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# Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

**Survey site:**
Land at 158 Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester, Greater Manchester, M8 8LQ

**Client:**
Mohammad Tahir

**Survey date:**
12/03/2026

**Project:**
This report is prepared to inform a planning application with Manchester City Council. This proposal can be described as; a proposed exhibition centre

*The survey results and recommendations contained within this report are valid for 18 months. An updated site visit may be required if the report is to be used any longer than 18 months after completion*

## Executive Summary

The following is work you will need to commission to obtain planning permission and to comply with legislation. Further information, along with opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, are outlined in Tables 1, 3 & 4 of this report.

| Key Findings |
| --- |
| **Biodiversity Net Gain**<br>• A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment will be required to comply with the Environment Act (2021) and local planning policy.<br><br>**Invasive, non-native species**<br>• An invasive species management plan will be required to control and/or eradicate Japanese knotweed.<br><br>**Protected species**<br>• Precautionary working measures will be followed to ensure that amphibians, hedgehogs and small mammals are not harmed by the works.<br>• In the unlikely event that a protected animal is found during construction, all works must stop and a suitably qualified ecologist must be contacted. |

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# Introduction and Context

## Introduction

The aim of the PEA was to obtain data on existing ecological conditions, and to conduct a preliminary assessment of the likely significance of ecological impacts on the proposed development.

No previous ecology reports have been produced for this site by Arbtech Consulting Ltd or, to the author's knowledge, by any other consultancy.

## Methodology

PEA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: PEA Methodology and Legislation - 2026.

## Limitations

Whilst every effort has been made to describe the baseline conditions within the survey area, and evaluate these features, this report is a preliminary assessment and does not provide a complete characterisation of the site. Nor does it represent a full botanical assessment. It assesses the likelihood of protected, notable and important habitats and species being present, based on a site and landscape level habitat value-based risk assessment. This is based upon the ecology, biology and known distribution of species as currently understood.

A biological records data search has not been undertaken. However, given the location of the site, the nature of the habitats present and the assessed suitability of the site for protected or notable species, it is not anticipated that the purchase of biological records data will add any significant weight or alter the conclusions and recommendations outlined in this report.

The survey was completed outside of the optimal survey period (April to October) for ground flora, and as such the accuracy of botanical assessment and condition assessment data may be limited in terms of species visible and ground conditions at the time of survey.

# Results, Impacts and Recommendations

## Site Location and Landscape Context

*Table 1: Site location and landscape context*

| **Site Location** |
|---|
| The site is located at National Grid Reference SJ 84258 99777 and has an area of approximately 0.11ha.<br>The development site comprises ruderal/ephemeral sparsely vegetated urban land which has been previously cleared, surrounded by palisade fencing. It is situated in the inner-city area of Cheetham Hill, Manchester ~1km north of Manchester city centre. The immediate and wider landscape has an urban character, with the site surrounded by buildings, roads and tarmac hardstanding. There are various greenspaces nearby such as Cheetham Park ~550m northwest but there is no direct connectivity to the site. There is a railway line ~550m south. The River Irwell is situated ~900m southwest and the River Irk ~420m southeast. These linear features which have connectivity to greenspaces likely enhance the local area by providing opportunities for foraging, refuge and commuting for a variety of wildlife such as bats in the wider landscape. |
| **Priority Habitats and Designated Sites** |
| **Summary of Survey Findings**<br><br><u>Priority Habitats</u><br>There are 3 priority habitats located within 2 km of the site. These comprise deciduous woodland, traditional orchard and wood pasture and parkland. The closest priority habitat comprises deciduous woodland, located ~470m east of the site.<br><br>Due to the surrounding urban infrastructure, there is no direct connectivity between the site and nearby notable habitats.<br><br><u>Designated Sites</u><br>There are no other statutory sites within 2 km of the site.<br><br>The site falls within the impact risk zone for Rochdale Canal SSSI however, the proposed development type is not listed as possible high risk with regard to this designation. |

The presence of non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site cannot be established without data from the Greater Manchester Local Record Centre. Whilst some habitats in the wider landscape may host designations, the immediate environs of the site do not host habitats likely to be of designable quality.

