

Queens Road

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

Guinness Partnerships

December 2021



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This document has 30 pages including the cover.

Document history

Revision	Purpose description	Originated	Checked	Reviewed	Authorised	Date
1.0	For client review	AR	JS	LMG	<initials>	<date>

Client signoff

Client	Guinness Partnerships
Project	Queens Road
Job number	5196972
Document reference	Atkins_Guinness Partnerships_Queens Road_PEA
Client signature / date	

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Summary

Report purpose	The primary aims of this report are to: • Identify key ecological constraints to the development; • Identify if additional ecological surveys are required to inform an ecological impact assessment; and • Identify avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures.
Proposed Scheme	The Proposed Scheme entails the construction of a total of eight new dwellings which are proposed across three terraces at a Site off Queens Road, Manchester.
Desk studies and field surveys	A desk study was undertaken on 5th November 2021 and an extended Phase 1 habitat survey of the Site was undertaken on 4th November 2021.
Ecological features	During the site visit, two priority plant species were recorded within the Site boundary of local to regional importance. The walkover survey identified suitable habitat for nesting birds, bats and badgers. No protected species, or evidence of protected species were recorded during the survey. An invasive non-native plant species, Japanese knotweed, was recorded within the Survey Area directly adjacent to Site boundary.
Avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures	Key mitigation measures to ensure no significant negative impacts to identified Important Ecological Features occurs as a result of the development include: • the development of a wildlife sensitive lighting scheme; • pre-works checks for nesting birds and badger where relevant; • removal of Japanese knotweed adjacent to the Site; and • the translocation of priority plant species • The Proposed Scheme should achieve 10% Biodiversity Net Gain, as per local planning policy.
Recommendations for further survey	A preliminary bat roost assessment should be carried out on any structures or trees which will be impacted by the works. The individual trees and structures to be surveyed would be determined once details of the works are available including timings, duration and use of lighting. The Proposed Scheme should achieve 10% Biodiversity Net Gain, as per local planning policy, this assessment should be carried out following a suitable metric.
Opportunities for biodiversity enhancements	Incorporation of features for roosting bats and nesting birds. Native species planting including shrubs/trees providing food year-round to provide foraging habitat and refuge for birds and bats.

Report Validity

In the event of scope or programme changes or if works do not commence within 12 months of the date of this report then updates to the surveys may be required to ensure the validity of the data, as per CIEEM guidance¹.

¹ CIEEM (2019) Advice Note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys

Introduction

Terms of Reference

- 1.1. Atkins, a member of the SNC-Lavalin group, was commissioned by Guinness Partnership to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) in connection with the proposed construction of eight dwellings across three terraces on a portion of land off Queens Road, Manchester (hereafter referred to as the Proposed Scheme). This report presents the findings of PEA on the land parcel, as shown on in the Site Location Plan and Scheme Drawings in Appendix A (hereafter referred to as the Site).
- 1.2. This report has been undertaken with reference to current good practice² and provides an initial appraisal of any likely ecological constraints upon designated sites, protected species and other Important Ecological Features (IEFs).
- 1.3. Following the principles of the mitigation hierarchy and British Standard (BS) 42020:2013³, this report also identifies the need for measures to avoid, mitigate or compensate for negative impacts to habitats and species likely to be a result of the Proposed Scheme. Opportunities to provide biodiversity enhancements in accordance with local, regional and national biodiversity planning policies are also identified where relevant. Furthermore, this report identifies recommendations for further ecological surveys that may be required to establish the presence or likely absence of IEFs within and adjoining the Proposed Scheme, including specially protected species.
- 1.4. This report is intended to inform design development, site layout and/or site investigations. In addition, it provides the indicative scope for further ecological surveys and/or ecological impact assessment required in connection with a planning application or to contribute to an Environmental Impact Assessment.

The Site

- 1.5. The Site is located at Ordnance Survey national grid reference SD 85956 00147 in central Manchester.
- 1.6. The Site is approximately 0.2 ha in extent.. The Site is primarily composed of poor semi-improved neutral grassland with scattered trees. There is also a pavement dissecting the northern end of the Site. The immediate surrounds are primarily composed of housing estates to the north, east and west and a stretch of broadleaved deciduous woodland to the south. Within the wider habitat, there are patches of amenity grassland and areas of woodland to the south, west and north-west. The River Irk is located approximately 900m to the west of the Site.

The Scheme

- 1.7. Specific details of the Proposed Scheme are yet to be confirmed, including site compounds, access routes and the timing of the works. When details of the Proposed Scheme are available, this PEA report may need to be updated.
- 1.8. The Proposed Scheme involves the construction of a total of eight houses across three terraces. The details of the Proposed Scheme, as they are currently understood, are shown on the Scheme Drawings in Appendix A.

Scope of the Assessment

- 1.9. This report presents ecological information obtained during the following:
 - A walkover survey of accessible land within and adjacent to the Site on 4th November 2021; and
 - A desk-study undertaken on 5th November 2021.

² CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for preliminary ecological appraisal. 2nd Edition.

³ British Standard (2013) BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity - code of practice for planning and development

- 1.10. The walkover survey and identification of potential ecological constraints was based on the condition of the Site and its immediate surrounds encountered at the time of the walkover survey, and information about the Proposed Scheme available at the time. If information on the Proposed Scheme should change, the Site may need to be re-visited to establish if there are any further ecological constraints arising from changes to the design.

