

Redwood Hub, Edgar Wood Academy, Heywood Old Road, Heywood OL10 2QN

ECOLOGICAL SURVEY AND ASSESSMENT

October 2025

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Document Control

Survey Type:	Surveyors	Survey Date(s)
Ecological appraisal surveys	Amy Sharples	19 th September 2025
Reporting	Personnel	Date
Author	Amy Sharples B.Sc. (Hons) M.Sc. ACIEEM Senior Ecologist	25 th September 2025
Signature(s)		
Checked	Rebecca Bayley B.Sc. (Hons)	26 th September 2025
Revised and issued	Amy Sharples	2 nd October 2025
Report issued to	LeaHough Chartered Surveyors	
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SUMMARY

Introduction and Scope

- i. This ecological survey and assessment presents the ecological, biodiversity and nature conservation status of the area associated with the Redwood Hub, Edgar Wood Academy, Heywood Old Road, Heywood OL10 2QN. The assessment was requested in connection with proposals to extend the existing school building and car park.
- ii. This report presents the results of a desktop study, data search and extended Phase 1 Habitat carried out in September 2025. The scope of survey undertaken is appropriate to identify potential ecological constraints, the remit of mitigation required and opportunities for biodiversity associated with the development proposals.
- iii. The site comprises hardstanding, areas of modified grassland with ornamental planting and the proposed building extension will key into the existing school building.

Results of Survey and Assessment

- iv. The proposals will have no adverse direct or indirect effect on statutory or non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation.
- v. In terms of each habitat's importance in a geographical context the modified grassland and hardstanding are not considered to hold any importance.
- vi. No habitats within the site are Priority Habitat or are an irreplaceable habitat.
- vii. The habitats are suitable for use by foraging and sheltering hedgehog, a Priority Species. Reasonable avoidance measures to ensure protection of wildlife during works are outlined at **Section 5.2**.
- viii. Appropriate survey effort and / or assessment, in accordance with standard guidance, has been carried out to reasonably discount adverse effects on other relevant protected species.

Recommendations

- ix. The recommendations in **Section 5.0** outline all the mandatory measures and additional actions to be applied to ensure compliance with wildlife legislation, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and best practice.
- x. The proposals will secure an opportunity to implement beneficial measures, with the aim of providing a net gain in biodiversity in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.

Conclusion

- xi. It is concluded that the proposals are feasible and acceptable in accordance with ecological considerations and relevant planning policy. Development at the site will provide an opportunity to secure ecological enhancement for wildlife associated with urban sites.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Rationale

- 1.1.1 ERAP (Consultant Ecologists) Ltd was commissioned by LeaHough Chartered Surveyors to carry out an ecological assessment of the area associated with the Redwood Hub, Edgar Wood Academy, Heywood Old Road, Heywood OL10 2QN (hereafter referred to as the 'site'). The Ordnance Survey (OS) grid reference at the centre of the site is SD 85227 07387. An aerial image of the site and its surrounding habitats is appended at **Figure 1** (source image: Google Earth Pro).
- 1.1.2 The assessment was requested to inform a planning application proposing the extension of the existing school building and car park.

1.2 Scope of Works

- 1.2.1 The scope of ecological works undertaken in September 2025 comprised:
- A desktop study and data search for known ecological information at the site and the local area;
 - An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and assessment, and assessment of the habitats present at the site using the UK Habitats Classification;
 - Assessment of the ecological value of the habitats within the site with the use of the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) and the Ratcliffe criteria, as presented in *A Nature Conservation Review* (Ratcliffe, 1977);
 - Survey and assessment of all habitats for relevant statutorily protected species¹ and other wildlife including badger (*Meles meles*), bird species and reptiles;
 - A daytime bat walkover survey for bats, which has comprised a preliminary roost assessment of the building and an assessment of the suitability of the habitats within the site and the surrounding area for foraging and commuting bats;
 - The identification of any potential ecological constraints on the proposals and the specification of the scope of mitigation and ecological enhancement required in accordance with wildlife legislation, planning policy guidance and other relevant guidance; and
 - The identification of any further surveys or precautionary actions that may be required to inform the progression of the site through the planning process or prior to the commencement of construction activities.

¹ In accordance with *Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and Their Impact on the Planning System* (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005) developers should not be required to undertake surveys for protected species unless there is reasonable likelihood of the species being present and affected by the development. In this instance (for example) there are no ponds within an unobstructed radius of 500 metres from the site, and no water bodies or water courses within or adjacent to the site; there has been no requirement to consider great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*), water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) or otter (*Lutra lutra*) as part of this assessment. No trees are present at the site so a ground level tree assessment is not required.

