Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

Bower Street, Manchester
Reference: 82-796-R2-4
Date: April 26



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Site Address	Land south of Bower Street, Newton Heath, Manchester M40 2BH
Coordinates	E 387065, N 400193
Site Area	Approximately 1.22 ha
Current Site Use and Adjacent Site Use	The site predominantly comprised ruderal/ephemeral vegetation. Scattered areas of vegetation, including other neutral grassland, mixed scrub, bramble scrub, broadleaved woodland and individual trees surrounded the area of developed land. The Rochdale Canal was present adjacent to the southern site boundary.
Designated Sites	The site is located within 1 km of Clayton Vale Local Nature Reserve (LNR). The LNR is located approximately 950 m southeast of the site. The site is also located within the impact risk zone of the Rochdale Canal Special Site of Scientific Importance (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Rochdale Canal SSSI and SAC is located 2 km northeast of the site. It is not anticipated that the proposed development would have an impact on the designated sites due to the small size of the site, urban nature of the wider area which offers limited ecological connectivity, and distance from the designated sites. The site is also located downstream of the Rochdale Canal SSSI and SAC and therefore it is not anticipated that the designated site would be impacted by pollution events. Furthermore, as per the criteria listed on MAGIC (accessed January 2026), the proposed site will not require further consultation with Natural England to proceed in relation to the SSSI. This indicates that the proposed development, comprising the construction of a data centre, is unlikely to have a harmful effect on the Rochdale Canal SSSI and SAC. As such, a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) will not be required in relation to the SAC. No further statutory designated sites were identified within 1 km of the site boundary. Two Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) were identified within 1 km of the site boundary. These comprise the following: - Rochdale Canal – Stott's Lane to Ducie Street Basin SBI is located adjacent to the southern site boundary. - Bank Bridge Meadow SBI is located 890 m southeast of the site. Rochdale Canal SBI is located adjacent to the southern site boundary and as such, pollution and protection measures should be implemented to ensure there are no negative impacts upon the SBI as a result of the development. A 5 m vegetated buffer should also be implemented to ensure the canal is protected throughout the development. It is considered that the proposed development will not have any negative impacts on the Bank Bridge Meadow SBI due to its distance from the site and the nature of the proposed works. Additionally, a significant increase in the number of visitors to the SBIs is not anticipated as a result of the development, which comprises the creation of a data centre.
Survey Results	The site was found to comprise developed land; sealed surface, ruderal/ephemeral, other neutral grassland, mixed scrub, bramble scrub, individual trees and broadleaved woodland.

	The site was found to have the following potential ecological constraints: • Opportunities for common amphibians within the scrub, other neutral grassland, individual trees, ruderal/ephemeral, and woodland habitats. • Some, but limited, value for foraging bats within the onsite habitats such as the individual trees, woodland, and scrub. Commuting and foraging potential for bats within the adjacent Rochdale Canal. • Potential presence of badgers within the local area and suitable foraging and sett-building opportunities on site. • Potential presence of hedgehogs within the understorey of individual trees, scrub, and woodland habitats. • Opportunities for nesting birds within the individual trees, scrub, and woodland.
Conclusions	**No further surveys are required to facilitate the development subject to the following recommended mitigation:** • A 5 m vegetated buffer from the Rochdale Canal should be implemented to ensure the SBI is protected throughout the development. • Common amphibians are to be removed by hand from the working area during the clearance phase. • The lighting design should ensure the adjacent Rochdale Canal is maintained as a dark area during and post-construction. • Updated badger walkover prior to start of works. • Precautionary Working Methods for badger. • Vegetation should be retained where possible. Where vegetation requires removal, it should be checked for the presence of hedgehog prior to removal. If any vegetation is too dense to be fully inspected, it should be strimmed to 50 cm and checked for hedgehog before being cleared to ground level. If trees are removed, their bases should be checked, prior to removal, for sheltering hedgehogs. It is recommended that any clearance takes place outside of December-March to avoid impacting hibernating hedgehogs. • Vegetation should be retained where possible. If any vegetation requires removal, it should be removed outside of the breeding bird season (March to September inclusive). If this is not possible, a nesting bird check should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist up to 48 hrs before works commence. If a nest, or nest in construction, is located, then a stand-off distance should be maintained until the young have fledged. A 10% gain in biodiversity will be required on-site. If this cannot be achieved on-site, a conservation offset payment, or off-site compensation will be required.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

E3P was commissioned by Latos Manchester Limited to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal at Bower Street, Manchester, hereafter referred to as "the site".

This report has been prepared by Phoebe Parry BSc (Hons), Consultant Ecologist at E3P. Phoebe holds a qualifying CIEEM membership, a Level 4 Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC) and has experience undertaking Preliminary Ecological Appraisals, protected species surveys and ecological mitigation for a wide variety of projects across the UK.

