

23 ALKRINGTON HALL ROAD SOUTH MIDDLETON

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

June 2021



Report Control Sheet

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Site Address	23 Alkrington Hall Road South, Middleton, M24 1NJ
Grid Reference	SD86410463
Approximate Site Area	0.1 ha
Current Site Use	The site comprises a residential dwelling with driveway and ornamental garden. Located adjacent to the site is a large area of broadleaved woodland.
Designated Sites within Zone of Influence	The site is located immediately adjacent to Alkrington Woods Local Nature Reserve (LNR).
Notable Habitat Features	No notable habitats were found within the site boundary. The site comprised amenity grassland, ornamental garden, buildings and hardstanding. Habitats adjacent north and west comprised broadleaved woodland which was considered notable due to its inclusion in the LNR.
Notable Species Applicable to the Assessment	Bats Breeding birds Terrestrial Mammals
Recommendations for Further Survey and Mitigation	• A nesting bird check should be undertaken if any trees or buildings are to be removed within the nesting bird season (March – September inclusive). • A sensitive lighting strategy should be adopted for the boundary features. • Best practice pollution prevention measures adopted throughout construction works. • Sensitive vegetation removal relating to hedgehogs.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.0 SCOPE & PURPOSE

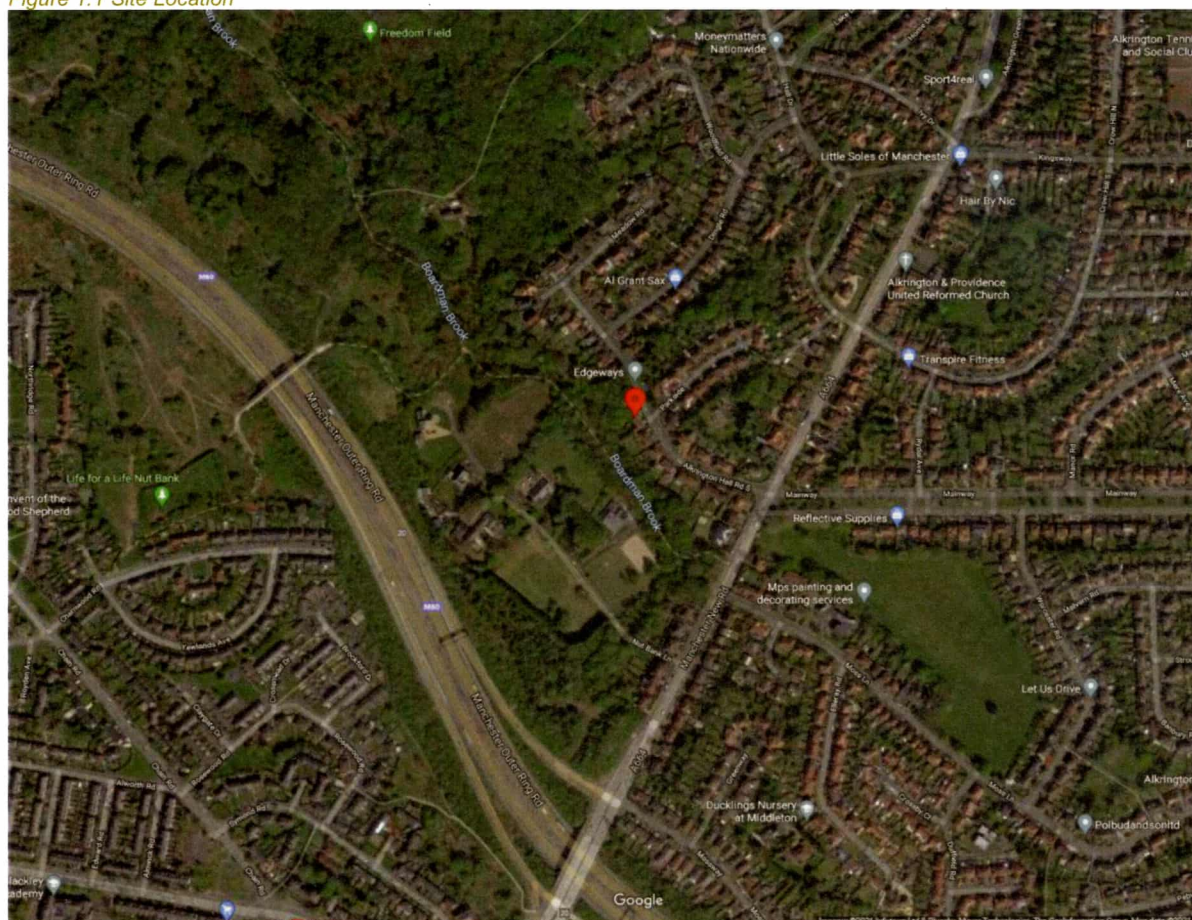
1.1.1. Collington Winter Environmental Ltd was instructed by Seed Arboriculture Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) at 23 Alkington Hall Road South, Middleton, Manchester. This report has been prepared to support the application for a side extension to the existing property.

