

Smallbridge Business Park, Riverside Drive, OL162SH.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

September 2025



Report Control Sheet

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Site Address	Smallbridge Business Park, Riverside Drive, OL162SH
Grid Reference	SD 91286 14880
Approximate Site Area	0.08 ha
Current Site Use	The site is currently used for industrial storage and comprises of unsealed, unvegetated surface, hardstanding sealed surface and a soil mound. It is largely unmanaged with vegetation limited to a soil mound found to the east of the site.
Designated Sites within Zone of Influence	The site is located within the Impact Risk Zone for Rochdale Canal SSSI located approximately 0.82 km southeast from the site boundary. Due to the nature of the development, a consultation between Natural England and the Local Planning Authority (LPA) is not required to facilitate development. Several other statutory designated sites are located within 5 km from the site and one LWS is located within 1 km. The designated sites are deemed sufficient distance from the site and separated by anthropogenic barriers such as residential housing that no negative impacts are anticipated through development. The designated sites are not connected to the development site by any linear features such as watercourses, hedgerows, or treelines that could potentially facilitate pollution.
Notable Habitat Features	Notable habitats present included artificial unsealed, unvegetated surface, developed land; sealed surface and ruderal/ephemeral.
Notable Species Applicable to the Assessment	• Invertebrates • Bats (Potential roosting, foraging and commuting) • Common amphibians • Badger • Hedgehog
Mitigation Recommendations	• Considerations for badgers, hedgehogs, and common amphibians during development.
Recommended Further Surveys and Assessment	No further surveys required to proceed with the proposed development.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. SCOPE & PURPOSE

1.1.1. Collington Winter Environmental Ltd was commissioned by Fothergill Coated Fabrics Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) at Smallbridge Business Park, Riverside Drive, OL162SH. This report has been prepared to inform planning permission for an extension to the existing warehouse on site.

1.1.2. The author of this report is Michael Boucher, Graduate Ecologist at Collington Winter Environmental Ltd and overseen by Caitlin O'Connor, Senior Ecologist at Collington winter who is highly experienced managing schemes and has produced many ecological reports to inform planning management plans.

1.2. LOCATION

1.2.1. Please refer to Figure 1.1 for the site location. The site is located on an industrial estate to the south of Buckley, a suburban area within Rochdale, in Greater Manchester.



Figure 1.1 Site Location

1.3. OBJECTIVES

1.3.1. The objectives of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal are as follows:

- Identify the major habitats present
- Ascertain the presence or potential presence of any legally protected or notable species or habitats
- Identify any mitigation or further survey required and opportunities for strategic wildlife enhancements and long-term management.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1. DESK STUDY

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

- Obtaining local records of notable species and locally designated sites within 1 km of the site from The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU), obtained on the 13.06.25.
- Review of Magic.gov.uk website for details of any designated sites, notable habitats and presence of European Protected Species Licences.
- Review of aerial and OS maps for habitat information, as well as determining locations of potential waterbodies to be considered in the assessment.
- Review of potential habitat links on and off site, to determine the potential zone of influence of the proposed development.
- On site consultation with the landowner which provided valuable information regarding historic land use and known species and habitats present within the site.

2.1.2. Please note, a lack of records for a species does not confirm absence. Instead, local surveys may not have been undertaken or records not submitted to GMEU.

2.2. VEGETATION AND HABITAT ASSESSMENT

2.2.1. An Ecological Appraisal of the site was undertaken by Caitlin O'Connor, Senior Ecologist on the 3rd June 2025. The weather was overcast (8/8 oktas), with no precipitation at the time of survey, however heavy rain did occur one hour before survey, wind speed 4 and 12°C.

2.2.2. An updated ecological appraisal was undertaken by Michael Boucher, Graduate Ecologist at Collington Winter on 19th August 2025. The weather was 19

2.2.3. The walkover survey was undertaken broadly in line with standard UK HAB Methodology, Version 2 (2023). The assessment is undertaken with consideration of methodology as per "Preliminary Ecological Appraisal" (CIEEM, 2018).

2.2.4. A UK HAB Plan has been produced and is presented in Appendix 7.3 of this report. Standard methodology has been used, though adjustments have been made based on judgement to demonstrate habitats in a clearer manner, or where standard guidance does not fit the conditions found on site.

2.3. FAUNA ASSESSMENT

2.3.1. A search for signs of protected and notable species of fauna was undertaken during the site walkover. This included both field signs of species, as well as potential for species to be present based on habitat availability.

