MARLSBRO HOUSE, MANCHESTER

BLACK REDSTART MITIGATION REPORT

October 2026

Collingtonwinter
environmental

Report Control Sheet

Project Name: *Marlsbro House, Manchester*
Project Reference: *CW20-3408*
Report Title: *Black Redstart Mitigation Report*
Report Reference: *CW20-3408 RPT 001*
Printing Instructions: *Print at A4 Portrait, Double Sided.*

Rev	Date	Description	Prepared	Reviewed	Approved
1	02/10/2026	Report sent to Client	GD	CO	CO
2	13/10/2026	Amended Report sent to Client	GD	CO	CO
3	15/10/2026	Amended Final Report Sent to Client	GD	CO	CO

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. SCOPE & PURPOSE

1.1.1. Collington Winter Environmental Ltd was commissioned by ACLO Assets MH Limited to complete a Black Redstart Mitigation report at Marlsbro House, Manchester, M1 1ED. This report has been produced to discharge Condition 22 of PLA-2026-000266. Condition 22 asks "a precautionary working method and enhancement plan for black redstarts to ensure no disturbance or destruction of black redstarts nests during the works, and to provide suitable nesting boxes (the universal nest brick, or equivalent specification)", with the boxes in place prior to occupation".

1.1.2. The author of this report is Georgia Duffy, Graduate Ecologist at Collington Winter Environmental Ltd and this report has been supervised by Caitlin O'Connor AMIEnvSc, Senior Ecologist at Collington Winter Environmental. Caitlin is highly experienced managing schemes and has produced many ecological reports to inform planning permission.

1.1.3. The aim of this report is to assess Marlsbro House's suitability for black redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros)* birds and the mitigation requirements.

1.2. LOCATION

1.2.1. Please refer to Figure 1.2.1. for the approximate site location. Marlsbro House is located within the city centre of Manchester. It is surrounded on all aspects by businesses, housing and high-rise apartment buildings/ offices.

