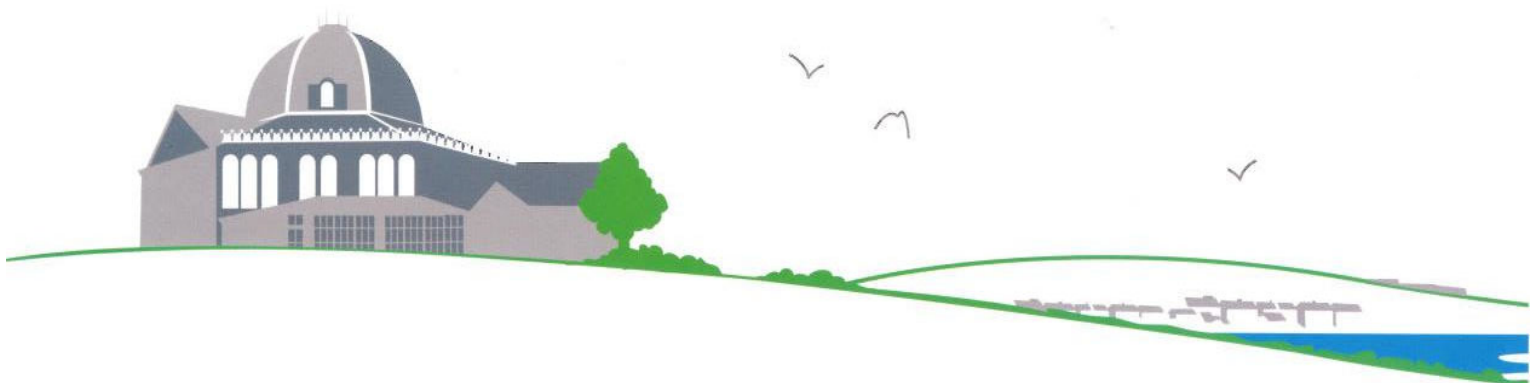




BRUNTWOOD

ALBERTON HOUSE, MANCHESTER

ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT



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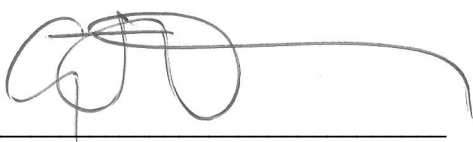
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This project has been undertaken in accordance with PAA policies and procedures on quality assurance.

Signed: 

CONTENTS

	Page
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Site Description	1
Legislative Context	1
Protected Species	3
Invasive Species	3
2. METHODS	4
Desk Study	4
Site Assessment	4
Phase 1 Habitat Survey	4
Scoping for Protected/Notable Species	4
Bat Biology	4
Building and Tree Inspections for Roost Features	5
Limitations	7
Desk Study	7
Site Visit	7
3. RESULTS	8
Desk Study	8
Statutory Protected Sites	8
European Sites	8
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	8
National/Local Nature Reserves	8
Priority Habitats	8
Non-Statutory Protected Sites	8
Protected and Notable Species	8
Granted European Protected Species Application	8
Badger and Water Vole	9
Otter	9
Bats	9
Other mammals	10
Birds	10
Amphibians	10
Reptiles, White-clawed Crayfish and Notable Fish	11

Invertebrates.....	11
Notable and Invasive Non-Native Plants.....	11
Phase 1 Habitat Survey.....	11
Buildings.....	11
Hardstanding.....	11
Ornamental Planting and Lawn.....	11
River Edge	12
Protected Species	12
Birds	12
Otter and Water Vole	12
Bats	12
4. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	13
Summary of the Site and Recommendations.....	13
Additional Habitat Enhancement Opportunities.....	13
Native Species	13
Artificial Refugia	14
Bird Boxes	14
Bat Boxes	14
Bat Bricks	14
Lighting Design	14
5. REFERENCES	15
6. ABBREVIATIONS	16
TABLES	
1 Bat Potential Roost Feature Assessment Criteria	6
2 Bat Habitat Suitability Assessment Criteria	6
3 Bat Roosts	9
4 Bat Records	9
5 Bird Species of Principal Importance	10
FIGURE	
1 Phase 1 Habitats Map	
APPENDICES	
1 Photographs	
2 Summary Protected Species Legislation	

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Penny Anderson Associates Ltd (PAA) was commissioned by Bruntwood to carry out an ecological assessment of Alberton House, Manchester (central grid reference: SJ 83481 98427), hereafter referred to as the 'site'.
- 1.2 The ecological assessment included a desk study for the site and the area within 1km of its centre. The desk study examined all data records for protected sites, habitats and species held the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU).
- 1.3 This report details the results of a desk study and site visit and evaluates the results in the context of the proposed re-development of the site, making recommendations for any further survey work as required.

