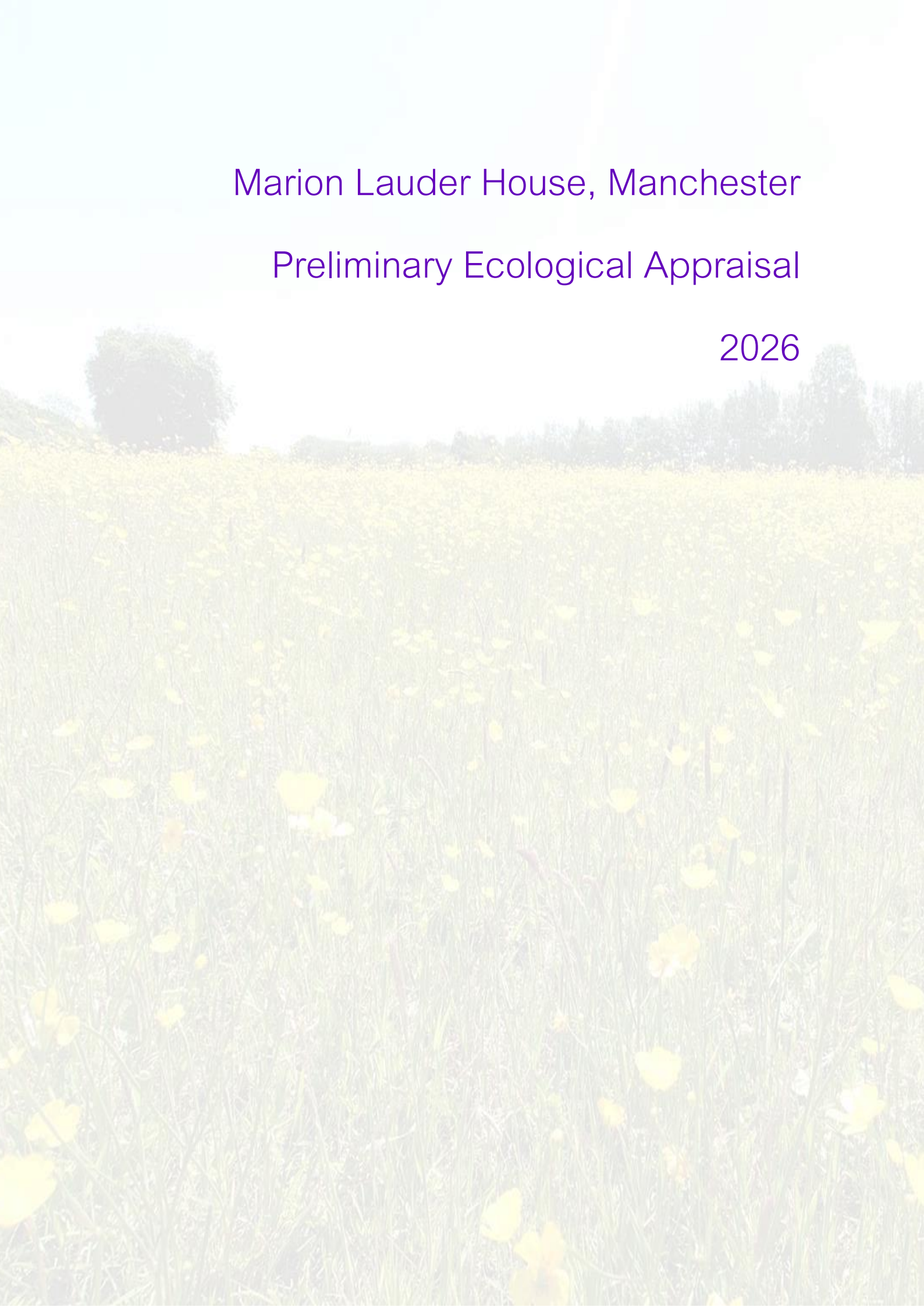
Marion Lauder House, Manchester

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

2026



Client	CareConcepts Ltd
Project Title	Marion Lauder House
Project Reference	RHE.4809
Project Leader	Tim Palmer
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Executive Summary

Development Details

The client is proposing an extension and reconfiguration of the existing care home facility to provide additional bedrooms and associated communal/support accommodation at Marion Lauder House, 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 the ecological interest. Recommendations are provided so that the development is compliant with biodiversity policy and legislation.

