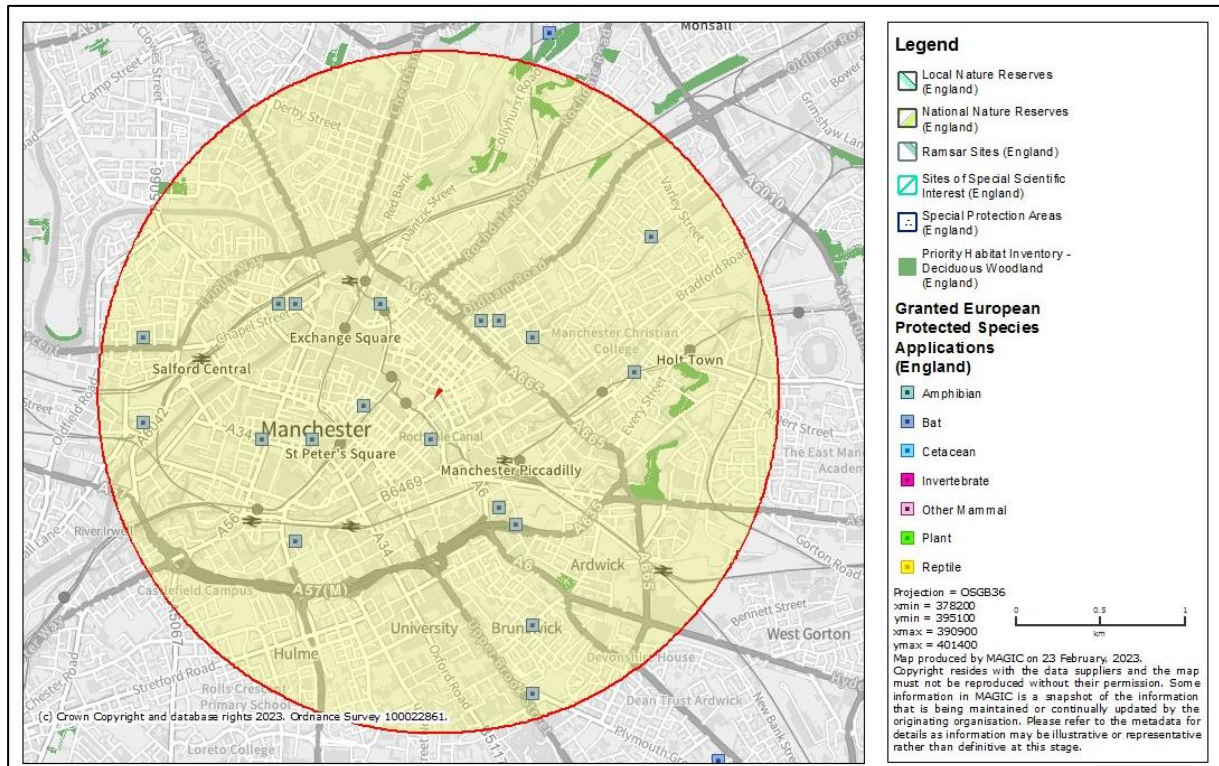


Figure 6.2 – EPSML and designated site data for the area within 2.0 kilometres of the application site (MAGiC Maps 2023)

7.0 Field Study Results

Bats

- 7.1 St Margaret's Chambers is a five-storey red-brick built and sandstone dressed Grade II listed building, featuring several hipped and pitched slate roof sections, with maximum dimensions of 38 metres x 14 metres x 15 metres (length x width x height). The bottom storey of the building features modern shop fronts, utilised by several cafes and shops, while the upper storeys are derelict having previously been in use as offices. Features present include four decorative gables, stone sills and lintels, timber windows, and a security staircase to the north. In respect of its condition, whilst the surveyor is not qualified to assess structural state, the aesthetic condition of the building was adjudged to be fair, with the exterior structure generally tight and in good order.
- 7.2 Internally, a single loft space at the south-west of the building was accessed (see **Figure 7.1**), however as stated in **Section 5.0** it is assumed that further loft spaces exist beneath the various pitches, which are inaccessible. Nevertheless, a judgement could be made of the space that was accessed, and it is assumed that any other spaces are likely to be of a similar character. The space was dark, warm and non-draughty, with rockwool insulation on the floor, and has evidently not been accessed in a long time given the heavy dust and cobwebbing. The space was reasonably open, with an apex of approximately 2.0 metres.



