The Limes, Fallowfield Campus

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Report

2026

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Executive Summary

Development Details

The client is proposing development of educational facilities at The Limes, part of the University of Manchester's Fallowfield Campus in Manchester, hereafter referred to as the 'site'.

This report describes the ecological features of the site and its surroundings and assesses the potential impacts of the development on any ecological interests. A Biodiversity Net Gain assessment has also been undertaken. Recommendations are provided so that the development is compliant with biodiversity policy and legislation.

Ecological Interest

The site comprises an existing car park (developed land) which is of negligible ecological importance, with small pockets of isolated species-poor modified grassland. Individual amenity trees occur just outside of the site boundary. There are no protected species constraints on site. The invasive non-native species Himalayan Balsam was recorded just outside of the site boundary.

Outcomes

No further surveys are required. The adjacent trees will be protected using standard arboricultural methods. Habitat enhancement opportunities, in line with the NPPF, include landscaping using a variety of flowering species/varieties, and the addition of features such as bat and bird boxes.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The development achieves a net gain of 101.59%, which is above and beyond the legislative and policy requirement of 10%.

1. Introduction

1.1 Project Brief

1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited (RHE) was commissioned in 2026 by The University of Manchester, via Halliday Meecham Architects (the client), to carry out an Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment of land at The Limes, Fallowfield Campus, Manchester (the 'site'). The site is located at National Grid Reference (NGR) SJ 85895 94336 (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Map showing the location of the site (Red Line Boundary) courtesy of Google Maps Satellite

1.1.2 The site comprises an existing car park within Fallowfield Campus of the University of Manchester.

Description of Development

1.1.3 The site will be the subject of a planning application for the erection of a single-storey, new-build steel portal frame facilities management services building (sui generis use), incorporating maintenance storage, office accommodation and associated staff welfare facilities, together with associated car parking and landscaping.

1.2 Scope of Work

1.2.1 The Client commissioned RHE to carry out the following works:

- Record the extent, type, and condition of habitats within and next to the site.
- Calculate the baseline and post-development biodiversity units.
- Search for signs of protected species and assess the potential of habitats and features to support protected and notable species.

1.3 Site Visit Information

Surveyor Details

1.3.1 Simon Holden *MCIEEM* (Regional Manager) and Isabella Ercole (Junior Ecologist) undertook the site visit on 5th May 2026. Simon has over 21 years of professional experience and is a suitably qualified ecologist.

Weather

1.3.2 The weather at the time of the survey was cloudy and mild (12°C). Weather conditions were appropriate for a full assessment to be undertaken.

2. Methods

2.1 Desk Study

2.1.1 The Magic website (Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside) was interrogated for the presence of Statutory Designated Sites within a 2km radius of the site.

2.1.2 The site was checked to determine if it is located within an Impact Risk Zones for any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and if so, whether the Local Planning Authority will need to consult Natural England.

2.1.3 It was considered disproportionate to apply to the Local Record Centre for existing records of protected species, due to the isolation of the site and the type of habitats on site. However, the Local Planning Authority planning maps and portal were interrogated for non-statutory site locations and previous ecological surveys/data from the locality.

2.2 Field Survey

Habitat Survey

2.2.1 The site was walked over and the habitats and features of ecological interest were mapped and described according to the UK Habitat Classification system[1]. Habitats and features of particular interest were target noted.

Species Assessment

2.2.2 During the walkover habitat and features were assessed for their suitability to support protected and notable species in accordance with CIEEM guidelines[2]. Field signs of protected, notable, and invasive non-native species, if encountered, were mapped, and described.

2.3 Biodiversity Net Gain

2.3.1 During the site walkover the ecological condition of each habitat was assessed in accordance with the Defra (2024) guidelines[3].

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[1] UKHab-v2.01-July-2023-Final-2.pdf. at http://UKhab.org

[2] CIEEM (2017). *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

[3] The_Statutory_Biodiversity_Metric_-_User_Guide_.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)

2.3.2 Habitat data including type, area (or length), condition and strategic location were uploaded to the Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculator spreadsheet to determine the baseline value of the site. The extent of any habitats to be retained or enhanced was also entered into baseline worksheets.