Ecological Interest

The site has a low level of ecological interest. Features of interest include trees. Species of relevance to the assessment include bats, Hedgehog and nesting birds.

Outcomes

Further survey work is required to determine the presence/absence of roosting bats. Habitat loss would be significant at the site level only. Recommendations for general mitigation and enhancements are included within this report. Biodiversity Net Gain assessment is reported separately.

1. Introduction

1.1 Project Brief

1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited (RHE) was commissioned in 2026 by CareConcepts Ltd to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment of land at Marion Lauder House (the 'site'). The site is located at O.S. grid reference: SJ824858 (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Site location

1.1.2 The site comprises a care home on the southern edge of Wythenshawe. Surrounding land use is residential to the northeast with Manchester Aiport to the southwest.

1.2 Scope of Work

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

- Desk-based study to obtain details of designated sites, protected and notable species within a specified search area.
- Record the extent, type, and condition of habitats within and next to the site.
- Search for signs of protected species and assessment of the potential of habitats and features to support protected and notable species.

1.2.2 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) information is reported separately.

1.3 Site Visit Information

Surveyor Details

1.3.1 Tim Palmer *MCIEEM* (Technical Director) and Myles Harrison (Junior Ecologist) visited the site on 18th May 2026. Tim has over 25 years' professional experience and holds a level 2 licence to disturb bats (Ref. 2015-14656-CLS-CLS).

Weather

1.3.2 The weather at the time of the survey was cloudy with spells of rain showers throughout the survey and an average temperature of 12°C. Weather conditions were appropriate for the assessment.

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 (and European Protected Species licences) within a 2km radius of the site.

2.1.2 The site was checked to determine if it is located within an Impact Risk Zone 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 Greater Manchester Local Record Centre (GMLERC) was contacted to provide details of non-statutory designated sites and records of protected and notable species within a 2km radius of the site.

2.2 Field Survey

UK Habitat Classification 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.

Bats

2.2.3 A Preliminary Roost Assessment was undertaken of the buildings and mature trees on site in accordance with standard guidelines[3]. The exterior of the buildings/trees were surveyed from the ground using binoculars and a high-powered torch. Features offering potential access to roosting bats were recorded. Such features may include suitable gaps in roof coverings, gaps behind external cladding/facia and gaps in masonry. Any trees on the site were searched for Potential Roosting Features (PRF's), such as flaking bark, woodpecker holes, knot holes and limb splits.

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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] Collins, J. (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)*. Bat Conservation Trust. London.

2.2.4 Evidence indicating the presence of roosting bats was also searched for. This may include bat droppings on walls, windows or on the ground below roost entrances or staining from fur oil around roost entry points.

2.3 Mitigation Hierarchy

2.3.1 Mitigation measures should be embedded within the masterplan design and planning application process. Measures during the construction phases should be included in a Construction Environmental Management Plan: Biodiversity (CEMP). 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.

2.4 Survey Constraints

2.4.1 The site was fully accessible. The survey was undertaken in May, an optimal month for habitat and protected species assessments, and therefore a robust assessment was possible. A high degree of confidence is placed on the results.

3. Results

3.1 Designated Sites

3.1.1 There are no designated conservation sites within the study area.

3.1.2 The site is located the Impact Risk Zones of Site(s) of several SSSIs, however due to the limited extent and type of development proposal there is no requirement for the Local Planning Authority to consult with Natural England.

