

Higher Openshaw Community Primary School,
Openshaw, Manchester

Ecological Appraisal and
Preliminary Roost Assessment
2026



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Client [Manchester City Council](#)

Project Title [Higher Openshaw Community Primary School, Manchester](#)

Project Reference [RHE.4683](#)

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1. Introduction

Background

Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd (RHE) was commissioned by Manchester City Council (the Client) to undertake an ecological assessment of a proposed classroom building at Higher Openshaw Community Primary School (the 'site'). The site is located at SJ 88799 97894.

Site Context

The site is a school with housing adjacent southeast to southwest. Woodland to the northwest visible in Figure 1 has been cleared and is now a construction site. The site has some limited connectivity to grassland habitats, with Sandywell Millennium Green present 80m to the south and a grassland park adjacent to the north-east (see Figure 1). Ashton Canal extends 180m north of the site boundary.

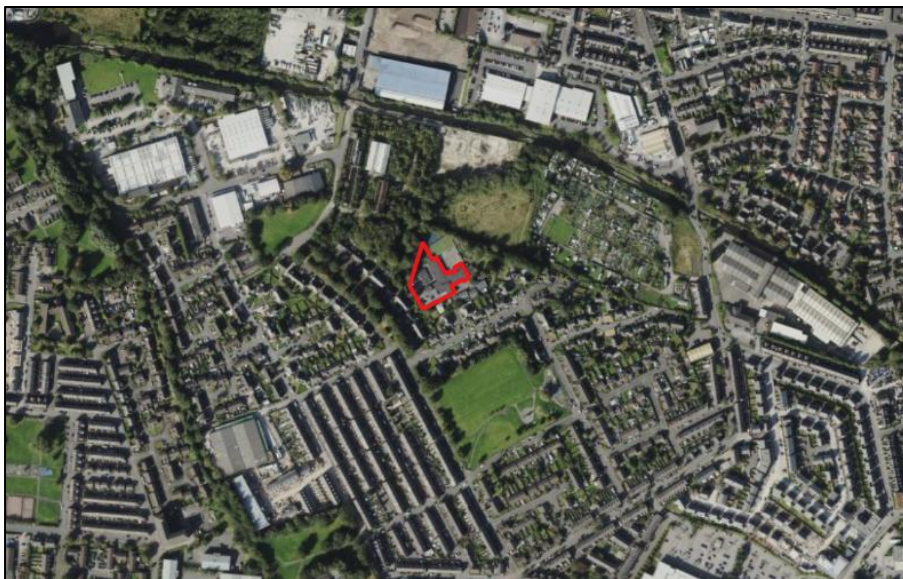


Figure 1 showing the site location



Figure 2 showing Building 1 location

Proposed Development

A planning application will be submitted for a new SEN classroom (see Appendix 1).

Scope of the Assessment

The aim of the assessment was to identify any potential ecological constraints and to inform any mitigation requirements, to enable the proposed development to be delivered in conformity with planning policy.

2. Methods

Field Survey

The site was surveyed by Stephen Griffith on 8th January 2026. Stephen has over 2 years' experience undertaking these surveys. The weather was dry and overcast with a temperature of 4°C.

During the walkover habitat and features were assessed for their suitability to support protected and notable species in accordance with CIEEM guidelines¹. Field signs of protected, notable, and invasive non-native species, if encountered, were mapped, and described.

Given the very small extent of the site, it was not considered proportionate to undertake a records search. Designated sites were not considered as the size of the development is very unlikely to result in impact pathways for the surrounding habitats.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

The exterior of the temporary SEN classroom (Building 1) was surveyed from the ground. Features offering potential access to roosting bats were recorded. Such features may include suitable gaps in roof coverings, gaps behind external cladding/facia and gaps in masonry. Evidence indicating the presence of roosting bats was also searched for. This may include bat droppings on walls, windows or on the ground below roost entrances or staining from fur oil around roost entry points. The interior of Building 1 was surveyed to identify any evidence indicating use by roosting bats. Such evidence may include bat droppings, feeding remains, urine splashes, live or dead bats and staining from fur oil on timbers.

3. Results

Habitats

The proposed development is of very small scale and impacts to habitats are expected to be minimal. Therefore, a habitat map has not been produced.