2.0 METHOD OF SURVEY

2.1 Desktop Study and Data Search

2.1.1 The following sources of information and ecological records were consulted:

- a. MAGiC Maps: A web-based interactive map which brings together geographic information on key environmental schemes and designations, including details of statutory nature conservation sites;
- b. Ancient Tree Inventory (Woodland Trust, 2025): An online database of ancient and veteran trees;
- c. Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy;
- d. Greater Manchester Local Record Centre (GMLRC); and
- e. Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

2.2 Vegetation and Habitats

- 2.2.1 An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the site was carried out by Amy Sharples B.Sc. (Hons) M.Sc. ACIEEM on 19th September 2025. The weather was overcast with a light breeze (Beaufort scale 2) and an air temperature of 16°C.
- 2.2.2 A habitat and vegetation map was produced for the site and the immediate surrounding area and is appended at **Figure 2**. The mapping is based on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee Phase 1 Habitat Survey methodology (JNCC, 2010) with minor adjustments to illustrate and examine the habitats with greater precision.
- 2.2.3 On site habitat mapping was assisted via use of GPS technology and QField on-site mapping software, using *BS.25-077-P-01 - Redwood Hub - Location Plan* (LeaHough Chartered Surveyors, 2025) as a base plan.
- 2.2.4 The plant species within the site boundary were determined with estimates of the distribution, ground cover, abundance and constancy of individual species. The estimation of abundance was based on the DAFOR system, where D = Dominant, A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional and R = Rare, this being a widely used and accepted system employed by ecological surveyors. The terms L = Locally and V = Very were additionally used to describe the plant species distributions with greater precision.
- 2.2.5 Stands of vegetation and habitats were described and evaluated using the National Vegetation Classification (NVC). The NVC provides a systematic and comprehensive analysis of British vegetation and is a reliable framework for nature conservation and land-use planning.
- 2.2.6 Habitats within the site were assessed in accordance with *The UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* (UKHab Ltd, 2023). The UK Habitat Classification, or 'UKHab' has been designed to function at two scales of minimum mappable unit (MMU): fine scale (25m² or 5 metres length) and large scale (400m² or 20 metres length). It has been considered for the purposes of this survey that the fine scale of 25m² or 5 metres length MMU is appropriate.
- 2.2.7 Searches were made for uncommon, rare and statutorily protected plant species, those species listed as protected in the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) and species which are indicators of important and uncommon plant communities. Plant nomenclature follows *New Flora of the British Isles 3rd Edition* (Stace, 2010).

- 2.2.8 Searches were carried out for the presence of invasive species, including those listed on Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended), including Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Indian Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*).

2.3 Animal Life

Badger

- 2.3.1 The survey area for badger covered the site (as annotated on **Figure 1** and **2**) and extended to accessible land within a radius of 50 metres from the site boundary. Private gardens / land beyond the site boundary were not accessed but were viewed from the boundaries.
- 2.3.2 The survey was conducted in accordance with guidance presented within *Badgers and Development* (Natural England, 2007) and *Badgers: advice for making planning decisions* (Natural England, 2022).
- 2.3.3 The following signs of badger activity were searched for:
- Sett entrances, e.g. entrances that are normally 25 to 35cm in diameter and shaped like a 'D' on its side;
 - Large spoil heaps outside sett entrances;
 - Bedding outside sett entrances;
 - Badger footprints;
 - Badger paths;
 - Latrines;
 - Badger hairs on fences or bushes;
 - Scratching posts; and
 - Signs of digging for food.
- 2.3.4 Habitats within and surrounding the site were assessed in terms of their suitability for use by foraging and sheltering badger in accordance with their known habitat preferences as detailed in current guidance and *Badger* (Roper, 2010).

Bat Species

Daytime Bat Walkover Survey

Preliminary Roost Assessment of the Building

- 2.3.5 The survey was carried out in accordance with standard methodology including the *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* (Mitchell-Jones, 2004), the *Bat Workers' Manual 3rd Edition* (Mitchell-Jones & Mcleish, 2004) and *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn)* (Collins, J. (ed), 2023).
- 2.3.6 An inspection of the external surfaces, walls and roof of the section of building to be keyed into by the extension was carried out to find potential bat roosting habitat or accesses into internal areas where roosts may be present. Searches for evidence of bat presence in the form of droppings, urine stains, feeding signs, grease marks and other evidence were also carried out.
- 2.3.7 A list of equipment used is detailed in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: Survey Equipment used during Daytime Bat Survey

LED Lenser P14 torch
8x20 binoculars

- 2.3.8 The suitability of the building has been assessed in accordance with Table 4.1 of *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn)* (Collins, J. (ed), 2023), taking into account any presence of gaps suitable for access by bats, features suitable for use by roosting bats within the building (including crevice dwelling species and species which can roost in the open in roof voids), and the suitability of the surrounding habitats for use by foraging and commuting bats. The suitability of the building has been informed by the following categories as presented in **Table 2.2**.

