

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal



Hopwood Hall College, Rochdale

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Where field investigations have been carried out, these have been restricted to a level of detail required to achieve the stated objectives of the work.

This work has been undertaken in accordance with the quality management system of RSK ADAS Limited.

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Summary

ADAS were commissioned by Collida to undertake a preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) and preliminary roost assessment (PRA) to inform plans to develop Hopwood Hall College, a further education centre in Rochdale, located at Rochdale Campus, St Mary's Gate, Rochdale OL12 6RY (OS Grid Reference SD 89339 13366).

There were three statutory sites within 5 km of the site and one non-statutory designated site within 2 km of the site. The proposed development site is geographically separated from any designated sites. No hydrological connectivity nor any other impact pathways have been identified.

A field survey was carried out in September 2024. The proposed development site comprised Modified Grassland, Buildings, Developed Land; Sealed Surface, Other Developed Land and a Non-Native Ornamental Hedgerow.

The hedgerow on site provided opportunities for common nesting bird species during nesting bird season and the flat roofed buildings offered nesting opportunities (albeit low) for cliff-nesting species. If possible, vegetation clearance / demolition should take place outside of nesting bird season, if this is not possible, checks for nesting birds must be carried out of the flat roofed areas / hedgerow prior to clearance / demolition.

Block B and the garages were considered to have low potential to support roosting bats, with each building requiring one dusk survey to be carried out between May and August. Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) are recommended in relation commuting and foraging bats, associated with the River Roch.

Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) are recommended in relation to the River Roch. Although the water course lies outside the site boundary it is recommended that the Environment Agency Pollution Prevention Guidance is adhered to.

A biodiversity net gain assessment will be undertaken to inform this planning application which will detail habitat retention, creation and enhancement prescriptions.

Subject to the adoption of the recommendations outlined in this report and currently outstanding assessments, it is expected that the proposed works would comply with relevant wildlife legislation and national / local planning policy.

Summary of Further Survey or Actions

The table below provides information on further surveys, mitigation measures and enhancement measures to be undertaken on site.

Survey/Action	Rationale	When
Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment.	A BNG Assessment will be undertaken to inform this planning application and in order to comply with the Environment Act 2021 and national / local planning policy.	Design phase.
Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) in relation to the offsite water course (River Roch).	The River Roch lies outside the site boundary however it is recommended that the Environment Agency Pollution Prevention Guidance is adhered to.	Throughout works.
Bat emergence survey.	Roosting potential has been identified in Block B and the garages. The buildings have been assessed as having 'Low' suitability and will require one dusk emergence survey per building.	Between May and August. Early surveying is recommended to allow sufficient information to be gathered to inform a licence application if necessary.
Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) in relation commuting and foraging bats.	it is recommended that a sensitive lighting strategy (should lighting be required along the site boundary closest to the River Roch) based on the Institute for Lighting Professionals Guidance note 08/23 "Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK" (2023) is implemented to reduce the likelihood of an impact to foraging	Design phase.

Survey/Action	Rationale	When
	and commuting bats as a result of an increase of artificial light.	
Nesting bird checks.	The hedgerow on site provided opportunities for common nesting bird species during nesting bird season and the flat roofed buildings offered nesting opportunities (albeit low) for cliff-nesting species. If possible, vegetation clearance / demolition should take place outside of nesting bird season, if this is not possible, checks for nesting birds must be carried out of the flat roofed areas / hedgerow prior to clearance / demolition.	Between March and August. Checks must be carried out no less than 48 hours before vegetation clearance works are due to begin.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and Survey Objectives

ADAS were commissioned by Collida to undertake a preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) and preliminary roost assessment (PRA) to inform plans to develop Hopwood Hall College, a further education centre in Rochdale, located at Rochdale Campus, St Mary's Gate, Rochdale OL12 6RY (OS Grid Reference SD 89339 13366), hereafter referred to as 'the site'. The current application involves proposals to demolish an existing college building (block B) and associated garages and construct a new block B on an area of the site currently used as a car park, the proposed development includes associated hard and soft landscaping.

The aim of the PEA is to identify confirmed or potential ecological constraints to the proposed works and make recommendations for avoidance/mitigation/compensation, and opportunities for enhancement that can be incorporated into the design. The PEA also makes recommendations for further surveys, as required.

The report has been prepared in accordance with guidance produced by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM 2017) and the British Standard 42020:2013.

The objectives of this report are:

- *To identify designated nature conservation sites within the vicinity of the site;*
- *To identify any records and/or populations of protected, notable or scarce species in the vicinity of the site;*
- *To record habitats or features of ecological interest within or in immediate proximity to the site;*
- *To record the presence of, or potential for, protected or notable species;*
- *To make an ecological assessment and highlight potential ecological constraints;*
- *To outline any further survey work and potential protected species requirements if relevant; and*
- *To make suggestions for avoidance, mitigation compensation and enhancements in line with planning policies where appropriate.*

1.2 Site Description

The site, approximately 1.04 ha, is located in the centre of Rochdale, Greater Manchester and lies immediately west of the A58 (St Mary's Gate), and to the north of the River Roch.

Educational buildings were present on site, block A is partially included within the site boundary, where a single storey main entrance / reception with a Skywalk above connects block A and block B. Block B was a modern multistorey building, a small single storey garage was present to the west of Block B, which was being used for storage and workshops. The rest of the site was made up of a car park with associated

access roads and pathways with scattered areas of modified grassland. The proposed development site boundary in context of the wider landscape is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Site location and wider landscape (site indicated by red line boundary).

Imagery taken from Bing Aerial. September 2024.

1.3 Description of the Proposed Development

Development proposals include the demolition of block B and garages, a four-storey building (Block B replacement) will be constructed to the northwest of the site on the existing car park. Proposals include associated hard and soft landscaping.

Construction plans are outlined in document *FE0012-ALA-XX-XX-D-L-0029_ Site Landscape Plan - Illustrative_P06* (see Appendix 1).

2 Methods

2.1 Desk Study

A desk study was carried out in September 2024 to identify statutory sites of nature conservation importance within 5 km and non-statutory designated sites, together with known records of protected and other notable species within a 2 km radius of the site, with the search radius extending to 10 km for sites designated in relation to bats. Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) was used to derive information relating to the location of statutory designated sites and priority habitats.

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit Biological Record Centre provided details of non-statutory designated sites of nature conservation importance and records of protected and other notable species.

It is important to note that most species are greatly under-recorded and therefore a lack of records for a location should not be taken as an absence of the species concerned. Furthermore, a record for a particular habitat or species does not necessarily confirm its current presence.

2.2 Field Survey

A habitat survey was conducted on 11 September 2024 by ADAS Senior Ecological Consultant Emily King ACIEEM, and ADAS Assistant Ecological Consultant Lucy Cater QCIEEM, based on the method described in The UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) User Manual (UKHab Ltd 2023), with plant species recorded following standard nomenclature (Stace 2019).

UKHab is based on a hierarchical primary habitat system with associated habitat codes. The primary habitat codes are followed by secondary codes. Secondary codes are designed to give information on the environment, management and origin of habitats, to identify habitat mosaics and complexes and identify specific features within primary habitats.