Modified Grassland

This habitat is dominated by Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne* with Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, White Clover *Trifolium repens*, Yorkshire Fog *Holcus Lanatus*, Ivy *Hedera helix*, and mosses. The modified grassland species are common and widespread throughout the UK.

¹ CIEEM (2017). *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Line of Trees

A line of mature Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* trees is present along the northwestern site boundary.

Buildings and Developed Land

Building 1 (Figure 1) is a temporary SEN classroom located to the west of the main school building. Car parking for the school is present to the south of Building 1 and is sealed tarmac.



Photograph 1 showing the modified grassland and line of trees.

The land beyond the line of trees has been cleared (Photograph 2). Aerial imagery shows it was previously covered by woodland.



Photograph 2 – land beyond western site boundary (previously woodland).

Notable Species

Badger

The site was surveyed for evidence indicating use by notable species, especially Badger *meles meles*. No evidence was recorded, and the urban location of the site is lacking connectivity to any extended sheltering or foraging habitat for this species. It is unlikely that Badger will be using the site or surrounding habitats for commuting or foraging.

Other Mammals

Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* are likely to be active in the surrounding area. Grassland fields and residential gardens provide foraging resources for the species.

Birds

The line of trees offers suitable nesting habitat for birds.

Great Crested Newt

The nearest pond is located over 250m west of the site. As such, the presence of Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* is extremely unlikely. This species is not considered further.

Reptiles

No habitats are present on site, or in the surrounding urban area that would be suitable for reptiles. These species are not considered further.

Otter and Water Vole

No habitats are present on site that are suitable for Water Vole *Arvicola amphibius* or Otter *Lutra lutra*. These species are not considered further.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

Building 1 is a small single-storey prefabricated structure with a flat roof. A small gap is present on the north-east elevation between the building and the fascia board, but this does not allow access internally. The gap was shallow and exposed to the elements suggesting unsuitability for a day roost. Windows were well sealed. No roof void is present. All interior spaces are well illuminated and in use as a classroom during the day. The plasterboard ceilings and walls within the interior are in good condition and offer no entry points from the exterior. No potential roosting

features were identified, and Building 1 was assessed as offering **negligible** potential to support roosting bats.

The line of trees offers some limited foraging habitat for bats, and they are likely to be present in the area due to the proximity of Ashton Canal.

This building is also considered unsuitable for nesting birds, and no evidence was found at the time of survey.



Photograph 3 and 4 showing the exterior of Building 1.



Photograph 5 and 6 showing the fascia.



Photograph 7 and 8 showing the interior of Building 1.

4. Potential Impacts

The proposed development will not result in any impacts to designated sites or priority habitats. The only habitat change is the removal of Building 1, which will be replaced by a building of the same dimensions. Building 1 offers negligible potential to support roosting bats and therefore no impacts are anticipated.

No trees will be affected by the proposed development and there is no risk of roosting bats or nesting birds being impacted.

There is a risk that any bats using the line of trees for foraging may be impacted if artificial lighting is directed towards the north-west site boundary.

Hedgehogs may be harmed if they access construction sites through entrapment and contact with hazardous machinery and harmful substances. Mitigation is recommended (see Section 5).

Other impacts to notable species are not anticipated.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The proposed development will not affect any habitats other than buildings and sealed surface and therefore is considered to meet the *de minimis* threshold which excludes the requirement to deliver 10% Biodiversity Net Gain.

5. Recommendations

Mitigation and Enhancement Measures

No further surveys are required.

To ensure that Hedgehog and any other mammals are not trapped or harmed during the construction work, smaller excavations should be covered if left overnight. Larger excavations, if left overnight or for longer periods, should be ramped to enable animals to escape. Night-time work is to be avoided.

No artificial lighting should be directed toward the line of trees to avoid any risk of affecting foraging bats or other wildlife.