Site Description

- 1.4 Alberton House fronts onto St. Mary's Parsonage (Photo 1 in Appendix 1) in central Manchester and the rear of the building looks out onto the River Irwell close to Spinningfields and Deansgate (Photo 2). There are two building blocks forming an 'L'-shape of five and eleven storeys faced with red brick and flat roof (Photo 3). There are areas of formal planting at the front of the building and, at the back, a balcony over slabbed sloping ground that runs down to the adjacent narrow wooded corridor on the banks of the River Irwell (Photo 4).

Legislative Context

- 1.5 A range of international and national legislation has been established in the UK to protect important nature conservation sites and priority species. At the international level, European Union (EU) Directives require individual member states to implement their conservation provisions nationally for the benefit of Europe as a whole. These Directives have been transposed into UK law by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (amended).
- 1.6 Other international conventions include: the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979), which requires the maintenance of populations of wild flora and fauna, giving particular protection to endangered and vulnerable species; and the Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (1979), which requires the protection of migratory species throughout their entire range. The above conventions are implemented in England and Wales via the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA), 1981 (as amended) and Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. This legislation also protects important habitats and sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- 1.7 At the national level, Biodiversity 2020 (Defra 2011) forms England's national biodiversity strategy. Building on the Natural Environment White Paper published in 2011, this provides a means of delivering the UK's commitments to maintaining and protecting biodiversity. Under Biodiversity 2020, the Priority Species and Habitats referred to are those of 'Principal Importance' for the conservation of biodiversity in England as listed on Section 41 (England) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (amended).
- 1.8 More recently, the Environment Act 2021 further supports this commitment to, and strengthens the legislation in respect of, maintaining and also enhancing biodiversity in England, and Part 6 Nature and Biodiversity includes the following key areas:
 - Strengthened biodiversity duty for public authorities in England;
 - Biodiversity net gain to ensure developments deliver at least 10% increase in biodiversity;
 - Local Nature Recovery Strategies to support a Nature Recovery Network;
 - Duty upon Local Authorities to consult on street tree felling;

- Strengthen woodland protection enforcement measures; and
 - Protected Site Strategies and Species Conservation Strategies to support the design and delivery of strategic approaches to deliver better outcomes for nature.
- 1.9 Finally, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021) provides guidance for local authorities on the content of the Local Plans and is a material consideration in determining planning applications. Briefly, with an overall focus on sustainable development, the NPPF states that developments should aim to engender positive outcomes for habitats and biodiversity, with a particular focus on the maintenance and creation of ecological networks.
- 1.10 The NPPF identifies the following principals that should be applied by local planning authorities when determining planning applications:
- 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 SSSI, 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 SSSI;
 - 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.
- 1.11 The NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural environment through a range of actions, including:
- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils;
 - recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services; and
 - minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains for biodiversity including establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.
- 1.12 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:
- Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
 - promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Protected Species

- 1.13 Details of the protected species legislation relevant to this report can be found in Appendix 2.

Invasive Species

- 1.14 Certain non-native species that have been introduced into the UK are regarded as being a threat to native biodiversity. Legislative measures have, therefore, been put in place to prevent the spread of these invasive species in the wild.
- 1.15 Under Section 14 of the WCA, 1981 (as amended), it is illegal to introduce plants listed under Part II of Schedule 9 of the WCA into the wild or sell these species. Offences include causing the spread of viable plant material or neglecting to contain or appropriately manage non-native species.
- 1.16 Commonly introduced Schedule 9 species include non-native cotoneaster species, specifically, small-leaved cotoneaster¹ (*Cotoneaster microphylla*) and wall cotoneaster (*C. horizontalis*), along with giant hogweed (*Heracleum mategazzianum*), Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*).

¹ Plant names follow Stace 2019 where possible

2. METHODS

Desk Study

- 2.1 The desk study consisted of a consultation exercise to gather local and site-specific ecological information, which was used to help identify species and habitats that could be present on site and nearby areas that could potentially be affected by any proposals. A request for details of protected species and wildlife sites within 1km of the centre of the site was made to GMEU, the county biological record centre. In addition, the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC²) website was used to identify the location of wildlife sites and protected species.

