Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

Levenshulme Cricket Club
Reference: 82-211-R1
Date: December 24



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Site Address	East Levenshulme Cricket Club, Elsa Road, Manchester M19 3JG
Coordinates	E 388375, N 394253
Site Area	Approximately 1.23 ha
Current Site Use and Adjacent Site Use	The site comprises the former East Levenshulme Cricket Club, which was inactive at the time of survey. Residential housing defines the northern and western site boundary, while a series of allotments are located directly adjacent to the east and south of the site.
Designated Sites	One statutory designated site is located within 1 km of the site boundary. Highfield Country Park Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located approximately 140 m south of the site at its closest point. Due to the proximity of the site to Highfield Country Park LNR, further consideration will be required. The site is located within the Impact Risk Zone of one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Rochdale Canal SSSI and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located approximately 6.7 km north of the site. Due to the distance between the site and Rochdale Canal SSSI, no detrimental impacts on the designated site are anticipated as a result of the development. Furthermore, as per the criteria listed on MAGIC (accessed December 2024), the proposed development will not require further consultation with Natural England to proceed. Furthermore, due to the distance between the proposed site and Rochdale Canal, no detrimental impacts on the floating water-plantain present within the SAC are anticipated as a result of the development. As such, a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening assessment will not be required to assess whether the development will have any 'likely significant effects' on the designated site. There are no non-statutory designated sites located within 1 km of the site boundary.
Survey Results	The site was found to comprise two structures, other neutral grassland, mixed scrub, bramble scrub, scattered trees and native hedgerows. The site was found to have the following potential ecological constraints: - Common amphibians may be present on-site. - Commuting and foraging opportunities for bats, though these are limited to the mixed scrub, bramble scrub, scattered trees and hedgerows. - One tree (T1) was assessed as having PRF-I bat roosting potential. - Potential presence of badger on-site and within the local area. - Potential presence of hedgehogs within the other neutral grassland, mixed scrub, bramble scrub and hedgerow understories. - Potential presence of nesting birds within mixed scrub, bramble scrub, scattered trees and hedgerows. - Potential presence of reptile within other neutral grassland, mixed scrub, bramble scrub and hedgerow understories. - Japanese knotweed and variegated yellow archangel were identified.

Conclusions

The following further survey is recommended to inform a planning application:

- An updated condition assessment of the site during the growing season (late May to September, dependent on weather and flowering times).

The following mitigation is recommended:

- Highfield Country Park LNR is located approximately 140 m south of the site at its closest point. To ensure that the non-statutory designated site is not negatively impacted by the development, all best practice guidance relating to pollution will be adhered to.
- Common amphibians are to be removed by hand away from construction activities.
- T1 should be retained where possible. If this is not feasible, then the tree should be soft felled under the supervision of an ecologist.
- The lighting design should ensure sensitive habitats, including any retained habitats and adjacent treelines, are considered during the construction phase and post-development.
- Precautionary Working Methods for badger.
- Updated Badger Walkover prior to works commencing.
- The site was assessed as providing suitable refuge and foraging habitat for hedgehogs within the other neutral grassland, mixed scrub, bramble scrub and hedgerow understories. These habitats should be retained where possible. Where vegetation requires removal, it should be checked for the presence of hedgehog prior to removal. If any vegetation is too dense to be fully inspected, it should be strimmed to 50 cm and checked for hedgehog before being cleared to ground level. If the log pile in the south of the site requires removal, it should be checked, prior to removal, for sheltering hedgehogs. It is recommended that any clearance takes place outside of December-March to avoid impacting hibernating hedgehogs.
- The on-site mixed scrub, bramble scrub, scattered trees and hedgerows were assessed as having value for common bird species. These habitats should be retained where possible. However, if this is not feasible, then any vegetation removal works should take place outside of the breeding bird season (March to September inclusive). If this is not possible, a nesting bird check will be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist up to 48 hours before works commence. If a nest, or nest in construction, is located then a stand-off distance will be maintained until the young have fledged. The ecologist will advise on suitable stand off and provide a toolbox talk to all site contractors regarding their working limits and legal implications.
- Precautionary Working Methods for reptile.
- Cinnabar are anticipated to be present on-site due to the large stands of ragwort species identified within the other neutral grassland. As such, ragwort should be retained where possible to maintain the suitability of the site for the species. In addition, invertebrate houses could be provided within the site to enhance the site for the species group.

- Japanese knotweed and variegated yellow archangel are invasive species as listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is therefore an offence to cause their spread in the wild. If removal or disturbance is required, it should be undertaken following best practise guidelines. It is recommended that an invasive species walkover is undertaken during the growing season to identify any invasive species, particularly garden escapee species.