2.3.3 The post-development masterplan was interrogated to determine areas of hard standing, buildings, and associated infrastructure. New, retained and enhanced habitats were classified and allocated a target condition, based on habitat type, location and management input. This information was uploaded to the metric spreadsheet to obtain a post-development value.

2.3.4 The Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy[4] (LNRS) map was interrogated to assess whether any land on site is included as a Nature Recovery Opportunity Area.

2.3.5 The pre- and post-development values were compared to determine whether the yield of biodiversity units achieved a deficit or gain.

2.4 Mitigation Hierarchy

2.4.1 Mitigation measures should be embedded within the masterplan design and planning application process. This process from proposal to implementation needs to consider the 'mitigation hierarchy' of avoid, reduce, compensate, and enhance:

- Aim to avoid negative effects through the design process.
- Mitigate if negative effects cannot be avoided.
- Use compensation measures to offset residual impacts.
- Identify and implement opportunities to enhance biodiversity.

[4] GM Nature Network - Greater Manchester Combined Authority

3. Results

3.1 Survey Constraints

3.1.1 Field survey results are valid for a limited duration, and no investigation can provide a complete description and characterisation of a site. The composition of habitats and species can change depending on environmental variables and the mobility of species, so the results of a study become less reliable over time. In some cases, surveys that are 3 years old may be acceptable for a project assuming that habitats have not significantly changed in the intervening period, but for protected species it is likely that survey data will need to be no more than 18 months old.

3.1.2 The site was fully accessible and there were no constraints to the survey.

3.2 Desk Study

3.2.1 The desk study returned no records of statutory designated sites, nor statutory site Impact Risk Zones, within 2km of the site boundary.

3.2.2 No non-statutory designated sites were found within 2km of the site.

3.3 Habitats

On-site Habitats

3.3.1 Photographs of the habitats can be found in Appendix 2. The UK Habitats Baseline plan is contained in Appendix 4. The site comprises developed land, modified grassland and ruderal vegetation. Six trees have recently (post 2023) been felled as part of a previous planning consent and their stumps are visible. These have been included in the baseline as per the BNG Habitat Degradation rules. They can be seen on aerial imagery and coupled with the data taken during the field survey, it is considered a robust condition assessment can be made.

3.3.2 None of the site lies within the Greater Manchester LNRS.

Developed Land; Sealed Surface

3.3.3 Developed Land; Sealed Surface is the dominant habitat type present on site. It is used as a car park, central to the site (see Photographs 1, 2 and 4 in Appendix 2).

Modified Grassland

3.3.4 Small pockets of modified grassland exist on site. Some patches appear to have been seeded. Dominant species include Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*, White Clover *Trifolium repens,* Dandelion *Taraxacum agg.,* Oxeye Daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare,* Yarrow

Achillea millefolium, Common Mouse-ear *Cerastium fontanum* and Common Chickweed *Stellaria media* (see Photographs 2 and 5 in Appendix 2).

Individual trees

3.3.5 Six Individual trees, felled under a previous planning permission, are present in the centre of the developed land; sealed surface habitat. The trees were young, small and have been assessed as being in poor condition (see Photograph 7 in Appendix 2).

Sparsely Vegetated Land

3.3.6 In the north of the site, two small parcels of sparsely vegetated land containing tall ruderal; ephemeral plants are present (see Photograph 6 in Appendix 2).

Off-site Habitats

Modified Grassland

3.3.7 Bordering the site, to the south, lies a parcel of modified grassland that will be used for off-setting the BNG deficit on site. Species present include White Clover *Trifolium repens*, Bent *Agrostis sp.*, Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, Greater Plantain *Plantago major,* Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg., Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Selfheal *Prunella vulgaris*, Wood Sorrel *Oxalis acetosella* and Common Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*. Moss was also present (see Photograph 9 in Appendix 2). This grassland is in poor condition due to low species diversity.

Individual Trees

3.3.8 Thirteen individual trees are grouped around the perimeter of the site, lying outside of the red line boundary. Species include Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus,* Himalayan Birch *Betula utilis,* Hybrid poplar *Populus x canadensis,* Purple Plum *Prunus cerasifera,* Willow *Salix* var*.,* Ash *Fraxinus excelsior,* Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia,* Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur,* Wild Cherry *Prunus avium and* Turkey Oak *Quercus cerris* (see Photograph 1 and 4 in Appendix 2). These are not included in the BNG assessment.

