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# PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

## At

## Weston Halls & Pendulum Hotel
78 Sackville Street
Manchester
M1 3BB

## NGR: SJ 84481 97511

| | |
|---|---|
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

United Environmental Services Ltd (UES) was commissioned by Cumming Group to carry out a baseline ecological survey of Weston Halls and Pendulum Hotel, Manchester. A desk study and preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) survey were undertaken on 15th August 2025, including searches using the Multi Agency Geographic Information Centre (MAGIC).

The PEA provides an assessment of potential ecological impacts associated with the development of the land parcel. The proposed development will include demolition of the buildings onsite, followed by the construction of student accommodation with associated landscaping.

The proposed development site has an area of approximately 0.71ha and comprises two connected mid-rise buildings with associated courtyards and pedestrian footpaths. Areas of frequently mown modified grassland are present within the northern, northeastern, and western sections of the site, with small areas of introduced shrubs and ruderal vegetation also present. The western section of the site primarily comprises a disused car park which has been encroached by scattered scrub. The non-native, invasive species Virginia creeper *Parthenocissus quinquefolia* was recorded onsite during the walkover survey.

The results of the survey combined with the results of the desk study have highlighted the requirement for further work in relation to the following habitats and species:

- **Bats in buildings** – a detailed bat scoping survey was undertaken of the two buildings onsite during the ecological walkover survey (report reference UES04940/05). The buildings were assessed as having low potential to support roosting bats. However, all potential roosting features (PRFs) could be fully inspected, and no evidence of roosting bats was identified. As such, no further surveys or mitigation measures are required with regards to bats.

- **Breeding birds** – site clearance, arboricultural works and vegetation clearance are to take place outside of the breeding bird season and should not be undertaken from March to August inclusive. If not possible and works need to take place during this period, a targeted nest survey is to be undertaken immediately prior to the works by a suitably qualified ecologist or an ecological clerk of works appointed to oversee the works.

- **Invasive species –** Virginia creeper is to be eradicated prior to the commencement of works within the affected areas.

Mitigation measures, as detailed in section 4, should be adhered to, which may in some cases negate the need for further survey work.

The development also presents an opportunity to improve the habitats on site for wildlife, such as bats and birds. The inclusion of nest boxes and bat boxes will provide suitable nesting and roosting features in the long term.

This report should be read with appendices 1 to 7, which include results of the desk study, GIS UKHab mapping, photographs of site and relevant statutory guidance.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Author, surveyors, qualifications and scope of study area

This report is written by Josie Wynn BSc, UES Graduate Ecologist. Surveyors present included:

- Daniel Smith BSc MScRes, UES Ecologist. Daniel holds a level 3 Botanical Society for Britain and Ireland (BSBI) field identification skills certificate (FISC), which certifies him as competent to undertake phase 1 habitat and UKHab surveys. Daniel is licensed by Natural England to disturb, take and handle all species of bats under licence number 2024-12117-CL18-BAT (level 2).

- Bethany Dineley BSc, UES Graduate Ecologist

The report provides an assessment of the potential ecological impacts associated with the proposed development at Weston Halls and Pendulum Hotel, Manchester.

The zone of influence considered within the scope of the survey includes all land within the red line boundary. Where relevant, other ecological resources, receptors and important habitats which are spatially separate from the site are considered.

## 1.2 Survey objectives

UES was commissioned in June 2025 to conduct a PEA of the proposed development site. This was completed in order to:

- Establish baseline conditions and determine the importance of ecological features present or potentially present within the survey area

- Identify key ecological constraints to the project

- Make recommendations for design options to avoid significant effects on important ecological resources at an early stage of development planning

- Identify potential requirement for further surveys for nationally or internationally protected species which may be present on site

- Identify potential requirement for mitigation or compensation, including measures that may be required based on further surveys

## 1.3 Proposed development

The proposed development will be phased:

a) partial removal of the existing structures and erection of two buildings comprising purpose-built student accommodation, one of 50 storeys and one of 17 storeys with an 8-storey link, together with associated amenity space, external landscaping, highways works and change of use of the Pendulum hotel to purpose-built student accommodation; and

b) Removal of remaining existing structure and erection of two buildings comprising purpose-built student accommodation, one of 33 storeys and one of part-24 and part-8 storeys with a 1-storey link, together with associated amenity space, external landscaping, and highways works.

As such, Phases A and B will comprise the following:

- Phase A: 50-storeys, 17-storeys, with 8-storey link.
- Phase B: 33-storeys, part-24 and part-8 storey, with 1-storey link.

## 1.4 Structure of the report

This report is a baseline appraisal that forms the basis for further ecological surveys and environmental impact assessments (EIA) if required. In the majority of cases the preliminary ecological assessment will not provide all the ecological data required by the Local Planning Authority to determine an application, especially in the event that protected habitat or species issues are present or likely.

This report should be read with appendices 1 to 7, which include results of the desk study, GIS UKHab mapping, photographs of site and relevant statutory guidance.

# 2 METHODOLOGY

This PEA comprises a desk study and a field survey. The desk study is conducted in order to collate ecological information on species and / or habitats of interest that may be present. The field survey is conducted in order to assess the habitats and their importance, both on site and in the context of their wider surroundings.

## 2.1 Desk study

The following resources were used to inform the desk study:

- National – Using the UK government's MAGIC website, statutorily protected sites were scoped to a distance of 10km from the application site.

- Local – UES has not been commissioned to undertake an ecological record search at this stage.

## 2.2 Field survey

An ecological walkover survey was carried out on 15th August 2025 by Daniel Smith and Bethany Dineley. The purpose of the survey was to identify, record and map dominant habitat types within the development area and highlight any further species surveys that may be required based on the quality of those habitats. When conducting the surveys particular focus was concentrated on the following species and habitat features:

- Amphibians
- Reptiles
- Badger
- Bats
- Hazel dormouse
- Hedgehog
- Otter
- Water vole
- White-clawed crayfish
- Birds
- Trees
- Hedgerows
- Plant communities
- Invasive species

The habitats were assessed by using the UKHab survey technique, which is a system for environmental audit widely used within the environmental consultancy field. The survey was undertaken in accordance with the methodology in the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (UKHab Ltd, 2023) as recommended by Natural England, and in the "Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal" (CIEEM, 2017).

The survey area encompasses all of the land within the development footprint and the land to a distance of 30m outside it where accessible. In line with recognised guidelines, ponds were also scoped to a distance of 500m (250m radius from the survey area).

The UKHab survey methodology was extended to record any signs of habitats suitable to support protected / invasive species and any incidental observations of other noteworthy species.

## 2.3 Survey limitations

The western courtyard and car park was inaccessible at the time of the walkover survey. However, it could be viewed from a distance at the southern boundary and the habitats within were determined.

# 3 RESULTS

## 3.1 Desk study

A desk study was conducted for the proposed development site and surrounding area. Statutorily protected sites were scoped to a distance of 10km. Further results of the desk study can be found at Appendix 1 – Desk study.

### 3.1.1 Protected sites

There are no statutorily protected sites within 2km of the proposed development site and the site lies within a Natural England SSSI Impact Risk Zone (IRZ), within which Natural England do not request that they are consulted on this type of development.

