

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

Falcon Close, Rochdale
Reference: 81-883-R2
Date: July 24





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Site Address	26 Falcon Close, Rochdale OL12 7RY
Coordinates	E 385966, N 414871
Site Area	Approximately 0.2 ha
Current Site Use and Adjacent Site Use	The site comprises a currently inactive residential garden. Habitats present comprise introduced shrub, modified grassland, treelines and hardstanding. The wider area comprises hardstanding, residential buildings, vegetated gardens, broadleaved woodland, brooks and arable fields.
Designated Sites	The site lies within the Impact Risk Zone of Rochdale Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which is located approximately 4.9 km south-east of the site. Due to the small size of the proposed works and the distance between the site and Rochdale Canal SSSI and SAC, no detrimental impacts on the designated site are anticipated. Additionally, an increase in visitor numbers to the SSSI and SPA is not anticipated. As per the criteria listed on MAGIC, the site will not require further consultation with Natural England concerning potential impacts on Rochdale Canal SSSI and SAC. A Habitat Regulation Assessment will not be required for the SAC. Four non-statutory designated sites are located within 1 km of the site boundary: ✿ Doctor Dam and Holt Wood Site of Biological Importance (SBI) is located approximately 330 m north-west of the site. ✿ Naden Brook SBI is located approximately 480 m south of the site. ✿ Fordoe and Naden Woods and Quarry SBI is located approximately 720 m north-west of the site. ✿ Old House and Mill Croft Brook SBI is located approximately 840 m south-east of the site. Due to the small size of the proposed works and the distance between the site and non-statutory designated sites, no negative impacts are anticipated.
Survey Results	The site comprised introduced shrub, modified grassland, treelines, hardstanding, one building and two walls. The site was found to have the following potential ecological constraints: ✿ One tree (T1) was found to have PRF-I bat roosting potential. ✿ Potential presence of common amphibians within the introduced shrub and modified grassland. ✿ Potential presence of badger on-site and within the local area. ✿ Potential presence of hedgehogs within the introduced shrub. ✿ Potential presence of nesting birds within the denser sections of introduced shrub and treelines.



Conclusions

- ✳ Potential presence of a small population of reptiles within the introduced shrub.

- ✳ Wall cotoneaster and field horsetail was identified on-site during the survey.

No further surveys are required to inform a planning application.

The following mitigation is recommended:

- ✳ Common amphibians are to be removed by hand from the working area during the clearance phase.

- ✳ Bat potential tree (T1) is to be soft-felled under the supervision of an ecologist if removal is required.

- ✳ The lighting design should ensure sensitive habitats, including the adjacent broadleaved woodland, are maintained as dark areas both during and post-construction.

- ✳ Updated Badger Walkover prior to works commencing.

- ✳ Precautionary Working Methods for badger.

- ✳ Vegetation should be retained where possible. Where vegetation requires removal, it should be checked for the presence of hedgehog prior to clearance. If any vegetation is too dense to be fully inspected, it should be trimmed to 50 cm and checked for hedgehog prior to clearance to ground level. It is recommended that vegetation clearance takes place outside of December-March to avoid impacting hibernating hedgehogs.

- ✳ Vegetation should be retained where possible. Any vegetation requiring removal should be removed outside of the breeding bird season (March to September inclusive). If this is not possible, a nesting bird check should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist up to 24 hrs before works commence. If a nest, or nest in construction, is located, then a stand-off distance should be maintained until the young have fledged.

- ✳ Precautionary Working Methods for reptiles.

- ✳ Wall cotoneaster and field horsetail should be removed prior to development commencing.

A 10% gain in biodiversity will be required on-site. If this cannot be achieved, a conservation offset payment or off-site compensation will be required.



Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
1. INTRODUCTION	5
1.1. Background	5
1.2. Proposed Development	5
1.3. Site Location	5
1.4. Objectives	6
2. METHODOLOGY	7
2.1. Desktop Study	7
2.2. Vegetation and Habitats	7
2.3. Fauna	7
2.4. Preliminary Roost Assessment	8
2.5. Survey Limitations	9
3. SURVEY RESULTS	10
3.1. Site Context	10
3.2. Designated Sites	10
3.3. Habitats	11
3.3.1. Introduced Shrub	11
3.3.2. Modified Grassland	12
3.3.3. Developed Land; Sealed Surface	13
3.3.4. Building	13
3.3.5. Walls	14
3.3.6. Line of Trees	14
3.4. Protected and Notable Species	15
3.4.1. Amphibians	15
3.4.2. Bats	16
3.4.3. Badger	17
3.4.4. Other Terrestrial Mammals	17
3.4.5. Otter and Water Vole	17
3.4.6. Breeding Birds	17
3.4.7. Reptiles	17
3.4.8. Notable Invertebrates	18
3.5. Invasive Plant Species	18
4. ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS AND MITIGATION	19
4.1. Development Proposals	19
4.2. Habitats	19
4.2.1. Line of Trees	19
4.3. Protected and Notable Species	19
4.3.1. Amphibians	19
4.3.2. Bats	20
4.3.3. Badgers	20
4.3.4. Hedgehogs	21
4.3.5. Breeding Birds	21
4.3.6. Reptiles	21
4.3.7. Invasive Plant Species	21



5. FURTHER SURVEYS	23
6. BIODIVERSITY STATEMENT	24
7. REFERENCES	25
APPENDIX I UKHAB HABITAT PLAN	26
APPENDIX II WATERBODY PLAN.....	27
APPENDIX III PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT	28



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

E3P were commissioned by Fairway Building and Remedial Contractors Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal at Falcon Close, Rochdale, hereafter referred to as “the site”.