1.2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Development proposals comprise the redevelopment of the site into a data centre with associated access road, parking, and hard and soft landscaping.

1.3. SITE LOCATION

The site is located in Newton Heath, east Manchester. Bower Street forms the site's northern boundary; the Rochdale Canal forms the southern site boundary, while Ten Acres Lane forms part of the site's eastern boundary. Industrial development is located along the southwestern boundary of the site. An active railway line is located 310 m south of the site at its closest point. The River Medlock is located 850 m southwest of the site. Please refer to Figure 1 for the approximate site location.

Figure 1 Approximate Site Location



1.4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal are as follows:

- Identify the major habitats present.
- Ascertain the presence or potential presence of any legally protected species and habitats.
- Recommend any further surveys or mitigation that may be required.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal comprises a desk study and site walkover. This survey has been completed as a baseline assessment of the site, and as such, please see the end of the report for further surveys and mitigation proposed.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. DESKTOP STUDY

The following sources of information and ecological records were consulted:

- MAGIC – A web-based interactive mapping system, on which geographic information regarding key environmental schemes and designations are collated, including details of statutory conservation sites, accessed January 2026.
- Aerial mapping and ordnance survey maps.
- Local data records provided by Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) on 23rd December 2025.

A 1 km search area was utilised for the data search, with this being deemed an appropriate distance for the zone of influence of the site. The 1 km data search was selected due to the size of the site as well as the ecological value of the land surrounding the site predominantly comprising industrial development.

The data search included the request for details of protected and notable species of flora and fauna within 1 km of the central grid reference of the site. In addition, a request was made for any non-statutory designated sites within 1 km of the site boundary.

Please note that a lack of up-to-date records does not confirm the absence of a species from the area. Lack of records may simply be a result of a lack of protected species surveys being undertaken within the local area.

2.2. VEGETATION AND HABITATS

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the proposed development site was undertaken by Phoebe Parry on 15th December 2025. Phoebe holds a Level 4 FISC. The weather was overcast with rain.

The walkover survey was undertaken to the standard methodology as detailed by the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (UKHab, 2023). The assessment follows the methodology as per "Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal" (CIEEM, 2017).

A vegetation and habitat plan has been produced for the proposed development site (please refer to Appendix I). The mapping is based on the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (UKHab, 2023).

Searches were made for uncommon, rare, and statutorily protected plant species, those species listed as protected in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and species which are indicators of important and uncommon plant communities. All plant nomenclature follows Stace (2019).

Searches were carried out for the presence of invasive species, including those listed on the revised (April 2010) Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) including Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*).

2.3. FAUNA

A thorough search of the site for signs of protected species of fauna was undertaken during the site walkover. These searches considered the following:

- Suitability of any ponds to support notable amphibians, and the suitability of the site's terrestrial habitats to support amphibians.
- Suitability of the site to support reptiles by way of habitat structure and refuge piles, as well as links to the wider landscape.
- Signs of badgers (*Meles meles*), by way of setts, mammal paths, foraging signs or latrines to indicate usage of the site by the species.
- Search of any watercourses for signs or suitability for water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) and otter (*Lutra lutra*) by way of burrows, resting places, holts and foraging signs.
- Suitability of the site to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats.
- Suitability of the site to support notable bird species.
- Suitability of the site to support notable invertebrates.
- Search of the site for any invasive species.

2.4. PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

The Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken by Phoebe Parry on 15th December 2025. Phoebe holds a Class 1 Natural England Bat Licence (2025-86386-CL17-BAT)

The survey involved undertaking a systematic search of the trees, searching for signs of bats, or spaces where bats would be able to access. The methodology followed that described in *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, 4th Edition (Collins, 2023)*.

The trees were categorised for their bat roosting potential as described in Table 1 in accordance with Collins (2023).

Table 1 Bat Roosting Potential Classification of Trees

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
PRF-I	PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats.
PRF-M	PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.

2.5. SURVEY LIMITATIONS

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal does not constitute a full botanical survey. Instead, key species are identified to give a representative description of each habitat type.

This survey was undertaken in December, which is an appropriate time of the year to undertake a survey. However, as a result of seasonal vegetation die back, it is possible that some species of flora may have been missed or misidentified, including some invasive/non-native species. However, due to the limited diversity of vegetation and habitats present on site, this is not considered to be a significant constraint.

A survey of the areas within 30 m of the site boundary to search for field signs of badger was not possible, due to the presence of private industrial land to the west to which access could not be gained. As such, some field signs of badger may have been missed.

These constraints have been taken into consideration during the assessment.

