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PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

At

232-236 Palatine Road
Didsbury
Manchester
Greater Manchester
M20 2WF

NGR: SJ 83560 90980

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

United Environmental Services Ltd (UES) was commissioned by Atzaro Real Estate Ltd. to undertake a baseline ecological survey of land at 232–236 Palatine Road, Didsbury, Greater Manchester. A desk study and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) were originally completed on 9th August 2024 (UES04587/01), including a data search using the Multi-Agency Geographic Information Centre (MAGIC).

In accordance with CIEEM guidance (Advice Note, April 2019, *On the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys*), ecological data over 18 months old require validation. An updated walkover survey was therefore undertaken on 21st April 2026 to confirm the validity of previous findings and identify any changes in site conditions.

The proposed development comprises the demolition of three existing apartment blocks and the construction of new residential dwellings.

The site extends to approximately 0.6ha and is primarily residential in nature. Habitats onsite include built development, areas of modified grassland and other neutral grassland, and scattered trees. Vegetation clearance undertaken in late 2024 has altered the western part of the site, with former scrub replaced by recolonising ruderal vegetation. Overall, habitat distinctiveness has not declined and remains of moderate value, with some localised increases and decreases in habitat quality.

The updated survey and desk study identify the following key ecological considerations:

- **Amphibians** – Great crested newts (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* are unlikely to be present; however, Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) should be implemented to safeguard common amphibians.
- **Badger** – RAMs should be implemented during construction.
- **Bats (buildings)** – Surveys undertaken in 2024 identified two bat roosts (common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* day roosts). Mitigation and compensation will be required (see UES04587/05).
- **Bats (trees)** – If trees are affected, a ground level tree assessment (GLTA) will be required, with further surveys if necessary. Lighting should be designed to minimise impacts on bats.
- **Breeding birds** – Vegetation clearance and demolition should avoid the breeding season (March to August inclusive), or be preceded by a nesting bird check.
- **Hedgehogs** – RAMs should be implemented during construction.
- **Hedgerows and trees** – To be retained where possible or replaced through landscaping, with consideration of root protection areas.
- **Invasive species** – Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*), montbretia (*Crocosmia* × *crocosmiiflora*) and wall cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*) are present. These Schedule 9 species must be controlled to prevent further spread. An Invasive Species Method Statement will be required.

Mitigation measures outlined in Section 4 should be implemented, which may reduce or negate the need for further survey work in some cases.

The development also provides opportunities for ecological enhancement, including the installation of bird and bat boxes to provide long-term nesting and roosting habitat.

This report should be read in conjunction with Appendices 1 – 8, which include desk study data, UKHab mapping, photographs, and relevant guidance.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Author, surveyors, qualifications and scope of study area

This report is written by Marley Hazael BSc UES Graduate Ecologist. Other surveyors include:

- 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 2025-85030-CL18-BAT (level 2). Daniel is licensed by Natural England to disturb, take and handle great crested newts (GCNs) under licence number 2025-81974-SCI-CL09 (level 2).

The report provides an assessment of the potential ecological impacts associated with the proposed development of a parcel of land at 232-236 Palatine Road, Didsbury.

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 April 2026 to conduct an updated 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 development proposals include the demolition of three apartment blocks and the construction of new residential units.

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 8, 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 – A search for protected species or otherwise notable species and local designated sites was undertaken within a 2km radius of the proposed development site by Greater Manchester Local Records Centre.

2.2 Field survey

An initial ecological walkover survey was carried out on 9th August 2024 by Alasdair Grubb and Josh Howard. Following delays with the proposed development, an updated walkover survey was carried out on 21st April 2026 by Daniel Smith. 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
- Birds
- Trees
- Hedgerows
- Plant communities
- Invasive species
- Otter
- Water vole
- White-clawed crayfish

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 survey was undertaken in April, which is outside the optimal period for identifying all plant species. However, the majority of species were identifiable from their vegetative characteristics, allowing for a robust assessment of habitats.

As such, no significant limitations to the survey are considered to apply.

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 four statutorily protected sites within 2km of the proposed development site:

- Stenner Woods and Milgate Fields Didsbury LNR[1]

  Stenner Woods and Milgate Fields LNR is located approximately 1.0km to the south-east of the proposed development site. It is an area of wet woodland dominated by a rare willow carr, plus drier areas of woodland.

- Chorlton Water Park LNR

  Chorlton Water Park LNR is located approximately 1.3km to the north-west of the proposed development site. Manchester's first designated LNR is one of the most popular spots in the Mersey Valley. The reserve is set around a central lake with meandering paths leading into woodlands and wildflower meadows. The 170-acre site boasts common spotted Dactylorhiza fuchsii and northern marsh Dactylorhiza purpurella orchid in summer.

- Wythenshawe Park LNR

  Wythenshawe Park LNR is located approximately 1.6km to the south-west of the proposed development site. The site features a mix of woodlands, meadows, and wetlands, supporting a variety of species, including several that are rare or threatened.

- Gatley Carrs LNR

  Gatley Carrs LNR is located approximately 1.9km to the south of the proposed development site. It contains nineteen acres of woodland, scrubland & grassland and four acres of Willow swamp with two ponds.

The proposed development site lies within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) within which Natural England do not request that they are consulted on this type of development.

There are also eight non-statutorily protected sites within 2km of the proposed development site:

- Wrengate Wood SBI[2] - located approximately 30m to the north-east of the proposed development site.

[1] LNR – Local Nature Reserve
[2] SBI – Site of Biological Importance

The site is situated within the Mersey Valley and supports both broadleaved woodland, wet woodland and a heronry. Additional habitat diversity is provided by a pond and a small stream.

The woodland to the south of the site occurs on steep slopes down to an area of wet woodland on the 'flood plain' for the small stream, which flows into the River Mersey. The seasonally inundated wet woodland supports abundant crack willow Salix fragilis with occasional alder Alnus glutinosa. The ground flora includes many dry woodland species, which occur elsewhere on the site in addition, to frequent remote sedge Carex remota with wild garlic Allium ursinum, meadowsweet Filipendula ulmaria, opposite-leaved golden saxifrage Chrysosplenium oppositifolium and yellow archangel Lamium galeobdolon. Nettle Urtica dioica is abundant as is typical for this type of woodland. There are frequent Dryopterid ferns, including lady Athyrium filix-femina, male Dryopteris filix-mas and broad buckler Dryopteris dilatata. The invasive Himalayan balsam is also present.