Figure 7.1 - Aerial view of the building indicating the accessed loft space in blue and inaccessible spaces in red

- 7.3 The building is considered broadly suitable for the breeding requirements of loft-dwelling species such as the brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*, BLE), as these are species which prefer dark, open loft spaces with consistent thermal conditions. No evidence of BLE bats such as droppings or prey items was encountered (although all of the spaces could not be accessed), and the immediate environment is considered highly unsuitable for this species, given the lack of nearby treelines or green spaces.

- 7.4 A breathable roofing membrane (BRM) is present beneath the roofing materials in the accessed loft space; the presence of an underlining typically improves a building's value to bats, notably for crevice-dwelling bats of the *Pipistrellus* genus, whereby the bats roost between the lining and the roof cover material provided external opportunities. However, BRMs can often cause injury or even death due to the fine claws of the bat getting tangled in the fibres. No evidence of crevice-dwelling bats was identified at the site; however this is often the case due to the crevice-dwelling nature of these species.
- 7.5 Externally, no potential roosting features (PRFs) were located on the building; the stone features throughout are tight-fitting, and no roof slates were observed to be slipped, lifted or missing which could provide access to the aforementioned loft voids, with the building also lacking many typical features that might be utilised by bats for crevice opportunities such as timber fascia boards or bargeboards. Taking into account the lack of potential roosting features alongside the aforementioned poor habitat suitability for bats, St Margaret's Chambers is duly categorised as offering '**Negligible**' bat roost suitability, in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust – Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd ed. (2016).
- 7.6 A cellar is present beneath the entire footprint of the building, however this is in use as an active shop, and as such is under high levels of disturbance, while being warm and bright. It is therefore considered highly unsuitable for bat hibernation and external access is not available into this area.

Breeding Birds

- 7.7 No historic evidence of Schedule 1 specially protected species such as peregrine falcon and/or black redstart was observed during the investigation of the roof. Notwithstanding an absence of historic evidence, the nature of the roof as well as other building features such as the sandstone features and ledges on the exterior, contain areas which could feasibly be utilised for nesting by the named species in the future, given their recorded presence in the city in recent years.
- 7.8 In relation to common bird species no evidence of nesting, historic or recent, was observed within the building.

8.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

Bats

- 8.1 Based on the site-specific assessment as described in **Sections 6.0-7.0** and supported by **Appendix I**, St Margaret's Chambers has duly been categorised as offering '**Negligible**' bat roost potential in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust 'Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines' (2016) (see **Figure 8.1**).

Table 4.1 Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement.		
Suitability	Description Roosting habitats	Commuting and foraging habitats
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats.

Figure 8.1 – Bat Conservation Trust extract on Negligible roost potential requirements

- 8.2 Bats are a transient species and buildings can deteriorate over time. In the highly unlikely event that bat(s), or evidence of bat(s), are found during the proposed works, then, as a legal requirement, the work at the site should immediately cease and an Ecologist should be contacted for further advice. If bat(s) or their roost(s) will be affected, then an EPSML may be required to legally commence with the works. See **Figure 8.2** for indicative evidence of bats.



Figure 8.2 – Evidence of bats – droppings on the left / a Common Pipistrelle bat on the right - indicative

- 8.3 Owing to the highly urbanised, well illuminated and busy surrounding environment already present on and surrounding the application site, it is unlikely that the proposed development will result in light and/or noise disturbance exceeding the current level; however, as a precautionary measure owing to the presence of confirmed bat records within 300m of the application site the following lighting recommendations are suggested should any night work be undertaken:

Installation of harsh artificial lighting as part of any development that exceeds current levels could have a negative impact upon foraging/commuting bats in the landscape, particularly if increased light spillage occurs in areas of that are currently free from illumination such as

boundary features. A bat-sensitive lighting plan is recommended as part of the scheme, in order to avoid potential impacts to bats that may use the site. Several options to consider have been listed below, though the reader is referred to the Bat Conservation Lighting Guidelines for further information.

Appropriate luminaire specifications: Luminaires come in a myriad of different styles, applications and specifications which a lighting professional can help to select. The following should be considered when choosing luminaires.

