

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Survey site: All Saints Church, Foxholes Road, Rochdale, OL12 0EF

Client: Mr Amir Khan

Survey date: 07/07/2025

Project: This report has been prepared in order to information a planning application with Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council. The proposals are described as:

‘Conversion of existing church to residential dwelling’

This report has been prepared in relation to proposed footpath installation work required as part of the proposals only.

PEA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: [PEA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.](#)

Site Location and Context					
The survey site is centred on National Grid Reference SD 90380 14542 and has an area of approximately 0.24ha. The site comprises A church building (B1), associated access driveway and footpaths, areas of modified grassland and mixed scrub. A small line of trees adjacent to a section of Rhododendron scrub is present the site entrance. Mixed scrub habitats extend towards a line of trees on the north-eastern boundary. The site is situated on the outskirts of the village of Buckley, north-east of Rochdale Town Centre. There are lines of trees and scrub within the site and extending into the local urban and garden landscape. Aerial imagery shows the local landscape to have a mixed urban landscape character comprised of residential dwellings and associated gardens, with small woodland copses and areas of public open space in close proximity to the site. Such features likely enhance the area for a variety of species, including bats, nesting birds and terrestrial mammals.					
Survey Details					
The site survey was undertaken by Leo Plevin BSc (Hons) MSc MCIEEM, Principal Ecologist, an ecologist with eight years of experience, and holder of Natural England survey licences for bats (2023-11521-CL18-BAT) (Level 2) and great crested newt (2019-41392-CLS-CLS) (Level 1).					
Date of survey	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (km/h)	Rain
07/07/2025	18	56	40	3	Dry
Survey limitations					
It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to describe the baseline conditions within the survey area, and evaluate these features, this report does not provide a complete characterisation of the site. This assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species being present. This is based on suitability of the habitats on the site and in the wider landscape, the ecology and biology of species as currently understood, and the known distribution of species as recovered during the searches of historical biological records. A biological records data search has not been undertaken. However, given the location of the site, the nature of the habitats present and the assessed suitability of the site for protected or notable species, it is not anticipated that the purchase of biological records data will add any significant weight or alter the conclusions and recommendations outlined in this report. The survey was commissioned in relation to proposals for the installation of a footpath along the western boundary of the site, as this is the only piece of external works planned as part of the proposals. An assessment of works to be undertaken as part of the conversion of the building into a residential dwelling have not been undertaken as part of this assessment.					

Ecological Survey Factor	Detailed using desk study and site survey (carried out under good weather conditions). Any specific limitations noted within relevant section. This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.
Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations	
Habitats and plants (see habitat map in appendix 1, location plan in appendix 2, proposal plan in appendix 3 and photos in appendix 4). Botanical species are described with reference to the DAFOR scale (D = Dominant; A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional, R = Rare).	
Summary of Survey Findings (UKHab codes used)	The site does not contain any habitats listed as a habitat of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006). However, the site contains grassland and scrub habitats which are of good quality and could be of value to local wildlife populations (as detailed in subsequent sections of this table). Other habitats within the site are common and widespread and have low ecological value. Notable habitats are present within 2km. On-site habitat descriptions <u>u1b – Developed land/sealed surface</u> Areas of developed land sealed surface are present on site in the form of the access driveway off Foxholes Road and footpaths at the entrance to the building. These areas are free from vegetation. <u>g4 – Modified grassland</u> Areas of modified grassland are present surrounding the on-site building (B1). The grassland is currently unmanaged and comprises cock's-foot (A), perennial rye grass (A), Yorkshire-fog (A), White clover (F), Greater plantain (F), Ragwort (O), field horsetail (O), common nettle (O), bramble (O), red fescue (R), common knapweed (R), herb robert (R), colt's foot (R), ladies mantle (R) and jointed rush (R). Modified grassland is considered to be in Poor condition due to its species composition (<6-8 species per m²) <u>h3h – Mixed scrub</u> Areas of the site on the northern and eastern boundaries are dominated by mixed scrub. These areas are largely comprised of self-seed sycamore, goat willow, grey willow, with areas of dog rose, cherry laurel, box privet and wilson's honeysuckle present which would have previously formed formal garden areas along the north-western boundary. Mixed scrub is considered to be in Poor condition due to its species composition (<6-8 species per m²) <80% of the total area contains native species, there is a single age class present, the scrub does not have a well-defined edge and there are no glades or rides present, <u>h3d – Bramble scrub</u> An area of scrub dominated by bramble is present on the south-western aspect of B1. This habitat has a fixed condition of Poor <u>h3g – Rhododendron scrub</u>