This report has been produced by Conor Evans BSc (Hons) MRes, Consultant Ecologist at E3P. Conor holds a Qualifying CIEEM membership and has experience undertaking Preliminary Ecological Appraisals and ecological mitigation for a variety of projects across the UK. Conor also holds a Class 1 Great Crested Newt Natural England licence.

1.2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Development proposals include the construction of two residential properties and associated landscaping.

1.3. SITE LOCATION

The site is located in Norden, Rochdale. The site is accessed via Woodhouse Lane which defines the north-east site boundary. Residential housing is located directly adjacent to the south-east, south-west and north-west site boundary. An unnamed watercourse is located approximately 20 m west of the site, which flows through a large area of broadleaved woodland. A series of arable fields are located approximately 50 m north-west of the site. Naden Brook is located approximately 300 m south of the site. Multiple reservoirs are located within 1 km of the site, including Doctor Dam, which is located approximately 340 m north-west of the site, and Greenbooth Reservoir, which is located approximately 480 m north-west of the site.

Please refer to Figure 1 for the approximate site location.

Figure 1 **Approximate Site Location**





1.4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal are as follows:

-  Identify the major habitats present.
-  Ascertain the presence or potential presence of any legally protected species and habitats.
-  Recommend any further surveys or mitigation that may be required.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal comprises a desk study and site walkover. This survey has been completed as a baseline assessment of the site, and as such please see the end of the report for further surveys and mitigation proposed.



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. DESKTOP STUDY

The following sources of information and ecological records were consulted:

- 📍 MAGIC – A web-based interactive mapping system, on which geographic information regarding key environmental schemes and designations are collated, including details of statutory conservation sites, accessed July 2024.
- 📍 Aerial mapping and ordnance survey maps.
- 📍 Local data records from the past 10 years provided by Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU), received July 2024.

A 1 km search area was utilised for the data search, with this being deemed an appropriate distance for the Zone of Influence due to the small size and urban nature of the site. Records pre-dating 2014 were classified as historic and therefore excluded from the desk study unless the records were of particular importance and relevance to the site.

The data search included the request for details of protected and notable species of flora and fauna within 1 km of the central grid reference of the site. In addition, a request was made for any non-statutory designated sites within 1 km of the site boundary.

Please note that a lack of up-to-date records does not confirm the absence of a species from the area. The lack of records may simply be a result of a lack of protected species surveys being undertaken within the local area.

2.2. VEGETATION AND HABITATS

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the proposed development site was undertaken by Conor Evans on 20th June 2024. The weather was clear and warm.

The walkover survey was undertaken to the standard methodology as per the “Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal” (CIEEM, 2017). A vegetation and habitat plan has been produced for the proposed development site and the immediate surrounding area (please refer to Appendix I). The mapping is based on the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (UKHab, 2023).

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. All plant nomenclature follows Stace (2019).

Searches were carried out for the presence of invasive species, including those listed on the revised (April 2010) Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) including Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*).

2.3. FAUNA

A thorough search of the site for signs of protected species of fauna was undertaken during the site walkover. These searches considered the following:



- ✿ Suitability of any ponds to support notable amphibians, and the suitability of the site's terrestrial habitats to support amphibians.
- ✿ Suitability of the site to support reptiles by way of habitat structure and refuge piles, as well as links to the wider landscape.
- ✿ Signs of badgers (*Meles meles*) by way of setts, mammal paths, foraging signs or latrines to indicate usage of the site by the species.
- ✿ Search of any watercourses for signs or suitability for water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) and otter (*Lutra lutra*) by way of burrows, resting places, holts, and foraging signs.
- ✿ Suitability of the site to support roosting, foraging, and commuting bats.
- ✿ Suitability of the site to support notable bird species.
- ✿ Suitability of the site to support notable invertebrates.
- ✿ Search of the site for any invasive species.

2.4. PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

The Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken by Conor Evans on 20th June 2024.

The survey involved undertaking a systematic search of the on-site building and trees, searching for signs of bats, or spaces where bats would be able to access. The methodology followed that described in *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, 4th Edition* (Collins, 2023).

The on-site building and trees were categorised for their bat roosting potential as described in Table 1 in accordance with Collins (2023).

Table 1 Bat Roosting Potential Classification of Buildings

CATEGORY	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	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 and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by a large number of bats.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
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 and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts.



Table 2 Bat Roosting Potential Classification of Trees

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

2.5. SURVEY LIMITATIONS

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal does not constitute a full botanical survey. Instead, key species are identified to give a representative description of each habitat type.

This survey was undertaken in June, which is an optimal time of year to undertake a survey. However, due to the short sward of the on-site grassland, it is possible that some species could have been missed during the survey. However, due to the poor quality of the grassland and the lack of vegetation diversity, this is not anticipated to be a major constraint.

B1 could not be accessed internally during the survey. This is not anticipated to be a major constraint, as no potential access points for bats were identified.



3. SURVEY RESULTS

3.1. SITE CONTEXT

The site is located within a predominantly residential area in Nordon, Rochdale. The site comprises introduced shrub, modified grassland, treelines and hardstanding. These habitats are anticipated to provide limited ecological value for wildlife. However, the treelines may provide suitability for nesting birds, sheltering hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*), and commuting and foraging bats.

The wider area comprises hardstanding, residential buildings, vegetated gardens, broadleaved woodland, brooks and arable fields. The broadleaved woodland and brooks are anticipated to be of the highest ecological importance.