1.1.2. The author of this report is Olivia Collington BSc (Hons), MEnvSc, CEnv. Director and Principal Ecologist at Collington Winter Environmental Ltd.

1.2. LOCATION

1.2.1. Please refer to Figure 1.1 for the approximate site location. The site is located to the south west of Alkington Hall Road South and is an end property.

Figure 1.1 Site Location



1.3. OBJECTIVES

1.3.1. 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 or notable species or habitats
- Identify any mitigation or further survey required and opportunities for strategic wildlife enhancements.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1. DESK STUDY

2.1.1. An initial desk-based assessment of the site was undertaken to collate baseline data. The desk study included:

- Review of Magic.gov.uk website for details of any designated sites, notable habitats and presence of European Protected Species Licences.
- Review of aerial and OS maps for habitat information, as well as determining locations of potential waterbodies to be considered in the assessment.
- Review of potential habitat links on and off site, to determine the potential zone of influence of the proposed development.

2.1.2. A data search was not undertaken by obtaining records from the local Environmental Records Centre due to the small size of the site and small scale of development. Instead, the above sources of information were used to make a judgement of the sites potential value for notable species and habitats.

2.2. VEGETATION AND HABITAT ASSESSMENT

2.2.1. An Ecological Appraisal of the site was undertaken by Austin Morley BSc (Hons) Consultant Ecologist at Collington Winter Environmental. The survey was undertaken on 14th June 2021. Weather conditions were dry and clear.

2.2.2. The walkover survey was undertaken broadly in line with standard methodology as detailed in “JNCC Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey” (2010). The assessment is undertaken with consideration of methodology as per “Preliminary Ecological Appraisal” (CIEEM, 2018).

2.2.3. A Phase 1 Habitat Plan has been produced and is presented in the Appendix of this report. The mapping is based on the “JNCC Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey” (2010), though adjustments have been made based on judgement to demonstrate habitats in a clearer manner, or where standard guidance does not fit the conditions found on site.

2.3. PROTECTED AND NOTABLE SPECIES ASSESSMENT

2.3.1. A search for signs of protected and notable species of fauna was undertaken during the site walkover. This included both field signs of species, as well as potential for species to be present based on habitat availability.

2.3.2. The searches broadly included the following:

- Assessment of waterbodies and terrestrial habitats for suitability to support notable amphibians.
- Searches for field signs of, and habitat suitability for bats.
- Suitability of habitats to support reptiles, and searches for incidental field signs.
- Searches for field signs of badger, including setts, mammal paths, snuffle holes, badger hair and latrines to indicate activity.
- Searches of watercourses for signs of water vole and otter, and assessment of habitat availability for the species.
- Assessment of the suitability of the site to support notable bird species and recording any field sightings of birds during the walkover.
- Assessment of the sites ability to support notable invertebrates.
- Searches for non-native invasive species.

2.4. SURVEY LIMITATIONS

2.4.1. This survey does not constitute a full botanical survey. Key species for each habitat type have been identified to give a broad representation of habitats present within the site. The survey was undertaken in April, which whilst a valid time of year to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, some species of flora may have been missed

by the assessment.

2.4.2. No internal access into the building was available during the survey and therefore an external inspection was undertaken and a precautionary assessment made for bat roosting potential.

3 SURVEY RESULTS

3.1. SITE CONTEXT

- 3.1.1. The site is located within the residential area of Middleton, to the southwest of Alkrington Garden Village. The site is an end property, located adjacent to McBride Riverside Park which partially makes up part of Alkrington Woods Local Nature Reserve.
- 3.1.2. Boardman Brook is located to the south of the property and creates a significant linear commuting resource, linking with Alkrington Woods LNR. It is anticipated that a variety of wildlife including birds, bats and terrestrial mammals will use these features as habitats of high value in the local area.
- 3.1.3. The woodland which is located adjacent north and west of the site is identified on Magic.gov.uk as UK Priority Habitat Inventory Deciduous Woodland.
- 3.1.4. No Natural England Protected Species Licences were identified within 1 km of the site during consultation with Magic.gov.uk.