	A short section of <i>Rhododendron</i> scrub is present at the site entrance, this area has been subject to some recent clearance works. This area is dominated by <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> which is further discussed within the Invasive Species section below. <u>Line of trees 33</u> Two lines of trees are present within the site. A small line of immature silver birch and ash trees is present at the site entrance within modified grassland habitats. A mature line of trees is present on the northern boundary comprising sycamore, oak, ash and horse chestnut. This line of trees is considered to be ecologically valuable as it is directly connected to woodland habitats off site. Lines of trees within the site are considered to be in Moderate condition. Local notable habitats Patches of lowland mixed deciduous woodland (LMDW) are present within 2km of the site as identified by a search of the magic.gov.uk . The closest is within the site, covering identified areas of mixed scrub and the line of trees on the north-eastern boundary extending offsite to the south-east. These areas do not qualify as LMDW however offsite woodland to the south-east is likely to qualify as LMDW. Further patches present within 1km to the east and south of the site along the Hey Brook. LMDW is classed as a priority habitat under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006. Further priority habitats are present within 2km of the site, ancient woodland and woodpasture and parkland.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	On-site habitats The proposed development will result in the loss of modified grassland, rhododendron scrub and a line of trees on the western site boundary. All other habitats are to be retained. The removal of habitats from the site could result in a net loss in biodiversity at the site. Notable habitats No direct impacts to any notable habitats are anticipated due to the small scale and nature of the proposed development. However indirect impacts from pollution incidents during construction could occur.
<i>Recommendations</i>	On-site habitats Retained trees should be protected in line with the measures outlined in the British Standard "Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction to Construction - Recommendations" (BS 5837) (2012). Notable habitats Best practice measures to minimise the possibility of pollution affecting the nearby LMDW must be implemented during construction. A Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) may be required for this. Biodiversity net gain The Environment Act (2021) requires all developments (excluding exemptions) to deliver a 10% net gain in biodiversity. This is mandatory for larger developments and came into force for smaller developments on 2nd April 2024. It is understood that a planning application for the site had been submitted prior to these dates, however that the application is yet to be validated. Due to the nature of the proposals, it is likely that the proposed development would be exempt from BNG requirements under the self-build / custom build exemption.

Locality and Designated Sites	
Summary of Survey Findings	On-site designations The site is not subject to any designation. Statutory designated sites (within 1km) There are no known statutory sites within 2km of the site. Non-statutory designated sites The presence of non-statutory designated sites within 1km of the site cannot be established without data from greater Manchester Local Record Centre
Foreseen Impacts	On-site designations N/A. Statutory and non-statutory designated sites No impacts to designated sites are anticipated due to the small scale and distance of the proposed development from such sites (where known) as well as the urban location of the site with surrounding physical barriers. The site lies within the impact risk zone for SSSIs located beyond 1km from the site. The proposed development type is not listed as a possible high risk for this designation.
Recommendations	On-site designations None required. Statutory and non-statutory designated sites None required.
Invasive / Non-native species	
Summary of Survey Findings	<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> (TN1) is present within areas of <i>Rhododendron</i> scrub on site, which is listed as an invasive, non-native species under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
Foreseen Impacts	Construction could result in the spread of invasive species.
Recommendations	<i>Rhododendron</i> present on site will be sensitively removed prior to the commencement of works to prevent the spread of a non-native, invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the WCA. The <i>Rhododendron</i> will be removed using hand tools only. The most effective method of removal is through hand pulling, which results in minimal soil disturbance. Hand pulling young shrubs will typically result in the full removal of the shrub and associated root network, which will prevent the re-establishment. Mature shrubs are likely to have a deeper and more established root network unlikely to be removed in full by hand pulling alone. Where there are mature shrubs, removal should be aided