2.3.2. The searches broadly included the following:

- Assessment of waterbodies on site and within 250m of the site boundary, and terrestrial habitats for suitability to support notable amphibians.
- Searches for field signs of, and habitat suitability for bats.
- Suitability of habitats to support reptiles, and searches for incidental field signs.
- Searches for field signs of badger (*Meles meles*), including setts, mammal paths, snuffle holes, badger hair and latrines to indicate activity.
- Searches of watercourses for signs of water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*), white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) and otter (*Lutra lutra*), and assessment of habitat availability for the species.
- Assessment of the suitability of habitats to support notable birds and recording any field sightings of birds during the walkover.
- Assessment of the sites ability to support notable invertebrates and flora.
- Searches for non-native invasive species.

2.4. PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

2.4.1. A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of the site was undertaken by Caitlin O'Connor who holds a Class 1

Bat Survey Licence from Natural England (Reference 2023-11812-CL17-BAT).

2.4.2. The survey was undertaken following guidance set out in Collins (2023). This includes undertaking a detailed internal and external inspection of any features to compile information on potential and actual bat entry/ exit points, roosting locations and evidence of bats.

2.4.3. The commuting and foraging assessment methodology is based on information contained within the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines 4th edition (Collins 2023).

2.4.4. The potential flightpaths and foraging habitats were assessed as per categories listed in Table 4.1, 4.2 and 6.2, demonstrated below (Collins 2023).

2.4.5. If negative impacts on bat activity is suspected, further surveys may be required. Negative impacts anticipated on bats flights paths and foraging habitats may include:

- Modification of light paths or foraging habitats either physically or through disturbance such as light spill/noise
- Severance of flight paths (fragmentation)
- Loss of Foraging habitats

Table 4.1. Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement.

Potential suitability	Description	
	Roosting habitats in structures	Potential flight-paths and foraging habitats
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).	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines, or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).
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.	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
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 or by larger numbers 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 ^c).	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
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).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
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 potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

Assessment Criteria for Bat Roosting Potential

Table 4.2. Guidelines for assessing the suitability of trees on proposed development sites for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.

Suitability	Description
NONE	Either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any
FAR	Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree
PRF	A tree with at least one PRF present

Table 6.2. Guidelines for categorising the potential suitability of PRFs on a proposed development site for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.

Suitability	Description
PRF-I	PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats.
PRF-M	PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.

2.5. SURVEY LIMITATIONS

- 2.5.1. This survey does not constitute a full botanical survey. Key species for each habitat type have been identified to give a broad representation of habitats present within the site.
- 2.5.2. It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no investigation can ensure the complete characterisation of the natural environment. This survey does not constitute a full botanical survey. Plant species may have been under-recorded, unidentifiable or not visible due to a number of factors.
- 2.5.3. The protected species assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species occurring on the site. This is based on the suitability of the habitat, known distribution of the species in the local area (provided by data searches) and any direct evidence within the survey area.
- 2.5.4. The findings of this report represent the professional opinion of qualified ecologists and do not constitute professional legal advice. The client may wish to seek professional legal interpretation of the relevant wildlife legislation cited within this document.

2.6. PROPORTIONALITY

- 2.6.1. Collington Winter Environmental Ltd provide recommendations in line with the British Standard for Biodiversity (BS42020). Within BS42020, proportionality is encouraged for both ecologists and Local Authority Decision Makers and Consultees. Please refer to the below extract from Section 5.5 of BS42020.

“The work involved in preparing and implementing all ecological surveys, impact assessments and measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development. Consequently, the decision-maker should only request supporting information and conservation measures that are relevant, necessary and material to the application in question. Similarly, the decision-maker and their consultees should ensure that any comments and advice made over an application are also proportionate.”

NOTE 1 This approach is enshrined in Government planning guidance, for example, paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework for England [41].

NOTE 2 The desk studies and field surveys undertaken to provide a preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) might in some cases be all that is necessary.”

3 SURVEY RESULTS

3.1. SITE CONTEXT

3.1.1. The site is located to the east of Buckley, with a predominantly urban landscape to the north and west, and agricultural landscape to the south and east. A small parcel of woodland borders the northwest of the site and separates it from a residential housing estate. The southern aspects of the site are adjacent to warehouses and associated parking before opening into the wider landscape which contains Belfield Park, the River Beal, River Roch and agricultural fields which also house Cleggghall Fisheries. The habitats found on the southern aspects of the site are likely to support a wide range of native fauna and wildlife. Connectivity of these habitats to the site is limited, however, due to hardstanding and buildings preventing movement.

3.2. DESIGNATED SITES

3.2.1. Statutory Designated Sites located within 5 km from the site are outlined in Table 3.2.1.

Table 3.2.1 Statutory Designated Sites within 5 km from the development site.

