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Inspection & Assessment in Relation to Bats & Breeding Birds

October 2024

Project Reference: PR-0260-24

Phase 5 – Sherrif Street
Rochdale
OL12 6QZ

National Grid Reference: SD 8935 1382



Phase 5, Sherrif Street, Rochdale, OL12 6QZ
Inspection & Assessment in relation to Bats & Breeding Birds

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Executive Summary

As part of a proposed planning application concerning six buildings at Phase 5, Sherrif Street, Rochdale, Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd carried out a daytime preliminary roost assessment (PRA) in relation to bats with an inclusive inspection for breeding birds on the 24th July 2024.

The survey was commissioned by RBH; the scope of proposals is understood to involve the demolition of six three-storey flats.

Detailed methods, findings, conclusions and recommendations are presented throughout the report; however, the reader should be aware of the following **Key** points:

Biodiversity Gain

Based on the information gathered during the diurnal assessment, the site is not likely to be exempt from the biodiversity gain pre-commencement planning condition.

The site is host to the following biodiversity value:

- Habitat: **5.43**
- Hedgerow: **0.02**
- Watercourse: **0.00**

It is understood that at this stage of the development there are no post development plans, and it is unknown if any trees are to be retained as part of the proposals, therefore it is likely that the required 10% net gain will be achieved through a mixture of onsite and offsite habitat creation/enhancement.

Bats:

Based upon the findings of the survey covered through sections 5.0 – 6.0 of the report and supported by **Appendix I**, the buildings Phase 5, Sherrif Street, are determined to offer a bat roost suitability of '**Low**' in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust - Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th ed. (2023) (**Figure 1.1**); further survey work is recommended to be carried out at the site before an impact assessment can be concluded.

The sub-building is deemed as **negligible** as it is determined to hold no bat roost suitability and therefore will not require any further surveys

Table 7.2. Recommended minimum number of survey visits for presence/absence surveys to give confidence in a negative result for structures (also recommended for trees but unlikely to give confidence in a negative result).		
Low roost suitability or PRF-I	Moderate roost suitability	High roost suitability or PRF-M
One survey visit. One dusk emergence survey ^a (structures). No further surveys required (trees).	Two separate dusk emergence survey visits ^b .	Three separate dusk emergence survey visits ^b .

Figure 1.1 - Extract from *Bat Conservation Trust – Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines*, 4th ed. (2023)

*It is recommended that **one dusk / emergence survey** is conducted during the active season of bats (May – August, extending into September), in order to establish if / how the buildings are being used by bats, and if so, identify the species present, abundance, roost locations and flight lines around the site following emergence surveys. A total of **24 surveyors** would likely be required at the site to cover all elevations host to roost potential.*

In relation to hibernation, the site is unlikely to be utilised by large numbers of bats owing to the history of the site. However, in line with Bat Conservation Trust - Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th ed. (2023) at non-classic sites the presence of hibernating bats needs to be considered and progressed accordingly.

Therefore, it is recommended that timings in relation to bats are considered as part of the demolition works; and it is recommended that the demolition of the buildings take place outside of the hibernation season November – February and that in addition to this a number of bat boxes are incorporated into the post development on differing elevations to allow for varied climatic conditions throughout the year to compensate.

Breeding birds:

In relation to common bird species, the site offers numerous nesting platforms in the form of mature trees and shrubs. It was also observed that feral pigeons were able to enter some of the vacant buildings through open/damaged windows, the gaps in the soffits are also considered large enough to allow egress for species such as house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*). Thus, all of the structures on site and the taller vegetation are considered to offer suitable nesting platforms for birds during the breeding bird season of March – August, inclusive *see section 7.8 -7.12* of this report for further details.

NB: *All wild birds (with only minor exceptions) and their nests whilst being built or containing eggs or dependant young are protected from destruction, damage and disturbance under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is a punishable offence to interfere in any*

Incidental observations:

Owing to the likely hood of hedgehogs utilising the vegetated areas of the site it is recommended reasonable avoidance measures (RAM's) for this species are drawn up by a suitably qualified ecologist; this document should include the requirement for a destructive search whereby the sites vegetation is cleared in tandem with hand search undertaken by the attending ecologist.

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1.0 Introduction & Reasons for the Survey

- 1.1 As part of a proposed planning application concerning the demolition of six apartment blocks on Sherrif Street, Rochdale, Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd carried out a daytime preliminary roost assessment in relation to bats with an inclusive inspection for breeding birds on the 24th July 2024.
- 1.2 The survey was commissioned by RBH; the scope of proposals is understood to involve the demolition of six apartment blocks known as Ollerton, Newstead, Romsey, Quinton, Ullesthorpe and Vaynor along with the clearance of the site. See **Figure 1.2** for the location of the site.