A 10% gain in biodiversity will be required on-site. If this cannot be achieved on-site, a conservation offset payment, or off-site compensation may be required.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

E3P were commissioned by Southway Housing to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of Levenshulme Cricket Club, Manchester, hereafter referred to as "the site".

This report has been prepared by Conor Evans BSc (Hons) MRes, Consultant Ecologist at E3P. Conor holds a Qualifying membership of CIEEM and has over three years of professional experience as an ecologist. Conor has experience undertaking Preliminary Ecological Appraisals and ecological mitigation for a variety of projects across the UK. Conor also holds a Level 3 Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC) and a Natural England Class 1 Survey Licence for great crested newts.

1.2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Detailed proposals are not known at this time, though are anticipated to comprise the construction of a series of residential housing with associated access hardstanding and landscaping.

1.3. SITE LOCATION

The site is located within the predominantly urban area of Levenshulme, south-east Manchester. The site is accessed via Elsa Road to the north of the site. A series of allotments are located directly adjacent to the east and south of the site, while residential housing defines the western site boundary. Highfield Country Park is located approximately 210 m south of the site. Greenbank Playing Fields are located approximately 310 m north-west of the site. The Secret Lake is located approximately 370 m north-east of the site. Fallowfield Brook is located approximately 370 m south-east of the site at its closest point. Nutsford Vale Park is located approximately 600 m north-west of the site. Please refer to Figure 1 for the approximate site location.

Figure 1 Approximate Site Location



1.4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal are as follows:

- Identify the major habitats present.
- Ascertain the presence or potential presence of any legally protected species and habitats.
- Recommend any further surveys or mitigation that may be required.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal comprises a desk study and site walkover. This survey has been completed as a baseline assessment of the site, and as such please see the end of the report for further surveys and mitigation proposed.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. DESKTOP STUDY

The following sources of information and ecological records were consulted:

- MAGIC – A web-based interactive mapping system, on which geographic information regarding key environmental schemes and designations are collated, including details of statutory conservation sites, accessed December 2024.
- Aerial mapping and ordnance survey maps.
- Local data records provided by Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) on 09th December 2024.

A 1 km search area was utilised for the data search, with this being deemed an appropriate distance for the Zone of Influence of the site due to its small size. Unless of particular importance and relevance to the site, or where no recent records are available, records pre-dating 2014 were classified as historic and therefore excluded from the desk study.

The data search included the request for details of protected and notable species of flora and fauna within 1 km of the central grid reference of the site. In addition, a request was made for any non-statutory designated sites within 1 km of the site boundary.

Please note that a lack of up-to-date records does not confirm the absence of a species from the area. The lack of records may simply be a result of a lack of protected species surveys being undertaken within the local area.

2.2. VEGETATION AND HABITATS

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the proposed development site was undertaken by Conor Evans on 09th December 2024. Conor holds a Level 3 Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC). The weather was cold and overcast with a slight breeze and occasional rain.

The walkover survey was undertaken to the standard methodology as per the "Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal" (CIEEM, 2017). A vegetation and habitat plan has been produced for the proposed development site and the immediate surrounding area (please refer to Appendix I). The mapping is based on the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (UKHab, 2023).

Searches were made for uncommon, rare and statutorily protected plant species, those species listed as protected in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and species which are indicators of important and uncommon plant communities. All plant nomenclature follows Stace (2019).

Searches were carried out for the presence of invasive species, including those listed on the revised (April 2010) Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) including Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*).

2.3. FAUNA

A thorough search of the site for signs of protected species of fauna was undertaken during the site walkover. These searches considered the following:

- Suitability of any ponds to support notable amphibians, and the suitability of the site's terrestrial habitats to support amphibians.
- Suitability of the site to support reptiles by way of habitat structure and refuge piles, as well as links to the wider landscape.
- Signs of badgers, by way of setts, mammal paths, foraging signs or latrines to indicate usage of the site by the species.
- Search of any watercourses for signs or suitability for water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) and otter (*Lutra lutra*) by way of burrows, resting places, holts, and foraging signs.
- Suitability of the site to support roosting, foraging, and commuting bats.
- Suitability of the site to support notable bird species.
- Suitability of the site to support notable invertebrates.
- Search of the site for any invasive species.

2.4. PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken on 09th December 2024 by Conor Evans, who has undertaken multiple PRAs on buildings and trees across the UK.

The survey involved undertaking a systematic search of the on-site structures and trees, searching for signs of bats, or spaces where bats would be able to access. The methodology followed that described in Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, 4th Edition (Collins, 2023). The survey was undertaken utilising suitable binoculars, where appropriate.

The on-site structures and trees were categorised for their bat roosting potential as described in Table 1 and Table 2, in accordance with Collins (2023).

Table 1 Bat Roosting Potential Classification of Structures

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
None	No habitat features on-site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year.
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on-site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do 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.
Moderate	A structure 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 of high conservation status.
High	A structure 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. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.