The woodland on the slopes above the stream has both a well-developed understorey and a ground flora typical of a bracken-bramble Pteridium aquilinum-Rubus fruticosus ag. woodland. The ground flora is well-developed across the slope with abundant bluebell Hyacinthoides non-scripta.

- Fletcher Moss Park SBI - located approximately 1.0km to the south-east of the proposed development site.
- Rose Hill Woods SBI - located approximately 1.3km to the south of the proposed development site.
- Chorlton Water Park SBI - located approximately 1.4km to the north-west of the proposed development site.
- Loonts Lake SBI - located approximately 1.5km to the south of the proposed development site.
- Gib Lane Wood SBI - located approximately 1.7km to the south-west of the proposed development site.
- Round Wood SBI - located approximately 1.8km to the south-west of the proposed development site.
- Field by Electricity Substation SBI - located approximately 1.9km to the north-west of the proposed development site.

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

- Abney Hall LNR
- Broad Ees Dole LNR
- Brookheys Covert SSSI[3]
- Chorlton Ees and Ivy Green LNR
- Clayton Vale LNR
- Cotteril Clough SSSI
- Crookilley Woods LNR
- Dunham Park SSSI
- Heaton Mersey Common LNR
- Highfield Country Park LNR
- Happy Valley LNR
- Haughton Dale LNR
- Hulmes and Hardy Wood and Lower Haughton Meadows LNR
- Lindow Common LNR
- Lindow Common SSSI
- Mersey Vale Nature Park LNR
- Poise Brook LNR
- Reddish Vale LNR
- Trafford Ecology Park LNR
- Wights Wood LNR
- Woodbank Park LNR

[3] SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest

3.1.2 Protected species

The following records of protected or otherwise notable species were highlighted by the environmental records search:

- Amphibians: no records of GCNs were returned from within 2km of the proposed development sites. The only amphibian records returned are of common toad *Bufo bufo* and smooth newt *Lissotriton vulgaris*.

- Badgers: eighty records of badger *Meles meles* were returned from within 2km of the proposed development sites. Fifty-six of the records detail badger setts. The closest sett is located within Wrengate Wood approximately 100m east of the proposed development site.

- Bats: records of brown-long eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, Daubenton's *Myotis daubentonii*, Natterer's *Myotis nattereri* and whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus* were returned. Thirty-six records of bat roosts were returned including common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, pipistrelle sp., brown long-eared, noctule and unknown bat species. The closest roost to the site is a pipistrelle sp. consisting of two individuals was recorded in 2011, located at Ashfield Lodge Flats, approximately 100m east of the proposed development site.

- Birds: various species, including several NERC section 41 and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 1 species.

- Hazel dormouse: no records of hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* were returned from within 2km of the proposed development sites.

- Hedgehog: two-hundred and sixty-six records of hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* were returned from within 2km of the proposed development sites.

- Otter: fourteen records of otter *Lutra lutra* were returned from within 2km of the proposed development site. All the records were along the River Mersey. The closest record located approximately 150m south-west from the proposed development site in 2022.

- Reptiles: two reptile species records were returned from within 2km of the proposed development site. These included grass snake *Natrix helvetica* and slow worm *Anguis fragilis*. Two records of grass snakes were returned with the closest recorded located in Cavendish Road Park approximately 1.6km north of the proposed development site in 1993. Two records of slow worms were returned with the closest recorded located in Northenden Allotments approximately 1.5km south of the proposed development site in 2009.

- Water vole: there are two records of water vole *Arvicola amphibius* were returned from within 2km of the proposed development site. The closest recorded was along the River Mersey approximately 400m north from the proposed development site in 2023.

- White clawed-crayfish: one record of white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* was returned from within 2km of the proposed development site. The record was of two dead females located in Chorlton Water Park approximately 1.7km north-west from the proposed development site in 2009.

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 6.

The local area is predominantly residential, comprising dwellings with associated amenity areas and other neutral grassland to the rear of the site. The western part of the site was previously dominated by dense scrub; however, following vegetation clearance at the end of 2024, the habitat composition has changed. The following principal habitat types were recorded onsite:

- g3c Other neutral grassland
- g4 Modified grassland
- h2b Non-native and ornamental hedgerow
- u1 Built-up areas and gardens
- u1b5 Buildings
- u1b6 Other developed land
- u1f Sparsely vegetated urban land
- 32 Scattered trees

3.2.1 g3c Other neutral grassland

Secondary codes: 10, 16, 81, 524

This habitat is located to the rear of the apartment blocks in the western section of the site. It likely originated as amenity grassland; however, due to a prolonged absence of management, it has transitioned to tall ruderal vegetation.

The western extent of this area was previously dominated by dense mixed and bramble scrub, which was cleared in late 2024. The area is now undergoing recolonisation by ruderal species. Remnant woodland ground flora, including Spanish bluebell *Hyacinthoides hispanica*, wood forget-me-not *Myosotis sylvatica*, wild garlic and red campion *Silene dioica*, indicate that the scrub was well established prior to clearance.

The non-native invasive species Himalayan balsam, listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Schedule 2 of the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019, is abundant within this area (Appendix 3 – Target Note 1; Appendix 5 – Photograph 3).

Bramble is beginning to re-establish but is not yet fully dominant.

To the east of the site, former amenity grassland has similarly transitioned to ruderal vegetation and shade-tolerant species due to a lack of management. Rhododendron, also listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, is present in the south-eastern corner of the site (Target Note 3; Photograph 4).

3.2.2 g4 Modified grassland

Secondary codes: 32, 524

A managed lawn is present along the south-eastern boundary near the site entrance. This area is dominated by grasses, with species including perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, annual meadow-grass *Poa annua* common sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, ivy-leaved speedwell *Veronica hederifolia*, cleavers *Galium aparine*, dandelion *Taraxacum* officinalis agg., lesser celandine *Ficaria verna* and bracken.

Montbretia, listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, is present adjacent to the hedgerow (Target Note 3; Photograph 6).

3.2.3 h2b Non-native and ornamental hedgerow

Secondary codes: 11

Three ornamental hedgerows are present along the site boundaries:

Hedgerow 1 – Located along the eastern boundary, this hedgerow is defunct with a large gap forming the access road. It is composed primarily of ornamental species, including garden privet *Ligustrum ovalifolium*.

Hedgerow 2 – Located along the south-western boundary, this hedgerow is intact and dominated by garden privet, with occasional elder *Sambucus nigra*, dog rose *Rosa canina* and three small sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* trees.