	using hand tools to expose the root network in full so the entire shrub and associated roots can be removed. Development works will not commence until Rhododendron has been successfully removed from the site.																						
Invertebrates																							
Summary of Survey Findings	The habitats present on-site, including modified grassland and mixed scrub, likely provide common invertebrates with opportunities to forage and shelter. The site contains no further notable habitats which may provide niches for specialised or protected invertebrates.																						
Foreseen Impacts	Modified grassland will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local invertebrate populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally.																						
Recommendations	No further surveys.																						
Bats																							
Summary of Survey Findings	EPSL data A search of the magic.gov.uk database for granted EPSLs within a 2km radius of the site has been completed. Displaced bats from licensed sites <2km away from the survey site will find alternative habitat either within the mitigation measures implemented as part of the licence or will relocate to other known roosts sites in close proximity to the licensed site. There are four EPSLs within a 2km radius of site as detailed below: <table><tr><th>EPSL reference</th><th>Bat species affected</th><th>Distance from site</th><th>Impacts allowed by licence</th></tr><tr><td>2016-19740-EPS-MIT-1</td><td>Common pipistrelle</td><td>Approx. 1km north-west</td><td>Destruction of a resting place</td></tr><tr><td>2015-8047-EPS-MIT</td><td>Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, Daubenton's</td><td>Approx. 1.5km south-west</td><td>Destruction of a resting place</td></tr><tr><td>EPSM2009-709</td><td>Common pipistrelle</td><td>Approx. 1.7km south-west</td><td>Destruction of a resting place</td></tr><tr><td>EPSM2011-2750</td><td>Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle</td><td>Approx. 1.7km south</td><td>Destruction of a resting place</td></tr></table> There are no Special Areas of Conservation designated for bats within 10km of the site. Foraging and commuting habitat Habitats recorded on site are assessed to provide foraging and commuting opportunities for bats in the form of modified grassland, mixed scrub, and lines of trees. These habitats are likely to provide micro-climatic conditions that support invertebrates that will in turn provide foraging opportunities for local bat populations. Most notably, the lines of trees on site are mature and extend beyond the site adding to the continuity of vegetated linear features present in the wider landscape. Bats are well known to utilise linear features to aid navigation whilst travelling between foraging resources and roost sites.			EPSL reference	Bat species affected	Distance from site	Impacts allowed by licence	2016-19740-EPS-MIT-1	Common pipistrelle	Approx. 1km north-west	Destruction of a resting place	2015-8047-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, Daubenton's	Approx. 1.5km south-west	Destruction of a resting place	EPSM2009-709	Common pipistrelle	Approx. 1.7km south-west	Destruction of a resting place	EPSM2011-2750	Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle	Approx. 1.7km south	Destruction of a resting place
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	Roosting habitat There is one building present on site (B1). B1 was not subject to a detailed inspection, however, is proposed to be converted as part of the proposals. No trees on site or within proximity to the site were considered to offer suitable features for roosting bats.	
B1 Building description		Photographs
Summary B1 is a large stone-built church building with a pitched roof slate tiled roof. There is a spire present on the south-eastern extent which extends above the main building roof. The building could provide suitable habitat for bats to roost to the nature of the building and it's construction.		
Foreseen Impacts	Roosting habitat [Buildings] The proposed construction of the footpath within the site as assessed within this report is unlikely to impact upon any bat roosts present within the onsite building. Roosting habitat [Trees] None foreseen Foraging and commuting habitat The proposed development will result in the loss of small areas of modified grassland, rhododendron scrub and a line of trees but given their low value and the presence of more extensive areas of foraging and commuting habitat in the locality, this is likely to be inconsequential for bats. Artificial lighting The proposed development may lead to an increase in the amount of current lighting of surrounding habitats or the retained building without mitigation. This may disturb commuting bats.	