There are thirty-one statutorily protected sites (designated for ecological reasons) within 2 – 10km of site:

- Abney Hall LNR[1]
- Alkrington Woods LNR
- Blackley Forest LNR
- Boggart Hole Clough LNR
- Broad Ees Dole LNR
- Chorlton Ees and Ivy Green LNR
- Chorlton Waterpark LNR
- Clayton Vale LNR
- Clifton Country Park LNR
- Crookilley Woods LNR
- Gatley Carrs LNR
- Haughton Dale LNR
- Heaton Mersey Common LNR
- Highfield Country Park LNR
- Hollinwood Branch Canal SSSI[2] & LNR
- Huddersfield Narrow Canal SSSI
- Hulmes and Hardy Wood and Lower Haughton Meadows LNR
- Kenworthy Woods LNR
- Kersal Moor LNR
- Mere Clough LNR
- Mersey Vale Nature Park LNR
- Philip's Park LNR
- Reddish Vale LNR
- Rochdale Canal SAC[3] & SSSI
- Stenner Woods and Milgate Fields, Didsbury LNR
- The Cliff/ Kersall Dale LNR
- Three Sisters (Salford) LNR
- Trafford Ecology Park LNR
- Woodbank Park LNR
- Worseley Woods LNR
- Wythenshawe Park LNR

## 3.2 Baseline conditions – Habitats

The results of the PEA are also shown on the accompanying map at Appendix 2 – UKHab plan. Habitats are colour-coded in accordance with the UKHab standard. A full botanical species list for each habitat is provided at Appendix 5.

The local area is a highly developed urban setting in the central business district of Manchester. The following principle habitat types were characterised on site:

- g4 Modified grassland
- u1 Built up areas and gardens
- u1b5 Buildings
- u1b6 Other developed land

[1] LNR – Local Nature Reserve
[2] SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest
[3] SAC – Special Area of Conservation

- u1f Sparsely vegetated urban land

### 3.2.1 g4 Modified grassland

Secondary codes: 108

The site contains six areas of frequently mown modified grassland of varying sizes (see Appendix 4 – Photographs, Photographs 1 - 2). Four of these areas are located within the northern and northeastern sections of the site, while the remaining two are situated in the western section. The areas of grassland of intensively managed and have a uniform sward.

Species present include common daisy *Bellis perennis*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale agg.*, selfheal *Prunella vulgaris*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus,* white clover *Trifolium repens,* sticky mouse-ear *Cerastium glomeratum*, smooth sowthistle *Sonchus oleraceus*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Greater plantain *Plantago major*, wood sorrel *Oxalis sp.*, groundsel *Senecio vulgaris,* American willowherb *Epilobium ciliatum,* perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne,* red escallonia *Escallonia rubra,* annual meadow grass *Poa annua,* common ragwort *Senecio jacobaea* and spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare.*

### 3.2.2 u1 Built up areas and gardens

Secondary codes: 847

There is an area of dense vegetation and introduced shrub in the northern section of the site (Photograph 3), adjacent to the modified grassland. The vegetation is dominated by a dense layer of ivy *Hedera helix*, interlaced with non-native ornamental shrubs, St John's wort *Hypericum sp.,* and a stand of buddleia *Buddleja davidii.*

### 3.2.3 u1b5 Buildings

Secondary codes: N/A

There are two connected buildings on site, comprising the Pendulum Hotel and Weston Hall student accommodation.

The Pendulum Hotel fronts onto Sackville Street and is a mid-rise building constructed from brick with detailing around the windows and roofline. The building is five-storeys in height and there is a projecting section to the south-east that rises to a part six-storey level beneath a shallow pitched gable. The front of the building features a curved glass entrance, framed with metal and topped by a flat roof, and the ground-floor has large glass panels (Photographs 4-6).

Weston Hall is a four to five storey student accommodation building. Similarly to the Pendulum hotel, the building is constructed from brick with dark framed windows that are evenly spaced across the elevations (Photographs 7-10).

The two buildings form a connected complex arranged around internal courtyards. The roofs are constructed of concrete tiles and are a mixture of hipped and pitched forms, creating a varied roofline (Photograph 11). The eaves feature boxed soffits with integrated ventilation panels.

### 3.2.4 u1b6 Other developed land

Secondary codes: 10 and 81

There are several courtyards and pedestrian footpaths throughout the development site, which are surfaced with concrete paving slabs and sections of stone gravel (Photographs 7 and 8). The courtyards feature some soft landscaping such as large planters containing ornamental shrubs (Photograph 12). The forecourt area in front of the Pendulum hotel is finished with red brick block paving (Photograph 5).

The western section of the site primarily consists of a disused car park and footpaths along the edges of the building (Photograph 13), which support scattered buddleia scrub.

There is also ephemeral vegetation encroaching upon the gravel including hedge bindweed *Calystegia sepium,* willowherb *Epilobium sp*., dandelion *Taraxacum officinale agg.* and spurge *Euphorbia sp.*

### 3.2.5 u1f Sparsely vegetated urban land

Secondary codes: 10, 81 and 524

In the northern section of the site there is an area of sparsely vegetated urban land that has become dominated by ruderal and ephemeral vegetation (Photograph 14). Species present include American willowherb*,* prickly sow-thistle *Sonchus asper,* buddleia, greater plantain, garden privet *Ligustrum ovalifolium,* dandelion, Canadian fleabane *Erigeron canadensis* and sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus.*

The invasive, non-native species Virginia creeper *Parthenocissus quinquefolia* is also present within this area (see Appendix 2 – UKHab Plan - Target note 1; Photograph 15).

## 3.3 Baseline conditions – Protected species or resources

As part of the PEA, specific observations of wildlife were also recorded. Wildlife observations focused on protected species, invasive species or species of conservation concern. Habitats with potential to support protected species were noted with a view to follow up surveys if required.

### 3.3.1 Amphibians

There are no mapped ponds either onsite or within 250m of the proposed development site. The majority of the terrestrial habitats within the development footprint are unsuitable for great crested newts (GCNs) or other amphibians as they mainly consist of hardstanding, buildings and frequently mown modified grassland with a short, uniform sward.

Although the site contains small areas of habitat which amphibians may use for cover, such as dense vegetation, introduced shrub, and ruderal vegetation, the limited extent of these habitats, combined with the site's highly urban setting and lack of habitat corridors, makes it very isolated from other suitable GCN habitat. Consequently, it is considered unlikely that GCN are present on site.

### 3.3.2 Reptiles

The proposed development site is predominantly composed of hardstanding, buildings, and frequently mown modified grassland with a short, uniform sward, offering limited suitability for reptiles. Some habitats in the northern section of the site, such as the areas of ruderal vegetation and introduced shrubs, may provide limited cover; however, their small extent and isolation from other suitable habitats in the wider landscape reduce the likelihood of reptile usage. Therefore, it is considered unlikely that reptiles will be present on site.

### 3.3.3 Badger

No evidence of badger activity, including setts, snuffle holes, footprints, hairs or latrines, was identified onsite during the walkover survey.

The proposed development site is situated within a highly urbanised area with limited connectivity to suitable habitats further afield. The site itself consists of buildings, hardstanding and frequently mown grassland which do not offer suitable habitat for badgers. As such, badgers are not considered to be present onsite.

### 3.3.4 Bats

A detailed bat scoping survey was also carried out by UES on 15th August 2025, full details are included within the associated report (UES04940/05).

The quality of roosting habitats within the buildings on site is considered to be low, with minimal external and internal potential roosting features (PRFs) such as gaps in the wooden trusses, tears in the bitumen felt lining the roof and access points through the vents. The features were fully inspected during the survey, and no evidence of roosting bats was identified.

