

61 King Street South

Rochdale

Daytime Bat Survey and Extended

Phase 1 Habitat Survey

2023



**RACHEL
HACKING
ECOLOGY**

Client HNA Architects

Project Title 61 King Street South, Rochdale

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Executive Summary

Development Details

The client is proposing residential development on land at 61 King Street South, Rochdale (hereafter referred to as the 'site').

This report describes the ecological features of the site and its surroundings and assesses the potential impacts of the development on the ecological interest. Recommendations are provided so that the development is compliant with biodiversity policy and legislation.

Ecological Interest

The site has a low level of ecological interest. The existing bungalow has low potential to support roosting bats. Nesting birds may use the building and trees on site.

Outcomes

Further survey is required to establish the status of roosting bats and inform mitigation requirements. Potential impacts to birds can be avoided by timing works to avoid the nesting season. Opportunities to enhance the biodiversity value of the site should be incorporated within the proposed development.



1. Introduction

1.1 Project Brief

- 1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2023 by HNA Architects to carry out a daytime bat survey and Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of land at 61 King Street South, Rochdale (hereafter referred to as the 'site'). The site is located at NGR SD 89268 12389 (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. showing the site location

Description of Development

- 1.1.2 A planning application is to be submitted for the extension of the bungalow and the construction of three additional dwellings.

Relevant Planning History

- 1.1.3 No previous planning applications were identified.

1.2 Scope of Work

- 1.2.1 The Client commissioned Rachel Hacking Ecology to carry out the following works:
- Desk-based study to obtain details of designated sites within 1km.
 - Record the extent, type, and condition of habitats within the site.

- Search for signs of protected species and assess of the potential of habitats and features to support protected and notable species.
- Identify the requirement for further survey or mitigation, as appropriate.

1.3 Site Visit Information

Surveyor Details

- 1.3.1 Simon Holden *MCIEEM* (Associate Ecologist) visited the site on 17th May 2023.

Weather

- 1.3.2 The weather at the time of the survey was dry, overcast and mild.



2. Methods

2.1 Desk Study

- 2.1.1 The Magic (Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside) website was interrogated for the presence of Statutory Designated Sites (and European Protected Species licences) within a 1km radius of the site.
- 2.1.2 The Impact Risk Zones for any SSSI within 5km of the site was checked to determine whether the Local Planning Authority will need to consult with Natural England.
- 2.1.3 Greater Manchester Local Record Centre website was used to identify any non-statutory designated sites within 1km.

2.2 Field Survey

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.2.1 In accordance with JNCC guidelines¹ the site was walked over and the habitats and features of ecological interest were mapped and described. Habitats and features of particular interest were target noted.
- 2.2.2 During the walkover habitat and features were assessed for their suitability to support of protected and notable species in accordance with CIEEM guidelines². Field signs of protected, notable, and invasive non-native species, if encountered, were mapped, and described.

Bats

- 2.2.3 The exterior of the site was surveyed from the ground using binoculars and a high-powered torch. Features offering potential access to roosting bats were recorded. Such features may include suitable gaps in roof coverings, gaps behind external cladding/facia and gaps in masonry.
- 2.2.4 Evidence indicating the presence of roosting bats was also searched for. This may include bat droppings on walls, windows or on the ground below roost entrances or staining from fur oil around roost entry points.

¹ JNCC (2010). *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A Technique for Environmental Audit*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough

² CIEEM (2017). *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

- 2.2.5 The interior of the site was surveyed to identify any evidence indicating use by roosting bats. Such evidence may include bat droppings, feeding remains, urine splashes, live or dead bats and staining from fur oil on timbers.
- 2.2.6 Any trees on the site that are to be affected by the proposals were given a ground-level assessment, searching for Potential Roosting Features (PRFs), such as flaking bark, woodpecker holes, knot holes and limb splits.
- 2.2.7 Assessment of bat roost potential was made using professional judgement, in accordance with the criteria described in standard methodology³.

2.3 Biodiversity Net Gain

- 2.3.1 During the site walkover the ecological condition of each habitat was assessed in accordance with the Natural England (2022) guidelines⁴. Habitat types recorded during the field survey were converted from the JNCC system to the UK Habitat Classification system⁵.

³ Collins, J. (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - good practice guidelines. 3rd edn. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

⁴ Panks, S. White, N., Newsome, A. et al. (2022). *Biodiversity metric 3.1: Auditing and accounting for biodiversity – User Guide*. Natural England.

⁵ Butcher, B., Carey, P., et al. (2020). UK Habitat Classification – Habitat Definitions V1.1. at <http://UKhab.org>

3. Results

3.1 Constraints

- 3.1.1 Field survey results are valid for a limited duration and no investigation can provide a complete description and characterisation of a site. The composition of habitats and species can change depending on environmental variables and the mobility of species, so the results of a study become less reliable over time. In some cases, surveys that are 3 years old may be acceptable for a project assuming that habitats have not significantly changed in the intervening period, but for protected species it is likely that survey data will need to be no more than 18 months old.