3.2. DESIGNATED SITES

- 3.2.1. The site is located within the Impact Risk Zone for Rochdale Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which is located approximately 2.5 km east of the site boundary.
- 3.2.2. Alkrington Woods LNR is located adjacent north and west of the site boundary.

3.3. HABITATS

- 3.3.1. Please refer to Drawing 20-154 for the Phase 1 Habitat Map for the site. Photographs of the site are presented in Table 3.1.
- 3.3.2. The site comprised a semidetached residential building rendered with pebble dashing to the external walls. The roof was pitched with tiles. The building appeared in a good state of repair. A hardstanding driveway was present.
- 3.3.3. The amenity garden to both the front and rear of the dwelling was found to be largely unmanaged and dominated by common nettle, bramble, greater willowherb and creeping bent. Concrete flags and other building rubble/materials were present in these areas.
- 3.3.4. Adjacent to the north and west of the site, behind the garden fencing, broadleaved woodland was present which comprised a dense canopy dominated by sycamore, lime, sweet chestnut, hawthorn, sycamore and ash. The understorey was largely comprised of common nettle, bluebell, ground ivy and bramble with some areas of bindweed present.
- 3.3.5. Directly to the north of the garden fence, the woodland slopes downwards towards a dry stream feature.
- 3.3.6. To the west of the site boundary, Boardman Brook was present which was found to be between 0.5 – 1.5 m in depth. Ferns, bramble and trees line the banks, though no emergent or marginal vegetation was present.

Table 3.1 Photographs of the Site

Feature	Photograph
The main residential dwelling found to be in a good state of repair.	
Front garden comprised of rubble and building materials.	

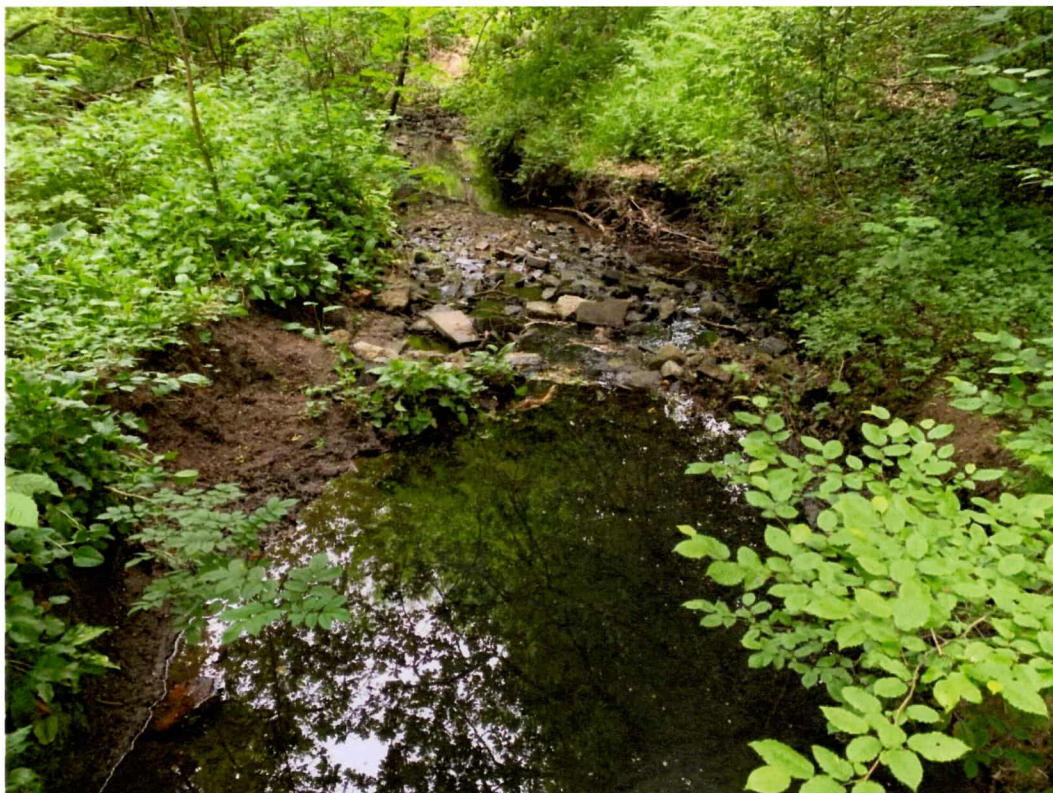
Rear garden comprised of tall ruderal unmanaged habitats.



Broadleaved woodland located immediately north of the site.



Boardman Brook located to the west of the site boundary.