The UKHab methodology works on a basis of a minimum mapping unit (MMU). This is the smallest unit that habitats can be mapped to. This assessment is based on a MMU of 25 m² in area and 5 m in length. Anything smaller will be presented via secondary codes, habitat description and/or shown as a target note where appropriate.

The habitat survey was extended to include notes on fauna and habitats which could potentially support protected species. The presence of, or potential for, protected species was noted on the field map during the survey.

2.3 Preliminary Roost Assessment

A preliminary roost assessment (PRA) was carried out by ADAS in conjunction with the field survey detailed above, on 11 September 2024 under the licence of Rob Nicholson, ADAS Associate Director of Ecology, Bat Class Licensed (2015-14102-CLS-CLS). The external inspection included viewing the external

walls, roof structure and other external features of the building, while the internal inspection involved entering roof and loft spaces as well as outbuildings and inspecting them for signs of bat usage. The survey aimed to identify and classify any features or structures available for roosting bats, including entry and exit points, and evidence of usage such as live or dead bats, bat droppings, feeding remains, scratch marks, and urine / fur staining around potential entrance points. The buildings were assessed for their suitability to support roosting bats throughout the year and categorised based on the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidelines (Collins, 2023; see Table 1 below). Equipment used during the survey included binoculars and mobile phone to take photographs of potential roost features and signs of bats. Buildings block A, block B and block C were described and assessments were made of their suitability to support roosting bats following industry-standard guidance (Collins 2023), as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: BCT guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of structures for roosting bats, based on features present and using professional judgement

Suitability	Roosting Habitats in Structures
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year, i.e. a complete absence of crevices / suitable shelter at all ground / underground levels.
Negligible ^a	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions ^b and / or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis by a large number of bats (i.e., unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site but could be used by individual hibernating bats).
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^b and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^b and surrounding habitat. These structures have the

Suitability	Roosting Habitats in Structures
	potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.
^a Negligible is defined as ‘so small or unimportant as to be not worth considering, insignificant’. This category may be used where there are places that a bat could roost or forage (due to one attribute) but it is unlikely that they actually would (due to another attribute). ^b For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels, or levels of disturbance.	

2.4 Assessment and Evaluation

The importance of identified ecological features on or likely to be on site was assessed and defined in a geographical context (see Appendix 2). The frame of reference for the habitat features in terms of their geographical importance is in line with guidance set out in CIEEM, 2018. Where ecological features have negligible importance they are not considered further in the report.

Species and the potential for habitats to support them are assessed, where appropriate, against best practice guidelines.

As part of the evaluation further surveys may be recommended based on the suitability of habitats to support protected species, the habitats themselves and potential impacts posed by the proposed development and the legal protection afforded to both habitats and species.

2.5 Zone of Influence

The assessment conducted for this report has considered the area in which ecological features could be subject to significant effects from the proposed development. The area of the potential effects is often wider than the actual perimeter of the development site and is known as the Zone of Influence.

The Zone of Influence varies for different impacts and each designated site, habitat and species has been considered in relation to their sensitivity to the proposed development.

The study areas for some species can extend beyond the site boundary, for example the study area for waterbodies that could support Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) is 250 m from the site boundary and the study area for Badger (*Meles meles*) is typically 30 m from the site boundary, where access is available.

2.6 Mitigation Hierarchy

The main aim of the preliminary ecological appraisal is to inform the client of the potential impacts on ecological features and what next steps are needed to manage these. In order to achieve this aim the mitigation hierarchy should be adopted so that the following applies:

- **Avoidance** - *Ecological features of importance should be avoided in the first instance through the design process by either designing around them, alternative design or even an alternative location.*
- **Mitigation** – *Adverse impacts that cannot be avoided should be adequately mitigated for to minimise negative impacts on the ecological features. Mitigation measures can either be implemented during the design process or construction phase.*
- **Compensation** – *This should only be used in exceptional circumstances or as a last resort, after all options for avoidance and mitigation have been fully considered. Compensation therefore can be applied to any residual impacts that cannot be avoided or mitigated.*
- **Enhancements** - *Seek to provide net benefits for biodiversity over and above requirements for avoidance, mitigation or compensation.*

2.7 Limitations

The protected species assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of such species occurring on the site. It should not be taken as providing a full and definitive survey of any protected species group.

Even where data for a particular species group are provided in the desk study, a lack of records of a defined geographical area does not necessarily mean that there is a lack of ecological interest; the area may simply be under recorded.

The UK Habitat Classification Survey does not constitute a full botanical survey or provide accurate mapping of invasive non-native plant species.

3 Baseline Ecological Conditions

3.1 Desk Study

There were three statutory sites within 5 km of the site, the closest of which Rochdale Canal Site of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which is located 1.27 km southeast. Healey Dell Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Hopwood Woodlands (LNR) are also located within 5 km of the site. There were no SACs designated for bats within 15 km of the site. Greater Manchester Local Record Centre (GMLRC) provided one non-statutory designated site within 2 km of the site Meadowcroft Woods Site of Biological Interest (SBI). Table 2 provides a summary of the designated sites located within 2-5 km of the site.

Table 2: Statutory and non-statutory designated sites within 5km and 2km of the survey site

Site Name	Description	Distance and direction from site
Statutory Designated Sites		
Rochdale Canal SSSI & SAC	Site of Special Scientific Interest, 26.37 ha. Consists of standing open water and canals in unfavourable (recovering) condition. Locally substantial populations of key species have been retained and species losses have been outweighed by species gains during the assessment period. Conservation management procedures are in place to assist the re-colonization of areas in which natural processes are still slow.	1.27 km southeast.
Healey Dell LNR	Local Nature Reserve, 26.4 ha. Nature reserve rich in industrial archaeology, located 2 miles from Rochdale town centre. The reserve mostly consists of woodland The River Spodden winds through, with multiple waterfalls creating areas of stony white-water river beds. Ponds and areas of grassland are also present.	1.8 km northwest.
Hopwood Woodlands LNR	Local Nature Reserve, 42.6 ha. The reserve is made up of a number of smaller woodland areas around the grounds of Hopwood Hall. The woodland habitats vary and there are also a number of toads and birds.	4.6 km southeast.
Non-statutory Designated Sites		
Meadowcroft Woods SBI	Site of Biological Importance, 14.0 ha. Woodland between B6222 and River Roch.	1.58 km southwest.

Table 3 presents the results of the biological records search...Selected records include records from the last 10 years within 2 km of the site.