Table 2 Bat Roosting Potential Classification of Trees

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
PRF-I	PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats.
PRF-M	PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.

2.5. SURVEY LIMITATIONS

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal does not constitute a full botanical survey. Instead, key species are identified to give a representative description of each habitat type.

This survey was undertaken in December and as a result of differing flowering times, it is possible that some species of flora may have been missed or misidentified. It is also possible that some invasive/non-native species could have been missed during the survey. Due to the location of the site adjacent to an allotment, it is recommended that an invasive species walkover is undertaken during the growing season to identify any invasive species, particularly garden escapee species prior to site works.

Due to seasonal die-back, plant species within the other neutral grassland may have been missed. As such, a full Biodiversity Net Gain Condition Assessment could not be undertaken. It is therefore recommended that an updated condition assessment is undertaken during the growing season (late May to September) to inform a planning application.

Due to private land adjacent to the west and north-west of the site, access to all areas within 30 m of the site to search for signs of badger was not possible. As such, some features may have been missed.

These constraints have been taken into consideration during the assessment.

3. SURVEY RESULTS

3.1. SITE CONTEXT

The site is located within the predominantly urban area of Levenshulme, south-east Manchester. Based on aerial imagery, the site predominantly comprises poor-quality grassland and hedgerows with trees. The grassland is anticipated to provide limited ecological value for wildlife. However, the hedgerows that border the site to the east and south are anticipated to provide valuable commuting and foraging habitats for bats and nesting and nesting habitat for breeding birds, while the trees within the hedgerow may provide roosting opportunities for local bat species.

Areas directly adjacent to the site comprise residential housing, vegetated gardens, allotments, hardstanding roads, amenity grassland and scattered trees. The scattered trees are anticipated to be of the highest value for wildlife, providing opportunities for roosting bats and nesting birds.

Multiple areas of Deciduous Woodland, a UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat, are located within 1 km of the site. The closest such area of deciduous woodland is located approximately 240 m south of the site. These woodland areas are anticipated to form valuable habitats for a range of protected species, including nesting birds, roosting, foraging and commuting bats, badgers, hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) and common amphibians. These areas of deciduous woodland are located within Highfield Country Park, separated from the site by allotments and hardstanding footpaths. As such, due to a lack of significant dispersal barriers, it is anticipated that protected species may commute to the site from these woodland areas.

Fallowfield Brook is located approximately 370 m south-east of the site boundary at its closest point. This watercourse is anticipated to provide foraging, commuting and resting resources for a range of aquatic specialists, including Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), fish, aquatic invertebrates and a variety of waterfowl. Connectivity between the site and Fallowfield Brook is relatively good, due to the brook being located within Houldsworth Golf Club, which comprises amenity grassland and woodland, linking the brook to the site via the adjacent allotments and Houldsworth Gold Club. It should be noted that connectivity may be limited by the Fallowfield Loop and associated hardstanding footpaths. As such, some species, including bats, may commute to the site from Fallowfield Brook.

No waterbodies are located on-site or within 250 m of the site boundary.

3.2. DESIGNATED SITES

One statutory designated site is located within 1 km of the site boundary. Highfield Country Park Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located approximately 140 m south of the site at its closest point. The site comprises marshy grassland, wet woodland, plantation woodland, scrub and relict hedgerows. Due to the proximity of the site to Highfield Country Park, further consideration will be required.

The site is located within the Impact Risk Zone of one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Rochdale Canal SSSI and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located approximately 6.7 km north of the site. The Rochdale Canal SSSI is designated for its diverse assemblage of aquatic flora, including floating water-plantain (*Luronium natans*), alternate-leaved water milfoil (*Myriophyllum alterniflorum*), bottle sedge (*Carex rostrata*) and several species of pondweeds (*Potamogeton* sp.). Other notable species include water violet *(Hottonia palustris*), reed-sweet grass (*Glyceria maxima*) and the locally uncommon royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*). The Rochdale Canal has also been designated as an SAC for the presence of floating water-plantain, an Annex II species. Due to the distance between the site and Rochdale Canal SSSI, no detrimental impacts on the designated site are anticipated as a result of the development. Furthermore, as per the criteria listed on MAGIC (accessed December 2024), the proposed development will not require further consultation with Natural England to proceed.

Furthermore, due to the distance between the proposed site and Rochdale Canal, no detrimental impacts on the floating water-plantain present within the SAC are anticipated as a result of the development. As such, a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening assessment will not be required to assess whether the development will have any 'likely significant effects' on the designated site.

There are no non-statutory designated sites located within 1 km of the site boundary.

3.3. HABITATS

The main habitats encountered during the survey are described in the following subsections. Please refer to Appendix I for the UKHab Habitat Plan.