3.2 Designated Sites

- 3.2.1 The desk study provided information on the designated sites listed below in Table 1.

Table 1. Designated Sites			
Name	Status	Location/distance	Interest
Rochdale Canal	Special Area for Conservation (SAC)	1km east	Floating water-plantain <i>Luronium natans</i>
Rochdale Canal	Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	1km east	Aquatic vegetation

- 3.2.2 The desk study identified that the site is located within the Impact Risk Zone of the Rochdale Canal SSSI. The proposed development will not require the Local Planning Authority to consult with Natural England.

3.3 Habitats

Amenity Grassland

- 3.3.1 The site includes an area of amenity grassland dominated by Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus*. This is classified as modified grassland under UK Habs. It is in poor condition as it fails assessment criterion 1 (6-8 species per m²).





Photograph 1 showing amenity grassland in foreground and tall ruderal to the rear

Tall Ruderal

- 3.3.2 Several patches of tall ruderal habitat exist on the perimeter of the site. Species include Broadleaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, Rosebay willowherb *Chamaenerion angustifolium*, Common Nettle *Urtica dioica* and Common Ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*. This is classified as Sparsely Vegetated Land; Ruderal/Ephemeral under UKHabs. It is in poor condition as it fails criteria A and B.



Photograph 2 showing tall ruderal habitat

Ephemeral/Short perennial

- 3.3.3 Areas of recently cleared ground have developed a patchy covering of ruderal species. Species present included Broadleaved dock, Yorkshire Fog, Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg. and Red

Fescue *Festuca rubra*. This is classified as Sparsely Vegetated Land; Ruderal/Ephemeral under UKHabs. It is in poor condition as it fails criteria A and B.

Bare Ground

- 3.3.4 Hardstanding is present. This is classified as developed land/sealed surface under UKHabs. This habitat is of very low distinctiveness and low strategic significance. Condition assessment is not applicable.

Scattered trees

- 3.3.5 Several trees are present along the western boundary of the site. Species include Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, Leyland Cypress *Cupressocyparis x leylandii*, Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and Privet *Ligustrum ovalifolium*. The trees are in moderate condition as they fail criteria A and E.

Buildings

- 3.3.6 A detached bungalow is present. This is described further in relation to bat roost potential.

3.4 Species

Bats

- 3.4.1 The building on site is a bungalow constructed from brick. It has a pitched, concrete tiled roof.



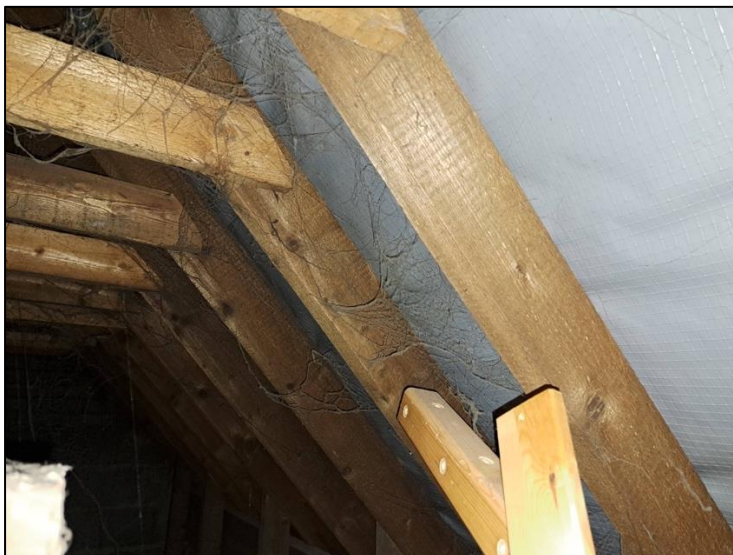
Photograph 3 showing the building on site

- 3.4.2 Areas of missing mortar are present on the roof verges at both gable ends (see Photograph 4). Significant gaps are present around the window on the western gable (see Photograph 4).



Photograph 4 showing gaps along the roof verge and around window

- 3.4.3 Occasional gaps behind the wooden soffits are present. Flashing around the chimney is lifted (see photograph 5).
- 3.4.4 Internally, the roof is lined with a plastic membrane. The eastern section is converted to a dwelling space. The western section of the roof void is sealed off with a wall.
- 3.4.5 The bungalow is assessed as offering low potential to support roosting bats.



Photograph 6 showing the roof lining

- 3.4.6 None of the trees on site supported potential roosting features for bats.
- 3.4.7 Mandale Park is located 100m west of the site, offering suitable bat foraging habitats.

Birds

- 3.4.8 The building and trees offer potential to support nesting birds.



4. Assessment

4.1 Development Context

- 4.1.1 The following assessment assumes that the existing building will be remodelled, and three new dwellings will be constructed on the site.

4.2 Impacts on Designated Sites

- 4.2.1 There is no habitat connectivity to the Rochdale Canal SAC/SSSI and no impact pathways exist. No impacts to any statutory or non-statutory designated sites are likely to result from the proposed development.