All luminaires should lack UV elements when manufactured. Metal halide, fluorescent sources should not be used. LED luminaires should be used where possible due to their sharp cut-off, lower intensity, good colour rendition and dimming capability. Lighting should be directed to where it is needed, and light spillage avoided. This can be achieved by the design of the luminaire and by using accessories such as hoods, cowls, louvres and shields to direct the light to the intended area only. Planting can also be used as a barrier or manmade features that are required within the build can be positioned so as to form a barrier.

Predicting where the light cone and light spill will occur: There are lighting design computer programs that are widely in use which produce an image of the site in question, showing how the area will be affected by light spill when all the factors of the lighting components listed above are taken into consideration. This should be a useful tool to inform the mitigation process.

Light levels: The light should be as low as guidelines permit. If lighting is not needed in any particular area, do not light. Numerous software programmes are currently available which can be used inform lighting plans, demonstrating how lighting decisions will illuminate a site.

Please refer to the 'Landscape and urban design for bats and biodiversity' (Gunnell *et. al.*, 2012, Bat Conservation Trust) Guidance Note 8 'Bats and Artificial Lighting' 2018, Bat Conservation Trust for further information.

8.4 No implications are applicable in relation to Schedule 1 specially protected bird species such as peregrine falcon and black redstart and no surveys in relation to these species are required. Notwithstanding, the building features protruding ledges/window sills and other miscellaneous architecture that offer potential future nesting opportunities for both species. If the work is undertaken during the months of March-September then a final inspection of the roof is recommended immediately prior to the commencement of any demolition works; this should be carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist with knowledge of peregrine and black redstart nesting preferences. Only when the ecologist is satisfied that neither species will be impacted by the proposals should any demolition works be able to commence.

8.5 While no evidence of breeding birds was identified during the inspection, the building has the potential to support common bird species associated with Manchester city centre such as gulls and pigeons, for example. If any nesting birds are identified at any stage of the work schedule, the applicant should be aware that breeding birds are protected at the nest - reckless or intently disturbing the birds would constitute an offence being committed and works should be moved or timed away from the nest until the birds have moved on/chicks successfully fledged.

NB: *All wild birds (with only minor exceptions) and their nests whilst being built or containing eggs or dependant young are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981. It is a punishable offence to interfere in any way with active nests, including disturbance.*

8.6 General recommended ideas to enhance the site in accordance with the principles of 'Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice principles for development' (CIEEM *et. al.*, 2019), are

presented in **Appendix II**, with enhancement measures for peregrine falcon and black redstart included.

9.0 Bibliography

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- **Communities & Local Government (C&LG)**, 2018. *National Planning Policy Framework*. Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/60777/2116950.pdf
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- **Mitchell-Jones, A.J. and McLeish, A.P.** (Eds) (2004). *Bat Workers' Manual*, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.