3.3.1. BUILDINGS (u1b5)

Two structures (S1 and S2) were located on-site. Please refer to Appendix II for the full Preliminary Roost Assessment.

Figure 2 Showing Structure



3.3.2. DEVELOPED LAND; SEALED SURFACE (u1b)

A large area of developed land; sealed surface was present in the east and south of the site. The developed land was in poor condition, with multiple areas that had been colonised by plant species. Species present comprised annual meadow-grass (*Poa annua*), pendulous sedge (*Carex pendula*), mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*), spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) and broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*).

Figure 3 Showing Developed Land; Sealed Surface



3.3.3. OTHER NEUTRAL GRASSLAND (g3c)

A large area in the centre of the site comprised unmanaged other neutral grassland. Multiple patches of common ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*) were noted throughout the grassland. Other species present comprised perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), rough meadow-grass (*Poa trivialis*), annual meadow-grass (*Poa annua*), Timothy (*Phleum pratense*), fescue species (*Vulpia* sp.), rush species (*Juncus* sp.), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), spear thistle, cleavers (*Galium aparine*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), common sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), crane's-bill species (*Geranium* sp.), greater plantain (*Plantago major*), curled dock (*Rumex crispus*) and dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* agg.).

Figure 4 Showing Other Neutral Grassland



3.3.4. MIXED SCRUB (h3h)

Two areas of mixed scrub were present in the north-east and south of the site. Species present comprised willow species (*Salix* sp.), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), wild cherry (*Prunus avium*), dog rose (*Rosa canina*), bramble, mugwort, ragwort species, willowherb species, common nettle, herb robert (*Geranium robertianum*), pea species (*Lathyrus* sp.), common ivy (*Hedera helix*), common nettle and strawberry species (*Fragaria* sp.).

Figure 5 Showing Mixed Scrub



3.3.5. BRAMBLE SCRUB (h3d)

Large areas of bramble scrub were present in the north, south and west of the site. The scrub was dominated by bramble, with occasional ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), willow species, holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), wild cherry, dog rose, butterfly-bush (*Buddleia davidii*), dogwood (*Cornus alba*), pendulous sedge and teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*).

Figure 6 Showing Bramble Scrub



Variegated yellow archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon argentatum*) and Japanese knotweed were also identified within an area of bramble scrub in the south-east of the site. Please refer to Appendix I for the exact locations of invasive non-native plant species.

Figure 7 Showing Japanese Knotweed



3.3.6. SCATTERED TREES (32)

Multiple scattered trees were present across the site within areas of bramble scrub. Species present comprised hawthorn, ash, wild cherry, willow species, sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and hazel (*Corylus avellana*).

Figure 8 Showing Scattered Trees



3.3.7. SPECIES-RICH NATIVE HEDGEROW (h2a5)

A species-rich native hedgerow was present along the eastern boundary of the site. The hedgerow was approximately 90 m in length, 4 m in width and an average height of 5 m. Species present comprised hawthorn, willow species ash, wild cherry, hazel, garden privet (*Ligustrum ovalifolium*), bramble, dog rose and butterfly-bush. The hedgerow understory comprised herb robert, greater plantain, common ivy, common nettle, and petty spurge (*Euphorbia peplus*).

Figure 9 Showing Species-Rich Native Hedgerow



3.3.8. NATIVE HEDGEROW (h2a)

A native hedgerow was present in the south of the site. The hedgerow was approximately 25 m in length, 3 m in width and 4 m in height. Species present comprised elder (*Sambucus nigra*), ash, willow species, dogwood, butterfly-bush and bramble.

Figure 10 Showing Native Hedgerow



3.4. PROTECTED AND NOTABLE SPECIES

3.4.1. AMPHIBIANS

Consultation with GMEU identified one recent record of great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) within the 1 km search area. The record was from 2014, located approximately 420 m north-east of the site boundary and associated with a large pond adjacent to a housing development.

Consultation with MAGIC did not identify any great crested newt European Protected Species Licences within the 1 km search area. The closest such licence was located approximately 6.9 km south of the site and was active between 2014 - 2020 for the damage and destruction of a great crested newt resting place.

Great crested newts' upper dispersal limit is generally considered to be up to 250 m from a waterbody (though occurrence of greater distances does exist where habitat connectivity is of high quality) (English Nature, 2001). As such, the presence of great crested newts on-site is reasonably discounted as no waterbodies were located on-site or within 250 m of the site.

Consultation with GMEU identified one record of common toad (*Bufo bufo*) within the 1 km search area. The record was located approximately 320 south-west of the site within Highfield Country Park. Due to the lack of waterbodies on-site or adjacent to the site boundary, the site does not offer suitable breeding habitat for common amphibians. However, the other neutral grassland, mixed scrub, bramble scrub and hedgerow understories may provide shelter and protection for the species group within their terrestrial phase. As such, common amphibians are anticipated to be present on-site.