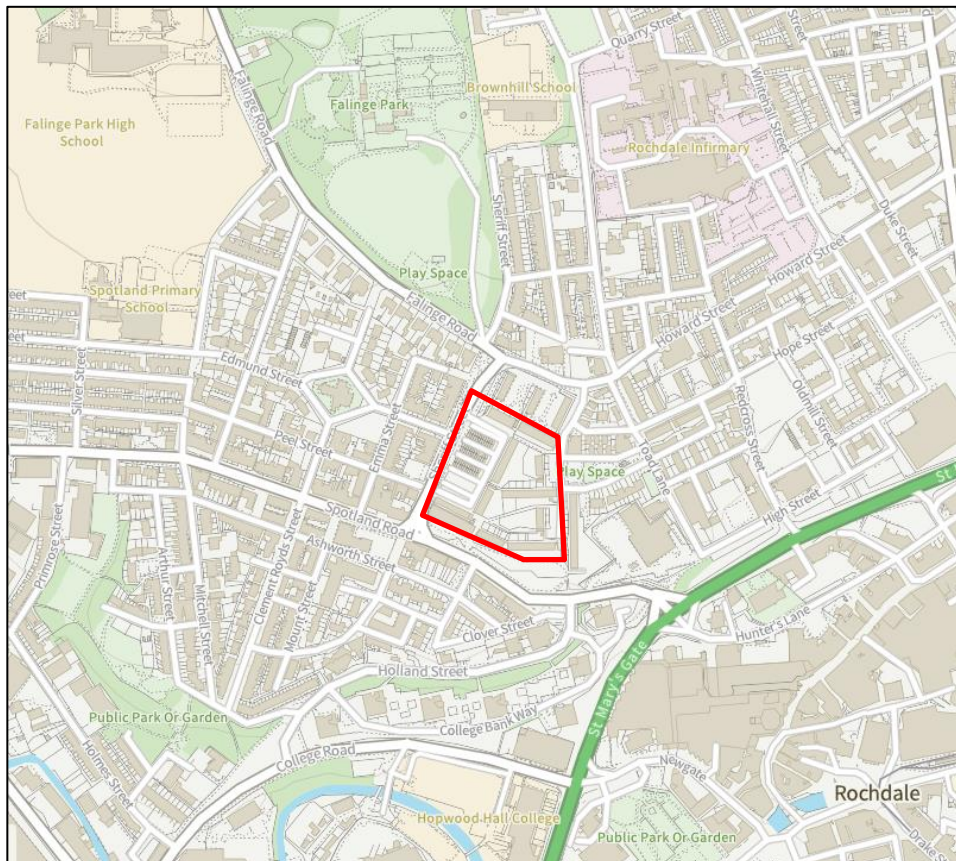


Figure 1.2 –Location of the site © MAGiC Maps 2024

- 1.3 The aim of the survey was to ascertain if the structure of the flats is of value to bats, whilst an assessment of nesting and general suitability for birds was also carried out. If any potential roost features (PRFs) were found to be suitable for bats, or signs of use were observed, where suitable habitats and / or bat records exist in the locality, then more detailed surveys would be recommended i.e. dusk emergence surveys during the main active season of bats which is May – August (extending into September).
- 1.4 If additional surveys are required following the initial site visit, this report will outline the details of those further requirements, in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust – Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th ed. (2023).
- 1.5 If it was determined that bat(s) or their roost / place of rest / shelter will be subsequently impacted by the works then a European Protected Species (EPS) licence would be legally required to proceed with the development.

- 1.6 If evidence indicated breeding birds may be impacted by proposals, tailored recommendations would be made accordingly, species pending.
- 1.7 As part of the local authority's planning policies and obligations to the Planning Framework, ecological surveys are generally required prior to planning permission being granted where protected / priority habitats and species are, or may be present, that could be affected by the proposals for which the application seeks consent. Where more detailed surveys are recommended by the ecologist, following an initial daytime investigation, then Local Planning Authorities (LPA), on the advice of their ecological advisors, will not grant permission until such time that all relevant information is gathered.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 1.8 In addition to the above, the survey aimed to ascertain the baseline value of the habitats on site, to allow for the completion of a 'Biodiversity Statement'. Habitats would thus be identified, measured and mapped using UK Habitat Classification – Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (2023), before they would be condition assessed in accordance with Biodiversity Net Gain Principles and Rules (DEFRA, February 2024) covered in the most recent User Guide.¹

¹ See:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65c60e0514b83c000ca715f3/The_Statutory_Biodiversity_Metric_-_User_Guide_.pdf

2.0 Protected Species & Their Requirements

Bats

- 2.1 All British bats and their **roosts are afforded full protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) and are listed in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019) (EU Exit). When dealing with cases where an EPS (all UK bats) may be affected, a planning authority is a competent authority within the meaning of Regulation 7 of the Regulations, and therefore has a statutory duty, as the local authority, to have due regard to the provisions of the Regulations in the exercise of its functions.

2.2 Uses of Buildings by Bats

- a) Summer breeding roost (May – August)
- b) Hibernation roost (October – March)
- c) Transitional or temporary roost (other months)

- 2.3 Roost selection is often closely correlated to suitable foraging habitat within a reasonable commuting distance from the roost and different sites are used depending upon insect densities and abundance; climatic conditions can also affect their ability to successfully forage. All British bats are insectivorous.

