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ECOLOGY

**ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT &
BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**LAND ADJACENT TO 70 KIRKWAY, MIDDLETON,
GREATER MANCHESTER**

APRIL 2024

**Commissioned By NW Extensions Ltd.
on behalf of
Mr. P. Henstock**

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1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Eyebright Ecology Ltd. was commissioned by NW Extensions Ltd. on behalf of Mr.P.Henstock to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) including Biodiversity Impact Assessment of Land adjacent to 70 Kirkway, Middleton, Manchester, M24 1EL (Approximate OS Grid Reference: SD872053), hereafter referred to as 'the Site'.

A planning application is proposed for construction of two new dwellings on the Site which currently includes grassland, scrub, trees and hedgerows.

A UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) survey and preliminary bat roost assessment of trees was undertaken on 26 September 2023 by Eleanor Weir, an experienced and licensed ecologist who has worked as a professional ecological consultant for 21 years, and who is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

Table 1 below is a brief summary of findings and recommendations.

Species / Habitat	Recommendations for Mitigation, Compensation & Enhancement	Timing
Bats	Majority of trees had negligible roosting potential. Tree 1 was an ash tree in the entrance to the Site with dense ivy cover which could support individual bats on an irregular basis (PRF-I). No further bat survey of Tree 1 required but recommend the careful removal of ivy by hand under supervision of a licensed ecologist, prior to felling. Enhancement for the Site will be 1 x tree bat box (Schwegler 2F or similar) installed on a retained sycamore tree, facing south.	Prior to felling During construction
Hedgehog	Check for hedgehogs in grass and under scrub and hedges, prior to vegetation removal. If vegetation too dense to see, reduce to 30cm then check for hedgehogs. During construction, ensure any piping is capped if stored at ground level. Ensure any temporary excavations are covered overnight, or have a ramp for hedgehogs and other wildlife to escape. Garden fences to have hedgehog access holes cut into them	During construction

Birds	Vegetation may be used by nesting birds between mid Feb and August inclusive. Works should ideally commence outside of the nesting period; if not, a check for any 'active' nests will be made within 24 hrs prior to works commencing. If active nests are found, they must be left until fledglings leave the nest. The Site will be enhanced for nesting birds with the following: A total of 4 swift bricks (S Brick or similar) - 2 built into the end gables of each plot, suitable for swifts, house sparrows etc. 4 tree bird boxes (2 x 32mm Vivara Pro Seville or Schwegler 1B, 2 x Vivara Pro Barcelona open box or Shwegler 2H Robin box) installed by ecologist out of reach of cats etc.	Vegetation removal between Sep and mid-February or be subject to a nesting bird check by an ecologist.
Invasive Schedule 9 plants	Small amount of Himalayan balsam and variegated yellow archangel present. Pull out by hand and remove to a licensed waste disposal, or have a professional contractor spot treat with herbicide prior to construction. Ensure these plants do not spread outside of the Site.	Prior to construction
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	BNG calculations found the proposals will lead to a net loss of 0.6241 units (-96.83%) for area habitats and a net loss 0.0130 units (-9.56%) for linear habitats. Unfortunately the small size of the Site does not allow for habitat creation or enhancement within the scheme, and off-site options will need to be explored to off-set the loss of biodiversity that would arise from the proposals.	Prior to construction

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background & Objectives

Eyebright Ecology Ltd. was commissioned by NW Extensions Ltd. on behalf of Mr.P.Henstock to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) including Biodiversity Impact Assessment of Land adjacent to 70 Kirkway, Middleton, Manchester, M24 1EL (Approximate OS Grid Reference: SD872053), hereafter referred to as 'the Site'.

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The objective of this Ecological Impact Assessment is to:

- Describe the existing ecological baseline and to evaluate as far as possible, any potentially significant impacts associated with the proposed development;
- Detail any mitigation required to ensure the works comply with the relevant legislation and to address any potentially significant ecological effects;
- Provide an assessment of any residual effects (after mitigation has been applied) and to identify any appropriate compensation and enhancement measures or post-construction monitoring that may be necessary.
- Undertake a Biodiversity Impact Assessment to quantify the biodiversity changes expected as a result of the proposals;
- Make recommendations to minimise biodiversity loss and to achieve a 10% net gain where possible.

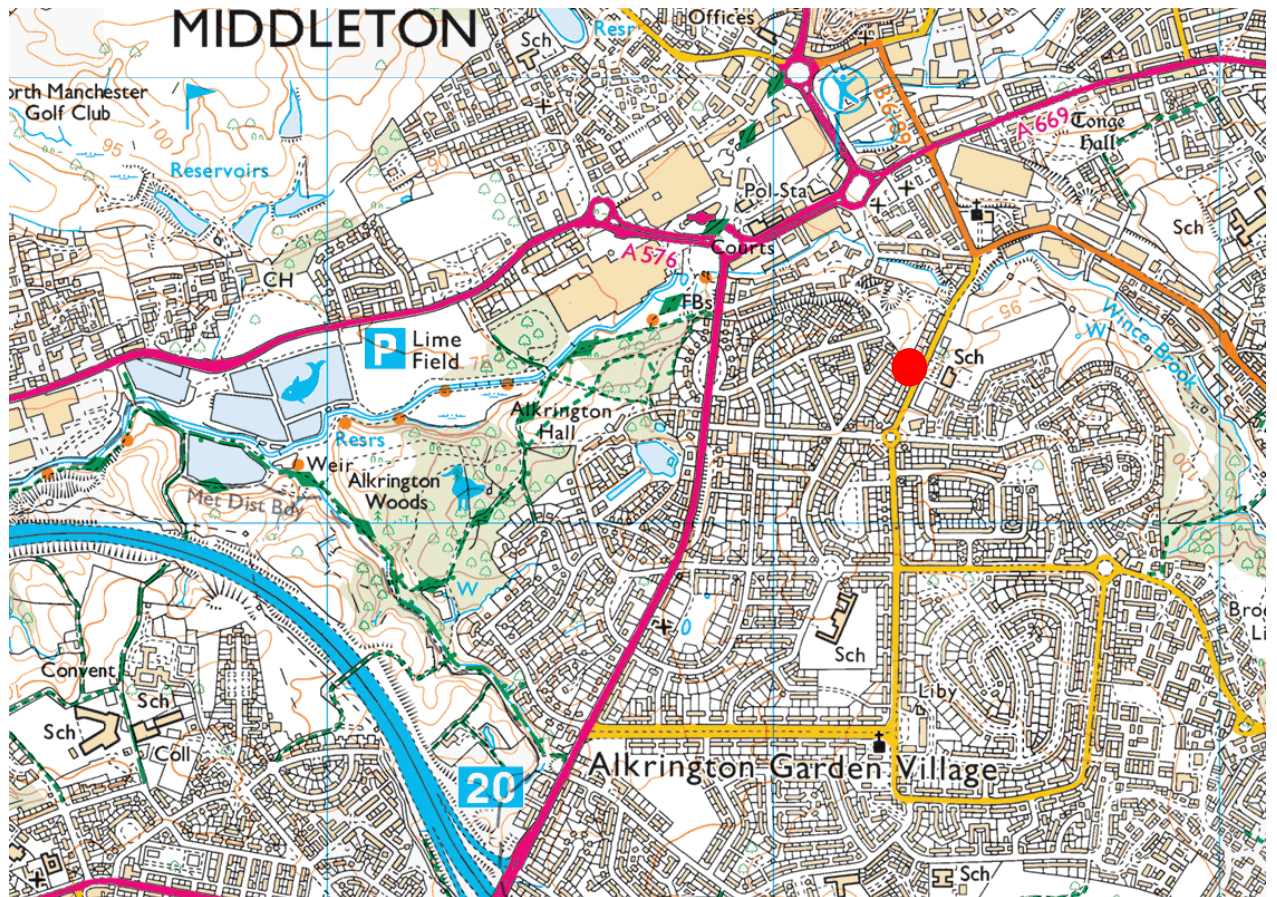
Unless the client indicates in writing to the contrary, information on the species found to be present on the site will be passed to the county biological records centre to update records held for the area.

