262 Ryebank Road, Chorlton, Manchester

Ecology Assessment

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Kingdom Ecology have carried out an Ecological Walkover Survey and initial Bat Scoping Assessment of a detached house at 262 Ryebank Road, Chorlton, Manchester, M21 9LJ (National Grid Reference SJ 8094 8323).

The assessment has been carried out to identify any ecological constraints which should be considered during proposed works to redevelop the site and to allow an assessment as to whether the development will deliver a biodiversity net gain.

The development proposals are to demolish and built to new semi-detached houses.

Field surveys were completed the 9th May 2024. Surveys were led Richard Roe (BSc, MSc, MIEEM, CEnv). Richard has extensive experience of undertaking habitat and protected species and habitat surveys as a professional ecological consultant with over twenty years' experience. Richard holds a Level 4 FISC and a Level 4 Bat Class Licence.

1.2 Purpose of Report

This report provides the findings of field surveys undertaken at the site. Surveys aimed to identify habitats and species which are either of importance in terms of their conservation value or are afforded statutory legal protection. The presence of such habitats or species would form a material consideration during the planning process and could pose a constraint to the redevelopment of the site.

Survey comprised of an initial ecological walkover survey of the site including a daytime assessment of the suitability of the affected building to support roosting bats.

Following a description of the survey findings and an evaluation of habitats at the site, the report goes on to make recommendations for further works, mitigation, and ecological enhancement measures where relevant.

1.3 Protected Species Legislation

1.3.1 Bats

All British bat species are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and through their inclusion in Schedule II of the Habitats Regulations 2010 which transpose Annex II of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora ("EC Habitats Directive") which defines European protected species of animals.

British bats species are afforded further protection by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Taken together, this legislation makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture bats.
- Deliberately disturb bats, whether at roost or not.
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to bat roosts.
- Possess or transport bats, unless acquired legally.
- Sell, barter or exchange bats.

A bat roost is interpreted as "any structure or place, which any wild bat uses for shelter or protection." (Bat Conservation Trust 2023[1]). A bat roost is protected whether or not bats are present at the time.

All species of British bat are considered a European Protected Species (EPS). The Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations (2010) provide derogation against certain offences which could potentially affect an EPS through the EPS Licensing system.

1.3.2 Birds

All wild birds in England and Wales are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird, or take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or its eggs.

[1] Bat Conservation Trust (2023) 'Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition'

2 Field Survey Methods

2.1 Survey Aims and Objectives

The survey aim was to assess the site as to its ecological importance by assessing the value of habitats and their suitability to support any protected or notable species. The purpose of this was to highlight any ecological constraints associated with future development proposals.

Survey comprised of an ecological walkover survey, this included an assessment of habitats at the site in terms of their suitability to support any protected species including breeding birds and bats.

Species that are considered unlikely to be significantly affected by the proposed development, even if known to be present in the general vicinity, were 'scoped out' of the assessment.

Survey also aimed to identify opportunities for ecological enhancement and to inform potential mitigation measures, if required, to ameliorate any negative impacts attributable to the proposed works.

2.2 Survey Methods

2.2.1 Ecological Walkover Survey

An Ecological Walkover of the site was undertaken on the 9th May 2024.

The aims of the walkover survey were to:

- identify areas or habitats that are of particular ecological interest for nature conservation and which require more detailed investigation;
- provide a broad botanical description of habitats present based upon UKHab classifications;
- provide additional information regarding incidental observations of protected species or non-native, invasive species;
- to assess the site as to its ecological importance by assessing the value of habitats and their suitability to support any protected or notable species (including badgers, bats and breeding birds).

A map of habitats recorded at the study site is shown in Figure 1. Typical habitats recorded at the site are also shown in photographs in the Appendix.

2.2.2 Daytime Bat Inspection

The building was assessed as to its suitability to support bats following standard methodologies prescribed in English Nature's *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* (Mitchell-Jones 2004)[2] and the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines* 4th Edition (BCT 2023)[3].

Survey, comprising of an inspection of the interior and exterior of the building, was undertaken during daylight conditions using binoculars and a high-powered torch. The survey was undertaken during daylight hours on the 9th May 2023.

In addition to searching for evidence of an actual bat roost the survey also aimed to assess the suitability of the building to support bats and consequently the likelihood of a bat roost being present but with no obvious field signs.

Survey assessed the building's roost suitability by examining structural features and the surrounding habitat. Structural features that will influence the suitability of a building to support roosting bats include the presence of a roof void; access points into a building including gaps beneath barge boards, gaps under lead flashing, gaps within masonry, loose tiles etc, complexity of any roof void, daytime light levels in roof void etc.

Important habitat features surrounding the structures which could influence roost potential include: whether the structure is in a semi-rural or parkland location, proximity to a significant linear feature (e.g. watercourse, mature hedgerow, wooded lane) or an area of woodland etc.

Taking account of these architectural and habitat features, the building was assigned a level of roost suitability. This assessment considered roost suitability criteria as summarised in Table 1 below and taken from the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines* 4th Edition.

[2] Mitchell-Jones, A.J. 2004. Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, Peterborough.

[3] Bat Conservation Trust (2023) 'Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition'

Table 1- Bat Roost Suitability Criteria

Suitability	***Description of Potential Roosting Habitats***
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e., a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels.
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion. Structure has Negligible habitat features likely to be used by roosting bats.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger number of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation). A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground of features seen with only very limited roosting potential.
Moderate	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, condition and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
High	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.

3 Survey Results

3.1 Site Description

The study site comprises of a detached house and adjacent garden located on Ryebank Road on the western edge of the suburb of Chorlton, Manchester.

Development proposals would see the demolition the house and the construction of two semi-detached houses.

The site is located on the western edge of the suburb of Chorlton, Manchester. Immediate surrounding habitats comprise of further residential housing with established gardens. There are areas of parkland located within relative proximity to the site. This includes Longford Park which is located approximately 150 m to the west of the site and Turner Moss Playing Fields which are located approximately 180 m to the south of the site. The nearby areas of parkland are considered to offer good opportunities for foraging bats.

Habitats around the site are considered to be of '**low**' value for foraging bats.

3.1.1 Habitat Description

In summary, the building is set within a vegetated garden which appears to have gone largely unmanaged in the recent past. There are areas of lawn to the front and rear of the house with fringes of ruderal vegetation around the edges of the site. This ruderal vegetation includes patches of bramble, hedge bindweed, wood avens and ivy.

The areas of lawn are grass dominated and comprise of Yorkshire Fog and perennial rye, with sweet vernal grass and red fescue. Some common grassland herbs are present within the lawn, these include dandelion and common ragwort. The lawn is found to support approximately five species per metre square (grassland recorded as modified grassland in a 'poor' condition). There are several trees that have been recently removed from the garden. The felled trees include a medium-sized beech and two medium sized sycamore. A stand of laurel and a patch of elder scrub also appears to have been cleared from the site as well as a stand of bramble scrub at the rear of the site. There is also a dilapidated caravan and base of a former shed/wooden structure at the rear of the garden.

Habitats recorded at the study site are shown on Photographs and on Figure 1 in the Appendix.

3.2 Protected Species

3.2.1 Bat Scoping Assessment

The detached house is located on Ryebank Road on the western edge of the suburb of Chorlton, Manchester. The house is a 1.5 storey, detached brick-built structure, considered likely to be of 1930s origin. The house is currently vacant.

The building has a hipped roof clad in ceramic tiles. The roof pitch runs down to the tops of the ground floor windows with dormer windows located within the building's upper floors and projecting from the roof pitches. At the rear of the house, there is a conservatory and a small, single-storey flat roofed extension.

Internally, the upper floor rooms extend partially into the roof void space, therefore there is a narrow loft space running above the upper floor rooms. The ground and first floor rooms are considered to be unsuitable for roosting bats. The loft space is approximately 1.5 m in height and is approximately 10 m long x 1.5 m in width. The internal face of the roof is lined with bitumen hessian felt and the loft space is lined with rockwool insulation. There is a water tank within the loft space and so the void is relatively cluttered. The loft space is heavily cobwebbed including cobwebbing spanning the internal void space.

No obvious potential bat access points or bat droppings were found within loft space. Mouse droppings are present.

The main house is largely in good condition. The brickwork is well pointed; the roof tiles are largely intact; and the hip and ridge tiles appear to be mostly well mortared. However, there are several potential features offering suitable bat roosting habitat. These include areas of missing and raised hanging tile (Target Note 1, 4, 5 & 8 on Figure 3 in the Appendix), gaps between overlapping tiles at the half gables located at the front face of the building (Target Note 3), gaps between the hanging tiles and the roof structure (Target Note 2), missing roof rosemary tiles (Target Note 6), and raised ridge tiles (Target Note 7).

Taking account of the location of the building and the potential bat roosting features identified, the building was assessed as offering a **'moderate'** bat roosting potential.

Adjacent to the house there is a small, detached garage with a pitched, gable ended roof clad in interlocking concrete tiles. The verges of the garage are sealed in plastic verge capping. The South face of the garage is clad in hanging tiles. These appear to be mostly intact with some minor crevices. The garage has a glazed window and has a small loft space which is approximately 50 cm in height. The loft space is heavily cobwebbed and the internal face of the roof is lined with bitumen hessian felt.

The garage building was assessed as offering a '**negligible**' bat roosting potential.

3.2.2 Breeding Birds

The scrub habitat located around the perimeter of the site offers suitable bird nesting habitat during the breeding season.

3.2.3 Other Protected or Notable Species

It is considered unlikely that any other protected species would be present within the proposed development areas.

4 Summary & Recommendations

4.1 Habitats

4.1.1 Summary

Kingdom Ecology have carried out an Ecological Walkover Survey of a large detached house located at 262 Ryebank Road, Chorlton, Manchester. Development proposals demolish an built two new semi-detached dwellings.

These works would affect highly modified habitats which comprise of species hardstanding and vegetated garden.

The proposed development area is considered to support habitats which are mostly of limited ecological value.

Recommendations to enhance the biodiversity value of the proposed development are provided in section 4.3. This includes the installation of bat and bird boxes.

Section 4.4 of the report considers the baseline ecological value of the site and measures this against the ecological value of the proposed development in order to determine whether the proposals will result in a net gain in terms of their biodiversity value.

4.2 Protected Species

4.2.1 Birds

Much of the tall vegetation has already been removed from site, therefore it is considered to be unlikely that any nesting birds would be affected by future works.

However, if during works any nesting birds are found, works should immediately stop and further advice should be sought from an appropriately qualified ecologist.

4.2.2 Bats

The daytime bat scoping inspection examined the house with regards to its suitability to support roosting bats.

The site is located within a suburban setting with immediate surrounding habitats considered to be of relatively low value for foraging bats. However, some areas of more valuable bat foraging habitat are located within relative proximity to the site. This includes Longford Park which is located approximately 150 m to the west of the site and Turner Moss Playing Fields which are located approximately 180 m to the south of the site.

The survey found the interior of the main house to be of limited suitability for bats with limited internal crevice features.

However, the exterior of the house has several potential bat roosting features. These are largely associated with crevices around hanging tiles, occasional missing or raised roof tiles and gaps under tiles at the gable. These features all offer suitable roosting habitat for individual or low numbers of non-breeding bats.

Taking account of the potential bat roosting features identified and the building's location, the house was assessed as offering '**moderate**' bat roosting suitability.

4.2.3 Further Bat Survey

In order to further assess the identified potential bat roosting features, it is recommended that at a further two dusk/dawn bat activity surveys are carried out during the peak active bat survey season (between May and September with at least one survey completed between late May and the end of August).

The survey should use two bat surveyors so that all identified potential bat roosting features can be fully assessed.

The surveys would aim to confirm the presence or otherwise of any bat roosts associated with the building. Recommended surveyor locations are shown on Figure 1.

If any roosting bats are encountered or high levels of bat activity are recorded around the property, further nocturnal surveys may be required and any future development of the site may need to be carried out following a European Protected Species License.

Pending the findings of the further nocturnal bat surveys, further recommendations regarding bat roost mitigation measures and compensation habitat should be provided by an appropriately qualified ecologist.

Even if no evidence of roosting bats is found during further surveys, it is recommended that additional bat roosting habitat is provided at the site. This could comprise of bat slates, bat boxes and bat bricks which can be installed within the extended new property, or a bat box could be installed in the retained silver birch tree located within the rear garden. The model and location of bat boxes should be determined by an appropriately qualified ecologist.

4.2.4 Other Protected Species

The site is considered unlikely to support any other protected species.

4.3 Ecological Enhancements

It is recommended that opportunities to enhance the ecological value of the development area are taken.

4.3.1 Bat and Bird Boxes

The proposed development should include provision for roosting bats and breeding birds. This can be achieved through the installation of bat boxes (recommended model Habibat 003) and sparrow nest boxes (model Schwegler 1SP) into the proposed new dwellings.

The bat and bird boxes can be built into the brick walls of the proposed extension so as to remain visually unobtrusive.

The precise location, model and number of bat and bird boxes should be determined by an appropriately qualified ecologist.