<i>Recommendations</i>	Roosting habitat [Buildings] None required. Roosting habitat [Trees] In the unlikely event that a bat or evidence of bats is discovered during the development all work must stop and a bat licensed ecologist contacted for further advice. Foraging and commuting habitat No further surveys are required. Artificial lighting A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during post-development which outlines the areas of the site that will be retained as dark corridors. Parameters can be found on the Bat Conservation Trust website: https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/lighting-2
Birds	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	Buildings No evidence of nesting birds was identified on B1, however the building could provide suitable habitat for nesting birds both internally and within the buildings roof and spire construction. Trees and vegetation No bird nests were identified within the vegetation on-site, however areas of mixed scrub, rhododendron scrub and lines of trees all offer nesting opportunities and nest-building resources for birds. Barn owls The site does not appear to provide any suitable nesting sites for barn owls. Overwintering birds Due to the small size of the site and the extent and type of the habitats recorded, the site not considered suitable to support a significant assemblage of protected and/or notable birds.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	Buildings/trees The proposed development could result in the destruction or the disturbance and subsequent abandonment of active bird nests. Barn owls None foreseen.

	Overwintering birds None foreseen.
<i>Recommendations</i>	Buildings/trees Any building or vegetation removal should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the vegetation should be undertaken immediately, by a qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged or an ecologist has confirmed the nesting attempt has concluded. Precautions should be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any retained nests so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during construction works. At least a 3-5m buffer should be created between any machinery and active nests until the young have fledged or an ecologist has confirmed the nesting attempt has concluded. Barn owls None required. Overwintering birds None required. Suggested biodiversity enhancements The installation of a minimum of bird boxes on mature trees around the site boundaries or on retained buildings will provide additional nesting habitat for birds e.g. Schwegler No 17 Swift Nest Box (buildings) Schwegler 1SP Sparrow Terrace (buildings) Schwegler 1B Nest Boxes (trees) Schwegler 2H Robin Boxes (trees) Woodstone Nest Box (buildings or trees) Or a similar alternative brand. Tree boxes should be positioned approximately 3m above ground level where they will be sheltered from prevailing wind, rain and strong sunlight. Small-hole boxes are best placed approximately 1-3m above ground on an area of the tree trunk where foliage will not obscure the entrance hole. Swift and sparrow boxes should be positioned at the eaves of a building and can be incorporated into the fabric of the building during construction.

Reptiles	
Summary of Survey Findings	EPSL data A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for protected reptiles within 2km of the site. Habitat suitability Habitats within the site are considered to be suboptimal due to an absence of notable habitat structure and diversity, which significantly limits refuge, foraging, and commuting opportunities, albeit they do provide some basking opportunities when located adjacent to potential refugia. The site has connectivity to further suitable reptile habitat in the wider landscape via woodland habitats present to the east. The presence of reptiles on site cannot be discounted, albeit likely limited to low numbers within peripheral scrub. Wider landscape The adjacent sections of woodland are of elevated ecological value within the wider landscape and may represent important resources for local reptile populations. These adjacent habitats provide optimal foraging, commuting, and refuge opportunities for reptiles and are well connected to further suitable habitat in the wider landscape. The presence of reptiles utilising these adjacent habitats cannot be discounted.
Foreseen Impacts	Modified grassland, rhododendron scrub and a line of trees will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local reptile populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, site clearance could result in the death or injury of reptiles, if present.
Recommendations	A precautionary working method will be implemented for widespread reptiles during construction, including the following measures: • Vegetation will be maintained at a short sward (5cm) to discourage reptiles. • Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. • Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby habitats. • Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. • If any reptiles are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance. • In the unlikely event that a reptile is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.
Amphibians	
Summary of Survey Findings	EPSL and survey data A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for great crested newts within 2km of the site. Further, no positive class survey licence return or DLL historic survey data (2017 – 2019) were present within 2km of the site. Aquatic habitat suitability (including ponds within 500m)