The western-most section of building was also inspected and no external PRFs or access points were identified. The boxed soffits along the eaves of the building and the roof tiles were well-sealed. At the time of the survey, the loft space was not accessible; however, as no access points were identified, this section of the building is considered to have negligible potential.

There are no trees present within the proposed development site and vegetation cover is generally limited, resulting in low-quality foraging and commuting habitat for bats. In addition, there are higher levels of artificial lighting and noise associated with the surrounding urban environment. Nearby watercourses may provide alternative foraging opportunities for bats, whilst also providing connectivity to higher quality habitats further afield.

### 3.3.5 Hazel dormouse

The habitats on site are unsuitable for dormice. The site is situated in an urban area and there are no hedgerows, native scrub or woodland present onsite, with an absence of key species including hazel *Corylus avellana* and honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum.* Therefore, hazel dormice are not considered to be present onsite.

### 3.3.6 Hedgehog

The majority of the proposed development site comprises hardstanding, buildings, and frequently mown grassland, which are largely unsuitable for hedgehogs. Small areas of introduced shrub and ruderal vegetation in the northern section of the site provide limited

opportunities for foraging and sheltering hedgehog; however, they are isolated from suitable habitat within the wider surrounding area. As such, it is considered unlikely that hedgehogs will be present onsite.

### 3.3.7 Otter, water vole and white-clawed crayfish

There are no watercourses within, or directly adjacent to, the development site. Therefore, otter, water vole and white-clawed crayfish are not considered to be present onsite.

### 3.3.8 Birds

A targeted bird survey was not undertaken during the site visit. The small area of dense vegetation and introduced shrub in the northern section of the proposed development site may provide limited opportunities for nesting and foraging birds.

### 3.3.9 Trees

There are no trees within the proposed development site

### 3.3.10 Hedgerows

There are no hedgerows within the proposed development site.

### 3.3.11 Plant communities

No plant communities or individual species were recorded on site which are afforded statutory protection in their own right.

### 3.3.12 Invasive species

The non-native, invasive species Virginia creeper was identified within the northern section of the site during the walkover survey (Target note 1; Photograph 15).

Virginia creeper is listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

# 4. EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides a brief assessment of the likely impacts associated with the proposed development on the receptors identified during the walkover survey and desk study. It also includes any mitigation and compensation measures which may be required for the proposed development to proceed.

## 4.1 Habitats

### 4.1.1 Designated sites

The sites identified during the desk study were cross-referenced with the survey area relevant to this report. The closest statutorily protected site is Clayton Vale LNR which is located approximately 3.5km to the east of the proposed development site.

Given the distances from site and the scale of development, it is considered unlikely that the proposed development will have any direct or indirect impact on this or any other local designated sites.

## 4.2 Species

### 4.2.1 Bats

There are two buildings located within the proposed development site which were assessed as having low potential to support roosting bats. The western-most section of building was also inspected and no external PRFs or access points were identified. The boxed soffits along the eaves of the building and the roof tiles were well-sealed. At the time of the survey, the loft space was not accessible; however, as no access points were identified, this section of the building is considered to have negligible potential.

There are no trees within the site boundary and foraging opportunities are limited to the small areas of introduced shrub and ruderal vegetation.

Construction impacts

If bats are roosting within the buildings during site clearance and demolition, they are at risk of direct harm and disturbance and the roosts will be lost permanently. Inappropriate landscaping could also result in the severing of commuting corridors used by bats as well as the loss of foraging habitats.

*Mitigation*

The buildings onsite were assessed as having low potential to support roosting bats. However, all PRFs could be fully inspected, and no evidence of roosting bats was identified. As per Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidance (2023), this inspection can be considered to constitute the further survey effort required and no further surveys or mitigation measures are required, with regards to bats.

Any external lighting installed as part of the development should be designed to be wildlife friendly and avoid overspill onto habitats along the site boundaries.

*Enhancements*

The provision of bat boxes as part of the development proposals would increase the roosting opportunities for bats on site but would also increase the ecological value of the site. At the time of writing this report no detailed plans are available, but bat boxes that could be used on site include:

- Schwegler 1FF box (affixed to buildings)
- Schwegler 2F box (affixed to buildings)
- Schwegler 2FR bat tube (installed in connected pairs or threes into the external walls of buildings)

Bat boxes affixed to trees should be fitted at a height of between 5 and 6m metres on a southerly aspect.

The bat boxes affixed to, or installed into the external walls of buildings should be installed just below the eaves / roof height. No detailed lighting proposals are as yet available to UES, however care must be taken when installing any new lighting to ensure that light spillage onto the bat boxes is minimised. This may require the use of cowling or relocation of the bat box or lighting.

It should be noted that once bat inhabits a bat box, they may only be disturbed by a licensed bat worker.

Operational impacts

No operational impacts are envisaged.

### 4.2.2 Birds

The small area of dense vegetation and introduced shrub in the northern section the site has some, albeit limited, potential to support nesting birds.

Construction impacts

Vegetation removal could result in the direct loss of nests, any individuals within the nests and of available nesting territories if conducted during the breeding season.

*Mitigation*

Site clearance and vegetation removal is to take place outside of the breeding bird season and should not be undertaken from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible and works need to take place between this period, a targeted breeding bird nest scoping survey should be conducted by a suitably qualified ecologist immediately prior to the works, or an ecological clerk of works appointed to oversee the works.

*Compensation and enhancement*

To compensate for the loss of vegetation, consideration should be given to providing replacement habitat for foraging and nesting birds by incorporating tree, shrub or scrub planting as part of the landscaping proposals.

Compensation for the loss of nesting habitat and the enhancing of the nesting habitat on site can also be provided through the provision of bird nest boxes. Bird boxes that could be used on site include:

- Schwegler 1SP sparrow terrace (affixed to building below the eaves)
- Schwegler 3S starling nest box (affixed to buildings)
- Schwegler 1MR Avianex box (affixed to buildings)
- Manthorpe swift nest brick (incorporated into the external walls of buildings)

The bird boxes should be sited at a minimum height of three metres and be oriented between north and east, thus avoiding strong sunlight and the wettest winds.

Operational impacts

Inappropriate management of the habitats on site could degrade them and render them unsuitable for wildlife.

*Mitigation*

It is important to implement good horticultural practice in any landscaping scheme, including the use of peat-free composts, mulches and soil conditioners. The use of pesticides (herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and slug pellets) should be discouraged to prevent fatal effects on the food chain. Any pesticides used should be non-residual.

### 4.2.3 Invasive species

The non-native, invasive species Virginia creeper was identified in the northern section of the site. Virginia creeper is listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. As such, it is an offence to plant or otherwise cause this species to grow in the wild.

Construction impacts

Site clearance and setting out could result in the disturbance and dispersal of Virginia creeper on and off site.

*Mitigation*

Invasive species will need to be eradicated prior to the start of works in the affected area in order to ensure that they do not spread across the site or onto adjacent areas. It is essential that a competent and qualified person carries out any herbicide treatment.

Operational impacts

If Virginia creeper is eradicated prior to the start of works on site, no further operational impacts are envisaged. However, complete eradication is an ongoing process, and if it is not treated as such, the plants can return and continue to spread. This could become more acute with increased activity on site.