**Impacts**

No direct impacts to any designated sites will occur as a result of the proposed development, due to the small scale and low overall impact of the development from such sites (where known), alongside additional factors such as distance in combination with connectivity disrupting barriers.

**Recommendations**

No recommendations.

## Habitats and Flora

The site survey was undertaken by Lizzie Hill BSc (Hons), MSc, Graduate Ecologist (Accredited Agent on Bat Class 2 Licence Number: 2025-85397-CL18-BAT to undertake Level 1 bat survey work).

*Table 2: Survey weather conditions*

| Date of survey | Temperature (°C) | Humidity (%) | Cloud Cover (%) | Wind (km/h) | Rain |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12/03/2026 | 10.6 | 87 | 100 | 35.1 | None |

*Table 3: Habitats and flora*

**Habitats and Flora: Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations**

*This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.*

## Onsite habitats

### Summary of Survey Findings

Built-up areas and gardens (u1) - Ruderal/Ephemeral (81)
The site comprises sparsely vegetated urban land - ruderal/ephemeral. The site has been previously cleared, with areas of hardstanding visible and has vegetation cover <75%, with moss cover present on exposed rubble/soil.

In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment Matrix, the ruderal/ephemeral was assessed to have a poor condition value.

*Table 3a: Ruderal/Ephemeral species abundance.*

| Abundance | Species |
|---|---|
| **Dominant** | Japanese knotweed *(Reynoutria japonica)* |
| **Abundant** | Bramble *(Rubus fruticosus)* |
| **Frequent** | Cleavers *(Galium aparine)*, creeping buttercup *(Ranunculus repens)*, dandelion *(Taraxacum)*, common nettle *(Urtica dioica)*, perennial rye-grass *(Lolium perenne)* |
| **Occasional** | Herb-robert *(Geranium robertianum)*, broad-leaved dock *(Rumex obtusifolius)*, white clover *(Trifolium repens)*, spear thistle *(Cirsium vulgare)*, hogweed *(Heracleum sphondylium)* |
| **Rare** | Shepherd's-purse *(Capsella bursa-pastoris)* |

### Impacts

The proposed development will result in the loss of 0.11ha of sparsely vegetated urban land. This is likely to have a minimal impact on biodiversity due to the low ecological value of these habitats. However, this could lead to a net loss in biodiversity at the site.

### Recommendations

The proposed development may require a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment, to calculate the value of habitats on site and ensure the delivery of a minimum of 10% measurable biodiversity net gain.

**Invasive / Non-native species**

**Summary of Survey Findings**

Japanese knotweed was identified on the site which is listed as an invasive, non-native species under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

**Impacts**

Construction could result in the spread of Japanese knotweed.

**Recommendations**

An invasive species management plan will be required to control and/or eradicate Japanese knotweed.

## Fauna

*Table 4: Fauna*

**Fauna: Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations**

*This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.*

**Roosting Bats**

**Summary of Survey Findings**

A review of the MAGIC database for European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) for bats within a 2km radius of the site has been completed. 20 EPSL were identified, as detailed below:

*Table 4a: EPSL records within 2km of the site - bats*

| EPSL reference | Bat species affected | Distance from site | Impacts allowed by licence |
|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2014-6380-EPS-MIT | Common pipistrelle | ~0.9km south | Destruction of a resting place |
| | 2014-6380-EPS-MIT-1 | Common pipistrelle | ~0.9km south | Destruction of a resting place |
| | 2014-6380-EPS-MIT-2 | Common pipistrelle | ~0.9km south | Destruction of a resting place |
| | EPSM2010-1888 | Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle | ~1.1km northeast | Destruction of a resting place |
| | 2017-31569-EPS-MIT | Common pipistrelle | ~1.1km southwest | Destruction of a resting place |
| | 2014-4219-EPS-MIT | Common pipistrelle | ~1.1km southwest | Destruction of a resting place |
| | EPSM2013-5644 | Common pipistrelle | ~1.2km southeast | Destruction of a resting place |
| | 2016-24504-EPS-MIT | Common pipistrelle | ~1.2km southeast | Destruction of a resting place |
| | 2016-24504-EPS-MIT-1 | Common pipistrelle | ~1.2km southeast | Destruction of a resting place |
| | 2014-3531-EPS-MIT-2 | Common pipistrelle | ~1.4km southeast | Destruction of a resting place |
| | 2014-3531-EPS-MIT | Common pipistrelle | ~1.4km southeast | Destruction of a resting place |
| | 2014-3531-EPS-MIT-1 | Common pipistrelle | ~1.4km southeast | Destruction of a resting place |
| | 2018-33674-EPS-MIT | Common pipistrelle | ~1.5km south | Destruction of a resting place |
| | 2019-43484-EPS-MIT | Common pipistrelle | ~1.6km southeast | Destruction of a resting place |
| | 2014-490-EPS-MIT | Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle | ~1.75km southeast | Destruction of a resting place |
| | 2020-45213-EPS-MIT | Common pipistrelle | ~1.78km southwest | Destruction of a resting place |
| | 2014-3569-EPS-MIT | Common pipistrelle | ~1.8km southwest | Destruction of a resting place |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| EPSM2012-5061 | Brown long-eared | ~1.9km southwest | Damage to a breeding place, destruction of a breeding place, destruction of a resting place |
| EPSM2012-4767 | Common pipistrelle | ~1.8km southwest | Destruction of a resting place |
| 2019-41924-EPS-MIT-1 | Common pipistrelle | ~2km southeast | Destruction of a breeding place, destruction of a resting place |

No buildings or trees were present on site with suitable roosting features for bats to utilise.

**Impacts**

No impacts on roosting bats are anticipated.

**Recommendations**

None.

**Foraging and Commuting Bats**

**Summary of Survey Findings**

There are no habitats on site which could be used for foraging bats. There are no strongly connected linear features present that may provide cohesive commuting routes between the site and features in the urban landscape.

**Impacts**

The proposed development will not result in the removal of any habitats which could be used by foraging or commuting bats.

**Recommendations**

None.

## Amphibians

**Summary of Survey Findings**

A review of MAGIC database found no granted EPSL for great crested newts (GCN) within 2km of the site.

A check was also completed for great crested newt class survey license returns and historic pond surveys. No records were identified.

No ponds are located on, or adjacent to, the site. A review of aerial imagery shows there are no ponds within 500m of the site.

**Aquatic habitat suitability**
No ponds are present on site or within 500m of the site.

**Terrestrial habitat suitability**
The site provides limited suitable terrestrial habitat for amphibians given the lack of optimal habitat (i.e. scrub, rank grassland). The areas ruderal vegetation and hardstanding offer sub-optimal habitat for terrestrial amphibians. Given the urban nature of the surrounding landscape (i.e. dominated by roads and hard standing which are sub-optimal for amphibians) it is unlikely that amphibians will migrate on to site. Further, there is limited suitable terrestrial habitat across the wider landscape reducing the likelihood of amphibians being present on site and across the surrounding areas.

**Impacts**
Given the lack of suitably connected breeding ponds within 500m of the site, the presence of GCN on-site is considered unlikely and therefore impacts to GCN as a result of the proposed development are deemed to be acceptably low.

**Recommendations**
Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts to great crested newts, further surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented for common amphibians during construction, including the following measures:

- A staged approach will be adopted for vegetation clearance, whereby the vegetation will be strimmed to 15cm and left overnight to allow any amphibians to disperse. The vegetation can then be cleared to ground level and must be maintained at this level for the duration of construction to deter amphibians from the working area.
- Any rubble piles will be dismantled by hand and debris and brash will be stored on pallets or removed from the site to prevent amphibians from utilising these areas.

- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
- If any common amphibians are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.
- In the unlikely event that a great crested newt is identified, works must cease and advise must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

**Reptiles**

**Summary of Survey Findings**

There is no suitable habitat present on site for reptiles due to a lack of habitats such as scrub and rank grassland which would offer refuge for these species. Further, the site is surrounded by urban development (i.e. roads and buildings) which is considered sub-optimal for reptile migration and therefore reptiles are considered unlikely to migrate from any nearby suitable habitats to the development site. As such it is likely that reptiles are absent from the development site.

**Impacts**

No impacts are anticipated on reptiles as a result of the proposed development.

**Recommendations**

None.

**Birds**

**Summary of Survey Findings**

No evidence of nesting birds was identified on the site. There are no suitable habitats on site which provide habitat for nesting birds.