Site Assessment

- 2.2 A daytime site visit was carried out by Principal Scientist Gerard Hawley (MCIEEM³) as an accredited agent of Dr Sarah Ross' Level 2 bat licence (2015-12600-CLS-CLS) and Ecologist Phoebe Gray on 20th July 2021. All methods, equipment and assessment criteria were consistent with current good practice guidelines for the survey and the surveyors were competent for the assigned tasks based on the CIEEM competency framework (CIEEM 2013).
- 2.3 A subsequent update walkover was completed on 27th June 2022 by Sarah Ross (MCIEEM, CEnv) to re-check habitats and features across the application site and update maps accordingly.

Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.4 The Phase 1 habitat survey followed guidelines outlined in JNCC (2010). Habitats were assessed based on the plant species present, with the results reported and presented on an annotated Phase 1 habitat survey map (see Figure 1). This habitat map details the location and extent of all habitat types recorded within the site boundaries.

Scoping for Protected/Notable Species

- 2.5 The habitat survey was 'extended' (Institute of Environmental Assessment 1995, CIEEM 2017) to include a general assessment of the suitability of the site for supporting any protected or notable species. Features with suitability for any individual species were noted, together with any incidental field signs found such as footprints, feeding remains or sightings of animals themselves.
- 2.6 In relation to bats, the inspection survey followed current good practice guidelines published by The Bat Conservation Trust (Collins 2016) and all existing trees and buildings within the site were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats.

Bat Biology

- 2.7 There are 17 species of native bats known to be resident (i.e. breed) in the British Isles. British bats feed entirely on insects and have developed a complex sonar system, known as echolocation, which enables them to find prey and navigate around their environment at night.

² The MAGIC website provides authoritative geographic information about the natural environment from across government.

³ Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)

- 2.8 Habitat requirements vary widely, both on an individual and species level, although certain features, such as woodland, parkland, traditional pasture, marshes and areas of freshwater, are often focal points for foraging, as insects are plentiful in these areas (Mitchell-Jones 2004). Bats use linear features, such as rivers, hedgerows, smaller roads and woodland edges, as landmarks in order to commute from one location to another (Schofield and Mitchell-Jones 2003).
- 2.9 Bats utilise different roosts at different times of the year. Between late October and March, bats hibernate; this requires an unexposed roost with a stable temperature, typically a cave, cellar or tunnel. Around March, the bats emerge and gradually move to their summer roosts, typically within man-made structures or suitable crevices in trees. During the spring and summer female bats gather together at maternity roosts to give birth and rear their young. Most births occur between late June and mid-July, with the young able to fly within three to five weeks (Altringham 2003; Waters and Warren 2003). By the end of August, most of the young bats are independent and the colony begins to break up (Schofield and Mitchell-Jones 2003). Mating takes place between August and December, either at the winter hibernation site or at autumn breeding sites. The numbers of bats utilising these roosts can vary from single bats to hundreds in a nursery colony or hibernation site (Altringham 2003).

Building and Tree Inspections for Roost Features

- 2.10 Buildings and trees were inspected from ground level and the types and locations of any potential roost features (PRF) that appeared to provide sufficient shelter for bats were recorded. Example PRF on buildings include slipped tiles, gaps at eaves, missing mortar, lifted lead flashings and, in trees include woodpecker holes, knot holes and crevices in deadwood or beneath loose bark. Any potential indication of bat presence that could be seen was also recorded. Each PRF was categorised either as Low, Moderate or High potential for roosting bats and, using this data, each tree was assigned to one of five categories based on its most suitable feature (Table 1).
- 2.11 The habitats within the site and immediately adjacent areas were also considered for their general suitability for commuting and foraging bats to place the site in the context of its surroundings, as this can have a bearing on the likelihood of a roost being present.
- 2.12 The assessment of suitability was based on the broad criteria outlined in Tables 1 and 2 (Collins 2016), combined with the professional judgement and experience of the surveyor in identifying suitable habitat features and field signs of bats.