An unnamed watercourse is located approximately 20 m west of the site. This watercourse may provide valuable foraging, commuting and resting resources for a range of aquatic specialists, including Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), fish, aquatic invertebrates and a variety of waterfowl. The site is separated from this watercourse by the residential properties to the north-west and south-west.

Multiple areas of Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland and ancient and semi-natural woodland are located within 1 km of the site boundary. The closest such area of Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland is located approximately 20 m west of the site, and the closest such area of ancient and semi-natural woodland is located approximately 440 m west of the site. These areas of woodlands are anticipated to provide valuable habitat for a range of protected species including nesting birds, roosting and foraging bats, badgers, hedgehogs and common amphibians. The site is separated from the closest areas of broadleaved woodland by an unnamed brook.

There are multiple arable fields located within 1 km of the site boundary, the closest of which is located approximately 50 m north-west of the site. These arable fields may provide foraging and resting resources for brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*) and farmland specialist birds, including skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) and meadow pipit (*Anthus pratensis*).

Multiple large reservoirs are located within 1 km of the site boundary, including Doctor Dam and Greenbooth Reservoir, which are located approximately 340 m north-west and 480 m north-west of the site boundary respectively. These waterbodies may provide valuable nesting resources for a variety of waterfowl, such as lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*) and coot (*Fulica atra*).

One area of open mosaic habitat on previously developed land is located approximately 500 m south-east of the site boundary. This habitat may provide foraging and resting resources for local wildlife, particularly for birds and invertebrates.

One waterbody (WB1) is located within 250 m of the site boundary, approximately 210 m west of the site.

3.2. DESIGNATED SITES

There are no statutory designated sites located within 1 km of the site boundary. The site lies within the Impact Risk Zone of Rochdale Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which is located approximately 4.9 km south-east of the site. The site is designated as a SSSI its important habitats for emergent vegetation and submerged aquatic plants, including extensive colonies of the nationally rare floating water plantain (*Luronium natans*). The site is designated as a SAC for its significant population of floating water-plantain and also supports a diverse assemblage of aquatic flora, notably its assemblage of pondweed (*Potamogeton* sp.).



Rochdale Canal SSSI and SAC can be affected by an increase in air pollution. As the development proposed the construction of two residential properties, an increase air pollution via increased traffic is not anticipated. Additionally, due to the small size of the proposed works and the distance between the site and Rochdale Canal SSSI and SAC, no detrimental impacts on the designated site are anticipated as a result of the development. Furthermore, an increase in visitor numbers to the SSSI and SPA is not anticipated as the development proposals detail the construction of two residential dwellings.

As per the criteria listed on MAGIC (accessed July 2024), the site will not require further consultation with Natural England concerning potential impacts on Rochdale Canal SSSI and SAC. Additionally, a Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) will not be required for the SAC. Therefore, no further consideration is required.

Four non-statutory designated sites are located within 1 km of the site boundary comprising:

- ✿ Doctor Dam and Holt Wood Site of Biological Importance (SBI) is located approximately 330 m north-west of the site. Doctor Dam and Hold Wood SBI comprises ancient woodland and wetland habitats.
- ✿ Naden Brook SBI is located approximately 480 m south of the site. Naden Brook SBI comprises Naden Brook and broadleaved woodland.
- ✿ Fordoe and Naden Woods and Quarry SBI is located approximately 720 m north-west of the site. Fordoe and Naden Woods and Quarry SBI comprises Fordoe Brook and broadleaved woodland
- ✿ Old House and Mill Croft Brook SBI is located approximately 840 m south-west of the site. Old House and Mill Croft Brook SBI comprises Mill Croft Brook, Old House Brook and broadleaved woodland.

Due to the small size of the proposed works and the distance between the site and non-statutory designated sites, no negative impacts are anticipated. Therefore, no further consideration is required.

3.3. HABITATS

The main habitats encountered during the survey are described in the following subsections. Please refer to Appendix I for the UKHab Habitat Plan.