3. SURVEY RESULTS

3.1. SITE CONTEXT

The site predominantly comprised hardstanding which had been colonised by scrub and ruderal ephemeral vegetation. These habitats are anticipated to provide foraging and sheltering opportunities for invertebrates, terrestrial mammals and birds. Furthermore, numerous mature trees were located throughout the site which are anticipated to provide further nesting opportunities for birds.

The Rochdale Canal is located along the southern site boundary. The canal provides foraging and commuting opportunities for a variety of local fauna, including those that specialise feeding along aquatic habitats such as Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*). The canal provides a protected commuting corridor to habitats in the wider area.

The majority of the site has been characterised as a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land Priority Habitat. Upon consultation with the habitat description (Biodiversity Reporting and Information Group, 2010), the habitats on site did not meet all the essential criteria and therefore, the site is not considered to be an Open Mosaic Priority Habitat. Please see Section 3.1 for further justification.

Numerous other Open Mosaic Priority habitats are located within 1 km of the site. The closest is located approximately 20 m south of the site. Such habitat comprises brownfield land that, due to previous disturbance and modification, supports a notable diversity of habitats within close proximity. As such, they are anticipated to provide valuable habitat for a variety of fauna, including rich assemblages of invertebrates. However, there is some uncertainty in the characterisation of the habitats within these nearby areas when reviewing aerial photography.

Additionally, several areas of Deciduous Woodland BAP Priority Habitats were located within 1 km of the site boundary, the closest of which is located approximately 300 m east of the site boundary. These woodland habitats are anticipated to support a wide range of flora and fauna including specialist species of invertebrates, fungi, and birds. This habitat had limited connectivity to the site due to the dense urban development separating the site and the priority habitat.

An area of Wood-pasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat is located approximately 910 m south of the site. These habitats comprise mature/veteran trees and open grassland which can support a range of located fauna such as invertebrates, terrestrial mammals and birds. This habitat has limited connectivity to the site due to the urban development which separates the site from the priority habitat.

No ponds were located on site or within 250 m of the site boundary.

3.2. DESIGNATED SITES

The site is located within 1 km of Clayton Vale Local Nature Reserve (LNR). The LNR is located approximately 950 m southeast of the site. The River Medlock runs through the LNR. Mature, semi-natural woodland and open grassland is also present.

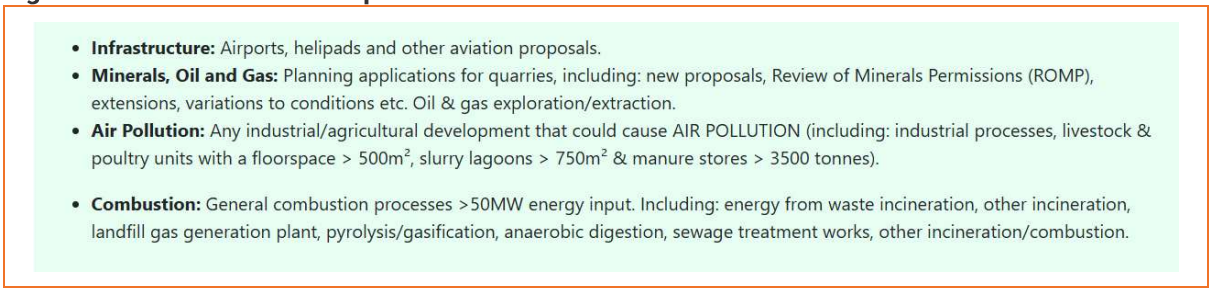
The site is also located within the impact risk zone of the Rochdale Canal Special Site of Scientific Importance (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Rochdale Canal SSSI and SAC is located 2 km northeast of the site. The site is designated as an SSSI as it comprises important habitat for aquatic plants and emergent vegetation. The site is designated as an SAC as it supports Annex II species floating water plantain (*Luronium natans*).

It is not anticipated that the proposed development would have an impact on Clayton Vale LNR, Rochdale Canal SSSI and SCA due to the small size of the site, urban nature of the wider area which offers limited

ecological connectivity and distance from the designated sites. The site is also located downstream of the Rochdale Canal SSSI and SAC and as such it is not anticipated that the designated site and qualifying Annex II species would be impacted by pollution events .

Furthermore, as per the criteria listed on MAGIC (accessed January 2026) shown in Figure 2, the proposed site will not require further consultation with Natural England to proceed in relation to the SSSI. This indicates that the proposed development is unlikely to have a harmful effect on the Rochdale Canal SSSI and SAC. As such, a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) will not be required in relation to the SAC.