Table 2.2: Suitability Categories for Roosting Habitats in Buildings

Suitability	Description
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 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).
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 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. ^c Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten <i>et al.</i> , 2016 and Jansen <i>et al.</i> , 2022). Common pipistrelle swarming has been observed in the UK (Bell, 2022 and Tomlinson, 2020) and winter hibernation of numbers of this species has been detected at Seaton Delaval Hall in Northumberland (National Trust, 2018). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK, but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in prominent buildings in the landscape, urban or otherwise.	

Habitat Assessment for Commuting / Foraging Bats

- 2.3.9 Habitats within and adjacent to the site were assessed for their value and suitability for commuting and foraging bats in accordance with Table 4.1 of *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn)* (Collins, J. (ed), 2023). Reference has been made to the categories, descriptions and examples presented in **Table 2.3**.

Table 2.3: Consideration of Suitability of Foraging and Commuting Habitat for Bats

Suitability	Potential Flight Paths and Foraging Habitats
None	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 as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	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	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	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.
^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).	

Bird Species

- 2.3.10 Bird species observed and heard during the survey were recorded.
- 2.3.11 Habitats throughout the site and in the immediate surrounding area were assessed for their value to roosting, feeding and nesting birds, as indicated by the amount of shelter, feeding value, as indicated by the habitats present at the site and in the surrounding area.
- 2.3.12 The elevation of the building to be impacted by the extension was examined for evidence of current and previous use by nesting birds and was assessed for its suitability for use by nesting birds.

Reptile Species

- 2.3.13 The site and its surroundings were assessed in terms of their suitability for use by reptile species using the important characteristics for reptiles outlined in the draft document *Reptile Mitigation Guidelines* (Natural England, 2011), and the *Reptile Habitat Management Handbook* (Edgar, et al., 2010). These habitat characteristics are outlined in **Table 2.4**.

Table 2.4: Important Habitat Characteristics for Reptiles

1. Location (in relation to species range)	7. Connectivity to nearby good quality habitat
2. Vegetation Structure	8. Prey abundance
3. Insolation	9. Refuge opportunity
4. Aspect	10. Hibernation habitat potential
5. Topography	11. Disturbance regime
6. Surface geology	12. Egg-laying site potential

Other Wildlife

- 2.3.14 Evidence of other wildlife, including Priority Species, observed whilst on site, but for which specific surveys were not made, was recorded and has been included in this report where it is considered of relevance to the planning application.
- 2.3.15 Habitats have been assessed for their suitability for Priority Species identified in the data search results where this is considered relevant to the application.

2.4 Survey and Reporting Limitations

- 2.4.1 All areas of the site were fully accessible. No survey limitations were experienced.
- 2.4.2 All measurements within this report are approximate only, and have been either measured (using QField) or estimated whilst on site or calculated using mapping software (QGIS) or internet-based mapping services such as MAGiC Maps and Google Earth.

2.5 Evaluation Methods

- 2.5.1 The habitats, vegetation and animal life were evaluated with reference to standard nature conservation criteria as described in *A Nature Conservation Review* (Ratcliffe, 1977) and *Guidelines for the Selection of Biological SSSIs* (Bainbridge, et al., 2013). These are size (extent), diversity, naturalness, rarity, fragility, typicality, recorded history, position in an ecological or geographical unit, potential value and intrinsic appeal.
- 2.5.2 Habitats have been assessed to determine whether they meet those described in *UK Biodiversity Action Plan: Priority Habitat Descriptions* (Maddock, A (ed), 2008); these lists are used to help draw up the statutory lists of Priority Habitats, as required under Section 41 of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006*. Where suitable, the ecological value of the habitats present has been assessed using the terms outlined in *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine* (CIEEM, 2018). Each habitat and individual trees have been assessed to determine whether they are 'irreplaceable habitat', defined in *National Planning Policy Framework* (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2024)² as 'Habitats which would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. They include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, blanket bog, limestone pavement, sand dunes, salt marsh and lowland fen'. The further detail presented in *The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024* (GOV.UK, 2024) has also been referred to.

²Hereafter the NPPF

- 2.5.3 Government advice on wildlife, as set out in the NPPF and associated government circulars has been taken into consideration. Legislation relating to protected species, such as those listed under Schedules 1, 5, 6 and 8 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) and *The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*, is referenced where applicable, and any impacts to protected species are evaluated in accordance with current guidance.
- 2.5.4 The presence of any Priority Species, as listed under Section 41 of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006* is noted, and habitats are assessed in terms of their suitability and value for these species. The presence of habitats and / or species listed by the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plans has been taken into account in the evaluation of the site.

3.0 SURVEY RESULTS

3.1 Desktop Study and Data Search

Statutory Designated Sites for Nature Conservation and SSSI Impact Risk Zones

- 3.1.1 The site is not and does not form part of any statutory designated site for nature conservation.
- 3.1.2 The site lies within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone for the overlapping Rochdale Canal SSSI and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The Rochdale Canal SSSI and SAC are located 3.05 kilometres east of the site and are designated for the presence of Floating Water-plantain (*Luronium natans*).
- 3.1.3 The SSSI Impact Risk Zone requires the Local Planning Authority to consult with Natural England on likely risks from the following development categories (Natural England, 2025):

Infrastructure: Airports, helipads and other aviation proposals.

