Piccadilly Gardens Redevelopment Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

August 2026

PREPARED FOR

Galliford Try on behalf of Manchester City Council



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Executive Summary

Civic Engineers Limited was commissioned by Galliford Try on behalf of Manchester City Council to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester. The appraisal has been completed to support a full planning application for the redevelopment of the Site, with the objective of creating a vibrant and functional public realm. The purpose of the PEA is to establish the baseline ecological conditions, including the habitats present and any evidence of protected or notable species that could be affected by the proposed redevelopment.

No statutory or non-statutory designated sites are located within, or directly adjacent to the Site boundary, and none are present within 5 km of the site. On this basis, it is considered that no designated sites are ecologically connected to the Site and therefore none will be affected by the proposed redevelopment of Piccadilly Gardens.

Habitat within the Site comprises predominantly modified (amenity) grassland, hardstanding associated with pavements and road/tram infrastructure, and urban trees. These habitats are of **Site and local-level importance**. No potential Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTEs) or invasive non-native species (INNS) were identified within or adjacent to the Site.

The habitats on and adjacent the Site are suitable for; breeding birds, west European hedgehog, and commuting and foraging bats. No requirement for protected species surveys or licence application at present.

A full list of potential impacts has been identified and presented in Section 4. They relate to the loss and/or degradation of the habitats themselves which are of site and local-level importance and subsequent effects on the species which occupy/may occupy those habitats.

Mitigation recommendations designed to avoid and minimise impacts are provided in Section 5. These recommendations include;

- Works causing loud noise and vibration May to August inclusive (main bat activity season) should be limited to daylight hours to avoid intolerable disturbance to foraging and commuting bats and hedgehog in the locality.
- All site personnel should be made aware of ecological constraints (i.e. bats, hedgehogs and nesting birds) present in and around the Site within the site induction / toolbox talk.
- Vegetation clearance works should be scheduled to commence September to March, inclusive, to avoid the breeding bird season and avoid constraints in relation to nesting birds.
- If clearance is scheduled to take place during the nesting bird season a nesting bird check should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist 48 hours prior to clearance.
- Any excavations created during the works should not be left open for mammals to become trapped. Appropriate covers should be fitted at the end of every working day. At the very least, a shallow sloping edge or some form of ramp should be placed in the excavations to allow any animals to climb out.

Opportunities for delivering biodiversity enhancement from future development have been identified and include;

- Future landscaping of the Site should aim to enhance existing green infrastructure and encourage long-term habitat connectivity to the wider landscape.
- Where possible, sourcing seeds, bulbs and grass turfs of local provenance (north England producers) is key to achieving the best biodiversity outcome.
- Artificial hedgehog hibernacula could be installed.
- Woodcrete and reed insect blocks or ‘bug hotels’’ could be installed to provide shelter for insects which may be present.
- Installation of gully pot ladders to allow safe egress for wildlife which may become trapped within street drainage features.
- A swift tower could be installed to provide nesting provision within the city centre.

Introduction

1.1. Terms of Reference

Civic Engineers Limited was commissioned by Galliford Try on behalf of Manchester City Council to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester. The appraisal has been completed to support a full planning application for the redevelopment of the Site, with the objective of creating a vibrant and functional public realm. The purpose of the PEA is to establish the baseline ecological conditions, including the habitats present and any evidence of protected or notable species that could be affected by the proposed redevelopment.

The 'Site' is defined as the area demarcated by the fixed red line boundary as shown in Appendix A. The 'survey area' constitutes the area of the Site plus appropriate buffers.

The results and recommendations in this document relate to the Site boundary as provided by the client at the time of the survey (April 2026).

1.2. Project Description and Background

Piccadilly Gardens is an open, public realm space and public transport hub, located in central Manchester, bordering the Northern Quarter of the city centre, and is approximately 0.93 hectares (ha) in size. It is estimated that approximately 150,000 people pass through the gardens daily[1]. The gardens currently offer little biodiversity value or functionality in terms of fostering positive social interaction or driving local economic activity. In recent years, the gardens have become associated with public disorder.

Redevelopment and reconfiguration of Piccadilly Gardens comprising works to the public realm including public open space and use of space for events, together with decommissioning and removal of the existing fountain; creation of play space, lawn area, hard and soft landscaping; lighting; and drainage and other associated infrastructure; and a severable plot for a future ancillary structure with associated interim landscaping.

The proposals make provision for a future structure within the Gardens, which will complement the ongoing investment in and refurbishment of the Piccadilly Gardens landscape. The structure does not form part of this application and will be brought forward under a separate full planning application.

The proposals seek to enhance the environmental quality, accessibility, safety and functionality of Piccadilly Gardens, creating a high-quality civic destination that reflects its importance within Manchester City Centre.

1.3. Scope of Report

The aim of the survey was to determine the ecological baseline and identify important ecological features which may be affected by the proposed redevelopment of the Site and inform redevelopment plans. The main objectives were as follows:

- Conduct a desk study to gather previously recorded biological data relating to the Site.
- Verify broad habitats present on the Site.
- Search for field evidence of a range of protected or notable species which may frequent the survey area.
- Identify suitable habitat for protected or notable species in the survey area.
- Evaluate the habitats and species applicable to Site against geographic levels of importance.
- Appraise the potential impacts to habitats and species should no avoidance, mitigation or compensation be applied within the proposed project.
- Make recommendations for any further survey to inform the proposed project and/or species licensing requirements.
- Suggest broad measures to avoid, minimise and compensate for the predicted negative ecological effects associated with the proposed project.
- Suggest opportunities offered by the proposed development to deliver biodiversity gain.

1 The Mill (February 2024) Can anyone save Piccadilly Gardens? Available at: https://manchestermill.co.uk/can-anyone-save-piccadilly-gardens/ (Accessed May 2026).