**Impacts**

No impacts are anticipated on nesting birds as a result of the proposed development.

**Recommendations**

None.

**Badgers**

**Summary of Survey Findings**

No badger setts were noted on site or within a 30m radius of the site. The site is considered unsuitable for badgers given the lack of suitable sett excavation areas/ground. Further, there is limited suitable badger foraging habitat on site given the lack of fruiting trees/scrub. The site is also surrounding by urban development (i.e. roads and buildings), which is sub-optimal habitat and enclosed by fencing, therefore reducing the likelihood of badgers being present within the surrounding area of the site.

**Impacts**

No impacts are anticipated on badgers as a result of the proposed development.

**Recommendations**

None.

**Riparian animals**

**Summary of Survey Findings**

There are no riparian habitats on or adjacent to the site.

**Impacts**

Otters
No impacts are anticipated on riparian animals as a result of the proposed development.

Water Vole
No impacts are anticipated on riparian animals as a result of the proposed development.

**Recommendations**

None.

| **Hazel dormouse** |
|---|
| **Summary of Survey Findings**<br>A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for hazel dormice within 2km of the site.<br>The site lies outside of the know current range for hazel dormice and there are no suitable habitats within the development area. As such it is considered likely that hazel dormice are absent from site.<br><br>**Impacts**<br>No impacts are anticipated on hazel dormice as a result of the proposed development.<br><br>**Recommendations**<br>None. |
| **Invertebrates** |
| **Summary of Survey Findings**<br>The sparsely vegetated urban land likely provides common invertebrates with opportunities to forage and shelter. The site contains no further notable habitats which may provide niches for specialised or protected invertebrates.<br><br>**Impacts**<br>The proposed development will result in the loss of ~0.11ha of sparsely vegetated urban land. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local invertebrate populations owing to the presence of more extensive habitat locally.<br><br>**Recommendations**<br>No further surveys. |
| **Other e.g. small mammals** |
| **Summary of Survey Findings** |

The ruderal vegetation onsite provides limited foraging and commuting opportunities for hedgehogs and other small mammals. There were small holes identified on site within a soil mound and a hole ~10cmx10cm identified in the eastern section of the site. These holes are suitable for use by small mammals.

Although the connectivity of the site is limited with the surrounding urban infrastructure, hedgehogs are common to urban areas and can commute through gaps in fencing. As such, the presence of foraging, sheltering and commuting small mammals on site cannot be discounted.

**Impacts**

The proposed development will result in the loss of ~0.11ha of sparsely vegetated urban land. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local small mammal/hedgehog populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of hedgehogs, if present.