Table 3 Records of selected protected or notable species within 2 km of the site

Species	Summary of Biological Records Search
Birds	There were records of twelve bird species protected under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 within 2 km of the site, which are listed as “species of principle importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity”. These species included three Birds of Conservation Concern Amber-listed species, Bullfinch (<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>), Dunnock (<i>Prunella modularis</i>), Song Thrush (<i>Turdus philomelos</i>), as well as nine Birds of Conservation Concern Red-listed species, Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>), Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>), House Sparrow (<i>Passer domesticus</i>), Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>), Lesser Redpoll (<i>Acanthis cabaret</i>), Marsh Tit (<i>Poecile palustris</i>), Skylark (<i>Alauda arvensis</i>), Starling (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>), and Yellow Wagtail (<i>Motacilla flava</i>). Bullfinch, House Sparrow, and Song Thrush were numerous in the area (more than fifteen records). Four bird species listed under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (protected by special penalties at all times) were present within 2 km of the site, including two records of Barn Owl (<i>Tyto alba</i>) located 1.7 km southwest and 1.6 km northwest of the site, one record of Black Redstart (<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>) (BOCC Amber-listed) located 1.8 km northwest, twelve records of Kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>) with the closest record being 160 m northwest, and thirty-four records of Peregrine Falcon (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>), most of which were concentrated around Rochdale Town Hall approximately 280 m east of the site. Peregrines have been nesting on the Rochdale Town Hall building since 2008 and are actively encouraged by the council with the provision of nest boxes and the protection of known nesting sites.
Bats	Three records of bat roosts were returned from the data search within close proximity to the site (within 600 m), recorded as housing a combination of Daubenton’s (<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>), Common Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>), Soprano Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>) and unknown pipistrelle species. Within the wider 2 km radius, there were eleven Common Pipistrelle roosts, sixteen roosts of an unknown pipistrelle species, three Soprano Pipistrelle roosts, one Brown Long-eared Bat (<i>Plecotus auritus</i>) roost and three roosts of unknown species. Multiple records of ‘other signs’ of bat species were present, including Daubenton’s, Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, as well as Nathusius Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>) and Whiskered Bat (<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>). The latter two species had no records of roosts within 2 km of the site. The records were all fairly widespread across the wider area, with the highest concentrations being around the River Roch and River Spodden. The majority of recorded roosts, particularly multi-species roosts, were located within the central urban area.
Badger	Eight Badger setts were present within 2 km of the site, with all setts being located within wooded areas. The location of these setts is confidential and cannot be released into the public domain under DBRC licence conditions. Five records of Badger ‘signs’, including signs of foraging and territory marking, were present within 2 km of the site, including in urban areas. No records of Badger were identified on or within close proximity to the site.
Otter	Four records of Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) were present within 2 km of the site, with the closest record being within 1.2 km of the site. All records were concentrated around the River Spodden and its associated woodland, approximately 1.5 km to the northwest of the site.

Species	Summary of Biological Records Search
Water Vole	Five records of Water Vole (<i>Arvicola amphibius</i>) were supplied within 2 km of the site, all of which were around the same area near the River Roch and Stanney Brook, approximately 1.6 – 1.8 km east of the site.
Hazel Dormouse	No records of reptiles were supplied within 2 km of the site.
Great Crested Newt	One record of Great Crested Newt presence was supplied within 2 km of the site, located within an urban area 950 m to the west of the site's boundary. Three records of Great Crested Newt absence were supplied, with one located 920 m to the southwest of the site, and the other two in the same area approximately 2 km to the east of the site.
Reptiles	No records of reptiles were supplied within 2 km of the site.
White-clawed Crayfish	No records of White-clawed Crayfish were supplied within 2 km of the site.
Invasive non-native species	No records of invasive non-native species were supplied within 2 km of the site.
Other species	There was one record of Brown Trout (<i>Salmo trutta</i>) within 500 m to the east of the site, which is protected under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. Nine records of moth species listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment Research Council NERC Act 2006 were supplied within 2 km of the site. One record of Wall Brown (<i>Lasiommata megera</i>) and one record of White-Letter Hairstreak (<i>Satyrus w-album</i>) butterfly were present within 2 km of the site, both also Section 41-listed species. One record of a Section 41-listed fungi species, the Olive Earthtongue (<i>Microglossum olivaceum</i>), was supplied within 2 km of the site. Two records of Floating Water-Plantain were supplied within 2 km of the site, both of which were located within the Rochdale Canal SSSI area.

3.2 Field Survey

The habitats identified during the habitat survey are listed and described below. All habitats are marked on the habitat map in Appendix 3, secondary habitat codes are listed in Appendix 4, and each habitat type is illustrated with a photograph in Appendix 5.

On site:

Modified grassland – g4 (108, 845, 202)

Developed land; sealed surface u1b (800, 804)

Buildings – u1b5 (813)

Other developed land – u1b6 (847, 823, 814, 845)

Non-native and ornamental hedgerows – h2b (523, 510)

Off site:

Other rivers and streams - r2b

3.2.1 Habitats

3.2.1.1 *Modified Grassland – g4*

Modified grassland was present on site, all of which was frequently mown (secondary code 108) (Appendix 5: Photograph 1 and 2). Frequent mowing to maintain the lawn has resulted in a very short sward which was on average 5-7 cm tall. Four patches of grassland were present, the first located to the west of the site adjacent to the car park entrance (Grid reference: SD 89207 13424), the second immediately east of the main college building (Grid reference: SD 89321 13364), the third immediately north of the main college building (Grid reference: SD 89354 13404) and the fourth was located to the east of the main college building (Grid reference: SD 89368 13381). Where the retaining walls were staggered forming tiered grassland areas leading down to the children play area, ground level planters (Secondary code 845) were located around the edges of this area, two young self-set trees (Secondary code 202) were growing from the planters both of which had stems measuring <7.5cm diameter at breast height (DBH).

All grassland areas were similar in composition, dominated by grasses typical of improvement including Perennial Ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*) and Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), as well as scattered patches of thick moss (*Bryophyta* sp). The most frequent herbs were also indicative of improvement; these included White Clover (*Trifolium repens*), Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), Ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), Self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*), and Common Mouse-ear (*Cerastium fontanum*). Daisy (*Beilis perennis*), Dandelion (*Taraxacum agg.*), Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Smallflower Bittercress (*Cardamine parviflora*), and Common Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*) were also present but rare. Rough Hawkbit (*Leontodon hispidus*), Ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*) and Roundleaved Cranesbill (*Geranium rotundifolium*) were also present occasionally.

3.2.1.2 *Developed land: sealed surface u1b (800, 804)*

A car park (secondary code 804) (Appendix 5: Photograph 3) with associated roads (Secondary code 800) and pathways were present.

3.2.1.3 *Buildings u1b5 (813)*

Educational buildings were present on site (Secondary code 813), block A is partially included within the site boundary, the main section of the block is outside the site boundary, however a single storey main entrance / reception with a Skywalk above connecting block A and B is included within the site boundary. It is anticipated that block A will be retained (Appendix 5: Photograph 4). Block B (Appendix 5: Photograph 5) a modern multistorey building was the largest building on site, adjacent to this a small single storey

garage (Appendix 5: Photograph 6), which was being used as storage and workshops, both of which will be demolished as part of the proposed development.

3.2.1.4 Other developed land u1b6 (847,823,814,845)

An outside children's play space (secondary code 823, 814) (Appendix 5; Photograph 7) was present immediately to the east of block B. The area comprised a solid rubber surface with scattered ground level planters (secondary code 845) and a small area of ornamental planting (secondary code 847).

3.2.1.5 Non-native and ornamental hedgerow h2b (523, 510)

A non-native (secondary code 523) hedgerow bordered a patch of grassland to the north of block B, OS Grid Reference SD 89375 13399 (Appendix 5: Photograph 8), composed of Garden privet (*Ligustrum sp.*). The ground at the base of the hedgerow was bare (Secondary code 510).