2. Methods

Desk Study

- 2.1. The geographical area for obtaining ecological data through desk studies has been determined using best practice guidance and professional judgement. Baseline data has been gathered from a range of sources through data requests, consultation, and using online resources as outlined below. This included data gathering in relation to statutory and non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation and protected and priority species⁴. The study areas used for the data gathering are detailed in Table 2-1. The desk study was undertaken in 5th November 2021. For species records collected, only those within 10 years of the data collection date have been considered within the assessment.
- 2.2. The following online resources were accessed:
- Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website⁵; and
 - Woodland Trust: Ancient Tree Inventory⁶;
 - Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI) Maps⁷; and
 - British Geological Survey (BGS) Geology of Britain Viewer⁸.
- 2.3. Ordnance Survey maps and the Grid Reference Finder website were used to identify the presence of waterbodies within 500 m of the Site boundary, in order to establish if the land within and immediately surrounding the Site could be used as terrestrial habitat for great crested newts. This species typically uses suitable terrestrial habitat up to 500 m from a breeding pond⁹. However, there is a notable decrease in great crested newt abundance beyond a distance of 250 m from a breeding pond¹⁰.
- 2.4. Greater Manchester Local Records Centre (GMLRC) was contacted to request records of protected and priority (Section 41¹¹) species and details of non-statutory designated sites.

Table 2-1 - Data search areas

Data Type	Search area – distance from Proposed Scheme boundary
Statutory designated sites for nature conservation	2 km
Non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation	2 km
Irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and veteran trees	1 km
Priority habitats ¹²	1 km
Protected species	2 km

⁴ These are defined in CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal 2nd Edition

⁵ <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

⁶ <https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>

⁷ [BSBI maps](#)

⁸ [Geology of Britain viewer | British Geological Survey \(BGS\)](#)

⁹ English Nature (2004). Great Crested Newt Mitigation Licences

¹⁰ English Nature (2004). An assessment of the efficiency of capture techniques and the value of different habitats for the great crested newt (ENRR576) <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/134002>

¹¹ Section 41 of the natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

¹² Priority habitats are taken to include Habitats of Principal Importance, Local Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and Annex I habitats under the Habitats Directive

- 2.5. Natural England's Open Data Geoportal for Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zones (IRZs)¹³ was used to identify whether the scheme fell within the IRZ for any relevant SSSIs.
- 2.6. A review of national and local planning policy relevant to the Proposed Scheme was undertaken as part of the data gathering. The following policy documents were subject to review:
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021) National Planning Policy Framework¹⁴;
 - GMCA Biodiversity Net Gain: Guidance for Greater Manchester¹⁵ and
 - Core Strategy 2012-2027, Manchester City Council¹⁶

Field Surveys

- 2.7. The geographical area for undertaking ecological field surveys has been determined using the current survey guidance (as detailed in section 2.9), professional judgement and the Zones of Influence, which have been determined based on likely effects arising from the Proposed Scheme.

Surveyor Competencies

- 2.8. All the surveys were led by surveyors who have been assessed to be at least of capable experience following the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) competency framework¹⁷.

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.9. An ecological walkover survey of areas within and adjacent to the Site, including land up to 50 m from the Site boundary where access was allowed (the Survey Area), was undertaken on 4th November 2021 using the extended Phase 1 habitat survey methodology¹⁸ as guidance. The walkover survey recorded information on the habitats within the Survey Area and also included a search for evidence of the presence of, and the potential of each habitat to support, protected and priority species as recommended by CIEEM¹⁹. Vascular plant names recorded during this survey follows Stace²⁰, whilst nomenclature for lower plants follows Blockeel *et al*²¹.
- 2.10. This survey method comprised mapping habitats present according to the JNCC Phase 1 habitat survey methodology¹⁸, with target notes (TNs) used to record specific details on the plant species composition of the habitats, current management and quality. TNs were also used to record features of ecological importance (e.g. ponds, complex habitat mosaics). In addition, the survey comprised assessing the suitability of the habitats present for, and recording any activity of the following species/species groups (in line with current guidance):
- amphibians (terrestrial and aquatic habitats), including an assessment of aquatic habitat for its suitability to support great crested newts using the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment²²
 - bats²³;
 - badgers ;
 - breeding and wintering birds;
 - reptiles²⁴;
 - invertebrates²⁵;

¹³ [Natural England Open Data \(arcgis.com\)](https://naturalengland-open-data.arcgis.com)

¹⁴ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf

¹⁵ [gmca-bng-guidance-update_250221-final-edited.pdf](https://gmca-bng-guidance-update-250221-final-edited.pdf) ([greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](https://gmca-bng-guidance-update-250221-final-edited.pdf))

¹⁶ https://secure.manchester.gov.uk/info/200074/planning/6573/core_strategy_2012-2027

¹⁷ <https://www.cieem.net/competency-framework>

¹⁸ Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2010) Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey - a technique for environmental audit.

¹⁹ CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for preliminary ecological appraisal. 2nd Edition.

²⁰ Stace (2019) New Flora of the British Isles 4th edition

²¹ Blockeel, T.L., Bell, N.E., Hill, M.O., Hodgetts, N.G., Long, D.G., Pilkington, S.L. & Rothero, G.P. 2020. A new checklist of the bryophytes of Britain and Ireland. Journal of Bryology online, March 2021

²² Oldham R.S., Keeble J., Swan M.J.S. & Jeffcote M. (2000) Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) Herpetological Journal 10 (4), 143-155 (2000).

²³ Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London

²⁴ Froglife (1999) Reptile Survey: an introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation. Froglife advice sheet 10

²⁵ As relevant to the location, identified through the desk study or at the time of the survey

- plants²⁵;
- fungi²⁵; and
- other notable species²⁶

- 2.11. Evidence of the presence of the following invasive species was recorded where seen:
- Evidence of animal species as listed on the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019 muntjac deer and grey squirrel.
 - Evidence of the presence of invasive non-native plant species (INNPS) plants. These are listed within Schedule 9 (Part II) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and subject to strict legal control.

