
EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY & DAYTIME BAT SURVEY

342 HEYWOOD OLD ROAD, BOWLEE

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Site Information

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2022 by Watergrove to carry out an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey & Daytime Bat Survey at 342 Heywood Old Road, Bowlee, Rochdale, Greater Manchester (O.S. grid reference: SD 84450 06611 – see Figure 1). The proposed development site is the location of a fire damaged former restaurant and the associated parking and outdoor areas. An area of greenspace with trees lies immediately to the south and east of the site, with residential and commercial developments to the north and west. In the wider context the site is located within a semi-rural location with residential and commercial developments among the surrounding agricultural land.

An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey is required to provide an overview of the habitats present within the site and to assess any potential protected species issues on the site. A daytime bat survey is required to assess the potential use of the property by bats.

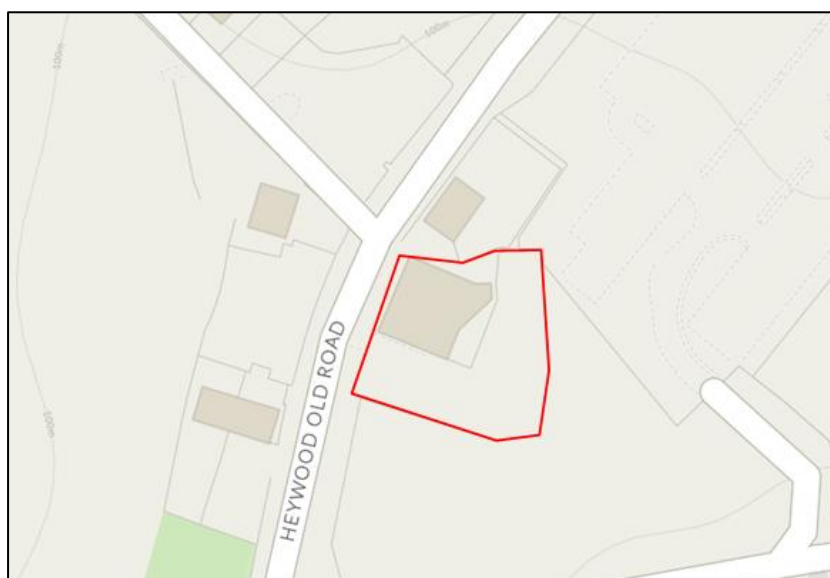


Figure 1 showing the location of the site

Description of Development

- 1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application for the demolition of the existing building and the construction of a new residential development with associated access, parking provision and landscaping.

Biodiversity in Planning

- 1.3 Biodiversity is a material consideration, and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have a requirement to consider biodiversity and protected species when determining planning applications. Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) gives specific reference to minimising the impacts of development on biodiversity. Local and Neighbourhood plans also provide guidance towards protecting and enhancing biodiversity, including priority habitats and notable species.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.1 A Phase 1 Habitat survey was undertaken to JNCC standards (JNCC, 2010). The site was walked and each habitat was assigned a Phase 1 habitat category. Species lists were taken at locations of botanical interest. All botanical nomenclature follows Stace, 2019. A Phase 1 map was produced showing habitat boundaries.
- 2.2 During the Extended Phase 1 survey, the habitats were assessed for their potential to support protected species. This included, for example, looking for signs of Badger activity (e.g. setts, paths, latrines and hairs on fences), assessing any waterbodies on site or near the site for their potential to support Great Crested Newt
- 2.3 The site was also surveyed for invasive, non-native plant species such as Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed.

Daytime Bat Survey

- 2.4 A daytime bat survey of the site was undertaken to search for, and to assess the potential for, a bat roost.
- 2.5 An external assessment of the affected buildings on the site was undertaken, which included, for example, looking for gaps between any soffit boards and walls, gaps between window frames and the walls, and looking for bat droppings on the walls and window ledges. An internal assessment was also carried out, with particular focus on gaps in walls, cracks in roof beams, and any evidence of bat activity, such as bat droppings, in the internal spaces.
- 2.6 A ground-level assessment of any trees affected by the proposals was also undertaken. This involved a search for potential roosting features (PRF's), including peeled bark, knot holes and branch splits.
- 2.7 A pair of close-focussing binoculars, a high-powered torch and, where necessary, an endoscopic camera, were used to search for evidence of bats.