Site Name	Distance from site (km)	Direction	Designation	Citation
Rochdale Canal	0.82	SE at the closest point	SSSI	The Rochdale Canal contains important habitats for submerged aquatic plants and emergent vegetation, including extensive colonies of the nationally scarce SAC species floating water plantain (<i>Luronium natans</i>). The site also supports a diverse assemblage of aquatic flora, notably its assemblage of pondweeds, (<i>Potamogeton spp</i>); the nine species of which found in the canal represent a balanced community which reflects the quality of water.
South Pennine Moors	3.46 km	E at the closest point	SAC SSSI	The underlying rock is Millstone Grit which outcrops at Boulsworth Hill and on the northern boundary of Ilkley Moor. The moorlands are on a rolling dissected plateau between 300m and 450m AOD with a high point of 517m at Boulsworth Hill. The greater part of the gritstone is overlain by blanket peat with the coarse gravely mineral soils occurring only on the lower slopes. The site is the largest area of unenclosed moorland within West Yorkshire and contains the most diverse and extensive examples of upland plant communities in the county. Extensive areas of blanket bog occur on the upland plateaux and are punctuated by species rich acidic flushes and mires. There are also wet and dry heaths and acid grasslands. Three habitat types which occur on the site are rare enough within Europe to be listed on Annex 1 of the EC habitats and Species Directive (92/43) EEC. These communities are typical of and represent the full range of upland vegetation classes found in the South Pennines. This mosaic of habitats supports a moorland breeding bird assemblage which, because of the range of species and number of breeding birds it contains, is of regional and national importance. The large numbers of breeding merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i>, golden plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> and twite <i>Carduelis flavirostris</i> are of international importance. The southern end of the site has good exposures of the Millstone Grit series and three localities are described under the heading 'Geology'.

Healey Dell	3.06 km	W at the closest point	LNR	Beauty spot and wildlife sanctuary rich in industrial archaeology, two miles from Rochdale town centre on the way to Whitworth and Bacup. The River Spodden has carved its way through the woodlands through thousands of years, creating delightful scenery and spectacular waterfalls which once powered ancient corn, wool and cotton mills. A disused 1800s railway line is now a nature trail with magnificent views from a 100-foot-high viaduct.
Key: LNR – Local Nature Reserve SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest. SAC – Special Area of Conservation.				

3.2.2. The site falls within the Impact Risk Zone of Rochdale Canal located approximately 0.82 km southeast from the site boundary.

3.2.3. No other statutory sites are located within 5 km of the site boundary.

3.2.4. The local data search returned the following non-statutory designated site within 1 km from the site boundary:

- Buckley Wood Site of Biological Importance – Located approximately 850 m northwest of the site boundary.

3.3. PRIORITY HABITATS

3.3.1. Consultation with Magic.gov.uk highlighted the presence of the following Priority Habitats within 1km of the site boundary (Figure 3.3.1):

- Deciduous woodland is located in several areas within 1 km from the site boundary with the closest approximately 190 m north.
- Broadleaved woodland is located in several areas within 1 km from the site boundary with the closest approximately 200 m north.
- Ancient, replanted woodland is located approximately 780 m northwest from the site boundary.

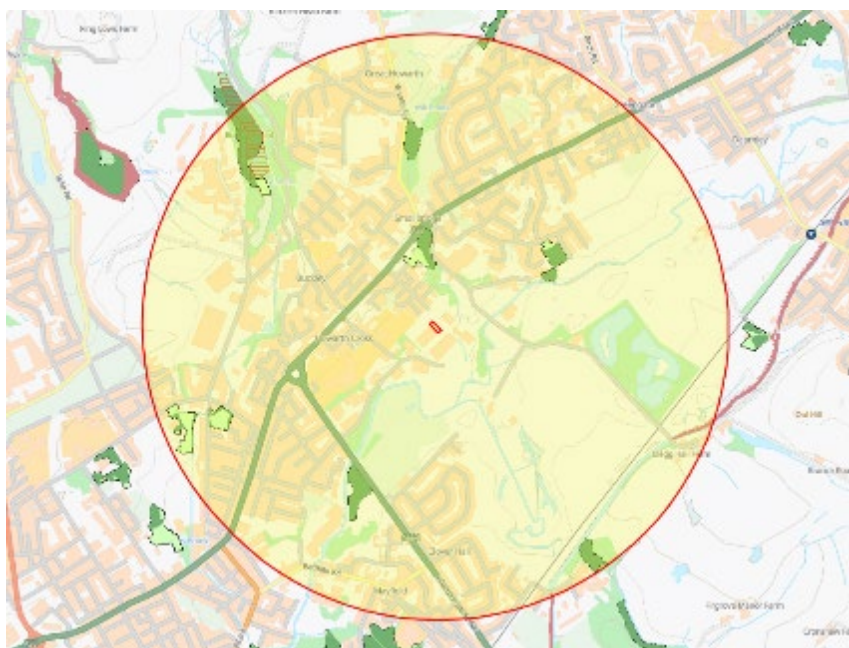




Figure 3.3.1 Priority Habitats within 1km from the Site (Magic.gov.uk, 2025)