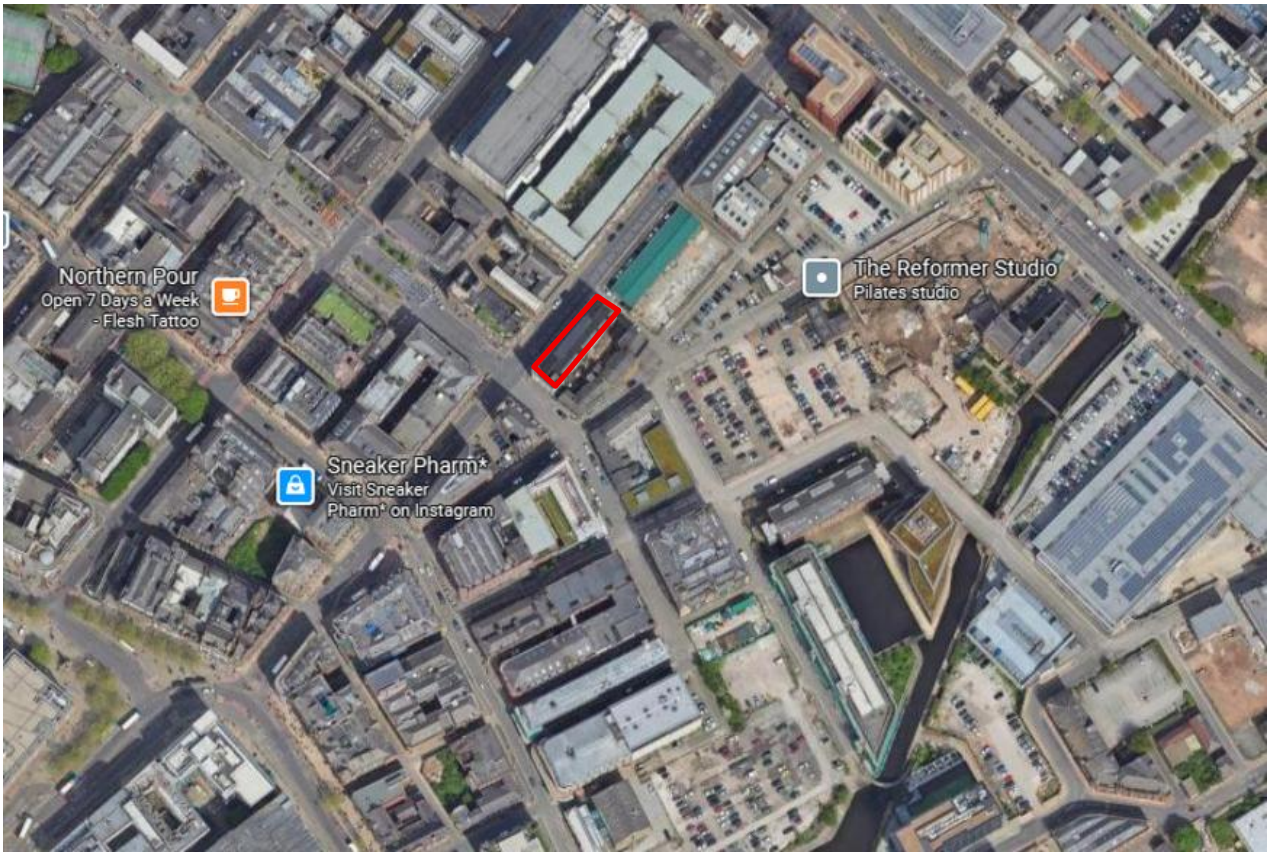


Figure 1.2.1 Site Location

1.3. OBJECTIVES

1.3.1. The objectives of the Black Redstart Mitigation as follows:

- Determine the importance of the building to be affected in relation to black redstart.
- Assess the potential impacts of the proposed development.
- Advise relevant mitigation (where necessary) for black redstart.

1.4. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

1.4.1. All birds in the UK and their nests are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA 1981). The following are criminal offences:

- Killing, injuring or taking any wild bird
- Taking, damaging or destroying the nest of any wild bird whilst that nest is in use or being built.
- Taking or destroying the egg of any wild bird • Possessing any live or dead wild bird, or any part, or anything derived from such a bird.
- Possessing an egg of a wild bird or any part of such an egg

1.4.2. Certain bird species are also protected on Schedule 1 of the WCA 1981 which makes the following criminal offences:

- Disturbing any Schedule 1 wild bird whilst it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young.
- Disturbing dependent young of such a bird.

1.4.3. Black redstart is protected on Schedule 1 of the WCA 1981

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. DESK STUDY

2.1.1. An initial desk-based assessment of Marlsbro House was undertaken to collate baseline data. The desk study included:

- Review of aerial and OS maps for habitat information.
- Review of potential habitat links on and off site, to determine the potential zone of influence of the proposed development.
- A review of any previous surveys.

2.2. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

2.2.1. This assessment identifies the designated sites, key habitats and black redstart populations within the surrounding area of Marlsbro House.

2.2.2. The analysis of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) or inclusion on Red Data Book Lists or Local Biodiversity Action Plans.

2.2.3. Consideration of the impact is important and essential to assess the impact on local bird populations. In identifying impacts, the review considers the Client's site proposals and any subsequent recommendations made are proportionate / appropriate to the site and have considered the Mitigation Hierarchy as identified below:

- Avoid: Provide advice on how the development may proceed by avoiding impacts on black redstart by consideration of the site design.
- Mitigate: Where avoidance cannot be implemented, mitigation proposals are put forward to minimise impacts to black redstart as a result of the proposals.
- Compensate: Where avoidance cannot be achieved, mitigation strategy will consider the requirements for site compensatory measures.
- Enhance: The assessment will identify appropriate enhancements for black redstart.

3. DESK STUDY

3.1. BLACK REDSTART SPECIES OVERVIEW

3.1.1. The black redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros)* is a small robin-sized bird and inhabits a range of habitats from industrial and urban areas to farmland, mountainous, marine and intertidal habitats. The species is a typical migratory bird and usually spends the breeding season within Europe and parts of Asia. During winter, populations will migrate to southern Europe and North Africa. However, individuals may overwinter in their breeding areas, particularly in urban environments.

3.1.2. Within the UK, there are resident, summer breeding and overwintering individuals and populations. Concentrations on the far southeast coast of England and the far west coast of England, just above Wales consist of summer breeding and residential individuals. Overwintering populations are typically present along the eastern, northern and western coastlines of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Additionally, the species overwinters along the majority of the British coastline, with the exception of the most northwestern coastline of Scotland.