Limitations

- 2.12. This section identifies limitations to the survey and assessment and provides an explanation as to the perceived effect of these on the appraisal.
- 2.13. Up to 50 m beyond the Site boundary was surveyed where feasible. Where residential properties existed within the 50 m boundary, access was restricted. However, this is not considered to be a significant limitation as more detailed preliminary ecological assessments will be undertaken of the surrounding buildings for their suitability to support roosting bats and they will not be directly impacted and mitigation measures will be put in place to minimise any direct impacts. This limitation is only applicable to bats and no other species are anticipated to be impacted.
- 2.14. The survey was carried out in November, at a time of year when certain plant species (including some INNPS) are not easily identifiable. Therefore, the presence of INNPS has not been ruled out. However, this limitation was reduced through having a Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC) Level 6 botanist accompany lead surveyors at the time of the field survey.
- 2.15. Many cryptic taxa that may constitute IEFs, particularly including apomictic species of plant, invertebrates and fungi, could not be adequately surveyed at the time of the survey. These groups require specialist survey and survey windows are generally highly restrictive, particularly for plants in the genera *Taraxacum*, *Rubus* and *Hieracium*. However, attributable to the nature of the habitats present at the Site and surrounding landscape, this is not considered to be a significant limitation.
- 2.16. The search for waterbodies within 500 m of the Site was undertaken by using Ordnance Survey plans and aerial photographs only. These sources may not show all waterbodies within 500 m of the Site boundary and, therefore, some waterbodies may not have been identified.
- 2.17. The desk study reviewed the Woodland Trust Trusts Veteran Trees inventory, MAGIC maps and BGS Geology of Britain viewer. These sources provide records of priority and irreplaceable habitats, but are not an exhaustive list and other priority or irreplaceable habitats may be present in the area. The walkover survey aimed to identify such features and as such this is not considered a constraint.
- 2.18. GMLRC biological records are not exhaustive and include only records of specially protected species and Species of Principal Importance for England. The absence of records does not conclusively demonstrate the absence of any given species.
- 2.19. Ecological surveys are limited by factors which affect the presence of plants and animals such as the time of year, migration patterns and behaviour. The ecological surveys undertaken to support this PEA have not therefore produced a complete list of plants and animals and the absence of evidence of any particular species should not be taken as conclusive proof that the species is not present or that it will not be present in the future. The above limitation/s has been addressed through taking the precautionary approach within the appraisal.

3. Results

Statutory and non-Statutory Designated Sites

- 3.1. The table below lists the statutory and non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation within 2 km of the Site.

Table 3-1 – Statutory and non-statutory designated sites within 2 km of the Site

²⁶ As relevant to the location, identified through the desk study

Site name	Designation	Location of designated site ²⁷	Features of interest ²⁸
Clayton Vale	Local Nature Reserve (LNR) (Statutory)	1.9 km south east of the Site	Reclaimed from land fill in the early 1980's and forms a valley with the river Medlock running along the base
Rochdale canal: Stotts lane to Ducie street basin	SBI / LWS Non-statutory	900 m south east of the Site	An important wildlife corridor. A good site for otter, bats and aquatic plants
Reservoirs at Harpurhey	Site of Biological Importance (SBI)/ Local Wildlife Site (LWS) Non-statutory	1.3 km north west of the Site	A series of former mill ponds restored in the early 2000's for wildlife
Bank bridge meadow	SBI / LWS Non-statutory	1.75 km south east of the Site	Designated by the Local Authority for its relative biological importance within Greater Manchester. Habitats of importance within the site include woodland and grassland.

- 3.2. The Site falls into the Rochdale Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone IRZ). This is also designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The SSSI contains important habitats for submerged aquatic plants and emergent vegetation associated with oligotrophic to mesotrophic waters, including an internationally important population of floating water-plantain. Floating water-plantain is a European Protected Species listed under Annex II of Directive 92/43/EEC and is listed as a primary reason for the selection of the site as an SAC. The site also supports diverse aquatic flora including several pondweeds, such as nationally rare American pondweed and county-rare blunt-leaved pondweed. The Rochdale Canal SSSI and SAC is over 2 km from the Site. The Proposed Scheme does not fall into a IRZ category which would pose a risk to the Rochdale Canal SSSI. In addition, there is no hydrological connectivity between the Site and the SSSI. Given the absence of hydrological connectivity and distance from the Site it is considered unlikely that floating-water plantain (Annex II species listed as a reason for designation of the site) or other aquatic species would be impacted by the works. Therefore, the Rochdale Canal SSSI and SAC are not considered further in this report.
- 3.3. There is no hydrological connectivity from the Site to any non-statutory or statutory site within 2 km of the Site, and given the distance of the designated sites from the Site and the land use (which comprises roads and residential housing) it is considered unlikely that designated sites will be impacted by the Proposed Scheme and they are not considered to pose a constraint. Therefore, statutory and non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation are not considered further in this report.

²⁷ Where designated sites are situated outside of the Site boundary, the distance and direction is given to the closest point that the designated site is from the Site.

²⁸ including qualifying features of internationally designated sites and reasons for designation for SSSIs

Irreplaceable HabitatsA number of notable trees and a single veteran tree was identified approximately 730 m north of the Site. No hydrological connectivity was present between this tree and the Site.