# 5. CONCLUSION

The proposed development site has an area of approximately 0.71ha and comprises two connected mid-rise buildings with associated courtyards and pedestrian footpaths. Areas of frequently mown modified grassland are present within the northern, northeastern, and western sections of the site, with small areas of introduced shrubs and ruderal vegetation also present. The western section of the site primarily comprises a disused car park which has been encroached by scattered scrub. The non-native, invasive species Virginia creeper was recorded onsite during the walkover survey.

The preliminary ecological appraisal has highlighted potential issues with the following ecological receptors on or adjacent to site: bats, breeding birds and invasive species. Provided these issues are addressed in accordance with the recommendations detailed in this report, the development may proceed without adversely impacting the aforementioned ecological receptors.

The development also presents an opportunity to enhance the habitats available to wildlife on site. The provisioning of bat and bird nest boxes on site will provide improved roosting and nesting opportunities into the long-term future of the site.

# 6. REFERENCES

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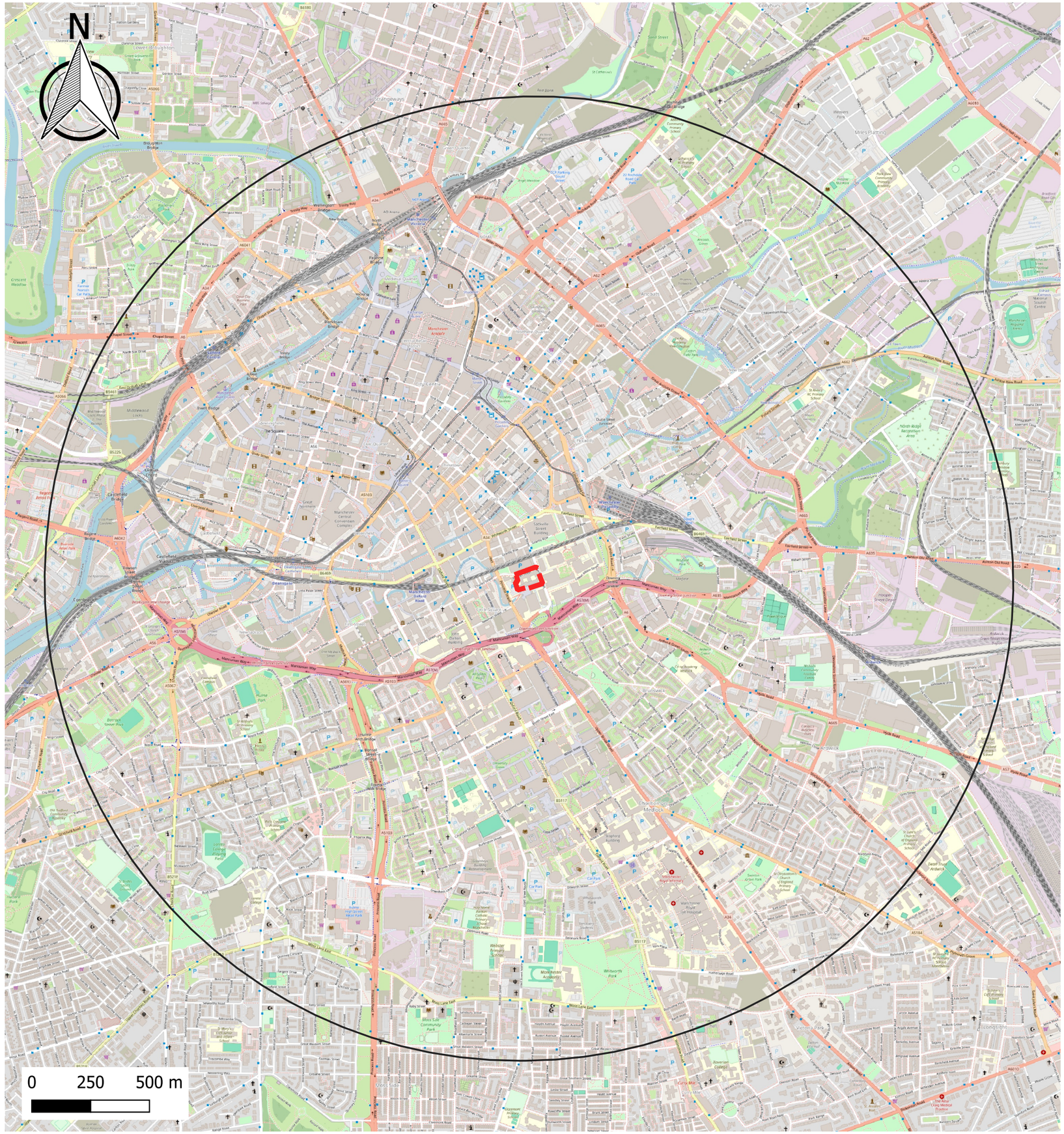
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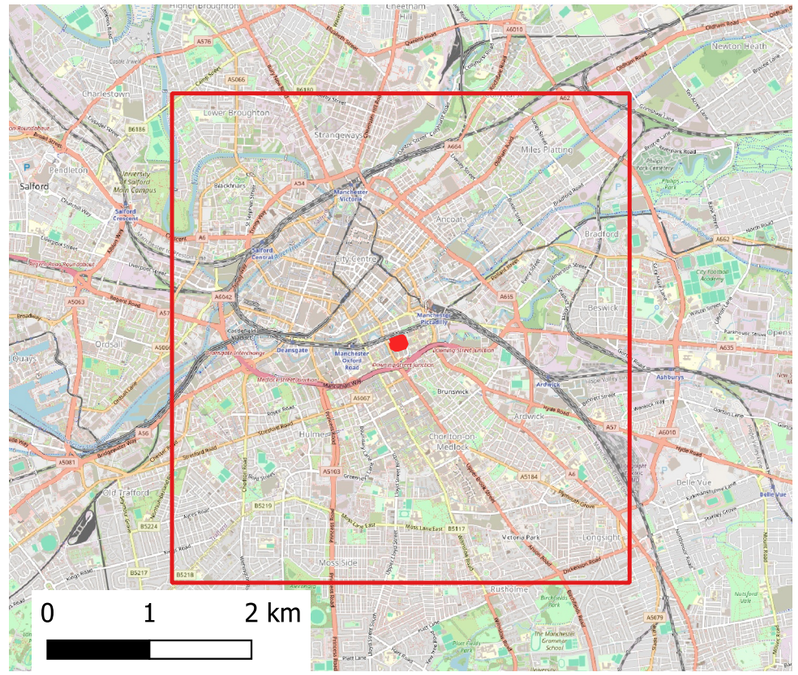
# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1 – Desk study

# Statutorily Designated Sites

**Site: Weston Halls & Pendulum Hotel, Manchester**
**NGR: SJ 84481 97511**
**Author: Josie Wynn**
**Date: 06/11/2025**




**Key:**

- Local Nature Reserve
- National Nature Reserve
- Ramsar Site
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Special Area of Conservation
- Special Protection Area
- Development Boundary
- 2km buffer