4.3 Impacts on Habitats

- 4.3.1 Habitats on site are likely to be lost to facilitate the proposed development. The habitats on site are of low distinctiveness, comprising common and widespread species. No specific mitigation is required.

4.4 Impacts on Species

Bats

- 4.4.1 Works affecting the roof of the bungalow could result in impacts to bats and their roosts, should these be present. Impacts could include individual bats being killed or injured and roosts being destroyed.

Birds

- 4.4.2 Works affecting the roof of the bungalow or the trees on site could result in impacts to nesting birds, should these be present.

4.5 Biodiversity Net Gain

- 4.5.1 The details of the proposed development including landscape design are not available at the time of writing. Once these are fixed an assessment of the likely changes to biodiversity units can be made. If the application of the Mitigation Hierarchy demonstrates that on-site delivery is not feasible or is insufficient to achieve a net gain and comply with policy requirements it will be necessary to deliver off site compensation, as identified by reference to the ecological network, which will “prioritise projects that are deliverable and can secure the greatest benefit for biodiversity.”



5. Recommendations

5.1 Further Surveys

Bats

- 5.1.1 A dusk emergence survey should be carried out on the building to establish the status of roosting bats and inform any mitigation requirements. The survey should be undertaken in suitable weather conditions by at least two surveyors to ensure the building is watched adequately. The survey should be undertaken between May and September.

5.2 Mitigation Measures

Bats

- 5.2.1 New buildings should incorporate bat boxes to increase roosting opportunities on the site. These should be installed at eaves height, on southeast to southwest elevations, but not directly above windows or doorways.

Birds

- 5.2.2 Impacts to birds can be avoided by undertaking any removal of trees or works to the bungalow roof outside the nesting bird season (March to August). Should this not be possible, a check for nesting birds should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist no more than 48 hours prior to works. Any active nests would need to be protected by a suitable buffer until nesting is complete.
- 5.2.3 New buildings should include nest boxes to provide nesting opportunities for House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*. These should be installed at eaves height on northeast to northwest elevations.

Habitats

- 5.2.4 The proposed development should include measures such as planting trees and shrubs to provide resources for invertebrates and birds.



Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021) describes the Government's planning policy for England and how it should be applied. Within this framework, the requirements in relation to biodiversity are included within several policies. The two most relevant to individual planning decisions are Paragraphs 174 and 180, shown below:

- 174. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
 - a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
 - b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
 - c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
 - d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures; etc...
- 180. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:
 - a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
 - b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
 - c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and



- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

Legislation

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CRow Act 2000) includes the notification and confirmation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). SSSIs can be notified for their floral, faunal, geological, or physiographical features. Protection against damaging operations and management of SSSIs is also included within the Act. Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) are zones around an SSSI account for the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified and identify development proposal which could have adverse impacts.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CRow Act 2000) protects native animals, plants and habitats. Under the Act it is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild animal listed on Schedule 5 and it is an offence to interfere with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturb animals occupying such places. The Act prohibits picking, uprooting or destroy any wild plant (or any attached seed or spore) listed in Schedule 8.

European Protected Species (EPS) such as bats, Hazel Dormouse, Otter, Natterjack Toad, Smooth Snake, Sand Lizard and Great Crested Newt are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CRow Act 2000) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The Acts make it an offence to:

- a) Deliberately capture, injure or kill an EPS;
- b) Deliberately impair an EPS's ability to survive, breed, reproduce, rear or nurture young; to hibernate or migrate; or significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the EPS.
- c) Possess or control live or dead EPS or any part of, or anything derived from a EPS;
- d) Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of an EPS;
- e) Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place that is used for shelter or protection by an EPS;
- f) Intentionally or recklessly disturb a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection that is occupied by an EPS.

All common herptiles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CRow Act 2000). Grass Snake, Slow Worm, Common Lizard, Adder are protected against intentional killing or injury.



Common Frog, Common Toad, Smooth Newt and Palmate Newt is protected against sale. In addition, all British reptiles, Common toad and Great Crested Newt are listed as Species of Principal Importance.

All nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage, or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb a species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act while they are nest building or at or near a nest with eggs or young, or to disturb the dependent young.

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 makes it an offence to wilfully, or to attempt to kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a Badger, or intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett. Interference of a sett includes disturbing badgers during occupation of a sett, or damaging or destroying a sett, or obstructing access to the sett.

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 places a duty on every public authority to have regard to conserving biodiversity. Section 41 of the same Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitats that are of 'Principal Importance' for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. The Secretary of State must take steps, as appear reasonably practicable, to further the conservation of those living organisms and habitats in any list published under this section. The list of species and habitats of principal importance currently includes 943 species and 56 habitats. These are the species and habitats found in England which are regarded as conservation priorities under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework

The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 protect 'important' hedgerows from destruction or damage. A hedgerow is 'important' if it (a) has existed for 30 years or more; and (b) satisfies at least one of the criteria listed in Part II of Schedule 1 of the Regulations. Under the Regulations, it is against the law to remove or destroy 'important' hedgerows unless permitted by the local planning authority.