Off-site

3.2.1.6 Other rivers and streams – r2b

The River Roch was located to the south of the site, (just over 10 m) outside the site boundary. No vegetation was present within the channel. The sides of the river were canalised reinforced with concrete (Appendix 5; Photograph 9) and a strip of tall ruderal vegetation was present along the top of the bank.

3.2.2 Species

3.2.2.1 Birds

The hedgerow present at OS Grid Reference SD 89375 13399 may be suitable for common nesting birds species. There is also some potential (albeit low) for birds to nest on the flat roofs of the buildings (Appendix 5; Photograph 10). There is no suitable habitat present on site for ground nesting bird species or wintering birds given the site comprises mainly hardstanding, buildings with only small patches of modified grassland which are regularly disturbed.

3.2.2.2 Hazel Dormouse

Hazel Dormouse are considered absent from Rochdale.

3.2.2.3 Otter and Water Vole

The River Roch is located outside the site boundary to the south of the site. The section of watercourse closest to site was considered unsuitable for supporting Otter and Water Vole since the banks were canalised with concrete. There was no vegetation within the channel and little cover for these species on the bank tops, with only a strip of tall ruderals immediately adjacent to the river backing onto either modified grassland, buildings or hardstanding. The area was urban with high levels of disturbance from

both Hopwood Hall College and Rochdale Sixth Form which was located immediately adjacent to the River Roch.

3.2.2.4 *Badger*

The site did not provide sufficient foraging habitat for Badger nor opportunities for sett creation since the majority of the site comprised hardstanding with high levels of anthropological disturbance with a busy car park and continuous foot traffic. No setts or field signs of Badger such as guard hairs, prints, latrines, snuffle holes or tracks associated with Badger were identified during the field survey. A mammal burrow, most likely an inactive Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) den (Appendix 5; Photograph 11) was identified outside the site boundary underneath the A58 where it crossed the River Roch (Grid reference: OS Grid Ref SD 89328 13231), the hole had caved in with rocks and debris. More suitable habitat for Badger was present in the form of wooded parcels of land within the surrounding landscape. It was considered that Badger were likely absent from the site.

3.2.2.5 *Reptiles*

The site was generally considered to contain sub-optimal habitat to support common reptiles, the majority of the site comprised of buildings, hardstanding and frequently mown modified grassland, providing few foraging and refuge opportunities. No reptiles, or evidence of them, were seen during the survey. Reptiles are considered likely absent from site.

3.2.2.6 *Amphibians*

No ponds or waterbodies suitable for supporting Great Crested Newt were present on site. Terrestrial habitat on site was considered sub-optimal for Great Crested Newt with the majority comprising buildings, hardstanding and frequently mown modified grassland. One pond was present within 250 m of the site, at OS Grid Reference SD 89334 13058 adjacent to an area of parkland. Due to the poor connectivity of this pond, the urbanised location and the lack of other ponds within 1 km of it for breeding purposes, it is not considered likely that Great Crested Newt are present within the area.

3.2.2.7 *White-clawed Crayfish*

No suitable habitat was present on / adjacent to the site which could potentially support White-clawed Crayfish. The River Roch adjacent to the site was turbid with banks lacking suitable refuge features utilised by White-clawed Crayfish. This species favours areas with relatively hard, mineral-rich waters on calcareous and rapidly weathering rocks, conditions which were not present on site or associated with the offsite river.

3.2.2.8 *Other Invertebrates*

The dominant habitats on site, hardstanding and frequently mown modified grassland, were considered unlikely to support notable invertebrate assemblages.

3.2.2.9 Non-native invasive plants

Two individual Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) plants were observed offsite an area of tall ruderals along the bank of the River Roch (Grid reference: OS Grid Reference SD 89202 13396) (Appendix 5; Photograph 12). Several more individual plants were observed on the southern bank furthest from site to the east of the disused footbridge, as well as stands of Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) (Appendix 5; Photograph 13). Both of these species are listed as invasive under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

3.2.3 Preliminary Roost Assessment

Block A was subject to a preliminary roost assessment despite being outside the site boundary since it was connected to block B which is proposed to be demolished.

Block A and B were of similar construction, both multi-storey (six and four storeys respectively) modern buildings formed of brick and concrete, with metal tile-style cladding and flat roofs. The flat roofs were sealed with metal and rubberized material. The lower-storey sections of block A had glass walls and wrap-around windows, with an overhanging flat roof on the east and south sides of the building and further metal tile-style cladding (Appendix 5; Photograph 14).

The cladding on the outside of the building was made up of metal sheets, welded and bolted to the exterior of the building. Small (0.5 inch) gaps were present between the metal sheets, with about 1 inch of space between the start of the gap and the structure wall (Appendix 5; Photograph 15). Due to the exposed nature of these gaps and the sealing around each cladding panel, it is not considered likely that bats could shelter within them.

There were small (thumb sized) gaps between the cladding and the windows on the south side of Block A (Grid reference: SD 89329 13287); however, due to the presence of exterior lights directly above these gaps, it is not considered likely that bats would roost within these spaces due to light disturbance (Appendix 5; Photograph 16). No signs of bat activity, e.g. droppings, urine splashes, fur / urine staining, feeding remains, or live or dead bats, were observed on the outside of the building.

Block A had a flat roof which was fully sealed, with no entry/exit points for bats. A small room housing the winch mechanism for the elevator extended from the flat roof (Appendix 5; photograph 17) (Grid reference: SD 89340 13315). This space was internally surveyed, no suitable entry/exits points or crevices for bat roosting, or signs of bat activity such as droppings, feeding remains, urine or fur staining or live or dead bats.

The restaurant hot room (above the Riverside Salon to the south of block A (Grid reference: SD 89321 13298) had open vent slats partially covered internally with chicken wire, which bats could potentially enter the structure through; however, no signs of bat presence were observed, and due to the nature of

the room and the potential for temperatures and humidities to fluctuate greatly, the internal space was not considered suitable for supporting roosting bats. Block A was considered to have negligible potential for supporting roosting bats.

The roof of Block B was similarly sealed. The wiring room (Appendix 5; Photograph 18) (Grid reference: SD 89339 13366) and water tank room (Appendix 5; Photograph 19) (Grid reference: SD 89346 13385) both could be assessed internally and externally. There was a third brick structure above the flat roof which was only accessible externally, however was fully sealed and in good condition (Appendix 5: Photograph 20). The wiring room had no access points for bats and was in good condition. The water tank room had a potential entry point in one of the walls (Appendix 5: Photograph 21), and an opening where a sheet of metal had lifted partially covering the opening (Appendix 5: Photograph 22). Externally, both of these rooms had sealed metal tile-style cladding and otherwise was well sealed and in good condition (Appendix 5; Photograph 23). The water tank room was considered to have low potential for supporting roosting bats.

A line of garages utilised as storage and a pottery firing room was located to the west of block B. One garage had a slatted door through which bats could potentially enter the internal space (Appendix 5; Photograph 24), gaps were also present between the internal walls of the garages (Appendix 5; Photograph 25), making it possible for bats to enter the majority of the internal space. The storage room / pottery room was the largest interior space and had small circular holes in the metal walls which could allow bats to enter the room (Appendix: Photograph 26). No signs of bats were observed throughout. The garages were not insulated and were cold and damp. Overall, the garages were considered to have low potential to support roosting bats due to the presence of entry /exit points.