Figure 2 Criteria for Impacts on Rochdale Canal SSSI SAC



- **Infrastructure:** Airports, helipads and other aviation proposals.
- **Minerals, Oil and Gas:** Planning applications for quarries, including: new proposals, Review of Minerals Permissions (ROMP), extensions, variations to conditions etc. Oil & gas exploration/extraction.
- **Air Pollution:** Any industrial/agricultural development that could cause AIR POLLUTION (including: industrial processes, livestock & poultry units with a floorspace > 500m^2, slurry lagoons > 750m^2 & manure stores > 3500 tonnes).
- **Combustion:** General combustion processes >50MW energy input. Including: energy from waste incineration, other incineration, landfill gas generation plant, pyrolysis/gasification, anaerobic digestion, sewage treatment works, other incineration/combustion.

No further statutory designated sites were identified within 1 km of the site boundary.

Two Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) were identified within 1 km of the site boundary. These comprise the following:

- Rochdale Canal – Stott's Lane to Ducie Street Basin SBI is located adjacent to the southern site boundary. The site comprises floating, emergent and marginal flora.
- Bank Bridge Meadow SBI is located 890 m southeast of the site. The site comprises species-rich grassland and semi-natural woodland along the River Medlock.

It is possible that floating water plantain could be located within the Rochdale Canal SBI. As such, the Annex II species could be impacted by the proposed works. As such, pollution and protection measures should be implemented to ensure there are no negative impacts upon the SBI as a result of the development. Further details of these measures can be found in Section 4.2.

Furthermore, floating water plantain is a species which is known to be sensitive to reductions in direct sunlight, which can affect its growth and ecological viability. As such, the overshadowing effects of the development have been considered. Due to the position of the application site relative to the Rochdale Canal, the Proposed Development would not result in any material loss of sunlight exposure to the waterbody. Given that the sun path is to the south of the site for the majority of the day, any shadows cast by the Proposed Development would be directed to the north, away from the canal. As such, in the event that any floating water-plantain were present within this section of the canal, the proposed development would not give rise to any significant overshadowing effects.

It is considered that the proposed development will not have any negative impacts on the Bank Bridge Meadow SBI due to its distance from the site and the nature of the proposed works. Additionally, a significant increase in the number of visitors to the SBIs is not anticipated as a result of the development, which comprises the creation of a data centre.

3.3. HABITATS

The main habitats encountered during the survey are described in the following subsections. Please refer to Appendix I for the UKHab Habitat Plan.

3.3.1. DEVELOPED LAND; SEALED SURFACE (U1B)

Developed land; sealed surface was present in areas throughout the site. The developed land was in poor condition and was colonised by mosses in places.

Figure 3 Showing Developed Land; Sealed Surface



3.3.2. RUDERAL/ EPHEMERAL (U81)

The majority of the site comprised ruderal ephemeral vegetation which had colonised more derelict areas of developed land. Species present included willowherb species (*Epilobium* spp.), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), butterfly bush (*Buddleja davidii*) and dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* agg.).

Figure 4 Showing Ruderal/ Ephemeral



3.3.3. OTHER NEUTRAL GRASSLAND (G3)

Areas of other neutral grassland were present in north and east of the site forming the understorey of individual trees. Species included red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), common vetch (*Vicia sativa*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), dandelion, herb Robert, bramble, butterfly bush, and pendulous sedge (*Carex pendula*).

Figure 5 Showing Other Neutral Grassland



3.3.4. MIXED SCRUB (H3H)

Areas of scrub comprising a mixture of dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*), willow species (*Salix* spp.), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), and cherry (*Prunus avium*) were present throughout the site.

Figure 6 Showing Mixed Scrub



3.3.5. BRAMBLE SCRUB (H3D)

Small areas of bramble scrub were present in the east and west of the site forming the understorey of individual trees.

Figure 7 Showing Bramble Scrub



3.3.6. OTHER WOODLAND; BROADLEAVED (W1G)

An area of broadleaved woodland was located within the centre of the site. Species present within the woodland comprised cherry, London plane (*Platanus × acerifolia*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), lime (*Tilia × europaea*) and beech (*Fagus sylvatica*). The understorey comprised bramble, silver birch and beech saplings, and willowherb species.

Figure 8 Showing Broadleaved Woodland



3.3.7. INDIVIDUAL TREES (W32)

Numerous individual trees were present throughout the site. Species included Norway maple, sycamore, lime, willow, London plane, horse chestnut, beech, laburnum species (*Laburnum sp*), and black hybrid poplar (*Populus × canadensis*).

Figure 9 Showing Individual Trees



3.1. HABITAT JUSTIFICATION

The site was classified as a Priority Habitat, Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land on MAGIC Maps. However, specific criteria need to be passed in line with the guidance from JNCC, July 2010. Table 2 details the criteria required for a habitat to be defined as Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land (JNCC, July 2010), and justification as to why the habitats within the site do not fit this category. Using the criteria below, the site fails criteria 3 and criteria 5 and as such does not classify as Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land.