3.2 Habitats

3.2.1 Target Notes and photographs are contained in Appendix 3 and the habitats survey plan is contained in Appendix 2. There are no irreplaceable habitats present on site.

Ornamental Shrub

3.2.2 Two small shrub beds exist within the areas of modified grassland on the eastern and western boundaries of the site. Vegetation includes Mangrove leaved Daisy-brush *Olearia avinecciifolia* and Raspberry *Rubus idaeus*.

Individual Trees

3.2.3 Scattered trees are present around the site. Species include Norway Maple *Acer platanoides,* Common Whitebeam *Sorbus aria,* Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and Bird Cherry *Prunus padus.*

Hedgerows and Trees

3.2.4 Three ornamental hedgerows dominated by Cherry Laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* are present along the eastern, southern, and western boundaries.

3.2.5 A line of trees is present at the northeast end of the site boundary. Species include Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and Elder *Sambucus nigra*.

Grassland

3.2.6 Areas of modified grassland are located around the site. Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne* is dominant with occasional Daisy *Bellis perennis*, Dandelion *Taraxacum* agg*.,* White Clover *Trifolium repens,* Selfheal *Prunella vulgaris* and Common Mouse-ear *Cerastium fontanum*. The habitat is in poor condition as there are fewer than six species per square metre and the sward height is uniform.

Developed land; sealed surface

3.2.7 The site is dominated by buildings, car park and paths.

3.3 Species

Badger

3.3.1 The desk study returned two records of Badger *Meles meles* records within the search area.

3.3.2 No evidence of badger activity (including setts, latrines, paths, snuffle holes, or foraging signs) were found during the survey and Badgers are highly unlikely to be present given the urban location of the site and lack of deep vegetation cover.

Bats

3.3.3 The desk study returned multiple records of seven species including Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus,* Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pigmaeus,* Whiskered Bat *Myotis mystacinus,* Brown Long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus,* Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii,* Common Noctule *Nyctalus noctule,* and Brandt's Bat *Myotis brandtii* within the search area. The nearest record of roosting bats was 770m to the northeast.

3.3.4 The main care home building (Building 1) is brick built and of fairly recent construction with interlocking concrete tiles covering the roof. Soffits and fascias appear newly fitted and are plastic/PVC with end caps fitted at the gables. All of the roof features are modern and tightly sealed. In places there is a parapet wall at the eaves with concrete coping stones and very limited gaps beneath. These appear shallow and unsuitable. Bat roost potential is negligible.

3.3.5 The Bungalow (Building 2) has been disused for c. five years. It is brick built with flat concrete interlocking tiles on the gable ended, two pitched roof. Wooden soffits are in poor condition with rotten sections on corners. Eroded mortar fillet at eaves. Bat roost potential is low.

Hedgehog

3.3.6 Multiple records of Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* were returned in the desk study. The closest relevant record to site was returned 65m away, no evidence of this species was recorded during the survey although it is anticipated that the shrub beds and lawns could be used occasionally for foraging/commuting.

Birds

3.3.7 Fifteen records of birds were recorded in the desk study, these include Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos,* Dunnock *Prunella modularis,* Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula,* and House Sparrow *Passer domesticus.* A number of widespread species were recorded during the site visit including Goldcrest *Regulus regulus,* Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus,* Starling *Sturnus vulgaris,* Greenfinch *Chloris chloris,* Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis,* House Sparrow and Blackbird *Turdus merula.* None of the observations refer to nesting/breeding birds although the trees and shrub beds on site are suitable and expected to be used as nesting habitat.

Reptiles

3.3.8 The desk study returned no records of reptiles and none of the habitats on site are considered suitable. Due to their likely absence, reptiles are not discussed further in this report.

Great Crested Newt and Other Amphibians

3.3.9 There are no suitable breeding or terrestrial habitat for Great Crested Newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* on site. There are no ponds or waterbodies featuring standing water within 0.25km of the site.