Air Pollution: Any industrial / agricultural development that could cause air pollution including industrial processes, livestock and poultry units with a floorspace greater than 500m², slurry lagoons greater than 750m² and manure stores greater than 3500 tonnes.

Combustion: General combustion processes greater than 50 megawatt energy input including energy from waste incineration, other incineration, landfill gas generation plant, pyrolysis / gasification, anaerobic digestion, sewage treatment works, other incineration / combustion.

Non-statutory Designated Sites for Nature Conservation

- 3.1.4 The site is not and does not form part of any non-statutory designated site for nature conservation, called 'Sites of Biological Importance' or 'SBI' in Greater Manchester.
- 3.1.5 SBI are located within a 2 kilometres radius from the centre of the site, and are summarised in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1: SBI Within a 2 Kilometres Radius from the Centre of the Site

SBI Name	Distance and Direction from the Site	Reasons for Designation
Streams and Flushes near Bradley Hall Farm	1.85 kilometres to the south	Grassland (Gr2)
Glade & Oaken Bank Woods	1.98 kilometres to the north-east	Ancient Woodland (Wd1) Ponds (Fw2)

3.1.6 The presence of the SBI is considered further at **Section 4.2**.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

3.1.7 There are no local nature measures identified by the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy Map.

Priority Habitats Inventory

3.1.8 The Priority Habitats Inventory³ was checked via MAGiC Maps. No Priority Habitats are identified at the site by the inventory.

Ancient Tree Inventory

3.1.9 No ancient or veteran trees are identified at the site by the inventory.

Protected and Notable Species

3.1.10 GMLRC holds no records of protected and notable species for the site.

3.1.11 Records of protected and notable species for a 2 kilometres radius from the centre of the site are summarised in **Table 3.2**.

Table 3.2: Records of Protected Species Within a 2 Kilometres Radius from the Centre of the Site

Taxon Group	Species Name and Designations ¹ and Notes
Amphibians	Great crested newt (<i>Triturus cristatus</i>): EPS, WCAs5, PS and GMBAP. 38 records, dated between 2004 and 2024. The closest record is 965 metres to the north-west of the site, and from 2009.
	Common toad (<i>Bufo bufo</i>): PS. 14 records, dated between 2011 and 2024. The closest record is 1060 metres to the west of the site, and from 2011.
Birds – WCAs1	Black redstart (<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>): WCAs1 and GMBAP. 1 record from 2004, located 1545 metres to the north-west of the site.
	Barn owl (<i>Tyto alba</i>): WCAs1. 37 records, dated between 2007 and 2023. The closest record is to the north-west of the site; an accurate estimation of distance of the record to the site cannot be made due to the locational data being less than a six figure grid reference
	Hobby (<i>Falco subbuteo</i>): WCAs1. 2 records, dated 2008 and 2015. The closest record is 1545 metres to the north-west of the site, and from 2015.
	Little ringed plover (<i>Charadrius dubius</i>): WCAs1. 10 records, dated between 2007 and 2017. The closest record is 1545 metres to the north-west of the site, and from 2007.

³ A spatial dataset that describes the geographic extent and location of Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) Section 41 habitats of principal importance.

Birds – PS only	Bullfinch (<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>), curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>), dunnoek (<i>Prunella modularis</i>), grasshopper warbler (<i>Locustella naevia</i>), grey partridge (<i>Perdix perdix</i>), herring gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>), house sparrow (<i>Passer domesticus</i>), lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>), lesser redpoll (<i>Carduelis cabaret</i>), linnet (<i>Linaria cannabina</i>), reed bunting (<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>), ring ouzel (<i>Turdus torquatus</i>), skylark (<i>Alauda arvensis</i>), song thrush (<i>Turdus philomelos</i>), spotted flycatcher (<i>Muscicapa striata</i>), starling (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>) and tree sparrow (<i>Passer montanus</i>).
Invertebrates – PS only	Cinnabar (<i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>), garden tiger (<i>Arctia caja</i>), latticed heath (<i>Chiasmia clathrata</i>), wall (<i>Lasiommata megera</i>) and white-letter hairstreak (<i>Satyrrium w-album</i>)
Terrestrial Mammals	Soprano pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>): EPS, WCAs5, PS and GMBAP. 4 records, dated between 2006 and 2019. The closest record is 1735 metres to the south-east of the site, and from 2011. Brown long-eared bat (<i>Plecotus auritus</i>): EPS, WCAs5, PS and GMBAP. 1 record from 2019, located 1875 metres to the north-east of the site. Noctule bat (<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>): EPS, WCAs5, PS and GMBAP. 3 records, all from 2019. The closest record is 1880 metres to the north-east of the site. Bat sp (<i>Chiroptera</i> sp.): EPS, WCAs5 and GMBAP. 3 records, dated between 2005 and 2017. The closest record is 355 metres to the east of the site, and from 2017. Common pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>): EPS, WCAs5 and GMBAP. 209 records, dated between 2001 and 2023. The closest record is 170 metres to the west of the site, and from 2020. Daubenton's bat (<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>): EPS, WCAs5 and GMBAP. 1 record from 2016, located 1790 metres to the south of the site. <i>Myotis</i> sp (<i>Myotis</i> sp.): EPS, WCAs5 and GMBAP. 1 record from 2006, located 1635 metres to the north-west of the site. Badger (<i>Meles meles</i>): PBA. 7 records, dated between 1997 and 2016. The closest record is more than 300 metres from the site, and from 1997. Brown hare (<i>Lepus europaeus</i>): PS and GMBAP. 6 records, dated between 2009 and 2021. The closest record is 1060 metres to the west of the site, and from 2009. Hedgehog (<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>): PS. 22 records, dated between 2010 and 2022. The closest record is 355 metres to the north of the site, and from 2015.
¹Key to Designation Codes: EPS = European Protected Species under The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. WCAs1 = Species receives full protection under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). WCAs5 = Species receives full protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). PBA = Protection of Badger Act 1992. PS = Priority Species listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. GMBAP = Species listed on the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan.	