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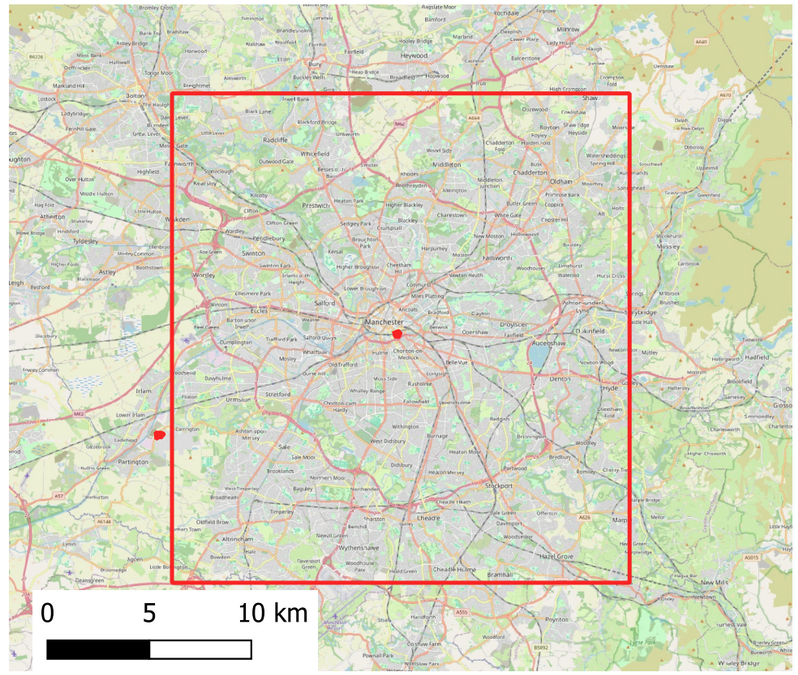
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# Statutorily Designated Sites

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**NGR: SJ 84481 97511**
**Author: Josie Wynn**
**Date: 06/11/2025**






## Key:

- Local Nature Reserve
- National Nature Reserve
- Ramsar Site
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Special Area of Conservation
- Special Protection Area
- Development Boundary
- 10km buffer

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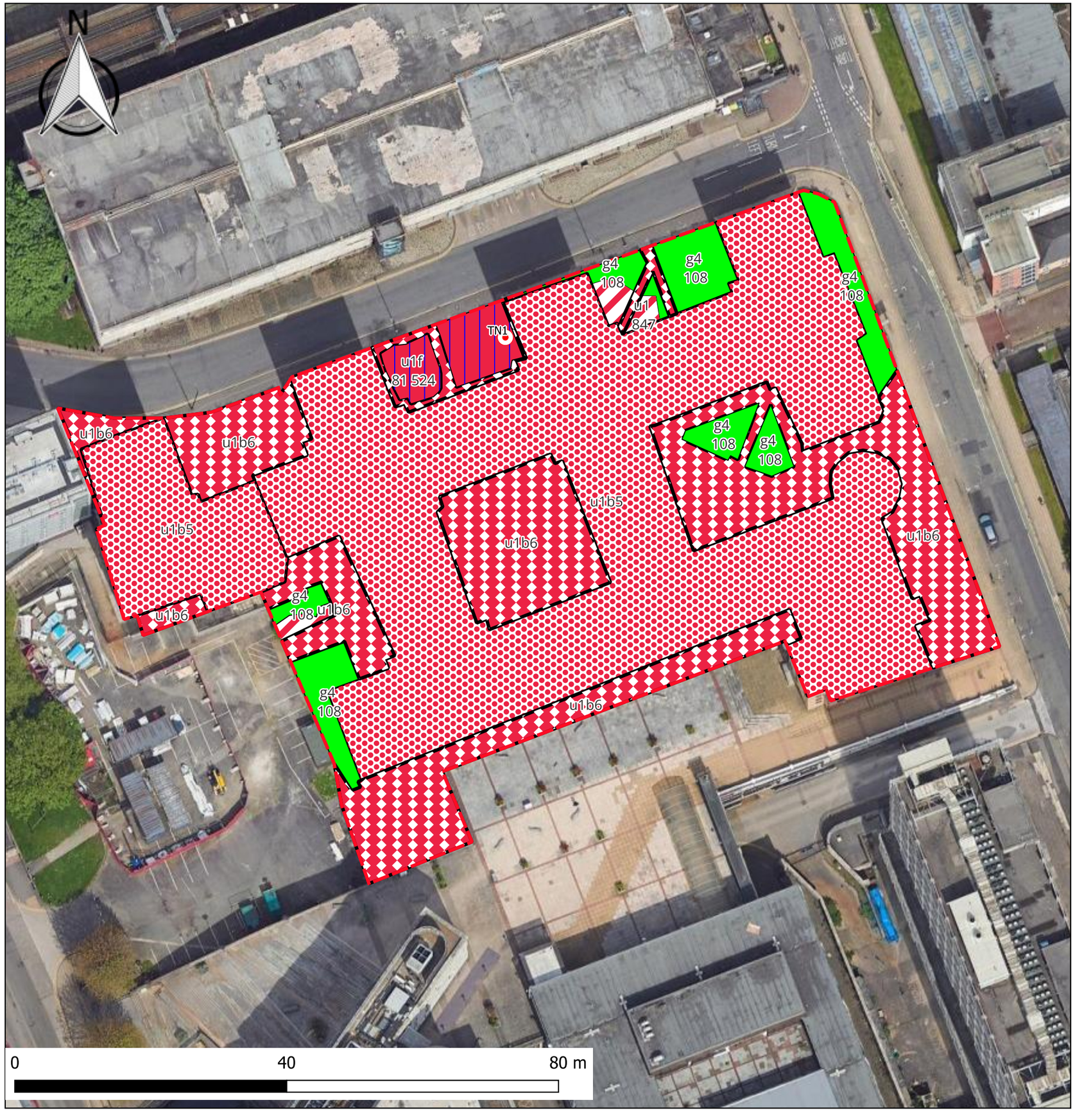
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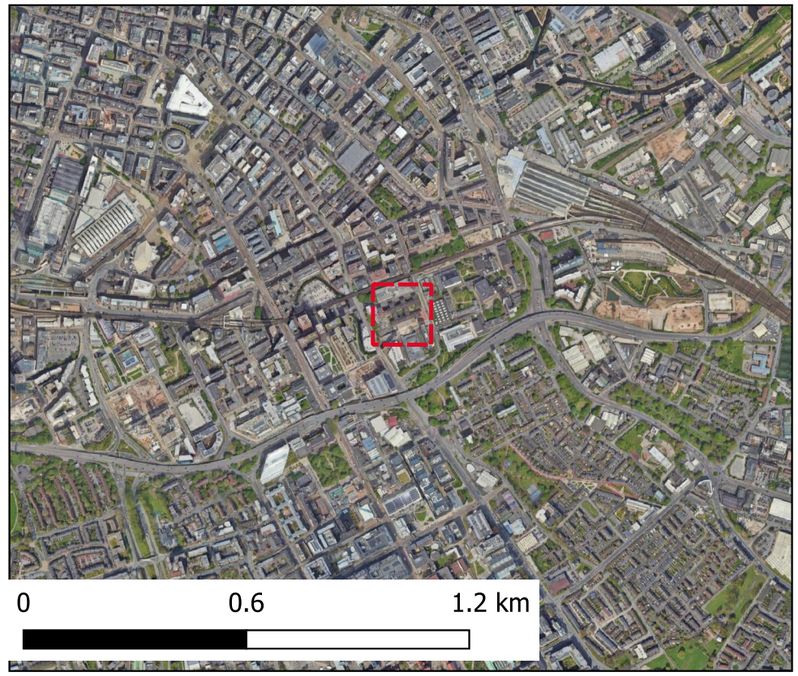
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## Appendix 2 – UKHab plan

# UK Habitat Classification Plan

**Site: Weston Halls & Pendulum Hotel, Manchester**
**NGR: SJ 84481 97511**
**Author: Nathaniel Foley**
**Date: 06/11/2025**




Key

- g4 - modified grassland
- u1 - built-up areas and gardens
- u1b5 - buildings
- u1b6 - other developed land
- u1f - sparsely vegetated urban land
- Survey boundary
- Target notes

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# Appendix 3 – Aerial photographs


Weston Halls and Pendulum Hotel, Manchester
Close aerial photograph
Site boundary
Map data © 2025 Google, Imagery © 2025 Google


Weston Halls and Pendulum Hotel, Manchester
Wide aerial photograph
Site boundary
Map data © 2025 Google, Imagery © 2025 Google

# Appendix 4 – Photographs



Photograph 1. Area of modified grassland in the northern section of the site.