Features on site were considered to have negligible potential to support foraging bats since it comprised mainly of hardstanding and buildings. The section of River Roch located offsite had potential to support foraging and commuting bats.

Table 4: Preliminary Roost Assessment results

Building	Target note reference	Potential Roosting Feature	Bat Potential
Building A	Offsite (Grid Reference: SD 89332 13309)	No potential roost features / unsuitable internal conditions.	Negligible
Building B	TN1	Two potential entry /exit points identified on structure extending above the flat roof.	Low

Garage	TN2	Slatted door and gaps between garages creating internal spaces for bat roosting.	Low
Garage	TN3	Small circular holes in metal walls creating internal spaces for bat roosting.	Low

4 Planning Policy and Legislation

4.1 Local Planning Policy

Table 5 details the policies within the Rochdale Borough Local Plan (Core Strategy 2016 – 2028) which are relevant to the ecological features on site. Rochdale’s Core Strategy was adopted in October 2016 and forms the basis of the Rochdale Local Plan, covering a period of 12 years from 2016 to 2028. It sets out the long-term strategic policies for future development, and will form the framework that planning applications will be assessed against.

Table 5: Summary of relevant local planning policy – Rochdale Borough Local Plan to 2028, adopted October 2016

Policy	Description
SO4	To promote a greener environment To do this, Rochdale will focus on: 1. Minimising Rochdale’s contribution to climate change and mitigating and adapting to its adverse effects; 2. Ensuring in particular that development is energy efficient and contributes to carbon reduction; 3. Reducing the likelihood of flooding through appropriate flood risk management, especially in Rochdale town centre and parts of Littleborough and Heywood; 4. Improving our urban open spaces and making them more accessible; 5. Maximising the value of our green open areas and countryside to provide opportunities for recreation, amenity, biodiversity, and flood management; 6. Minimising and managing waste and managing minerals resources sustainably; and, 7. Ensuring no detriment to the conservation interests of European and other protected natural sites.
G7	Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity We will ensure that sites and features of biodiversity and geodiversity importance are given full and appropriate recognition and protection. Opportunities for enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity, creating new sites and features of interest and improving opportunities for public enjoyment will be supported. No development should result in a net loss of biodiversity or geodiversity interest in the borough and overall development in the borough should result in a net gain. Particular priorities for biodiversity and geodiversity are: 1. The South Pennine Moors - our focus is to maintain and enhance the peatland habitats of the moorland and to support development, land and water management activities which provide an opportunity to conserve and enhance the value of moorland for upland breeding birds of conservation significance and the habitats on which they depend and which do not harm biodiversity value. Our focus is the designated Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation but also the wider moorland where such interest is present or could be supported through appropriate development or land management. We will also protect and support enhancement measures for areas of geodiversity value. 2. The Rochdale Canal - our focus is to ensure that the Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation and the wider biodiversity interest of the canal is given full and appropriate protection and ensure that development which delivers the economic and recreational value of the Rochdale Canal and its wider corridor supports and does not harm its biodiversity value.

Policy	Description
	3. Upland farmland - our focus is to ensure that the biodiversity interest of upland farmland including its value for birds, woodland and grassland is protected and opportunities for enhancement and the creation of new interest maximised through land management improvements and appropriate development activities. 4. Countryside around towns - our focus is to protect and enhance the biodiversity interest of river valleys, woodland, water and farmland including the reclamation of derelict and neglected land and flood risk management measures. We will also support actions which enhance public access and enjoyment of countryside close to urban areas including Local Nature Reserves and the wider countryside. 5. Urban Areas - our priority is to protect and enhance existing urban biodiversity and to support opportunities for new urban biodiversity corridors, sites and features including sustainable urban drainage schemes, new public realm provision, street trees and urban woodlands, ponds and lodges, green roofs and natural play areas. 6. Designated sites of ecological importance - will be given appropriate protection according to their European, national or local status and in accordance with policies in other development plan documents, supporting Supplementary Planning Documents and Biodiversity Action Plans. 7. Protected Species: Development proposals which would affect a species protected by law or its habitat will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that: a. There is no adverse impact on the species concerned; b. Damage to habitats is minimal and alternative habitat provision is effective in maintaining those species. Opportunities to protect, enhance and create features of biodiversity or geodiversity interest should be informed by the detail of any formal designation of a site or area and supporting plans and guidance such as Local Biodiversity Action Plans, Green Infrastructure Strategies and Action Plans and the Council's Biodiversity and Development SPD. We will expect development proposals and improvements to: a) Protect and include existing biodiversity (including established biodiversity interest on brownfield land) within new developments, public realm and open spaces and meet the requirements of the Biodiversity and Development SPD, Greater Manchester and Local Biodiversity Action Plans; b) Protect and enhance existing features such as peatland, ponds, wetlands, reservoirs, mill lodges, trees, hedges, wooded areas, meadows, flora and fauna; c) Take opportunities to promote biodiversity and create new habitats through new development using landscaping and building and construction features wherever possible (e.g. ponds, species of vegetation, green roofs and walls, bat boxes, roof space, appropriate nest boxes and landscaping); d) Enhance strategic wildlife corridors and the most natural areas and ensure that habitats and corridors are not fragmented by development; e) Improve access where appropriate to new or existing biodiversity interest for public enjoyment; and f) Protect important geology and take opportunities to increase interest and accessibility.

4.2 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2024), is a policy framework document which provides a range of important principles. Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

‘Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.’

Paragraph 188 goes on to state:

‘... take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.’

When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles (paragraph 193):

‘...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.’

4.3 Relevant Legislation

4.3.1 National Legislation

4.3.1.1 *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) consolidates and amends existing national legislation to implement the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds (Birds Directive) in Great Britain.

4.3.1.2 *Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006*

Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 places a duty upon all local authorities in England to promote and enhance biodiversity in all of their functions. Section 41 lists habitats and species of principal importance to the conservation of biodiversity. Fifty-six habitats and 943 species of Principal Importance for Conservation are included on the Section 41 list and draws upon the UK BAP List of Priority Species and Habitats.

4.3.1.3 *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)*

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) transpose Council Directive 92/43/EEC, on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (EC Habitats Directive), into national law and transpose elements of the EU Wild Birds Directive in England and Wales. The Regulations provide for the designation and protection of a national site network including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), the protection of 'European protected species', and the adaptation of planning and other controls for the protection of other sites, such as Ramsars.

4.3.1.4 The Environment Act 2021

Para 2 (3) of Schedule 14 of The Environment Act 2021 makes it mandatory for all new developments (with some limited exceptions) to achieve a biodiversity net gain (BNG) of at least 10% by the time the development is completed compared to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat. This percentage may be amended in the future by the Secretary of State. Please note that some Local Policies stipulate a higher target than this.

The Bill allows three methods for securing biodiversity net gains:

1. enhancement of the biodiversity of land to which the planning permission relates;
2. the allocation of registered offsite biodiversity gain to any development for which the planning permission is granted; and
3. the purchase of biodiversity credits for any such development.