	Great crested newts (GCN) exist in metapopulations and are known to utilise ponds and their connecting terrestrial habitat during their life cycle; great crested newts are typically found within terrestrial habitats within 250m and up to 500m from breeding ponds (Langton et al. 2001). No ponds are present on site or within 500m of the site. Terrestrial habitat suitability The site provides some albeit limited suitable terrestrial habitat for amphibians given the lack of optimal habitat (i.e. rank grassland). The areas of hard standing and modified grass offer sub-optimal habitat for terrestrial amphibians. The mixed scrub within the site may offer refuge for these species, however given the urban nature of the surrounding landscape (i.e. dominated by roads and hard standing which are sub-optimal for amphibians) it is unlikely that amphibians will migrate on to site. Further, there is limited suitable terrestrial habitat across the wider landscape reducing the likelihood of amphibians being present on site and across the surrounding areas.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	Given the lack of suitably connected breeding ponds within 500m of the site, the presence of GCN on-site is considered unlikely and therefore impacts to amphibians as a result of the proposed development are deemed to be acceptably low.
<i>Recommendations</i>	None required.
Badger	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	No badger setts were noted on site or within a 30m radius of the site. Further, no evidence of foraging badgers was noted within the development area. However, the site was considered suitable for badger sett excavation and foraging habitat.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	No works will be undertaken within 30m of a badger sett. Modified grassland, rhododendron scrub and a line of trees will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local badger populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of badgers, if present.
<i>Recommendations</i>	Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts to badgers, further badger surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures: • A toolbox talk will be given to contractors regarding the possible presence of badgers at the site. • A pre-commencement inspection of the site will be undertaken for any new badger activity if works do not commence within three months. • Heras fencing will be erected around the working area to prevent encroachment into retained habitats where badger setts could be present. • Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. • The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which badgers could use.