3.4 Biodiversity Net Gain (baseline)

3.4.1 The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) headline results can be seen in Appendix 3. Please refer to the Metric for further details of the baseline habitats and BNG scores (*RHE.4798 The BNG Statutory Metric - The Limes, Fallowfield Campus 2026*). Table 1 provides a summary of the on-site baseline habitat units. Table 2 provides a summary of the off-site baseline habitat units. The baseline habitat value within the red line development area (on-site) is 0.11 habitat units, zero hedgerow units and zero watercourse units. The baseline habitat value outside of the red line development area (off-site) is 0.05 habitat units, zero hedgerow units and zero watercourse units,

Table 1 Baseline Habitat Units			
Habitat	Area (ha)	Condition	Units
Developed Land; Sealed Surface	0.43	N/A	0.00
Modified Grassland	0.005	Poor	0.01
Individual Trees	0.0244	Poor	0.10
Sparsely Vegetated Land	0.002	Poor	0.00

Table 2 Baseline Habitat Units			
Habitat	Area (ha)	Condition	Units
Modified Grassland	0.027	Poor	0.05

3.5 Protected & Notable Species

Bats

3.5.1 No buildings exist on site. No trees exist on site. No potential roosting features (PRFs) were identified on any trees adjacent to the site. The site offers sub-optimal habitat for foraging bats, with only short rows of trees lying adjacent and numerous streetlights present on site.

Nesting Birds

3.5.2 No habitat suitable for nesting birds exists on site. The trees and brash piles adjacent to the site offer suitable habitat for nesting birds.

Great Crested Newt

3.5.3 No ponds exist on site and no field ponds were found within 250 metres of the site. A small circular ornamental pond lies 80 metres to the north-west, and this can be discounted due to its isolation within lawns and hardstanding. The habitats on site do not offer cover or foraging for amphibians. Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* is not considered further in this report.

Badger

3.5.4 No Badger *Meles meles* sett or evidence of Badger activity was found on site nor immediately adjacent. The habitats on site are sub-optimal for Badger and the wider landscape is heavily managed. Badger is not considered further in this report.

Hedgehog

3.5.5 The site offers no cover for foraging or hibernating Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus.* Given the use of the site as a car park, it is unlikely to be used by Hedgehog and Hedgehog is not considered further in this report.

3.6 Invasive, Non-native Species

3.6.1 A small, localised area of the invasive, non-native Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* was found in a section of sparsely vegetated land off site, however it was not extensive nor present on the site (see Photograph 3 in Appendix 2).

4. Assessment

4.1 Development Context

4.1.1 The following assessment assumes that the development will go ahead as described in paragraph 1.1.3. The adjacent trees will be retained and protected and the site will be enhanced by extra landscaping.

4.2 Impacts on Designated Sites

4.2.1 No impacts to any designated sites are anticipated due to the distances involved and the absence of impact pathways.

4.3 Impacts on Habitats

4.3.1 The dominant habitat on site is of negligible ecological value. The loss of the species-poor modified grassland is not of significance. New landscaping, using a greater diversity of flowering plant species and varieties than what is currently present on site, will enhance the ecological value of the site and adequately mitigate for the loss of modified grassland.

4.4 Biodiversity Net Gain (post-development)

4.4.1 Landscaping proposals (Layer Studio, 2026[5]) includes wildflower grassland strips (classified as modified grassland due to size and proposed management) and shrub beds.

4.4.2 The on-site post-development value of the site is summarised in Table 2 below.

Table 3 Post-development Habitat Units (on site)			
Habitat	Area (ha)	Condition	Units
Developed Land; Sealed Surface	0.4153	N/A	0
Modified Grassland	0.0097	Moderate	0.03
Introduced Shrub	0.0032	N/A	0.01
Urban Tree (3)	0.0122	Poor	0.03

[5] 440-LYR-XX-ZZ-DWG-L-1001 [General Arrangement] Rev P02

4.4.3 12 individual, urban trees are also being planted within the off-site compensation area (currently modified grassland). This compensation is inside the LPA boundary/NCA of impact site.