3.1.12 The presence of these protected and notable species within the wider area has been taken into account throughout this report.

3.2 Vegetation and Habitats

General Description

3.2.1 The approximately 0.15 hectare site is located within the existing Edgar Wood Academy site and comprises hardstanding, areas of modified grassland with ornamental planting.

3.2.2 The site boundary lies within the wider Edgar Wood Academy site and the northern, southern and western site boundaries are not defined by physical features. The eastern site boundary is defined by the existing school building which the extension proposals will attach to.

3.2.3 The appended **Figure 2** can be referred to for all habitat descriptions. Photographs are appended in **Section 8.2**.

Hardstanding

3.2.4 The hardstanding (**Photos 1 and 2**) at the site is devoid of vegetation and is not characteristic of an NVC community.

3.2.5 The hardstanding is described by the UKHab as u1b6 other developed land with the secondary code 814 educational premises open space.

Modified Grassland with Ornamental Planting

3.2.6 An area of short mown modified grassland is located in the western area of the site (**Photos 3 and 4**), and two areas of short mown grassland with areas of ornamental planting are located within the area of hardstanding (**Photos 5 and 6**).

3.2.7 The modified grassland is characterised by constant and abundant Perennial Rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*) with locally abundant Daisy (*Bellis perennis*), Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Annual Meadow-grass (*Poa annua*), White Clover (*Ranunculus repens*) and Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* agg.). A plant species list is appended at **Table 8.1**.

3.2.8 The modified grassland is characteristic of an *MG7 Lolium perenne* ley grassland community of the NVC (Rodwell, 1992) and is described by the UKHab as g4 modified grassland with the secondary codes 108 frequently mown, 814 educational premises open space and 847 introduced shrub.

Invasive Plant Species

3.2.9 No Japanese Knotweed, or any other invasive plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended), is present at the site.

3.3 Animal Life

Badger

3.3.1 No evidence of badger was detected at the site or in the wider area. The presence of badger, and any adverse effects on this species as a result of the proposals, are reasonably discounted.

Bat Species

Daytime Survey: Building

3.3.2 No bat droppings were found around the surveyed section of the school building.

3.3.3 The elevation of the existing school building (**Photos 7 and 8**) is covered in large panels, with 15mm wide gaps surrounding each panel (**Photo 9**). A void of a depth of 50mm is present between the external panels and the internal wall of the building, closer inspection confirmed that the void is packed with dense insulation (**Photo 10**). Due to the presence of the dense insulation behind the panelling which currently

infills the void, the building is currently assessed to confirm to a suitability for use by roosting bats of 'negligible'.

- 3.3.4 No other potential roost features were found at the elevations of building to be affected by the extension; this section of the building has a flat roof.

Habitat Assessment for Commuting and Foraging Bats

- 3.3.5 The modified grassland within the site is unlikely to provide an abundance or diversity of invertebrate prey, and is therefore considered to be of 'low' suitability for use by foraging bats.
- 3.3.6 The hardstanding area of the site is assessed to be of 'negligible' suitability for use by foraging and commuting bats.

Bird Species

- 3.3.7 No birds detected in the site on 19th September 2025.
- 3.3.8 The vegetation at the site and the section of building to be extended are not suitable for use by nesting birds.

Reptiles

- 3.3.9 The site supports an even topography and there are no piles of garden waste or other suitable debris for use by sheltering or hibernating reptiles. The site supports no favourable habitat for basking reptiles. The habitats within the site are reasonably unlikely to support a large population or a variety of invertebrate prey.
- 3.3.10 The site is not adjacent or linked to any areas of favourable habitat for reptile species. The presence of reptiles within the site is reasonably discounted.