Hedgerow 3 – Located along the northern boundary (largely offsite but overhanging), this hedgerow is dominated by cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*, with additional species including goat willow *Salix caprea*, sycamore and elder.

3.2.4 u1 Built-up areas and gardens

Secondary codes: 847

This habitat comprises areas of introduced, non-native ornamental planting located in the north-eastern corner of the site.

3.2.5 u1b5 Buildings

Secondary codes: 818, 825

Three buildings onsite comprise occupied, two-storey brick-built apartment blocks with pitched slate roofs and rear extensions incorporating both pitched and flat roof sections.

A fourth structure comprises a disused garage block located in the north-western section of the site. This building was previously heavily vegetated with ivy *Hedera helix* and bramble; however, vegetation clearance in late 2024 has left the structure exposed. The building is brick-built with a flat corrugated asbestos roof.

Further details are provided in the bat presence/absence survey report (UES0487/05).

3.2.6 u1b6 Other developed land

Secondary codes: 32, 81

The eastern section of the site is largely comprised of hardstanding associated with car parking for residents.

3.2.7 u1f Sparsely vegetated urban land

Secondary codes: 10, 81, 524

Areas of hardstanding adjacent to buildings and site boundaries support scattered ephemeral and short perennial species, including wall lettuce *Lactuca muralis*, prickly sow-thistle *Sonchus asper*, stinging nettle, petty spurge *Euphorbia peplus* and common knotgrass *Polygonum aviculare*.

Wall cotoneaster, listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, is present along the south-western boundary (Target Note 4).

Following vegetation clearance, previously obscured hardstanding paths have been exposed and are undergoing recolonisation by ruderal species, including common ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, thale cress *Arabidopsis thaliana*, great willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum*, herb robert *Geranium robertianum*, spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, nettle, foxglove *Digitalis purpurea*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, smooth sow-thistle *Sonchus oleraceus*, field horsetail *Equisetum arvense* and common hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*. Himalayan balsam is also present in these areas (Target Note 2).

3.2.8 32 Scattered trees

Scattered trees are present within the modified grassland along the south-eastern boundary. Species include yew *Taxus baccata*, cypress *Cupressus* sp., cedar *Cedrus* sp., elder, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, sycamore and lime *Tilia* sp.

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 records of GCN within the local area.

The site is located within an urban setting and is dominated by hardstanding and built features, with limited areas of grassland and tall ruderal vegetation. Boundary hedgerows and trees provide some connectivity; however, overall habitat suitability for GCN is low.

The surrounding landscape is also predominantly urban, with managed recreational land (golf courses) and several significant dispersal barriers, including the River Mersey, Palatine Road and the M60 motorway. Although small areas of woodland are present locally, the fragmented nature of the landscape further reduces the likelihood of GCN presence onsite.

Four ponds are located within 250m of the site, with the closest approximately 50m to the east. eDNA sampling undertaken across all four ponds returned negative results. Further details are provided in the GCN Impact Assessment (UES04587/14).

Based on the above, it is considered highly unlikely that the proposed development will impact GCN. However, it is still possible that common amphibian species are present onsite.

3.3.2 Reptiles

There are a low number of reptile records within the local area, with the nearest record approximately 1.5km from the site.

Habitats onsite, including areas of other neutral grassland and hedgerows, provide limited suitability for common species such as slow worm for commuting and foraging.

Given the low number of local records and the distance to the nearest record, it is considered highly unlikely that the proposed development will impact reptiles.

3.3.3 Badger

No evidence of badger activity was recorded during the walkover survey. However, active setts are known to be present approximately 100m from the site.

The grassland habitats onsite may provide foraging opportunities, and it is therefore considered likely that badgers may use the site on a transient basis.

3.3.4 Bats

The three apartment buildings onsite were assessed as having moderate potential to support roosting bats. Presence / absence surveys undertaken by UES in August and September 2024 confirmed two day roosts:

- A common pipistrelle day roost (single individual) within No. 236
- A soprano pipistrelle day roost (three individuals) within No. 234

No roosts were recorded within No. 232.

Building 4, located in the western section of the site, is assessed as having negligible potential for roosting bats.

Mature trees onsite may provide additional roosting opportunities, while hedgerows and trees offer suitable foraging habitat due to associated invertebrate abundance.

Further detail is provided in the bat presence / absence survey report (UES04587/05).

3.3.5 Hazel dormouse

There are no records of hazel dormouse within 2km of the site. Habitats onsite are generally unsuitable, with hedgerows and scrub lacking species diversity and key components such as honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*. Hazel *Corylus avellana* is present but limited.

Dormice are therefore considered unlikely to be present onsite.

3.3.6 Birds

Hedgerows, trees and areas of scrub provide suitable nesting habitat for breeding birds.

Evidence of nesting birds (feral pigeon *Columba livia domestica* and jackdaw *Corvus monedula*) was found during the scoping survey within the buildings on 9th August 2024.

3.3.7 Trees

No tree species onsite are subject to statutory protection.

3.3.8 Hedgerows

Three species-poor ornamental hedgerows are present onsite. These are unlikely to qualify as 'Important' under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997.

3.3.9 Plant communities

No plant communities or individual plant species of statutory conservation concern were recorded onsite.

3.3.10 Invasive species

Four non-native invasive species were recorded onsite:

- Himalayan balsam and rhododendron within tall ruderal and other neutral grassland (Target Notes 2 and 3; Photographs 3 and 4)
- Montbretia within modified grassland on the south-eastern boundary (Target Note 1; Photograph 6)
- Wall cotoneaster on hardstanding along the south-western boundary wall (Target Note 4)

3.3.11 Otter

No suitable aquatic habitat is present onsite. The nearest watercourse is approximately 60m away.

It is considered highly unlikely that the proposed development will impact otter.

3.3.12 Water vole

No suitable aquatic habitat is present onsite. The nearest watercourse is approximately 60m away.

It is considered highly unlikely that the proposed development will impact water vole.

3.3.13 White-clawed crayfish

A single historic record of white-clawed crayfish exists approximately 1.7km from the site, dating back over 15 years.

The species is not anticipated to be present onsite.

3.3.14 Hedgehog

Numerous records of hedgehog were returned within 2km of the site.

Areas of scrub and grassland onsite provide suitable foraging and commuting habitat, while dense vegetation offers potential sheltering and hibernation opportunities.

It is therefore considered likely that hedgehogs may be present onsite.

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

Designated sites identified during the desk study were reviewed in relation to the proposed development site.