Photograph 2. Two areas of modified grassland in the north-eastern section of the site.



Photograph 3. Area of dense vegetation and introduced shrub in the northern section of the site.



Photograph 4. Western elevation of the building.




Photograph 5. Eastern elevation of the Pendulum Hotel building.



Photograph 6. South-western elevation of the Pendulum Hotel.




Photograph 7. South-eastern elevation of the north-eastern section of the Weston Hall building. Also showing pedestrian footpaths and a courtyard area.



Photograph 8. North-eastern elevation of the south-eastern section of the Pendulum Hotel and Weston Hall buildings. Also showing pedestrian footpaths and a courtyard area.



Photograph 9. North-eastern elevation of the Weston Hall building.



Photograph 10. North-western elevation of the central north section of the Weston Hall building.



Photograph 11. Showing a combination of pitched and hipped roofs and concrete roof tiles.



Photograph 12. Concrete paved pedestrian footpaths and courtyard area with ornamental shrubs in planters.



Photograph 13. Disused hardstanding area in the western section of the site, which was formerly used as a carpark.



Photograph 14. Area of ruderal and ephemeral vegetation with sycamore saplings in the northern section of the site.



Photograph 15. Invasive non-native species Virginia creeper and buddleia in the northern section of the site.

# Appendix 5 – Botanical species list

| *Scientific name* | Common name |
|---|---|
| *Acer pseudoplatanus* | Sycamore |
| *Bellis perennis* | Common daisy |
| *Buddleja davidii* | Buddleia |
| *Calystegia sepium* | Hedge bindweed |
| *Cerastium glomeratum* | Sticky mouse-ear |
| *Cirsium vulgare* | Spear thistle |
| *Epilobium ciliatum* | Amercian willowherb |
| *Epilobium sp.* | Willowherb species |
| *Erigeron canadensis* | Canadian fleabane |
| *Escallonia rubra* | Red escallonia |
| *Euphorbia sp.* | Spurge species |
| *Hedera helix* | Common ivy |
| *Holcus lanatus* | Yorkshire fog |
| *Hypericum sp.* | St John's wort species |
| *Ligustrum ovalifolium* | Garden privet |
| *Lolium perenne* | Perennial rye-grass |
| *Oxalis sp.* | Wood sorrel species |
| *Parthenocissus quinquefolia* | Virgina creeper |
| *Plantago major* | Greater plantain |
| *Poa annua* | Annual meadow-grass |
| *Prunella vulgaris* | Selfheal |
| *Ranunculus repens* | Creeping buttercup |
| *Senecio jacobaea* | Common ragwort |
| *Senecio vulgaris* | Groundsel |
| *Sonchus asper* | Prickly sow-thistle |
| *Sonchus oleraceus* | Smooth sow-thistle |
| *Taraxacum officinale agg.* | Dandelion |
| *Trifolium repens* | White clover |

# Appendix 6 – Landscape design for birds

| SPECIES | F | SIZE | | | | LOCATION | | | SOIL MOISTURE | BENEFITS TO WILDLIFE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | T | S | M | L | H | W | Su/Sh | | |
| **TREES** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Alder* | D | | | | Y | | | Su | M | Seed food for birds |
| Beech* | D | | | Y | Y | Y | | Su | D | Seed food for birds |
| Birch* | D | | Y | Y | Y | | | Su | D | Seed food for birds |
| Bird cherry * | D | | | Y | Y | | | Su | D | Food for birds, flowers attract insects |
| Crab apple* | D | | Y | Y | Y | | | Su | D | Food for birds, flowers attract insects |
| English oak* | D | | | | Y | | | Su | D | Food for birds, insects and mammals, nesting sites |
| European larch* | D | | | | Y | | | Su | M | Seed food for birds |
| Holly* | E | | Y | Y | Y | Y | | Su | D | Fruits eaten by birds, food plant of holly blue butterfly |
| Juniper* | E | | | | | | | Su | D | Shelter and nest sites, fruits eaten by thrushes |
| Lime* | D | | | | Y | Y | | Su | D | Seed food for birds |
| Rowan* | D | | | Y | Y | | | Su | D | Fruits eaten by birds |
| Scot's pine* | E | | | | Y | | | Su | D | Seed food for birds |
| Swedish whitebeam | D | | Y | Y | Y | | | Su | D | Food for birds, flowers attract insects |
| Wild cherry* | D | | | Y | Y | | | Su | D | Food for birds, flowers attract insects |
| Yew* | E | | Y | Y | Y | Y | | Su | D | Food for birds, nesting sites |
| **SHRUBS** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Barberry | B | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | | Su | D | Good shelter and nest cover for birds, berries may provide food |
| Blackthorn* | D | | | Y | Y | Y | | Su | M | Attracts insects, food for birds, nesting sites |
| Buckthorn* | D | | | Y | Y | Y | | Su/Sh | D | Food plant of brimstone butterfly, fruits eaten by birds |
| Butterfly bush | E | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | | Su | D | Attracts insects |
| Californian lilac | E | | | Y | Y | Y | Y | Su | D | Flowers attractive to various insects |
| Dogwood* | D | | | Y | Y | Y | | Su | D | Food for birds, winter stem colour |
| Elder* | D | | Y | Y | Y | Y | | Su | D | Food for birds |
| Escallonia | E | | | Y | Y | Y | | Su | M | Flowers attractive to various insects, tolerant of salt - good in coastal areas |
| Field maple* | D | | Y | Y | Y | Y | | Su | D | Good source of insect food for birds |
| Firethorn | E | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Su | D | Berries popular with many bird species |
| Flowering current | D | | Y | Y | Y | | | Su | D | Early flowers attractive to insects |
| Forsythia | D | | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Su | D | Early flowers attractive to insects |
| Garria | E | Y | Y | Y | Y | | Y | Su | D | Winter catkins, early cover for nesting birds |
| Goat willow* | D | Y | Y | Y | Y | | | Su | D | Catkins attractive to bees, good source of insect food for birds |
| Gorse* | E | | | Y | Y | Y | | Su | D | Early flowers attractive to insects, good protection for birds |
| Rhytismatales | E | | | Y | Y | Y | | Su | D | Good cover, tolerant of salt - good in coastal areas |
| Guelder-rose* | D | | | Y | Y | Y | | Su | D | Food for birds & insects |
| Hawthorn* | D | | Y | Y | Y | Y | | Su | D | Flowers attractive to insects, fruits eaten by birds, good shelter and nesting site |
| Hazel* | D | Y | | Y | Y | Y | | Su | D | Food for birds, insects and mammals, nesting sites |
| Laurel-leaved vibumum | E | | Y | Y | Y | | | Su | D | Early flowers good for insects, good cover for birds |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lavender | E | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | | Su | D | Flowers attract many insects, seeds popular with finches |
| Lilac | D | | Y | Y | Y | | | Su | D | Flowers attractive to insects |
| Oregon grape | E | | Y | Y | Y | | | Su/Sh | M | Early flowers good for insects |
| Pheasant berry | E | | | Y | Y | | | Su | D | Berries popular with many bird species |
| Privet* | E | | Y | Y | Y | Y | | Su | D | Flowers attract butterflies, produces berries |
| Rose | D | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Su | D | Fruits of some varieties attractive to birds |
| Rosemary | E | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | | Su | D | Flower attract many insects |
| Shad bush | D | | Y | Y | | | | Su | M | Flowers attract insects, early forming berries good for thrushes |
| Snowberry | D | | | Y | Y | Y | | Su/Sh | D | Flowers attractive to bees, fruits attractive to birds, dense stems provide cover |
| Spindle* | D | | Y | Y | Y | | | Su | D | Berries eaten by birds, but poisonous to mammals |
| Tamarix | D | | | Y | Y | Y | | Su | D | Flowers attractive to various insects, tolerant of salt - good in coastal areas |
| **CLIMBERS & RAMBLERS** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bramble* | D | | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Su/Sh | D | Food for birds, insects and mammals, nesting sites |
| Clematis | D | Y | Y | Y | Y | | | Su | D | Nesting sites |
| Honeysuckle* | D | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Su/Sh | D | Attractive to insects, good nesting site, food for birds |
| Ivy* | E | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Su/Sh | D | Attractive to insects, good nesting site, food for birds |
| Rose | D | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Su | D | Fruits of some varieties attractive to birds |
| Winter jasmin | E | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Su | D | Early flowers attractive to insects |
| Wisteria | D | Y | Y | Y | Y | | Y | Su | D | Attractive to insects, good nesting site |