3.3.1. INTRODUCED SHRUB

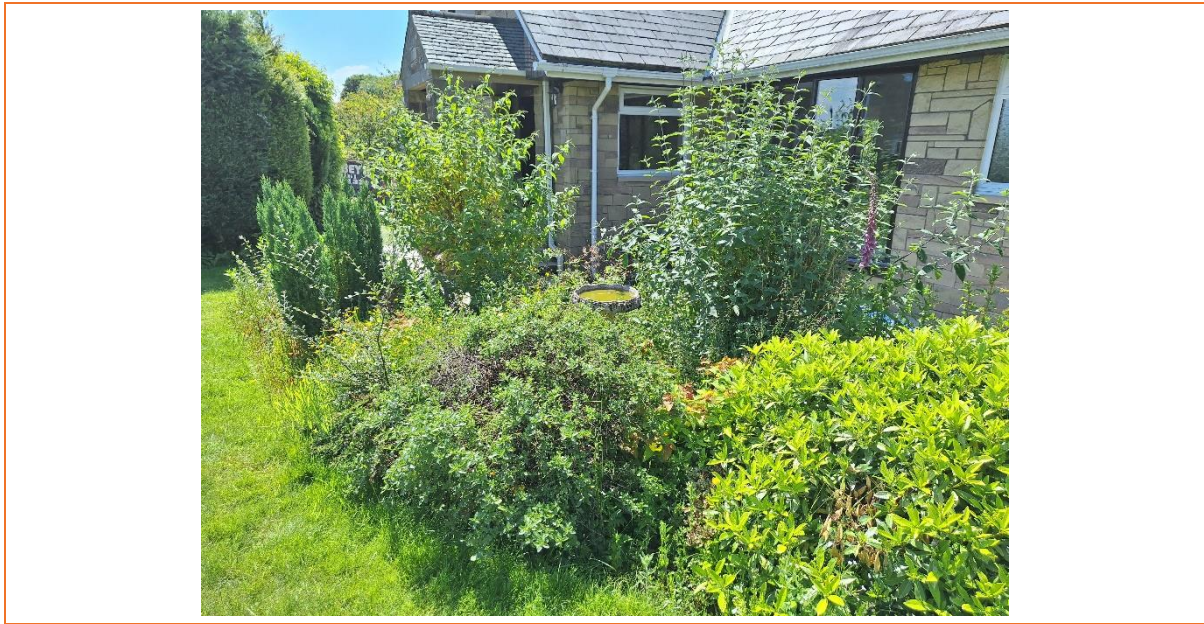
Multiple areas of overgrown introduced shrub were identified across the west, centre and south-east of the site. Species present comprised firethorn sp. (*Pyracanthus* sp.), rose sp. (*Rosa* sp.), Himalayan honeysuckle (*Leycesteria formosa*), day-lily sp. (*Hemerocallis* sp.), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), meadow buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), hoary willowherb (*Epilobium parviflorum*), rosebay willowherb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*), wood avens (*Geum urbanum*), tutsan (*Hypericum androsaemum*), bluebell sp. (*Hyacinthoides* sp.), hardy fuchsia (*Fuchsia magellanica*), perennial candytuft (*Iberis sempervirens*), Portugal laurel (*Prunus lusitanica*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), butterfly-bush (*Buddleia davidii*), Japanese kerria (*Kerria japonica*), flowering currant (*Ribes sanguineum*), red escallonia (*Escallonia rubra*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), yellow iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), stag's horn sumach (*Rhus typhina*), Japanese andromeda (*Pieris japonica*), oleaster (*Elaeagnus x ebbingei*), guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*), cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), box (*Buxus sempervirens*), French crane's-bill (*Geranium endressii*), willow-leaved cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster salicifolius*), broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), pulmonaria sp. (*Pulmonaria* sp.), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*), spotted dead-nettle (*Lamium maculatum*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), herb-robert (*Geranium robertianum*), garden privet (*Ligustrum ovalifolium*), pendulous sedge (*Carex pendula*), weigelia sp. (*Weiglia* sp.), hazel (*Corylus maxima*), Welsh poppy (*Papaver cambricum*), spirea sp. (*Spirea*



sp.), Mexican orange blossom (*Choisya ternata*), spruce sp. (*Picea* sp.), hydrangea sp. (*Hydrangea* sp.), sweet briar (*Rosa rubiginosa*), Thunberg's barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), rhubarb (*Rheum rhabarbarum*), canary ivy (*Hedera canariensis*), foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), heart-leaved houttuynia (*Houttuynia cordata*), common figwort (*Scrophularia nodosa*), creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) and spotted-laurel (*Aucuba japonica*). One poplar tree (*Populus* sp.) was also identified within the introduced shrub.

Wall cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*) was identified within an area of the introduced shrub (please refer to Appendix I for the approximate location). Field horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*) was also noted throughout the introduced shrub.

Figure 2 **Showing Introduced Shrub**



3.3.2. MODIFIED GRASSLAND

Modified grassland was identified in the west, centre and north-east of the site. The modified grassland in the centre of the site comprised a short sward, whereas the modified grassland in the north-east of the site comprised a longer sward. Species present comprised daisy (*Bellis perennis*), perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), rough meadow-grass (*Poa trivialis*), cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), fox-and-cubs (*Pilosella aurantiaca*), clover sp. (*Trifolium* sp.), common sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), creeping buttercup, meadow buttercup, rosebay willowherb and hoary willowherb.



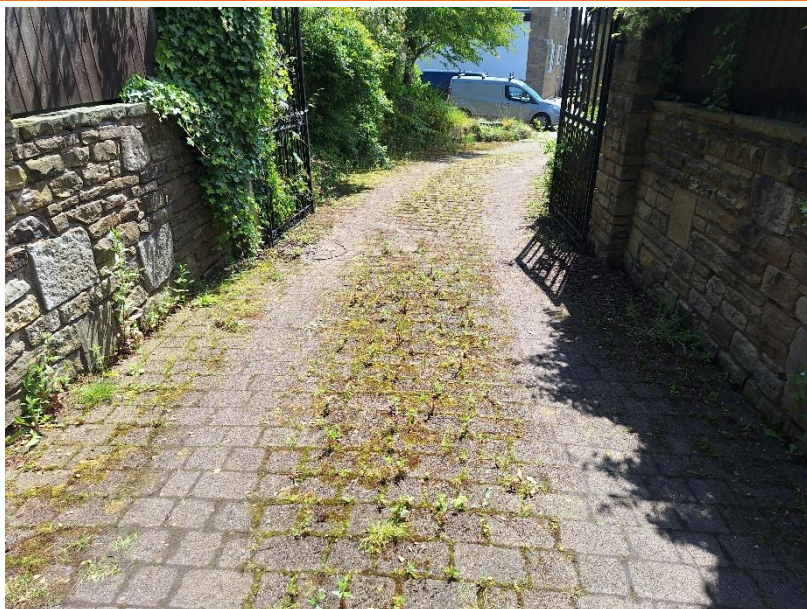
Figure 3 Showing Modified Grassland



3.3.3. DEVELOPED LAND; SEALED SURFACE

A large area of the site comprised laid brick hardstanding. The hardstanding had been colonised in part by ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* agg.), hoary willowherb and perennial rye-grass.