The nearest statutory designated site is Stenner Woods and Milgate Fields Didsbury LNR, located approximately 1.0km to the south-east of the site. Given the separation distance and the scale and nature of the proposed development, no direct or indirect impacts are anticipated on this or any other statutory designated sites.

The nearest non-statutory designated site is Wrengate Wood SBI, located approximately 30m to the north-east of the site. However, the habitats within the development site adjacent to the SBI are of relatively low ecological value, and no direct habitat loss or pathways for significant indirect effects (e.g. hydrological or lighting impacts) are anticipated. As such, it is considered unlikely that the proposed development will result in any significant direct or indirect impacts on the SBI.

4.1.2 Hedgerows

There are three hedgerows on the site, which vary in age and quality.

Construction impacts

Construction activities too close to the root protection areas (RPAs) of the hedgerows could cause permanent damage. Site clearance and setting out may also involve the direct loss of hedgerows on site.

Mitigation

A BS5837 arboricultural survey should be undertaken to catalogue the location and species of the hedgerows on site. Any works close to the field boundaries should be mindful of the hedgerows and their RPAs.

Compensation

If any hedgerows are to be removed, they should be replaced accordingly as part of a detailed landscaping scheme, with only native species to be planted.

The gapping up of any defunct hedgerows and the management of existing hedgerows on site will provide higher quality habitat for wildlife locally.

Operational impacts

No operational impacts are envisaged.

4.1.3 Trees

There are a number of trees on the site, which vary in condition and maturity.

Construction impacts

Site clearance and setting out may involve the direct loss of trees on site as an ecological resource or may result in damage to any trees which are to be retained.

Mitigation

A BS5837 arboricultural survey should be undertaken to catalogue the location and species of the trees on site. Trees, in particular those forming a linear feature across the site, should be retained where possible. RPAs should be established and implemented around the trees which are to be retained. These areas should be adequately protected by appropriately designed protective barriers and ground protection throughout the entire development process.

Compensation

If any trees are to be removed, they should be replaced accordingly as part of a detailed landscaping scheme, with only native species to be planted.

Operational impacts

No operational impacts are envisaged.

4.2 Species

4.2.1 Amphibians

Works associated with the proposed development are unlikely to impact GCN; however, as a precaution, works should be undertaken in accordance with the following RAMs to safeguard common amphibian species that may be present onsite:

- Prior to the commencement of works, the areas of grassland within the proposed working area are to be mown to a sward height of less than 100mm until the works on site have been completed. This will reduce the potential for amphibians and other wildlife to be present within the working area during the development works.

- Where possible potential refugia should not be created and left on site overnight. Any potential refugia created on site as part of the development works will be removed by hand or will be checked for sheltering amphibians and other wildlife prior to removal by mechanical means or burning. Potential refugia can include but is not limited to piles of vegetation including grass cuttings, log piles and brash piles, individual logs and large pieces of rubble or other discarded materials e.g. sheets of plastic or metal.

- No excavations are to be left open overnight. If this is not possible, a plank or other means of escape for wildlife should be left within the excavation at an angle of 45°. Any open excavations should be checked for trapped amphibians and other wildlife prior to the start of works the following morning.

- Excavations should be checked for trapped amphibians and other wildlife prior to infilling.

- Where possible, materials will be stored on pallets off the ground, in order to reduce the risk of amphibians sheltering underneath them.

- UES will remain on call throughout the development, and if any suspected GCNs are encountered, work on site is to stop immediately and ecological advice must be sought. UES can be reached on 01565 757788.

4.2.2 Badger

There are numerous records of badger setts within the local area. No evidence of badger activity was observed onsite during the walkover survey. However, badgers are likely to use the site in a transitory capacity on an occasional basis.

Construction impacts

In the unlikely event that badgers use the proposed development area during the works, construction activities without mitigation could result in direct harm.

Mitigation

To adhere to best practice guidelines, the following reasonable avoidance measures should be implemented to protect badger during the construction phase of the development:

- No trenches or excavations will be left open overnight. They will be backfilled or covered with board, or alternatively fitted with a means of escape for any animal which may become trapped within, such as a plank or slope leading out of the bottom of the excavation at an angle of 45°. Any open excavations should be checked for trapped wildlife in the morning prior to start of works on site.

- Any pipes will be stored with caps on to prevent entry by badgers and other animals, and materials such as barbed wire will be stored so that animals cannot become entangled in them.

- Any chemicals or harmful materials will be stored so that they cannot be accessed by badgers or other animals.

- Excavations will be checked before they are backfilled to ensure that no animals have become trapped.

Operational impacts

No operational impacts are envisaged.

4.2.3 Bats

Two of the buildings onsite have confirmed day roosts used by a low number of common and soprano pipistrelles. There are a number of trees on site which could contain features that are also suitable for roosting bats.

Construction impacts

If bats are roosting within the buildings or trees 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 and compensation

The survey results from August and September 2024 will need to be submitted as part of the planning application, and will inform further mitigation or compensation measures, if required. Due to a low number of roosts of common bat species, a low impact bat mitigation class licence (BMCL) issued by Natural England will be required. This will need to be applied for once planning permission has been granted and the development works to No. 234 and 236 must not commence until a bat mitigation licence is obtained.

Ground level and aerial tree inspections should be conducted of any trees to be removed or otherwise altered. These inspections can be undertaken at any time of year. If any potential roosting features are found to still be suitable following the inspections, bat presence / absence surveys may be required (May to September inclusive).

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 trees or buildings)
- Schwegler 2F box (affixed to trees or buildings)
- Schwegler 1FW hibernation box (affixed to trees)
- 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

To be assessed following the confirmed development plans.

4.2.4 Birds

There are a number of habitats, such as hedgerows and mature trees which could support breeding birds.

Evidence of nesting birds (feral pigeon and jackdaw) was found during the scoping survey within the buildings.

Construction impacts

Building demolition, tree felling, arboricultural works and 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, building demolition, tree felling, abroricultural works and vegetation removal (including enabling works) are 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

If extensive areas of vegetation are to be removed, 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.

Landscaping can also be used to promote biodiversity through the appropriate design of habitats and creating habitat mosaics, which promote natural linkages and hence the dispersal of target species. Principles and landscaping ideas beneficial to wildlife and relevant to this site include:

- Planting and management of hedgerows
- Planting of berry and nut bearing shrub species to encourage winter birds
- Planting and management of shrubs which develop a mosaic of structures to support breeding birds
- Use of nectar bearing flowers to encourage invertebrates (such as bees, flies, beetles and butterflies)

Species are to be native of local provenance or to have a proven benefit to biodiversity. Further information can be found at Appendix 7 – Landscape design for birds.