A biodiversity gain statement must set out whether, and if so how, the biodiversity gain objective applies in relation to development where the onsite habitat is irreplaceable, how the development will minimise any adverse effects to the onsite habitat, and what the evidence must be produced to show how the biodiversity net gain has been met upon completion of the development.

Biodiversity gains will need to be maintained for at least 30 years after the development is completed.

4.3.2 Species Specific Legislation

4.3.2.1 Birds

Breeding wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, a wild bird is defined as any bird of a species that is resident in or is a visitor to the European Territory of any member state in a wild state. Game birds however are not included in this definition (except for limited parts of the Act). They are covered by the Game Acts, which fully protect them during the close season.

All birds, their nests and eggs are protected and it is thus an offence, with certain exceptions to:

intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird;

intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built;

intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird;

have in one's possession or control any wild bird, dead or alive, or any part of a wild bird, which has been taken in contravention of the Act or the Protection of Birds Act 1954;

have in one's possession or control any egg or part of an egg which has been taken in contravention of the Act or the Protection of Birds Act 1954;

*use traps or similar items to kill, injure or take wild birds; and
have in one's possession or control any bird of a species occurring on Schedule 4 of the Act unless
registered, and in most cases ringed, in accordance with the Secretary of State's regulations.*

Additionally for some species listed in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb the adults while they are in and around their nest or intentionally or recklessly disturb their dependent young.

4.3.2.2 Bats

Bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 it is illegal to:

- *kill or injure bats;*
- *cause disturbance at their resting places; or*
- *block access to, damage or destroy their roost sites.*

Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). it is an offence to:

- *deliberately capture or kill a bat;*
- *damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any bat. (This is an absolute offence and intent or recklessness does not have to be proved); and*
- *deliberately disturb a bat (this applies anywhere, not just at its roost).*

5 Evaluation of Ecological Features/Further Survey

Table 6 below provides an evaluation of the ecological features, identifying which are of sufficient importance to be taken forward. Any ecological feature that is identified as negligible importance will not be considered further. Where there is insufficient evidence further surveys will be recommended to be able to assess the ecological importance of that feature in relation to the site and the proposed development. In some instances a level of site importance has been identified for features which have a very localised scale.

Table 6: Evaluation of ecological features on or likely to be on site

Ecological Feature	Justification	Level of Importance
Modified grassland - g4	Modified grassland – g4 is a very common and widespread habitat, typically associated with developed areas and agriculture.	Negligible importance
Developed land; sealed surface - u1b	Other developed land – u1b has no ecological value as a habitat.	Negligible importance
Buildings u1b5	Buildings – u1b5 has no ecological value as a habitat.	Negligible importance
Other developed land u1b6	Other developed land – u1b6 has no ecological value as a habitat.	Negligible importance
Non-native and ornamental hedgerow h2b	Non-native and ornamental hedgerow – h2b is a common and widespread habitat at the national and local scale, typically associated with developed areas and gardens.	Negligible importance
Birds	Hedgerow may potential nesting habitat for common and widespread bird species. Roof spaces of buildings on site may provide potential nesting opportunities.	Site importance

Ecological Feature	Justification	Level of Importance
Bats	Block B and the garages have low potential to support roosting bats.	Unknown - Further survey required
Badger	The site did not provide sufficient foraging habitat for Badger nor opportunities for sett creation since the majority of the site comprised hardstanding with high levels of anthropological disturbance with a busy car park and continuous foot traffic. No setts or field signs of Badger such as guard hairs, prints, latrines snuffle holes or tracks associated with Badger was identified during the field survey.	Negligible Importance
Water Vole and Otter	No watercourses were present on site.	Negligible Importance
Hazel Dormouse	Hazel Dormouse are considered absent from Rochdale.	Negligible Importance
White-clawed Crayfish	No watercourses were present on site. The River Roch located outside the site boundary was considered unsuitable to support the species.	Negligible Importance
Reptiles	The site is generally considered have sub-optimal habitat, with the majority of the site comprised of buildings, hardstanding and frequently mown modified grassland, providing few foraging or refuge opportunities for reptiles. No reptiles, or evidence of them, were seen	Negligible Importance

Ecological Feature	Justification	Level of Importance
	during the survey. Reptiles are considered likely absent from site.	
Amphibians	No ponds or waterbodies suitable for supporting Great Crested Newt were present on site. Terrestrial habitat on site was considered sub-optimal for Great Crested Newt with the majority comprising hardstanding, buildings and frequently mown modified grassland.	Negligible Importance
Invertebrates	The site unlikely to be an important resource for assemblages of notable invertebrates since the majority of the site comprises hardstanding, buildings and modified grassland.	Negligible Importance
Non-native invasive species	No non-native invasive plant species were identified on site. Japanese knotweed and Himalayan Balsam were identified along the River Roch off site, however, the stands and a suitable buffer zone are not anticipated to be disturbed as a result of the proposed development.	Negligible Importance

6 Ecological Constraints, Opportunities and Recommendations

6.1 Designated Sites

There were three statutory sites within 5 km of the site, the closest of which was Rochdale Canal Site of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) located 1.27 km southeast. Healey Dell Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Hopwood Woodlands (LNR) were also located within 5km of the site. There were no SACs designated for bats within 15km of the site. Greater Manchester Local Record Centre (GMLRC) provided one non-statutory designated site within 2 km of the site, Meadowcroft Woods Site of Biological Interest (SBI).

The proposed development site is geographically separated from any designated sites. No hydrological connectivity nor any other impact pathways have been identified. Therefore, the above-mentioned designated sites are not considered further in this appraisal.

6.2 Habitats

6.2.1 Non-native and ornamental hedgerow h2b (523, 510)

Under current design plans, a section of hedgerow is due to be removed. It is recommended that native hedgerow be planted on the site to compensate for the loss of this habitat, this would also contribute to provide shelter and foraging opportunities for small mammals and invertebrates.

It is understood that a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment will be undertaken as part of the planning application for this development. This document will detail further site / habitat enhancement and creation prescriptions.

6.2.2 River Roch (offsite)

Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) are recommended in relation to the River Roch. Although the water course lies outside the site boundary it is recommended that the Environment Agency Pollution Prevention Guidance is adhered to.

6.3 Species and Species Groups

6.3.1 Birds

It is recommended that any vegetation clearance should take place outside of nesting bird season (March – August inclusive). If this is not possible the vegetation must be checked prior to clearance by a suitably experienced ecologist no less than 48 hours prior to clearance. This will ensure that no nesting birds are disturbed or harmed during works. If an active nest is found, a 5 m non-works buffer should be put in place around the nest until after the young have fledged. Similar precautions should be taken while

demolishing flat-roofed buildings (Block B) which has low potential for nesting opportunities for cliff-nesting species.

6.3.2 Bats

The structure (water tank room) extending above the flat roof of block B had low suitability to support bat roosts, as such this structure is subject to one emergence bat survey. The garages located to the west of block B had low suitability to support bat roosts, as such this structure is subject to one emergence bat survey. These surveys should be conducted between May and August. Early surveying is recommended to allow sufficient information to be gathered to inform a licence application, if necessary. The results of these surveys will inform an impact assessment in relation to bats on site and appropriate and proportionate mitigation/ compensation. No further consideration will therefore, be given in this report in relation to roosting bats.