- 3.4. Given the absence of irreplaceable habitats within 1 km of the Scheme and distance of the veteran tree from the Site alongside the absence of hydrological connectivity, irreplaceable habitats do not pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme and are not considered further in this report.
- 3.5. No ancient woodland or other irreplaceable habitats (such as blanket bog, limestone pavement, sand dunes, salt marsh and lowland fen²⁹) were identified within 1 km of the Site through the desk study and the findings from the field surveys. A number of notable trees and a single veteran tree was identified approximately 730 m north of the Site. No hydrological connectivity was present between this tree and the Site.
- 3.6. Given the absence of irreplaceable habitats within 1 km of the Scheme and distance of the veteran tree from the Site alongside the absence of hydrological connectivity, irreplaceable habitats do not pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme and are not considered further in this report.

Habitats

- 3.7. The Site is primarily composed of poor semi-improved neutral grassland dominated by perennial rye-grass, red fescue, white clover and creeping buttercup, alongside occasional common cat's-ear and the mosses *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus* and *Brachythecium rutabulum*. Scattered trees were present across the site including Canadian black poplar, goat willow and sycamore. There are pavements/walkways cutting through the Site to the north. The immediate surroundings are primarily composed of housing estates to the north, east and west and an area of secondary broadleaved woodland to the south. Within the wider habitat, there are patches of amenity grassland and areas of woodland to the south, west and north-west. The River Irk is located approximately 900 m to the west of the Site.
- 3.8. Several patches of deciduous broadleaved woodland, wood pasture and parkland and open mosaic habitats were identified within 1 km of the Site. Details of these priority habitats are listed below and shown in the Priority Habitats Plan in Appendix B.

Table 3-2 – Priority habitats within 1 km of the Site

Habitat Type	Location of habitat
Deciduous woodland	Thirteen parcels within 1 km. The closest parcel is located approximately 35 m south west of the Site.
Open mosaic habitat	Twelve parcels within 1 km. The closest parcel is located approximately 135 m southwest of the Site.
Woodpasture and Parkland	Two parcels within 1 km of the Site. The closest was located 720 north of the Site.

- 3.9. It is considered unlikely that open mosaic habitat and woodpasture and parkland will be impacted by the works given their distance from the Site and the absence of hydrological connectivity with the Site. Therefore, they are not considered to pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme.
- 3.10. Due to the proximity to the Site deciduous woodland may be impacted by pollution from the works, this priority habitat may pose a constraint to the Proposed Works and recommendations are provided in Section 4.
- 3.11. Table 3-3 lists all of the habitats present within the Zone of Influence. The table also provides details of the area³⁰ of each habitat within the Site and the proportion of the Site this makes up. Habitats are mapped on the extended Phase 1 habitat survey plan in Appendix B with TNs on the figure. A site-specific species list obtained at the time of the survey and containing both English and scientific names is available within Appendix C.

²⁹ National Planning Policy Framework (publishing.service.gov.uk)

³⁰ Measurements were taken in QGIS

Table 3-3 - Habitat types within the Site

Habitat Type	Location of habitat	Area of habitat/ distance of linear feature		Annex 1 habitat y/n	Priority habitat y/n
		Ha/M	% of Site		
Poor semi-improved grassland	Across the majority of the Site	0.2	98%	N	N
Scattered trees	Scattered across the Site	N/A	1%	N	N
Hardstanding	Paved area to the north of Site	0.017	1%	N	N

Protected and Priority Species

- 3.12. Evidence of protected and priority species, or habitats with the potential to support protected and priority species are indicated on the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Plan Appendix B, with specific features highlighted by TNs on the map. TN descriptions are provided in Appendix B. Details of legislation relating to protected species is provided in Appendix D.

Amphibians

- 3.13. GMLRC provided no records of great crested newts within 2 km of the Site. No European Protected Species licences for great crested newts were identified within 1 km of the Site.
- 3.14. No waterbodies were identified within 500 m of the Site.
- 3.15. No suitable habitat for great crested newts was recorded within the Site, the broadleaved woodland to the south may provide some suitable habitat for hibernating newts, however, given the surrounding habitat and lack of suitable waterbodies identified within 500 m it is considered highly unlikely that GCN will be present on the Site. Therefore, this species is not discussed further within this report as it is not considered to pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme.

Bats

- 3.16. GMLRC provided 33 records of bats within 2 km of the Site comprising common pipistrelle, daubentons, soprano pipistrelle and unidentified pipistrelle species. The closest record was a common pipistrelle foraging and commuting located 520 m north of the Site. Seven European protected Species licence applications were identified for bats within 2 km of the Site. These composed six for common pipistrelle and one for common and soprano pipistrelle. The closest licence application is EPSM2010-1888 for destruction of a resting place for common and soprano pipistrelle 780 m north west of the Site.
- 3.17. Whilst no bat roosts have been identified within the Site or Survey Area, buildings surrounding the Site within the Zone of Influence were identified as having varying degrees of bat roosting suitability.
- 3.18. The scattered trees on Site may provide some value to small numbers of foraging bats, however, the broadleaved woodland to the south of Site is considered to be of moderate suitability for foraging and commuting bats. The habitats within the Site are considered to have below low suitability for foraging and commuting bats. Given the habitats within the Site which are to be lost is of below low suitability for foraging bats, it is considered that survey will not be necessary. However, recommendations are provided below with regard to foraging and commuting bats.
- 3.19. As suitable roosting and foraging habitat for bats has been recorded within the survey area and roosts are known to be present within 2 km, this species may pose a minor constraint to the Proposed Scheme and recommendations are provided in Section 4.