3.1.3. Summer breeding is known within the northwest region, where the development site is located.

3.1.4. Please see Figure 3.1 for general distribution map.

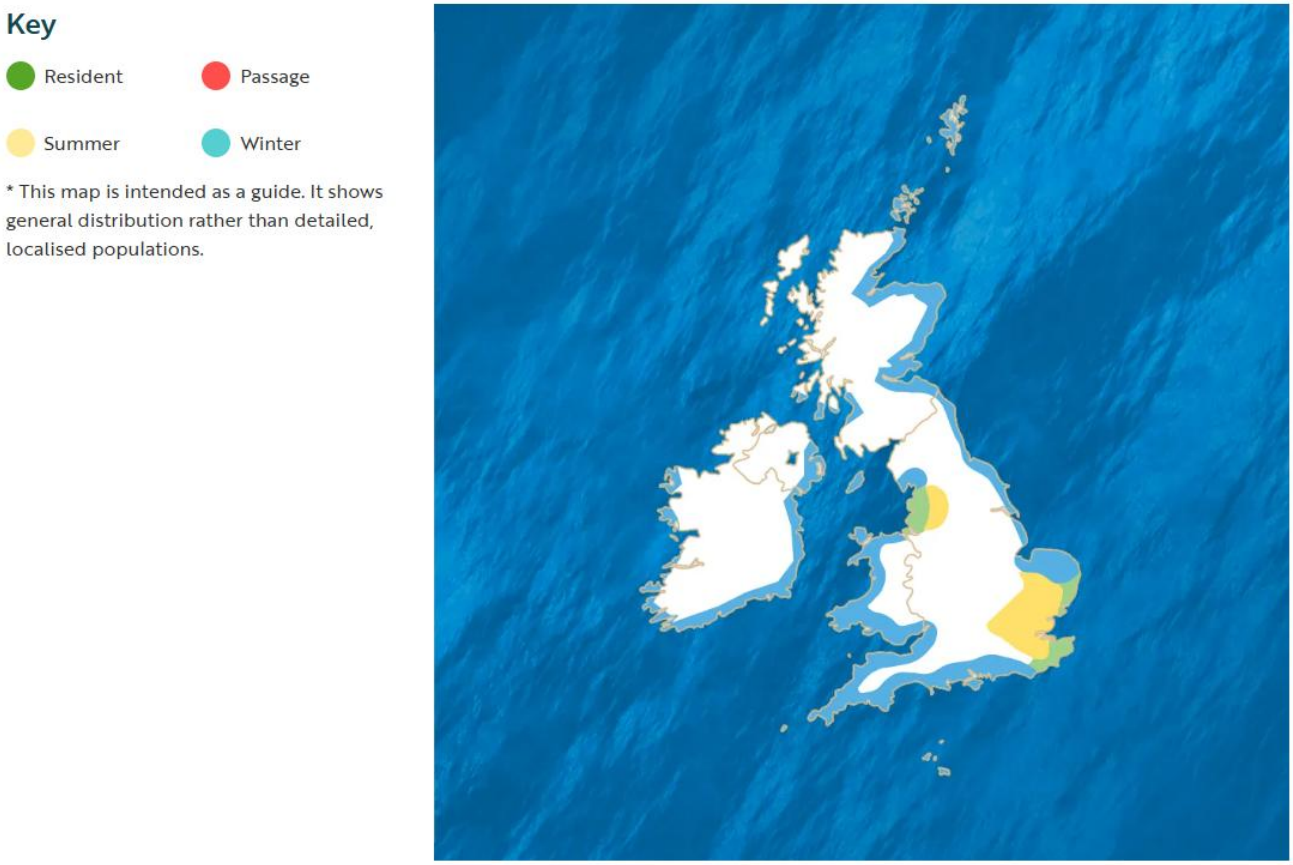


Figure 3.1 Species Distribution Map Across the UK and the Republic of Ireland. Image taken from The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Black Redstart Website on the 01/10/2026.

3.1.5. The species typically nests in crevice or holes in their natural environment. The species will nest on rocky crags, cliffs and scree slopes. Within urban environments, the species will nest within crevices and holes in buildings. Within the UK the breeding season typically last from March/April to July.

3.1.6. The species is rare within the UK, with only approximately 58 - 100 breeding pairs in the UK and approximately

400 overwintering individuals. Therefore, the species has been placed as Amber on the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern. The species faces decline from threats of habitat loss through urbanisation. While the species have adapted to urban environments, the loss of nesting opportunities, through constant re-development is a real threat.