4.4.4 The off-site post development value of the site is summarised in table 3 below.

Table 4 Off site habitat creation			
Habitat	Area(ha)	Condition	Units
Urban Tree (12)	0.0489	Poor	0.14

Summary of Net Change

4.4.5 The baseline value of the site is 0.11 habitat units. The post-development value of the site is 0.09 habitat units, resulting in a net loss of 0.02 habitat units (-21.15%). Discussions took place with the client team to attempt to reach 10% BNG and it was decided to retain the existing site boundary and choose land within the clients control directly adjacent to the site to off-set the BNG. The baseline value of the off-setting land is 0.05 habitat units. After 12 trees are planted on it, the result will be 0.19 habitat units. Therefore, overall, the development is predicted to achieve a gain of 0.11 habitat units, equivalent to 101.59% Biodiversity Net Gain. The Trading Rules have been met. As a result, no additional offsetting is required.

4.5 Impacts on Protected and Notable Species

Bats

4.5.1 No impact to any bat roosts is expected from the development. Artificial light impacts, such as increasing the lighting on site, could impact negatively on foraging bats close to the adjacent tree belts (see Section 5).

Birds

4.5.2 Whilst no nesting bird habitat exists on site, the adjacent trees offer suitable nesting habitat. Birds could be affected if trees are damaged or disturbed during development within the bird breeding season. General mitigation is recommended (see Section 5).

4.6 Invasive, Non-native Species

4.6.1 Himalayan Balsam was recorded close to the site boundary but not on site, Given the fact that this species can rapidly colonise disturbed ground, mitigation is recommended (see Section 5).

5. Recommendations

5.1 Further Surveys

5.1.1 No further surveys required.

5.2 General

5.2.1 Protection of ecological features (habitats and species) during the construction phase will be described in a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). The creation of the habitats on site and their management and monitoring for 30 years will be described in a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP). It is anticipated that the CEMP and HMMP will be provided as a planning condition in advance of the commencement of the proposed development.

5.3 Habitats & Biodiversity Net Gain

5.3.1 The on-site and off site proposed habitats must be created as stated to ensure that the legal minimum of 10% BNG is achieved. This will be secured via the HMMP and a Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP), pre-commencement of development.

5.3.2 Adjacent trees to the site must be protected using appropriate fencing during construction.

5.4 Protected and Notable Species

Bats

5.4.1 It is recommended that no new artificial lighting is implemented on the site.

5.4.2 Two Woodcrete bat boxes will be installed onto the new building, at a height of at least 3 metres and facing south or west.

Birds

5.4.3 If any of the trees adjacent to the site need treatment or felling within the nesting season (which is generally March to August inclusive), then a nesting bird survey must be undertaken a suitably experienced ecologist immediately prior to work on the tree commencing. Any active nests found will be adequately protected until deemed inactive.

5.4.4 Two Woodcrete bird boxes will be installed onto the new building, at a height of at least 2 metres and facing north.

5.5 Invasive species

5.5.1 It is recommended that the patch of Himalayan Balsam is avoided during the construction phase of development to minimise the risk of further spread or it is treated with herbicide.

5.5.2 The site must be monitored for signs of Himalayan Balsam during the construction period and beyond and any infestation treated appropriately (e.g. herbicide or hand-pulling).

Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2026) describes the Government's planning policy for England and how it should be applied. Within this framework, the requirements in relation to biodiversity are included within several policies. The most relevant to individual planning decisions are Policies N1 to N6, shown below:

PLAN MAKING POLICIES

N1: Identifying environmental opportunities and safeguards

1. Development plans should safeguard and enhance the natural environment, and reflect the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services, by using Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Protected Landscape Management Plans, River Basin Management Plans, National Forest Strategies, Community Forest Plans and other relevant evidence at the most appropriate level to:
    a. Set out the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites and areas of importance for their landscape, geodiversity or biodiversity value in the plan area, and identify other features which require particular consideration in managing development due to their environmental value such as chalk streams;
    b. Identify opportunities for the conservation, enhancement and recovery of landscapes, sensitive waterbodies, habitats and priority or threatened species, including through habitat restoration, the use of nature-based solutions, and the creation and strengthening of ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures (including opportunities which exist at a catchment or landscape scale across plan boundaries);
    c. Steer the location of development, including through site allocations, in ways which utilise land of least environmental value where that would be consistent with other policies in this Framework. This should include limiting the scale and extent of development within Protected Landscapes, avoiding the use of higher quality agricultural land where land of poorer quality is available and avoiding and minimising harm to designated sites of importance for nature. Areas which could become of particular importance for nature identified in Local Nature Recovery Strategies should be taken into account as opportunities to integrate development with environmental restoration, but should not necessarily preclude the allocation of land for development; and
    d. Set out standards for green infrastructure provision, in a way which complements and/or incorporates those for recreational land (as set out in policy HC1). These should draw upon