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. At the time of writing this report no detailed plans are available, but bird boxes that could be used on site include:

- Schwegler 1B nest box (affixed to trees)
- Schwegler 1SP sparrow terrace (affixed to building below the eaves)
- Schwegler 2H robin nest box (affixed to trees)

- Schwegler 3S starling nest box (affixed to trees or buildings)
- Schwegler 1MR Avianex box (affixed to trees or 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. Unless there are trees which shade the box during the day, the boxes should be oriented between north and east, thus avoiding strong sunlight and the wettest winds. House sparrow terraces and swift nest boxes should be installed just below the roof level.

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.

Excessive removal or pruning of trees and hedgerows should be avoided to maximise the growth and plant matter available to wildlife. Pruning should be left until late winter to leave seeds and berries for wintering wildlife and to ensure no impact on breeding and nesting birds.

4.2.5 Hedgehogs

No evidence of hedgehog activity was observed on site during the walkover survey. However, numerous records of hedgehogs were returned from the local area and the areas of grassland on site provide suitable foraging and commuting opportunities for hedgehogs. Additionally, the dense scrub will provide suitable refugia and hibernating opportunities for hedgehogs.

Construction impacts

Vegetation clearance works and construction activities without mitigation could result in direct harm, injury and / or death to individuals.

Mitigation

The following RAMs should be implemented on site during the construction phase of the development:

- No trenches or excavations will be left open overnight. They will be backfilled or covered with board, or alternatively fitted with a means of escape for any hedgehogs (or other animal) which may become trapped within, such as a plank or slope leading out of the bottom of the excavation at an angle of 45°. All excavations left open overnight will be checked for trapped wildlife in the morning.

- Any other potential refugia on site or created as part of the works should be removed by hand or checked for sheltering hedgehogs prior to their removal by mechanical means or burning. Potential refugia can include piles of leaf litter, log piles and brash piles.

- Any pipes will be stored with caps on to prevent entry by hedgehogs and other animals, and materials such as barbed wire will be stored so that animals cannot become entangled in them.

- Any chemicals or harmful materials will be stored so that they cannot be accessed by hedgehogs or other animals.

- Excavations will be checked immediately before they are backfilled to ensure that no animals have become trapped.

Operational impacts

To allow continued use of the site by hedgehog and to ensure commuting routes are not blocked, fences installed on site should be designed to allow passage of hedgehogs. This can either be through the choice of material e.g. choosing a fence style that naturally contains holes at the base or through the inclusion of hedgehog highways. Hedgehog highways are small 13cm x 13cm holes at the base of fences.

4.2.6 Invasive species

Four non-native invasive species were identified onsite during the walkover. Himalayan balsam is located within the tall ruderal vegetation and grasslands. Rhododendron and montbretia is located within the modified grassland on the south-eastern site boundary. Wall cotoneaster is located on the hardstanding along the south-western wall. Himalayan balsam, rhododendron, montbretia and wall cotoneaster are listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 or Schedule 2 of the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019. As such, it is an offence to plant or otherwise cause these species to grow in the wild.

Construction impacts

Site clearance and setting out could result in the disturbance and dispersal of Himalayan balsam, rhododendron, montbretia and wall cotoneaster on and off site.

Mitigation

Invasive species will need to be subject to control measures prior to the start of works in those areas of the site in order to ensure that they do not spread across the site or onto adjacent areas. Additionally, any invasive species on site should be eradicated as part of the development. It is essential that a competent and qualified person carries out any herbicide treatment. An invasive species method statement should be prepared to detail how these species will be controlled and eradicated as part of the development.

Operational impacts

If Himalayan balsam, rhododendron, montbretia and wall cotoneaster are subject to control measures prior to the start of works in the affected areas and any invasive species on site are eradicated as part of the development, no further operational impacts are envisaged. However, complete eradication is an ongoing process, and if it is not treated as such, they can return and continue to spread. This could become more acute with increased activity on site.

5 CONCLUSION

The site extends to approximately 0.6ha and is predominantly residential in nature. Habitats onsite comprise built development, areas of modified and other neutral grassland, and scattered trees. Vegetation clearance undertaken in late 2024 has altered the western part of the site, with former scrub replaced by recolonising ruderal vegetation. Overall, habitat distinctiveness has not declined and remains of moderate value, with some localised increases and decreases in habitat quality.

The updated Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has identified similar ecological constraints to those recorded in 2024, including amphibians, badgers, bats, breeding birds, hedgehogs, hedgerows, invasive species and trees. Provided that the recommendations and mitigation measures outlined within this report are implemented, the proposed development can proceed without significant adverse effects on these ecological receptors.

The development also presents opportunities for ecological enhancement. The installation of bat and bird boxes, alongside appropriate habitat management, will provide long-term benefits by enhancing roosting and nesting opportunities for wildlife onsite.

6 REFERENCES

CIEEM (2017). *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal* (Second Edition).

DEFRA (2019). *MAGIC* [online]. Available at: http://magic.defra.gov.uk/.