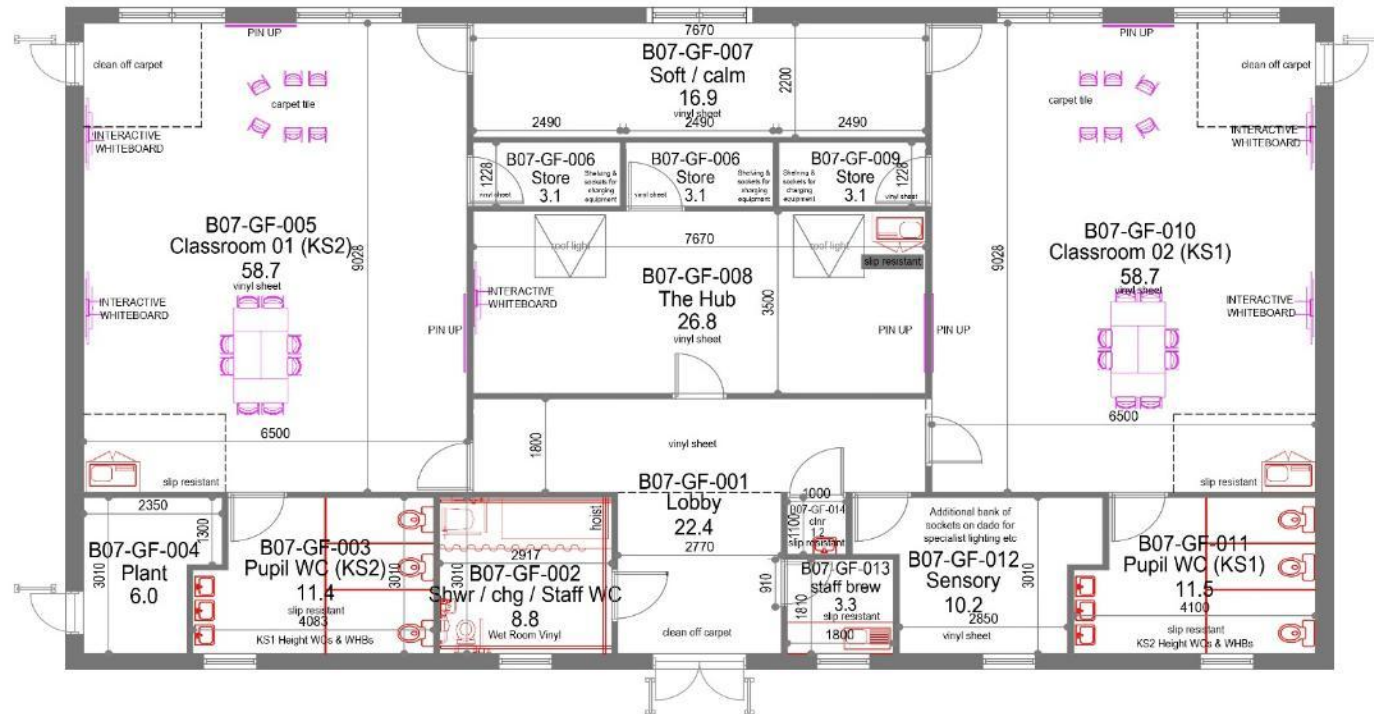
To enhance the site for wildlife two Woodcrete bird boxes (e.g. 1B Schwegler Nest Box), should be installed on two of the retained trees adjacent to Building 1. The boxes will be positioned facing north, and at least 3 metres in height.

Hedgehog highways can also be created by installing small gaps (approximately 13cm x 13cm) at the base of any boundary fencing. This allows hedgehogs to commute through the site and connect with habitats and residential gardens in the immediate surroundings.



Appendix 1: Proposed Site Plans





Ground Floor Plan - Option 2

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Higher Openshaw Community School

SEND Building
010023048360

Total site area:
Gross external area: 273.4
Gross internal area: 253.3
Total room area: 171.5
Net internal area: 246.6
Building footprint area: 273.4

GENERAL NOTES

INSTALL ACCESS CONTROLS TO ALL INTERNAL DOORS
AIR CONDITIONING PROVIDED THROUGHOUT
CORRIDORS TO CLASSROOMS
SHELVING TO STORES
DOOR HANDLES TO BE AT 1000mm - TBC
HEAVY DUTY FINGER JUMBS TO ALL DOORS



Capital Programmes
Division

FEASIBILITY

PROJECT NAME
Higher Openshaw Community School
Savinton Road, Openshaw,
Manchester M11 1JL

REF
010023048360

SEND replacement

PROPOSED STEP
Ground floor plan - Option 2

REF
E14600021

DATE
08/10/25

BY
A. Unsworth

FOR
HOP MCC B05 GF DR B 0010



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