Badger

- 3.20. GMLRC provided fourteen records of badger within 2 km of the Site. The closest record was approximately 1.5 km south east of Site.
- 3.21. The extended Phase 1 habitat survey did not identify any signs of badger activity and the habitats on Site are considered to have negligible potential for sett building and poor potential for foraging. The broadleaved woodland to the south of the Site may offer suitable habitat for sett building. However, a walkover of the woodland found no evidence of use by badgers. Potential for badgers to be present on the Site is limited due to the urban nature of the Site, high likelihood of disturbance from local residents.
- 3.22. Although no badger evidence has been recorded within the study area, there is potential for badgers to establish a sett in the woodland immediately adjacent to Site before construction works commence. Therefore, this species may pose a minor constraint to the Proposed Scheme and recommendations are provided in Section 4.

Birds

- 3.23. GMLRC provided 171 records of birds within 2 km of the Site. The closest record was 560 m south of the Site and included a number of species listed at a single point. These species include starling , herring gull , dunnoek , song thrush , peregrine , kingfisher and spotted flycatcher .
- 3.24. The scattered trees within the Site provide suitable nesting habitat for a range of common and widespread tree/shrub-nesting species of bird, whilst the extending area of broadleaved woodland to the south of the Site provides additional suitability for this group.
- 3.25. Although Schedule 1 species have been recorded within 1 km of the Site (kingfisher and peregrine), the habitats within and surrounding the Site are not suitable for nesting by these species given the absence of watercourses with bare, steep banks for kingfisher and tall, built structures or cliffs which may be used by peregrine.
- 3.26. As suitable nesting habitat for a variety of common and widespread tree/shrub-nesting bird species has been recorded within the Site and study area this species group may pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme and recommendations are provided below.

Reptiles

- 3.27. GMLRC provided one record of reptiles within 2 km of the Site. The record was for eleven slow worms found 1.45 km east of the Site.
- 3.28. The habitats on Site are not considered to provide suitable foraging or refugia habitat for reptiles, no refuges were present and the grassland within the Site was regularly maintained by mowing. The broadleaved woodland to the south of Site may provide some suitable refugia habitat, and has connectivity to woodland, grassland and railway in the wider area. However, this habitat will not be impacted by the works by clearance, removal or vehicle movements.
- 3.29. As no suitable habitat for reptiles has been recorded within the Site, reptiles are not discussed further within this report as it is not considered to pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme.

Invertebrates

- 3.30. GMLRC provided 16 records of priority invertebrates within 2 km of the Site. These include white-letter hairstreak , cinnabar moth,ghost mot and latticed heath . The closest record is of a cinnabar moth approximately 550 m south of the Site.
- 3.31. The habitats within the Site or the Survey Area are unlikely to support significant invertebrate assemblages given the location, character and overall quality of habitats present across the Site.
- 3.32. As no suitable habitat for significant invertebrates assemblages has been recorded within the study area, they are not discussed further within this report as it is not considered to pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme.

Other Notable Species

- 3.33. GMLRC provided six recent records of hedgehogs within 2 km of the Site, the closest of which is located approximately 930 m to the south of the Site. The habitats within the Site are suitable for foraging and commuting hedgehog, given they are surrounded by gardens and woodland in present in the surrounding area. Hedgehogs may pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme and recommendations are provided in Section 4.

- 3.34. There are no suitable habitats for white clawed crayfish, otter or water vole within 250 m of the Site as no watercourses are present. Therefore, these species are not considered further in this assessment.

Fungi

- 3.35. GMLRC provided no recent records of priority or specially protected fungi within a 2 km radius of the Site.
- 3.36. The habitats within the Site or the Survey Area are considered unlikely to support significant fungal assemblages given the location, character and overall quality of habitats present across the Site.
- 3.37. As no suitable habitat for significant fungal assemblages has been recorded within the study area, they are not discussed further within this report as it is not considered to pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme.

Plants

- 3.38. GMLRC provided one record of plants of conservation priority within 2 km of the Site. A yellow bird's-nest which was recorded 1.2 km west of the Site.
- 3.39. Two plants of conservation priority were identified within the Site boundary. These include wild strawberry and spreading mouse-ear-hawkweed. Wild strawberry is red-listed 'Near-threatened' in England, whilst spreading mouse-ear hawkweed is a first vice county record, and the first record for northwest England in over half a century. The presence of both species at the Site have been concluded to be of local and regional conservation importance, respectively.
- 3.40. These plant species may pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme and recommendations are provided in Section 4.
- 3.41. GMLRC provided no records of INNPS within 2 km of the Site.
- 3.42. The extended Phase 1 habitat survey identified no invasive non-native animal or plant species within the Site boundary, however, Japanese knotweed was identified at the edge of the broadleaf woodland to the south of the Site, on the boundary between the Site and the Survey Area.
- 3.43. As Japanese knotweed was recorded within the Survey Area on the edge of the Site boundary, this INNPS may pose a minor constraint to the Proposed Scheme and recommendations are provided in Section 4.

4. Constraints and Recommendations

Key Constraints

- 4.1. Based on the survey results outlined in Section 3 above, the following constraints have been identified. Recommendations for mitigation of these constraints are provided in the following sections.

Bats

- 4.2. Habitats within the Site offer below low suitability for foraging bats and habitats immediately adjacent to the Site offer suitability for foraging and roosting bats. The current proposal includes construction of a new housing estate which is to involve removal of any trees on Site, building works which may involve heavy machinery and new lighting. All of these could result in disturbance to bat roosts within nearby buildings and loss of a small amount of below low suitability foraging habitat.