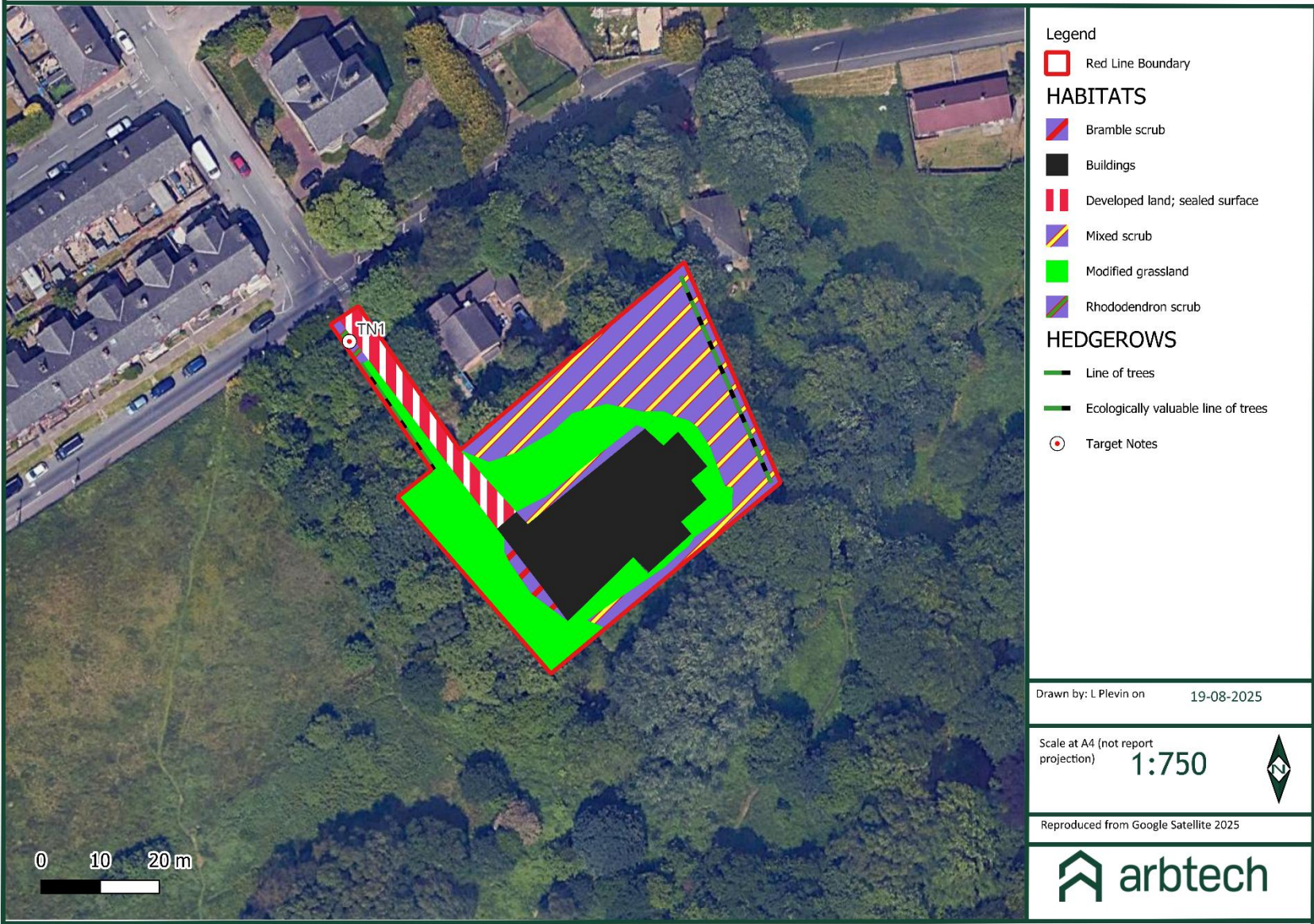
	Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. In the unlikely event that a badger sett is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.
Riparian animals	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for otters or water voles within 2km of the site. There are no water courses on or connected to the site. There are also no riparian habitats present on site or within an influencing distance.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	No impacts are anticipated on riparian animals as a result of the proposed development.
<i>Recommendations</i>	None required.
Hazel dormouse	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	EPSL data A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for hazel dormice within 2km of the site. Habitat suitability The site lies outside of the known current range for hazel dormice and there are no suitable habitats within the development area. As such it is considered likely that hazel dormice are absent from site.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	No impacts are anticipated on hazel dormice as a result of the proposed development.
<i>Recommendations</i>	None required.
Other e.g. hedgehog	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	Areas of modified grassland and mixed scrub likely provide foraging and commuting opportunities for hedgehogs, with woodland habitat nearby.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	Modified grassland, rhododendron scrub and a line of trees will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local hedgehog populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of hedgehogs, if present.
<i>Recommendations</i>	Similar to the badgers, a precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures: - Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. - The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which hedgehogs could use. - Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.

	If any hedgehogs are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance. Suggested biodiversity enhancements The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for hedgehogs: • Planting fruit bearing trees and species-rich grassland to increase foraging opportunities. • Creation of brash piles or installation of hedgehog houses in shady areas. • Installation of gaps under boundary fencing to enable hedgehogs to move freely through the site.
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All Saints Church, Foxholes Road, Rochdale, OL12
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Appendix 1: Habitat map