3.4.2. BATS

Consultation with GMEU identified records of brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), myotis bat species (*Myotis* sp.), noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), pipistrelle bat species (*Pipistrellus* sp.), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), and unidentified bat species within the 1 km search area. The closest record was from 2020 for common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and myotis species, located approximately 110 m south-east of the site and associated with the Fallowfield Loop and adjacent woodland.

Consultation with MAGIC did not identify any Natural England Bat Mitigation Licences within 1 km of the site boundary. The closest such licence was located approximately 1.8 km north-west of the site, active between 2016 - 2021 for the damage and destruction of a common pipistrelle non-breeding roost.

All on-site trees and structures were assessed for their bat roosting potential as per the guidance detailed within Collins (2023). Both on-site structures were assessed as having 'Negligible' bat roosting potential. One tree (T1) was assessed as having 'PRF-I' bat roosting potential due to the presence of ivy cover which may conceal potential roost features. Please refer to Appendix II for the full Preliminary Roost Assessment. All remaining trees present on-site were assessed as having no bat roosting potential due a lack of potential roost features as a result of the species, young age and size of the trees.

The mixed scrub, bramble scrub, scattered trees and hedgerows present on-site are anticipated to attract invertebrate prey, which may provide foraging opportunities for local bat species. The species-rich native hedgerow with trees along the eastern boundary are expected to attract a higher density/diversity of species than the other habitats present on-site. As such, local bat species are anticipated to favour the species-rich native hedgerow for foraging. Due to the residential housing adjacent to the north and west, the commuting value of the hedgerow and scattered trees on-site is limited. The site was therefore assessed as having some potential for foraging bats, though limited due to the adjacent residential housing. Local bat species are anticipated to prioritise higher-value habitats within the wider landscape for foraging and commuting purposes, including the treelines defining the Fallowfield Loop and Highfield Country Park, located approximately 100 m and 140 m south of the site respectively.

3.4.3. BADGER

Consultation with GMEU identified records of badger within the 1 km search area.

No badger setts or field signs of badger were identified on-site or within 30 m of the site boundary, where access was possible. The on-site habitats, excluding the developed land and structures, were assessed as providing suitable foraging and sett building opportunities for the species. As such, badgers may utilise the site.

3.4.4. OTHER TERRESTRIAL MAMMALS

Consultation with GMEU identified 19 records of European hedgehog within the 1 km search area. The closest such record was from 2021, located approximately 220 m south-west of the site, associated with a residential garden.

The site was assessed as providing suitable refuge, foraging and hibernation habitat for hedgehogs within the mixed scrub, bramble scrub and hedgerow understories. As such, hedgehogs may be present on-site.

3.4.5. OTTER AND WATER VOLE

Consultation with GMEU did not identify any recent records of otter or water vole within the 1 km search area.

No watercourses are located on-site or adjacent to the site boundary. The closest watercourse is Fallowfield Brook, located approximately 370 m south-east of the site at its closest point. Due to a lack of suitable aquatic habitat for otter and water vole within or adjacent to the site boundary, both species have been ruled out of further assessment.

3.4.6. BREEDING BIRDS

Consultation with GMEU identified records of bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), dunnock (*Prunella modularis*), herring gull (*Larus argentatus*), house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) and starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) within the 1 km search area.

Bullfinch, ring-necked parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*), blue tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*), feral pigeon (*Columba livia*), robin (*Erithacus rubecula*), house sparrow, starling, wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*), woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*) and magpie (*Pica pica*) were identified on-site during the survey. The site was assessed as providing suitable habitat for breeding birds within the on-site mixed scrub, bramble scrub, scattered trees and hedgerows. The site was assessed as providing negligible suitability for ground nesting birds due to the presence of tall trees in the treeline adjacent to the west of the site which is likely to support perching predators. As such, ground-nesting birds are not anticipated to utilise the site.

3.4.7. REPTILES

Consultation with GMEU did not identify any records of reptile within the 1 km search area.

The other neutral grassland, mixed scrub, bramble scrub and hedgerow understories may provide suitable resting and foraging habitats for reptiles. However, the small size of the site and the presence of residential housing to the north and east limit the site's overall value. Therefore, the site itself may have the potential to support a small number of reptiles.

3.4.8. INVERTEBRATES

Consultation with GMEU identified records of cinnabar (*Tyria jacobaeae*) within the 1 km search area.

Cinnabar are anticipated to be present on site due to the large areas of ragwort species identified on-site.

3.5. INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES

Consultation with GMEU did not identify any records of invasive plant species within the 1 km search area.

Japanese knotweed and variegated yellow archangel were identified within an area of bramble scrub in the south-east of the site.

Figure 11 Showing Japanese Knotweed



4. ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS AND MITIGATION

4.1. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

Detailed proposals are not known at this time, though are anticipated to comprise the construction of a series of residential housing with associated access hardstanding and landscaping.

4.2. DESIGNATED SITES

Highfield Country Park LNR is located approximately 140 m south of the site at its closest point. To ensure that the statutory designated site is not negatively impacted by the development, all best practice guidance relating to pollution will be adhered to. This will include best practice use of refuelling machinery to avoid fuel spills. Site drainage will need to be considered to ensure that no highly silted or polluted run-off from the site workings will enter the ground.

Best practice protection measures as detailed within PPG5 Pollution Prevention Guidelines (2007) are to be put in place to protect the designated sites. The following control measures would be required during any ground works and during the construction phase to ensure there are no impacts on the designated site or any wildlife utilising them:

- All operational plant will be kept well-maintained.
- Dampening of the operational areas will be regularly undertaken during dry weather conditions to avoid dust. Dust management will be extended to cover the plant and all operational areas and will be complied with throughout the period of development.
- A toolbox talk should be completed by a qualified ecologist to ensure contractors are aware of the designated site and its ecological importance.
- A 'Site Tidy' protocol is to be put in place on-site. All litter is to be appropriately controlled, whilst on-site materials are to be adequately stored overnight.
- Where possible, all excavations will be battered at a 45-degree angle, or a ramp installed, to allow escape should animals become trapped.
- Machinery will be turned off when not in use.
- Regular inspections should be completed by the Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) to ensure PWMs are being adhered to.
- Regular clean-ups of litter and debris should be completed to minimise pollution.
- Regular inspections of the working area are to be undertaken, with any incidence of litter, debris or other pollution to be reported. Appropriate measures are to be taken for the removal of litter/pollutants etc.

The above Precautionary Working Methods are determined to be sufficient to prevent any negative impacts on Highfield Country Park LNR.

4.3. HABITATS

The site comprises habitats that were found to be widespread within the local area; however, they did contain value for wildlife such as amphibians, bats, birds, terrestrial mammals and reptiles. The

developed land; sealed surface offers limited opportunities for wildlife on-site, with the mixed scrub, bramble scrub, hedgerows, and scattered trees offering the highest value habitat.

4.3.1. HEDGEROWS AND TREES

It is recommended that, where possible, the on-site hedgerows and trees are retained and protected throughout the development. If any trees require removal, they should be replaced as soon as practicable. Any replacement planting should endeavour to be to be on the same aspect as that to be lost.

Where any hedgerow requires removal, it should be replaced as soon as practicable using lengths of more valuable hedgerow. Any compensation hedgerow planting should equate to a minimum of 1.5 times the length of hedgerow to be lost. Any replacement planting should endeavour to be on the same aspect as that to be lost, in order to retain commuting features through the site.

It is recommended that the landscape planting comprises native species and species known to be of value for the attraction of wildlife. This will include fruiting and flowering species. Species deemed suitable for this development could include berry-bearing native species such as:

- Hawthorn
- Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*)
- Holly
- Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*)
- Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*)
- Dog Rose
- Guelder Rose (*Viburnum opulus*)
- Elder

All planting should be from a trusted peat-free source and where possible be of local provenance.

Any trees within the site boundary to be retained are to be appropriately protected during the construction phase of the development. Temporary protective demarcation fencing will be used to protect the retained trees. The fencing must extend outside the canopy of the retained trees and must remain in position until the completion of the development to ensure that protection is provided throughout the construction phase. The fencing shall be in accordance with BS 5837:2012 *Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction: Recommendations*.

4.4. PROTECTED AND NOTABLE SPECIES

4.4.1. AMPHIBIANS

The site may support small numbers of common amphibians within the other neutral grassland, mixed scrub, bramble scrub and hedgerow understories on-site. It is recommended that during the clearance phase of works, any common amphibians encountered are to be moved by hand away from construction activities.

4.4.2. BATS

All on-site trees and structures were assessed for their bat roosting potential as per the guidance detailed within Collins (2023). One tree (T1) was assessed as having 'PRF-I' bat roosting potential due to the presence of ivy cover which may conceal potential roost features. T1 should be retained where possible. If this is not feasible, then T1 should be soft-felled under the supervision of an ecologist. The tree should be cut below the ivy cover and slowly lowered to the ground. The ivy will then need to be removed from the tree to inspect for any potential roost features. If the tree can be inspected and deemed free of bats once on the ground, then the trees can be removed from the site immediately. If the trees cannot be fully inspected once on the ground, then the trees are to be left overnight to allow any bats to escape before being chipped the next day.