3.1.7. Therefore, the species has been flagged in the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan, with an objective of maintaining a breeding population of the species within the greater Manchester area. The target is to create a minimum of 50 green roofs/green walls across the Greater Manchester area over the next five years, particularly in areas where Black Redstarts are known to breed. Currently, a number of green roofs have/are being incorporated more into planning and building constructions to help support the species.

3.2. PREVIOUS SURVEYS

3.2.1. A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was conducted at Marlsbro House on the 13th of August 2025 by Collington Winter Environmental which assessed the building as having 'low' bat roosting potential due to multiple potential roosting features in relation to the external and internal walls, along with the damaged timber located along the internal ceilings. Due to the lack on entry points, the bats were unlikely to utilise these features. Therefore, the building was classified as having low bat roosting potential.

3.2.2. During the PRA survey, the building was surveyed for the presence of nesting birds, including black redstart.

3.2.3. One Nocturnal Bat Survey (NBS) was conducted on the 13th of August 2025 by Collington Winter Environmental. The survey recorded zero bat activity relating to emerging and re-entering behaviour throughout the survey period.

3.3. DESIGNATED SITES

3.3.1. A review of Magic.gov.uk found five statutory designated local nature reserves (LNR) sites within 5km from the site boundary.

- Clayton Vale LNR is located approximately 2.85km east of the site boundary. The reserve is reclaimed from land fill by Manchester City Council in the 1980s and forms a valley with the river Medlock, running along its base. Additionally, the site holds a semi-mature forest, planted in the mid-1980s and holds species such as silver birch (*Betula pendula*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), willow (*Salix spp*.) and poplars (*Populus spp.).*
- The Cliff / Kersal Dale LNR is located approximately 3.45km northwest of the site boundary. The site mainly consists of woodland, but holds open water, marshland, semi-natural grassland as well. The site supports a range of bird species including (but not limited to); woodpeckers (*Picidae spp.)* and kingfishers (*Alcedo atthis*).
- Boggart Hole Clough LNR is located approximately 4.1km northwest of the site. The site is the largest woodland clough in Manchester and partly contains ancient woodland. Additionally, the site holds several gullies and ravines.
- Broadhurst Clough LNR is located approximately 4.3km northeast of the site boundary. The site comprises of woodland, a mosaic of amenity grassland, species-rich rough grassland, marshland and the dean brook with flows through the lower levels of the clough. The woodland consists of mature poplars (*Populus spp.)* and young copses of birch (*Betula spp*.) and alder (*Alnus glutinosa*). Extensive stands of flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) can be found in the marshy areas of seasonal ponds. The reserve is anticipated to support local wildlife populations, including breeding birds.
- Kersal Moor LNR is located approximately 4.5km northwest of the site boundary. This moor is a mosaic of grassland and scattered trees. The site supports a range of plants and animals.
- Blackley Forest LNR is located approximately 4.7km north of the site boundary. The site mainly consists of forest along with grassland habitats and the River Irk, which flows through the park. The site is home to a variety of plants and wildlife, and it is anticipated to support breeding birds.

3.3.2. While none of the sites have been specifically designated for black redstart, they do hold the potential to provide, nesting, breeding and foraging opportunities for the species.

3.4. HABITATS

3.4.1. Marlsbro House comprises a vacant four storey building in the city centre of Manchester. Externally the walls are

fully rendered across the entire building, with some shutters located on the first floor. The building itself holds potential nesting features, with damaged rendering on the external walls and above crawl spaces, along with damage to the top of a door into the building, that potentially provides access into a crawl space above. Client consultation has found that no nesting birds have been identified since asbestos removal works have been commencing since April.

3.4.2. Please see the Preliminary Roost Assessment & Nocturnal Bat Survey Report by Collington Winter Environmental, September 2025 for more detail.

3.4.3. It should also be noted that all crawl spaces are regularly opened up and cleaned out as part of the development's asbestos removal.

3.4.4. Marlsbro House is situated within the city centre of Manchester, and is surrounded by an urban environment comprising businesses, high rise apartment buildings and limited green space. Within the immediate vicinity of Marlsbro House, limited greenspace is present, with only scattered individual trees and small parcels of lawns and recreational fields. However, directly south of Marlsbro House, are two building with green roof presents, which may support foraging opportunities for black redstart individuals.



Figure 3.2 Green Roofs present within immediate vicinity of the site. Image taken from Google Earth, 2026. Red Line represent site boundary; green line represents green roof boundaries.