1.4. Site Location and Description

The Site is in Manchester city centre (M1 1LU) and is centred at National Grid Reference (NGR) SJ 84375 98275. Ground levels across the Site are relatively uniform, at approximately 50 m above sea level (asl).

The Site comprises an area of public realm, incorporating amenity grassland, a water fountain, urban tree planting, and extensive hardstanding associated with pavements and surrounding road and tram infrastructure. At the time of survey, temporary street food providers were on Site.

1.5. Legislation

European and national legislation, planning policies, conservation initiatives and general guidance relevant to this study include:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended),
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA)
- Protection of Badgers Act 1992
- The Environment Act 2021
- The UK National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan[2]
- Manchester Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (LBAP) 2022- 2030[3]
- Manchester City Council Local Development Plan 2023[4].

A summary of protected species legislation is provided in Appendix B.

1.6. Report Usage

The information and recommendations contained within this report have been prepared in the specific context stated above and should not be utilised in any other context without prior written permission from Civic Engineers Limited.

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2. Methodology

2.1. Desk Study

To determine the ecological baseline, a desk study was conducted in advance of the field survey, in April 2026. The following sources were checked:

- MAGIC website[5] for statutory designated sites up to 5km of the Site.
- Manchester Local Development Plan 2020 for non-statutory designated sites up to 1km from the Site
- Records of ancient woodland available through Natural England Open Data Publication[6], within or adjacent to the Site.
- The UK Biodiversity Action Plan List[7] for Priority Habitats and Species

2 UK's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for 2030 . Available at: https://uk.chm-cbd.net/sites/gb/files/2025-04/31.03.2025_UK_National_Biodiversity_Strategy_and_Action_Plan.pdf (Accessed May 2026).

3 Manchester Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2022 – 2030:.Available online at Manchester Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan | Manchester City Council (Accessed May 2026)

4 Manchester City Council Local Development Plan. Available online at: https://www.manchester.gov.uk/planning-and-regeneration/planning/core-strategy/interactive-proposals-map (Accessed May 2026)

5 MAGIC. Available at: https://magic.defra.gov.uk/home.htm (Accessed, May 2026)

6 Ancient Woodland Inventory for England. Available at: https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/a14064ca50e242c4a92d020764a6d9df_0/about (Accessed, May 2026)

7 Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/habitats-and-species-of-principal-importance-in-england (Accessed, May 2026)

- Manchester Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)[3] for Local Priority Habitats and Species
- Buglife, B-Lines[8] to locate 'insect pathways' present across landscapes
- Important Invertebrate Areas (IIA)[9] to locate national/international places for the conservation of invertebrate and habitats upon which they rely upon.
- Aerial imagery from Google Earth[10]
- Cyan Lines[11] to identify pilot green-blue routes across Manchester.
- National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Trust Atlas for publicly accessible biological records

2.2. Field Study

All field survey work was undertaken by Civic Engineers Limited, Principal Ecologist Aisling Wallace who is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM). The survey focussed on plants and habitats on the Site and faunal species most likely to be found in the habitats which make up the landscape in and around the Site. The survey was undertaken on 29th April 2026. Conditions were bright and dry, with a light easterly breeze. The average air temperature during the survey was 18°C. The weather in the week pre-ceding the survey was largely dry.

Table 1 provides an overview of the area surveyed for specific habitats, species, and species groups. Detailed methods regarding habitat and species surveys are provided below. Red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*), pine marten (*Martes martes*), badger (*Meles meles*), water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*), otter (*Lutra lutra*), brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*), reptiles and amphibians, were scope out of the assessment, as no suitable habitat or desk study records were identified as part of the appraisal.

Table 1: Survey Areas

Habitats/ Species/ Species Group	Survey Area
UKHab Classification	Site
Groundwater Dependant Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTEs)	Site plus any connected wetland within 250m which may be impacted by works
Invasive Non- native Species (INNS)	Site plus 50m buffer
Bats	Site plus 50m buffer
West European Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*)	Site plus 50m buffer
Birds	Site plus 50m buffer
Invertebrates	Site plus 50m buffer

2.2.1. UKHab Classification Survey

A UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Survey was carried out in accordance with the user manual. UKHab is a hierarchical system for rapidly recording and classifying habitat via satellite imagery and field survey. The system comprises 5 levels of Primary Habitats which include ecosystems, broad habitats, priority habitats and Annex I habitats, along with non-hierarchical secondary codes which provide information on the environment, management, and origin of Primary Habitats. The secondary codes are also used to map habitat mosaics and identify notable species features. The information collected is used to identify ecologically sensitive features and recommend mitigation and enhancement measures in connection with a proposed development.

The surveyor utilised the UKHab Professional edition with a Minimum Mapping Unit (MMU) of 25m^2 and aimed to categorise habitats up to level 5. Where the level 5 habitat could not be determined or is not reflective of the habitat type due to a lack of indicative species, habitats were categorised to level 4 or the broader level 3 habitat. Where applicable, alterations to UKHab symbology on maps may occur where relevant for clarity.

8 Available at: Buglife, B-Lines, Available at: B-Lines - Buglife (Accessed, May 2026)

9 Available at: Important Invertebrate Areas - Buglife (Accessed, May 2026)

10 Available at: https://www.google.com/earth/ (Accessed, May 2026)

11 Cyan Lines is a plan to transform and link Manchester's green and blue spaces, to enable residents and visitors to better connect with nature.

2.2.2. Groundwater Dependant Terrestrial Ecosystems

The Functional Wetland Typology was used to aid identification of wetland habitats that derive their water from groundwater and surface water. This information is useful in identifying if and where further surveys are required to identify the presence and potential sensitivity of Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTEs). To help assess ground water dependency, observations of local topography, underlying geology, and features such as springs, diffuse ground water emergence and floristic indicators of base enrichment were made.