Appendix I: Site Photographs



Plate 1 – St Margaret's Chambers as seen from the south



Plate 2 – South-eastern elevation of the building



Plate 3 – *The building as seen from Back Piccadilly*



Plate 4 – *Character of the loft space accessed*



Plate 5 – *Character of loft space continued*



Plate 6 – *Breathable roof membrane present beneath roofing materials*

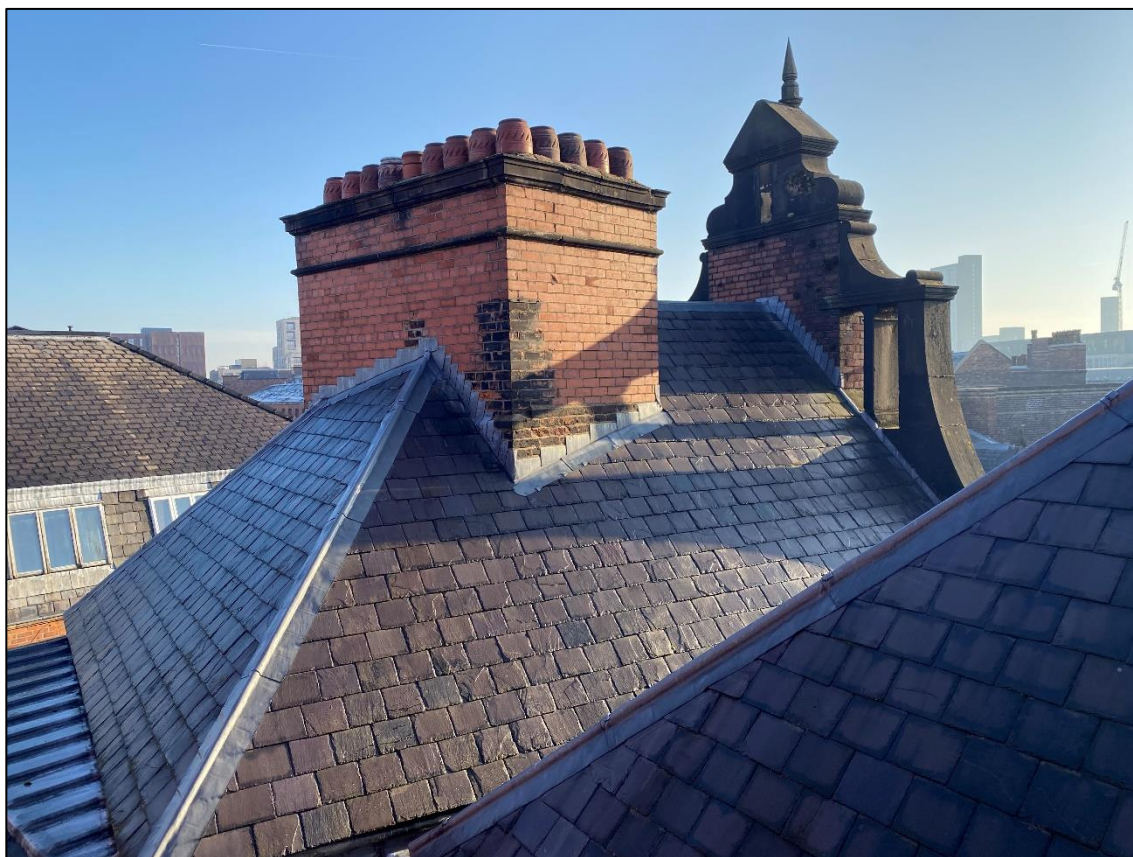


Plate 7 – *View of the northern most roof hip*

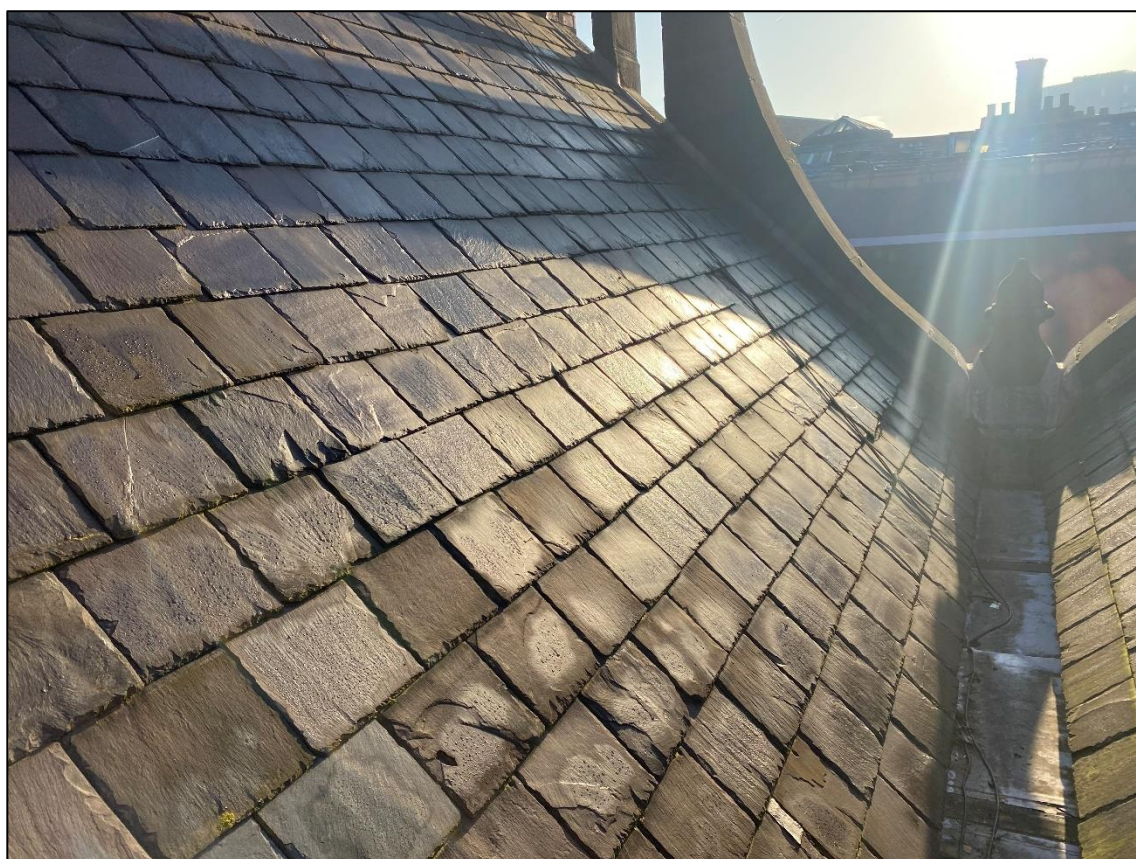


Plate 8 – *Tight fitting nature of the roof slates*

Appendix II: Biodiversity Enhancement: General Recommendations

Indicative Enhancement

Bats

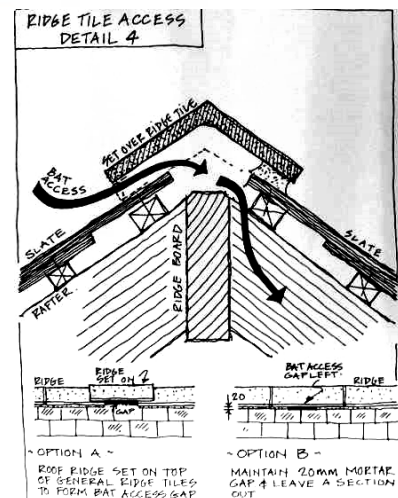
Integrated bat box

The Habibat Bat Box is a solid box made of insulating concrete with internal roosting space. The box blends seamlessly into brick-built properties and may be incorporated into the fabric of buildings, being best placed on gable elevations.



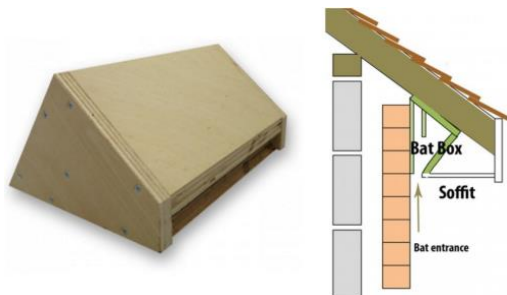
Ridge access

Where appropriated, ridge tile access should be made with the incorporation of traditional Bitumen 1F underfelt immediately beneath ridge tiles. Breathable BRM membrane can cause significant problems where bats are in contact with it, whereby their fine claws become entangled within the fibres of the membrane, entrapping and killing bats.