Table 2 Criteria for Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land (JNCC, July 2010)

CATEGORY	CRITERIA	JUSTIFICATION
1	The area of open mosaic habitat is at least 0.25ha in size.	The areas of habitat on-site exceed 0.25 ha. Passes Criterion 1.
2	Known history of disturbance at the site or evidence that soil has been removed or severely modified by previous use(s) of the site. Extraneous materials/substrates such as industrial spoil may have been added.	Aerial imagery dating back to 2002 shows that no modification of the site has been undertake since at least 2002. **Fails Criterion 2.**
3	The site contains some vegetation. This will comprise early successional communities consisting mainly of stress-tolerant species (e.g. indicative of low nutrient status or drought). Early successional communities are composed of (a) annuals, or (b) mosses/liverworts, or (c) lichens, or (d) ruderals, or (e) inundation species, or (f) open grassland, or (g) flower-rich grassland, or (h) heathland.	As detailed in the explanatory notes on the JNNC, the site does not comprise the species composition which would classify the habitat as Open Mosaic on Previously Developed Land, which includes mainly stress tolerant species. **Fails Criterion 3**
4	The site contains unvegetated, loose bare substrate and pools may be present.	No areas of the site comprised unvegetated, loose bare substrate. **Fails Criterion 4.**
5	The site shows spatial variation, forming a mosaic of one or more of the early successional communities (a)–(h) above (criterion 3) plus bare substrate, within 0.25ha.	Fails criteria 3 due to the limited stress tolerant species identified. **Fails criteria 5.**

3.2. PROTECTED AND NOTABLE SPECIES

3.2.1. AMPHIBIANS

Consultation GMEU did not identify any records of great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) within the 1 km search area.

Consultation with MAGIC did not identify any great crested newt European Protected Species Licences with the 1 km search area. The closest licence was located approximately 5.3 km east of the site, active between 2011 and 2013 for the destruction of a great crested newt breeding place.

Great crested newts' upper dispersal limit is generally considered to be up to 250 m from a pond (though occurrence of greater distances does exist where habitat connectivity is of high quality) (English Nature, 2001). No ponds were located within 250 m of the site boundary. As such, great crested newts are discounted as being present on site.

No records of common amphibians were identified within 1 km of the site boundary. Due to the lack of waterbodies within the site, the site does not offer suitable habitat for breeding common amphibians. However, the ruderal/ephemeral, grassland, scrub and woodland on site all provide suitable shelter and protection for the species group within their terrestrial phase. As such, common amphibians are anticipated to be present on site.

3.2.2. BATS

Consultation with GMEU did not identify any recent records of bat species within the 1 km search area Historic records of common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), and pipistrelle species (*Pipistrellus* spp.) were identified within the search area.

Consultation with MAGIC Mapping did not identify any Natural England Bat Mitigation Licences within the 1 km search area. This was located approximately 1.5 km southwest of the site, active between 2019 and 2020 for the destruction of a common pipistrelle non-breeding roost.

No buildings or structures were identified within the site boundary. All trees that could be accessed were assessed for their suitability to support roosting bats, as detailed in Collins (2023), and were found to have no bat roosting potential as they lacked maturity and/or any potential roost features suitable to support roosting bats.

The woodland, individual trees and scrub on site provide foraging opportunities for local bat species. However, given their small size and urban nature of the surrounding area, the site is anticipated to provide limited commuting and foraging potential for bats. Bats are anticipated to utilise higher-value habitats in the wider area such as Moston Vale located approximately 800 m north of the site. As such, bats are only anticipated to utilise the site on an occasional basis. The Rochdale Canal was located adjacent to the southern site boundary. This provides a valuable commuting feature to habitats in the wider area. The northern bank top of the canal located on site is lined with trees and vegetation which further enhances the value of this commuting and foraging feature.

3.2.3. BADGER

Consultation with GMEU identified multiple records of badger within the 1 km search area.

No badger setts were located on-site or within 30 m of the site boundary where access was possible. The woodland, individual trees, and scrub could provide suitable coverage for badger setts. These habitats could also be utilised for foraging. As such, the site offers suitable habitat for badgers.

3.2.4. OTHER TERRESTRIAL MAMMALS

Two records of European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) were located within the 1 km search area, the closest of which was located approximately 860 m southeast of the site within a residential area. The site was assessed as providing suitable refuge and foraging habitat for hedgehogs within the scrub, woodland, and individual tree understories. These habitats may also offer suitable hibernation opportunities for the species.