Figure 4 Showing Developed Land; Sealed Surface



3.3.4. BUILDING

One building (B1) was identified in the north-west of the site and comprised a disused car parking garage. Please refer to Appendix III for the full Preliminary Roost Assessment of the on-site building.



Figure 5 **Showing Building**



3.3.5. **WALLS**

Two walls (W1 and W2) were located in the north-west of the site. The walls bordered the drive leading to the site. Please refer to Appendix III for the full Preliminary Roost Assessment of the on-site walls.

Figure 6 **Showing Wall**



3.3.6. **LINE OF TREES**

Two treelines (TL1, TL2) were identified on-site. TL1 comprised Lawson's cypress (*Cupressus lawsoniana*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*), cotoneaster tree (*Cotoneaster* sp.), Judas tree (*Cercis siliquastrum*) and a dead tree of unknown species. TL2 comprised Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), spruce sp. (*Picea* sp.), alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and Judas tree.



Figure 7 Showing Tree Line 1



3.4. PROTECTED AND NOTABLE SPECIES

3.4.1. AMPHIBIANS

Consultation with GMEU did not identify any records of great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) within the 1 km search area.

Consultation with MAGIC did not identify any great crested newt European Protected Species Licences within the 1 km search area. The closest such licence was located approximately 4.9 km south-west of the site boundary. The licence was active between 2011 and 2014 for the destruction of a great crested newt resting place.

Great crested newts' upper dispersal limit is generally considered to be up to 250 m from a waterbody (though occurrence of greater distances does exist where habitat connectivity is of high quality) (English Nature, 2001). One waterbody (WB1) is located approximately 210 m west of the site. Please refer to Appendix II for the Waterbody Plan. A Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment could not be undertaken on the waterbody due to being located on private land. A rapid risk assessment was undertaken to determine the 'likely effect' of the development to cause offence. The result of the rapid risk assessment was that an offence would be highly unlikely as only 0.2 ha of habitat will be affected as a result of the development.

Figure 8 Rapid Risk Assessment Result

Component	Likely effect (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom)	Notional offence probability score
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.1 - 0.5 ha lost or damaged	0.1
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
	Maximum:	0.1
Rapid risk assessment result:	GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY	



In addition, the site is separated from this waterbody by the unnamed watercourse located approximately 20 m west of the site. This watercourse is expected to reduce dispersal of great crested newts to the site. The watercourse is culverted under Woodhouse Lane and is therefore not anticipated to act as a full dispersal barrier for great crested newts. Great crested newts are therefore reasonably discounted from further assessment.

Figure 9 **Showing Unnamed Watercourse**



Consultation with GMEU identified records of common toad (*Bufo bufo*) within the 1 km search area. These records were located approximately 900 m south-east of the site boundary, associated with a residential garden. The introduced shrub and modified grassland were assessed as providing suitable shelter and protection for the species group within their terrestrial phase. As such, common amphibians are anticipated to be present on-site.

3.4.2. BATS

Consultation with GMEU identified numerous records of bats comprising pipistrelle sp. (*Pipistrellus* sp.), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) and Daubenton's bat. The closest such record was for a pipistrelle bat species, located approximately 30 m north-east of the site boundary, associated with a residential garden.

Consultation with MAGIC did not identify any Natural England Bat Mitigation Licences within the 1 km search area. The closest licence was located approximately 3.6 km south-east of the site boundary. This licence was active from 2009 to 2010 for the destruction of a common pipistrelle resting place.

The on-site building, walls and trees were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats, as per Collins (2023). Building 1 (B1), Wall 1 (W1) and Wall 2 (W2) were all assessed as having Negligible bat roosting potential. One tree (T1) within TL1 was assessed as having PRF-I bat roosting potential. Please refer to Appendix I for the bat potential tree location and Appendix III for the full Preliminary Roost Assessment.

The on-site treelines are expected to attract invertebrate prey; however, due to the close proximity of a large area of broadleaved woodland located approximately 20 m west of the site, local bat species are anticipated to utilise this woodland over the habitats on-site. Additionally, the site is not anticipated to act as a wildlife corridor between habitats of higher value for bats. The site was therefore assessed as having Negligible potential to support foraging and commuting bats.



3.4.3. BADGER

Consultation with GMEU identified numerous records of badger within the 1 km search area.

No badger setts or field signs of badger were located on-site or within 30 m of the site boundary where access was possible. The on-site habitats were assessed as providing suitable foraging and sett building opportunities for the species. As such, badgers may utilise the site.

3.4.4. OTHER TERRESTRIAL MAMMALS

Consultation with GMEU identified numerous records of European hedgehog within the 1 km search area. The closest such record was located approximately 820 m south-east of the site within a residential garden. The site was assessed as providing suitable refuge and foraging habitat for hedgehogs within the introduced shrub. As such, hedgehogs may be present on-site.

Consultation with GMEU identified records of brown hare within the 1 km search area. The closest such record was located approximately 640 north-west of the site within an arable field. The site was assessed as being unsuitable for brown hare, which favour open farmland, due to a lack of suitable habitat and are therefore discounted from further assessment.

3.4.5. OTTER AND WATER VOLE

Consultation with GMEU did not identify any records of otter or water vole within the 1 km search area.

No watercourses were located on-site or directly adjacent to the site boundary. The closest watercourse is located approximately 20 m west of the site boundary. The site is separated from the watercourse by a residential garden. As such, due to a lack of suitable aquatic habitat on-site or data search records, both species groups have been reasonably discounted from further assessment.