Badgers

- 4.3. Although there was no evidence of badgers setts present on Site, the woodland directly adjacent to Site provides habitat suitable for foraging and sett creation. Badgers are a highly mobile species and can move into an area rapidly (including sett creation). Movement of construction vehicles could result in disturbance, damage or destruction to badger setts potentially also causing disturbance or death of badgers.

Plants

- 4.4. Japanese knotweed identified on the Site boundary is listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 making it an offence to plant or cause this species to grow in the wild. It is

also classed as 'controlled waste' under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 meaning there are strict regulations governing its disposal. Movement of construction vehicles could facilitate the spread of Japanese onto and beyond the Site.

- 4.5. Wild strawberry and spreading mouse-ear-hawkweed are priority species of local and regional conservation importance, respectively. The current proposal includes construction of a new housing estate which will involve damage and/or destruction of the poor semi-improved grassland within which both species were identified to grow as occasional or rare floristic components.

Nesting birds

- 4.6. The scattered trees on Site are considered to have potential for common and widespread species of tree-nesting bird. Felling of these trees within the nesting season (1st March to 31st August) could result in the damage and/or destruction to active nests.

Hedgehogs

- 4.7. Hedgehogs may be found foraging and commuting through the Site. Site clearance and other activity may result in harm and disturbance to hedgehogs.

Further Survey Requirements

- 4.8. A preliminary bat roost assessment (PBRA) should be carried out of structures and trees which may be impacted by the works, this PBRA should cover all trees and structures within 30 m of the Site in the first instance. Structures and trees which require further survey will be determined when the details of the works including timings, duration and use of lighting have been finalised and the PBRA have been completed. Depending on the result of these assessments and the works required, further surveys may be required in line with Good Practice Guidance³¹.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 4.9. The Environment Act 2021³² recently received Royal Assent passing the Act into active legislation, mandating the achievement of quantifiable biodiversity net gain projects and plans in England. Whilst these provisions are currently in a transitional period, where mandating biodiversity net gain is not mandatory for two years after Royal Assent of the Act, this is superseded where a Local Authority's Local Plan already contains provisions for biodiversity net gain.
- 4.10. GMCA Biodiversity Net Gain guidance³³ states that 'For developments in Greater Manchester, the minimum level of Biodiversity Net Gain is considered to be achieved when the biodiversity units for the habitats (for example, area based habitats, rivers and/or hedges) impacted by the development is increased by 10% or more after the development. This means delivering 10% gain for area base habitats and 10% net gain for hedges and 10% for rivers if any of these habitats are present on the site.' Relevant staff at the local planning authority and Greater Manchester Ecology Unit should be contacted for guidance if needed. The biodiversity net gain assessment should follow methods set out in a suitable metric, such as Biodiversity Metric 3.0³⁴.

Mitigation

General

- 4.11. It is recommended that all works adhere to the Guidance on Pollution Prevention (GPP)³⁵ and the Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) C715 Environmental good practice on site handbook³⁶.
- 4.12. Any excavations should be covered overnight to prevent mammals falling in. Where pits and trenches cannot be closed or filled on a nightly basis, ensure that a plank is placed into the excavation so an animal can use this as a means to escape if necessary. All excavations should be checked for animals the following morning before proceeding with works. If an animal is found, the

³¹ Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

³² [Environment Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

³³ [gmca-bng-guidance-update_250221-final-edited.pdf \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/250221-final-edited.pdf)

³⁴ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6049804846366720>

³⁵ <https://www.netregs.org.uk/media/1418/gpp-5-works-and-maintenance-in-or-near-water.pdf#:~:text=Guidance for Pollution Prevention%28GPP%29 documents are based,will be committing a criminal offence. Following these>

³⁶ Environmental Good Practice on Site Guide, CIRIA, Jan 2015, Edition 4

animal should not be touched, and an ecologist should be contacted for further advice on how to proceed .

- 4.13. Contractors should ensure all rubbish and construction materials are collected and removed from Site on a regular basis to prevent trapping or injury to mammals.
- 4.14. If any protected species or evidence of legally protected species, or any INNPS, are unexpectedly encountered at any point during the works, all works should cease, and an ecologist should be contacted for further advice on how to proceed.
- 4.15. No night-time working (taken to be 30 minutes prior to sunset until 30 minutes after sunrise) should be undertaken to avoid impacts on nocturnal and crepuscular animals. If night-time working is required, this should be discussed with an ecologist prior to commencement to establish what mitigation measures are required.

Bats

- 4.16. Details of the necessary mitigation required with regard to bats in relation to the Proposed Scheme would be provided following the results of the PBRA and any relevant nocturnal surveys, if necessary (as informed by the PBRA).
- 4.17. If lighting during construction or operation is required, this should be designed in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust lighting guidance³⁷. The construction lighting design should take into account the need to avoid illuminating areas where bats may be roosting in locations such as the houses directly adjacent to the Site.

Badgers

- 4.18. Based on the current survey data, badgers are not expected to be affected by the proposed development. However, as badgers are a highly mobile species and can move into an area rapidly (including sett creation), it is recommended that a pre-works check of the Survey Area for badgers is undertaken by an ecologist immediately prior to the start of any works taking place to identify any new setts that may be present.

Plants

- 4.19. The Japanese knotweed identified directly adjacent to the Site, on the boundary between the Site and the Survey Area, should be managed or removed prior to construction works. Specialist INNPS contractors should be engaged to advise on the most appropriate way forward.
- 4.20. It is recommended that the two priority plant species identified within the Site boundary, wild strawberry and spreading mouse-ear-hawkweed, are translocated and incorporated into the landscape design of the new housing so that no significant negative impacts to priority plants are undergone. Both species have a relatively wide range of tolerance and should easily be accommodated within a landscape scheme.

Nesting birds

- 4.21. Tree felling and vegetation clearance should be minimised as far as practicable and undertaken outside the core bird nesting season (the core bird nesting season is 1st March to 31st August) to avoid damage or destruction of occupied nests or harm to breeding birds. If this cannot be achieved, works within the core bird nesting season will require an inspection of vegetation to be cleared for nesting birds by a suitably qualified ecologist no more than 24 hours prior to any works being undertaken. If any nesting birds are identified during the survey, they should be left in situ for their entire nesting period until the young birds have fledged. Alternative approaches to the work will need to be proposed, e.g. leaving an exclusion zone around the nest to avoid disturbance.
- 4.22. All cleared vegetation should be rendered unsuitable for nesting birds, for example, by covering or chipping depending on the end purpose of the vegetation or should be removed from the works area.

Hedgehogs

- 4.23. The general mitigation measures section above provides recommendations that encompass provisions for hedgehogs.

³⁷ Bat Conservation Trust (2009) Bats and Lighting in the UK. Bats and the Built Environment Series.

Habitats

- 4.24. It is recommended that additional native trees and shrubs are incorporated into retained communal areas of the Site. It is recommended that a range of native species of local provenance are included in the planting and soft landscaping design.

Biodiversity Opportunities for Ecological Enhancements

- 4.25. In line with the NPPF³⁸ and local planning policy measures biodiversity should be protected and enhanced along with providing net gains for biodiversity on site in all Schemes. The recommendations below are based on information in this report along with information from the desk study. These measures will be over and above any similar measures needed to mitigate effects.
- 4.26. There are opportunities to incorporate features with value for foraging bats into the new development from landscaping design. This could entail planting of suitable trees, shrubs and hedgerows. Given the current low suitability of the habitats within the Site for bats, incorporation of appropriate landscaping can be used to increase the value of the Site for foraging and commuting bats. Areas of retained or planted vegetation on the Site should be left un-lit so they can be utilised for foraging.
- 4.27. There are opportunities to incorporate features with value for nesting birds into the new development. This should result in no net loss, in value for nesting birds through planting of suitable trees/shrubs and incorporation of bird boxes within the new housing.
- 4.28. The following enhancement measures are recommended;
- Suitable features for roosting bats and nesting birds incorporated into the new housing/apartments via integrated boxes;
 - Native species, of local provenance, planting including shrubs/trees providing food year-round. This will provide foraging habitat and refuge for birds, bats and insects.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. The Proposed Scheme should take into account the potential presence of foraging bats, nesting birds, badger, priority plants and INNPS within the local area adjacent to the Site. Biodiversity Net Gain should be taken into consideration during the design of the Proposed Scheme.
- 5.2. Details of the necessary mitigation required with regard to bats in relation to the Proposed Scheme would be provided following the results of the PBRA and any relevant bat surveys, if necessary (as informed by the PBRA).

Report Validity

- 5.3. In the event of scope or programme changes or if works do not commence within 12 months of the date of this report then updates to the surveys may be required to ensure the validity of the data, as per CIEEM guidance³⁹.

³⁸ [National Planning Policy Framework \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework)

³⁹ CIEEM (2019) Advice Note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys

Appendices



Appendix A. Site Location and Scheme Drawings



 Site Boundary



0 250 500 750 1,000 m

Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right (2018)

Atkins Limited © Chadwick House Birchwood Park Warrington England WA3 6AE			
Project: Queens Road			
Client: Guinness Partnership			
Title: Queens Road Site Location Plan			
Drawing number: EC0_3			
Original scale			1:7,765
PAGE 1/1			
Drawn by: GW	Checked by: JS	Reviewed by: LG	Approved by: LG
Date: Dec 21	Date: Dec 21	Date: Dec 21	Date: Dec 21

PROPOSED PLAN



1 Proposed Site Plan 1:500

N

— SITE BOUNDARY

SITE AREA : 2170.5m²

- EXISTING TREES
- EXISTING TREES TO BE REMOVED
- PROPOSED TREES TO BE PLANTED
- PROPOSED SOFT LANDSCAPING (Subject to a detailed landscaping strategy)

	House Type	Total
	2B4P House @ 79m ²	6
	3B5P House @ 93m ²	2
		8



PROPOSED MASSING



— DUAL ASPECT UNITS TO ADDRESS EACH CORNER

Appendix B. Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Plan, Priority Habitats Plan and Target Notes

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Plan



- Survey Area
- Site Boundary
- Queens Road Target Notes
- Hardstanding
- SI Poor semi-improved grassland
- Scattered trees
- Line of Trees
- Broadleaved woodland
- Scrub - scattered
- No Access



Atkins Limited © Chadwick House Birchwood Park Warrington England WA3 6AE			
Project: Guinness Partnerships - Queens Road			
Client: Guinness Partnership			
Title: Queens Road Extended Phase 1 Habitat			
Drawing number: ECO_4			
Original scale			1:700
PAGE 1/1			
Drawn by: GW	Checked by: JS	Reviewed by: LG	Approved by: LG
Date: Nov 21	Date: Dec 21	Date: Dec 21	Date: Dec 21:

Target Notes

Table B-1 – Summary of Target Notes

Target note	Description	Photograph
TN1	Japanese knotweed	
TN2	Wild strawberry – Locally important species and red-listed Near-threatened in England.	

TN3	A general site overview photograph showing poor semi-improved grassland and mature trees within the Site.	
TN4	The residential building shown may have had gaps under the soffit board and some lifted roof tiles. However, no detailed inspection was possible given absence of access.	
TN5	A row of houses within the Survey Area, the majority had some lifting tiles. No detailed inspection was possible due to lack of access, other features may be present.	

TN6	A row of houses within the Survey Area, the majority had some lifting tiles. No detailed inspection was possible due to lack of access, other features may be present.	
TN7	Overview photo of the woodland to the south of the Site.	
TN8	Spreading mouse-ear-hawkweed – Regionally important species and the first Vice County record of the species.	

Appendix C. Plant Species List

English name	Scientific name	DAFOR
Bristle-moss sp.	<i>Orthotrichum</i> sp.	R
Creeping feather-moss	<i>Amblystegium serpens</i>	R
Forked veilwort	<i>Metzgeria furcata</i>	R
Lateral cryphaea	<i>Cryphaea heteromalla</i>	R
Rough-stalked feather-moss	<i>Brachythecium rutabulum</i>	O
Springy turf-moss	<i>Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus</i>	O
a dandelion	<i>Taraxacum</i> sect. <i>Taraxacum</i>	F
a dandelion	<i>Taraxacum</i> sect. <i>Hamata</i>	R
Annual meadow-grass	<i>Poa annua</i>	R
Canadian black poplar	<i>Populus x canadensis</i>	R
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	LF
Common bent	<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	LF
Common cat's-ear	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	O
Common chickweed	<i>Stellaria media</i>	O
Common groundsel	<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	R
Common mouse-ear	<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	R
Common ragwort	<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>	O
Creeping buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	F
Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>	R
Franchet's cotoneaster	<i>Cotoneaster franchetii</i>	R
Goat willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>	R
Greater periwinkle	<i>Vinca major</i>	R
Meadow buttercup	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	LF
Michaelmas daisy sp.	<i>Aster</i> sp.	R
Perennial rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	F
Red fescue agg.	<i>Festuca rubra</i> agg.	F
Ribwort plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	O
Shepherd's purse	<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>	R
Smother sow-thistle	<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	R
Spreading mouse-ear-hawkweed	<i>Pilosella flagellaris</i> subsp. <i>flagellaris</i>	O
Sticky mouse-ear	<i>Cerastium glomeratum</i>	R
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	R
White clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	F
Wild strawberry	<i>Fragaria vesca</i>	R
Wood avens	<i>Geum urbanum</i>	R
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	O

Appendix D. Legislation table

Species	Legislation	Offences	Licensing procedures and guidance
Bats <i>European protected species</i>	Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) Reg 43	Deliberately ⁴⁰ capture, injure or kill a bat; deliberate disturbance ⁴¹ of bats; or damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place used by a bat. [The protection of bat roosts is considered to apply regardless of whether bats are present.]	A Natural England (NE) licence in respect of development is required. Guidance documents: <i>NE Standing Advice for protected species 2013</i> <i>European Protected Species: Mitigation Licensing- How to get a licence</i> (NE 2013) <i>Bat Mitigation Guidelines</i> (English Nature 2004) <i>Bat Workers Manual</i> (JNCC 2004)
	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) S.9	Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection or disturb ⁴² a bat in such a place.	Licence from NE is required for surveys (scientific purposes) that would involve disturbance of bats or entering a known or suspected roost site.
Birds	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) S.1	Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird; intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; intentionally take or destroy the nest or eggs of any wild bird. Intentionally or recklessly disturb a Schedule 1 species while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; intentionally or recklessly disturb dependent young of such a species [e.g. most birds of prey, kingfisher, barn owl, black redstart, little ringed plover].	No licences are available to disturb any birds in regard to development. Licences are available in certain circumstances to damage or destroy nests, but these only apply to the list of licensable activities in the Act and do not cover development. General licences are available in respect of 'pest species' but only for certain very specific purposes e.g. public health, public safety, air safety. Guidance documents: <i>NE Standing Advice for protected species 2013</i>
Adder Common lizard	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) S.9(1) and S.9(5)	Intentionally kill or injure any common reptile species.	No licence is required.

⁴⁰ Deliberate capture or killing is taken to include "accepting the possibility" of such capture or killing

⁴¹ Deliberate disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely a) to impair their ability (i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or (ii) in the case of animals of hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

⁴² Lower levels of disturbance not covered by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) remain an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) although a defence is available where such actions are the incidental result of a lawful activity that could not reasonably be avoided.

Grass snake Slow worm			However, an assessment for the potential of a site to support reptiles should be undertaken prior to any development works which have potential to affect these animals. Guidance documents: <i>NE Standing Advice for protected species 2013</i>
Plants <i>Nationally protected species</i>	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) S.13 (Schedule 8)	Intentionally pick, uproot or destroy any wild plant on Schedule 8	Licences can be issued by Natural England for specific purposes only, such as science and education or conservation purposes. There is no provision for licensing the above actions for development operations under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). No licence is required for survey in England. Guidance on survey techniques is available from Natural England. Guidance documents: <i>NE Standing Advice for protected species 2013</i>
Plants <i>Invasive species e.g. Japanese knotweed, hybrid knotweed, giant knotweed, giant hogweed, rhododendron, Himalayan balsam</i>	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) S.14	It is illegal to plant or otherwise cause these species to grow in the wild.	Any contaminated soil or plant material is classified as controlled waste and should be disposed of in a suitably licensed landfill site, accompanied by appropriate Waste Transfer documentation, and must comply with section 34 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Guidance documents: <i>The Knotweed Code of Practice</i> (Environment Agency, 2013 version 3) <i>Managing Invasive Non-native Plants</i> (Environment Agency 2010) <i>Guidance on Section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981</i> (Defra 2010)

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