3.2.5. OTTER AND WATER VOLE

Consultation with GMEU did not identify any records of otter or water vole within 1 km of the site boundary.

The Rochdale Canal is located adjacent to the site's southern boundary. The southern bank top of the canal comprised a paved canal towpath and the bank face was reinforced. However, the bank along the site boundary was vegetated with mixed scrub and broadleaved woodland. A lock was located along the canal.

The Rochdale Canal was deemed unsuitable for otters due to the multiple locks which were located along the length of the canal, including one adjacent to the southern site boundary. These limit the commuting potential for otters along the canal. Furthermore, the locks also limit the suitability for fish to pass easily along the canal, reducing the foraging resources for otter.

The canal was also deemed unsuitable for water vole. The bank located along the site boundary was heavily shaded by trees and therefore lacked suitable herbaceous vegetation for feeding. Furthermore, the canal is heavily disturbed due to its urban location and the numerous locks limit dispersal for the species. As such, water vole can be discounted as being present on site.

Figure 10 Showing Rochdale Canal from the Southern Site Boundary



Figure 11 Showing Lock along Rochdale Canal



3.2.6. WHITE CLAWED CRAYFISH

Consultation with GMEU did not identify any records of white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) within the search area.

The Rochdale Canal is located adjacent to the southern site boundary. The canal was deemed to be unsuitable for white-clawed crayfish due to the high levels of pollution within the water, lack of vegetation along the banks and lack of suitable refugia such as large cobbles and fallen trees. Additionally, locks were located adjacent to the site, which limit commuting potential, further limiting the suitability of the site for crayfish.

3.2.7. BREEDING BIRDS

Consultation with GMEU identified recent records of notable birds within the search area, including herring gull (*Larus argentatus*), song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*), and barn owl (*Tyto alba*).

Common and notable bird species are anticipated to be present within the scrub, woodland, and individual trees on site. The site is assessed as having limited value for ground nesting birds due the lack of open grassland on site.

3.2.8. REPTILES

Consultation with GMEU identified historic records of slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*) from 2010 and 2011 within the search area. The closest record comprised both species located approximately 470 m north of the site within a residential area.

The site is not anticipated to support reptiles. This is due to the small size of the site and the urban nature of the surrounding area, which limits connectivity to the site.

3.2.9. NOTABLE INVERTEBRATES

The data search identified records of cinnabar (*Tyria jacobaeae*) within the search area.

Notable invertebrates are unlikely to be present within the woodland on site due to its immature nature and the lack of deadwood habitat. The remaining habitats on site are also not anticipated to support notable invertebrates due to the limited floristic diversity. As such, notable invertebrates are not anticipated to be present on site.

3.3. INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES

Consultation with GMEU did not identify any records of invasive non-native plant species within the search area.

During the survey, no invasive plant species were identified on site.

4. ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS AND MITIGATION

4.1. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

Development proposals comprise the redevelopment of the site into a data centre with associated access road, parking, and hard and soft landscaping.

4.2. DESIGNATED SITES

Rochdale Canal SBI is located adjacent to the southern site boundary. The SBI could also comprise Annex II species floating water plantain. An assessment of the shading impacts as a result of the proposed development, found that there would be no effect on the canal relating to direct sunlight. However, the Canal could still be impacted by pollution events.

As such, to ensure the designated site is not negatively impacted by the development, all best practice guidance relating to pollution will be adhered to. This will include best practice use of refuelling machinery to avoid fuel spills. Site drainage will need to be considered to ensure that no highly silted or polluted run-off from the site workings will enter the ground. It is also recommended that a minimum 5 m vegetated buffer is maintained along the canal.

Best practice protection measures as detailed within PPG5 Pollution Prevention Guidelines (2007) are to be put in place to protect the SBI. The following control measures would be required during any ground works and during the construction phase to ensure there are no impacts on the designated sites or any wildlife utilising them:

- All operational plant will be kept well maintained.
- Turning off plant when not in use.
- Dampening of the operational areas will be regularly undertaken during dry weather conditions to avoid dust. Dust management will be extended to cover the plant and all operational areas and will be complied with throughout the period of development.
- Measures to prevent pollutants from entering ground and surface water is standard construction practice through the use of a bunded fuel storage and refuelling area at a discrete distance from any watercourses. These measures should be underwritten by spill management equipment being kept on-site and capable of being effectively utilised by trained operatives to contain any accidental spillage within any part of the operational area.
- A toolbox talk should be completed by a qualified ecologist to ensure contractors are aware of the designated site and its ecological importance.
- During night hours, no lighting is to be located facing the designated sites to ensure no wildlife are deterred from using them.
- A ‘Site Tidy’ protocol is to be put in place on-site. All litter is to be appropriately controlled, whilst on-site materials are to be adequately stored overnight.
- Where possible, all excavations will be battened at a 45-degree angle, or a ramp installed, to allow escape should animals become trapped.
- Surface water run-off will be controlled to reduce water pollution.