2.2.3. Invasive Non- native Species

The survey included a check for the presence of any invasive non-native species (INNS) including but not limited to the following:

- Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*);
- Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*); and
- Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*).

2.2.4. Bats

An assessment was undertaken in accordance with the criteria set out by the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT). Mobile street food catering trucks and three statues were identified within the Site boundary. Multiple buildings were present adjacent the Site, associated with Mosley Street, Parker Street and Portland Street. Twenty-six semi-mature trees were identified within the Site boundary, a further approximately 70 urban trees were identified in the wider Piccadilly Gardens area, beyond the Site boundary. The suitability of roosting, commuting and foraging habitats was classified according to the criteria in Table 2.

Table 2: Suitability Classification of Roosting, Commuting, and Foraging Habitats for Bats

SUITABILITY	ROOSTING FEATURES	FORAGING AND COMMUTING HABITATS
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/ stable hibernation site.	Continuous high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. The site is close to and connected to known roosts.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/ stable hibernation site but could be used by individual hibernating bats).	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats as flightpaths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by another habitat. Suitable but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Negligible	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats as flightpaths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by another habitat. Suitable but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flightpaths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains to account for non-standard bat behaviour.

None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats as any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/ suitable shelter at all ground/ underground levels).	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/ protection for flight-lines or generate/ shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).

The suitability of roosting habitats in trees was classified according to the criteria in Table 3.

Table 3: Suitability of Roosting Habitats in Trees

Suitability[12]	Roosting Features
PRF	A tree with at least one PRF present
FAR	Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree
NONE	Either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any

Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) in trees and structures are listed in Table 4.

Table 4: PRF's in Trees and Structures Frequently Used by Bats for Roosting

PRFs in trees frequently used as bat roosts	Access points in structures frequently used as bat roosts	Frequently used roosting locations in structures
Hollows and cavities from woodpecker, rot, and knot holes. Hazard beams and other vertical or horizontal cracks and splits	Underneath peeling paintwork or lifted rendering.	Top of chimney breasts, gable ends and dividing walls.
Partially detached plated bark	Behind hanging tiles, weatherboarding, eaves, soffit boxes, fasciae, and lead flashing	All beams and roof beams (ridge, hip etc.)
Cankers included bark and compression forks with potential cavities.	Under tiles and slates	Junction of timber joints, mortise and tenon joints
Partially detached ivy with stem diameters more than 50mm	Gaps in brickwork and stonework	Behind purlins
Bat or bird boxes	Gaps in rendering behind gutters	Between tiles/slates and the roof lining

2.2.5. West European Hedgehog

The suitability of the habitats for hedgehog was assessed according to guidance[13]. Suitable habitats include:

- Grazed pastureland separated into small fields by hedgerows
- Deciduous woodland copses (oak, beech)
- Overgrown verges or margins
- Suburban gardens, woodpiles or parklands

2.2.6. Birds

Habitats within the survey area were assessed for their suitability to support breeding and over wintering birds.

Observations of birds were also noted during the survey including incidental records of the following:

- Birds present – nesting or foraging onsite, flying over site, or corpses
- Pellets/droppings
- Nests – within trees or in ground vegetation

12 Potential Roost Feature (PRF), Further Assessment Required (FAR)

13 Cresswell, W.J., Birks, J.D.S., Dean, M., Pacheco, M., Trewhella, W.J., Wells, D. and Wray, S. (2012). UK BAP Mammals: Interim Guidance for Survey Methodologies, Impact Assessment and Mitigation. The Mammal Society, Southampton

- Eggs – intact/broken or within nest/below nest
- Feathers – adult or natal down

2.2.7. Invertebrates

In addition to the desk-based assessment, a general habitat suitability survey was made of the Sites suitability to host invertebrate species.

2.3. Survey Constraints

2.3.1. Desk Study

Desk studies are limited by the reliability of third-party information and the geographical availability of biological and/or ecological records and data. This emphasises the need to collate up-to-date, site- specific data based on field surveys by experienced surveyors. The absence of a species from biological records cannot be taken to represent actual absence. Species distribution patterns should be interpreted with caution as they may reflect survey/reporting effort rather than actual distribution.

2.3.2. Field Study

The field survey was undertaken early within the botanical survey season (April–September inclusive); therefore, only a limited floral species list could be recorded.

2.4. Evaluation of Ecological Features

European, national and local governments and specialist organisations have together identified many sites, habitats and species that provide the key focus for biodiversity conservation in the UK and Ireland, supported by policy and legislation. These provide an objective starting point for identifying the important ecological features that need to be considered. A geographical level of importance, as described in Appendices C and D, has been assigned to the designated sites, habitats and species identified on the Site and in the survey area. Where a feature is important at more than one level in the table, its overriding importance is that of the highest level. Usually only the highest level of legal protection is listed.

3. Results

3.1. Statutory Designated Sites

No statutory designated sites are present within, directly adjacent or within 5km the Site boundary.

3.2. Non- Statutory Designated Sites

No non-statutory designated sites are present within or directly adjacent the Site boundary.

Two non-statutory designated sites (Sites of Biological Importance (SBI)), are located within 1km of the Site boundary and are described in Table 7 below.

Table 5 Non- statutory designated sites

Site Name	Designation	Distance & Orientation at Closest Point	Reason for Designation	Level of Importance
Locally designated sites within 1km of the site				
Rochdale Canal – Stotts Lane to Ducie Street Basin	SBI	0.314km east, at the closest point.	Standing water	County/ Regional
Ashton Lane (West)	SBI	0.417km southeast, at the closest point.	Standing Water	County/ Regional

3.3. Ancient Woodland

No areas of ancient woodland are located within the Site boundary or within 1km radius of the Site.

3.4. Habitats

A summary of the habitats present within the Site can be found in Table 6 with further description below. The UKHab plan can be found in Appendix F, with photographs in Appendix G.

Table 6: On-Site Habitats

HABITAT TYPE	HABITAT	PRIMARY CODES	SECONDARY CODES
-	-	-	200 - tree
Grassland	Modified grassland	g4	
Urban	Developed land; Sealed surface	u1b	800 - road
	Buildings	u1b5	

3.4.1. Grassland

3.4.1.2 Modified grassland (g4)

The central part of Piccadilly Gardens is characterised by amenity grassland classified as modified grassland. At the time of survey, the sward was closely mown and of uniformly short height, reflecting intensive mowing management and high levels of pedestrian use (Photograph 1). Localised areas of bare ground were also present within the grassed areas because of trampling.

Owing to the very short sward and regular mowing regime, botanical diversity was limited and species identification was constrained. The grassland was species-poor and comprised common amenity grassland taxa, including perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), meadow-grass (*Poa* spp.), common daisy (*Bellis perennis*) and dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* agg.).

Modified grassland is a common and widespread habitat and does not qualify as a priority habitat within the LBAP. Within the context of this Site, it is considered to be of **Site importance** only. However, it may provide limited foraging and sheltering opportunities for common urban wildlife and can contribute to habitat connectivity across the wider urban green infrastructure network.

3.4.2. Urban

3.4.1.3 Developed land; Sealed surface (u1b)

Piccadilly Gardens is a major transport hub within Manchester city centre, linking the Arndale Centre with the Northern Quarter. The Site is dominated by hardstanding associated with pavements, roads and tram infrastructure, which together form the principal habitat within the Site (Photograph 2).

Developed land with sealed surfaces is a common and widespread urban habitat and is generally of negligible intrinsic ecological value and not considered within the LBAP. Within the context of this Site, it is not considered to provide significant ecological function. Therefore, developed land; sealed surface is assessed as being of **Site-level importance**.

3.4.1. Buildings (u1b5)

No permanent buildings are present within the proposed Site boundary. At the time of survey, several street food vendors were present in the north-western part of the Site, close to the John Peel statue. These comprised mobile catering units with timber cladding and were temporary in nature. Temporary structures are not a priority habitat within the LBAP and as such, they are considered of **Site-level importance**.

Three statues are also present within the Site boundary; the John Peel statue, Queen Victoria statue and the James Watt statue. Statues are not considered a priority habitat within the LBAP and are considered to offer negligible ecological value; therefore they are assessed as being of **Site-level importance**.

3.4.1. Urban trees (Secondary Code – 200)

Within the Site boundary, there are twenty-six, young-mature urban trees, plus and additional sixteen which are within raised planters.

Adjacent to the street food vendors, were seven London plane (*Platanus x hispanica (acerifolia*). At the time of survey, all branches had been pruned, leaving no leaf foliage (Photograph 5). The bases of this tree group were growing into the planting grid.

A further eight young-mature London plane trees were identified at the along the northern boundary of the Site. The base of the trees was noted to be growing into the planting grids.

To the west of the street food vendors, were eight, young-mature Honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*). The base of trees could not be viewed clearly due to construction barriers.

Three young-mature trees were also noted within the lawn habitat in the south-east of the Site.

Three raised planters (raised approximately 1m in height) were also noted within the Site boundary. These were planted with a mixture of ornamental trees and shrubs.

Urban trees are not a defined habitat within UKHab classification, through the promotion of nature-based solutions, urban trees are considered within the LBAP. They may provide foraging, sheltering and nesting opportunities for common urban wildlife and can contribute to habitat connectivity across the wider urban green infrastructure network. Consequently, urban trees are considered of **local importance**.

3.5. Groundwater Dependant Terrestrial Ecosystems

No evidence of ground water dependant terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTE) was identified within the Site boundary or wider survey area.

3.6. Invasive Non-Native Species

No evidence of invasive non-native species was identified within the Site boundary or wider survey area.

3.7. Protected Species

3.7.1. Disclaimer

Faunal species are transient and can move between favoured habitats regularly throughout and between years. This survey provides a snapshot of field signs present in the survey area in April 2026.

3.7.2. Bats

No records of any bat species, within the last ten years were returned within 2km radius of the Site.

Buildings and Structures

Street food vendors in temporary, wooden clad structures were recorded within the Site. No potential roost features (PRFs) were noted on the structures, as they were relatively newly constructed and therefore in good condition.

Three statues were identified within the Site, the John Peel statue, Queen Victoria statue and James Watt statue, no PRFs were identified on either.

Therefore, in reference to Table 2: buildings and structures within the proposed Site are assessed as having '**negligible suitability**' for roosting bats – "*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*".

Adjacent the proposed Site, there were many buildings associated with Mosley Street, Parker Street, Portland Street and Piccadilly. The buildings varied in design, age and use, with many mixed uses, with retail on the ground floor and accommodation or offices on upper floors. PRFs associated with degradation of shop front signage was noted across two shop fronts (Photographs 3 and 4).

Therefore, in reference to Table 2: buildings and structures adjacent the proposed Site are assessed as having '**low suitability**' for roosting bats – "*A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/ stable hibernation site but could be used by individual hibernating bats).*".

Trees

Within the Site boundary, there are twenty-six, young-mature urban trees, and an additional sixteen within raised planters. Adjacent to the street food vendors, were seven London plane (*Platanus x hispanica (acerifolia*). At the time of survey, all branches had been pruned, leaving no leaf foliage. A further eight young-mature London plane trees were identified long the northern boundary of the Site. To the west of the street food vendors, were eight, young-mature Honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*). Three young-mature trees were also noted within the lawn habitat in the south-east of the Site.

Three raised planters (raised approximately 1m in height) were also noted within the Site boundary. These were planted with a mixture of ornamental trees and shrubs.

Due to the young-mature age of the trees within the Site, no PRFs associated with aging, decay or damage were noted. Therefore, in reference to Table 3: trees within the Site were assessed as '**NONE**', either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any.

Foraging and Commuting Habitat

Within the wider Piccadilly Gardens area, beyond the proposed development Site, there are a further approximately 70 urban trees, primarily planted as linear features. Many of these trees have decorative lights wrapped around trunks and branches. However, it is thought the lights are not switched-on during spring and summer (when bats are active).

The amenity grassland offers limited floral diversity and therefore will attract limited insect (feeding) resource for bats.

There is limited vegetation and habitat connectivity in the wider city centre area. Also, due to the nature of Piccadilly Gardens being a city centre location, light and noise pollution is a constraint to commuting and foraging bats within the vicinity.

In reference to Table 2-2: this section of the Site is assessed as having '**low suitability'** for foraging and commuting habitats for bats' – "*Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats as flightpaths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by another habitat.*

All bat species found in England are classed as European Protected Species (EPS) and receive full protection under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and are of **International Importance**.

3.7.3. West European Hedgehog

Thirty-nine records of west European hedgehog, within a 2km radius of the Site, within the last 10 years were returned from the desk study. None of the records were within or adjacent the Site boundary.

Suboptimal habitat for hedgehogs is present throughout the Site, with the limited foraging habitat and nesting/ resting opportunities, associated with dense vegetation and leaf litter. However, due to the opportunistic foraging nature of hedgehogs, they may be attracted to scavenge waste food and litter dropped across the gardens. It is considered likely that hedgehog would utilise the Site.

West European hedgehog are a UK BAP priority species and therefore of **National Importance**.

3.7.4. Birds

Over 8000 records of 107 different bird species, within 2km of the Site and recorded within the last ten years were returned from the desk study. Of these, 40 species are either UK BAP or Bird of Conservation Concern[14] (BoCC) Amber or Red Listed, as listed in Table 7 below.

14 Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) are species identified as facing severe population declines, with 52 UK species currently on the "Red List" due to habitat loss, climate change, and agricultural intensification. The Red List represents species in urgent need of conservation, often having experienced a 50% or greater decline in UK breeding populations. Amber List represents a 25%- 49% decline in the UK breeding population or range over the last 25 years.

Birds likely to be present on Site are highlighted in bold:

Table 7:Conservation status of bird records

Common Name	Scientific Name	UK BAP	BoCC Status
Common tern	*Sterna hirundo*	Yes	Amber
Kestral	*Falco tinnunculus*	Yes	Amber
Greylag goose	*Anser anser*	No	Amber
Mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*	No	Amber
Pink-footed goose	*Anser brachyrhynchus*	No	Amber
Red breasted merganser	*Mergus serrator*	No	Amber
Mute swan	*Spatula clypeata*	No	Amber
Teal	*Anas crecca*	No	Amber
Black headed gull	***Chroicocephalus ridibundus***	**Yes**	**Amber**
Common gull	*Larus canus*	No	Amber
Great black-backed gull	*Larus marinus*	No	Amber
Lesser black-backed gull	***Larus fuscus***	**No**	**Amber**
Redshank	*Tringa totanus*	No	Amber
Song thrush	*Turdus philomelos*	Yes	Amber
Snipe	*Gallinago gallinago*	No	Amber
Whitethroat	*Curruca communis*	No	Amber
Wood pigeon	***Columba palumbus***	**No**	**Amber**
Bullfinch	*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*	Yes	Amber
Dunnock	*Prunella modularis*	No	Amber
Grey wagtail	*Motacilla cinerea*	No	Amber
Greenfinch	*Tringa nebularia*	No	Amber
Rook	*Corvus frugilegus*	No	Amber
Whitethroat	*Curruca communis*	Yes	Amber
Willow warbler	*Phylloscopus trochilus*	No	Amber
Wren	*Troglodytes troglodytes*	No	Amber
Swift	*Apus apus*	Yes	Red

Common Name	Scientific Name	UK BAP	BoCC Status
Dunlin	*Calidris alpina*	Yes	Red
Lapwing	*Vanellus vanellus*	Yes	Red
Ringed plover	*Charadrius hiaticula*	No	Red
Greenfinch	*Chloris chloris*	No	Red
House martin	*Delichon urbicum*	No	Red
House sparrow	*Passer domesticus*	Yes	Red
Linnet	*Linaria cannabina*	Yes	Red
Skylark	*Alauda arvensis*	No	Red
Starling	***Sturnus vulgaris***	**No**	**Red**
Tawny owl	*Strix aluco*	**No**	Amber
Tree sparrow	*Passer montanus*	Yes	Red
Herring gull	***Larus argentatus***	**Yes**	**Red**
Spotted flycatcher	*Muscicapa striata*	Yes	**Red**
Willow tit	*Poecile montanus*	Yes	Red

During the field survey nine bird species were observed: magpie (*Pica pica*), carrion crow (*Corvus corone*), wood pigeon, feral pigeon (*Columba livia*), blackbird (*Turdus merula*), starling (Red listed species) and black headed gull, herring gull and lesser black headed gull.

Habitat within and adjacent to the Site is considered suitable for opportunistic, scavenging omnivore bird species, notably gulls and corvids due to the abundance of food waste throughout the Site. Flat roof buildings adjacent the Site were also considered suitable nesting locations for gull species. Bird spike deterrents were noted on many of the window ledges of buildings adjacent the Site. No nests were noted within any of the trees within the Site.

3.7.5. Invertebrates

The Site is not located within a B- Line and not within an Important Invertebrate Area. However, at the closest point a B-Line[15] is located approximately 300m west of the Site.

A total of 11,903 records of 390 invertebrate species were returned via the desk study, including 7-spot ladybird (*Coccinella septempunctata*), common carder bee (*Aglais urticae*), blue winged olive (*Serratella ignita*) and four-barred major (*Oxycera rara*). No species identified within the desk study are considered UK BAP priority species.

Due to the dominance of hardstanding throughout the Site and wider city centre, limited habitat suitability for foraging, shelter and overwintering was identified for invertebrates. The prevalence of London plane trees within the Site, also offers only limited suitability for invertebrates when compared to native broadleaved species.

Based on the suitable habitat availability on-Site, particularly within a managed and/ or developed landscape, the potential invertebrate assemblage on Site is considered to be of **Site-level importance**.

[15] Buglife B-Lines are a network of 3km wide insect pathways spanning the UK, designed to connect fragmented wildflower- rich habitats.

4. Potential Impacts, Further Survey and Licencing

4.1. Potential Impacts

The following potential impacts may occur from the proposed redevelopment of Piccadilly Gardens:

Negative potential impacts:

Habitats

- Loss of modified grassland habitat to facilitate the development, considered of Site importance.
- Loss / altering of urban trees, to facilitate the development, considered of local importance.

Protected Species

- Potential for destruction or disturbance of bird nests, and death or injury to chicks if Site clearance works commence during the nesting bird season (March to August inclusive).
- Disturbance to nocturnal and crepuscular species (hedgehogs and bats) associated with construction activities through increased lighting and noise during and post-construction.
- Death or injury of west European hedgehog due to increased traffic during construction and operation of a future development.

Potential positive impacts:

- Landscaping considerate of biodiversity enhancement may create additional habitat for insects, bats and west European hedgehog.

4.2. Further Survey Requirements and Licensing

Ecological data on protected faunal species is generally valid for a period of 12 months, therefore annual updates to maintain a valid dataset are recommended.

A pre-construction/ vegetation clearance works check of the Site is recommended to identify any unforeseen ecological constraints.

No requirement for protected species surveys or licence application at present.

5. Mitigation and Biodiversity Enhancements

5.1. Mitigation

The following good practice mitigation is recommended based on the current level of available Site information:

- Works causing loud noise and vibration May to August inclusive (main activity season) should be limited to daylight hours to avoid intolerable disturbance to foraging and commuting bats and hedgehog in the locality.
- All site personnel should be made aware of ecological constraints (i.e. bats, hedgehogs and nesting birds) present in and around the Site within the Site induction / toolbox talk.
- Vegetation clearance works should be scheduled to commence September to March, inclusive, to avoid the breeding bird season and avoid constraints in relation to nesting birds. If clearance is scheduled to take place during the nesting bird season a nesting bird check should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist 48 hours prior to clearance.
- If any nests are identified, an exclusion zone will be created to safeguard the nest until all chicks have fledged.

- Any excavations created during the works should not be left open for mammals to become trapped. Appropriate covers should be fitted at the end of every working day. At the very least, a shallow sloping edge or some form of ramp should be placed in the excavations to allow any animals to climb out.

5.2. Opportunities for Biodiversity Gains

To comply with local and national planning policy and planning policy guidance, the following enhancements could be considered as a commitment to the full planning application:

- Future landscaping of the Site could aim to enhance existing green infrastructure and encourage long-term habitat connectivity to the wider landscape.
- Where possible sourcing seeds, trees and grass turfs of local provenance (north England producers) is key to achieving the best biodiversity outcome.
- Artificial hedgehog hibernacula could be installed.
- Woodcrete and reed insect blocks or ‘bug hotels’’ could be installed to provide shelter for insects which may be present.
- A swift tower[16] could be installed to provide nesting provision within the city centre.

The above measures are a significant contribution to the overall biodiversity value of the Site.

16 A swift tower is tall, man-made structure specifically designed to provide nesting and roosting habitats for swift. Guidelines for constructing a swift tower are available at: https://swift-conservation.org/Swift%20Towers.pdf (Accessed May 2026)

APPENDIX A

Site Location Plan

APPENDIX B

Summary of Protected Species Legislation

European Protected species (Bats)

A European Protected Species (EPS) is a species listed in the EC Directive (92/43) The Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna (the “Habitats Directive”), which is transposed into UK law through the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (the “Habitat Regulations”) as amended. Under this legislation EPSs (*e.g.* all bat species) are protected from:

(a) Deliberate or reckless capture, injuring or killing;

(b) deliberate or reckless

(i) harassment of an animal or group of animals;

(ii) disturbance of such an animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection;

(iii) disturbance of such an animal while it is rearing or otherwise caring for its young;

(iv) obstructing access to a breeding site or resting place of such an animal, or otherwise denying the animal use of the breeding site or resting place;

(v) disturbance of such an animal in a manner that is, or in circumstances which are, likely to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species to which it belongs; or

(vi) disturbing such an animal in a manner that is, or in circumstances which are, likely to impair its ability to survive, breed or reproduce, or rear or otherwise care for its young;

(c) deliberate or reckless taking or destroying the eggs of such an animal; or,

(d) damaging or destroying a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

(e) any person:

(i) possessing or controlling;

(ii) transporting;

(iii) selling or exchanging; or

(iv) offering for sale or exchange,

any live or dead animal or part of an animal or anything derived from such an animal which has been taken from the wild and which is of a species or subspecies listed in Annex IV(a) to the Habitats Directive – unless the animal from which the part or the thing in question is derived, was lawfully taken from the wild (i.e. taken from the wild in the European Union without contravention of appropriate domestic legislation and before the implementation date of the Habitats Directive (in that Country e.g. 1994 in UK) or if it was taken from elsewhere).

European Protected Species Licensing

For a licence to be issued these three tests must be satisfied:

- That the development is 'in the interests of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment';
- That there is 'no satisfactory alternative'; and
- That the derogation (i.e. any permission/licence granted) is 'not detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range'.

To obtain a licence a Method Statement is required that identifies the activities to be undertaken, the location of all resting sites (*e.g.* bat roosts), the potential effects and details of the proposed mitigation.

In some cases licences may be issued by NatureScot to enable certain otherwise illegal activities to take place for social, economic or environmental reasons (including development) as long as:

- the licensed activity will contribute to significant social, economic or environmental benefit;
- there is no satisfactory alternative; and
- there will be no significant negative impact on the conservation status of the species.

West European Hedgehog

Hedgehog are listed on Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which prohibits trapping and killing by certain methods.

General Breeding Birds

All wild bird species in the UK are protected from killing, injury and taking under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. It an offence to take, damage or destroy a nest while in use or being built, and to take or destroy the eggs of any nesting bird.

Birds listed on Schedule 1 of the Act are provided additional protection. It is an offence, with certain exceptions, to:

- Intentionally kill, injure, or take (handle) any wild Schedule 1 bird;
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy any nest whilst in use or being “built” by a Schedule 1 bird;
- Intentionally take or destroy a wild Schedule 1 bird egg;
- Have in one’s possession or control a wild Schedule 1 bird (dead or alive), or egg, (unless one can show that it was obtained legally);
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild Schedule 1 bird whilst “building” a nest or whilst in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young; and
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any dependent young of a Schedule 1 bird.

Licences can be granted by NatureScot to permit otherwise illegal acts; however licences cannot be issued for the removal of Schedule 1 birds to facilitate development.

APPENDIX C

Geographical Level of Importance of Ecological Features

Level of Importance	Sites	Habitats	Species
International	Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites; candidate or proposed habitats sites where applicable.	A viable area of habitat listed under Annex I of the Habitats Directive as retained in domestic law, or habitat critical to the life cycle of an internationally important species or assemblage.	European Protected Species protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); species of international conservation concern.
National (England/UK)	Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs), Marine Conservation Zones and Nature Conservation Review Sites.	An area of habitat that qualifies as habitat of principal importance in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, or habitat that is critical to the life cycle of a nationally important species.	Species protected under national legislation such as the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Protection of Badgers Act 1992, or listed as species of principal importance in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, where national status or legal risk justifies this level.
Regional / Greater Manchester	Sites identified as important at the Greater Manchester or city-region scale, where recognised through adopted plans, strategies or evidence bases.	Habitats identified as priorities in regional or combined-authority biodiversity strategies, nature recovery strategies or evidence bases for Greater Manchester.	Species considered scarce or priority species at the Greater Manchester or regional scale.
County / Metropolitan	Local Wildlife Sites, including Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs), and other non-statutory sites recognised in the local authority area.	Habitats identified as priorities in the Manchester Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan or other local evidence bases; semi-natural ancient woodland greater than 0.25ha may also fall within this level where appropriate.	Species identified as priorities in local biodiversity action plans or that are scarce at the county or metropolitan level.
Local		Semi-natural habitats that are important within the local area, including small areas of ancient woodland or habitats contributing to local ecological networks.	Species of local importance as defined by local authority evidence, local recording groups or site context.
Site		Common and widespread habitats not otherwise qualifying at a higher geographic level.	Common and widespread species not otherwise qualifying at a higher geographic level.
Negative			Invasive non-native species, including

Level of Importance	Sites	Habitats	Species
			species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), or otherwise recognised as invasive by the GB Non-Native Species Secretariat.