| **KEY** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***** | Native (NB: some varieties are cultivars or non-native) | **Location** | H = may be used as a hedge plant |
| **F** | D = Deciduous | | W = may be used as a wall shrub |
| Foliage type | E = Evergreen | | Su = Sunny borders |
| | B = Both | | Sh = Shade tolerant |
| **Size** | T = Terraces & balconies | | Su/Sh = Grows in partial shade |
| Suitable for garden sizes | S = Small garden (</= 6m x 4m) | **Soil mositure** | D = Well drained |
| | M = Medium gardens (</= 12m x 6m) | | M = Moist |
| | L = Large gardens (> 12m x 6m) | | W = Wet soil |

# Appendix 7 – Planning and statutory context

## Ecological assessments

Ecological assessments play an important part within the planning context; they include an initial assessment which highlights any specific interests of a site. From the initial site assessment, the surveyor assesses the suitability of habitats within the site to support protected species and makes recommendations for further survey works if required. The following paragraphs provide a brief interpretation of legislative protection in relation to the following species and habitats:

Amphibians
Great crested newts
Other amphibians
Reptiles
Badgers
Hazel dormouse
Bats
Birds
Trees
Hedgerows
Invasive plant species
Otters
Water voles
White-clawed crayfish
Planning policy

## Amphibians

### Great crested newts

Great crested newts (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* and their habitat (aquatic and terrestrial) are afforded full protection by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Amendment (EU exit) Regulations 2019. If both national and international legislation are taken together, it is an offence to:

- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture GCN
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb GCN in such a way to be likely to significantly affect:
    - their ability to survive, breed, reproduce, rear or nurture their young
    - their ability to hibernate or migrate
    - their local distribution or abundance
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly take or destroy the eggs of GCN
- Damage or destroy breeding sites or resting places of GCN
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb sheltering GCN, or obstruct access to their resting place
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any live or dead GCN, any part of GCN or anything derived from GCN

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

GCN are also protected by the Protection of Animals Act 1911, which prohibits cruelty and mistreatment. Releasing a GCN in such a way as to cause undue suffering may be an offence under the Abandonment of Animals Act 1960.

In addition to the above, there are various statutory provisions relating to the transport of animals, designed to ensure their welfare. GCN are also listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act (see bats section for further details).

It is important to identify the presence of GCN individuals and also to identify suitable habitat on sites so that legal obligations regarding this species can be observed. If a survey identifies the presence of GCN on the site, an assessment of the population size class is required. This can then inform a mitigation scheme, which would need to be developed in liaison with the local Natural England team, and which minimises direct threats to newts and compensates for any loss of habitat. A licence issued by Natural England is required for the legal implementation of a mitigation scheme.

A Natural England mitigation licence application requires a Mitigation Method Statement and a Reasoned Statement of Application. The Mitigation Method Statement contains details of the proposed mitigation

works. The Reasoned Statement needs to provide a rational and reasoned justification as to why the proposed development meets the requirements of the Conservation (National Habitats & c.) regulations 1994, namely Regulations 44(2)(e), (f) or (g), and 44(3)(a).

**Other amphibians**

More common British amphibians, such as common frog *Rana temporaria*, common toad *Bufo bufo*, smooth newt *Triturus vulgaris* and palmate newt *Triturus helveticus* are protected only by Section 9(5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This section prohibits sale, barter, exchange, transporting for sale and advertising to sell or to buy.

The above named species are also listed as UK Species of Conservation Concern. Due to general declines in most British amphibian species in recent years, many local authorities require amphibian surveys as a planning condition, or as part of environmental information submitted as part of a planning application, even where the presence of GCN is ruled out.

Natterjack toad *Bufo calamita* and pool frog *Pelophylax lessonae* are also offered the same level of protection as GCN, through the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Natterjack toad, common toad and pool frog are also listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act (see bats section for further details).

Water bodies that support all five (more common) species of British amphibians in high numbers, may be afforded protection in local plans, as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), or a similar equivalent, for sites of local importance. A site may require statutory protection as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

**Reptiles**

Common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*, grass snake *Natrix natrix* and adder *Vipera berus* are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). They are listed as a Schedule 5 species therefore part of Section 9(1) and section 9(5) apply. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 also strengthens their protection. It is offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly kill or injure any of the species listed above
- Sell, offer, advertise or transport for sale a live or dead animal of the species listed above

If a proposed development is likely to have an impact on these reptiles the local statutory nature conservation organisation must be consulted.

Sand lizard *Lacerta agilis* and smooth snake *Coronella austriaca* receive full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Read together, it is an offence to:

- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture any sand lizards or smooth snakes
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb sand lizards or smooth snakes in such a way to be likely to significantly affect:
    - their ability to survive, breed, reproduce, rear or nurture their young
    - their ability to hibernate or migrate
    - their local distribution or abundance
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly take or destroy the eggs of such an animal
- Damage or destroy breeding sites or resting places of such animals
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb sheltering sand lizards or smooth snakes, or obstruct access to their resting place
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any live or dead sand lizards or smooth snakes, any part of such an animal or anything derived from such an animal

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

All reptile species are also listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act (see bats section for further details).