Personnel and Seasonal Timing

- 2.8 Kate Reed (Senior Ecologist) carried out the surveys on the 2nd February 2022. Kate is an experienced ecologist and fully trained in botanical surveys and protected species assessments. February is a sub-optimal time of the year for botanical work however due to the habitat types present, a throughout assessment could be made at this time. The weather at the time of the survey was cloudy and dry. Daytime bat surveys can be undertaken at any time of year.

Survey Constraints

- 2.9 The main building on the site was inaccessible. Most of the site was fully accessible, unless indicated within the report. There were negligible constraints to the survey.



3.0 RESULTS

Description of Habitats

- 3.1 The Phase 1 Habitat Map can be found at the back of the report. The habitats on the proposed development site are described below.

Bare Ground

- 3.2 The majority of the site is covered with hardstanding, surrounding the building and used as car parking (see Photograph 1). This has been mapped as bare ground.



Photograph 1 showing the hardstanding

Ephemeral Short Perennial

- 3.3 Ephemera Short Perennial vegetation has started to colonise the edges of the hardstanding (see Photograph 2). This is composed of Yorkshire Fog *Holcus Lanatus*, Annual Meadow-grass *Poa annua*, Ivy *Hedera helix*, Broad-leaved Willowherb *Epilobium montanum*, Common Nettle *Urtica dioica*, Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. and Bryophytes.



Photograph 2 showing the ephemeral short perennial

Scattered Scrub

- 3.4 Scattered scrub is present on the northern site boundary and within the ephemeral vegetation (see Photograph 3). This is composed of young Elder *Sambucus nigra*, Field Rose *Rosa arvensis*, Leyland Cypress *Cupressus leylandii* and Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*.

3.5



Photograph 3 showing some of the scattered scrub

Scattered Trees

- 3.6 Scattered trees occur on the site, on the eastern boundary within the species-poor hedgerow (see Photograph 4). The sole tree species present was Elder *Sambucus nigra*.





Photograph 4 showing some of the scattered trees on site

Introduced Shrub

- 3.7 A flower bed is present at the rear of the building and as large planters at the front of the buildings (see Photograph 5). Species include Wilsons Honeysuckle *Lonicera nitida* Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* Holly *Ilex aquifolium* and Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*.



Photograph 5 showing the introduced shrub to the rear of the building

Species-poor intact hedgerow

- 3.8 A species-poor hedgerow exists on the eastern boundary of the site (see Photograph 6). The dominant species is Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* with occasional Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, English Elm *Ulmus procera* and Holly *Ilex aquifolium*.





Photograph 6 showing the hedgerow

Buildings, structures and Other Habitats

- 3.9 The former restaurant building is present on the site along with a shipping container. On the hardstanding to the rear of the building is a spoil heap composed of building materials and vegetation (see Photograph 7).



Photograph 7 showing the spoil heap

PROTECTED SPECIES

Great Crested Newt

- 3.10 Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* is a European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit) and the species is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.11 No waterbodies exist on the site or within 250m of the site boundary. The site supports limited suitable Great Crested Newt (GCN) terrestrial habitat. The hard standing and ephemeral short perennial habitats are considered hostile habitat for amphibians. The hedgerow base and the introduced shrub bed at the rear of the property offers some cover from predation as well as commuting/foraging opportunities for GCN.

Bats

- 3.12 All bat species are European Protected Species. This is implemented in the UK through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit). Bats are also protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Daytime Bat Survey

- 3.13 The former restaurant building was the subject of a daytime bats survey. There was not internal access at the time of the survey as extensive fire damaged am resulting in the building being unsafe, as a result an external assessment only was carried out.
- 3.14 The main building is a two-storey former pub/restaurant and is of brick construction with a pitched tiled roof (see Photograph 8). Single-story extensions exist on the northern and eastern elevations which are in a poor condition, extensively fire damaged (see Photograph 9). The brickwork on both the main building and the extensions are generally complete with no missing or damaged sections of brickwork/mortar that could provide potential roosting opportunities for bats.