Other Wildlife

- 3.3.11 The site provides habitats suitable for use by foraging hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*), a Priority Species. The suitability of the site for hedgehog is considered further at **Section 4.4**.

4.0 EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

4.1 Introduction and Description of Proposals

- 4.1.1 In accordance with *BS.25-077-P-03 - Redwood Hub - Proposed Site Plan* (LeaHough Chartered Surveyors, 2025) it is proposed to extend the existing school building and car park over the area of modified grassland and hardstanding with ornamental planting.
- 4.1.2 **Section 4.2** provides an assessment of any impacts of the proposed development on the designated sites for nature conservation present in the wider area. The ecological value of habitats within the site is evaluated at **Section 4.3**, and protected and notable species are considered at **Section 4.4**.

4.2 Designated Sites for Nature Conservation

- 4.2.1 The site and adjacent land have no statutory or non-statutory designation for nature conservation.

4.2.2 The site has no terrestrial or hydrological connectivity to any designated sites for nature conservation, and does not support any habitat which would be complementary to the statutory designated sites present in the wider area.

4.2.3 It is considered that the site is sufficiently small and distant from the SBIs in the local area that the proposed development will have no adverse direct or indirect effect upon them or their features of interest.

4.3 Vegetation and Habitats

4.3.1 Only common and widespread plant species were found. None of the habitats present are representative of semi-natural habitat or are a Priority Habitat or an irreplaceable habitat. The NVC communities present are typical of the geographical area and conditions present.

4.3.2 In terms of each habitat's importance in a geographical context⁴ the modified grassland and hardstanding are not considered to hold any importance in a geographical context.

4.3.3 The proposals will remove the majority of vegetated habitats within the site. Recommendations for features to include within the site design to compensate for the loss of habitat associated with the proposals are presented at **Sections 5.2** and **5.5**.

4.4 Protected Species and Other Wildlife

4.4.1 Appropriate survey effort and / or assessment, in accordance with standard guidance, has been carried out to reasonably discount adverse effects on relevant protected species.

4.4.2 Measures to ensure protection of nesting birds are presented at **Sections 5.3**. Recommended enhancements for nesting birds are presented at **Section 5.4**.

4.4.3 The site also supports suitable habitat for hedgehog, a Priority Species. Measures for the protection of hedgehog and other wildlife during the works are presented at **Section 5.2**.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 These recommendations aim to ensure that the development is implemented in accordance with relevant wildlife legislation, Natural England guidance, the principles of the NPPF, local planning policy and best practice.

5.1.2 In accordance with Chapter 15, paragraph 193(d) of the NPPF:

⁴ Using the terms presented at Section 4.7 of *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine* (CIEEM, 2018), i.e. International and European, National, Regional, Local Authority-wide area, River Basin District, Estuarine system / Coastal cell or Local. The term 'site' value is additionally used to highlight ecological features considered to be of importance in the context of the wider site habitats, but which are of negligible value in the context of the local area.

'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'.

- 5.1.3 Where possible, opportunities to enhance the ecological interest and habitat connectivity and seek biodiversity gain through appropriate landscape planting and habitat creation have been identified.
- 5.1.4 All recommendations are appropriate to the geographical area, the habitats in the wider area, the wildlife present in the local area (and likely to use the site post-construction) and take into consideration the continued use of the site as a school.

5.2 Recommendations in Relation to Site Design and Protection of Wildlife

Consideration of Lighting

- 5.2.1 Paragraph 198(c) in Chapter 15 (conserving and enhancing the natural environment) of the NPPF states that development should:

'limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.'

- 5.2.2 The lighting scheme to be implemented at the developed site (both during the construction and operational phases) must involve the use of appropriate products and screening, where necessary, to ensure no excessive artificial lighting shines over the proposed areas of landscape planting, as lighting overspill may deter use by wildlife such as foraging bats.
- 5.2.3 The lighting scheme will be designed with reference to current guidance, namely:
 - a. *Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night* (Institution of Lighting Professionals & Bat Conservation Trust, 2023); and
 - b. *Bats and lighting: Overview of current evidence and mitigation guidance* (Stone, 2014).

Protection of Nesting Birds

- 5.2.4 All wild birds are protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) while they are breeding. Any works such as vegetation clearance that will affect habitats suitable for use by nesting birds are scheduled to commence outside the bird nesting season. Commencement of works in the nesting season must be informed by a pre-works nesting bird survey, carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist. The bird breeding season typically extends between March to August inclusive.
- 5.2.5 If breeding birds are detected the ecologist will issue guidance in relation to the protection of the nesting birds in conjunction with the scheduled works. This may involve cordoning off an area of the site until the young birds have fledged.