MHCLG (2024). National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

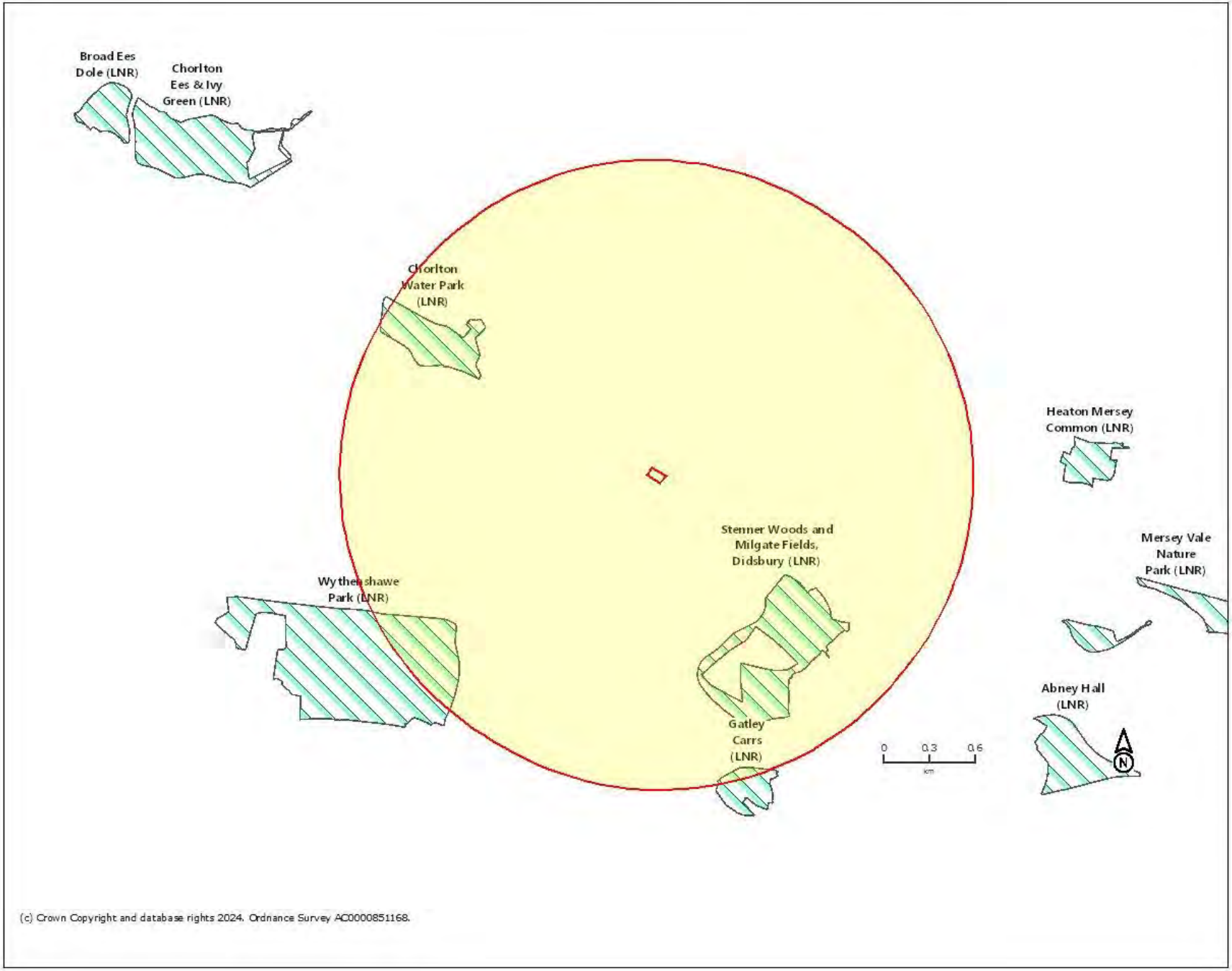
UKHab Ltd (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0.* Available at: *https://www.ukhab.org.uk).*

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Desk study

MAGIC

Statutorily protected sites (2km buffer)



Legend

- Local Nature Reserves (England)
- National Nature Reserves (England)
- Ramsar Sites (England)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England)
- Special Areas of Conservation (England)
- Special Protection Areas (England)
- Biosphere Reserves (England)

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ymin = 387900
xmax = 389600
ymax = 393900

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km

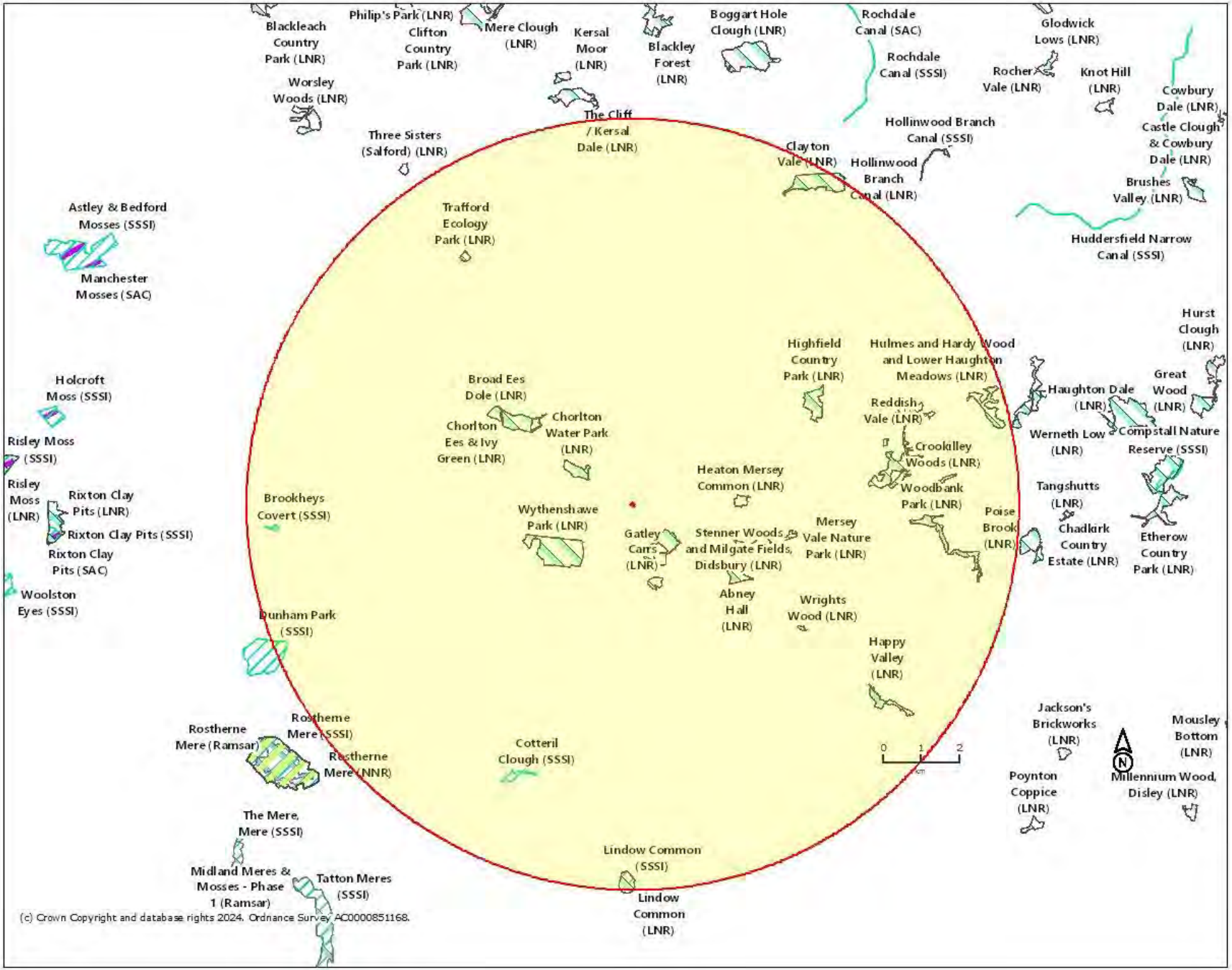
Map produced by MAGIC on 8 October, 2024.