Table 1 Bat Potential Roost Feature Assessment Criteria

Suitability	Description of Roosting Habitats
Negligible	No features likely to be used by roosting bats.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically, but does not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats. A tree of sufficient size to contain potential roost features but none seen from the ground or only those with very limited suitability. (i.e. suitable for occasional day roosting but unsuitable for maternity or hibernation roost).
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 and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost type of high conservation significance. (i.e. suitable for day roosting but unsuitable for maternity or hibernation roost).
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 and surrounding habitat. (i.e. suitable for maternity and/or hibernation roost).
Confirmed Roost	A structure or tree with evidence of bat presence, i.e. droppings, feeding remains, audible bat calls heard during daytime survey or sightings of the animals themselves, existing (reliable) record of bats roosting at the location.

Table 2 Bat Habitat Suitability Assessment Criteria

Suitability	Description of Commuting / Foraging Habitats
Negligible	No habitat features likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats.
Low	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	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.

Suitability	Description of Commuting / Foraging Habitats
High	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 known roosts.

Limitations

Desk Study

- 2.13 It is important to note that the desk study results provide an indication of the species present in and around the site, but do not confirm current presence or absence of any particular species. Protected species are often under recorded in county wildlife databases.

Site Visit

- 2.14 No significant limitations to the habitat assessment were encountered and the surveys took place in good weather during daylight hours for both site visits. Not all areas could be accessed where offices were in use although access was available to the ground floor parking area and roof areas. The area at the rear of the building leading to the bank of the River Irwell could not be accessed directly although a good view was afforded from Trinity Bridge. Therefore, the findings of the survey are considered to be robust.

3. RESULTS

Desk Study

Statutory Protected Sites

European Sites

- 3.1 European protected sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), RAMSAR wetland sites, possible SAC, potential SPA and proposed RAMSAR sites.
- 3.2 Consultation with the search engine MAGIC revealed one European Protected Site within a 10km search radius of the site. Rochdale Canal is classed as a SAC and is located approximately 6.11km north-west from the central site grid reference. The reason for the designation of this site is due to the presence of floating water-plantain (*Luronium natans*) in a botanically diverse water plant community.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

- 3.3 SSSI represent a selection of this country's best wildlife and geological sites, and cover approximately 7% of the terrestrial area of the country (with over 4,000 separate sites in England).
- 3.4 No SSSI sites were identified within 2km of the site, during consultation with the search engine MAGIC and the site does not fall under the Impact Risk Zone of any SSSI sites.

National/Local Nature Reserves

- 3.5 No National or Local Nature Reserves were identified within the 2km search area.

Priority Habitats

- 3.6 Several Priority Habitat deciduous woodlands were revealed within the 2km search area. The closest area to site is located approximately 1.05km west from the centre of the site.

Non-Statutory Protected Sites

- 3.7 No Local Wildlife Sites or other non-statutory protected sites were returned from the 1km data search area.

Protected and Notable Species

Granted European Protected Species Application

- 3.8 Seven granted European Protected Species (EPS) applications were returned within 1km search area:
- 3.9 Six bat licences for common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) were returned, the expiration dates of these licences ranging from 2013 to 2023. All of these licences were granted in order to allow destruction of a resting place. The closest licence to site is located approximately 385m south of the site.
- 3.10 One licence for brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*) was granted to allow destruction of a breeding site and resting place, and expired in 2015.

Badger and Water Vole

- 3.11 No records for badger (*Meles meles*) or water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) were returned within the 1km search area.

Otter

- 3.12 One record of otter (*Lutra lutra*) was returned from the data search. This record is dated in 2013 and is located approximately 850m north of the site, and is associated with the River Irwell.

Bats

- 3.13 The data search returned one Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), 19 common pipistrelle, two unknown pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus* sp.) and one soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) bat roosts within the 1km search area. These roosts are dated between 2004 and 2017 and the closest roost to site is a common pipistrelle day roost, located approximately 505m west of the site and dated in 2015 (see Table 3).

Table 3 Bat Roosts

Common Name	Scientific Name	No. of roosts	Closest roost to site & type if known (approximate distance and direction from site boundary)
Common pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	19	505m W, day roost
Daubenton's bat	<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	1	770m SW
Pipistrelle bat species	<i>Pipistrellus</i> sp.	2	865m SW
Soprano pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	1	800m SW

- 3.14 Table 2 shows the number of records of each bat species recorded (excluding roost data) in the search zone and the proximity to the site of the closest record for each species. A total of five species of bat have been recorded within 1km of the site.