3.4. HABITATS

3.4.1. Please refer to Drawing 20-2720 for the UK HAB Map for the site in Appendix 7.3. Photographs of the site are presented in the Appendix 7.2.

u1c ARTIFICIAL UNVEGETATED, UNSEALED SURFACE

Corresponding Biodiversity Metric Habitat: Urban – Artificial Unvegetated, Unsealed Surface

3.4.2. Most of the site comprised of artificial permeable surfaces overlaid with slate substrate. The ground had a few puddles due to recent heavy rainfall but nothing permanent or of value for local fauna was present.

u1b6 OTHER DEVELOPED LAND

Corresponding Biodiversity Metric Habitat: Urban – Developed land/sealed surface

3.4.3. A large portion of the site comprised of developed land/sealed surface in the form of a large car park and storage area which extended from the southwest of the site round to the northeast.

u1f SPARSELY VEGETATED URBAN LAND

Corresponding Biodiversity Metric Habitat: Sparsely vegetated land – Ruderal/ephemeral

3.4.4. The north of the site comprises a large soil mound which is approximately four to five meters tall. The soil mound mainly comprises rubble and bare ground although there is scattered vegetation particularly on the top of the feature. The mound overall possesses around 15% vegetation.

3.4.5. Vegetation species found within the soil mound included: common dandelions (*Taraxacum officinale*), broadleaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), oak (*Quercus robur*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), grey willow (*Salix cinerea*), wild cherry (*Prunus avium*), hazel saplings (*Corylus avellana*), horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*), black medic (*Medicago lupulina*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), crested dogs tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), dog wood (*Cornus sanguinea*), ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), cocks foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), red clover (*Trifolium pratense*), willow herb (*Epilobium sp.*), mosses (*Bryophyta sp.*), creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), meadow buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), vetches (*Vicia sp.*), fern (*Tracheophyta sp.*), bindweed (*Convolvulus sp.*), nettle (*Urtica dioica*), wood avens (*Geum urbanum*), oxeye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) and *Cotoneaster dammeri*.

u1b5 BUILDINGS

Corresponding Biodiversity Metric Habitat: Urban – Developed land/sealed surface

3.4.6. A large warehouse is located onsite which is currently operational and also has three smaller buildings associated with it which house machinery.

g4 MODIFIED GRASSLAND

Corresponding Biodiversity Metric Habitat: Modified Grassland

3.4.7. Three parcels of modified grassland were located on site, two to the southwest of site and one running along the northwest of the warehouse.

3.4.8. The parcels were comprised of similar species which included: red clover (*Trifolium pratense*), yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), meadow buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), common sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), rural feather-moss (*Syntrichia ruralis*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), *Syntrichia ruralis*, cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), dandelions (*Taraxacum spp.*), broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), common reed (*Phragmites australis*),

and wall cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*).

w1g OTHER BROADLEAVED WOODLAND

Corresponding Biodiversity Metric Habitat: Other woodland; broadleaved

3.4.9. To the northwest of the site lies an extensive area of broadleaved woodland, characterised by a young canopy and with a distinct line of cypress trees running through the centre. The understory is dominated by mosses, and a steep bank descends toward the adjacent warehouse, where red clover dominates the vegetation. At the base of the slope, a linear stand of willow marks the transition between habitats.

g4 200 MODIFIED GRASSLAND – URBAN TREE

Corresponding Biodiversity Metric Habitat: Urban tree

3.4.10. Five individual trees were located onsite all within the modified grassland parcel to the southeast of the site, all the trees were willow (*Salix spp.*)

h3d BRAMBLE SCRUB

Corresponding Biodiversity Metric Habitat: Urban tree

3.4.11. One parcel of bramble scrub was located to the northeast of the site.

3.5. SPECIES

FLORA

3.5.1. The data search returned four records of notable vascular plants within the local area, three of these related to bee orchid (*Ophrys apifera*) and one to floating water-plantain (*Luronium natans*).

3.5.2. The site supports a moderate diversity of flora across a mosaic of urban and semi-natural habitats. While large areas are dominated by artificial and sealed surfaces, pockets of modified grassland, sparsely vegetated land, and young broadleaved woodland provide suitable conditions for a range of ruderal, grassland, and early successional species. The presence of soil mounds, moss-dominated understory, and scattered trees further enhances structural and botanical diversity, indicating potential for natural colonisation and ecological enhancement.

3.5.3. Overall, the site offers limited but locally valuable opportunities for floral diversity.

INVERTEBRATES

3.5.4. The data search returned a total of two records of notable invertebrates within the local area. Both records were of wall moth (*Phereoeca uterella*).