Mr Amir Khan

All Saints Church, Foxholes Road, Rochdale, OL12
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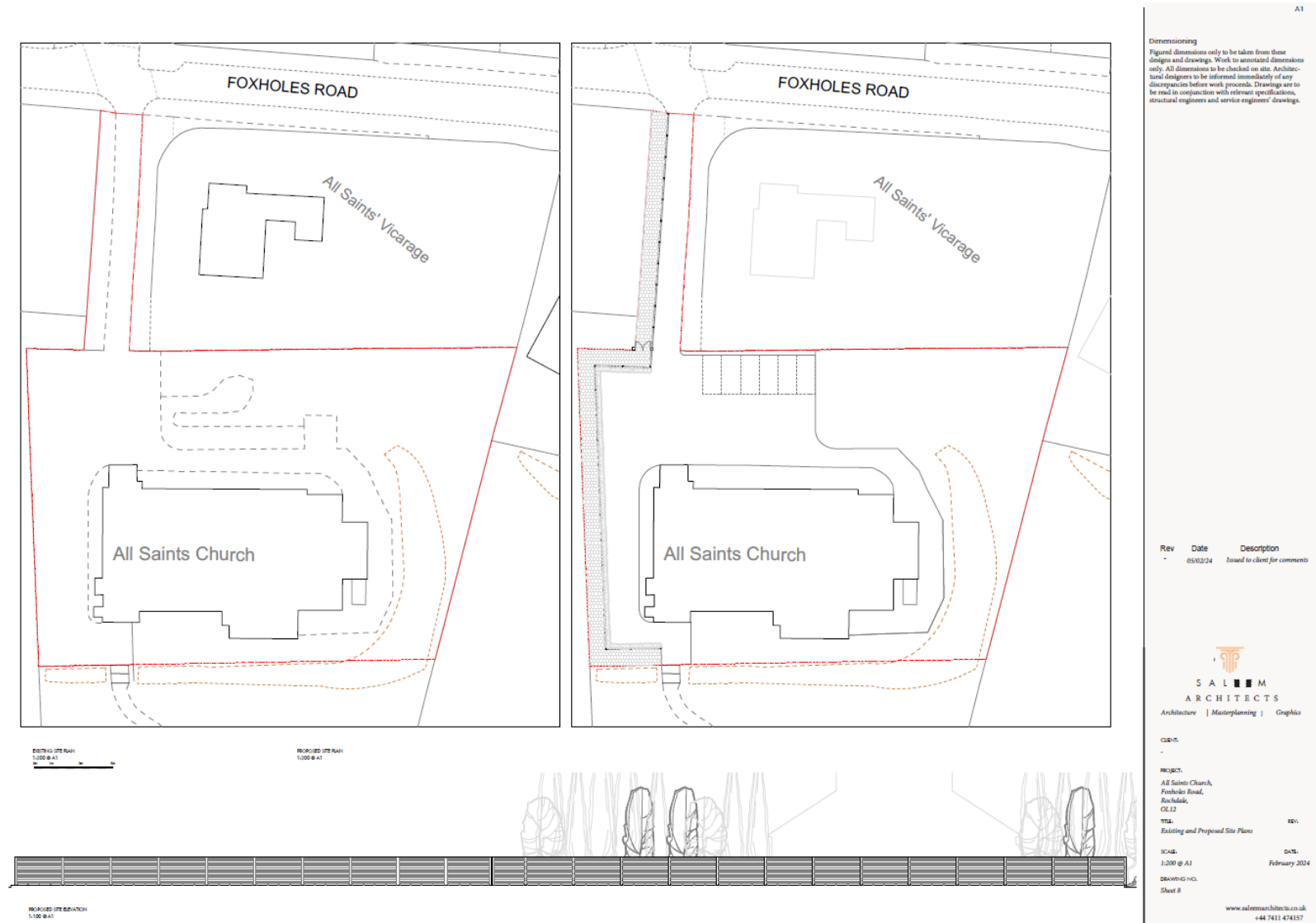
Appendix 2: Location map



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All Saints Church, Foxholes Road, Rochdale, OL12
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Appendix 3: Proposed plan



Appendix 4: Habitat Photos

Buildings	
Photograph	Description
	Building B1
Modified grassland	
Photograph	Description

	Areas of modified grassland on the southern site boundary
	Areas of modified grassland surrounding B1
Mixed scrub Photograph	Description

		Area of mixed scrub on the north-eastern boundary	
Line of trees			
Photograph		Description	



Line of trees at the site entrance



Line of trees along the north-eastern boundary

Rhododendron scrub

Photograph		Description
		Rhododendron scrub at site entrance
Developed land; sealed surface		
Photograph		Description
		Sealed surface access road

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Version control			
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Draft	0.1	Leo Plevin BSc (Hons) MSc, Principal Ecologist	19/08/2025
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