3.4.6. BREEDING BIRDS

Consultation with GMEU identified records of barn owl (*Tyto alba*), common scoter (*Melanitta nigra*), grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*), hobby (*Falco subbuteo*), kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*), bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), dunnoek (*Prunella modularis*), herring gull (*Larus argentatus*), house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), lesser redpoll (*Carduelis cabaret*), reed bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*), skylark (*Alauda arvensis*), song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*), spotted flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*), starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and wood warbler (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*) within the 1 km search area.

Common and notable bird species are anticipated to be present within the denser sections of the on-site introduced shrub and treelines. The site was assessed as having negligible value for ground nesting birds, as the on-site habitats do not provide suitable cover from predators. Additionally, the on-site treelines and adjacent buildings may support perching predators, further reducing the suitability of the site for ground nesting birds.

3.4.7. REPTILES

Consultation with GMEU identified one record of common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) within the 1 km search area.

The site was found to be largely unsuitable suitable for reptiles due to the presence of hardstanding and short sward modified grassland; however, the introduced shrub may support the species group.



Therefore, there is the potential for reptiles to be present on-site, though it is determined that it is unlikely that reptiles will be present in large numbers.

3.4.8. NOTABLE INVERTEBRATES

Consultation with GMEU identified records of buff ermine moth (*Spilarctia luteum*), cinnabar moth (*Tyria jacobaeae*), crescent moth (*Helotropha leucostigma*), dark brocade moth (*Mniotype adusta*), dark-barred twin-spot carpet moth (*Xanthorhoe ferrugata*), dot moth (*Melanchra persicariae*), small heath butterfly (*Coenonympha pamphilus*), small phoenix moth (*Ecliptopera silaceata*), wall butterfly (*Lasiommata megera*), white ermine moth (*Spilosoma lubricipeda*) and white-letter hairstreak butterfly (*Satyrrium w-album*).

Notable invertebrates are unlikely to be present on site due to the lack of floristic diversity.

3.5. INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES

Consultation with GMEU did not identify any records of invasive non-native plant species within the 1 km search area.

Wall cotoneaster was identified within the introduced shrub (please refer to Appendix I for approximate location). Field horsetail was also identified, and though not an invasive non-native species, it can have an adverse impact on the development.



4. ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS AND MITIGATION

4.1. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

Development proposals include the construction of two residential properties and associated landscaping.

4.2. HABITATS

The site comprises habitats that were found to be common and widespread within the local area; however, the was found to contain value for common amphibians, birds, terrestrial mammals and reptiles within the introduced shrub, modified grassland and treelines.

4.2.1. LINE OF TREES

It is understood that both treelines are to be removed to facilitate the development. These should be replaced as soon as practicable.

It is recommended that the landscape planting comprises native species and species known to be of value for the attraction of wildlife. This will include fruiting and flowering species. Species deemed suitable for this development could include berry-bearing native species such as:

- ✿ Hawthorn
- ✿ Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*)
- ✿ Holly
- ✿ Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*)
- ✿ Spindle
- ✿ Dog rose (*Rosa canina*)
- ✿ Guelder rose
- ✿ Elder (*Sambucus nigra*)

All planting should be from a trusted pest-free source and, where possible, be of local provenance.

4.3. PROTECTED AND NOTABLE SPECIES

4.3.1. AMPHIBIANS

The site may support common amphibians within the introduced shrub and modified grassland. It is recommended that during the clearance phase of works, any common amphibians encountered be moved by hand, away from construction activities.



4.3.2. BATS

One tree (T1) was assessed as having PRF-I potential to support roosting bats due to the presence of lifted bark which may support a small number of bats on an occasional basis. Please refer to Appendix III for the full Preliminary Roost Assessment. It is understood that T1 will be removed to facilitate the development. Therefore, the tree should be soft-felled under the supervision of an ecologist. The tree should be cut below the potential roost features and slowly lowered to the ground. If the tree can be fully inspected and deemed free of bats once on the ground, the tree can be removed immediately. If the tree cannot be fully inspected and deemed free of bats once on the ground, then the tree is to be left overnight with the roost feature facing upward to allow any bats to escape before being removed the next day.

The site was assessed as having Negligible potential to support commuting and foraging bats. However, the broadleaved woodland located approximately 20 m west of the site is anticipated to be utilised by local bat species. It is therefore recommended that the proposed lighting plan considers the habitats of highest importance and maintains the adjacent broadleaved woodland as a dark area. It is recommended that any security lighting during construction is appropriately placed to avoid being directed at the adjacent broadleaved woodland.

To reduce the potential lighting impacts on bats, the following recommendations are advised for the lighting strategy:

- ✦ Warm white tones are preferable to blue-toned lights (3000k).
- ✦ LED lights are preferable as they produce minimal UV.
- ✦ To avoid light spill skyward, ensure lights face downward.

Lighting should follow the protocols outlined in The Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) "Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night - Guidance Note GN08/23" (2023).

It is recommended that any planting within the site be of native fruiting/flowering species to enhance the site for foraging bats post-completion. Bat boxes could also be incorporated into the proposed buildings.

4.3.3. BADGERS

No badger setts were located during the survey, though the on-site habitats were identified as being suitable for the species. Badgers are highly mobile and can create new setts in a short period of time. It is therefore recommended that an Updated Badger Walkover is undertaken prior to the development to identify any new badger setts.