3.5.5. The site offers some opportunities for invertebrate species, particularly within the modified grassland, sparsely vegetated areas, and young woodland habitats. The presence of flowering plants such as red clover, dandelions, and meadow buttercup provides nectar sources for pollinators, while bare ground and rubble within the soil mound offer potential refuges for ground-dwelling species. Mosses and decaying organic matter in the woodland understory may support detritivores and microhabitat specialists.

3.5.6. Overall, the site supports a modest but relevant assemblage of habitats for invertebrates but due to the urban surroundings it is not anticipated notable species will use the site in large numbers.

AMPHIBIANS

3.5.7. The data search returned no records of great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) or other common amphibian species such as common toad (*Bufo bufo*) or common frog (*Rana temporaria*).

3.5.8. The following EPSLs for great crested newt were located within 5 km from the site boundary, based on Magic.gov.uk:

Case reference of granted application	Species on the licence*	Distance from site (KM)	Licence Start Date	Licence End Date	Does the Licence				
					impact on a breeding site?	allow damage of breeding site?	allow damage of a resting place?	allow destruction of breeding site?	allow destruction of a resting place?
2015-7848-EPS-MIT	GCN	2.61	14/04/2015	31/07/2017	N	N	Y	N	Y

- 3.5.9. The site provides limited value for amphibian species due to the lack of aquatic habitats on site and within 250 m of the site boundary. As great crested newts' upper dispersal limit is generally considered to be up to 250 m from a waterbody (though occurrence of greater distances does exist), ponds beyond this distance were not assessed due to limited connectivity (English Nature, 2001).
- 3.5.10. However, the presence of rubble piles, vegetated soil mounds, and shaded woodland areas may provide occasional shelter or terrestrial habitat for common species such as common frog or common toad, particularly during dispersal.
- 3.5.11. Overall, the site presents low ecological value for amphibians, though minor opportunities exist within semi-natural habitat pockets. Amphibian species are not anticipated to utilise the site in large numbers

REPTILES

- 3.5.12. The data search returned no records of reptile species within the local area.
- 3.5.13. The site offers limited potential for reptile species due to the predominance of sealed surfaces and active industrial use. However, the sparsely vegetated soil mound, areas of modified grassland, and rubble piles may provide suitable basking spots and shelter for common reptile species such as slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*) or common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*), particularly where vegetation cover is mixed with bare ground.
- 3.5.14. Overall, the site presents low suitability for reptiles, with potential concentrated in semi-natural and transitional habitat features.

BIRDS

- 3.5.15. A total of 498 records of birds were returned during the 1 km data search. Examples of protected species returned within the search include kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) and little ringed plover (*Charadrius dubius*). The rest of the species were BAP-Section 41 species, which are considered priority species. Results included bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), curlew (*Numenius arquata*), Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*), grasshopper warbler (*Locustella naevia*), house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) and lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*).
- 3.5.16. The site offers generally low to moderate suitability for birds, with sealed surfaces, buildings, and modified grassland providing negligible to low nesting or foraging opportunities, aside from occasional use by common urban species such as pigeons or starlings. The soil mound with developing scrub and saplings, together with scattered willow trees, offers limited nesting and foraging potential for early successional and scrub-associated birds. The broadleaved woodland to the northwest represents the most valuable habitat onsite, providing moderate to high suitability for a range of common breeding species through its canopy structure and understory diversity.
- 3.5.17. Overall, while the site supports some features of value to nesting and foraging birds, it is likely to be used mainly by widespread and common species of low conservation concern.

BATS

- 3.5.18. A total of 34 records of bats were returned within 5 km of the site boundary. Species included soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), unidentified pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus* sp.), noctule (*Nyctalus noctule*) and common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*).
- 3.5.19. The following EPSL were located within 5km from the site boundary based on consultation with Magic.gov.uk:

Case reference of granted application	Species on the licence*	Distance from site (KM)	Licence Start Date	Licence End Date	Does the Licence				
					impact on a breeding site?	allow damage of breeding site?	allow damage of a resting place?	allow destruction of breeding site?	allow destruction of a resting place?
2016-19740-EPS-MIT-1	C-PIP	0.77	01/04/2016	31/03/2021	N	N	N	N	Y
2016-19740-EPS-MIT-2	C-PIP	0.77	20/06/2016	01/04/2021	N	N	N	N	Y
2015-8632-EPS-MIT	C-PIP	1.13	27/03/2015	01/10/2020	N	N	N	N	Y
EPSM2009-525	C-PIP;S-PIP	1.43	26/05/2009	31/08/2009	N	N	N	N	Y
2015-8047-EPS-MIT	C-PIP DAUB S-PIP	2.29	24/03/2015	31/08/2020	N	N	N	N	Y
EPSM2011-2750	C-PIP;S-PIP	2.36	15/02/2011	31/07/2013	N	N	N	N	Y