Table 4 Bat Records

Common Name	Scientific Name	No. of Records	Closest Record (approximate distance and direction from site boundary)
Brown long-eared bat	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	1	230m NW
Common pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	60	120m E
Daubenton's bat	<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	1	425m NE
Pipistrelle bat species	<i>Pipistrellus</i> sp.	9	65m N
Soprano pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	5	715m SW

Other mammals

- 3.15 Two records for hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) were also returned from the data search. These records are dated in 2016 and 2020 and the closest record to site is located approximately 500m north-west and is dated 2016.

Birds

- 3.16 The Red and Amber conservation status assessment (Eaton *et al.* 2015) is based on a number of criteria including historical decline, trends in population and range, rarity, localised distribution and international importance. Red listed species are the most critical group, followed by Amber. Green listed species are of least concern.
- 3.17 All nesting birds, their nests and eggs are protected from harm under the WCA, 1981 (as amended). In addition, species listed under Schedule 1 of the WCA are further protected against disturbance when breeding.
- 3.18 All Schedule 1 and Section 41 bird species recorded within the search area are listed in Table 5, along with their conservation status.

Table 5 Bird Species of Principal Importance

Common Name	Scientific Name	No. of Records	Amber	Red	Section 41	Schedule 1
Black redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	90		x		x
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	4	x		x	
Corncrake	<i>Crex crex</i>	1		x	x	x
Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	1		x	x	
Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	1		x	x	
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	16	x		x	
Herring gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	1		x	x	
Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	1				x
House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	14		x	x	
Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	11	x			x
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	8		x	x	
Lesser redpoll	<i>Acanthis caberet</i>	1		x	x	
Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	4		x	x	
Little ringed plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	6				x
Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	58				x
Song thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	9		x	x	
Spotted flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	1		x	x	
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	9		x	x	

Amphibians

- 3.19 No records for great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*, GCN) were returned from the 1km data search.

- 3.20 Consultation with Natural England's GCN Geoportal revealed no known locations with confirmed presence of GCN within 1km of the central grid reference.
- 3.21 An Ordnance Survey map search revealed no ponds or ditches within 500m of the site.
- 3.22 No records for smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*), common frog (*Rana temporaria*) or common toad (*Bufo bufo*) were returned from the data search.

Reptiles, White-clawed Crayfish and Notable Fish

- 3.23 No records for any reptile species, white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) or fish were returned from the data search.

Invertebrates

- 3.24 No priority invertebrate species records were returned from the data search.

Notable and Invasive Non-Native Plants

- 3.25 One record of a notable plant species was returned from the data search. This record is for grass-wrack pondweed (*Potamogeton compressus*), is located approximately 860m south of the site boundary and is dated 2005.

Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 3.26 A habitat map is presented in Figure 1.
- 3.27 Habitats present on site are:

- Buildings;
- Hardstanding;
- Ornamental planting and lawn; and
- River edge.

Buildings

- 3.28 The two building blocks that make up Alberton House provide very little habitat for faunal and floral species.

Hardstanding

- 3.29 There are small areas of hardstanding at the front of the buildings consisting of block paved areas and a limited area for parking (likely used for deliveries). A number of large decorative stones sit on light-colour angular gravel. Beneath a concrete balcony at the rear of the building a paved area that runs the length of the building slopes down towards the bank of the River Irwell.

Ornamental Planting and Lawn

- 3.30 At the entrance to Alberton House, fronting onto St Mary's Parsonage, there are four raised borders with a low wall topped with coping brick. In one of the borders there is a single paper birch tree (*Betula papyrifera*). The shrub plants are predominantly non-native evergreen species including New Zealand flax (*Phormium sp.*), Japanese skimmia (*Rutaceae sp.*), Japanese camellia (*Theaceae sp.*), box (*Buxus sempervirens*) and lavender species (*Lavandula sp.*), the latter being native. Small lawned areas contain common bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) and common centuary (*Centaureum erythraea*) (Photo 5).

River Edge

- 3.31 Within the application site boundary along the boundary with the River Irwell there is a concrete paved area below the overhanging balcony. This paved area has occasional sparse self-seeded tree saplings, mostly sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), and also scattered plants of the non-native invasive species giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) and Himalayan balsam (Photo 6). Both are Schedule 9 species of the WCA, 1981 (as amended).
- 3.32 These species have established on the site from adjacent stands present on the banks of the River Irwell, where there is narrow strip of self-seeded trees on earth banks outside of the red line boundary (Photo 2). The trees are relatively young and none have potential roost features for bats.