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MAGIC

Statutorily protected sites (10km buffer)



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Legend

- Local Nature Reserves (England)
- National Nature Reserves (England)
- Ramsar Sites (England)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England)
- Special Areas of Conservation (England)
- Special Protection Areas (England)
- Biosphere Reserves (England)

Projection = OSGB36
xmin = 357900
ymin = 379400
xmax = 408300
ymax = 403500

0 2 4 km

Map produced by MAGIC on 8 October, 2024.

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Appendix 2 – 2024 UKHab plan

Target Note 1 – Himalayan balsam

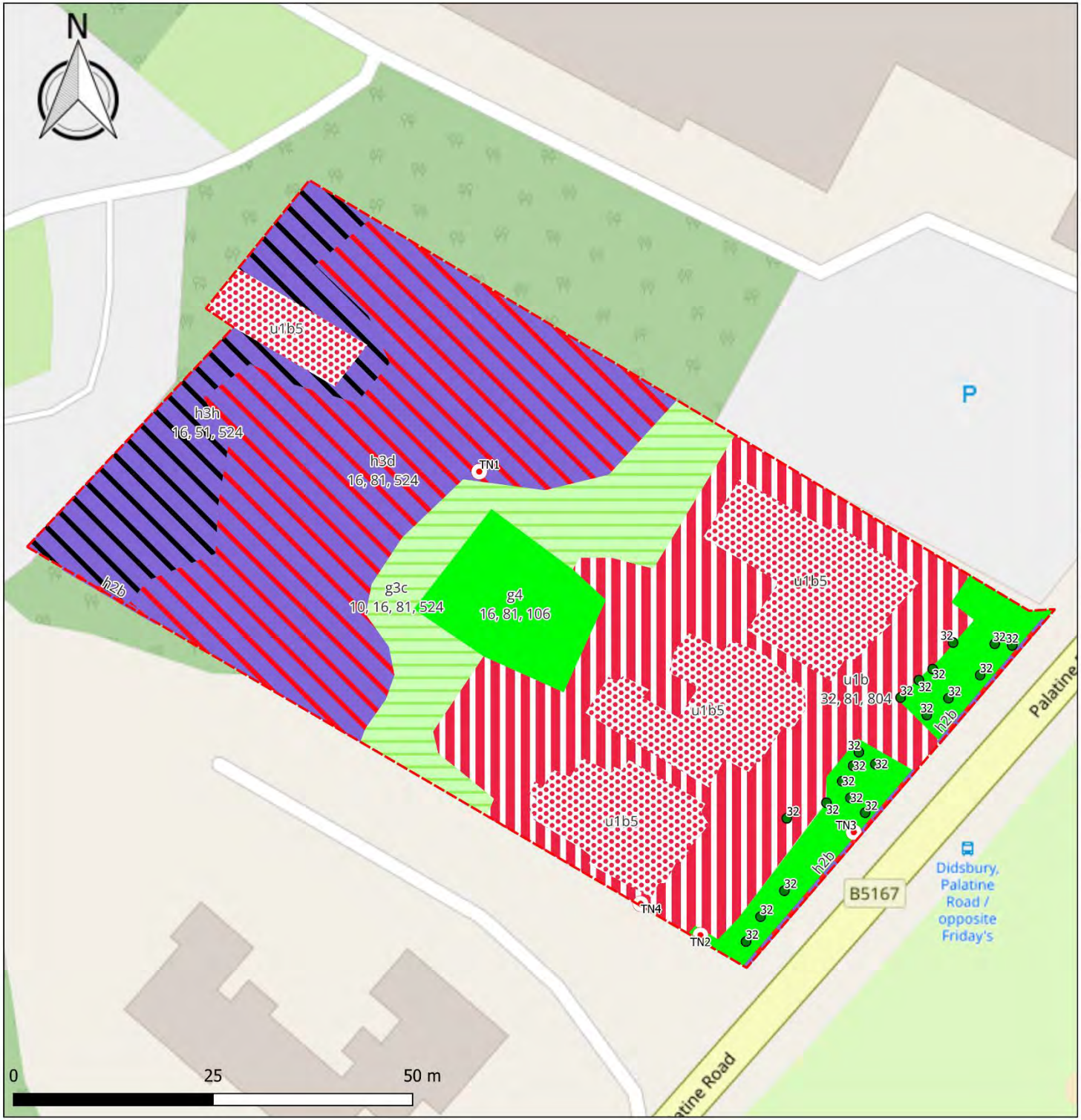
Target Note 2 - Rhododendron

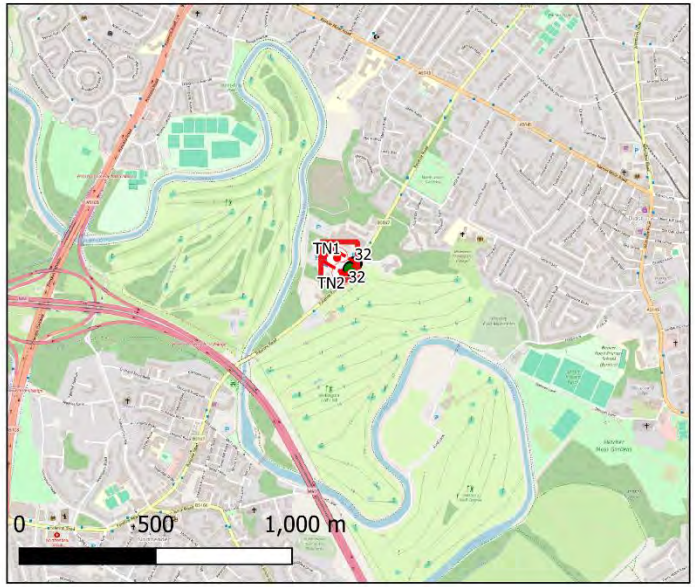
Target Note 3 – Montbretia

Target Note 4 – Wall cotoneaster

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Site: 232 - 236 Palatine Road, Didsbury
NGR: SJ 83560 90980
Author: Daniel Smith
Date: 09/10/2024