2015-7854-EPS-MIT	BLE C-PIP	2.61	20/03/2015	31/05/2021	N	N	N	N	Y
EPSM2009-709	C-PIP	2.65	08/04/2009	31/12/2010	N	N	N	N	Y
EPSM2012-5119	C-PIP	4.31	13/11/2012	30/11/2013	N	N	N	N	Y
2016-20262-EPS-MIT	C-PIP	4.48	01/03/2016	28/02/2021	N	N	N	N	Y
2017-32656-EPS-MIT	C-PIP	4.73	28/02/2018	31/08/2019	Y	Y	N	N	N

Species on the licence*	Species name	Latin
C-PIP	Common pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>
S-PIP	Soprano pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>
BLE	Brown long-eared bat	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>
DAUB	Daubenton's bat	<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>

- 3.5.20. The site provides low suitability for roosting bats, as the main warehouse and associated buildings appear to be modern and in active use, with limited features such as cracks, gaps, or voids that could support roosts. The warehouse which is to be extended as well as an adjacent outbuilding underwent a Preliminary Roost Assessment. The outbuilding is not to undergo works but may have been impacted through lighting or new commuting barriers if suitable for roosting bats. Details of the PRA are found below,
- 3.5.21. The scattered willows within modified grassland and young trees on the soil mound are small and immature, offering negligible roosting potential. The broadleaved woodland to the northwest provides some commuting and foraging suitability through structural complexity and potential invertebrate abundance, while modified grassland, sealed surfaces, and unvegetated areas are of negligible value.
- 3.5.22. Overall, the site offers limited bat habitat, with the woodland edge providing the only area of moderate suitability for foraging and commuting, but little potential for roosting.

EXISTING WAREHOUSE

- 3.5.23. An existing warehouse was found onsite which is due to be extended under the current location plans. The building is made exclusively from corrugated metal sheets including the pitched roof and external walls. The bottom of the structure is lined with a band of red brick which sits at a height of around 50 cm. The brickwork was found to be in excellent condition with no potential roosting features such as cracks, crevices, or missing mortar. The brickwork's low proximity to the ground also reduced its value for roosting bats.
- 3.5.24. The building did not contain any loft voids which limits its value for void dwelling species such as brown long-eared bats. Metal flashing ran along the full extent of the roof and was found to be in excellent condition with no lifts present which would provide roosting opportunities for crevice dwelling species such as common pipistrelle.
- 3.5.25. Overall, the building has **no bat roosting suitability**.
- 3.5.26. Please see Appendix 7.1 for photos of the warehouse.

OUTHOUSE

- 3.5.27. A small outbuilding was located to the north of the site; it does not fall within the existing site boundary however lighting during the works may impact upon any bat species utilising it for roosting. Therefore, the building was also subject to a PRA to allow for mitigation against any impacts upon roosting bat species.
- 3.5.28. The outhouse comprises a single-story unit built from red brick. The red brick was found to be in excellent condition with no potential roosting features such as cracks, crevices, or missing mortar. The roof is made from corrugated metal sheets and similar composition to the main warehouse. The metal flashing was found to be tight against the brickwork with minimal lifting, limiting the suitability for crevice dwelling species. Therefore, the building does not provide any suitable roosting features, the lack of a loft void and thin materials making up the walls and roof also mean it lacks the thermal regulatory properties required for summer or winter roosting.
- 3.5.29. Overall, the building holds no bat roosting suitability.
- 3.5.30. Please see Appendix 7.1 for photos of the building.

BADGER

- 3.5.31. A total of 3 records of badgers (*Meles meles*) were returned during the data search and their location is to remain confidential.
- 3.5.32. No badger setts were found onsite or within 30 m of the site boundary. The site provides generally low suitability for badgers, with large areas of sealed surfaces, modified grassland, and unvegetated ground offering negligible value. The soil mound and scrubby areas may provide limited foraging habitat, though the extent is small and unlikely to support a clan. The broadleaved woodland to the northwest could provide more suitable foraging ground and potential sett locations, particularly along the bank and tree line, although no evidence of badger activity (such as setts, latrines, or foraging signs) was observed during the survey.
- 3.5.33. Overall, the site offers limited potential for badger activity, with the woodland edge representing the only area of moderate suitability, though current use by the species is considered unlikely.