*** The term roost is generically referred to as a place that bat/s use for the any of the above reasons, however it should be noted that under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019) (EU Exit) (Regulation 43 (d) the term roost is not used but refers to “a breeding site or resting place of such an animal” and is afforded legal protection. The roost, breeding site or resting place of bats, which ever terminology is used is legally protected whether or not bats are in occupation.*

- 2.4 Up to ten bat species have been recorded within Greater Manchester to date, most of which use built structures, notably occupied residential buildings, for roosting. The most frequently encountered bat species is the common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and its abundant status in Greater Manchester is reflected throughout the UK.

Breeding birds

- 2.5 All wild birds, no matter how common, their eggs, young and nests, whilst being built or occupied, are protected under both the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA 1981) and Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC Act 2006).
- 2.6 Any work that would damage an occupied nest, eggs or young of breeding birds, regardless of priority status, must be avoided; any damage to nests that may occur as a result of the development should be outside of the main breeding bird season (March – August). On occasions nests can become unoccupied during the breeding season but the status of the nest(s) should be determined by a suitably experienced ecologist / ornithologist.
- 2.7 Birds listed on Schedule 1 (Sch.1) of the WCA 1981, for example peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) are afforded a greater level of protection and are safeguarded also from disturbance. This raptor is known to inhabit urban environments, where suitable nesting sites, such as churches, cathedrals and other taller structures, coincide with an abundance of prey items in the form of urban bird species, including feral pigeon.

Policy

- 2.8 Paragraph 186 of the National Policy Planning Framework (as revised in December 2023) states:

“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.”

- 2.9 This national focus on the conservation of biodiversity and the natural environment is further echoed in Policy G7 of the Rochdale Core Strategy, entitled ‘Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity’, which states:

“We will ensure that sites and features of biodiversity and geodiversity importance are given full and appropriate recognition and protection. Opportunities for enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity, creating new sites and features of interest and improving opportunities for public enjoyment will be supported. No development should result in a net loss of biodiversity or geodiversity interest in the borough and overall development in the borough should result in a net gain.”

This policy goes on to state:

“It is important to ensure that statutorily protected sites are given very strong protection e.g. the borough’s SSSI’s, SPA and SAC’s. Details in respect of requirements for new developments on or adjacent to the European Protected Sites will be contained within the Allocations DPD. Where a development has the potential to affect the conservation interests of a site protected by European legislation, we will require full assessment of any impacts and mitigation measures, including Habitats Regulations Assessment as well as any required Environmental Assessment. For non-statutorily designated sites, development should not adversely affect its core ecological value and extent and wherever possible avoid and fully mitigate any impacts. Proposals should also take full account of protected species interest and the need to maintain existing population levels and minimise unavoidable impacts on either protected species or their habitats. It should be noted that ‘brownfield’ sites can be of significant biodiversity interest, and can also contribute to wider ecological networks, and this must be taken into account.”

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 2.10 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), revised in December 2023, legislates net gain in biodiversity through paragraphs 180(d), 185(b) and 186(d). An effort should be made, therefore, through the development design to provide ecological enhancement in order to

deliver an overall increase in biodiversity, and opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.

- 2.11 The Environment Act 2021 ('The Act') came into force in November 2021. Aspects of the Act relating to BNG came into force on the 12th February 2024, whereby BNG is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).
- 2.12 The Act is supported by secondary legislation, consisting of six statutory instruments laid within law, of which the relevant legislation includes:
- The Environment Act 2021 (Commencement No. 8 and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2024²
 - The Biodiversity Gain Site Register Regulations 2024³
 - The Biodiversity Gain Site Register (Financial Penalties and Fees) Regulations 2024⁴
 - The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024⁵
 - The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024⁶
 - The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024⁷

Priority Habitats & Species

- 2.13 In the United Kingdom, legal protection and otherwise legislative recognition is afforded to particular habitats and species based on a variety of ecological factors. These are typically referred to as priority habitats and species, and can be identified under a variety of legislation and local policy, notably the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP), Section 41 (s.41) of the NERC Act as well as under Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPS).

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/44/contents/made>

³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/45/contents/made>

⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/45/contents/made>

⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/47/contents/made>

⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/48/contents/made>

⁷ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/50/contents/made>

3.0 Survey Methodology

- 3.1 As part of the Inspection & Assessment in relation to Bats & Breeding Birds report, a desk-top and field-based study is conducted. Methods for both components of the appraisal are given below.