- g3c - other neutral grassland
- g4 - modified grassland
- h2b - non-native and ornamental hedgerow
- h3d - bramble scrub
- h3h - mixed scrub
- u1b - developed land. sealed surface
- u1b5 - buildings
- Survey boundary
- 32 - scattered trees
- Target Notes

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Appendix 3 – 2026 UKHab plan

Target Note 1 – Montbretia

Target Note 2 – Himalayan balsam

Target Note 3 – Rhododendron

Target Note 4 – Wall cotoneaster

UK Habitat Classification Plan 2026

Site: 232-236 Palatine Road, Didsbury
NGR: SJ 83536 90975
Author: Marley Hazael
Date: 01/05/2026





Key

- g3c - other neutral grassland
- g4 - modified grassland
- h2b - non-native and ornamental hedgerow
- u1 - built-up areas and gardens
- u1b5 - buildings
- u1b6 - other developed land
- u1f - sparsely vegetated urban land
- 32 - scattered trees
- Target Notes

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Appendix 4 – Aerial photographs


232-236 Palatine Road, Didsbury
Close aerial photograph
Survey boundary
Map data © 2026 Google, Imagery © 2026 Google


232-236 Palatine Road, Didsbury
Wide aerial photograph
Site location
Map data © 2026 Google, Imagery © 2026 Google

Appendix 5 – Photographs



Photograph 1 – Area of other neutral grassland on the south-eastern boundary of the site.



Photograph 2 – Other neutral grassland on the western side of the site.



Photograph 3 – Himalayan Balsam, an invasive species of the schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.



Photograph 4 – Rhododendron, an invasive species of the schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.



Photograph 5 – Modified grassland onsite.



Photograph 6 – Montbretia, an invasive species of the schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.



Photograph 7 – Hedgerow 1.



Photograph 8 – Hedgerow 2.



Photograph 9 – Hedgerow 3.



Photograph 10 – Western elevation of the three residential buildings.



Photograph 11 – Exterior of Building 4.



Photograph 12 – Interior of Building 4.



Photograph 13 – Sparsely vegetated land on the western side of the site.



Photograph 14 – Sparsely vegetated urban land in the eastern side of the site.



Photograph 15 – Front drive on the south-eastern area of the site.



Photograph 16 – Scattered trees within the other neutral grassland to the east of the site.

Appendix 6 – Botanical species list

Latin	Common
Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore
Aegopodium podagraria	Ground Elder
Aesculus hippocastanum	Horse Chestnut
Agrostis capillaris	Common Bent
Agrostis stolonifera	Creeping Bent
Allium ursinum	Wild garlic
Alopecurus pratensis	Meadow Foxtail
Anagallis arvensis	Scarlet Pimpernel
Anthoxanthum oderatum	Sweet Vernal-grass
Arabidopsis thaliana	Thale cress
Athyrium filix-femina	Lady Fern
Bromus hordeaceus	Soft Brome
Bromus sterilis	Baron Brome
Buddleja davidii	Buddleia
Calystegia sepium	Hedge Bindweed
Cardamine pratensis	Cuckoo flower
Carex pendula	Pendulous sedge
Cedrus sp.	Cedar
Cerastium fontanum	Common Mouse-ear
Chamaenerion angustifolium	Rosebay willowherb
Chelidonium majus	Greater celandine
Cirsium arvense	Creeping thistle
Cirsium vulgare	Spear thistle
Convolvulus arvensis	Field bindweed
Corylus avellana	Hazel
Cotoneaster horizontalis	Wall Cotoneaster
Crocosmia x crocosmiiflora	Montbretia
Cupressus sp.	Cypress
Dactylis glomerata	Cock's Foot
Digitalis purpurea	Foxglove
Epilobium ciliatum	American willowherb
Epilobium hirsutum	Great Willowherb
Epilobium parviflorum	Hoary Willowherb
Equisetum arvense	Field Horsetail
Euphorbia peplus	Petty spurge
Fagaria vesca	Wild Strawberry
Festuca rubra	Red Fescue
Ficaria verna	Lesser celandine
Fraxinus excelsior	Ash
Galium aparine	Cleavers
Geranium dissectum	Cut-leaved Cranesbill
Geranium robertianum	Herb Robert
Geum urbanum	Wood Avens
Hedera helix	Ivy
Heracleum sphondylium	Hogweed
Holcus lanatus	Yorkshire Fog
Hyacinthoides hispanica	Spanish bluebell
Hydrangea sp.	Hydrangea
Hypericum androsaemum	Tutsan

Hypochaeris radicata	Catsear
Ilex aquifolium	Common Holly
Impatiens glandulifera	Himalayan Balsam
Jacobaea vulgaris	Common Ragwort
Juncus conglomeratus	Compact Rush
Lactuca muralis	Wall Lettuce
Lapsana communis	Nipplewort
Lolium perenne	Perennial Rye-grass
Lupinus sp.	Lupin
Luzula campestris	Field wood-rush
Myosotis arvensis	Field forget-me-not
Myosotis sylvatica	Wood forget-me-not
Pentaglottis sempervirens	Green alkanet
Plantago lanceolata	Ribwort Plantain
Plantago major	Greater Plantain
Poa annua	Annual Meadow-grass
Polygonum aviculare agg.	Knotgrass
Prunella vulgaris	Selfheal
Prunus insititia	Damson
Prunus laurocerasus	Cherry Laurel
Pteridium aquilinum	Bracken
Ranunculus acris	Meadow Buttercup
Ranunculus repens	Creeping Buttercup
Rhododendron ponticum	Common Rhododendron
Rosa canina	Dog rose
Rosa sp	Rose species
Rubus fruticosus agg.	Bramble
Rumex acetosa	Common Sorrell
Rumex obtusifolius	Broad-leaved Dock
Salix caprea	Goat willow
Sambucus nigra	Elder
Senecio vulgaris	Groundsel
Silene dioica	Red campion
Sisymbrium officinale	Hedge mustard
Sonchus asper	Prickly Sow-thistle
Sonchus oleraceus	Smooth Sow-thistle
Taraxacum officinale agg.	Dandelion
Taxus baccata	Common Yew
Trifolium repens	White clover
Urtica dioica	Common Nettle
Veronica hederifolia	Ivy-leaved speedwell
Veronica serpyllifolia	Thyme-leaved Speedwell
Vicia sativa	Common Vetch

Appendix 7 – 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 8 – 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.