5 Appendix

Photograph 1- East Face of the Building



Photograph 2- West face of the Building



Photograph 3- Loft space interior



Photograph 4- Interior of the Building.



Photograph 5- Small garage at Target Note 4



Photograph 6- Rear garden



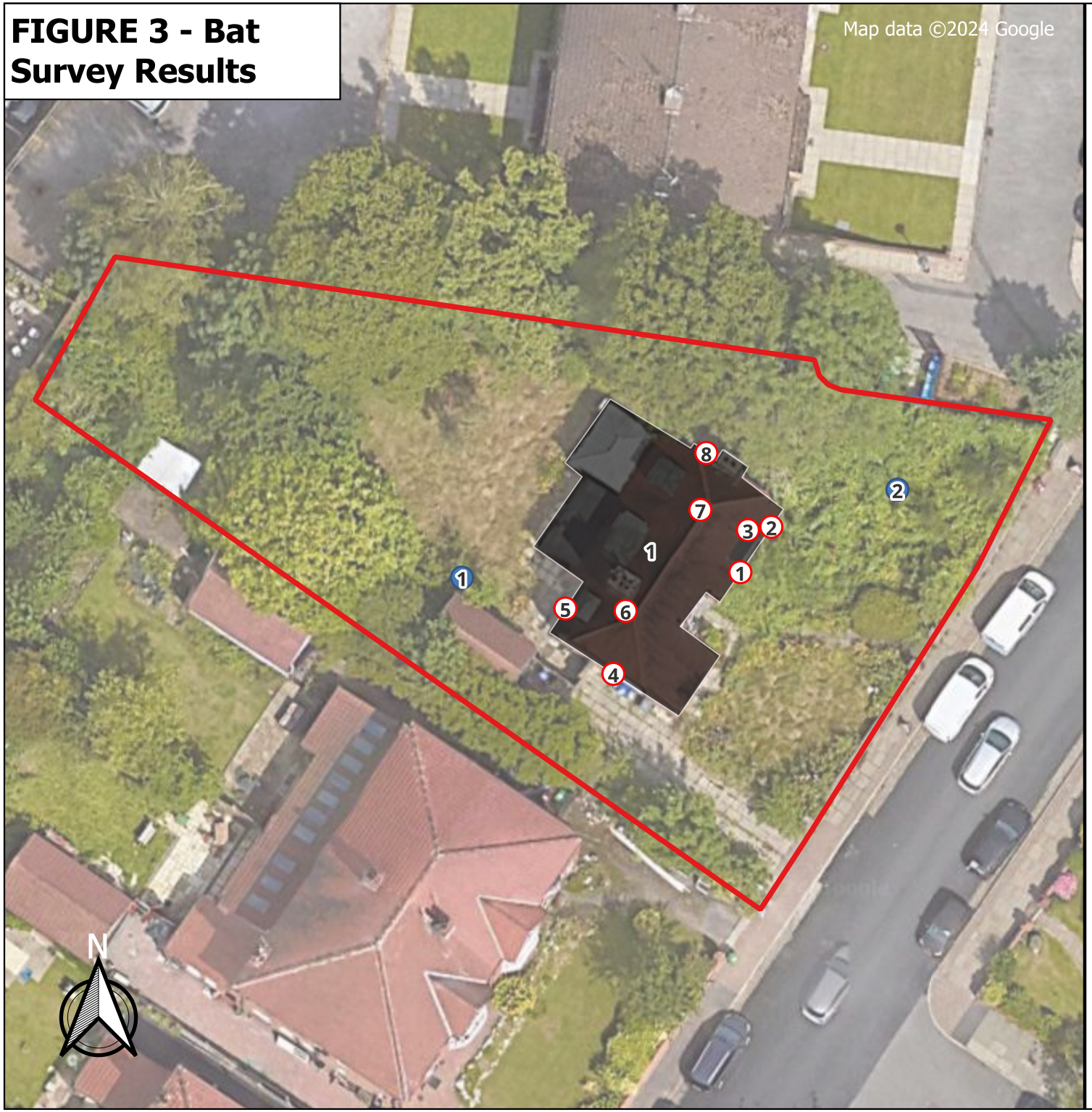
Photograph 7 – Potential feature (Target Note 1)



Photograph 8 – Raised ridge tile (Target Note 7)



FIGURE 3 - Bat Survey Results



KEY

- Red Boundary
- Building
- Bat Surveyor Location
- Target Note

0 10 20 m