**Badgers**

European badgers *Meles meles* and their habitat are protected under The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and are also included on Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and Appendix III of the Bern Convention. The legislation affords badgers protection against deliberate harm or injury making it an offence to:

- Wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger (or attempt to do so)
- To interfere with a sett by damaging or destroying it
- To obstruct access to, or entrance of, a badger sett
- To disturb a badger whilst it is occupying a sett

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

Works that disturb badgers whilst they are occupying a sett are illegal without a licence. Disturbance can occur even without direct interference or damage to the sett in question. In general, the following activities are likely to require a licence:

- Use of heavy machinery or significant earth moving within 30m of a sett
- Use of lighter machinery (usually any wheeled vehicles) within 20m of a sett
- Any digging, chain saw use or scrub clearance within 10m of a sett

**Hazel dormouse**

Hazel dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius* are offered full protection through the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. If both national and international legislation are taken together, it is an offence to:

- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture dormice
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb dormice in such a way to be likely to significantly affect:
    - their ability to survive, breed, reproduce, rear or nurture their young
    - their ability to hibernate or migrate
    - their local distribution or abundance
- Damage or destroy breeding sites or resting places of dormice
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb sheltering dormice, or obstruct access to their resting place
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any live or dead dormouse, any part of a dormouse or anything derived from a dormouse

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

Dormice are also listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act (see bats section for further details).

**Bats**

In the United Kingdom, all species of bat and their roosts are afforded full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the “Habitats Regulations”). The Wildlife and Countryside Act is the domestic implementation of

the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (the Bern Convention) and was amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture a bat
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection (even if the bat is not present at the time)
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any live or dead bat, any part of a bat or anything derived from a bat

Under UK law, a bat roost is *any structure or place which any wild [bat] … uses for shelter or protection*. As bats often reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that a roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time of the activity taking place.

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

If an activity is likely to result in any of the above offences, a licence can be applied for to derogate from the protection afforded. These licences must provide appropriate mitigation and are issued by Natural England.

A Natural England mitigation licence application requires a Mitigation Method Statement and, in many cases, a Reasoned Statement of Application. The Mitigation Method Statement contains details of the proposed mitigation works. The Reasoned Statement needs to provide a rational and reasoned justification as to why the proposed development meets the requirements of the Conservation (National Habitats & c.) regulations 1994, namely Regulations 44(2)(e), (f) or (g), and 44(3)(a).

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 lists the following bat species as species of principle importance under Section 41:

- Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*
- Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*
- Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*
- Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*
- Brown Long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*
- Greater Horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*
- Lesser Horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*

Section 40 requires every public body in the exercising of its functions 'have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity' (all biodiversity and not just section 41 species and habitats); therefore making these bats a material consideration in the planning process and requiring a detailed ecological bat survey before planning permission can be granted.

**Birds**

All wild birds, their nests and young are protected throughout England and Wales by the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is illegal to kill, injure or take any wild bird, or damage or destroy the nest or eggs of breeding birds. The legislation applies to all bird species, common and rare.

In addition to the protection afforded to all wild birds, more vulnerable species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act receive enhanced protection when breeding. Schedule 1 species, including their dependent young, are protected from intentional or reckless disturbance whilst at or near the nest, in addition to the protection afforded the more common species.

The NERC Act offers further protection to the nests of some species that regularly re-use their nests, even when the nests are not in use.

The leading governmental and non-governmental conservation organisations in the UK have reviewed the population status' of 244 UK bird species. "Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the Red List for Birds" is the

most recent publication summarising their findings. Three lists, Red, Amber and Green, have been produced based on the most up-to-date evidence available and criteria include conservation status at global and European levels and, within the UK: historical decline, trends in population and range, rarity, localised distribution and international importance. These lists are a valuable resource when considering conservation priorities.

**Trees**

Trees may be protected on an individual or group level through a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). In order to carry out works to trees with a TPO, prior written consent must be obtained from the Local Planning Authority. Trees may also be protected through a condition of planning consent or designated conservation areas.

**Hedgerows**

The Hedgerow Regulations are made under Section 97 of the Environment Act 1995 and came into operation on 1st of June 1997. They aim to protect important hedgerows in the countryside by controlling their removal through a system of notification to the Local Planning Authority.

A hedgerow can only be considered for classification as “important” if it, or the hedgerow of which the section belongs to is over 20m in length (or which meets a hedgerow at either end) and has existed for 30 years or more.

**Invasive plant species**

A number of invasive, non-native plant species are listed under Schedule 9 (Part II) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The most commonly encountered listed species in ecological surveys are Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica*, Montbretia *Crocosmia x crocosmiiflora* and variegated yellow archangel *Lamiastrum galeobdolon subsp. argentatum*. Section 14(2) of this Act makes it an offence to *plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild* any plant listed on Schedule 9 (Part II). These provisions are necessary to prevent the establishment of non-native species which may be detrimental to our native wildlife.

A number of invasive, non-native plants species are listed under Schedule 2 (Part II) of the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019. The most commonly encountered listed species in ecological surveys are Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* and giant hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum*. Section 3 of this Act make it an offence to *plant* or *otherwise causes to grow in the wild* any plant which is listed on Schedule 2 (Part II). These provisions are necessary to prevent the establishment of non-native species which may be detrimental to our native wildlife.

Soil or plant material contaminated with non-native and invasive plants can cause ecological damage and may be classified as controlled waste. It is an offence to keep, treat or dispose of waste that could harm the environment or human health. If there is any doubt, contact the local authority or Environment Agency.

**Otters**

European otter *Lutra lutra* are offered full protection through the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. If both national and international legislation are taken together, it is an offence to:

- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture otters
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb otters in such a way to be likely to significantly affect:
    - their ability to survive, breed, reproduce, rear or nurture their young
    - their ability to migrate
    - their local distribution or abundance
- Damage or destroy breeding sites or resting places of otters

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb sheltering otters, or obstruct access to their resting place
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any live or dead otter, any part of an otter or anything derived from otter

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

Otters are also listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act (see bats section for further details).

**Water voles**

Water voles *Arvicola amphibius* are protected by the provisions of Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take water vole
- Possess or control live or dead water vole or any part of a water vole
- Intentionally or recklessly damage destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which a water vole uses for shelter or protection, or disturb water vole using such a place
- Sell, offer, advertise or transport live or dead water voles for sale

Licences are available from Natural England to allow activities that would otherwise be an offence, including:

- Scientific or educational purposes
- For the purposes of ringing or marking
- Conserving wild animals or introducing them into particular areas
- Preserving public health or public safety
- Preventing the spread of disease
- Preventing serious damage to any form of property or to fisheries

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

Water voles are also listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act (see bats section for further details).

**White-clawed crayfish**

White-clawed crayfish *Austropotomobius pallipes* are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). They are listed as a Schedule 5 species therefore part of Section 9(1) and section 9(5) apply. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 also strengthens their protection. It is offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly kill or injure white-clawed crayfish
- Sell, offer, advertise or transport for sale a live or dead white-clawed crayfish

If a proposed development is likely to have an impact on white-clawed crayfish then the local statutory nature conservation organisation must be consulted.

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

Their inclusion on the EC Habitats Directive allows areas to be designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) for the presence of white-clawed crayfish. Such a designation brings legal protection under the Conservation of Habitats Regulations 2017, this includes how the site is managed and what development can occur on and in proximity to these sites.

White-clawed crayfish are also listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act (see bats section for further details).

**Planning policy**

The National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF) provides guidance on the interpretation of the law in relation to the natural environment and development.

National Planning Guidance is issued in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF). The most relevant section is 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Key relevant principles stated in 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment are;

**187.** Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats, and hedgehogs;
e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

**192.** To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

a) 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[68]; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation[69]; and
b) 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

**193.** When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

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 Site of Special Scientific Interest, 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 Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

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[70] 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.