Photograph 8 showing the exterior of the main building part of the northern extension





Photograph 9 showing the fire damaged eastern extension

- 3.15 The windows and door frames on the front facing elevation of the main property are all complete and boarded up for security on the lower floor. At the rear of the property and on the extensions the uPVC window frames are damaged by fire resulting in them melting and no longer lying flush with the surrounding brickwork and damaged glass panes or being missing entirely.



Photograph 10 showing the fire damaged windows at the rear of the property

- 3.16 The extensions support wooden soffit and bargeboards throughout these have been affected by the fire and are mostly missing at the rear of the building, the sections that do remain support potential access points (see Photograph 11).





Photograph 11 showing a potential access point within the soffit boards

- 3.17 The building has a pitched, slate-tiled roof covering the main building, the roof is mostly intact with only a small number of slipped tiles (see Photograph 12). Small gaps occur under the tiles which could provide potential roosting opportunities or access to the internal space for bats. The ridge tiles are intact and in good condition. Lead flashing exists around the chimney and where the lower extension meets the main house. Decorative stone coping stones are present on the main building these are all complete and intact sealing the edges of the roof. The roof over the extensions has been completely damaged by the fire with only very small section remaining (see Photograph 13).



Photograph 12 showing the roof of the main building



Photograph 13 showing the roof of the extension

- 3.18 There is a shed at the eastern side of the building, which is a rectangular, single-storey structure (see Photograph 14). It is constructed from wood with a clear fibreglass roof. The interior of the shed is well-lit, and the walls and roof beams are intact. No roof void exists. No interior cavities suitable for bats exist and no evidence of bat activity was found within the shed.



Photograph 14 showing the shed

- 3.19 The trees on site were all inspected from the ground for bat roosting features, such as cavities, limb damage or peeling bark. No such features or staining or evidence of bat use could be found associated with these trees.

- 3.20 Bats use linear landscape features for foraging and commuting and it is possible that bats forage and commute over the site, particularly the hedgerow.

Badger

- 3.21 Badgers *Meles meles* are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)/The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011. These Acts, for example, make it illegal to disturb a Badger whilst it is in a sett, to kill, injure or take a Badger and to obstruct the entrance to a Badger sett.
- 3.22 No Badger sett was located on the site or immediately adjacent to the site. No evidence of Badger activity such as latrines or snuffle holes was located on site.

Nesting Birds

- 3.23 All bird species are protected at their nest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011.
- 3.24 The site provides suitable nesting habitat for birds within the hedgerow, building, interdicted shrub, scattered trees and scrub.

INVASIVE SPECIES

- 3.25 Japanese Knotweed *Reynoutria japonica* is present on the north-east boundary of the site growing within a section of the hedgerow, this is an invasive non-native species as listed on Schedule 9 of The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) are present on or immediately adjacent to the site.



Photograph 15 showing the Japanese Knotweed

PROTECTED SITES

- 3.26 No statutory protected sites lie on the site or immediately adjacent to the site boundary. The nearest is Alkrington Woods Local Nature Reserve (LNR) which lies 1.6km to the south-east of the site. Seven statutory protected sites are located within 5km of the site:
- Blackley Forest LNR which lies 2.1km to the south of the site
 - Hollins Vale LNR which lies 2.7km to the north-west of the site
 - Hopwood Woodlands LNR which lies 2.9km to the north-east of the site
 - Rochdale Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which lies 3.9km to the north-east of the site
 - Boggart Hole Clough LNR which lies 4.1km to the south-east of the site
 - Mere Clough LNR which lies 4.4km to the south-west of the site
 - Philip's Park LNR which lies 4.4km to the south-west of the site
- 3.27 The site lies within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone, which lists certain types of development that may have a deleterious impact on protected sites nearby. The LPA may consult Natural England for advice on any potential impacts the proposed development may have on the nearby protected sites.
- 3.28 No non-statutory protected sites exist on or within 1km of the site boundary the nearest is Streams and Flushes near Bradley Hall Farm Site of Biological Importance (SBI) which lies 1.1km to the south of the site.