Protected Species

Birds

- 3.33 A small number of birds were seen during the survey. This included starling⁴ (*Sturnus vulgaris*), stock dove (*Columba oenas*), mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*).

Otter and Water Vole

- 3.34 Access to the riverbanks was restricted and close inspection was not possible. The otter population underwent a widespread decline during the 20th Century, thought to be related to the introduction of pesticides in the mid-1950s. A survey of England between 2009 and 2010 indicated an increase in signs of otter and continued expansion across English river systems (Crawford 2011). Recovery is thought to be related to a ban on pesticides, legal protection since 1978 and natural expansion from the remnant populations. There is a possibility that otter are using the River Irwell for foraging and commuting and the small area of vegetation along the riverbank on-site could provide some, albeit highly limited, daytime cover. It is extremely unlikely that water vole are present on site. The fluctuating height in river levels and the lack of suitable burrowing and foraging habitats available on the banks make the site wholly unsuitable for water vole.

Bats

- 3.35 The building inspection found no features that provide suitable conditions for roosting. The exterior brick cladding had no cracks or missing mortar, no gaps or crevices around window frames or doorways (Photo 7). The ground floor parking space similarly was in good condition with no evidence of suitable roost features.
- 3.36 Trees on site were all well managed landscape trees with no suitable features, such as rot holes or splits to boughs, that might be used by roosting bats. Therefore, the site held negligible potential for bat roosts.
- 3.37 The site itself held no significant habitat suitable for bat foraging. The surrounding urban landscape provides some limited habitat suitable for use by foraging bats. This includes the narrow strip of self-seeded trees on parts of the bank of the River Irwell itself.

⁴ The names of bird species noted on site follow British Ornithologists' Union 2017.

4. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Site and Recommendations

- 4.1 The site is of low ecological value. There are no designated wildlife sites on or within close proximity to the site and any proposed redevelopment would not threaten the integrity of notifiable features in the local area.
- 4.2 No birds' nests were recorded on the building or in the ornamental planting at the front of the building. There is some limited potential for nesting birds to use the street trees on site and trees/shrubs on the riverbank adjacent to the site. As such, it is recommended any tree works are completed outside of the bird nesting season.
- 4.3 No potential for roosting bats was identified at the site and no significant bat foraging areas occur on site. The self-seeded trees and shrubs along the riverbank adjacent to the site provides some limited foraging areas for bats and similar habitat is present further along the riverbank. Habitats on or adjacent to the site are unsuitable for other protected species such as otter, water vole or hedgehog, No further protected species surveys are considered necessary.
- 4.4 Two Schedule 9 plant species, giant hogweed and Himalayan balsam, are present on the paved area adjacent to the river, self-seeded from the adjacent riverbank which lies outside of the application site boundary. It is not an offence to simply have Schedule 9 species, but a problem arises when sites are disturbed as part of redevelopment. Clearance works and building operations can result in the inadvertent spread of these species, which could be contrary to legislation and also negatively impact on the river environment. Any Schedule 9 plant material, or soil containing root or rhizome fragments should, therefore, be dealt with appropriately. It is recommended that specialist advice on the appropriate control and disposal of materials is sought⁵, and that suitable longer-term management measures are developed as part of any landscaping plan. Long-term management should be co-ordinated with adjacent landowners where possible for best effect.

Additional Habitat Enhancement Opportunities

- 4.5 National Planning Policy requires that opportunities for ecological enhancement are sought within all development proposals, moving towards the aim of 'biodiversity net gain'. To achieve this, projects must be considered on an individual basis to ensure that new features, planting and management regimes are suitable for the conditions on site and thus likely to be successful in the longer term. Below are a number of general considerations for enhancement measures.

Native Species

- 4.6 Planting schemes used in urban environments often include non-native species. These may be selected for their aesthetic appeal, pollution tolerance, evergreen foliage and low maintenance, and many nectar-bearing exotic species do support insects and provide foraging and nesting opportunities for birds. However, native species, preferably of local provenance, tend to support greater biodiversity as they have adapted to the local conditions. Wherever practical, native or ecologically beneficial plants should be selected in the landscape design.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prevent-the-spread-of-harmful-invasive-and-non-native-plants>

Artificial Refugia

Bird Boxes

- 4.7 Where practical, bird boxes can be installed, targeted towards species currently known to utilise the site and its surrounds, to potentially accommodate a range of small birds. Traditional nest boxes can be attached in locations around the site on the south-western or south-eastern side of buildings, or nesting cavities of appropriate dimensions for a range of bird species can be incorporated in the façade of new buildings. Advice on suitable target species, nest internal dimensions and entrance sizes can be provided by a suitably qualified ecologist.