2.2 Site Character and Location

The site comprised a small triangle of land which had not been recently managed, and included scattered and dense scrub, trees, hedgerows and grassland. The site was surrounded by residential properties and adjacent to Kirkway, a well used road running north to Middleton, a town which lies around 8 km north of Manchester.

A site location map is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Site location map (OS Licence AC0000826185)



3. RELEVANT LEGISLATION & PLANNING POLICY

The following descriptions provide a basic overview of relevant legislation and planning policy. Full details are available on the relevant government websites.

Protected Species and Habitats Legislation

3.1 Habitat Regulations

The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 make it an offence to deliberately capture, kill or disturb any wild animal listed in Schedule 2. It is also an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal, even if the animal is not present at the time. In UK, European Protected Species that may be relevant to this site include:

- All species of bats
- Great crested newt

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) sites are also designated under the Habitats Directive, due to the presence of habitats and/or species which are important for conservation at a European level.

3.2 Wildlife & Countryside Act

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006, consolidates and amends existing national legislation to implement the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Birds Directive), making it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or their eggs or nests (with certain exceptions) and disturb any bird species listed under Schedule 1 to the Act, or its dependent young while it is nesting;
- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild animal listed under Schedule 5 to the Act; intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct any place used for shelter or protection by any wild animal listed under Schedule 5 to the Act; intentionally or recklessly disturb certain Schedule 5 animal species while they occupy a place used for shelter or protection;
- Pick or uproot any wild plant listed under Schedule 8 of the Act.
- Plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild any invasive plant listed under Schedule 9 of the Act.

Species which are listed under Schedule 5 include common reptiles (adder, grass snake, slow worm and common lizard) which are protected against killing or injuring and bats and great crested newts which have full protection.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are also designated under this Act.

3.3 Protection of Badgers Act

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 makes it illegal to kill, injure or take a badger or to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a badger sett. Sett interference includes disturbing badgers whilst they are occupying a sett or obstructing access to it.

3.4 Hedgerow Regulations

The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 (as amended) makes it illegal to remove or destroy 'important' hedgerows without Local Planning Authority permission (either through planning or a Hedgerow Removal Notice). Hedgerows that are at least 20 metres long, more than 30 years old and contain certain botanical species need to be assessed for 'importance' using a number of criteria set out in the Regulations.

3.5 Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act

The NERC Act 2006 places a duty on authorities to have due regard for biodiversity and nature conservation during the course of their operations. This legislation includes a list of Species and Habitats of Principal Importance (SPI / HPI) which must be considered as part of the planning process.

3.6 Environment Act 2021

Under the Environment Act 2021, all planning permissions granted in England (with a few exemptions) have to deliver at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), which has recently become a statutory requirement. BNG will be measured using DEFRA's statutory biodiversity metric, and habitats will need to be secured for at least 30 years. The Act also sets out:

- a strengthened legal duty for public bodies to conserve and enhance biodiversity,
- new biodiversity reporting requirements for local authorities, and
- mandatory spatial strategies for nature: Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS).

3.7 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF 2012 sets out current government policy on biodiversity and nature conservation. Planners are required to set criteria-based policies against which proposals for development which may affect legally protected species will be judged. The NPPF promotes sustainable development by ensuring that developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity with emphasis on maintaining ecological networks at a landscape level.

3.8 Local Planning Policy

The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document (August 2021) is the Local Plan covering Greater Manchester. Biodiversity and Geodiversity is considered with the Plan under Policy J-P-G 9, which states:

Policy J-P-G 9: A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Across the plan as a whole, a net enhancement of biodiversity resources will be sought, including by:

1. Increasing the quality, quantity, extent and diversity of habitats, particularly priority habitats identified in national or local biodiversity action plans and those that support priority species;
2. Improving connections between habitats, to protect and enhance the provision of corridors, ecological networks (including Nature Recovery Networks) and stepping stones that enable the movement of species, especially as the climate changes;
3. Enhancing the management of existing habitats, including through habitat restoration, avoiding habitat fragmentation and combating invasive species;
4. Protecting sites designated for their nature conservation and/or geological importance, with the highest level of protection given to international and then national designations in accordance with legislation and national policy;
5. Facilitating greater access to nature, particularly within urban areas;
6. Supporting the development and implementation of the Great Manchester Wetlands Nature Recovery Network; and
7. Safeguarding, restoring and sustainably managing our most valuable soil resources, tackling soil degradation/erosion and recovering soil fertility, particularly to ensure protection of peat-based soils and safeguard 'best and most versatile' agricultural land.

Development will be expected to:

- a. Follow the mitigation hierarchy of:
 - i. Avoiding harm to biodiversity, particularly where it is irreplaceable, and including consideration of alternative sites where appropriate, then
 - ii. Mitigating (within the local area) any harm to biodiversity, then
 - iii. Compensating (within the local area) for any remaining harm to biodiversity
- b. Avoid fragmenting or severing connectivity between habitats;
- c. Achieve a net gain in biodiversity
- d. Make appropriate provision for long-term management of habitats and geological features connected to the development; and
- e. Provide robust evidence in accordance with relevant government and other guidance, including field surveys wherever development of 'best and most versatile' agricultural land is proposed or to establish the status of the land within the Agricultural Land Classification system.

Whilst off-site habitat enhancement and creation required as part of the mitigation hierarchy (or to achieve a measurable net gain in biodiversity of no less than 10%) should be local to the site, regard should be had to supporting strategic biodiversity priorities and initiatives.

3.9 Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)

The Greater Manchester BAP lists a number of Priority Habitats and Species which are of conservation priority in the Greater Manchester Area. The following are priority species which could occur on site or in the surrounding area:

- Bats

The Priority Habitats and Species for Greater Manchester can be viewed at the following link:
https://gmlrc.org/projects/gm_bap/

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Desk Study

Statutory international designated sites within 5km, and nationally and locally designated sites within 2km of the site were identified using Natural England's MAGIC website (<http://www.magic.gov.uk/>).

A request was made to Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) for records of protected species and non-statutory sites within 1km of the site.

The MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk) website was searched for records of European Protected Species licences for bats and great crested newts within 2km of the Site, as well as great crested newt class licence returns and eDNA pond surveys 2017 - 2019 for the district licensing scheme.

Ordnance survey maps (1:25,000) and aerial images of the Site (www.streetmap.co.uk and www.maps.google.co.uk) were examined online.

4.2 Field Survey - Habitats

A UK Habitat Classification Survey (UKHab) was undertaken following criteria set out in UKHab 2.0. The habitat types within the Site were identified and mapped, and evidence or potential for protected species was noted.

The UKHab survey was undertaken on 26 September 2023.

4.3 Field Survey – Protected and Notable Species

During the walkover, the Site was inspected for any field signs of protected species or species of conservation concern. In addition, the habitats on, and immediately adjacent to the Site were assessed for their potential to support such species. Invasive fauna and flora species were also noted and mapped.

The following sections give more details for each species that potentially occurs on or adjacent to the Site.

4.4 Bats

Preliminary Roost Assessment

An assessment of trees for bat roosting potential was undertaken on 26 September 2023.

Each tree was assessed for Potential Roosting Features (PRF's) and categorised following the criteria in Table 2 below, which is taken from current Good Practice Survey Guidelines (Collins, 2023). PRFs include crevices which have arisen through disease and decay, damage or association – including knot holes, rot holes, woodpecker holes, cracks and splits, lifting bark and ivy.

Table 2: Assessment of Roosting Potential

Potential Suitability for Roosting Bats	Description
NONE	No PRF's in the tree or highly unlikely to be.
FAR	Further assessment required to establish if PRF's are present in the tree.
PRF	A tree with at least one PRF present.

For any trees with confirmed PRFs, a further assessment was made from the ground using binoculars and a powerful torch. Other factors such as clutter, surrounding habitat, lighting, height allowed an informed assessment of potential for the features to support individual bats or multiple bats such as a maternity roost. The PRFs were categorised using the criteria set out in Table 3 below (which is taken from current Good Practice Survey Guidelines (Collins, 2023).

Table 3: Assessment of Roosting Potential

Potential Suitability for Roosting Bats	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 as a maternity colony.

An assessment of the Site habitats for foraging and commuting bats was also made.