- Regular inspections should be completed by the Ecological Clerk of Works (EcoW) to ensure Precautionary Working Methods (PWMs) are being adhered to.
- Regular clean-ups of litter and debris should be completed to minimise pollution.
- Regular inspections of the working area around the Canal to be undertaken and any incidence of litter, debris or other pollution should be reported. Appropriate measures to be taken for the removal of the litter/pollutant etc.

Measures will also be taken throughout the construction phase to avoid dust pollution. Pollution prevention and control strategies will be adhered to at all times. Any dust incidents within proximity to the site and/or adjacent habitats will be reported to the site manager and the ECoW. Dust control measures will include the following:

- Where possible use a vacuum rather than a sweeping brush.
- Select the appropriate means of extraction/ suppression.
- If anyone is asked to carry out dust generating activities without suppression measures the site team will be consulted for advice.
- Dust generating tasks will never be carried out without the required control measures in place.
- Sealing and sheeting of stockpiles.
- Sheeting of vehicles transporting materials to and from the site.
- Damping down using hoses and mobile bowsers.
- Carrying out visual monitoring at sensitive locations.
- Regular servicing of plant and equipment, including cleaning/replacement of air filters.
- Issue of COSHH reports to identify any substances likely to cause offensive odours.
- Issue of Risk Assessment and Method Statements (RAMS) setting out how effective control measures will prevent the release of odours.

Due to the small scale of the development, which comprises the development of a data centre, a significant increase in visitors to the SBI is not anticipated as a result of the development.

4.3. HABITATS

The site comprised habitats that were found to be widespread within the local area; however, they did contain value for wildlife such as bats, birds, badger, hedgehog, reptiles, and common amphibians. The modified grassland and bare ground are of the lowest value for wildlife, with the hedgerow, scrub, and broadleaved woodland comprising the areas of the highest value.

4.3.1. WOODLAND, SCRUB, AND INDIVIDUAL TREES

It is recommended that, where possible, the individual trees, scrub and broadleaved woodland are retained and protected through development. If any trees or shrubs require removal, they should be replaced as soon as practicable. Any replacement planting should endeavour to be on the same aspect as that to be lost.

It is recommended that the landscape planting comprises native species and species known to be of value for the attraction of wildlife. This will include fruiting and flowering species. Species deemed suitable for this development could include berry-bearing native species such as:

- Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*),
- Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*),
- Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*),
- Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*),
- Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*),
- Dog rose (*Rosa canina*),
- Guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*),
- Elder (*Sambucus nigra*)

All planting should be from a trusted pest-free source and, where possible, be of local provenance.

Any trees or shrubs within the site or boundary, to be retained, are to be appropriately protected during the construction phase. Temporary protective demarcation fencing will be used to protect the trees and shrubs. The fencing must extend outside the canopy of the retained trees and must remain in position until all plots have been developed to ensure protection is provided throughout the construction phase.

The fencing will be in accordance with BS 5837:2012 *Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction: Recommendations*.

4.4. PROTECTED AND NOTABLE SPECIES

4.4.1. AMPHIBIANS

The site may support small numbers of common amphibians within the scrub, grassland, ruderal/ephemeral and woodland on-site. It is recommended that during the clearance phase of works, any common amphibians encountered be moved by hand, away from construction activities.

4.4.2. BATS

Due to the small size of the site, it is not anticipated that the habitats on site provide significant foraging resources for bats. As such, further bat surveys are considered exhaustive. However, the Rochdale Canal located adjacent to the southern site boundary, is anticipated to form a valuable foraging and commuting feature for bats. As such, it is recommended that the canal and bankside vegetation be retained and protected throughout the development. Furthermore, any lighting during and post construction should be appropriately placed to avoid being directed at the canal.

To reduce the potential lighting impacts for bats, the following recommendations are advised for the lighting strategy:

- Lighting should be pre-fixed on any proposed structures or buildings, to ensure impacts on the Rochdale Canal are diminished.
- Warm white tones are preferable to blue toned lights (3000k).
- LED lights are preferable as they produce minimal UV.
- To avoid light spill skyward, ensure lights face downward.
- Make use of vegetation to block light spill into dark areas.

Lighting should follow the protocols outlined in The Institute for Lighting Engineers document “Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Lighting” (2005) and The Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) (2023). “Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night. Guidance Note GN08/23”.

It is recommended that any planting within the site be of native fruiting/flowering species in order to enhance the site for foraging bats post-completion. Bat boxes could be installed throughout the site post-construction to enhance the site for the species group.