Bat Boxes

- 4.8 Building standards that demand greater insulation tend to remove features that traditionally have been used by bats and birds. Loss of natural roosts has increased the importance of man-made structures for bats and artificial roosts are becoming essential for the survival of many bat species. Bat boxes installed facing south-west, south-east and north would provide additional roosting opportunities for commuting and feeding bats in various weather conditions.

Bat Bricks

- 4.9 Bat roosting sites, often referred to as 'bat bricks' can be incorporated within the structure of new buildings, e.g. in place of the usual building bricks. A range of designs and materials are available including traditional brick shapes (e.g. Bioquip www.bioquip.net/acatalog/boxes_for_building.html) as well as concrete and 'woodcrete' models. These would be best placed on the south-west or south-east side of buildings.

Lighting Design

- 4.10 Artificial lighting can be disturbing to wildlife, particularly species such as bats that are nocturnal and adapted to forage in low-light conditions. Even if no roost is present on site, it would be good practice to adopt a sensitive lighting scheme to maximise biodiversity value post-development, with consideration given to the following points:
- Directing lamps where they are needed to avoid unnecessary light spillage;
 - Use of narrow spectrum light sources with low ultra-violet, blue or white wavelength component to minimise insect attraction at lamps;
 - Avoiding illumination of features and habitats that are likely to have the greatest value to bats, such as tree canopies and the river; and
 - Use of timers and/or motion sensors to limit periods of illumination to essential times only.
- 4.11 Further guidance on lighting specifications, applicable to bats and a range of nocturnal species, is provided in publications available via the Bat Conservation Trust website www.bats.org.uk, such as the impacts of different types of lighting (RCEP 2009), effects of artificial lighting on bat behaviour (Stone 2013) and guidelines for mitigation (BCT 2018, Eurobats 2018).

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6. ABBREVIATIONS

CIEEM Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management

CRoW Countryside and Rights of Way

EPA Environmental Protection Act

EPS European Protected Species

EU European Union

GCN Great Crested Newt(s)

GMEU Greater Manchester Ecology Unit

JNCC Joint Nature Conservation Committee

MAGIC Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside

NERC Natural Environment and Rural Communities

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework

PAA Penny Anderson Associates Ltd

PRF Potential Roost Feature(s)

SAC Special Area(s) of Conservation

SPA Special Protection Area(s)

SSSI Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest

WCA Wildlife and Countryside Act

FIGURE



Legend

Survey area

Habitat

- Introduced shrub
- Building
- Hardstanding
- Broadleaved tree
- Giant hogweed
- Himalayan balsam

TN1 Giant hogweed self-seeded in this area along with sparse tree saplings

**Vegetation below Alberton House balcony*

British National Grid
Projection: Transverse Mercator
False Easting: 400000.000000
False Northing: -100000.000000
Central Meridian: -2.000000
Scale Factor: 0.999601
Latitude Of Origin: 49.000000

ISO A3

0 2.5 5 10 15 Metres

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Project Name
Alberton House, Manchester

Discipline
Ecology

Title:
**PHASE 1
HABITATS MAP**

Scale 1:350	Drawing No. Figure 1
Drawn By CC	Originator GJH
PAA Ref.	Revision 1.0

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Photographs



Photo 1
Reception and building
facing onto St Mary's
Parsonage



Photo 2
Rear of building
looking out onto the
River Irwell



Photo 3
Flat roof



Photo 4
Balcony at rear of building



Photo 5
**Ornamental planting and
lawn at front of building**



Photo 6
Giant hogweed



Photo 7
Masonry in good condition and no gaps around window frames

APPENDIX 2

Summary Protected Species Legislation

SUMMARY OF THE LEGISLATION RELATING TO BATS

All wild species of bat are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981, which has also been amended by later legislation, including the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. Bats are listed on Schedule 5 of the WCA and are therefore subject to some the provisions of Section 9 which, with the amendments, make it an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection (S9:4b).
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a bat (S9:4c).

There are additional offences in relation to buying and selling (S9:5) any live or dead animal of this species or anything derived from them.