3.4.5. Within the wider area, there are larger areas of woodland, greenspaces and vegetated areas that the species may utilise for foraging purposes (Figure 3.3). Additionally, the wider area is overwhelmingly urban and therefore provides additional nesting opportunities as the species is known to nest within urban environments.



Figure 3.3 The red point represents the site. Orange boundaries, represents larger areas of vegetation, woodland and greenspaces within the wider area. Image taken from Google Earth 2026.

4. ASSESSMENT FOR BIRDS

4.1. SCHEDULE 1 SPECIES

Black redstart

4.1.1. In accordance with the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan, Black redstart birds are considered declining and threatened with the Greater Manchester area. Due the redevelopment of the city, there has been a loss of brownfield sites that were utilised by the species for feeding and nesting opportunities.

4.1.2. The PRA identified limited crevices that may be exploited by black redstart. It is possible that the building may supports breeding black redstart.

4.2. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

4.2.1. All birds, their nests, eggs and young are legally protected, with certain exceptions, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

4.2.2. The building is to undergo a full refurbishment, with the inclusion of structural changes and the demolition of part of the building. As such, there is the risk of injuring or killing black redstart adults and their young that may potentially be utilising the building, should works commence without the implementation of mitigation measures. Furthermore, the renovation will ultimately result in the loss of potential breeding habitats for black redstart and other bird species.

4.3. MITIGATION MEASURES

4.3.1. The building was not confirmed to support any nesting or breeding birds at the time of the survey. However, black redstart individuals could potentially exploit the building for nesting opportunities.

4.3.2. The proposed works are set to start on site in January 2027 and will likely run through the 2027 nesting bird season (March to September 2027). Therefore, during the period that works will occur during nesting bird season, the following method should be adhered to mitigate any potential harm/disturbance that may be caused to black redstart individuals.

- A pre-commencement nesting bird check should be conducted by a qualified ecologist to confirm the absence of black redstart individuals and other species of birds from Marlsbro House before works are to commence in January 2027. An additional nesting bird check should be conducted in March 2027 (at the start of the breeding season) to confirm the absence of black redstart individuals from Marlsbro House.
- Additionally, nesting bird checks should be conducted by a qualified ecologist before any high-risk activities are to begin, e.g. the erection of scaffold, the removal of rendering, any works to the roof and opening up the crawl spaces.
- A qualified ecologist should provide a toolbox talk to contractors and all site personnel. All site personnel should be fully briefed concerning the potential presence of black redstart birds, the mitigation measures to be followed, the relevant legislation, and the procedures to be implemented should black redstart individual/nest be encountered during works. A copy of the Toolbox Talk is provided at the start of works, and a copy of this should be made available in the Site Office.
- In the event a black redstart nest is encountered during works, all works should cease within the immediate area, and a qualified ecologist should be contacted for advice. At a minimum, a no works buffer zone of 5m should be implemented around the nest, to prevent potential disturbance and harm. Works can only commence when the young have fledged and a qualified ecologist has confirmed the nest is no longer in use. Typically, black redstarts lay eggs between the end of April and July, which then take around 12 to 16 days to hatch after being incubated by the female. Chicks usually fledge once they reach the age of around 15 to 18 days. All in all, finding freshly laid black redstart eggs could result in a no works buffer zone being implemented for a minimum of 34 days (non-working days included). An updated nesting bird check would assess the progress of the nest and may inform whether extended no working periods are implemented.

- It should be noted that all nesting bird checks last for 48 hours only. Therefore, any works that are to occur outside of this time frame, which may impact nesting features, will require an additional nesting bird check.

4.3.3. The use of netting as a means of preventing black redstart and other birds from nesting within the building is not recommended, and should be avoided, due to the potential for birds to become trapped or entangled, which may result in injury or death. If works are required during the nesting bird season, solid scaffold sheeting comprising a hard-sheet material should instead be used to restrict access to suitable nesting locations. Ideally, the sheeting should be fully erected before the nesting bird season commences. Prior to its installation, a suitably qualified ecologist should inspect the building to confirm that no active nests are present. This check should be undertaken irrespective of the time of year, as certain species, including pigeons, can nest year-round. If active nesting is confirmed, the affected area must be left undisturbed until the ecologist confirms that breeding has concluded and the young have fledged. The nesting bird check will be valid for 48 hours only; where installation is not completed within this time period, an additional nesting bird check will be required.