Natural England's Green Infrastructure Standards for England58, tailored as necessary to local circumstances.

2. Development plans should only set local standards for biodiversity net gain which are in excess of the statutory net gain requirement where this is for specific site allocations, and is fully justified and deliverable. Local standards should not extend to categories of development which are exempt from statutory biodiversity net gain.

NATIONAL DECISION-MAKING POLICIES

N2: Improving the natural environment

1. To contribute positively to the natural environment, and support nature's recovery, development proposals should:
   a. Consider the environmental qualities of land proposed for development, including habitats, landscape character and the natural beauty of the countryside, and identify opportunities for those qualities to be conserved or enhanced (including through requirements for biodiversity net gain where these apply);
   b. Take into account the quality of agricultural land (including that classified as best and most versatile agricultural land, and its grade), and if significant development of agricultural land is necessary, use areas of poorer quality land where possible;
   c. Take suitable opportunities to connect to and strengthen ecological networks that extend beyond the site, drawing on the measures proposed by Local Nature Recovery Strategies, National Forest Strategies and Community Forest Plans, where present, and other relevant assessments;
   d. Conserve and enhance existing natural features of visual, historic or nature conservation value (such as established trees and hedgerows) where possible; and use appropriate landscaping to help create a well-designed place and integrate the development into its surroundings;
   e. Use green infrastructure provided as part of the scheme and nature-based solutions to secure multiple benefits: such as for biodiversity; surface water and pollution management (including maintaining flow rates and water quality); climate change mitigation and adaptation, and recreation;
   f. Minimise any adverse impacts on biodiversity and include features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs. Development proposals should incorporate integrated nest boxes (commonly known as swift bricks) into their construction unless there are compelling technical reasons which prevent their use, or would make them ineffective; and

g. Ensure that green infrastructure and other features to support nature are located and designed to minimise risk of future failure, and that appropriate measures are in place for any necessary long-term management.

2. If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for, then the development should be refused.

3. Development proposals may incorporate biodiversity enhancements which exceed the statutory objective for biodiversity net gain, but this should only be a requirement where it is set out in up-to-date development plan policies for specific site allocations. Decision-makers should not give weight to other development plan policies which require biodiversity gains which go beyond the statutory framework, including where a policy requires gains for development proposals which are exempt.

N3: Trees in new development

1. In recognition of the benefits which trees can provide for biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the character and quality of the built environment, development proposals should:

a. Make new streets tree-lined (unless there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate in specific streets), and incorporate trees in other suitable locations, such as in parks and through the provision of community orchards;

b. Ensure that the selection of species and their placement is compatible with highways and other infrastructure requirements and the needs of different users of public spaces; and will be effective in helping to adapt to the effects of climate change and delivering other environmental benefits. Suitable arboricultural advice should be sought, and proposals discussed with highways and trees officers where necessary, so that the right trees are planted in the right places; and

c. Make provision for the long-term maintenance of both existing and newly-planted trees which form part of the development.

N4: Protected Landscapes

1. Development proposals within Protected Landscapes should be limited in scale and extent and sensitively located and designed to avoid harm to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the Protected Landscape. Substantial weight should be placed on the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of these areas, and to conserving and enhancing wildlife and cultural heritage in National Parks and the Broads.

2. Proposals for major development within Protected Landscapes should be refused other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public

interest. To inform a decision about whether exceptional circumstances exist, consideration of such proposals should include an assessment of:

a. The need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations such as maintaining a sufficient supply of minerals, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;

b. The cost of, and scope for, developing outside the Protected Landscape, or meeting the need for the development in some other way; and

c. Any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which it could be moderated.