3.3.10 It is considered highly unlikely that GCN may be present on site and therefore, this species is not further considered in this report.

Invertebrates

3.3.11 No invertebrate species were returned in the desk study. The urban context of the site and the general low species diversity of the scrub indicates the site is not likely to support rare species or important assemblages of invertebrates. Invertebrates are not considered further in this report.

3.4 Invasive Species

Plants

3.4.1 The desk study returned no records of invasive plants, and none were recorded during the surveys.

Animals

3.4.2 The desk study returned no records of invasive animals, and none were recorded during the surveys.

4. Assessment and Recommendations

4.1 Development Context

4.1.1 The following assessment assumes that the development will proceed as described above in paragraph 1.1.4.

4.2 Impacts on Designated Sites

4.2.1 No impacts to any designated sites will result due to the absence of impact pathways.

4.3 Impacts on Habitats

4.3.1 Minor losses of modified grassland will result.

4.3.2 Four small trees will be lost to facilitate the proposed development.

4.3.3 Habitat loss is significant at the site level only.

4.3.4 Changes in biodiversity units are addressed separately in a BNG report.

4.4 Impacts on Species

Bats

4.4.1 Given the proposed demolition of the bungalow (B2), in the event that bat roosts are present there is potential for incidental harm. It is therefore recommended that a single bat emergence survey is undertaken in accordance with standard guidelines (Collins 2023) during the period May-August (inclusive), to consider the potential presence of roosting bats and to characterise any roosts present.

Other Mammals

4.4.2 Hedgehogs could potentially be harmed if they access a construction site, hence any deep excavations should either be fenced off or ramped to ensure Hedgehogs are not accidentally trapped.

Nesting Birds

4.4.3 Habitat clearance should avoid the nesting bird period (March – August inclusive). In the event that clearance of vegetation including scrub (shrub beds) and trees, cannot be avoided during the breeding season, a prior check for the presence of active nests should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist up to 48hrs prior to habitat removal. In the event that active nests are found, these should be subject to retention and protection via the establishment of a suitable buffer zone, the extent of which will be advise by the ecologist depending on the sensitivity of the species concerned. Habitat clearance should be appropriately delayed until the nesting attempt is complete.

5. Enhancements

5.1.1 Appropriate enhancement measures include:

- Installation of bird boxes (e.g. 32mm and 45mm entrance boxes and swallow nesting boxes) within retained trees and newly constructed buildings;
- Installation of integrated and/or external bat roost features (e.g. bat boxes or bat bricks) on retained trees and newly constructed buildings;
- Creation of species-rich grassland and planting of native trees and shrubs of local provenance, including nectar, pollen, and berry-producing species;

5.1.2 The long-term management and establishment of habitats should be secured through the BNG process, with habitat targets aligned with those set out within the BNG assessment.

Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2025) 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 two most relevant to individual planning decisions are Paragraphs 187, 192 and 193, shown below:

- 187. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
  - a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
  - b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
  - c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
  - d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;
  - e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
  - f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
- 192. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:
  - b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.
- 193. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) 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 planning permission should be refused;
b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
c) development resulting in 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; and
d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

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: Desk Study

5.1.3 The report includes a summary of the species records that were made available. Should you wish to see further details please submit a written request to Rachel Hacking Ecology.

Appendix 3: Habitats

Habitat	Photograph
Modified Grassland	 

Ornamental shrub	
Ornamental hedgerows	 

Appendix 4: Habitat Plan


Ornamental shrub
Marion Lauder House
Baseline Habitat Map
Key
Artificial Unvegetated; Unsealed Surface
Developed Land; Sealed Surface
Modified Grassland
Mixed Scrub
Non-Native Ornamental Hedgerow
Medium Tree
Small Tree
Red Line Boundary
Marion lauder House, Manchester
Care Concepts LTD
Project Reference: RHE.4809
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