The mixed scrub, bramble scrub, scattered trees and hedgerows present on-site and the treeline adjacent to the west of the site were assessed as providing some although limited foraging value for local bat species. These habitats should be retained where possible. It is therefore recommended that the proposed lighting plan considers the habitats of highest importance, including the treeline adjacent to the west of the site, and maintains these habitats as dark areas. It is recommended that any lighting is appropriately placed to avoid being directed at any retained habitats or habitats surrounding the site.

To reduce the potential lighting impacts for bats, the following recommendations are advised for the lighting strategy:

- Warm white tones are preferable to blue-toned lights (3000k)
- LED lights are preferable as they produce minimal UV
- To avoid light spill skyward, ensure lights face downward

Lighting should follow the protocols outlined in The Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) "Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night - Guidance Note GN08/23" (2023).

It is recommended that any planting within the site be of native fruiting/flowering species to enhance the site for foraging bats post-completion. Bat boxes could be installed on the retained mature trees to enhance the suite for the species group.

4.4.3. BADGERS

No badger setts were located during the survey, though suitable habitat was identified on-site. Badgers are highly mobile and can create new setts in a short period of time. It is recommended that an updated site walkover prior to the development is carried out to identify any new badger setts.

If a badger sett is located, a stand-off distance may be required as well as precautionary working methods. If the sett requires closure, a Natural England Badger Licence would be required. Please note that badger licences can only be obtained between July and November each year to avoid potential impact on pregnant females. The following precautionary working methods will be adhered to during the construction phase to ensure that no badgers within the local area are impacted by the proposed development:

- All site operatives will be inducted to the presence of the species and their working limits and legal responsibilities.
- All site operatives will be inducted as to identifying potential badger setts and should be vigilant if they suspect they locate a new sett during works and inform the project ecologist immediately.
- All excavations will be battered at a 45-degree angle, or ramps will be installed, to allow the

escape should animals become trapped. Alternatively, excavations will be covered overnight.

- All site machinery and materials will be appropriately stored to avoid harm to the species, notably between July and November each year when extra care is needed to avoid potential impacts on pregnant females.

It is not anticipated that the development will have a significant negative impact on badgers within the local area.

4.4.4. HEDGEHOGS

The site was assessed as providing suitable refuge and foraging habitat for hedgehogs within the mixed scrub, bramble scrub and hedgerow understories. These habitats should be retained where possible. Where vegetation requires removal, it should be checked for the presence of hedgehog prior to removal. If any vegetation is too dense to be fully inspected, it should be strimmed to 50 cm and checked for hedgehog before being cleared to ground level. If the log pile in the south of the site requires removal, it should be checked, prior to removal, for sheltering hedgehogs. It is recommended that any clearance takes place outside of December-March to avoid impacting hibernating hedgehogs.

Post-development, a series of hedgehog houses could be installed throughout the site to enhance the site's value for the species.

4.4.5. BREEDING BIRDS

The on-site mixed scrub, bramble scrub, scattered trees and hedgerows were assessed as having value for common bird species. These habitats should be retained where possible. However, if this is not feasible, then any vegetation removal works should take place outside of the breeding bird season (March to September inclusive). If this is not possible, a nesting bird check will be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist up to 48 hours before works commence. If a nest, or nest in construction, is located then a stand-off distance will be maintained until the young have fledged. The ecologist will advise on suitable stand off and provide a toolbox talk to all site contractors regarding their working limits and legal implications.

4.4.6. REPTILES

The site was assessed as having the potential to support a small number of reptiles within the on-site other neutral grassland, mixed scrub, bramble scrub and hedgerow understories. As such, these habitats should be retained where possible. However, if they require clearance, it is recommended that the following Precautionary Working Methods are followed:

- All site contractors are to be inducted as to the potential presence of the species group, their legal responsibilities and working limits, by a suitably qualified experienced ecologist.

- Any other neutral grassland, mixed scrub, bramble scrub and hedgerow understories to be managed or removed will be checked by an ecologist for the presence of reptiles. If any vegetation is too dense to be inspected, it will be strimmed to a length of approximately 150 mm under the supervision of the ecologist.

- During works the site should be kept tidy of debris and material, and any vegetation within the working areas should be maintained below 50 mm in height to discourage amphibians or reptiles from re-entering these areas.

- If a reptile is identified, works should cease, and the project ecologist contacted immediately to capture the individual.

4.4.7. INVERTEBRATES

Cinnabar are anticipated to be present on-site due to the large stands of ragwort species identified within the other neutral grassland. As such, ragwort should be retained where possible to maintain the suitability of the site for the species. In addition, invertebrate houses could be provided within the site to enhance the site for the species group.

4.4.8. INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES

Japanese knotweed and variegated yellow archangel are invasive species as listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is therefore an offence to cause their spread in the wild. If removal or disturbance is required, it should be undertaken following best practice guidelines. It is recommended that an invasive species walkover is undertaken during the growing season to identify any invasive species, particularly garden escapee species.