OTHER TERRESTRIAL MAMMALS

- 3.5.34. The data search returned three records of west European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) within the 1 km search area. Habitat suitability for hedgehog is low to moderate, with some limited foraging opportunities in the modified grassland, soil mound, and woodland edge, and potential shelter within areas of scrub, bramble, and debris piles. However, the high proportion of sealed surfaces and ongoing site activity reduce overall value.
- 3.5.35. No records of brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*) were recorded in the 1 km data search. The site offers negligible suitability for brown hare, as much of the land is developed, sealed, or subject to regular disturbance, and the small parcels of modified grassland and soil mound do not provide the open arable or pasture habitats typically favoured by the species.

NON-NATIVE INVASIVE SPECIES

- 3.5.36. No records of non-native invasive species were found within 1 km of the site.
- 3.5.37. A row of Himalayan balsam was present on the southeastern aspect of the car park, running along the site boundary.

SPECIES DISCOUNTED FROM ASSESSMENT

- 3.5.38. Water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*), otter (*Lutra lutra*), beaver (*Castor fiber*) and white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) have been discounted from assessment as no suitable aquatic habitats are located on site or within proximity. The closest aquatic habitat that has the potential to support the discounted species is located approximately 70 m northeast of the site boundary, relating to Ash Brook. The brook is sufficiently separated from the site by anthropogenic barriers as such no negative impacts would occur on aquatic species during the proposed development.
- 3.5.39. Hazel Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) mainly occur in southern counties, especially in Devon, Somerset, Sussex, and Kent. There are few recorded localities north of the Midlands, though they are present in parts of the Lake District and in scattered Welsh localities (Matthews et al, 2018). The species are not generally known to be present within the Greater Manchester area (Wembridge et al., 2016). The habitats on site are of limited value due to limited areas of extensive woodland and scrub. As such, the species are reasonably discounted from site.
- 3.5.40. Red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) has been discounted from the assessment. Red squirrel populations are limited to small areas of northern England and are not known to be present in the Greater Manchester area; with no previous records returned in the data search. It is anticipated that high abundances of grey squirrel are present within this region (Shuttleworth/RSST n.d.). This species will displace red squirrel through competition as well as cause increased red squirrel mortality through the spread of squirrel pox (The Mammal Society, 2020).

4 MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. DESIGNATED SITES

- 4.1.1. The site is located within the Impact Risk Zone for Rochdale Canal SSSI located approximately 0.82 km south from the site boundary. Due to the nature of the development, a consultation between Natural England and the Local Planning Authority (LPA) is not required to facilitate development.

You do not need to consult Natural England on the proposed development at this location.

The Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI IRZs) indicate that at the location selected, the proposed development is unlikely to have a harmful effect on terrestrial Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites that they underpin.

Therefore, you do not need to consult Natural England on the likely impacts of development on terrestrial SSSIs and the SACs, SPAs or Ramsar sites that they underpin.

- 4.1.2. The designated sites are deemed sufficient distance from the site and separated by anthropogenic barriers such as residential housing and main roads that no negative impacts are anticipated through development. Moreover, the designated sites are not connected to the development site by any linear features such as watercourses, hedgerows, or treelines that could potentially facilitate pollution.
- 4.1.3. The adjacent woodland does provide more suitable habitat for species however it is not identified as a priority habitat. The on-site assessment found that the woodland was likely to have been self-set but did not contain any mature specimens. The immaturity of the woodland reduced the suitability for species such as bats due to the lack of roosting features such as loose bark and decay holes which are typical of more mature specimens. Furthermore, the proposed plans are to take place on the existing hardstanding, therefore any impact upon the woodland, if any, is likely to be minimal.
- 4.1.4. Two other statutory designated sites are located within 5 km from the site and one LWS was located within 1 km. Due to the works taking place on mainly the existing hard standing surface and the small scale of the works, it is not anticipated these designated sites will be impacted upon.

4.2. SPECIES

BATS

- 4.2.1. The adjacent woodland may provide opportunities for commuting bat species and may be impacted upon by lighting during the site works.
- 4.2.2. Slow-flying species such as brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), which are known to be in the local area, are sensitive to lighting and may be impacted by the proposed development, should no mitigation for lighting be considered.
- 4.2.3. Any proposed lighting/existing lighting should follow the guidance outlined in the Institute for Lighting Engineers document "Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Lighting" (2005) and BCT's "Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night" (2023).
- 4.2.4. An External Lighting Scheme has not been produced on the writing of this report. As such, the following recommendations are to be considered within the scheme during its condition, to minimise impacts of lighting. The recommendations are as follows:
- Keep site lighting to minimum levels.
 - Luminaries should lack UV elements and preferably LED lighting with a warm white light should be used over cool white light (ideally <2700Kelvin).
 - Lighting should feature peak wavelengths greater than 550nm.
 - Light placement should be downward facing to prevent excess horizontal or vertical light spill.