Desktop study

- 3.2 Prior to a site visit, a desktop study was conducted using online resources to obtain information pertaining to any sites afforded statutory (e.g. SSSI) and non-statutory (e.g. LWS) designations for nature conservation within 2.0 kilometres of the site boundary. To do so, the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGiC – provided by DEFRA) was accessed to gather such information; this particular interactive mapping service was also used to locate any locally granted European Protected Species Mitigation Licenses (EPSML) and species records to further inform conclusions concerning such species in the context of the study site and its proposed development.
- 3.3 Historic satellite imagery was reviewed using sources such as Google Earth (© 2023/24) to help establish past use of the land and determine the nature of adjoining and extending habitats; such information aids in the understanding of how the site might interact with its surroundings ecologically and its value in that context, and how the development may impact at a wider scale.
- 3.4 In addition, the Rochdale Borough Council 'Planning – Simple Search' online function was utilised to help inform the desktop study by analysis of existing publicly accessible ecological survey results that have been carried out locally within the previous five years.
- 3.5 A commercial data request to the Local Environment Records Centre serving the area – in this case Greater Manchester Local Records Centre (GMLRC) – has not been sourced and is justified through application of the following recent guidance:

1) The Guidelines for Accessing, Using and Sharing Biodiversity Data in the UK (CIEEM, 2020) states:

"It is generally expected that a desk study, including a data search, will be a key part of the ecological surveys or reports produced to inform a planning application. Freely available web-based sources of data and contextual information should always be used; in some cases, it may be acceptable to not undertake a data search with the LERC or other relevant NSS or local interest groups, for example:

- ii) Situations where the **data search would be extremely unlikely to provide information needed to inform the assessment, due to the scale and location of the proposed development**. The appropriateness of excluding a data search will need to be judged on a case-by-case basis as, in most situations, it will be essential to carry out such a search even if the development is very small or is likely to have a low impact. It can be very difficult to demonstrate that a data search would not have provided relevant information without obtaining and reviewing those data.*
- iii) In some cases for Preliminary Roost Assessments of buildings in **low impact / small-scale scenarios**, such as an extension to a residential property, loft conversions (full or partial), installation of Velux/dormer windows, single modern agricultural or similar building conversion or demolition; however, it should not be assumed that data searches are never required for such scenarios and this must be judged on a case by case basis and justified accordingly.*

- 3.6 As exemptions as made **bold** above can be applied at the site, whilst following best practice, it is considered unnecessary to conduct a commercial data request following the desk study effort and daytime assessment at this time, which offers a proportionate level of survey effort. If, however, a data search is considered necessary by the Local Authority advisory body to inform the ecological impact assessment following any further surveys recommended in this report, a proportionate data search should be commissioned with results interpreted into the conclusions and recommendations of a re-issued / updated report.

Field survey

- 3.7 In context with the above, a diurnal inspection and assessment of the building and the immediate environment in relation to bats and breeding birds was conducted on 24th July 2024 in bright conditions (13°C), wind 2/12 (Beaufort scale), 50% cloud, by the following surveyor (see **Table 3.1**):

Table 3.1 – Site surveyor credentials

Name	Description of most relevant credentials
Miss. T. Hesketh	An experienced Consultant Ecologist with 5 years professional training and experience; graduating with a BSc in Biology and MSc in Conservation Management (a course accredited by CIEEM) who holds a FISC Level 4 (2022) and is certified in River Condition Assessment methodology (MoRPh Rivers). Accredited agent on the Class 2 Natural England bat license of Mrs K Wilding (CLS-14227)
Miss. R. Donnely	A seasonal ecological consultant with Tyrer Ecological consultants.

Bats

- 3.8 Bat Conservation Trust – Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th ed. (2023), states:

“The guidelines should be interpreted and adapted on a case-by-case basis according to site-specific factors and the professional judgement of an experienced ecologist. The questions should not be whether the guidelines were followed, but were the defined objectives of the surveys met? Where examples are used in the guidelines, they are descriptive rather than prescriptive.”

- 3.9 The site was assessed for bats; a daytime bat walkover (DBW) was undertaken to observe, assess and record any habitats or features suitable for usage by bats, either as commuting, foraging or roosting provision. Wider connectivity to other habitats was also considered during the DBW.
- 3.10 Buildings and other permanent / semi-permanent structures (where present) were subject to a preliminary roost assessment (PRA), to identify potential areas which may be of value to bats and to determine evidence of use. This typically involves a systematic search of the external aspects of any structure(s), comprising an investigation of features known to be used by bats (for example roofing material, soffits, fascia, lead flashing hanging tiles) using a high-powered torch and close-focus binoculars, where necessary. An internal assessment of the structure(s) was also carried out, with the aid of a high-powered torch and endoscope, where

necessary, to identify any evidence of bat use of a structure. Field signs of bats typically comprise bat droppings, urine splashing, fur-oil staining, incidental animal presence, dead specimens and / or the presence of prey items, such as moth wings.

- 3.11 Trees (where present) would be subject to a ground level tree assessment (GLTA) using equipment such as close-focus binoculars and a high powered-torch. Potential roost features (PRFs) can include woodpecker holes, rot holes, hazard beams, other vertical or horizontal cracks or splits in stems and branches, partially decayed lifted bark, knot holes, man-made holes, tear-outs, cankers in which cavities have developed, other hollows or cavities, including butt-rots, double-leaders forming compression forks with included bark, gaps between overlapping stems or branches, partially detached climbing species with stem diameters in excess of 50mm or pre-existing bat / bird boxes. These PRFs can then be determined as PRF-I or PRF-M, dependent on their suitability for individual / low numbers of bats or their capability to host multiple bats.
- 3.12 Criteria for roost assessment are based upon the determinants given in the Bat Conservation Trust – Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th ed. (2023): (see **Figures 3.1 – 3.3** overleaf).