Reasonable Avoidance Measures Method Statement for Hedgehog and Other Wildlife

- 5.2.6 During the site preparation works and construction operations it is essential that the following best practice and Reasonable Avoidance Measures Method Statement (RAMMS) are applied for the protection of terrestrial mammals and other wildlife:
 - a. All site personnel must be made aware of this RAMMS and best practice guidance;

- b. During works all arising waste must be either removed from the area or placed in a skip to avoid the accumulation of materials that may create suitable habitat and shelter for terrestrial mammals;
- c. During construction, bricks etc. must ideally be stored on pallets or raised from the ground in another suitable manner in order that no suitable habitat for hedgehog is created;
- d. Trenches or holes must be fitted with a means of escape (such as ramped edge or a sloping plank of timber). This will ensure that any inquisitive animals do not become trapped;
- e. Deep trenches / excavations must not be left open overnight. Any open excavations (e.g. foundations/ footings/ service trenches etc) will be covered with plywood sheeting (or similar) at the end of each working day;
- f. Any pipes must be stored with caps on (to prevent animal entry);
- g. No fires must be lit at the site;
- h. The use of chemicals (such as fertilisers and herbicides) harmful to wildlife should be avoided wherever possible; and
- i. If a hedgehog is detected on site, it must be carefully picked up (using clean cloth or whilst wearing clean gloves), placed in a clean bucket and moved to an area of suitable habitat beyond the working area. ERAP (Consultant Ecologists) Ltd (01772 750502) can be contacted for further guidance if required.

5.3 Provision of Opportunities for Nesting Birds and Roosting Bats

Enhancing Habitats for Nesting Birds

- 5.3.1 The installation of one general nest box is recommended at the proposed new building. The box will not be positioned over windows or doorways where droppings may become a nuisance. RSPB advice states that boxes should ideally be sited facing north to east, to avoid exposure to direct sunlight, which may cause overheating of chicks in the nest.
- 5.3.2 Once the development layout has been finalised, an ecologist should advise on an appropriate position for the bird box. Such bird boxes are available from the NHBS (www.nhbs.com) or Wild Care (www.wildcare.co.uk). ERAP (Consultant Ecologists) Ltd will advise on the siting of bird boxes. An example of a suitable bird box is given below at **Insert 1**.



Insert 1: Schwegler 1MR Avianex Nest Box

5.4 Landscape Planting

- 5.4.1 It is recommended that the landscape planting within the site is composed from native species and species known to be of value for the attraction of wildlife.
- 5.4.2 It is recommended that trees which support blossom and fruit which will attract insects are incorporated into the landscape planting. Suitable species are presented in **Table 5.1**.

Table 5.1: Suitable Native Species for Tree and Shrub Planting

Scientific Name	Common Name	Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field Maple	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel	<i>Rosa arvensis</i>	Field Rose
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	<i>Rosa canina</i>	Dog-rose
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder
<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	Crab Apple	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	Rowan
<i>Prunus avium</i>	Wild Cherry	<i>Ulmus glabra</i>	Wych Elm
<i>Prunus padus</i>	Bird Cherry	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	Guelder Rose

- 5.4.3 The understorey and ground cover planting design should be prepared to optimise the attraction of invertebrates such as feeding bumblebees and butterflies. Where possible the use of native species should be maximised but where necessary non-native species known to be attractive to invertebrates should be used.
- 5.4.4 Planting schemes that include flowering species such as *Viburnum*, *Ceanothus*, *Hebe*, *Lavandula*, *Lonicera*, *Potentilla*, *Rosmarinus* and *Vinca* can maximise opportunities for feeding invertebrates and for the attraction of foraging bats and birds.
- 5.4.5 For further plants suitable for the attraction of pollinators please refer to the *Perfect for Pollinators Plant List* (Royal Horticultural Society, 2012). It is recommended that the selection of plant species at the site ensures that a variety of flowering species are available throughout the year.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This ecological appraisal has demonstrated that the proposed extension of the existing school building and car park is feasible and acceptable in accordance with ecological considerations and the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 6.2 Development at the site will provide an opportunity to secure ecological enhancement for fauna typically associated with the local area such as breeding birds.
- 6.3 It is concluded that the proposals are feasible and acceptable in accordance with ecological considerations and relevant planning policy. Development at the site will provide an opportunity to secure ecological enhancement for wildlife associated with urban sites.