**Recommendations**

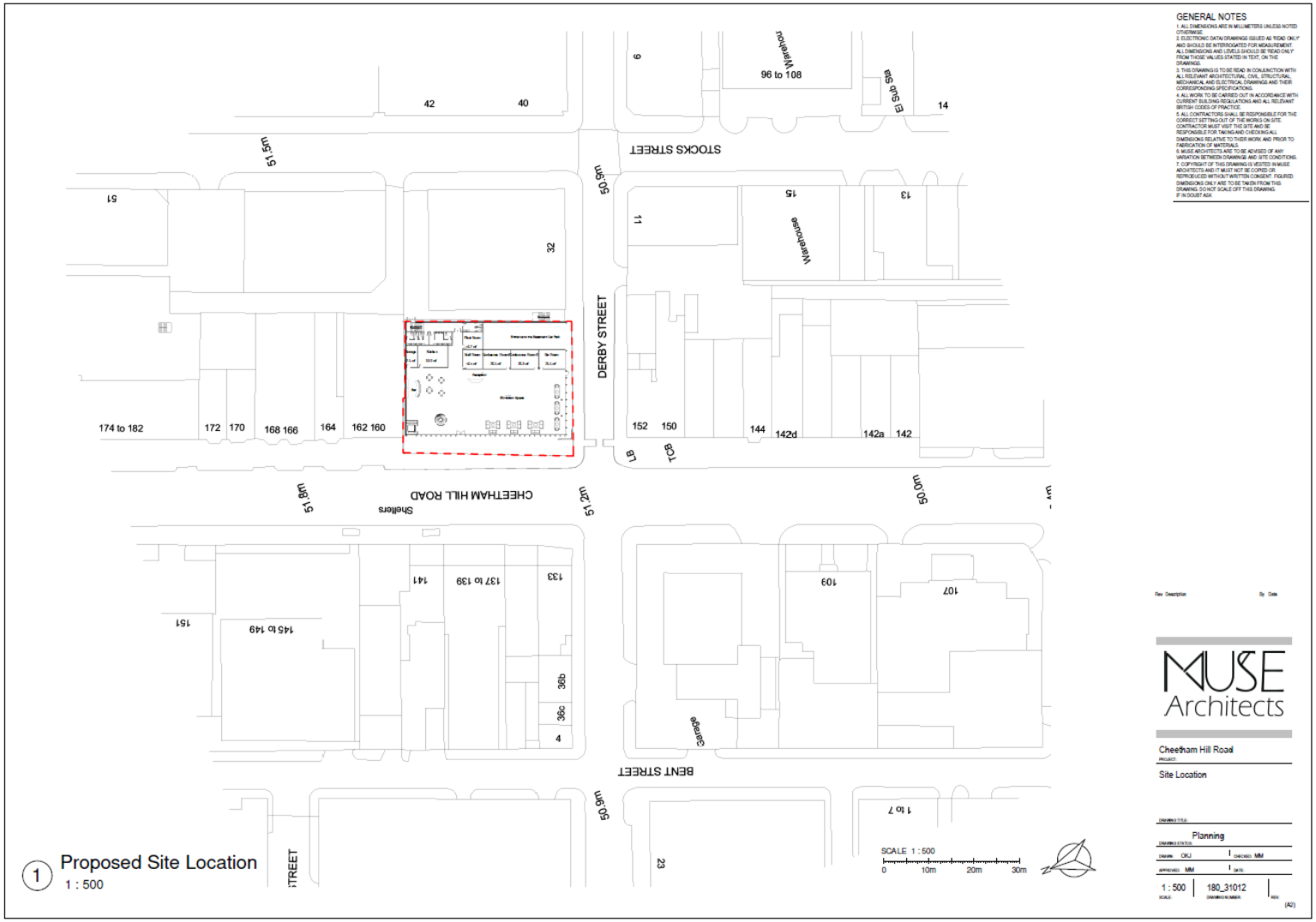
A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:

- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.
- Any pipework exceeding 100mm will be capped overnight.
- The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which hedgehogs could use.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
- If any small mammals are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.

The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for hedgehogs:

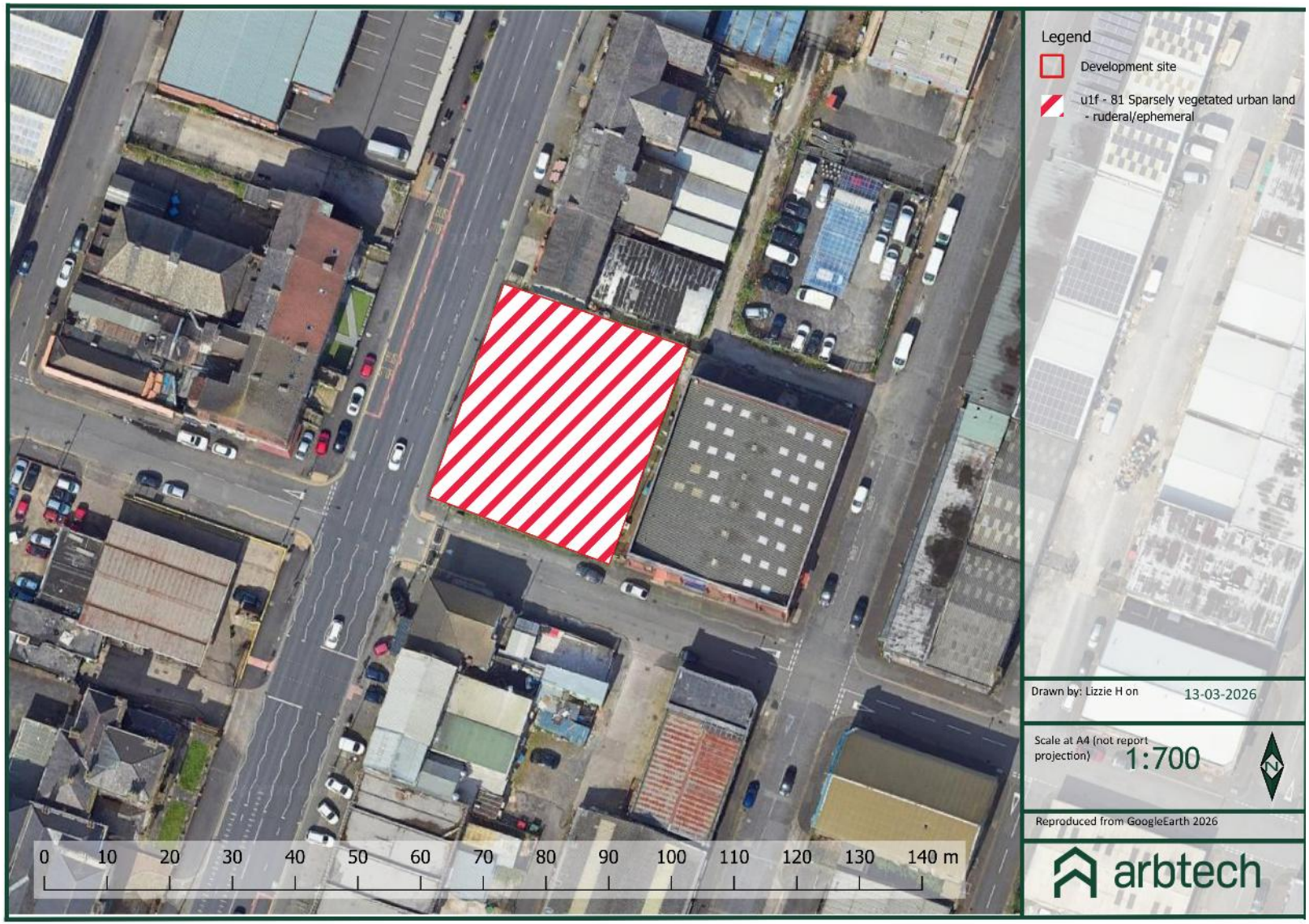
- Creation of fence gaps (14cm x 14cm) to enable small mammals to travel freely through the site
- Installation of hedgehog houses in shady areas.

## Appendix 1: Proposed Development Plan



## Appendix 2: Site Location Plan

## Appendix 3: Habitat Survey Plan



## Appendix 4: Site Photographs

*Photo 1: Ruderal/Ephemeral*

*Photo 2: Ruderal/Ephemeral*

*Photo 3: Japanese knotweed*

*Photo 4: Holes in a soil mound suitable for small mammals*

| | |
|---|---|
| <br>*Photo 5: Small hole ~10cmx10cm at eastern section of the site* | |

## Appendix 5: Baseline Condition Assessments

*Table 6a: Ruderal/Ephemeral condition assessment.*

| | Criteria Description | Criteria Passed? |
|---|---|---|
| **A** | Vegetation structure is varied, providing opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live, eat and breed. A single structural habitat component or vegetation type does not account for more than 80% of the total habitat area. | **N** |
| **B** | The habitat parcel contains different plant species that are beneficial for wildlife, for example flowering species providing nectar sources for a range of invertebrates at different times of year. | **N** |
| **C** | Invasive non-native plant species (listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and others which are to the detriment of native wildlife (using professional judgement) cover less than 5% of the total vegetated area. | **N** |
| **BONUS** | There is a complete absence of invasive non-native plant species (listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and others which are to the detriment of native wildlife (using professional judgement). **Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Good condition.** | **N** |
| | | **Total 0/3** |
| | Condition Poor due to passing 0 of 3 criteria and all essential criteria. | |

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## Version Control

| Status | Issue | Name | Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| Draft | V0.1 | Lizzie Hill BSc (Hons), MSc, Graduate Ecologist | 13/03/2026 |
| Draft | 0.2 | Elen Griffin BSc (Hons), MRSB, Senior Ecologist | 16/03/2026 |
| Final | V1 | Lizzie Hill BSc (Hons), MSc, Graduate Ecologist | 16/03/2026 |