Birds

- 3.13 The site and any built structure(s) on site were inspected for evidence of nesting and suitability for relevant species. Bird species observed and heard were recorded on site, and a search was made for nest material, or areas suitable for nesting – this can take the form of searching structures, woody vegetation, semi-aquatic vegetation such as reeds and / or ground flora. Elevations of any buildings or structures on site were inspected for evidence of birds that show a high dependency upon built structures, many of which are in a state of decline. These might include the following species for example (list non-extensive):
- **Starling** (*Sturnus vulgaris*): Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) red status
 - **House sparrow** (*Passer domesticus*): BoCC red status
 - **House martin** (*Delichon urbica*): BoCC red status
 - **Swift** (*Apus apus*): BoCC red status
- 3.14 Additional to the site's capacity to support generally common species for breeding, the area was also subject to an assessment for wider capacity to support species with extra protection under Sch.1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) (as amended), as well as those listed in s.41 of the NERC Act and on the Greater Manchester BAP.

Biodiversity Gain

- 3.15 Assessment of baseline Area Habitat / Hedgerow / Watercourse units have been carried out and assessed separately in accordance with the guidance, principles, and rules – where present on site.
- 3.16 Measurement of habitats was carried out using a combination of desktop software – QGIS, Google Earth and MAGiC Maps 2023/24, whilst physical habitat measurements were also taken in the field during ground truthing, where necessary.
- 3.17 The results, conclusions and recommendations are based on a number of factors i.e.
- Practical experience of the surveyor,
 - Knowledge of bat / bird species relevant to the site location and geographical range,

- Nature of the immediate / surrounding habitat in relation to foraging / commuting opportunities,
- Presence / absence of roost potential and the general condition of the structure / tree,
- Presence of loft spaces and / or cellars and reasonable practicality of use,
- Value and types of roost potential, if present (i.e. – maternity, hibernation, transitional).

3.18 The results, conclusions and recommendations of this report have been assessed by Mrs. K. Wilding, the Director of Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd, and her assessment is consistent with that of the surveyor Miss. T. Hesketh.

Table 4.1. Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement.

Potential suitability	Description	
	Roosting habitats in structures	Potential flight-paths and foraging habitats
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).	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines, or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).
Negligible ^a	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.	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
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 ^b and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats ^c).	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^b and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
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 ^b and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

a Negligible is defined as 'so small or unimportant as to be not worth considering, insignificant'. This category may be used where there are places that a bat could roost or forage (due to one attribute) but it is unlikely that they actually would (due to another attribute).

b For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance.

c Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten *et al.*, 2016 and Jansen *et al.*, 2022). Common pipistrelle swarming has been observed in the UK (Bell, 2022 and Tomlinson, 2020) and winter hibernation of numbers of this species has been detected at Seaton Delaval Hall in Northumberland (National Trust, 2018). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK, but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in prominent buildings in the landscape, urban or otherwise.

Figure 3.1 – BCT guidelines extract

Table 4.2. Guidelines for assessing the suitability of trees on proposed development sites for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.	
Suitability	Description
NONE	Either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any
FAR	Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree
PRF	A tree with at least one PRF present

Figure 3.2 – BCT extract on tree roost suitability criteria

Table 6.2. Guidelines for categorising the potential suitability of PRFs on a proposed development site for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.	
Suitability	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.

Figure 3.3 – BCT extract on tree roost categorisation criteria

4.0 Limitations

- 4.1 The survey took place within the optimal season for both bats and breeding birds, therefore there was a good chance of encountering direct evidence of both species such as through fresh droppings or feeding remains for bats, or through the identification of bird nests or breeding behaviour for signs of breeding birds. Thus, timing is not considered a constraint in this instance.
- 4.2 The buildings could not be accessed internally; thus, the exterior was solely assessed without any constraint. However, owing to the built-up nature of the area and the lighting present we would not expect to find loft dwelling species, as these are species which are typically photo sensitive. While this is accepted as a limitation, as the onsite ecologist was unable to ascertain internal conditions, it is considered that enough evidence was gained from the diurnal assessment to confidently assess the building's potential to support roosting bats.
- 4.3 In considering all potential survey constraints, no significant limitations were however experienced that might adversely influence the results, conclusions, and recommendations of this report.

5.0 Desk Study Results

- 5.1 The site of the proposed works, Phase 5, Sherrif Street (referred to in-part as “the site”) is located in the town of Rochdale within Greater Manchester, around 16.4km north-east of Manchester city centre (see **Figure 5.1** below). The site is comprised of several 3-storey apartment blocks, car parking and small areas of amenity grassland.