Block A was subject to a preliminary roost assessment despite being outside the site boundary since it was connected to block B which is proposed to be demolished. Block A was considered to have negligible bat roost potential and requires no further surveys.

Commuting and foraging habitat for bats was present off site along the River Roch, it is recommended that a sensitive lighting strategy (should lighting be required) based on the Institute for Lighting Professionals Guidance note 08/23 “Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK” (2023) is implemented to reduce the likelihood that bats would be affected as a result of an increase of artificial light.

6.4 Enhancement Opportunities

To ensure compliance with the Environment Act 2021, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Rochdale Core Strategy (adopted October 2016), a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment for the proposed development must be undertaken to demonstrate a minimum 10% net gain post development. This will assess the impacts of the proposed development and ensure that there is no net loss in biodiversity, and ideally achieve a net gain in biodiversity. Enhancements may include, but are not limited to:

- Ensuring trees and hedgerows that are planted on site are native and that some provide fruits/seeds/nuts to increase foraging opportunities for animals.
- Installation of appropriate bird boxes and bat boxes on trees and buildings on site.
- Enhancing the species diversity of amenity grassland on site and allowing grass to grow during the spring and summer months, creating a variation in sward height and allowing flowering plants to bloom, creating opportunities for small mammals, ground invertebrates, and pollinators.

7 Conclusions

A field survey was carried out in September 2024. The proposed development site comprised modified grassland, buildings, developed land; sealed surface, other developed land and a non-native ornamental hedgerow.

There were three statutory sites within 5 km of the site, the closest of which was Rochdale Canal Site of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) located 1.27 km southeast of the site. Healey Dell Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Hopwood Woodlands (LNR) were located within 5km of the site. There were no SACs designated for bats within 15 km of the site. Greater Manchester Local Record Centre (GMLRC) provided one non-statutory designated site within 2 km of the site Meadowcroft Woods Site of Biological Interest (SBI).

The hedgerow on site provided opportunities for common nesting bird species during nesting bird season and the flat roofed buildings offered nesting opportunities (albeit low) for cliff-nesting species. If possible, vegetation clearance / demolition should take place outside of nesting bird season, if this is not possible, checks for nesting birds must be carried out of the flat roofed areas / hedgerow prior to clearance / demolition.

Block B and the garages were considered to have low potential to support roosting bats, with each building requiring one dusk survey to be carried out between May and August. Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) are recommended in relation commuting and foraging bats, associated with the River Roch.

Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) are recommended in relation to the River Roch. Although the water course lies outside the site boundary it is recommended that the Environment Agency Pollution Prevention Guidance is adhered to.

A biodiversity net gain assessment will be undertaken to inform this planning application which will detail habitat retention, creation and enhancement prescriptions.

Providing the recommendations detailed in this report are adhered to, it is considered likely that the proposed development will comply with the Rochdale Core Strategy (adopted October 2016) and National Planning Policy in relation to protected and notable species.

8 References

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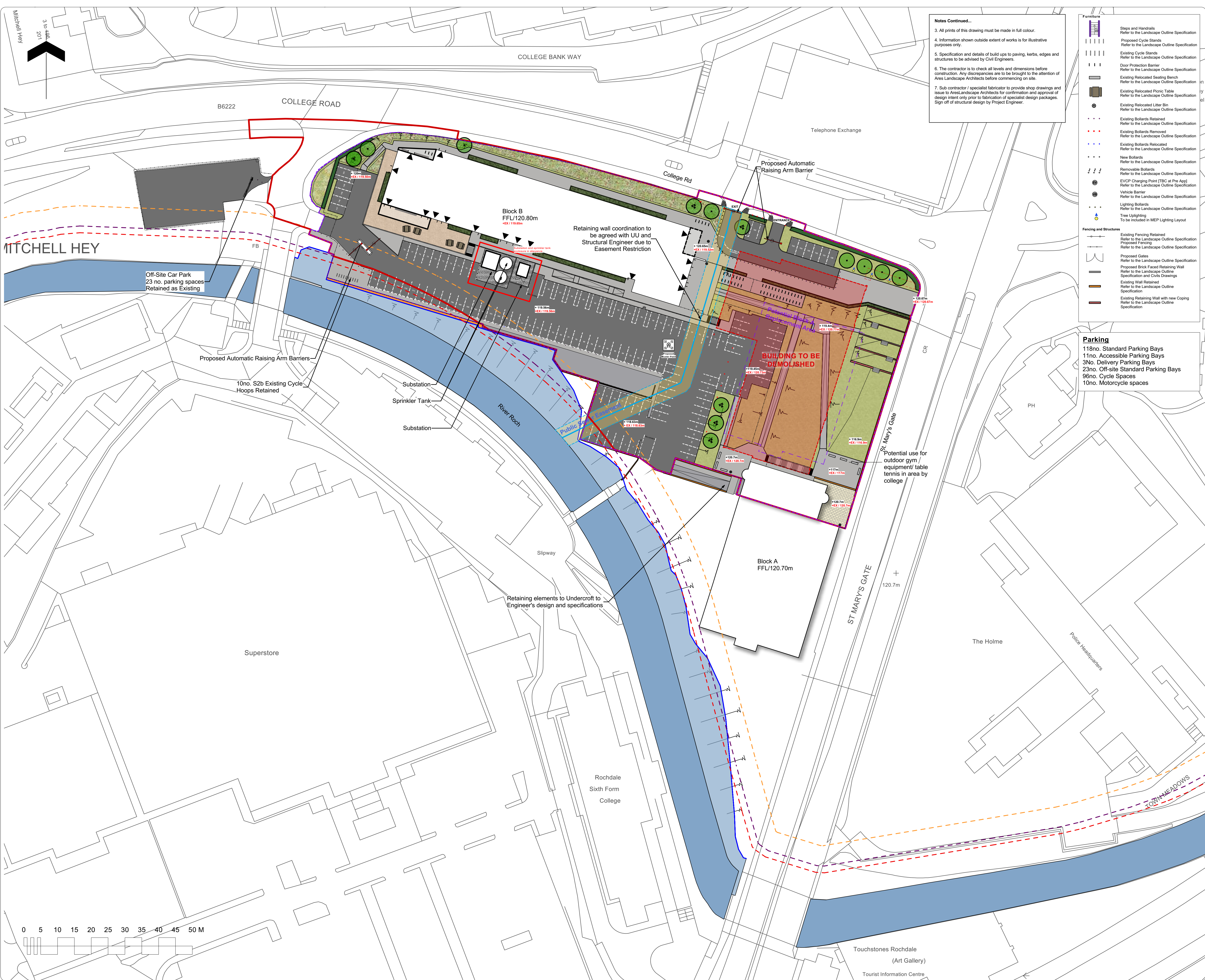
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Appendix 1: Proposed Plans

See following page



Note

1. Do not scale from this drawing
2. To be read in conjunction with Project Risk Register REF: FS0939-ALA-XX-XX-RR-L-0001
3. To be read in conjunction with Landscape Outline Specifications REF: FE012-ALA-ZZ-XX-SP-L-0001
4. To be read in conjunction with all submitted Landscape Architect's drawings.
5. To be read in conjunction with all other consultants' drawings.