5. FURTHER SURVEYS

5.1. UPDATED CONDITION ASSESSMENT

Due to seasonal die-back, plant species present within the on-site other neutral grassland may have been missed. As such, a full Biodiversity Net Gain Condition Assessment could not be undertaken. It is therefore recommended that an updated condition assessment is undertaken during the growing season (late May to September, dependent on weather and flowering times).

5.2. TABLE OF FURTHER SURVEYS

Please refer to Table 3 for a summary of further surveys that may be required to inform a planning application.

Table 3 Recommended Further Surveys

SURVEY TYPE	TIMESCALES
Updated Condition Assessment	Updated condition assessment to be undertaken on-site during the growing season (late May to September, dependent on weather and flowering times).

6. BIODIVERSITY STATEMENT

The scheme will be required to achieve a 10% net gain in biodiversity. Full details of this and a calculation of net gain could be finalised after detailed landscape plans have been prepared. It is recommended that an ecologist is consulted during the design stage to ensure, where possible, that biodiversity net gain can be achieved. If this is not feasible on-site, a conservation offset payment, or off-site compensation may be required.

The following habitat measures will increase the on-site biodiversity:

- Retention of hedgerows and scattered trees
- Enhancement of existing mixed scrub
- Native tree planting
- Species-rich native hedgerow planting
- Native scrub planting
- Species-rich wildflower grassland creation

Habitat measures should be provided within areas of open space or designated wildlife zones. A 30-year management plan should be produced to ensure biodiversity is secured on-site.

7. REFERENCES

- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.
- CIEEM (2018). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine.
- Collins, J. (ed.) (2023). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th Edition. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- Environment Alliance (2007). PPG5: Pollution Prevention Guidelines; Works and Maintenance in or Near Water. PPG5.
- Froglife (2001). Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook.
- Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) (2023). Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night. Guidance Note GN08/23.
- Stace, C. A. (2019). New Flora of the British Isles. Fourth Edition. Cambridge University Press.
- UKHab (2023). UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0.
- Wildlife and Countryside Act (2010). Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

END OF REPORT

APPENDIX I
UKHAB HABITAT PLAN





Key:

- Red Line Boundary
- Variegated yellow archangel
- Japanese knotweed
- Log pile
- Bat potential tree
- Medium scattered tree
- Small scattered tree
- Native hedgerow
- Species-rich native hedgerow
- Bramble scrub
- Developed land; sealed surface
- Mixed scrub
- Other neutral grassland
- Structures

Notes

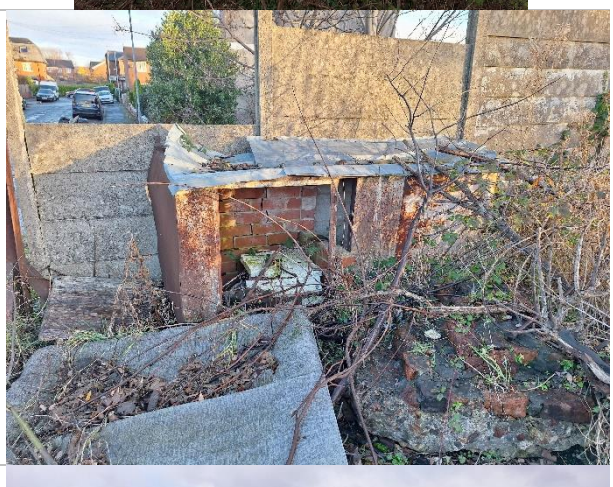
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Client: Southway Housing			Job No. 82-211	Date: 11/12/2024
			Drawing No. 001	Scale: 1:800 @ A4
Job title: Levenshulme Cricket Club			Drawing title: UKHab Habitat Plan	

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APPENDIX II
PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT



REF.	DESCRIPTION	PHOTOGRAPH
T1	T1 was a wild cherry tree within an area of mixed scrub in the south of the site. T1 was covered in dense ivy which may be concealing potential roost features. T1 was therefore assessed as having 'PRF-I' bat roost potential on a precautionary basis as it may support bats on an occasional basis.	
S1	S1 comprised a red brick and metal structure in the north-east of the site. S1 was in poor condition. A crack in the brickwork was noted, however, due to the unclear flight path above and below the crack, as well as the vegetation in front of the structure, it was considered unlikely to be utilised by bats. S1 was therefore assessed as having 'Negligible' bat roost potential.	
S2	S2 comprised a metal shipping container in the south of the site. The structure was well-sealed, with no obvious bat roost features. Furthermore, the structure is likely to be subject to fluctuating temperatures. S2 was therefore assessed as having 'Negligible' bat roost potential.	