3. Where, exceptionally, proposals for major development are approved within Protected Landscapes, steps should be taken to mitigate potential adverse impacts on their special qualities and statutory purposes60, including on features such as tranquillity and dark skies.

4. Development proposals within the setting of Protected Landscapes should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the Protected Landscape.

N5: Maintaining the character of the coast

1. Development proposals should maintain the character of undeveloped areas of coast, including land designated for its landscape, habitat or heritage value, while improving public access to it where appropriate. They should not hinder the completion and maintenance of a continuous signed and managed route around the coast (the King Charles III England Coast Path National Trail).

2. Development proposals in areas defined as Heritage Coast (and which do not already fall within a Protected Landscape) should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation. Major development within areas defined as Heritage Coast should not be supported, unless the development is compatible with the special character of the area.

3. If located within a Coastal Change Management Area, development proposals should also be considered against policy F9.

N6: Areas of particular importance for biodiversity and geodiversity

1. To support the conservation of important habitats, species and sites of geodiversity value, development proposals affecting:

a. A site of international importance, which for the purpose of this policy is a habitats site, should be refused unless:

i. An appropriate assessment has concluded that the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the site (either individually or in combination with other developments), or the proposal can satisfy the derogation tests61; and/or

ii. The impact of development on the relevant protected features of the protected site is being addressed through an Environmental Delivery Plan which has been made and the developer has committed to paying the nature restoration levy.

b. A site of national importance, which for the purpose of this policy is one designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, should only be supported if:

i. There would be no adverse effect (either individually or in combination with other developments) on the site's features of special scientific interest; or

ii. The benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both the likely impact on the features of special scientific interest, and any broader impact on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest; or

iii. The impact of development on the relevant protected feature of the protected site is being addressed through an Environmental Delivery Plan which has been made and the developer has committed to paying the nature restoration levy.

c A site of local importance, which for the purpose of this policy is one designated as a Local Nature Reserve or identified as a local wildlife site, local geological site or equivalent in the development plan, should only be supported if:.

i. There would not be a significant adverse effect on the integrity of the site; or

ii. The benefits of development in the location proposed clearly outweigh the likely impact on the features which make the site valuable for nature conservation.

2. Irrespective of a site's status in nature conservation terms, development proposals which would entail the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

3. This policy applies to development on land inside or outside a designated area, if it would have an impact on the identified biodiversity or geodiversity value of the area concerned.

Legislation

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CRoW Act 2000) includes the notification and confirmation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). SSSIs can be notified for their floral, faunal, geological, or physiographical features. Protection against damaging operations and management of SSSIs is also included within the Act. Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) are zones around an SSSI account for the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified and identify development proposal which could have adverse impacts.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CRoW Act 2000) protects native animals, plants and habitats. Under the Act it is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild animal listed on Schedule 5 and it is an offence to interfere with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturb animals occupying such places. The Act prohibits picking, uprooting or destroy any wild plant (or any attached seed or spore) listed in Schedule 8.

European Protected Species (EPS) such as bats, Hazel Dormouse, Otter, Natterjack Toad, Smooth Snake, Sand Lizard and Great Crested Newt are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CRoW Act 2000) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The Acts make it an offence to:

a) Deliberately capture, injure or kill an EPS;
b) Deliberately impair an EPS's ability to survive, breed, reproduce, rear or nurture young; to hibernate or migrate; or significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the EPS.
c) Possess or control live or dead EPS or any part of, or anything derived from a EPS;
d) Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of an EPS;
e) Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place that is used for shelter or protection by an EPS;
f) Intentionally or recklessly disturb a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection that is occupied by an EPS.

All common herptiles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CRoW Act 2000). Grass Snake, Slow Worm, Common Lizard, Adder are protected against intentional killing or injury. Common Frog, Common Toad, Smooth Newt and Palmate Newt is protected against sale. In addition, all British reptiles, Common toad and Great Crested Newt are listed as Species of Principal Importance.

All nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage, or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb a species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act while they are nest building or at or near a nest with eggs or young, or to disturb the dependent young.

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 makes it an offence to wilfully, or to attempt to kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a Badger, or intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett. Interference of a sett includes disturbing Badgers during occupation of a sett, or damaging or destroying a sett, or obstructing access to the sett.