4.3.4. It should also be noted as a general rule for all birds, that building works should be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season (March to September inclusive). If this is not possible, a suitably qualified ecologist should undertake a nesting bird check no more than 48 hours prior to the commencement of works that involve the destruction of potential nesting features. If nesting activity is observed, the nest(s) should be left in situ until the young have fledged. A suitable buffer will be maintained and determined by the ecologist. It should be noted that pigeons will nest year-round.

4.4. COMPENSATION MEASURES

4.4.1. The development will result in the unavoidable loss of potential breeding bird habitat for black redstart. To compensate for the loss, suitable nesting provisions will be installed prior to the occupation of the building. It is recommended that four Open Nest Boxes (Vivara Pro WoodStone Build-in Open Nest Box or Schwegler 2HW Deep Bird Nest Box or similar, as approved) are installed either within the external walls of the new-build elements of the building or externally mounted onto the existing walls of the building, to provide nesting cavities (Figure 4.4.1). As the building is listed, built-in boxes may not be feasible, and therefore both options have been provided.



Figure 4.4.1 WoodStone Build-in Open Nest Box & Schwegeler 2HW.

4.4.2. Bird boxes are most effective when positioned north-east to north-west facing aspects to prevent overheating throughout the summer nesting season and to help shelter the boxes from adverse weather conditions. The boxes should be installed as close to the top of the building as possible. Please see the Appendix for an indicative location plan of the bird boxes.

4.4.3. Alternatively, bird boxes can be installed at parapet or roofline level. Ideally, they should be positioned beneath eaves or ledges to provide additional shelter and protection from adverse weather conditions associated with increased exposure at higher elevations. Bird boxes should not be installed directly on roofs, as this can leave nesting birds and their young vulnerable to the elements.

4.4.4. It should be noted that Condition 22 states that the ‘universal nest brick or equivalent’ should be incorporated into the development **prior to occupation.** The WoodStone Build-in Open Nest Box and the Schwegeler 2HW Nest Box are both suitable equivalents to the universal nest brick.

4.4.5. The bird boxes are to be inspected every 2-3 years to check for any signs of damage. Any boxes that are found to be damaged/missing should be replaced. Bird boxes also require periodic cleaning after uptake. **These will be inspected outside of bird nesting season (nest boxes to be inspected from October to April).** If any

unhatched eggs are found outside of the nesting season for birds, then they may be removed legally between October to January and disposed of as outlined in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (c.69) (Please refer to the GOV.UK website - Licence to remove abandoned or unsuccessful eggs from the nests of wild birds (GL12) for guidance before the removal of unhatched eggs).

5. SUMMARY

5.1. CONCLUSION

5.1.1. Overall, the site has been found to potentially support breeding opportunities for black redstart.

5.1.2. As such, appropriate mitigation measures have been outlined to protect black redstart should they be present in the building before works commence. This includes nesting bird checks before works commence on the buildings. Should nesting activity be noted during the checks, the ecologist will advise on further mitigation measures.

5.1.3. Compensatory nest boxes have been recommended to allow for the continuity of potential nesting sites for black redstart post-renovation.

5.1.4. Overall, should the proposed measures be adhered to, there is not anticipated to be a negative impact upon breeding birds at a site or local level.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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7: APPENDIX

7. APPENDIX – BLACK REDSTART BIRD BOX LOCATION PLAN

Two bird boxes will be placed on the elevation (facing Faraday Street) (to the left). The bird boxes will be facing northeastwards.

Additionally, two bird boxes will be situated on the below elevation (facing Newton Street). The bird boxes will be facing northwards.



1 PROPOSED FARADAY ST. ELEVATION
Scale: 1:100

FARADAY ST



1 PROPOSED NEWTON ST. ELEVATION
Scale: 1:100

NEWTON ST

Drawing Title:

Black Redstart Bird Box Enhancement Locations

WoodStone Build-in Open Next Boxes (or similar)

Notes:

Scale: NTS

Checked by	GD
Drawn by	GD
Approved by	KB

Collington Winter Environmental
23 Bark Street East
Bolton
BL1 2BQ
Tel: 01204 263034
www.collingtonwinter.com

Base Layers - Proposed North Elevation (Faraday Street) AHA/MHM/PA/203 C and Proposed West Elevation (Newton Street) AHA/MHM/PA/200 A

Site: Marlsbro House, Manchester, M1 1ED.

Client Ref NO: 20-3408	Rev: 3.0

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