The following precautionary working methods will be adhered to during the construction phase to ensure that no badgers within the local area are impacted by the proposed development:

- ✦ All site operatives will be inducted to the presence of the species and their working limits and legal responsibilities.
- ✦ All site operatives will be inducted as to identifying potential badger setts and should be vigilant if they suspect they locate a new sett during works and inform the project ecologist immediately.
- ✦ All excavations will be battered at a 45-degree angle, or ramps will be installed, to allow the escape should animals become trapped. Alternatively, excavations will be covered overnight.



- ✿ All site machinery and materials will be appropriately stored to avoid harm to the species, notably between July and November each year when extra care is needed to avoid potential impacts on pregnant females.

It is not anticipated that the development will have a significant negative impact on badgers within the local area.

4.3.4. HEDGEHOGS

The site was assessed as providing suitable refuge and foraging opportunities for hedgehogs within the introduced shrub. Vegetation should be retained where possible, though it is understood that this habitat will be removed to facilitate the development. Where vegetation requires removal, it should be checked for the presence of hedgehog prior to removal. If any vegetation is too dense to be fully inspected, it should be strimmed to 50 cm and checked for hedgehog before being cleared to ground level. It is recommended that any clearance takes place outside of December to March to avoid impacting hibernating hedgehogs.

4.3.5. BREEDING BIRDS

The site was assessed as having value for common bird species within the denser sections of the introduced shrub and treelines. Vegetation should be retained where possible, though it is understood that these habitats will be removed to facilitate the development. Where vegetation requires removal, it should be removed outside of the breeding bird season (March to September inclusive). If this is not possible, a nesting bird check will be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist up to 24 hours before works commence. If a nest, or nest in construction, is located then a stand-off distance will be maintained until the young have fledged. The ecologist will advise on suitable stand off and provide a toolbox talk to all site contractors regarding their working limits and legal implications.

4.3.6. REPTILES

The site was assessed as having potential for a small number of reptiles within the introduced shrub. As such, this habitat should be retained where possible. However, if it requires clearance, it is recommended that the following Precautionary Working Methods are followed:

- ✿ All site contractors are to be inducted as to the potential presence of the species group, their legal responsibilities and working limits, by a suitably qualified experienced ecologist.
- ✿ Any hedgerows to be removed will be checked by an ecologist for the presence of reptiles. If any vegetation is too dense to be inspected, it will be strimmed to a length of approximately 150 mm under the supervision of the ecologist.
- ✿ During works the site should be kept tidy of debris and material, and any vegetation within the working areas should be maintained below 50 mm in height to discourage amphibians or reptiles from re-entering these areas.
- ✿ If a reptile is identified, works should cease, and the project ecologist contacted immediately to capture the individual.

4.3.7. INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES

Wall cotoneaster and field horsetail were identified during the survey. As such, it is recommended that prior to the development commencing, the wall cotoneaster should be eradicated following the most current guidance set out by the Environment Agency by a qualified contractor.



Field horsetail was also identified during the survey, and it is recommended that this be eradicated due to the damage it can cause to hardstanding. Field horsetail is not listed under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and therefore does not require removal by a qualified Environment Agency contractor.



5. FURTHER SURVEYS

No further surveys are required to inform a planning application.



6. BIODIVERSITY STATEMENT

The scheme will be required to achieve a 10% net gain in biodiversity. Full details of this and a calculation of net gain could be finalised after detailed landscape plans have been prepared. It is recommended that an ecologist is consulted during the design stage to ensure, where possible, that biodiversity net gain can be achieved. If this is not feasible on-site, a conservation offset payment or off-site compensation may be required.

As the development will comprise two residential plots, any proposed habitats will be input into the metric as vegetated gardens due to these areas not being secured for 30 years and/or handed over to a management company. It is therefore not considered feasible to achieve a 10% net gain in habitat or hedgerow units on-site or satisfy the trading rules. As such, off-site compensation or a conservation offset payment will be required for the development to proceed.



7. REFERENCES

- ✿ Bat Conservation Trust (2023). Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night. Guidance Note 8.
- ✿ Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.
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- ✿ Collins, J. (ed.) (2023). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th Edition. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- ✿ English Nature (2001). Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines.
- ✿ The Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) (2023). Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night. Guidance Note GN08/23.
- ✿ Natural England Joint Publication JP029 (2019). The Biodiversity Metric 2.0. Auditing and Accounting for Biodiversity, User Guide, Beta Version.
- ✿ Oldham, R. S., Keeble J., Swan, M. J. S. & Jeffcote, M. (2000). Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*). Herpetological Journal 10 (4), 143–155.
- ✿ Stace, C. A. (2019). New Flora of the British Isles. Fourth Edition. Cambridge University Press.
- ✿ UKHab (2023). UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0.
- ✿ Wildlife and Countryside Act (2010) Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