4.5 Badgers

During the walkover, a search for evidence of badgers *Meles meles* was undertaken on Site and within 30m of the boundary where access was possible, which included setts, well-worn pathways, latrines, foraging signs (e.g. snuffle holes), 'day nests' (an above-ground nest which a badger may use to rest in), and badger hairs.

Any setts found were closely inspected for signs of badger activity (e.g. hairs in entrance) or other mammal presence, and depending on the entrance number and location, were categorised as; Main Sett, Subsidiary Sett, Annexe Sett or Outlier Sett. Sett entrances and tunnel directions were

recorded and mapped, with an assessment of current activity (Well Used, Partially Used or Disused). Information regarding any badger setts will be provided in a separate confidential report.

4.6 Other Mammal Species of Conservation Concern

Field signs and/or incidental sightings were recorded of notable species, Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species and Species of Principal Importance (SPI) under the NERC Act (2006). For this Site, the most likely species to occur in the urban habitat was hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*. Habitats were also assessed for their potential to support such species.

4.7 Birds

During the walkover, any birds observed or heard on Site were recorded. Any evidence of nesting birds (both active and inactive nests) was also noted. The habitats on Site were assessed for nesting and foraging birds, in particular for species of conservation concern (e.g. Red List) or with additional protection whilst nesting (Schedule 1).

4.8 Reptiles

During the walkover, any potential reptile habitat or features were recorded. These include tussocky, unimproved, marshy or rough grassland, south-facing slopes and hedgebanks, heathland and wetlands, open mosaic habitats, log and brash piles and rubble piles. Any sightings of reptiles or signs of reptiles such as sloughed skin, were recorded as target notes and mapped.

4.9 Amphibians

During the desk study, a check for waterbodies within 250 metres of the Site was undertaken using Ordnance Survey and aerial maps.

Terrestrial habitats within the Site, were assessed for their suitability for foraging, commuting and sheltering amphibians. Amphibians require habitats such as grassland, scrub, woodland and hedgerows for dispersal and hibernation. Hibernation features are generally underground or well protected from frost, and include buried rubble and logs, crevices around tree roots and mammal burrows.

4.10 Invasive Species

During the walkover, a search was made for any species listed in Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, such as Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica* and Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*. Where present, the locations were mapped and photographed.

4.11 Ecological Assessment

The importance of the ecological features identified was evaluated using criteria for habitats and species building on CIEEM guidelines (2016). A geographical scale of ecological importance was

applied to each feature, from 'Site' (low) to 'International' (high) (see Appendix 4). In addition, features with no intrinsic ecological value were classed as 'Negligible'.

An assessment of the ecological effects of the development was then undertaken. Effects identified at 'Site' level and below were not considered 'Significant'.

The effect timescale was given as:

- Short-term: 0-3 years.
- Medium term 3-10 years.
- Long term: 10 years +.

Mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures for the construction and post-construction phases of the development were identified.

Effects that were predicted to occur after mitigation were also assessed using the above method.

4.12 Biodiversity Impact Assessment

A Biodiversity Impact Assessment was undertaken to assess the likely impacts of the proposed development on biodiversity, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (MHCLG, 2019).

The objectives of this Biodiversity Impact Assessment were to:

1. Calculate the baseline biodiversity units on Site prior to development and the resulting units post-development to quantify the likely net change in biodiversity;
2. Apply the mitigation hierarchy to determine the scope to avoid or mitigate impacts and/or losses;
3. Quantify the residual impact and identify whether any additional biodiversity units are required as compensation;
4. Identify and assess mechanisms for how compensation could be delivered on Site.

Due to the small size of the Site (less than 0.1ha), the Biodiversity Impact Assessment applied the latest Natural England Small Sites Metric, which uses habitat features as a proxy measure for wider biodiversity but does not explicitly address impacts on protected and notable species. The measures proposed to mitigate for biodiversity are in addition to any recommendations to mitigate for protected species.

UKHab Survey

The habitat survey was undertaken on 26 September 2023, mapping the habitat extents and recording botanical species. The habitats were characterised according to UKHab Version 2.0 (July 2023).

Habitat condition assessment

Unlike the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, the Small Sites Metric does not require habitat condition to be assessed, as it uses a simplified method for assigning an assumed condition to different habitats.

Small Sites Metric (Statutory)

The Statutory Small Sites Metric, which was published by Natural England in February 2024, is a simplified version of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric and can be used for sites of 1ha or less where there are no more than 9 houses being built and there are no Priority Habitats or protected sites present, and no European Protected Species present. It provides a means of measuring and accounting for biodiversity losses and gain resulting from development or changes in land management.

The metric considers area-based habitats and linear habitats (hedgerow and lines of trees) separately and the biodiversity unit scores for these categories are not interchangeable; linear habitats cannot be used to provide compensation for area-based habitat losses and vice-versa.

The baseline biodiversity unit score takes into account all habitats on site and is influenced by habitat distinctiveness, condition and extent as well as strategic significance in relation to local strategies.

The biodiversity unit value of the habitats present post-development takes into account whether these habitats were retained, enhanced or newly created due to the development. The value of these habitats is further modified by risk factors such as temporal risk (time taken for compensation to reach the required quality) and difficulty of creation and restoration, which provides a measure of the uncertainty of management techniques used to enhance or create habitat. The Small Sites Metric cannot be used for calculating off-site losses and gains.

The mitigation hierarchy

The mitigation hierarchy is a sequential order of mitigation actions employed to limit the negative impacts of development projects on biodiversity through the following measures (CIEEM 2016; Baker, J. *et al.*, 2019):

- Avoidance
- Minimisation
- Compensation

The guiding principle of the mitigation hierarchy is to explore all possibilities to avoid impacts on biodiversity; where these are unavoidable, to minimise impacts on biodiversity; compensation for unavoidable losses should only be employed as a final resort. If compensating for losses cannot be achieved within the development footprint or is not the most effective means of generating the most benefits for nature conservation, then biodiversity losses should be offset through gains elsewhere.

The Small Sites Metric with calculations (Excel spreadsheet) will be submitted alongside this report.

4.13 Personnel

The survey was undertaken by Eleanor Weir, an experienced ecologist who has worked as a professional ecological consultant for 21 years. Eleanor holds a current Natural England bat licence (Level 2: 2015-12689-CLS-CLS), great crested newt class licence (Level 1: 2020-44458-CLS-CLS), dormouse licence (2016-20824-CLS-CLS) and barn owl licence (CL29-00162) and is a full member of CIEEM.

4.14 Constraints

Amphibians

A detailed search of OS, aerial and site maps was made to locate any obvious waterbodies within 250m of the Site. However, small garden ponds, ephemeral pools or newly created ponds are often missing or obscured on maps, and it therefore cannot be guaranteed that all existing waterbodies within the search area have been located during the desk study and survey.

General

Fauna species present may not always leave field signs and in addition, species may take up residence on Site subsequent to the survey. If no development takes place within 18 months of this survey report, the findings should be reviewed and may need updating, and a full survey should be repeated within three years.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Designated Sites for Nature Conservation

Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation (SAC) was the only international level designated site within 5km. This SAC was located 1.58km to the east of the Site and is designated for a significant population of floating water-plantain *Luronium natans*, an Annex II species.

Rochdale Canal is also designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the only national level designated site within 2km. The canal supports a diverse assemblage of aquatic flora, in particular floating pond-weed *Potamogeton* species, along with the significant population of floating water-plantain, a rich invertebrate diversity, coarse fishes and a range of birds.

There was one local designated site within 2km; this was Alkington Woods Local Nature Reserve (LNR), located 540m to the west. This LNR includes mature woodland, species-rich grassland with meadow and wetland species, a river and fishing lakes.

There was one local non-statutory site within 1km; Alkington Woods and Rhodes Lodges Site of Biological Interest (SBI). The SBI was located 540m to the west of the Site, and included lowland broadleaved woodland, ponds and fishing lodges (lakes) with associated flora and fauna.

5.2 Habitats

Site overview

The Site comprised a small triangle of land which had been unmanaged for some time, but may have originally been part of a garden, indicated by the presence of typical garden shrubs and hedgerows. There was a small amount of species-poor grassland with scattered saplings and scrub, patches of dense bramble and introduced shrubs. There were several mature trees around the edges and boundary hedgerows which were mainly non-native but a short section of native hedge was present. The entrance to the Site including an area of hardstanding.

The habitats and numbered buildings are mapped on Figure 2 (Appendix 1). Appendix 2 shows photographs of the habitats and features.

Modified Grassland (g4)

The grassland on Site had not been recently managed (estimated for at least 3+ years due to young self-seeded saplings and scrub starting to take over) and had a long, tussocky sward. The grassland was species-poor and may originally have been a lawn. The sward was dominated by Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, with occasional common bent *Agrostis capillaris* and false oatgrass *Arrhenatherum elatius*. There were few forbs in the sward, being limited to occasional dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* and common ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*.

The grassland within the Site could be described using the following additional secondary codes:

128 – Tall or tussocky sward; 518 – Neglected.

Native hedgerow (h2a)

Hedgerow 2 (H2) was a very short section of native hedgerow at the top of a bank on the west boundary. The hedge was dominated by holly *Ilex aquifolium* with occasional hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*. The hedge was cut very short to no more than 0.75m high, as it also formed the boundary of a neighbouring garden.

Non-native & ornamental hedgerow (h2b)

Hedgerow 1 (H1) formed the south boundary and was a tall garden hedge of Leyland cypress *Cupressus x leylandii*. The hedge was around 5m high but only around 0.5m wide.

Hedgerow 3 (H3) formed the east boundary and was dominated by garden privet *Ligustrum ovalifolium* with frequent holly. This hedge was cut to 1.6 – 2m high, and a metre in width.

Bramble scrub (h3d)

There were two patches of dense bramble *Rubus fruticosus* scrub within the Site.

Sealed surface (u1b)

There was an area of hardstanding used for car parking at the entrance to the Site.

Scattered scrub (10)

There was scattered young scrub within the grassland, including low lying bramble and hawthorn saplings.

Scattered trees (32)

There were several mature trees around the edges of the Site. Several sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* trees were present along the top of the west bank of the Site, and partially shaded the Site. Some appeared to be outside of the boundary, and may belong to neighbouring gardens. These trees were around 0.4m DBH and in good condition, although crowded.

There was an early mature ash *Fraxinus excelsior* tree near to the entrance of the Site which had a DBH of 0.3m and ivy *Hedera helix* cover.

There were two young ash trees with some ivy cover next to H3 which had a DBH of 0.2m.

There were young self-set saplings scattered through the grassland, including sycamore, plum *Prunus* sp., ash and oak *Quercus robur*.

Introduced shrub (847)

There were several clumps of non-native shrubs including hydrangea *Hydrangea* sp., lilac *Syringa vulgaris*, snowberry *Symphoricarpos albus* and goat's beard *Aruncus dioicus*.

Invasive non-native species (524)

There was a small amount of Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* on Site as well as variegated yellow archangel *Lamium galeobdolon argentatum* on the shaded west bank of the Site. No other Schedule 9 invasive species were noted on Site.

5.3 Protected and Notable Species

Bats

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) returned numerous records of bat roosts and other bat signs (e.g. visual, audio) within 1km of the Site, including for common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*, *Myotis* species and noctule *Nyctalus noctula*.

All recorded roosts within 1km were pipistrelles. The nearest roost record was at a property around 240m away, which had a recorded pipistrelle species roost, dating to 1999. The next nearest roost was 410m to the south, also dating to 1999 and relating to a pipistrelle roost in the loft.

The largest roost record was a maternity roost of 142 common pipistrelle bats, around 1km to the south and dating to 2014.

The MAGIC website showed two mitigation licences for bats within 2km of the Site.

The nearest was 1.14km to the south and was for damage and destruction of breeding and resting sites for common pipistrelle in 2014. The other was a mitigation site which was 1.26km to the north, for destruction of a resting site for common pipistrelle, between 2015 and 2020.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

There were a number of sycamore trees along the west boundary of the Site, most of these appeared to be outside of the boundary, belonging to neighbouring gardens, but at least one was within the boundary. These were all fairly young trees, with DBH of 0.4m or less and in good condition. The sycamore trees were categorised as 'NONE', meaning no potential roosting features were present. There were also several young ash trees in the eastern boundary, with some ivy cover but which was not old enough to have formed crevices under the crossing stems. These trees were also categorised as 'NONE'.

There was one tree with a Potential Roosting Feature (PRF); this was Tree 1, an ivy-clad ash on the south corner of the Site.

A summary of the tree roost assessment is shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Tree roost assessment results

Tree Number	Tree Description	Potential Roosting Features (PRF)	Assessment of PRF
Tree 1	Semi-mature ash tree, DBH 0.3m. Estimated 12m height. Very cluttered trunk with numerous branches from low height.	Dense ivy covering trunk, very leafy.	PRF-I Ivy densely leafy with no very thick stems and tree cluttered with branches. In urban location with high surrounding light levels. No other PRFs likely underneath ivy due to young age and good condition of tree.

Badger

GMEU did not hold any records of badgers within 1km of the Site.

No badger setts or signs of badger activity were found on Site or adjacent to the Site, and a separate confidential badger report is not required.

Given the lack of records in the vicinity, the small size of Site and the urban location, it is considered to be unlikely for badgers to use the Site in future.

Other mammal species of conservation concern

GMEU held 19 records of hedgehog within 1km of the Site, with records being from 2019 to 2022 indicating there are current populations around Middleton. The nearest record was 188m to the east and dated to 2020.

No evidence of hedgehog was seen during the surveys. Hedgehog could forage or commute across the Site at night and could use dense scrub and bushes to nest or hibernate underneath.

Birds

GMEU returned records of a range of common bird species within 1km of the Site. Species include song thrush *Turdus philomelos*, dunnoek *Prunella modularis*, bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*, spotted flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*, starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, house sparrow *Passer domesticus* and

herring gull *Larus argentatus* along with peregrine *Falco peregrinus* and kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*. None of the records related to the Site or immediate surrounds.

No evidence of nesting birds was noted during the surveys, although the survey was undertaken past the . Despite lack of evidence of active nests during the survey, vegetation such as hedgerows, trees and scrub are likely to support common species of nesting birds during the breeding season.

The habitats on Site are unlikely to support Schedule 1 species such as peregrine falcon or kingfisher.

Reptiles

GMEU had no records of reptiles within 1km of the Site.

The grassland habitat on Site were of low suitability for reptiles, given the small area present, shading from trees and the relatively isolated urban location. It is considered unlikely for reptiles to occur on Site.

Amphibians

GMEU returned no records of amphibians including great crested newts within 1km of the Site.

The MAGIC website found no mitigation sites within 2km for great crested newts. The MAGIC website showed there were no licence class returns of ponds within 2km – the nearest positive site for great crested newts was over 3km away to the north.

There were no ponds found within the 250m search zone on Ordnance Survey and aerial maps.

Terrestrial habitat on Site was reasonable, with unmanaged grassland and scrub and hedgerow cover. The Site was connected by suitable habitat to Farmway Park to the north, an area of grassland and trees, and there was extensive habitat next to Wince Brook to the north-east but there were barriers of roads and buildings between this area and the Site.

The lack of ponds within 250m, and the urban location indicates that it is unlikely for a population of great crested newts to be present within 250m, and this species is not expected to occur within the terrestrial habitats on Site.

Invertebrates

GMEU returned several records of invertebrates within 1km, including white-letter hairstreak *Satyrus w-album*, mouse moth *Amphipyra tragopoginis*, dot moth *Melanchra persicariae*, buff ermine *Spilarctia luteum* and cinnabar moth *Tyria jacobaeae*.

No invertebrates were seen on Site during the site walkover. The habitats on Site are likely to support a limited range of common and widespread invertebrates.

Plants

GMEU returned no records of plants within 1km.

No rare or protected plant species were found on Site.

Two Schedule 9 invasive plant species were found on Site during the walkover in small amounts – Himalayan balsam and variegated yellow archangel.

5.4 Evaluation of ecological features

An evaluation of the ecological features within and adjacent to the survey area is provided in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Evaluation of Ecological Features

Ecological feature	Ecological importance	Reason
<i>Designated sites of nature conservation</i>		
Rochdale Canal SAC	International	1.58km to the east of the Site, designated for significant population of Annex II species of floating water-plantain
Rochadal Canal SSSI	District	1.58km to the east of the Site, designated for diverse assemblage of aquatic flora along with a range of invertebrates, fish and birds.
<i>Habitats within the survey area</i>		
Modified grassland	Site	Small area of unmanaged species-poor grassland.
Native hedgerow	Site	Although the hedge is largely native, it is very short in length and height, species-poor and likely to have been planted as a garden hedge.
Non-native hedgerow	Site	<i>Leylandii</i> hedge and garden privet hedge offering some potential bird nesting habitat but of low general value to biodiversity.
Bramble scrub	Site	Small amount of common habitat
Scattered scrub	Site	Small amount of common habitat
Scattered tree	Site	Sycamore and ash trees, either planted or self-set.
Introduced shrub	Site	Small amount of non-native shrubs, may provide some value to wildlife such as birds and invertebrates
<i>Protected and notable species</i>		
Bats	Site	Low potential for bat roosts within the Site. Site may provide a limited amount of foraging habitat for local bat populations.
Badgers	Negligible	No evidence of badger activity, unlikely to occur on Site in future.
Hedgehog	Site	The Site could support hedgehog on occasion as part of their wider foraging territory.

Ecological feature	Ecological importance	Reason
Birds	Site	Vegetation such as trees, hedgerows and shrubs may support common species of nesting birds.
Reptiles	Negligible	Limited habitat for reptiles; unlikely to support reptiles.
Amphibians	Negligible	No ponds found within 250m. Terrestrial habitats on Site unlikely to support great crested newts and limited value for common amphibian species.
Invertebrates	Negligible	The presence of notable invertebrate species was considered unlikely.
Plants	Negligible	The presence of rare plant species was considered unlikely.

6.0 ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS, MITIGATION, COMPENSATION & ENHANCEMENT

6.1 Overview of Proposed Works

A planning application is proposed for construction of two new dwellings on the Site. This will involve removal of much of the existing vegetation and severing of one of the hedgerows.

6.2 Assessment of Impacts, Mitigation, Compensation & Enhancement

The following table provides an assessment of the potential impacts of the development on each ecological feature, as well as proposals for mitigation, compensation and enhancement.

Table 6: Impact Assessment

Ecological Feature	Potential Impacts from Proposed Development	Effect on Feature without mitigation	Proposed Mitigation, Compensation & Enhancement Measures	Residual Effects (After Mitigation has been Applied)
<i>Designated Sites</i>				
Rochdale Canal SAC / SSSI	The proposals for the Site are considered unlikely to cause any negative impacts to the designated sites	No effects	No mitigation required.	No effects.

Ecological Feature	Potential Impacts from Proposed Development	Effect on Feature without mitigation	Proposed Mitigation, Compensation & Enhancement Measures	Residual Effects (After Mitigation has been Applied)
	due to their distance from the Site.			
<i>Habitats</i>				
Modified grassland	Permanent loss of modified grassland during construction of two new dwellings. Partially replaced by small gardens.	Negative long-term effect at site level	There will be loss of a small amount of unmanaged species-poor modified grassland. The new dwellings will have small gardens which are likely to be largely laid to lawn and are included as 'vegetated gardens' under the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) metric.	Slight negative effect at site level in the long-term.
Hedgerow (Native / Non-native)	Hedgerows will be largely retained, with severance of the non-native hedgerows to create access into the Site.	Negative, long-term effect at site level.	H1 and H2 (native hedgerow) will be retained. There will be a reduction of non-native H3 to allow access into the Site.	Slight negative effect at site level in the long-term.
Scrub	Loss of bramble scrub and scattered scrub	Negative, long-term effect at site level.	There will be loss of a small amount of bramble and scattered scrub. The new dwellings will have small gardens which are likely to be largely laid to lawn and are included as 'vegetated gardens' under the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) metric.	Slight negative effect at site level in the long-term.

Ecological Feature	Potential Impacts from Proposed Development	Effect on Feature without mitigation	Proposed Mitigation, Compensation & Enhancement Measures	Residual Effects (After Mitigation has been Applied)
Scattered tree	An early mature ash and sycamore will be removed, along with several young ash trees to create access into the Site and maximise the garden areas. There is risk of accidental damage of retained trees during construction.	Negative long-term effect at site level	The Site is very small and lacks space to plant new trees in the gardens of the properties. Retained trees will be protected with root zone protection fencing during construction. Losing several trees without replacement does cause a loss of units in the BNG metric and this will need to be addressed, potentially through payment into an off-site scheme.	Negative effect at site level in the long-term.
Introduced shrub	Construction of new dwellings and gardens will cause loss of some of the non-native shrubs.	Negative long-term effect at site level	The new 'vegetated gardens' next to the properties will be under ownership and management of the householders, but often include garden shrubs along the borders.	Neutral effect at site level in the long-term.
<i>Species</i>				
Bats	The ash tree has ivy cover but was assessed to be of limited potential to	Negative, long term effect at site level.	No further survey of the ash tree is required. However, as a precaution, ivy should be carefully removed by hand under supervision of a licensed ecologist, prior to felling the tree.	Neutral to positive effect at site level in the long-term.

Ecological Feature	Potential Impacts from Proposed Development	Effect on Feature without mitigation	Proposed Mitigation, Compensation & Enhancement Measures	Residual Effects (After Mitigation has been Applied)
	individual roosting bats. The Site is likely to be of limited value to foraging bats.		A Schwegler 2F or similar bat box is proposed to be fixed to one of the retained sycamore trees. This should face south-east to south-west and be free of clutter and branches around the box.	
Badgers	Unlikely to be present	No effects	No mitigation required.	N/A
Hedgehog	Hedgehog could nest under dense shrubs and be injured during vegetation clearance. Hedgehog may occasionally commute or forage through the Site, and could fall into	Negative, short-term effect at site level.	Vegetation clearance should follow a careful method of removing vegetation to 30cm in height using hand tools, then carefully inspected at ground level, through any leaf litter etc. Once confirmed clear of hedgehogs, it can be fully removed. Strimmers must not be used on Site unless a thorough search for hedgehogs has been undertaken immediately beforehand. Any vegetation cuttings should be removed from Site immediately to prevent brush piles being subsequently used by hedgehogs.	Neutral effect at site level in short and long term.

Ecological Feature	Potential Impacts from Proposed Development	Effect on Feature without mitigation	Proposed Mitigation, Compensation & Enhancement Measures	Residual Effects (After Mitigation has been Applied)
	excavations or use pipe work for shelter. Garden fences could prevent hedgehogs from moving across the Site.		During construction, ensure piping is capped if stored at ground level. Ensure any temporary excavations are covered overnight, or have a ramp for hedgehogs and other wildlife to escape. Any garden fences will have hedgehog access gaps of 13cm x 13cm cut into the base to allow hedgehogs to continue to move across the Site.	
Birds	Risk of destruction or damage of nests if present in vegetation during removal. Noise disturbance during construction. Permanent loss of scrub and tree habitat used by nesting species such as blackbird.	Negative, short-term effect at site level. Negative, short-term effect at site level. Negative, long-term effect at site level.	Vegetation removal (including severance of hedgerows, removal of grassland, scrub and shrubs, and tree felling) should be scheduled to avoid the bird breeding season (which can be from mid-February to August inclusive), as it is likely that the vegetation will support nesting birds during the breeding season. If this is not possible, an ecologist will need to check for any active nests; if any are found, work must avoid damaging or disturbing the nest until fledglings have left. In this case, an ecologist should undertake frequent monitoring and confirm when the nest is inactive. All cuttings and brash must be removed immediately from site, to prevent new nesting habitat being created. A total of four swift bricks (S Brick or similar) will be built into the north-east and south-west of each plot (the south-west facing bricks will be shaded by the Leylandii hedge so should not overheat). These will be not directly above windows, but incorporated into the walls just below the eaves, with the two bricks per plot being at least two metres apart. These are suitable for swifts as well as other species such as house sparrow.	Positive effect at site level in the long-term.

Ecological Feature	Potential Impacts from Proposed Development	Effect on Feature without mitigation	Proposed Mitigation, Compensation & Enhancement Measures	Residual Effects (After Mitigation has been Applied)
			S Brick: https://www.actionforswifts.com/ As an additional enhancement, four bird boxes will be installed on trees by an ecologist, out of reach of cats. The proposed locations are shown on Figure 4 (Appendix 1). Boxes will be made of long-lasting woodstone, using the following types or equivalent: 2 x Vivara Pro Seville 32mm or Schwegler 1B or similar, ideally on north facing trunks of sycamore at the west side of the Site, ensuring they are not near branches but on open parts of the trunk. 2 x Vivara Pro Barcelona open box or Schwegler 2H Robin Box or similar, could be installed onto trunks of the <i>Leylandii</i> hedge to provide cover.	
Reptiles / Amphibians	Unlikely to be present	No effects	No mitigation required.	N/A
Invasive plants – Himalayan balsam & variegated	Small amounts of invasive plant species, which could be spread out of the	Negative, long-term effect at site level.	Himalayan balsam and variegated yellow archangel are Schedule 9 species, meaning it is an offence to allow them to spread outside of the Site. If they are dug up, they must be removed carefully and taken to a licensed landfill.	Neutral effect at site level in short and long term.

Ecological Feature	Potential Impacts from Proposed Development	Effect on Feature without mitigation	Proposed Mitigation, Compensation & Enhancement Measures	Residual Effects (After Mitigation has been Applied)
yellow archangel	site if not disposed of correctly.		As there are only small amounts of both species, it may be best to remove through herbicide treatment prior to construction commencing. If herbicide treatment is followed, this should be undertaken by a professional contractor ensuring native retained vegetation and wildlife are not impacted.	

7.0 BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Headline summary

The proposals are predicted to result in a net loss of 0.6241 biodiversity units for area-based habitats. This is a -96.83% proportionate net loss of biodiversity. For linear habitats, there is due to be a loss of -0.0130 biodiversity units, which is – 9.56% proportionate net loss. Unfortunately, due to the small size of the Site, it is very difficult to mitigate for this within the proposed scheme, due to lack of space for habitat creation or enhancement.

Table 7: Net change in biodiversity

	Net change in biodiversity (biodiversity units)
Area-based Habitats	-0.6241 units (96.83% loss)
Linear Habitats	-0.0130 units (9.56% loss)

The final calculations are available for review in the Small Sites Metric submitted alongside this report, but a summary is shown in Table 8 below.

The calculations are based on the existing baseline assessment, and the proposals which are outlined in more detail in the section below. These are also shown on Figure 3 (Appendix 1).

6.1 Area Based Habitats

Vegetated Garden

The existing modified grassland, bramble scrub, scattered scrub and introduced shrubs will be removed during construction, and new gardens will be resown when the properties have been built and landscaping is undertaken. The garden habitat creation is classified as vegetated and non-vegetated garden which is likely to be a mixture of lawn, shrubs and borders and patios forming the gardens of the new dwellings. This is based on the metric guidance at a ratio of vegetated 70% to non-vegetated 30% and does not assume condition in future, as the gardens are outside of the control of any management plan and may be managed quite variably in terms of biodiversity.

Urban Trees

There will be two small ash trees and a medium ash and two medium sycamore trees which will be removed prior to construction. There are several retained trees just outside the boundary which will need to have a fully protected root protection zone during construction using herras fencing or similar to ensure there is no accidental damage.

Unfortunately there is no space within the Site proposals to plant new replacement trees.

6.2 Linear Habitats

Hedgerow 1 was the southern hedge, which was a non-native tall Leylandii hedge.

Hedgerow 2 was the eastern boundary which was a native species-poor hedge of holly and hawthorn. The hedge was cut to less than a metre in height.

Hedgerow 3 was the western boundary, which was a non-native garden privet hedge.

It is proposed to fully retain Hedgerow 1 and 2, but as these form boundaries with other gardens, removal and replacement with native hedge, or enhancement of the hedges is not likely to be possible.

Hedgerow 3 will be partially removed to create access into the Site. No enhancement is planned, as this hedge will be within the control of the plot owners, and it will be not be possible to guarantee enhancement or management measures.

There will be a clause in the deeds that the hedgerows are not removed at any point in the future.

6.3 Summary

Table 8: Summary of baseline and post-development biodiversity units

Baseline conditions Area-Based Habitat			Post-development Area-Based Habitats			
Habitat	Area (m²)	Biodiversity units	Habitat	Area (m²)	Biodiversity units	Retained, created or enhanced?
Modified grassland	87	0.03	Developed land / Sealed Surface (Driveway and Buildings)	329	0.00	Created
Bramble scrub	34	0.01	Vegetated Garden	106	0.0205	Created
Introduced shrub	360	0.07	Unvegetated garden	46	0.00	Created
Sealed surface	91	0.0				
Urban tree	569.72	0.5241				
Baseline conditions Linear-Based Habitat			Post-development Linear-Based Habitats			
Habitat	Length (m)	Biodiversity units	Habitat	Length (m)	Biodiversity units	Retained, created or enhanced?
Non Native Hedge (H1)	23	0.0230	Native Hedge (H1)	23	0.0230	Retained
Native Hedge (H2)	20	0.0800	Native Hedge (H2)	20	0.0800	Retained
Non Native Hedge (H3)	33	0.0330	Non native Hedge (H3)	20	0.0200	Partially Retained

8. SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Construction Phase (Short Term) Effects

All residual potential effects (once mitigation has been applied) during the construction phase on notable or protected species were likely to be neutral or positive. Mitigation measures to be followed during construction will ensure compliance with relevant legislation and are summarised below.

8.2 Post-construction (Medium to Long-term) Effects

All residual potential effects post-construction on notable or protected species were likely to be neutral or positive.

8.3 Cumulative Effects

No cumulative effects have been identified.

8.4 Biodiversity Net Gain

The proposed development will result in a net loss of biodiversity for area-based habitats and linear habitats. Due to the small size of Site, on-site habitat creation and enhancement is not possible within the Site scheme and the nature of the Site (residential), whereby future management of the retained and created habitats (gardens and hedges) cannot be guaranteed.

As the proposals do not achieve a net gain of 10% for area or linear habitats, discussions with the Local Planning Authority will need to be made to explore options for off-site habitat creation and enhancement. This may be paying for habitat credits with an organisation who will use the funds in landscape-scale biodiversity and rewilding projects, or the council may have schemes or sites in mind which could benefit from funding for habitat creation and enhancement.

8.5 Summary of Further Survey, Mitigation Measures & Timing

A summary of recommendations for mitigation, compensation and enhancement on Site are provided in Table 9 below and shown in Figure 3 & 4 (Appendix 1).

Table 9: Recommendations for Mitigation, Compensation & Enhancement

Species / Habitat	Recommendations for Mitigation, Compensation & Enhancement	Timing
Bats	Majority of trees had negligible roosting potential. Tree 1 was an ash tree in the entrance to the Site with dense ivy cover which could support individual bats on an irregular basis (PRF-I).	

	No further bat survey of Tree 1 required but recommend the careful removal of ivy by hand under supervision of a licensed ecologist, prior to felling. Enhancement for the Site will be 1 x tree bat box (Schwegler 2F or similar) installed on a retained sycamore tree, facing south.	Prior to felling During construction
Hedgehog	Check for hedgehogs in grass and under scrub and hedges, prior to vegetation removal. If vegetation too dense to see, reduce to 30cm then check for hedgehogs. During construction, ensure any piping is capped if stored at ground level. Ensure any temporary excavations are covered overnight, or have a ramp for hedgehogs and other wildlife to escape. Garden fences to have hedgehog access holes cut into them	During construction
Birds	Vegetation may be used by nesting birds between mid Feb and August inclusive. Works should ideally commence outside of the nesting period; if not, a check for any 'active' nests will be made within 24 hrs prior to works commencing. If active nests are found, they must be left until fledglings leave the nest. The Site will be enhanced for nesting birds with the following: A total of 4 swift bricks (S Brick or similar) - 2 built into the end gables of each plot, suitable for swifts, house sparrows etc. 4 tree bird boxes (2 x 32mm Vivara Pro Seville or Schwegler 1B, 2 x Vivara Pro Barcelona open box or Shwegler 2H Robin box) installed by ecologist out of reach of cats etc.	Vegetation removal between Sep and mid-February or be subject to a nesting bird check by an ecologist.
Invasive Schedule 9 plants	Small amount of Himalayan balsam and variegated yellow archangel present. Pull out by hand and remove to a licensed waste disposal, or have a professional contractor spot treat with herbicide prior to construction. Ensure these plants do not spread outside of the Site.	Prior to construction
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	BNG calculations found the proposals will lead to a net loss of 0.6241 units (-96.83%) for area habitats and a net loss 0.0130 units (-9.56%) for linear habitats. Unfortunately the small size of the Site does not allow for habitat creation or enhancement within the scheme, and off-site options will need to be explored to off-set the loss of biodiversity that would arise from the proposals.	Prior to construction

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APPENDIX 1: FIGURES

Figure 2 – UKHab Survey

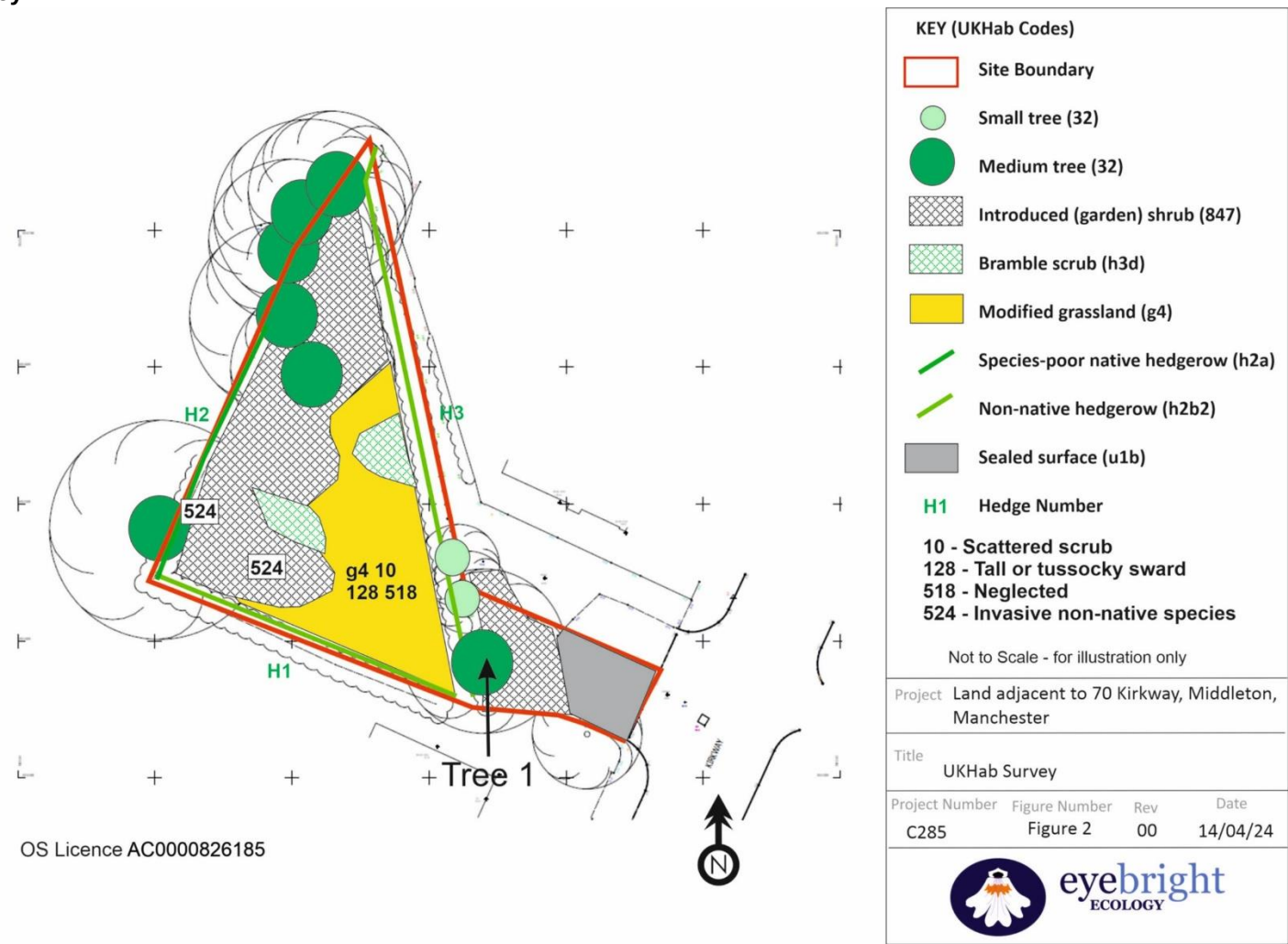


Figure 3 – Mitigation, compensation and enhancement

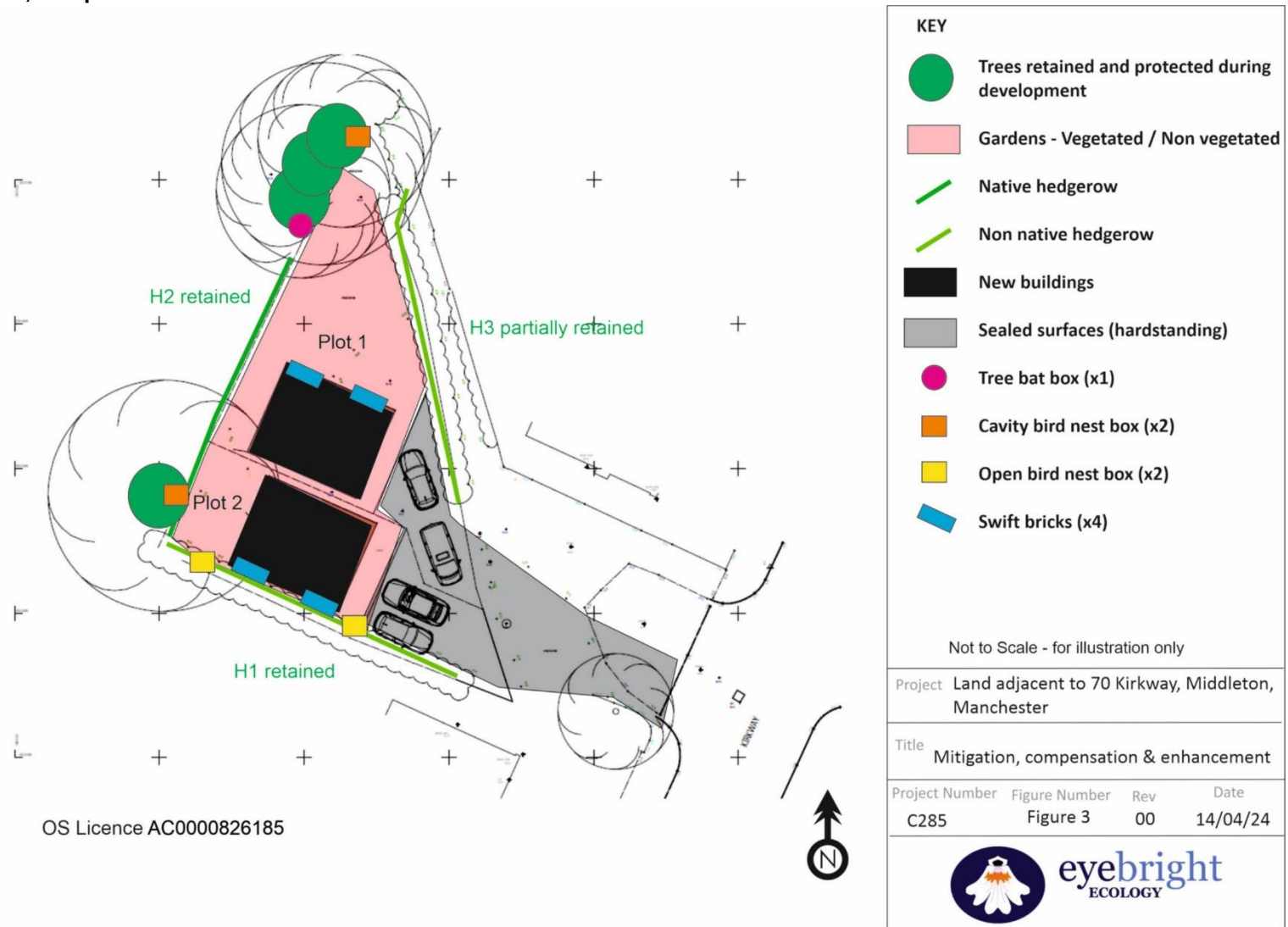
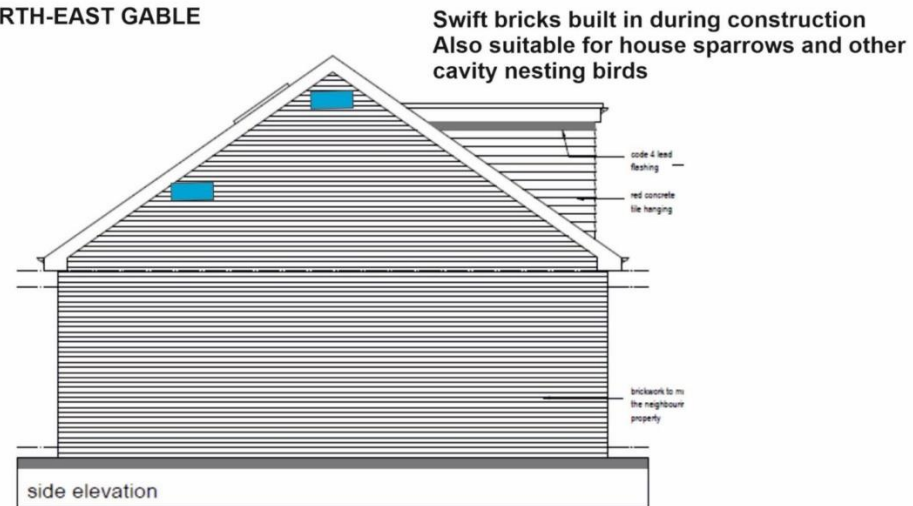
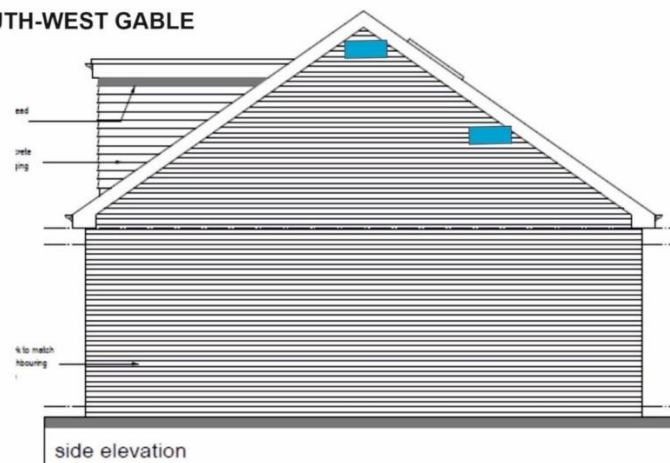