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 places a duty on every public authority to have regard to conserving biodiversity. Section 41 of the same Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitats that are of 'Principal Importance' for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. The Secretary of State must take steps, as appear reasonably practicable, to further the conservation of those living organisms and habitats in any list published under this section. The list of species and habitats of principal importance currently includes 943 species and 56 habitats. These are the species and habitats found in England which are regarded as conservation priorities under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework

The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 protect 'important' hedgerows from destruction or damage. A hedgerow is 'important' if it (a) has existed for 30 years or more; and (b) satisfies at least one of the criteria listed in Part II of Schedule 1 of the Regulations. Under the Regulations, it is against the law to remove or destroy 'important' hedgerows unless permitted by the local planning authority.

The Environment Act 2021 makes it mandatory for housing and development, subject to some narrow exemptions, to achieve at least a 10% net gain in value for biodiversity – a requirement that habitats for wildlife must be left in a measurably better state than before the development. Developers must submit a 'biodiversity gain plan' alongside usual planning application documents. The local authority must assess whether the 10% net gain requirement is met in order to approve the biodiversity gain plan.

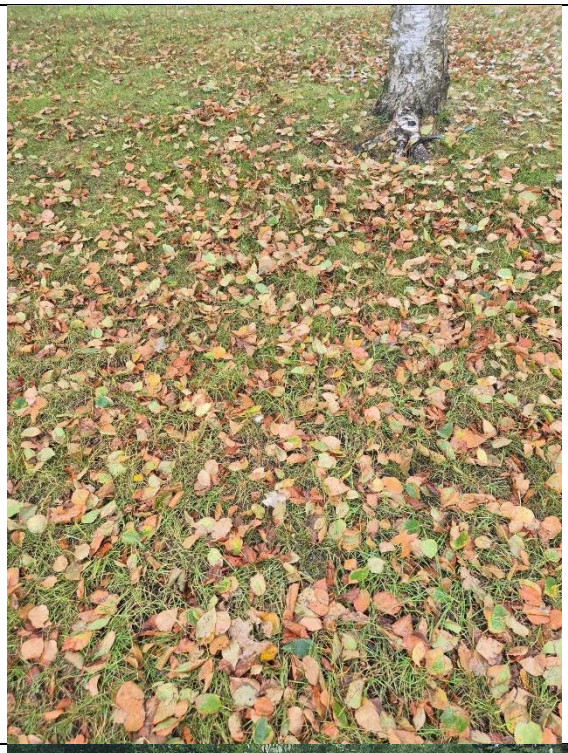
The Environment Act 2021 strengthens the duty on public authorities (NERC Act, 2006) to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity.

The Environment Act 2021 amends the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to introduce an additional purpose for granting a protected species licence in relation to development, 'for reasons of overriding public interest', and two additional tests for the granting of such licences: that there is 'no other satisfactory solution' and that granting the licence is 'not detrimental to the survival of any the population of the species concerned'. These changes will reduce the scope for unlicensed activities to provide clear safeguards before licences can be granted, providing legal certainty and clarity to developers about their environmental obligations.

Appendix 2: Site Photographs

Table 1 Survey Photographs		
Image number	Notes	Image
1	Developed Land; Sealed Surface photographed from east, looking west.	
2	Developed Land; Sealed Surface kerb and part of the Modified Grassland (tree is outside the RLB)	

3	Himalayan Balsam growing outside of the red line boundary to the north of the site	
4	Showing the car park and trees adjacent to the site	

5	Parcel of modified Grassland inside the red line boundary	
6	Sparsely Vegetated Land; Tall Ruderal Ephemeral	
7	Tree stump present in the centre of the developed land; sealed surface habitat	

8	Brash piles present in the sparsely vegetated land habitat	
9	An adjacent area of modified grassland that will be used for off-site tree planting.	