Soffit access

Where soffits are instated at gable elevations, roost provision may be instated in the form of a soffit bat box with internal roosting space.



Externally fitted boxes

A large number of externally fitted box models for bats exist for buildings and trees. Suitable models for both buildings and trees may include the Eco Kent Bat Box.



Black Redstart

The integral Black Redstart nest box is intended to be built into walls to provide nesting cavities. This provides much needed nesting cavities for species specifically including Black Redstart. Constructed from FSC certified WoodStone this nest box will not deteriorate like a traditional wooden nest box.



For information see - www.nhbs.com/woodstone-build-in-open-nest-box

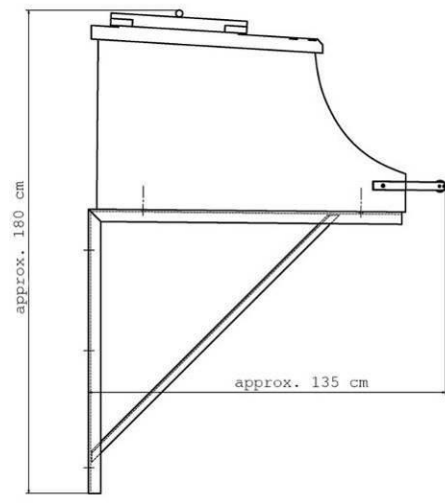
Peregrine Falcon

Peregrine Falcons have been sighted in urban Manchester and can form a material consideration of planning, in association with Policy EN15 under Biodiversity & Geological Conservation of the Manchester Core Strategy 2012 to 2027.