SPECIES

BIRDS

- 3.3.7. The site provides small areas of habitat for nesting birds by way of the unmanaged vegetation within the site. It is anticipated that a range of common and widespread passerine species will utilise the site for foraging and potential nesting.
- 3.3.8. The adjacent broadleaved woodland provides high value for nesting birds and is anticipated to be a key feature within the local landscape for the species.

BATS

- 3.3.9. The building on site was a semi-detached residential house with pebble dashing render to the external. The walls, chimney stack and roof were all found to be in a good condition, with no obvious potential roosting locations for bats identified. The building was assessed as providing negligible bat roosting potential.
- 3.3.10. The front and rear gardens to the property are anticipated to provide some value for foraging bats based on their unmanaged nature, however the adjacent woodland will provide far higher value for bats.
- 3.3.11. No trees with bat roosting potential were identified within the site. Trees were located within the adjacent woodland which could provide bat roosting potential based on their size and features present (such as holes and crevices in the trunk).

OTHER TERRESTRIAL MAMMALS

- 3.3.12. No evidence of badger (*Meles meles*) was identified on site or within the wider area during the survey, however it is anticipated the adjacent woodland will provide high value habitats for badger and the species are likely to be present locally.
- 3.3.13. The unmanaged garden and adjacent woodland are expected to be of value for European Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*).

4 RECOMMENDATIONS AND MITIGATION

4.1. HABITATS

- 4.1.1. The habitats on site were found to be of low value for wildlife in general, being largely comprised of a residential dwelling and unmanaged garden. The adjacent habitats of the woodland and associated Boardmans Brook were found to be the highest value habitats in the local area.
- 4.1.2. The proposals comprise a small side extension to the property to the north. The clearance of the garden habitats on site to facilitate this is not considered to be of any significant impact to local wildlife. It is understood that the extension will not require the felling of any trees within the adjacent woodland beyond the fence line, and therefore no significant impacts are anticipated (assuming Root Protection Measures are put in place as recommended by a suitably qualified arborist).
- 4.1.3. During construction of the side extension, all due care should be paid to the adjacent habitats which make up part of a LNR. This includes adherence to all best practice pollution prevention measures (Pro PPG5) to ensure there is no runoff or spills which could encounter the watercourses and cause negative impacts. Any machinery refuelling should be undertaken on hardstanding habitats and spills cleaned immediately.
- 4.1.4. No construction lighting should be aimed at the adjacent woodland during works. All works should cease before dark each night to avoid deterring nocturnal animals from utilising the site.

4.2. SPECIES

BIRDS

- 4.2.1. Any vegetation removal is required within the breeding bird season (March – September inclusive), a nesting bird check should first be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist. If any nests, or nests in construction are located, a suitable buffer zone should be maintained until the young have fledged. The vegetation should be removed within 48 hours of the nesting bird check.
- 4.2.2. Post development to enhance the site, a series of bird boxes could be installed within the site to provide new nesting opportunities for nesting birds.

BATS

- 4.2.3. Proposed construction lighting is to follow the protocols outlined in the Institute for Lighting Engineers document “Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Lighting” (2005) and BCT’s “Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK” (2018) to minimise disturbance and sky-glow off site. No lighting should be directed at any of the hedgerows within the site.
- 4.2.4. A series of bat boxes could be installed within the site post development to enhance the site for bats post development.

TERRESTRIAL MAMMALS

- 4.2.5. No evidence of badger was identified within the site, however prior to commencement of works a check should be made for any mammal burrows on or adjacent to the site. If burrows are detected, an ecologist should be instructed to undertake a walkover to determine if they belong to badger. If badger setts are identified, mitigation may be required in the form of stand off buffer zones or Natural England Mitigation Licences.
- 4.2.6. The site provides value for hedgehog. If any vegetation is to be removed, it should first be checked by hand for hedgehogs. If any hedgehogs are located, they should be carefully relocated to an area away from harm but within the close vicinity of the site to ensure they remain in their home territory.

5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1. WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENTS

5.1.1. The proposed development has scope for a range of enhancements to benefit wildlife. These include:

- Provision of native fruiting and flowering plants throughout the development.
- Installation of bat and bird boxes throughout the site.

5.2. FURTHER SURVEYS REQUIRED

5.2.1. Please refer to Table 5.1 for a summary of further surveys required.

Survey	Timescale
Nesting Bird Check	March – September (Inclusive)
Badger	Check for any new setts

5.3. CONCLUSION

5.3.1. The site comprises of habitats which are of limited value for wildlife, being predominantly comprised of a residential dwelling and unmanaged garden.

5.3.2. The proposals are not anticipated to have a significant negative impact on any ecological features or receptors within the local area if the above detailed mitigation is followed.

6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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