Appendix 3: BNG Headline Results

FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	0.11
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	101.59%
	Hedgerow units	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit	
Area habitat units	10.00%	0.11	0.12	0.00	No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

Appendix 4: Baseline and Post-development Habitat Plans



UK Habitat map

Key

- Red Line Boundary
- Developed Land; Sealed Surface
- Modified Grassland
- Sparsely vegetated Land
- Individual Tree
- Off Site Habitat

The Limes, Fallowfield Campus

Halliday Meecham Architects

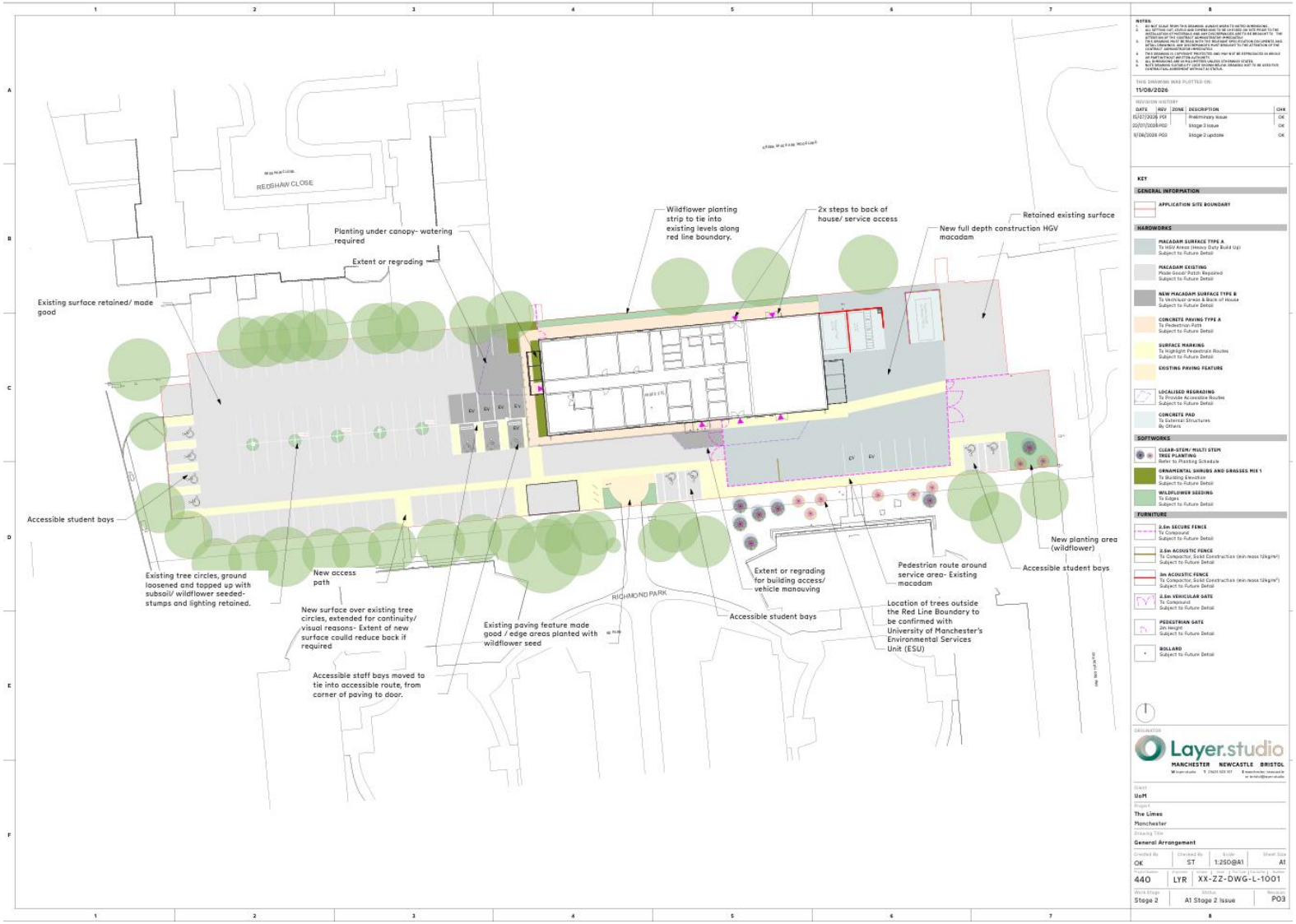
Project Reference: RHE.4798

Drawn By: IE

Date: 05/06/2026

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RACHEL HACKING ECOLOGY



Courtesy of Layer Studio