Peregrine diet consists almost entirely of birds, meaning one of their 'ecological functions' is control of the Feral Pigeon, making them a natural and cheap method of 'controlling' urban pigeon abundance. Historically, this species has suffered as a result of building renovation and change in design, notably they struggle with smooth façades and smooth, angled roofs. The creation and installation of artificial nesting aids on high structures has proved very useful in aiding their recovery and in modern times the UK conservation success of the Peregrine is somewhat of a nationwide triumph which is testament to smart local planning decisions in relation to this species.

Installation height: Generally in heights above 25 – 30 m. North or east-facing sites have proved to be most effective. The "balcony" with its perch should be placed so that there is a clear area directly below. The box can be attached directly to a building using screws (e.g. on flat roof sections) or, by means of a mounting rack and wall plugs, onto an outside wall. Recommended litter/ bedding: Place some gravel or other loose material in the box. Peregrines do not construct nests, instead the female scrapes a hollow in which to hatch the eggs. The breeding period starts any time between mid-March and the beginning of April.





House Sparrow

The Sparrow Terrace has been designed to help redress the balance of falling House Sparrow numbers. The current UK population is now half of what it previously was in 1980 and this is widely attributed to habitat destruction and lack of suitable nesting spaces. House Sparrows are social birds and like to nest in company, therefore, this terrace provides ideal nesting opportunities for three families. The terrace can be fixed on to the surface of a suitable wall or incorporated into the wall. It is suitable for all types of buildings.



Breeding Birds - Other

This traditional design has proved to be highly effective in attracting Robins, as well as other small species such as Black Redstart, Spotted Flycatcher and Wren. It is designed to be installed on the walls of houses, barns, garden sheds or other buildings and should be hung so that the entrance is to one side (at an angle of 90° to the wall). The front panel can be easily removed for cleaning.

This type of box should not be made conspicuous on a tree or bush because small predators can enter through the unprotected opening. By hanging on a wall, predators won't be able to reach the box. Alternatively hide the box in Ivy, Honeysuckle or other climbing plants.



Invertebrates - Bee bricks

The Bee Brick can be used in place of a standard brick or block in construction to create habitat for solitary bees. Alternatively, it can be used as a standalone bee house in your garden or wild patch. It will provide much needed nesting space for solitary bee species such as red mason bees and leafcutter bees, both of which are non-aggressive.

Each Bee Brick contains cavities in which solitary bees can lay their eggs before sealing the entrance with mud and chewed-up vegetation. The offspring will emerge the following spring and the cycle will begin again. Each cavity goes part way into the brick, which is solid at the back. Bee Bricks should be placed in a warm sunny spot on a south-facing wall at a minimum height of 1m, with no vegetation obstructing the holes. It is highly recommended that bee-friendly plants should be located nearby so that the bees using the bricks have food, otherwise it is unlikely that the brick will be used.

Available in a choice of four colours: white grey, dark grey, yellow and red.

Specification

- * Material: Concrete
- * Origin: Cornwall, UK
- * Dimensions: W 215mm x D 105mm x H 65mm
- * Weight: 2.9kg
- * Colours: White grey, yellow, dark grey and red



Native Planting and/or Landscaping

New feature landscaping should incorporate native woody plants as opposed to non-native species that are of significantly less benefit to biodiversity. Species such as Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*), Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), Guelder-rose (*Viburnum opulus*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) are native and will provide a valuable resource for a myriad of wildlife as opposed to non-native, exotic species which are generally much less effective, particularly to pollinator groups including bees, butterflies and moths.

Suitable Trees	Suitable Woody Shrubs
English Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>)	Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>)
Rowan (<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>)	Honeysuckle (<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>)
Wild Service Tree (<i>Sorbus torminialis</i>)	Guelder Rose (<i>Viburnum opulus</i>)
Silver Birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>)	Elder (<i>Sambucus nigra</i>)
Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>)	Wild Privet (<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>)
Goat Willow (<i>Salix capraea</i>)	Blackthorn (<i>Prunus spinosa</i>)
Beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>)	
Wild Cherry (<i>Prunus avium</i>)	