END OF REPORT

APPENDIX I

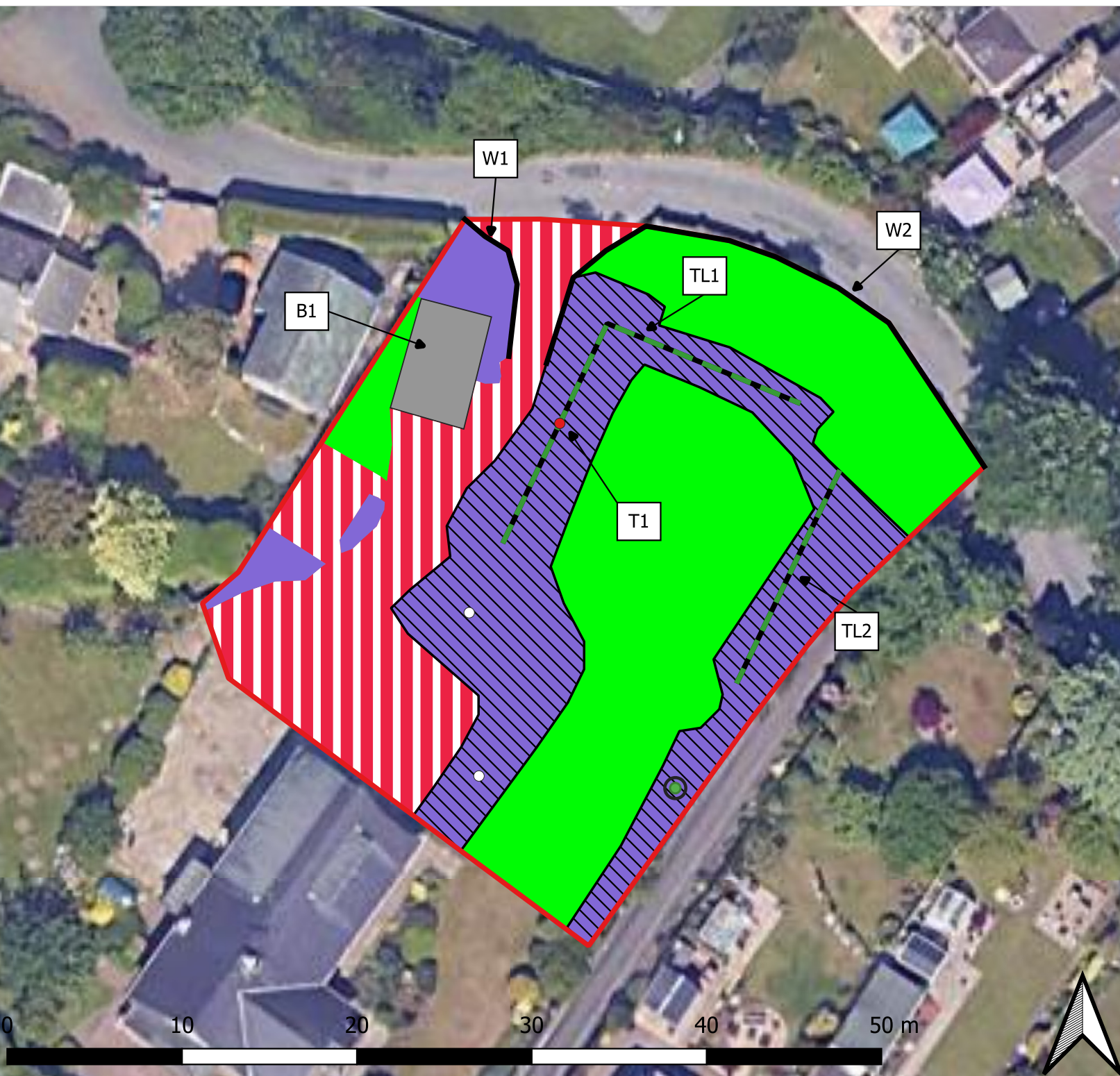
UKHAB HABITAT PLAN



- Red Line Boundary
- Line of trees
- Wall
- Existing urban tree
- Bat potential tree
- Wall cotoneaster
- Developed land; sealed surface
- Introduced shrub
- Modified grassland
- Buildings
- Field horsetail

Notes

Issue: 1	Revision: 1	Date: 05/07/2024	Drawn: CE	Authorised: CK
Client: Fairway Building and Remedial Contractors Ltd			Job No. 81-883	Date: 05/07/2024
			Drawing No. 001	Scale: 1:300 @ A4
Job title: Falcon Close, Rochdale			Drawing title: UKHab Habitat Plan	



APPENDIX II

WATERBODY PLAN



Key:

 Red Line Boundary

 Waterbody

 Buffered 250 m buffer

WB1

Notes

Issue: 1	Revision: 1	Date: 05/07/2024	Drawn: CE	Authorised: CK
Client: Fairway Building and Remedial Contractors Ltd			Job No. 81-883	Date: 05/07/2024
			Drawing No. 003	Scale: 1:300 @ A4
Job title: Falcon Close, Rochdale			Drawing title: Waterbody Plan	



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APPENDIX III PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT





REF.	DESCRIPTION	PHOTOGRAPH
B1	Building 1 (B1) comprised a parking garage in the north-west of the site. B1 was in good condition, with all brickwork well sealed and no obvious cracks or crevices present. Facias were also flush against the brickwork. The building could not be accessed internally during the survey. No potential access points were identified on any aspect of the building. B1 was therefore assessed as having 'Negligible' bat roosting potential.	
W1	Wall 1 (W1) was located in the north-west of the site and comprised a mosaic of different shaped bricks. The brickwork was well sealed, with no obvious cracks or crevices present. W1 was therefore assessed as having 'None' bat roosting potential.	
W2	Wall 2 (W2) was located in the north-east of the site and comprised a mosaic of different shaped bricks. The brickwork was well sealed, with no obvious cracks or crevices present. W2 was therefore assessed as having 'None' bat roosting potential.	
T1	Tree 1 (T1) was located within an on-site treeline (TL1). T1 comprised a dead tree of unknown species. Multiple sections of lifted bark were identified on T1. However, due to the exposed nature of the lifted bark, it was determined that the tree is only likely to support a small number of bats on an occasional basis. T1 was therefore assessed as having PRF-I potential to support roosting bats.	