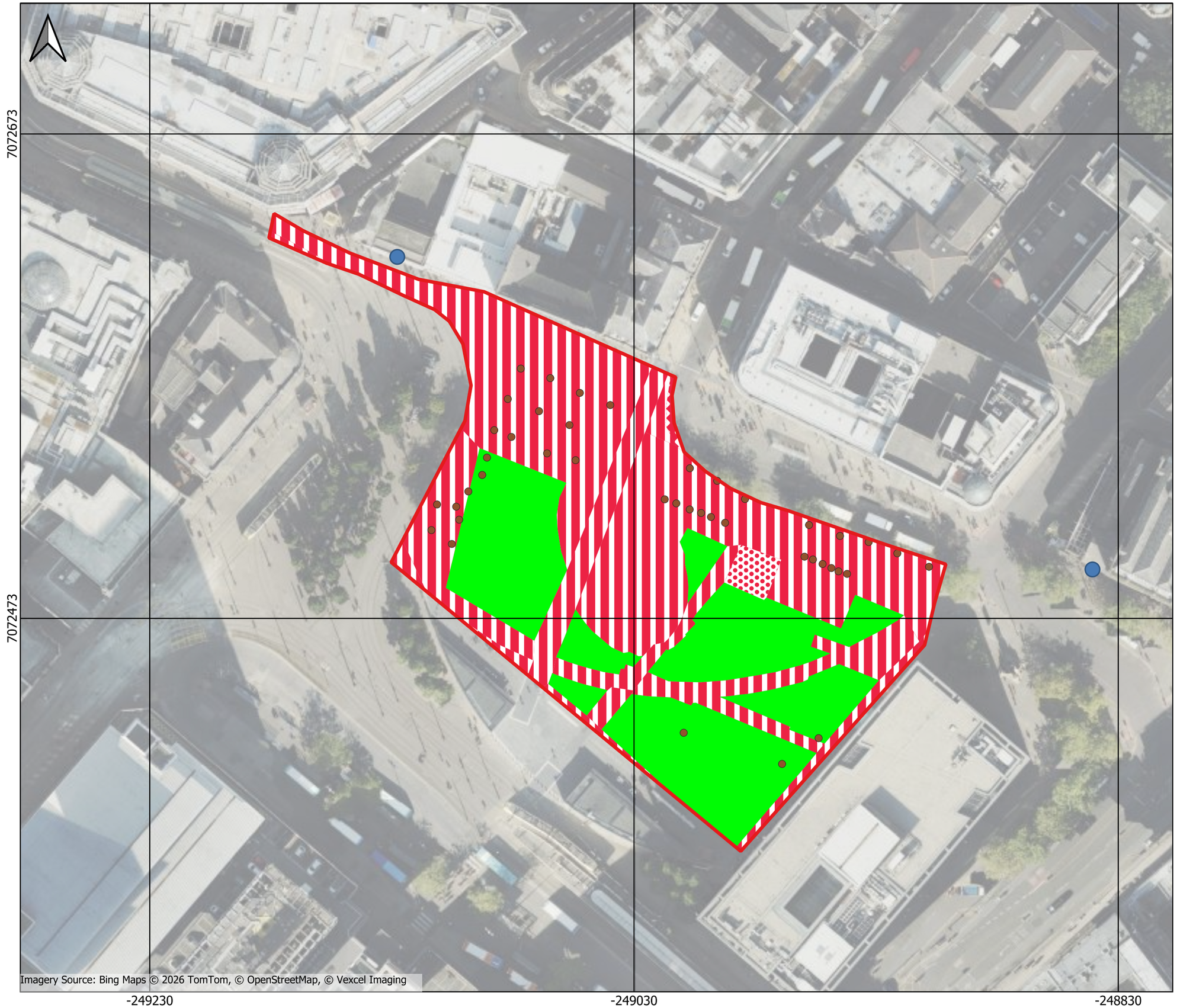
APPENDIX D

Geographical Level of Importance for Ornithology Features

Level of Importance	Assessment Criteria		
	Legal Protection	**Conservation Status**	**Population Size**
International	Any species within Annex 1 of the EU Birds Directive	Any species which is listed as Critically Endangered or Endangered on the IUCN Red List	Supporting greater than 1% of the EC population
National (UK)	Any species within Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act	Any species on the BoCC Red List	Supporting greater than 1% of the UK population
National (England)		Any species on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan	Supporting greater than 5% of the English population
Regional		Any species on the BoCC Amber List	Supporting greater than 0.5% of the UK population
County		Any species that is listed as a Priority Species in the LBAP	Supporting greater than 0.05% of the UK population
Local		BoCC Green List; or species with no conservation concern; common and widespread throughout the UK	Supporting less than 0.05% of the UK population

APPENDIX F

UKHab Plan and Ecological Constraints Plan



Legend

- Red Line Boundary
- Trees (including planters)
- g4 - Modified Grassland
- u1b - Developed Land. Sealed Surface
- u1b5 - Buildings
- u1b6 - Other Developed Land
- Potential Roost Features

Do not scale this map

Client
Manchester City Council

Project
Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester

Title
UKHab Plan and Ecological Constraints Plan

Status
FINAL

Drawing No.	Revision	Date
4475 - 001	V4	22 July 2027
Drawn	**Checked**	**Approved**
AW	RMcL	RMcL

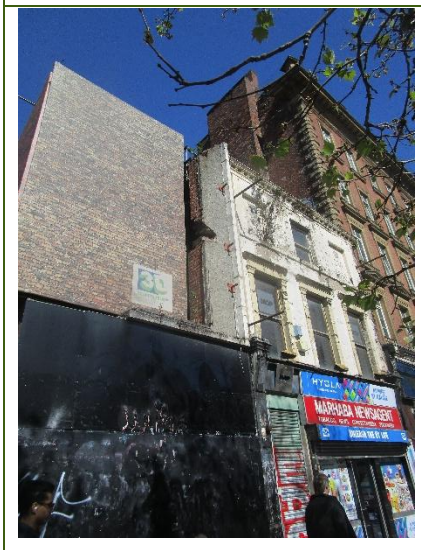
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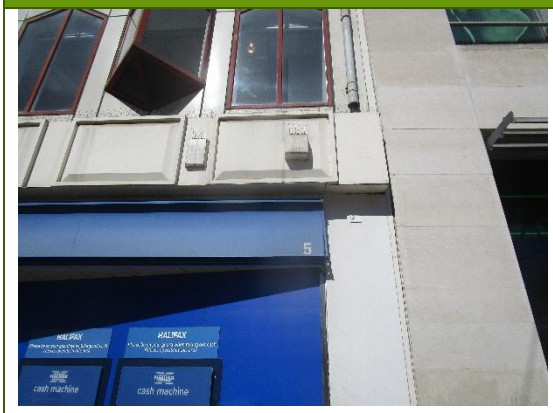
Rev	Date	Amendment	Initials
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APPENDIX E

Photographs

Photograph	Description
	**Photograph 1.** Amenity grassland. Low sward height with limited species diversity and areas of bare ground.
	**Photograph 2.** Developed land; sealed surface. Hard standing showing tram lines in the foreground, pavement in the middle ground and a road in the background.
	**Photograph 3.** Bat PRFs identified in gaps within shop front signage and loose brick work.

Photograph	Description
	**Photograph 4.** Bat PRFs identified in gaps within shop front signage.
	**Photograph 5.** Pruned London plane adjacent the street food vendors.

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together

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Legend

Red Line Boundary

Do not scale this map

Client
Manchester City Council

Project
Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester

Title
Site Location Plan

Status
FINAL

Drawing No.	Revision	Date
4475 - 002	-	21 May 2026
Drawn	**Checked**	**Approved**
AW	RMcL	RMcL

Scale 1:1500 @ A3 — 0 — 15 — 30 m

Rev	Date	Amendment	Initials
-	-	-	-

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