4.0 ASSESSMENT

Habitats

- 4.1 The Phase 1 Habitats present on the site are common throughout the UK. No nationally rare or locally rare plant species were located during the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey.
- 4.2 The site comprises an area of hardstanding with a fire damaged building and a small amount of introduced shrub, ephemeral vegetation is developing on sections of the hardstanding. A single hedgerow is present on the site all other site boundaries are open or marked with heras fencing. The habitats on site offer limited cover from predation, foraging habitat and a limited pollen and nectar source for invertebrates.

Development Context

- 4.3 The development proposals involve the demolition of the existing building and the construction of residential development with associated parking and landscaping. It is recommended a suitable landscaping scheme is created to help mitigate the loss of the habitats on site.

PROTECTED SPECIES

Great Crested Newt

- 4.4 No ponds exist on the site. No waterbodies exist within 250m of the site. The habitats on site offer limited value of GCN only the hedgerow base and the introduced shrub could offer suitable terrestrial habitat for GCN. Given the lack of breeding habitat in the locality and the limited value of the terrestrial habitats on site, no further survey work is required, and Great Crested Newt is not considered to be a constraint on development at this time.

Bats

- 4.5 The building on site was the subject of a daytime bat survey, there was no internal access at the time of the survey due to the extensive fire damage. The main section of the building is complete externally with potential access points created via the damaged windows, small gaps under the roof tiles and the small number of damaged/missing roof tiles. As there was no internal access and the building supports potential access points is considered to offer **low potential** to support a bat roost and a precautionary dusk emergence survey is recommended. The rear of the building is completely damaged by the fire and offers **negligible potential** to support a bat roost.
- 4.6 The trees on site were surveyed from the ground for features that could support bats, the trees on site are young and do not support any potential roosting features.
- 4.7 The hedgerow on site could provide bat foraging and commuting habitat, if the hedgerow is retained as a part of the development, it is recommended that soft lighting is used in this area.

Badger

- 4.8 No Badger sett was located on the site or immediately adjacent to the site. No evidence of Badger activity was located. Badgers are not considered to be a constraint on development.

Nesting Birds

- 4.9 The site support potential nesting habitat for birds within the hedgerow, buildings, scattered trees, scattered scrub and introduced shrub. If any work to these habitats will proceed within the bird nesting season (which is generally March-August), then a nesting bird check will be required immediately prior to any work.

INVASIVE SPECIES

- 4.10 The Japanese Knotweed which is an invasive non-native as listed on Schedule 9 of The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) should be eradicated from the site using a suitable methodology for this species.

PROTECTED SITES

- 4.11 No statutory or non-statutory protected sites lie within the proposed development site or immediately adjacent. Eight statutory protected sites lie within 5km of the site boundary. The closest site is Alkington Woods Local Nature Reserve LNR which lies 1.6km to the south-east of the site. No non-statutory protected sites lie within 1km of the site. The nearest is Streams and Flushes near Bradley Hall Farm SBI which lies 1.1km to the south of the site. At these distances, and with barrier habitats between the surrounding sites and the proposed development site, there is expected to be no deleterious impact on the protected sites from the development.
- 4.12 The site lies within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone, which lists certain types of development that may have a deleterious impact on protected sites nearby. For the location of the site the development type of not listed as a concern and Natural England should not need to be consulted at this time.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

- 5.1 Protected species are a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a planning application. The presence of protected species, the effect of the proposed development and suitable mitigation, if required, must be established before planning permission can be granted. Following the findings from the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, the following survey may be required:

- **Nesting Birds** - If any work to the scattered scrub needs to be carried out within the bird nesting season (which is generally March to August), then a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior to work commencing.
- **Bats** – further survey is required to determine if an active roost is present, and if so, the species of bat and the type of roost present. It is recommended that a minimum of one dusk emergence/dawn re-entry surveys are undertaken at the building at an optimal time of year (between May and September).

Invasive Species

- 5.2 The Japanese Knotweed should be eradicated from the site using a suitable methodology as a part of the proposed development.

Habitat Enhancement

- 5.3 General recommendations to bring biodiversity gain to the site are:

- Soft landscaping should include the provision of native and non-native flowering perennial species, to provide a pollen and nectar source for invertebrates.
- Bird boxes and/or bat boxes should be erected on the new buildings where possible.
- Trees planting of native species where practically possible.

6.0 REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP

