

OLDHAM STREET, MANCHESTER PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL INTERIM REPORT



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REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- RPS were commissioned by Cumming Group to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of buildings located on Oldham Street, Manchester. This comprised a desk study, Phase 1 Habitat survey and an Ecological Scoping survey which assessed the potential of the site to support species of conservation concern or other species which could present a constraint to the development of the site.
- The proposals involve redevelopment of the site into a hotel.
- The site is approximately 0.05 ha in size and comprises two buildings: 68 Oldham Street and NQ1.
- Feral pigeons are considered likely to be nesting within 68 Oldham Street as a colony is present in one of the roof voids. All bird nests are protected from destruction under the Wildlife and Countryside Act. It is recommended that a pre-works nesting bird check is carried out to avoid destroying active nests during demolition works. Alternatively, efforts to exclude the birds could be undertaken, however these will need to ensure that no birds become trapped within the building.
- The buildings have features with low potential to support roosting bats. A single emergence or re-entry survey should be completed within the bat activity survey season (May-August inclusive) to confirm bat roosts presence/absence.

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Appendix A Relevant Legislation

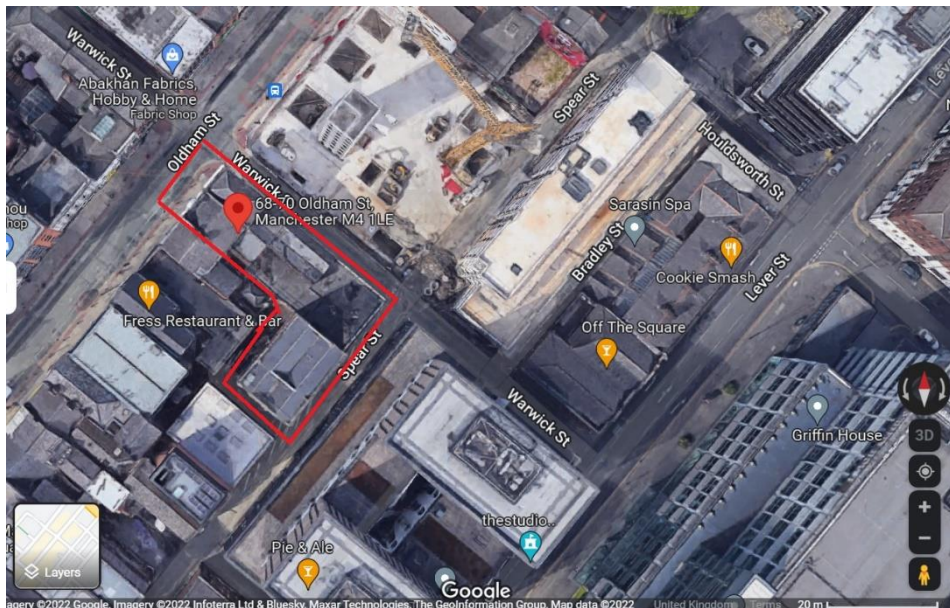
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and scope of this report

- 1.1.1 RPS was commissioned by Cumming Group to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of buildings on Oldham Street, Manchester. The development proposals are for the redevelopment of 68 Oldham Street and NQ1 to a hotel.
- 1.1.2 To undertake an initial assessment of the potential ecological impacts of the proposals, a desk study, Phase 1 Habitat Survey, and a Preliminary Protected Species Assessment were carried out. This is termed as a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (PEAR) in accordance with CIEEM (2017). This assessment is considered 'preliminary' until any required protected species, habitat or invasive species surveys are completed, and the results incorporated into a final Ecological Appraisal or Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) which supports the planning application.
- 1.1.3 This report presents the preliminary findings of the survey and to:
- assess the site for potential to support protected species or other species that could present a constraint, and make appropriate recommendations for further survey work if necessary;
 - provide outline options for mitigation measures as appropriate; and
 - make recommendations for appropriate biodiversity enhancements in line with national and local planning policy.
- 1.1.4 This report pertains to these results only; recommendations included within this report are the professional opinion of an experienced ecologist and therefore the view of RPS. The surveys and desk-based assessments undertaken as part of this review and subsequent report including the Ecological Appraisal Notes are prepared in accordance with the British Standard for Biodiversity Code of Practice for Planning and Development (BS42020:2013).

1.2 Study area and Zone of Influence

- 1.2.1 The site is located on Oldham Street, Manchester. The site is approximately 0.05 ha in size. The National Grid coordinates for the centre of the site are SJ 84597 98581.
- 1.2.2 The site comprises two adjoining buildings. The buildings are the only feature present on the site.
- 1.2.3 The site location is shown on Figure 1.1. Aerial imaging available via Google Earth Pro was also reviewed to assess the site in relation to its context in the wider landscape.
- 1.2.4 The term Zone of Influence is used to describe the geographic extent of potential impacts of a proposed development. The Zone of Influence is determined by the nature of the development and also in relation to designated sites, habitats or species which might be affected by the proposals.
- 1.2.5 For this site, the Zone of Influence is considered to be land on and immediately adjacent to the site. The site is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Site location

1.3 Development proposals

- 1.3.1 The proposed development involves construction of a hotel on the site, with the majority of the existing buildings demolished but with some elements of the original buildings retained (facades etc.).

1.4 Legislation and policy

- 1.4.1 Relevant legislation, policy guidance and both Local and National Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) are referred to throughout this report where appropriate. Their context and application is explained in the relevant sections of this report.
- 1.4.2 The relevant articles of legislation are:
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2017);
 - ODPM Circular 06/2005 (retained as Technical Guidance on NPPF 2017);
 - Local planning policies (Policy EN9 Green Infrastructure, Policy EN 15 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation);
 - The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) 2019;
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
 - The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006;
 - Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action plan.
- 1.4.3 A summary of legislation relevant to protected or other species identified as potential constraints in this report is provided in Appendix A.

2 METHODS

2.1 Desk Study

- 2.1.1 Ecological records within a 2 km radius of the site were requested from Greater Manchester Local Record Centre (GMLRC). Data requests were limited to records for protected species recorded within the last ten years and sites of nature conservation interest within 2 km of the site. This included a review of existing statutory sites of nature conservation interest, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Area of Conservation (SACs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs), and non-statutory sites, such as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs).
- 2.1.2 Locations of statutory designated sites were accessed via the government 'MAGIC' website (MagicMap, 2016).
- 2.1.3 A 1:25,000 OS map was used to identify nearby features such as ponds or green corridors that could provide habitat or connectivity to other areas.

2.2 Ecological Appraisal

- 2.2.1 The Ecological Appraisal consisted of two components: a Phase 1 Habitat survey and a Preliminary Protected Species Assessment scoping for protected species and other species of conservation concern which could present a constraint to development.
- 2.2.2 The survey was completed on 12 August 2022.
- 2.2.3 The Phase 1 Habitat surveys followed the standard methodology (JNCC, 2010), and as described in the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017). In summary, this comprised walking over the survey area and recording the habitat types and boundary features present.
- 2.2.4 A Preliminary Protected Species Assessment was carried out in conjunction with the Phase 1 Habitat survey. The site was assessed for its suitability to support protected species, birds, bats, and other species of conservation importance that could pose a planning constraint.
- 2.2.5 The surveyor looked for evidence of use including signs such as droppings and particular habitat types known to be used by certain species groups.

2.3 Impact Appraisal

- 2.3.1 The overall ecological appraisal is based on the standard best practice methodology provided by the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017). The assessment identifies sites, habitats, species and other ecological features that are of value based on factors such as legal protection, statutory or local site designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) or inclusion on Red Data Book Lists or Biodiversity Action Plans.
- 2.3.2 The assessment also refers to planning policy guidance (e.g. NPPF) where relevant to relate the value of the site and potential impacts of development to the planning process, identifying constraints and opportunities for ecological enhancement in line with both national and local policy.
- 2.3.3 The methodology for evaluation of the nature conservation value of ecological features affected by development (ecological receptors) is adapted from the current Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (CIEEM, 2018). These guidelines recommend assignment of value (or potential value) to ecological receptors in accordance with the following scale:

1. International;

2. UK;
3. National (i.e. England/Northern
4. Ireland/Scotland/Wales);
5. Regional;
6. County (or Metropolitan - e.g. in London);
7. District (or Unitary Authority, City, or Borough);
8. Local or Parish; and/or
9. Within the immediate zone of influence only.

2.3.4 Following on from the above, potential constraints to development are identified on that basis, with recommendations for further, more detailed surveys made as appropriate, for example to fully investigate botanical value or to confirm presence / likely absence of a protected species

2.3.5 In appraising any impacts, the review considers the client's site proposals and any subsequent recommendations made are proportionate and appropriate to the site and have considered the Mitigation Hierarchy as identified below:

- **Avoid:** Provide advice on how the development may proceed by avoiding impacts to any species or sites by either consideration of site design or identification of an alternative option.
- **Mitigate:** Where avoidance cannot be implemented mitigation proposals are put forward to minimise impacts to species or sites as a result of the proposals. Mitigation put forward is proportionate to the site.
- **Compensate:** Where avoidance cannot be achieved any mitigation strategy will consider the requirements for site compensatory measures.
- **Enhance:** The assessment refers to planning policy guidance (e.g. NPPF) to relate the ecological value of the site and identify appropriate and proportionate ecological enhancement in line with both national and local policy.

2.3.6 When describing impacts on ecosystem structure and function, reference is made to the following aspects where appropriate:

1. extent;
2. magnitude;
3. duration;
4. reversibility;
5. timing and frequency; and

2.3.7 Understanding the nature of the impact enables determination of the effect on the ecological integrity of the ecological receptor. This in turn is assessed against the importance of the receptor to determine the significance of the effect on nature conservation interests as being (i) not significant, or (ii) a significant positive or adverse impact.

2.4 Limitations

Desk Based Assessment

2.4.1 The desk study data has not been received at the time of writing. A full report will be completed once the data has been received.

Survey

- 2.4.2 It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no investigation can ensure the complete characterisation and prediction of the natural environment.
- 2.4.3 The protected/notable species assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of these species occurring on the site, based on the suitability of the habitat, known distribution of the species in the local area provided in response to our enquiries and any direct evidence on the site. It should not be taken as providing a full and definitive survey of any protected/notable species group.
- 2.4.4 It was not possible to view all the sections of existing roof, due to the height of the building and close presence of surrounding buildings.

Accurate Lifespan of Ecological Data

- 2.4.5 The majority of ecological data remain valid for only short periods due to the inherently transient nature of the subject. The survey results contained in this report are considered accurate for [two] years, assuming no significant considerable changes to the site conditions.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Designated Sites

- 3.1.1 There are no statutory designated sites for nature conservation value within 2 km of the site. No details on non-statutory sites was available at the time of writing.

3.2 Species

- 3.2.1 Records of protected species have not yet been received from GMLRC.

3.3 Phase 1 Habitat Survey

Buildings

- 3.3.1 The only site habitat is existing buildings. These are discussed in relation to their ability to support fauna below. The buildings are not considered to be of ecological importance. Another building adjoins 68 Oldham Street. A large building was under construction a short distance to the north of 68 Oldham Street, and other buildings were present a short distance from the NQ1 building.

Hardstanding

- 3.3.2 The building has hardstanding pavements and roads present on three elevations.

3.4 Ecological Scoping Survey

Plants

- 3.4.1 *Buddleia Buddleja davidii* was recorded growing from the wall of 68 Oldham Street. This was the only plant recorded during the survey. Buddleia is commonplace and has invasive tendencies.

Amphibians and reptiles

- 3.4.2 The site is located within a heavily urbanised area of central Manchester. No ponds or habitats considered suitable for amphibians or reptiles are present and these species are not considered to be a constraint for the proposed development.

Birds

- 3.4.3 Feral pigeons were present within one of the roof voids of 68 Oldham Street. Site habitats are largely unsuitable for other nesting bird species.

Bats

- 3.4.4 The buildings on site were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats. Photos of the buildings and descriptions of features are shown in Table 3-1. 68 Oldham Street extends from Oldham Street to Spear Street at the rear. It is a brick built two and three storey building. It has a multi-pitch roof, with one pitched and hipped section, two pitched sections and a flat roof section. It has a mix of single and multi-pane single glazed windows in wooden frames. The building has not been in use in some time and is in a state of despair with various broken or boarded up windows, extensive damp internally, with sections of internal ceilings rotten through and collapsing. It was not possible to fully view all the roof pitches however those viewed were slate tiled. There was felt roof lining present within the majority of the roof voids, with wooden trusses. Light was visible within several of the roof voids, and one was being used by a colony of feral pigeons. A wooden fascia was present on the northern elevation of the building (Warwick Street). This has an extensive gap underneath it that appeared to run along the length of the soffit. Access to Warwick Street was restricted due to construction work on an adjacent parcel of land and so this feature could only be viewed from a distance. Wooden soffits were also present on the third storey section

of the building, facing east towards Spear Street. Gaps under tiles were also visible on the pitched section of roof that was visible from the ground.

- 3.2 The NQ1 building was in a better state of repair and had been occupied until recently. This was a brick built four-storey building with a double pitched roof. The roof was not visible from the ground and could not be assessed. A small section of lifted flashing was present on the northern elevation of the building. It had multi-pane single glazed sash windows with stone lintels beneath them. Mortar between the brickwork was largely intact. A minor gap above a large wooden loading door on the western elevation of the building was noted. On the same elevation there was an extended section of missing brickwork when a gutter has been removed. This had minor sheltered gaps but was largely exposed. The area surrounding the features on the western elevation was cluttered with fire escapes and extractor fans from neighbouring businesses.
- 3.3 The site is located within a highly urban area of central Manchester, with an active construction site adjacent to it. The features present on both buildings provide suitable roosting opportunities for bats should they be present in the local area. Given the site's location, the buildings are assessed as having low potential to support roosting bats.

Table 3-1 Building features and photos

Building	Feature	Photo
68 Oldham Street	Oldham Street elevation. No features present.	

REPORT

68 Oldham Street

Torn lining in roof void –
light ingress and visible
gaps out of shot in photo



68 Oldham Street

Gap underneath fascia



68 Oldham Street

Lifted tiles on gable end



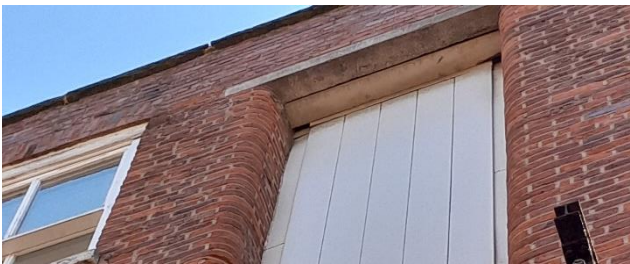
NQ1 Building

N/A



NQ1 Building

Gap at top of old wooden loading door



REPORT

NQ1 Building

Gap in brickwork where
gutter has been removed



NQ1 Building

Lifted flashing



Badgers

- 3.4.1 No suitable habitat for badgers is present on or around the site. Badgers are not considered to be a constraint for the proposed development.

4 EVALUATION AND POTENTIAL IMPACTS

4.1 Designated sites

- 4.1.1 There are no statutory designated sites within 2 km. It is not known if any locally designated sites are present within 2 km but given the proposed development is within central Manchester and within the footprint of existing buildings, impacts to any sites that are present are considered highly unlikely.

4.2 Habitats

- 4.2.1 The only habitat on site is existing buildings. This habitat is not of ecological importance. The hardstanding surrounding the buildings is also not of ecological importance

4.3 Species

Birds

- 4.3.1 Nesting birds (feral pigeons) are present within 68 Oldham Street and have potential to be impacted by the development. All bird nests, including those of feral pigeons, are protected from destruction under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981(as amended). Pigeons can breed throughout the year. Mitigation will be required to with respect to nesting birds

Bats

- 4.3.2 Buildings on the site have been assessed as having low bat roost potential. A single emergence or re-entry survey should be carried out to confirm the presence or absence of roosting bats within the bat activity survey season (May-August).

5 MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT

5.1 Species

Birds

- 5.1.1 General licence GL42: Wild birds allows for certain species, including feral pigeon to be killed or taken to prevent serious damage (GL42). Consideration could be given to obtaining such a licence twinned with excluding pigeons from the building to prevent them from nesting, however such works would also need to ensure that no potential bat roosts were obstructed. Otherwise works will need to ensure that no pigeon nests are destroyed, with a nesting bird check completed by an experienced ecologist no more than 48 hours before works commencing.
- 5.1.2 The new building could be enhanced with the provision of external bird boxes, attached to suitable elevations. Swift boxes and general-purpose bird boxes are recommended.

Bats

- 5.1.3 Further surveys are required to determine if bat roosts are present on the site. If a roost is found, then mitigation will be required with a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence obtained from Natural England to allow the destruction of a bat roost.

5.2 Enhancement opportunities

- 5.2.1 The site could be enhanced with provision of bat and bird boxes.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1.1 Site habitats are dominated by existing buildings. Further surveys are required to determine if bat roosts are present within the building. Feral pigeons are nesting in the building and mitigation will be required to remove them from the building.

REFERENCES

CIEEM (2018). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater and Coastal. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

CIEEM (2017). Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Collins J. (ed.) (2016). Bat surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good practice guidelines (3rd Edition). Bat Conservation Trust, London.

JNCC (2010). Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat survey: a technique for environmental audit (revised reprint). Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.

Appendix A

Relevant Legislation

A.1 BIRDS

All birds, their nests and eggs are afforded protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as updated by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. It is an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built; and
- intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

Schedule 1 birds cannot be intentionally or recklessly disturbed when nesting and there are increased penalties for doing so. Licences can be issued to visit the nests of such birds for conservation, scientific or photographic purposes but not to allow disturbance during a development even in circumstances where that development is fully authorised by consents such as a valid planning permission.

A.2 BATS

All British bat species are fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as updated by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. All British bats are also included on Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as European Protected Species. It is an offence to:

- intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture bats;
- deliberately or recklessly disturb bats (whether in a roost or not); and
- damage, destroy or obstruct access to bat roosts

A roost is defined as 'any structure or place which [a bat] uses for shelter or protection'. As bats tend to reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that a roost is protected whether or not bats are present at the time of survey.

A licence will therefore be required by those who carry out any operation that would otherwise result in offences being committed.

The following bat species are listed as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England, (commonly referred to as UKBAP Priority species): Barbastelle, Bechstein's, Noctule, Soprano Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared, Greater Horseshoe, and Lesser Horseshoe.