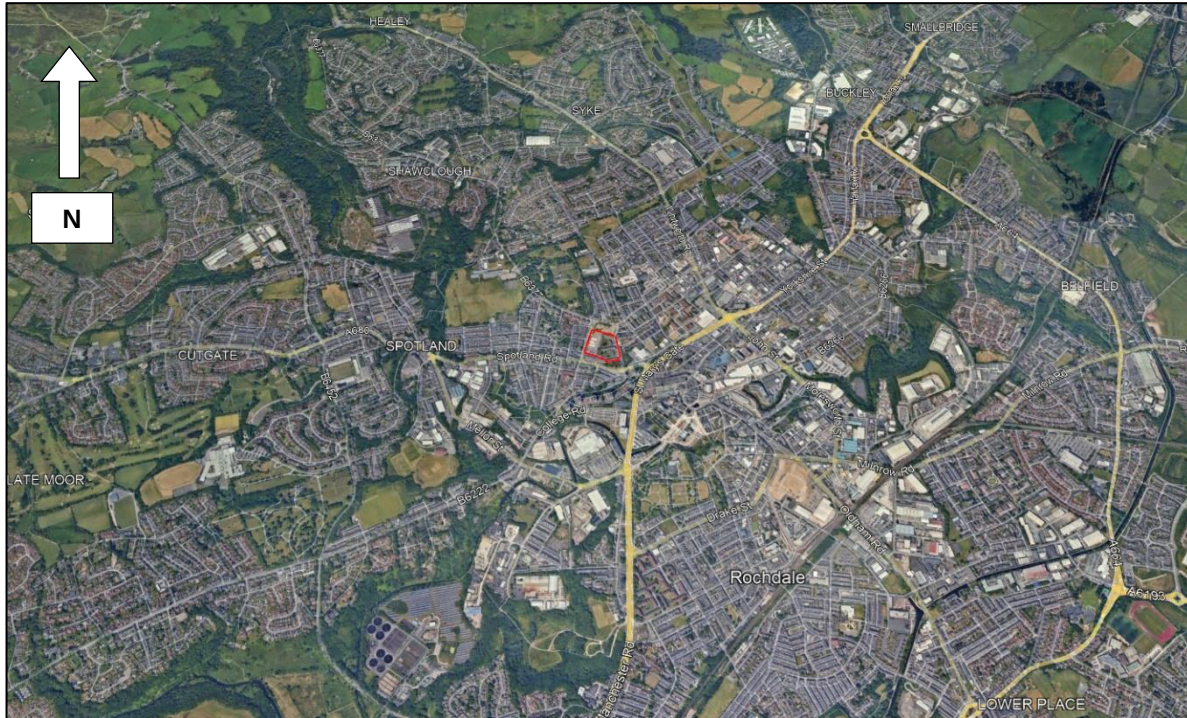


Figure 5.1 – Location of the application site within the wider landscape (© Google Earth Pro 2023/24)

- 5.2 The immediate environment consists predominantly of a mixture of urban residential and retail properties including housing, small businesses, shops and shopping centres. Rochdale town centre is 0.5km to the south-east. To the north of the site is Falinge Park, a large public green space. The River Roch is 0.3km to the south of the site. Other semi-natural habitats include a large, wooded area to the north-west, urban tree lines, and amenity grasslands within parks, gardens, allotments and playing fields.
- 5.3 The extending environment is urbanised leading to sub-urban areas, green space is present throughout the extending environment, in the form of school playing fields, cemeteries with mature tree lines and open grasslands. The River Roch lies 550m south of the application site.
- 5.4 The protected species most typically associated with the habitats described is the Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) bat, frequently associated with using buildings in both urban and rural settings; this species presence in the landscape is likely.

Relevant planning history

- 5.5 Five previous planning applications have been submitted in respect of the site; four of these were made in 2022 with the fifth in 2019. Two of these applications, 22/80059/FUL and 22/00420/DEM, submitted 2022 were granted prior approval for the demolition of the block of flats known as Waverley. These flats were within the site boundary and were of similar construction to the current buildings. Two bat surveys were conducted in relation to this application as the building was deemed of moderate suitability for supporting roosting bats by Temple. The report stated that whilst there was some commuting and foraging of common

pipistrelles, no evidence was found of roosting bats. Therefore, no license was required, and the permission was granted.

Designated sites

- 5.6 Two statutory designated sites for nature conservation are present within a 2.0km search radius of the site (see **Table 5.1** for information and **Figure 5.2** below for a visual aid).