Bat species are also listed under Annexes IIa and IVa of the EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, also known as the 'Habitats Directive'. Inclusion on Annex IVa means they are consequently identified as European Protected Species (EPS) and protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (amended).

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (amended) state that a person commits an offence if they:

- (a) deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European protected species,
- (b) deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species, in such a way as –
 - (i) to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear their young, or
 - (ii) in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate, or
 - (iii) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong;
- (c) deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal, or
- (d) damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

Under these Regulations it is an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place whether the animal is in occupation or not, and protection extends to all life stages of the animal in question. There are additional offences relating to possession, control and sale of a live or dead bat or part of such an animal.

In addition, seven native British bat species, including the soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and the brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), are listed as 'species of principal importance' for the conservation of biodiversity in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (amended). In Wales, Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 provide a list of organisms of 'principal importance for maintaining and enhancing biodiversity' and lists several species of bat including the common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) which is absent from England's S41 list.

Please note: the above text provides a brief summary of the legislation in relation to bats and their roosts and the original Acts, Regulations and any amendments should be referred to for the precise wording.

SUMMARY OF THE LEGISLATION RELATING TO BREEDING BIRDS

All wild species of breeding birds and their nests and eggs are protected under Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981, as amended by later legislation including the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. This legislation applies in England and Wales.

Part 1 (Section 1:1) of the WCA states that:

'If any person intentionally,

- (a) kills, injures or takes any wild bird;
- (b) takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or
- (c) takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird,

he shall be guilty of an offence.'

Part 1 (Section 1:5) of the WCA (amended by the CROW Act 2000) refers to specific birds listed on Schedule 1 of the WCA, and states that:

'If any person intentionally or recklessly,

- (a) disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; or
- (b) disturbs dependent young of such a bird,

he shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a special penalty.'

Schedule 1 includes birds such as Western barn owl (*Tyto alba*), black redstart (*Phoenicurus ochrurus*), woodlark (*Lullula arborea*) and Cetti's warbler (*Cettia cetti*). Please refer to the WCA for a complete list of Schedule 1 species¹.

Some provisions are made to allow the killing and taking of certain species under certain circumstances, as follows:

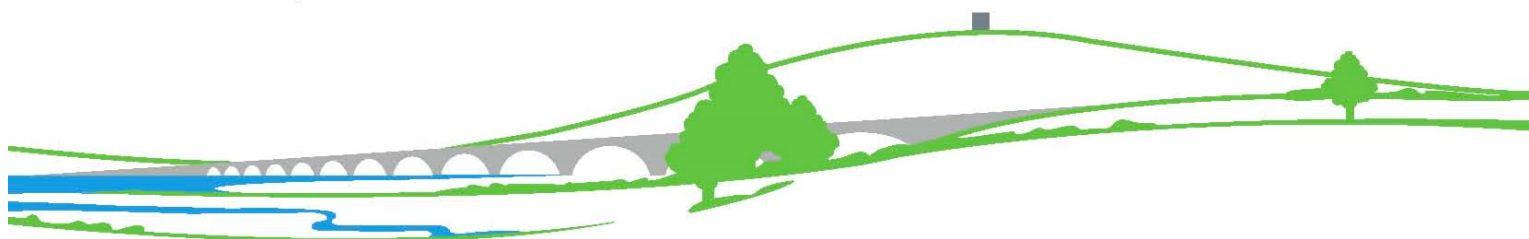
- Birds listed on Schedule 2 (Part 1) of the Act may be taken or killed outside of the 'close season' for each individual species (the 'close season' is defined by the Act). This includes various wild duck and geese species.
- Birds listed on Schedule 2 (Part 2) of the Act may be killed or taken by authorised persons at all times. This includes species such as carrion crow (*Corvus corone*), Eurasian magpie (*Pica pica*), feral pigeon² (*Columba livia*) and greater Canada goose (*Branta canadensis*). An 'authorised person' is defined as a person who has written authorisation to undertake the act from the relevant statutory authority. The written authority is in the form of a licence, either a general licence which covers a number of the more typical 'pest' species, or an individual licence for other individual species. In England these licences are issued by Natural England and in Wales by the Welsh Assembly Government.

Please note: the above text provides a brief summary of the legislation in relation to breeding birds in England and Wales and the original Act and any amendments should be referred to for the precise wording.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/schedule/1>

² Also known as rock dove

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