- The use of integrated fittings such as cowls, shields, louvres and hoods, that effectively contain light spill from unintended areas.
- The use of hard landscaping features to block light and create dark corridors.
- Avoid illuminating habitats of value.
- Use of timed security lights should be set on motion-sensors and using short, 1-minute timers, to minimise light use.
- Column heights of lighting can be considered to minimise light spill.

AMPHIBIANS

4.2.5. It is recommended that consideration of common amphibian presence during habitat removal is completed. Any debris is to be cleared by hand, and any common amphibians located moved carefully, by hand, to outside of the impacted area.

BADGERS

4.2.6. No evidence of badger was found onsite or within 30 m of the site. However, the woodland habitats which border the site are thought to be of value to the species. As such, the following Precautionary Working Methods will be adhered to during the construction phase to ensure that no badgers are impacted by the proposed development (Badger Trust, 2023):

- All site personnel should be fully briefed concerning the method statement, the presence of badgers, the mitigation measures to be followed, the relevant legislation, the penalties imposed and who to contact should they need to.
- Trees and shrubs should be felled so that they fall away from the direction of a sett and outside exclusion zones.
- Ensure excavations or trenches left overnight are covered or have an escape route such as a shallow gradient at one or both ends.
- Ensure excavations or trenches are inspected each morning and evening to ensure no badgers have become trapped.
- Open pipework with a diameter of more than 120mm should be properly covered or capped at the end of the working day to prevent badgers from entering and becoming trapped.
- During the work, the storage of any chemicals should be contained in such a way that they cannot be accessed or knocked over by any roaming badgers.
- The storage of topsoil or other “soft” building materials within the site should be given careful consideration. Badgers will readily adopt such mounds and dig setts which would then be afforded the same protection as established setts. To avoid the adoption of such mounds, they should be subject to daily inspections before work commences or alternative measures put in place, such as being fenced off for higher-risk areas.
- Litter, tools and potentially dangerous materials on site should be cleared at the end of the working day. Care should be taken that there are no sharp metal objects or pointed protrusions on the ground which could seriously injure a badger due to their poor eyesight.
- Ensure no dogs are brought to the work site.
- Security lighting should be kept to a minimum and away from setts to avoid disturbance to any badgers on site.
- Fires should be lit only in secure compounds away from areas of badger activity and should be fully extinguished at the end of the working day.
- Badger paths must not be blocked to ensure access to foraging areas is maintained.

TERRESTRIAL MAMMALS

4.2.7. European Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) and brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*) are anticipated utilise the site and are a Species of Principal Importance. During habitat management, any areas of dense vegetation should first be carefully hand searched to check for the species. If any hedgehogs are identified during works, should be relocated carefully by hand to a location away from the working area.

5 FURTHER SURVEYS AND CONCLUSION

5.1. FURTHER SURVEYS

5.1.1.No further surveys are recommended due to the limited value of the onsite habitats.

5.1.2.However, consideration is recommended for invertebrates, bats, badgers, terrestrial mammals and common amphibians.

5.2. CONCLUSION

5.2.1.The site is dominated by hardstanding, buildings, and modified grassland of limited ecological value, with small areas of early successional vegetation and a parcel of broadleaved woodland providing the main features of interest. The habitats present are largely common and widespread, supporting only low suitability for protected and notable species, with the exception of the woodland edge which may offer moderate value for birds, bats, and hedgehog. No evidence of legally protected species such as badger was recorded during the survey. Overall, the site is considered to be of low ecological value in a local context, with limited potential constraints to development, although precautionary measures and retention or enhancement of boundary vegetation and woodland would provide biodiversity benefits.

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7 APPENDIX

7.1. PRA PHOTOGRAPHS

Description	Photographs
Main warehouse building which is to be extended	

	
Outhouse	

7.2. SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

Description	Photographs
Building 1	 Four photographs of Building 1, a large industrial building with blue and white corrugated metal siding. The top row shows three views: a side view of the long building, a front view showing the entrance, and a view from a paved area. The bottom row shows a close-up of the building's exterior with a chimney.
Building 2	 Two photographs of Building 2, a small red brick building. The left photo shows the building from a side angle, and the right photo shows it from a front angle.
Building 3	 Two photographs of Building 3, a small red brick building. The left photo shows the building behind a fence, and the right photo shows it from a side angle with a large green pipe in the foreground.

Building 4		
ARTIFICIAL UNVEGETATED, UNSEALED SURFACE		
DEVELOPED LAND; SEALED SURFACE		

RUDERAL/EPHEMERAL	
MODIFIED GRASSLAND	

OTHER WOODLAND	BROADLEAVED			
BRAMBLE SCRUB				

INDIVIDUAL TREES	
INTRODUCED SHRUB	
HIMALAYAN BALSAM	

7.3. UK HABITAT MAP