Table 5.1 – Statutory Designated Sites within 2.0 kilometres of application site and reasons for designation

Site name	Designation type	Interest features
Rochdale Canal (1.6 km to the south-east)	Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	A 25.5-hectare site containing important habitats for submerged aquatic plants and emergent vegetation, including extensive colonies of the nationally scarce Annex II SAC qualifying Floating Water-plantain (<i>Luronium natans</i>), which is representative of the formerly more widespread canal populations of northwest England. The site also supports a diverse assemblage of aquatic flora such as pondweeds (<i>Potamogeton sp.</i>), with nine species present. The species present are indicative of mesotrophic water quality, with evidence of local enrichment. Nationally scarce animal species are also present in the canal, such as a water beetle (<i>Agabus ulingosus</i>) and the pea mussel (<i>Pisidium pulchellum</i>). Waterfowl such as coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>), moorhen (<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>) and mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) can also be found here, alongside 12 species of coarse fish and other birds such as grey wagtail (<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>) and kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>).
Healey Dell (1.5km north-east)	Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	A 26.6 ha site, consisting of woodland, both lowland mixed deciduous woodland, and ancient woodland, along the banks of the river Spodden.

Phase 5, Sherrif Street, Rochdale, OL12 6QZ
Inspection & Assessment in relation to Bats & Breeding Birds

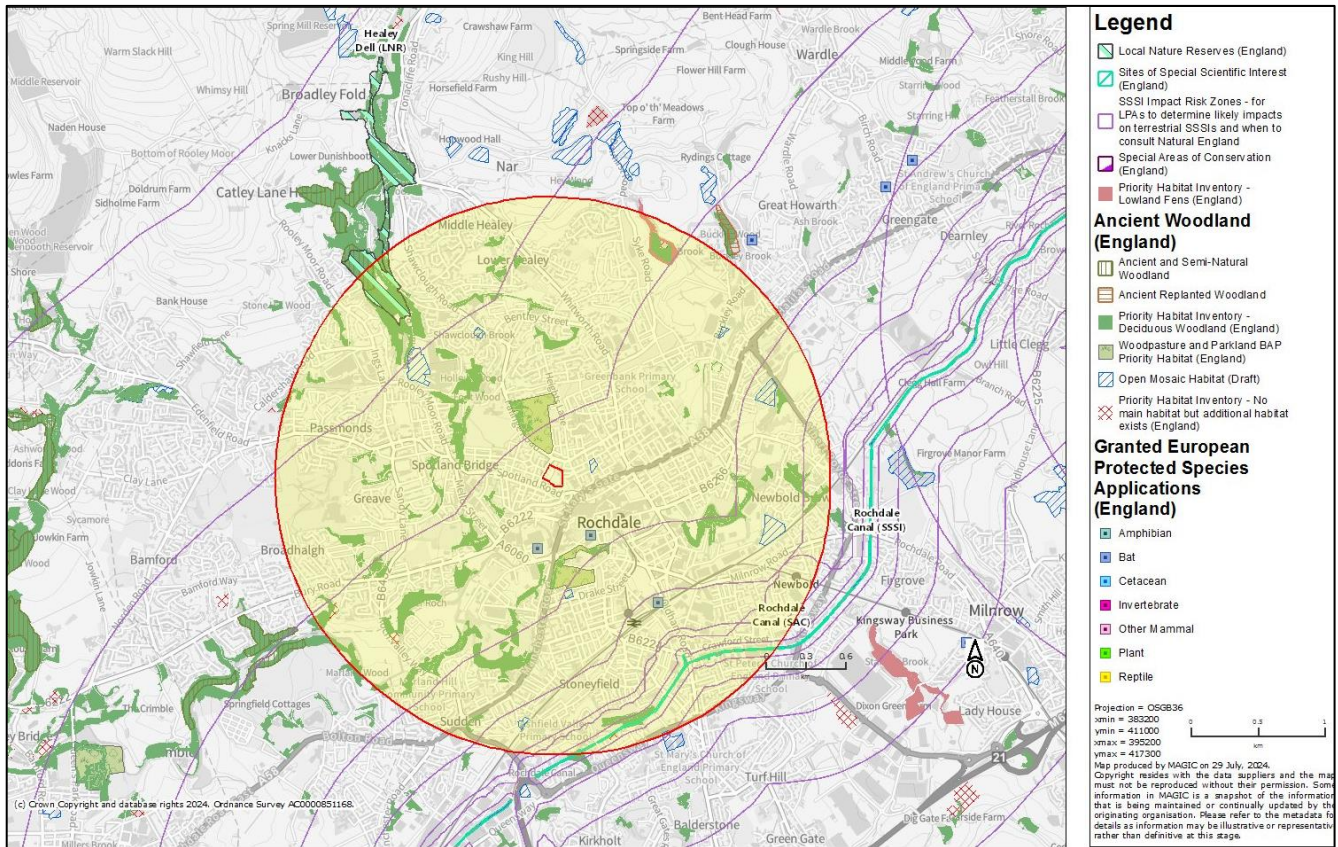


Figure 5.2 – Designated site data for the area within 2.0km of application site © MAGiC Maps 2024

- 5.7 Analysis of MAGiC Maps indicates Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) for one Site of Special scientific interest (SSSI) extends within the 2km radius of the site, Rochdale Canal SSSI. Based on the IRZ information available, the sites do not fall under any of the categories which would trigger further consultation with Natural England. Given the distance from the site, and nature of the planned development, no impact on the SSSIs is deemed likely.
- 5.8 Where no impact to SSSI's is predicted, NE issue the following advice within their standing guidance on SSSI impact zones (NE, 2019):

“It is important to note that the SSSI IRZs only indicate Natural England’s assessment of likely risk to the notified features of SSSIs. Where they indicate such a risk is unlikely, this does not mean that there are no potential impacts on biodiversity or the wider natural environment.”