KEY

Site	Planning Application Boundary
Extent of Works	
Proposed Level	
Existing Level	
Gradient	
Proposed Building	
Existing Building to be demolished	
8m Defra boundary	
10m Riparian boundary	
16m Defra boundary	
Flood Zone 3 Boundary	
Building Overhang	
Future Building Footprint	
PV Canopy	
Planting	
Proposed Tree	
Proposed Multi-stem Tree	
Grass Seed	
Hedge Planting	
Amenity Planting	
Meadow Planting (Mix A)	
Meadow Planting (Mix B)	
Paving	
Pedestrian Macadam	
Vehicular Macadam	
Wet Pour Surface	
Concrete Surface	
Corduroy Paving	
Existing Concrete Flag	
Existing Macadam	
Blister Paving	
Lambeth Blister Paving	

ID	RISK	MITIGATION	DATE MITIGATED
RESIDUAL PROJECT RISKS			

DATE	REV	DESCRIPTION OF REVISION	DRAWN BY	APPROVED BY
28/04/2025	P06	Updated with rationalised grassland planting layout.	MM	MM
24/04/2025	P05	Issued for planning consultation boards.	MM	MM
10/04/2025	P04	Issued for draft Stage 4	LS	MM

REVISIONS

DEIR:

150

STATUS

S4 - Suitable for WDC Review & Authorisation

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CLIENT:

Hopwood Hall College

PROJECT TITLE:

Hopwood Hall College

DRAWING TITLE:

Site Landscape Plan - Illustrative

DRAWING SCALE:	DRAWN BY:	DRAWN DATE:
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Appendix 2: Frame of Reference for Geographical Context

Geographical context	Examples
International and European	Ramsar Sites, Special Protection Areas, Biosphere Reserves, Special Areas of Conservation. Sites supporting populations of internationally important species. Any regularly occurring population of an internationally important species, which is threatened or rare in the UK. i.e. it is a UK Red Data Book species or listed as occurring in 15 or fewer 10km squares in the UK (categories 1 and 2 in the UK BAP) or of uncertain conservation status or of global conservation concern in the UK BAP. A regularly occurring, nationally significant population/number of any internationally important species.
National	SSSIs or non-designated Sites meeting SSSI selection criteria, NNRs, Marine Nature Reserves, NCR Grade 1 Sites. Sites containing viable areas of key habitats identified in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Any regularly occurring population of a nationally important species which is threatened or rare in the region or county (see local BAP). A regularly occurring, regionally or county significant population/number of any nationally important species.
Regional	Sites containing viable areas of threatened habitats listed in a Regional BAP (or some Natural Areas), comfortably exceeding SINC criteria, but not exceeding SSSI criteria. Any regularly occurring, locally significant population of a species listed as being nationally scarce which occurs in 16-100 10km squares in the UK or in a Regional BAP or relevant Natural Area on account of its regional rarity or localisation; A regularly occurring, locally significant number of a regionally important species.
County / Metropolitan	Sites meeting the criteria for county or metropolitan designation (SINC, CWS, etc.). Ancient semi-natural woodland, LNRs or viable areas of key habitat types listed in county BAPs/Natural Areas. Any regularly occurring, locally significant population of a species which is listed in a County/Metropolitan “red data book” or BAP on account of its regional rarity or localisation; A regularly occurring, locally significant number of a County/Metropolitan important species.
Local	Undesignated Sites or features considered to appreciably enrich the habitat resource in the District or Borough or within a zone of influence. A population of a species that is listed in a District/Borough BAP because of its rarity in the locality or in the relevant Natural Area profile because of its regional rarity or localisation; A regularly occurring, locally significant number of a District / Borough important species during a critical phase of its life cycle.

Appendix 3: UK Habitat Classification Survey Map

See following page



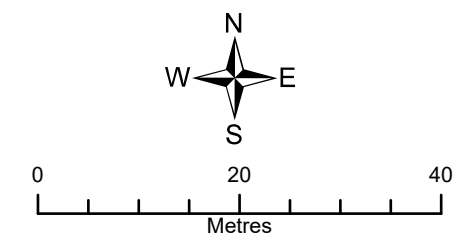
Hopwood Hall College

Rochdale Campus, St Mary's Gate,
Rochdale OL12 6RY
(SD 89339 13366)

UK Habitat Baseline

- Site boundary
- g4 - modified grassland
- h2b - non-native ornamental hedgerow
- u1b - developed land, sealed surface
- u1b5 - buildings
- u1b6 - other developed land
- Target notes

Drawn by Lewis Palmer 08/05/2025, Verified by Emily King 08/05/2025



1:750 at A3 size
Service Layer Credit
Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, IGN, and the GIS User Community

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Appendix 4: UK Habitat Classification Secondary Code Definitions

Secondary code	Description
108	Frequently mown
202	Young tree self-set
510	Bare ground
523	Non-native
800	Road
804	Car park
813	Educational buildings
814	Education premises open space
823	Children's play space
845	Ground level planters
847	Introduced shrub

Appendix 5: Photographs



Photograph 1: Modified grassland.



Photograph 2: Modified grassland close to the children's play area to the northeast of the site.



Photograph 3: Developed land; sealed surface. Car park and roads.



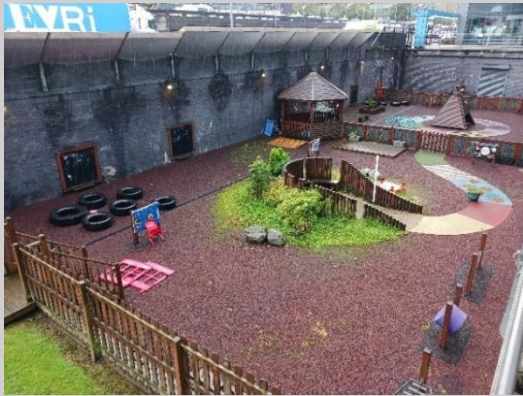
Photograph 4: Block A connected to block B.



Photograph 5: Block B.



Photograph 6: Garages.



Photograph 7: Other developed land; children's play area.



Photograph 8: Non-native and ornamental hedge.



Photograph 9: Other rivers and streams. The River Roch outside site boundary.



Photograph 10: Example of flat roof on site.



Photograph 11: Inactive mammal burrow, outside the site boundary.



Photograph 12: Himalayan Balsam adjacent to River Roch outside site boundary.



Photograph 13: Himalayan Balsam and Japanese knotweed outside site boundary.



Photograph 14: Block A outside site boundary.



Photograph 15: External metal cladding, block A and block B.



Photograph 16: Lighting block A.



Photograph 17: Winch lift room on the roof of Block A.



Photograph 18 Wiring room, block B.



Photograph 19: Water tank room, block B.



Photograph 20: Brick structure on roof of block B. Only accessible externally.



Photograph 21: Water tank room, block B. Potential access for bats.



Photograph 22: Water tank room, block B. Potential access for bats.



Photograph 23: Metal clad buildings on top of flat roofs.



Photograph 24: Slatted door garages.



Photograph 25: Gaps were present in the internal walls between the garages.



Photograph 26: Garages, potential access for bats.