Figure 4 – Swift brick locations

PLOT 1 - NORTH-EAST GABLE



PLOT 2 - SOUTH-WEST GABLE



KEY

Not to Scale - for illustration only

Project Land adjacent to 70 Kirkway, Middleton, Manchester

Title Swift brick locations

Project Number	Figure Number	Rev	Date
C285	Figure 4	00	14/04/24



APPENDIX 2: Photographs

Plate 1 – Site habitats showing trees, grassland and scrub



Plate 2 – Grassland showing low species diversity but scattered scrub and self-set saplings



Plate 3 – Bramble and introduced shrubs and sycamore along the west boundary



Plate 4 – Hedgerow 1 – Non native *Leylandii* hedge



Plate 5 – Hedgerow 3 from outside – non-native privet hedge



Plate 6 – Introduced shrubs (Goats beard)



Plate 7 – Tree 1 (Ivy covered ash – left) and Himalayan balsam (invasive - right)



Plate 8 – Variegated yellow archangel (invasive)



APPENDIX 3: Definition of Terms

Table 10: Geographical Scale of Importance

Scale of Importance	Evaluation criteria
International	A habitat or species cited as a reason for the designation or proposed designation of a World Heritage Site, Biosphere Reserve, Biogenetic Reserve, Ramsar Site, Special Protection Area (SPA) or Special Area of Conservation (SAC). A large extent of habitat that is listed as a Priority Habitat Type in Annex 1 of the EC Habitats Directive in good condition with typical species diversity. A large and viable population of a regularly occurring species that is rare within an international context.
National	A habitat or species cited as a reason for the designation or proposed designation of a National Nature Reserve (NNR), Marine Nature Reserve (MNR), National Park, Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI). Any area of habitat listed as a Priority Habitat Type in Annex 1 of the EC Habitats Directive that has potential to support typical species diversity. A large extent of habitat listed as a Priority Habitat in the UK BAP in good condition that supports an abundance of typical species. A large and viable population of a regularly occurring species that is scarce within an international context. A very large and viable population of a regularly occurring species that is listed as a Priority Species in the UK BAP. A large and viable population of a regularly occurring rare species that occurs in 15 or fewer 10km squares of the National Grid (e.g. a species that is listed in UK Red Data Books). A bird species with a British breeding population of <1,000 pairs.
Regional	A large extent of habitat listed as a Priority Habitat in the UK BAP that supports typical species diversity and is in good condition. A large and viable population of a regularly occurring species that is listed as a Priority Species in the UK BAP. A large and viable population of a regularly occurring plant species that is known to occur in 16 to 100 10km squares of National Grid (Stewart, Preston and Pearman 1994). A large and viable population of a regularly occurring insect species (Nationally Notable categories Na and Nb) that is known to occur in 16 to 100 10km squares of the National Grid [Ball, 1986]. A bird species with a British breeding population of 1,000 to 10,000 pairs.
County	A habitat or species cited as a reason for the designation or proposed designation of a Local Site (known locally as a County Wildlife Site (CWS), Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), Ecology Database Site (EDS) etc.), a Local Nature Reserve (LNR), a Nature Reserve (owned or managed by: The Wildlife Trusts, The Woodland Trust or equivalent body etc) or an Ancient Woodland.

Scale of Importance	Evaluation criteria
	A habitat listed as a Priority Habitat in the UK BAP which is large in extent and supports typical species diversity. A medium and viable population of a regularly occurring species that is listed as a Priority Species in the UK BAP. A viable population of a regularly occurring species listed in a County Red Data Book, County Flora or found in less than 10% of 1km squares of the National Grid within the count. A small population of a plant species that is known to occur in 16 to 100 10km squares of National Grid. A small population of an insect species (Nationally Notable categories Na and Nb) that is known to occur in 16 to 100 10km squares of the National Grid. A bird species with a British breeding population of 10,000 to 100,000 pair
District	A habitat or species cited as a reason for the designation or proposed designation of a Local Site (known locally as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS), Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), Ecology Database Site (EDS) etc.), a Local Nature Reserve (LNR), a Nature Reserve (owned or managed by: The Wildlife Trusts, The Woodland Trust or equivalent body etc) or an Ancient Woodland. A habitat listed as a Priority Habitat in the UK BAP which is small in extent, supports typical species diversity or is in an unfavourable condition. A small and viable population of a species that is listed in the UK BAP or LBAP. A bird species with a British breeding population of 100,000 to 500,000 pairs.
Local	A habitat or species cited as a reason for the designation or proposed designation of a site which is officially listed e.g. on a Parish Register. A semi-natural habitat that is listed in the UK BAP or LBAP, which is either small in extent and/or is in an unfavourable condition. A species which occurs occasionally that is listed in the UK BAP or LBAP. A bird species with a British breeding population of >500,000 pairs.
Site	An artificial habitat or habitat that has readily established e.g. amenity grassland. A species which is common and not listed on the UK BAP or LBAP e.g. Badger.
Negligible	A habitat or species common within the Application Site, offering little benefit to British wildlife and biodiversity.