4.4.3. BADGERS

No badger setts were located on-site during the survey, though the habitats on site were identified as being suitable for the species. Badgers are highly mobile and can create new setts in a short period of time. It is recommended that an updated site walkover be carried out prior to the development to identify any new badger setts.

If a badger sett is located, a stand-off distance may be required as well as precautionary working methods. If the sett requires closure, a Natural England Badger Licence would be required. Please note that badger licences can only be obtained between July and November each year to avoid potential impact on pregnant females.

The following precautionary working methods will be adhered to during the construction phase to ensure that no badgers within the local area are impacted by the proposed development:

- All site operatives will be inducted to the presence of the species and their working limits and legal responsibilities.
- All site operatives will be inducted as to identifying potential badger setts and should be vigilant if they suspect they locate a new sett during works and inform the project ecologist immediately.
- All excavations will be battered at a 45-degree angle, or ramps will be installed, to allow the escape should animals become trapped. Alternatively, excavations will be covered overnight.
- All site machinery and materials will be appropriately stored to avoid harm to the species, notably between July and November each year when extra care is needed to avoid potential impacts on pregnant females.

It is not anticipated that the development will have a significant negative impact on badgers within the local area.

4.4.4. HEDGEHOGS

The site was assessed as providing suitable refuge, foraging and hibernation opportunities for hedgehogs within the understorey of individual trees, scrub habitats, and broadleaved woodland. These habitats should be retained where possible. Where vegetation requires removal, it should be checked for the presence of hedgehog before removal. If any vegetation is too dense to be fully inspected, it should be strimmed to 50 cm and checked for hedgehog before being cleared to ground level. If trees are removed, their bases should be checked before removal for sheltering hedgehogs. It is recommended that any clearance takes place outside of December-March to avoid impacting hibernating hedgehogs.

4.4.5. BREEDING BIRDS

The site was assessed as having value for common bird species within the scrub, woodland, and individual trees. These habitats should be retained where possible.

If any vegetation requires removal, it should be carried out outside of nesting bird season. Breeding bird season occurs between March and September (inclusive). If this is not possible, a suitably qualified ecologist should inspect the area no more than 48 hours prior to the removal. Should any nests, or nests in construction, be located, a suitable stand-off distance should be maintained until the young have fledged. The ecologist will advise on suitable stand-off and provide a toolbox talk to all site contractors regarding their working limits and legal implications.

Post-development, bird boxes could be installed throughout the development to enhance the site's value for the species group.

5. FURTHER SURVEYS

No further surveys are required to facilitate the development.

6. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

The scheme should achieve a 10% in Biodiversity Net Gain. In line with The Environment Act 2021, this is a mandatory requirement. Full details of this and a calculation of net gain could be finalised after detailed landscape plans have been prepared. It is recommended that an ecologist is consulted during the design stage to ensure, where possible, that biodiversity net gain can be achieved. The following habitat measures will increase the on-site biodiversity:

- Retaining the individual trees on site.
- Retaining and enhancing the scrub and woodland habitats.
- Native scrub planting.
- Native tree planting.
- Wildflower meadow creation.

A vegetated corridor along the southern boundary of the site will be maintained to ensure there are no reductions in the watercourse units for the scheme.

Habitat measures should be provided within areas of open space or designated wildlife zones. A 30-year management plan should be produced to ensure biodiversity is secured on-site.

7. REFERENCES

- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.
- CIEEM (2018). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine.
- Collins, J. (ed.) (2023). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th edition. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- Environment Alliance (2007). PPG5: Pollution Prevention Guidelines; Works and Maintenance In or Near Water; PPG5.
- Institute of Lighting Engineers (2005). Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light.
- The Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) (2023). Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night. Guidance Note GN08/23.
- Stace, C. A. (2019). New Flora of the British Isles. Fourth Edition. Cambridge University Press.
- UKHab (2023) UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0
- Wildlife and Countryside Act (2010) Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

END OF REPORT

APPENDIX I
UKHAB HABITAT PLAN





Key:

- Red line boundary
- Tree Groups
- Individual tree
- Rochdale Canal
- Bramble scrub
- Developed land; sealed surface
- Mixed scrub
- Other neutral grassland
- Other woodland; broadleaved
- Ruderal/ephemeral

Notes

Issue:	Revision:	Date:	Drawn:	Authorised:
1	1	09/01/2026	PP	CK

Client: Latos Manchester Limited	Job No. 82-796	Date: 09/01/2026
	Drawing No. 82-796-001	Scale: 1:600@A4
Job title: Bower Street, Manchester	Drawing title: UKHab Habitat Plan	

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