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8.0 APPENDIX 1: TABLES AND FIGURES

8.1 Plant Species Lists

Table 8.1: Plant Species List for the Modified Grassland

Scientific Name	Common Name	DAFOR ¹	Cover
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy	LA	5%
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle	LF	<1%
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear Thistle	LF	<1%
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	LF	<1%
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Red Fescue	LF	<1%
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog	LA	10%
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Rye-grass	A*	55%
<i>Plantago major</i>	Greater Plantain	LF	<1%
<i>Poa annua</i>	Annual Meadow-grass	LA	5%
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup	LA	10%
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock	LF	<1%
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	Common Ragwort	LF	<1%
<i>Senecio squalidus</i>	Oxford Ragwort	LF	<1%
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.	Dandelion	LA	5%
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover	LA	10%

¹**Key to DAFOR:** D=Dominant, A=Abundant, F=Frequent, O=Occasional, R=Rare, V=Very, L=Local and *denotes a constant species

8.2 Photographs

Table 8.2: Photographs



Photo 1: Hardstanding with modified grassland and existing school building



Photo 2: Hardstanding



Photo 3: Modified grassland



Photo 4: Modified grassland



Photo 5: Modified grassland with ornamental planting within area of hardstanding



Photo 6: Modified grassland with ornamental planting within area of hardstanding



Photo 7: Existing school building



Photo 8: Existing school building



Photo 9: Gap between panels at existing school building



Photo 10: Gap between panels at existing school building with dense insulation behind

8.3 Figures

Figure 1: Aerial Image of the Site and its Surroundings

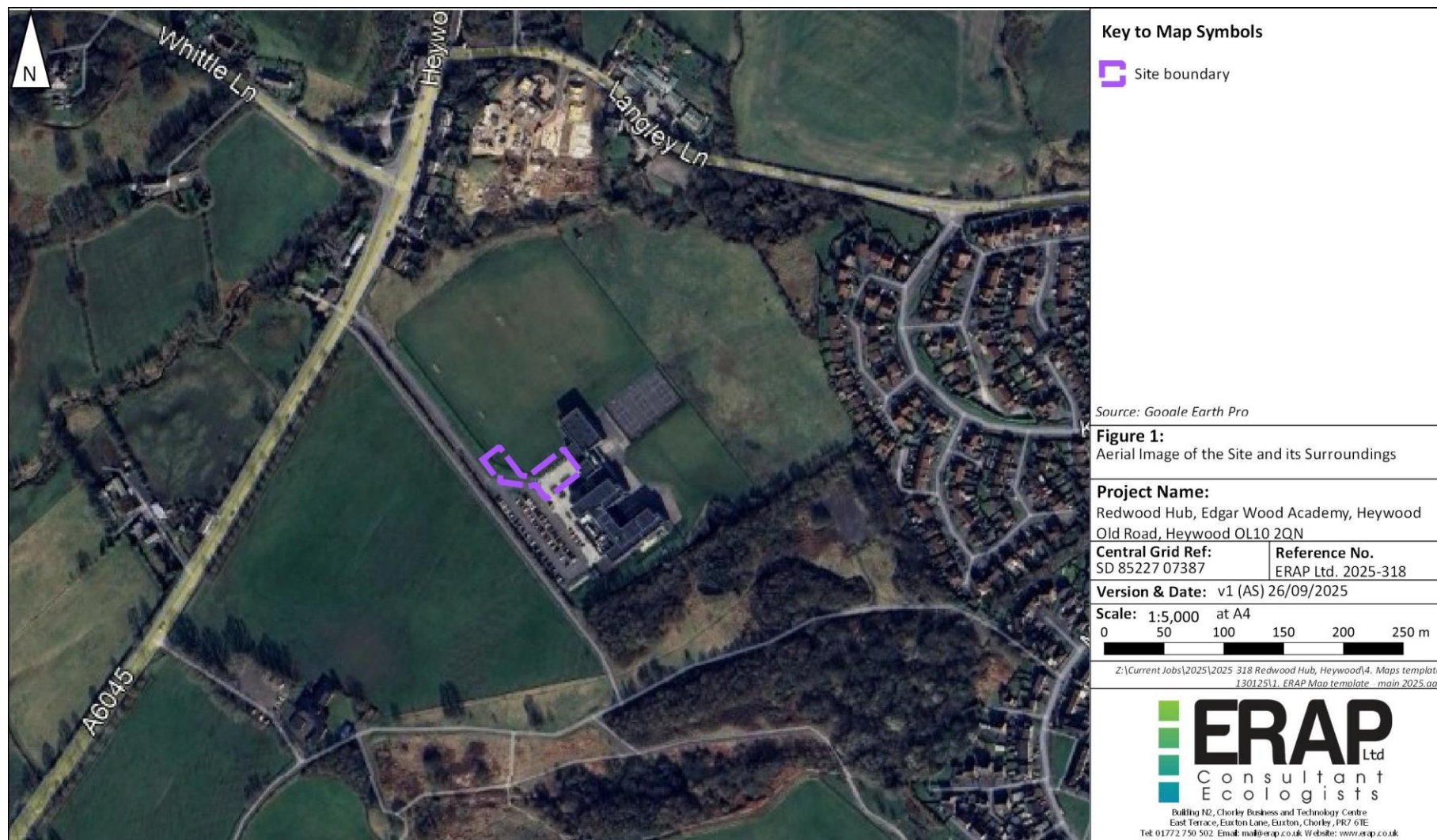


Figure 2: Phase 1 Habitat and Vegetation Map

