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PHASE ONE ECOLOGY REPORT
PROPOSED FABRICATION WORKSHOP EXTENSION
SALT SEPARATION SERVICES LTD
CANAL STREET WORKS, ROCHDALE

Site: Rochdale Canal

Date: 8th January 2024

1. Introduction

This Phase One Ecology Report aims to assess the ecological value of the Rochdale Canal and its surrounding environment close to Salt Separations Ltd as they're proposing to build an extension which is sited approx. 40m away from the canal edge. The Rochdale Canal is a historic waterway in the Northwest of England, the location of the study was along a 90m length of the canal adjacent to the industrial site owned by Salt Separations. This report follows standard ecological assessment methodologies to identify and evaluate the habitats and species present within the study area.

2. Site Description

The Rochdale Canal generally runs through a diverse landscape, encompassing urban, suburban, and rural areas, within the area of study the landscape was of an urban nature with derelict sites, housing and workshop / industrial buildings. The canal is flanked by a mixture of land uses, including residential, commercial, and industrial zones. The towpath and immediate surroundings vary in vegetation types, from built-up urban areas to semi-natural habitats, however along the study length there is little vegetation and natural habitat merit.

3. Methodology

The assessment was conducted in accordance with industry-standard Phase One survey techniques, incorporating both desk-based and field assessments. The field survey involved a systematic walkover of the entire length of the canal (100 – 150m), documenting key ecological features and potential habitats. The following factors were considered:

- a. Topography and Geology.
- b. Hydrology and Water Quality.
- c. Vegetation and Habitats.
- d. Fauna (Birds, Mammals, Amphibians, Reptiles, Fish, Invertebrates).
- e. Cultural and Historical Features.

4. Findings

- a. Topography and Geology: The canal follows a generally flat topography and is embedded within a range of geological substrates. There are no significant geological concerns identified during the survey.
- b. Hydrology and Water Quality: The canal water quality appears to be within acceptable parameters for aquatic life. Regular monitoring is recommended to ensure ongoing water quality, however this will not be at risk from the development or the ongoing use of the new extended part of the existing building so there is little / no risk to water quality.
- c. Vegetation and Habitats: The canal supports a variety of habitats, including marginal vegetation (albeit limited and quite poor quality in this location), sprinkling of aquatic plants, and riparian zones, indicating quite low ecological value. The opposite bank had a line of dense low quality trees with no significant species, albeit good for birds to rest, nest and habitat, some nests were noted but given they are on the opposite side of the canal some 50m away from the development, this did not pose any cause for concern. Immediately beyond the bank of trees is a residential development and a derelict / redundant mill site.
- d. Fauna: The canal and its surroundings provide habitat for a range of fauna. Bird species such as House Sparrow, Pidgeon and Robin, however it is low season and most bird activity is quite low key this time of year. Given the lack of environment appealing to birds nesting and cavities to nestle it is noted that the bird species habituating the location is low even through spring and summer, passing and resting birds would be the common inhabitants. Fish species like, pike, perch and bream are the most likely inhabitants of the canal in this location, however none were noted on the walkover study, a small rod and probe was placed in the water with a soft float and bait (no hooks) it wasn't noted on 3 occasions within a two hour period that the float dipped indicating the presence of fish in the canal; no invertebrates were observed. The lack of any protected species indicates extremely low risk and no ecological significance.

- e. Cultural and Historical Features: The canal has historical and cultural importance, however the location / immediate area that this study took place does not pose any significant or cultural historic features.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the Phase One Ecology Report for the Rochdale Canal along the 100m length adjacent to the application site and some 40m from the proposed extension location, the following recommendations are proposed:

- a. Regular monitoring of water quality during the construction phase to ensure the ongoing health of aquatic ecosystems.
- e. Further surveys, if required, during the construction phase to assess the presence of any protected or priority species.

6. Conclusion

The Rochdale Canal generally demonstrates moderate to high ecological value, however, along the study location this ecological value is low, and the development does not pose any potential harm or risk. Generally, the canal in more rural areas supports a diverse range of habitats and species, however the habitats and species in along the study site was insignificant. It is noted though to be prudent and exercise careful consideration of ecological factors during the construction phase as this could be crucial for the sustainable management and future development of the canal and its surroundings.