Habitats

- 5.9 An online search of MAGiC Maps identified the following priority habitats within a 2.0km search radius (see **Table 5.1** overleaf).

Table 5.1 – Priority habitats located within 2.0km buffer.

Habitat Type	Designation	Distance to site
Deciduous woodland	Priority Habitat Inventory	Multiple. Closest: 0.3km north-west
Lowland fens	Priority Habitat Inventory	1.7km north-east
Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land	Open Mosaic Habitat (Draft)	0.2km east
Woodpasture and Parkland	BAP Priority Habitat	0.1km north

Bats

- 5.10 An online search of MAGiC Maps revealed that three European Protected Species Mitigation Licenses (EPSMLs) for bats have been granted within a 2.0km radius of the site boundary, see **Table 5.2** for further details and **Figure 5.2** for visual aid.

Table 5.2 – EPSML data records from MAGiC Maps

Licence Number	Distance from Site	Context (where relevant)
EPSM2009-709	0.5km south-west	Common pipistrelle; destruction of resting place
2015-8047-EPS-MIT	0.4km south-east	Common pipistrelle, Soprano pipistrelle and Daubenton's bat; destruction of a resting place
EPSM2011-2750	1.1km south-east	Common pipistrelle; Soprano pipistrelle; destruction of a resting place

- 5.11 Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd have previous and ongoing projects involving bats within the 2.0-kilometre area surrounding the site – as such, the following biological data (see **Table 5.3**) is readily available to the Ecologist from the company database – all data has been previously submitted to the local ecological records centre (LERC) serving the area, which, in this case, is Greater Manchester Ecological Records Unit (GMERU).

Table 5.3 – Records of bats held by Tyrer Ecological Consultants located within 2.0km of the site

Year	Distance from Site	Context (where relevant)
2023	1.03 kilometres east	No bats seen, 1000+ pipistrelle droppings, suspected maternity roost.
2014	0.56 kilometres south-east	Day roost of 8 Daubenton's bats Day roost of 10 Common pipistrelles Day roost of 4 Soprano pipistrelles

- 5.12 The habitat in the immediate vicinity of the site provides limited foraging opportunities for bats in linear tree lines to the south of the site along with the areas of modified grassland that is scattered with trees at the north of the site. It is predominantly urban in nature with roads and buildings presenting anthropogenic barriers to commuting. Falinge Park only 0.07km to the north provides a good habitat for foraging along with Broadfield Park, 0.5km to the south.

NB: *Where quality habitat is present close to buildings then the percentage use of those buildings, by bats, increases given that roost opportunities are available and vice versa.*

Birds

- 5.13 Given the urbanised location of the site, notable bird assemblages are considered unlikely. Species likely to be present in the vicinity include those linked with urban areas, for example starling and feral pigeon (*Columba livia* 'domestica').
- 5.14 The site hosts various mature trees and areas of introduced shrub, these areas offer suitable nesting platforms for passerine species associated with urban areas such as black bird (*Turdus merula*).

Biodiversity Gain

- 5.15 The Rochdale Local Plan (2023) Local Plan was accessed and used to assess the strategic significance of habitats present within the site, in combination with the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). Based upon this information, the site does not fall within any areas designated for nature.

6.0 Field Study Results

Bats

- 6.1 The site, Phase 5, Sherrif Street, consists of six three-storey apartment blocks located to the north-west of Rochdale town centre. The buildings are named Ollerton, Newstead, Romsey, Quinton, Ullesthorpe and Vaynor. The six buildings are of similar construction comprised of a mixture of brick and breeze block construction with prefabricated cladding with a render finish. The roofs are hipped and are made up of interlocking pan roof tiles supporting UPVC windows and doors. The approximate dimensions of the buildings are as follows of the buildings Ollerton & Romsey are approximately 25m x 10m x 6m; Ullsethrope is approximately 30m x 10m x 6m
- 6.2 There is a timber soffit box around all elevations with UPVC capping gaps were noted in places between the soffit box and the wall across all 6 buildings.
- 6.3 The surrounding habitat offers limited foraging opportunities for bats, with few suitable linear features for commuting bats and a number of anthropogenic barriers such as roads and significant street lighting, the buildings offer some limited roosting potential as across all 6 buildings minor gaps were observed at the soffits. The 6 buildings are therefore duly categorised as pertaining to a bat roost suitability of '**Low**', in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust – Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th ed. (2023).
- 6.4 There is a small substation building on site which is of brick construction, with UPVC cladding, fascia's, capping and barge boards. The roof has tightly fitted interlocking tiles and a modern dry ridge, The wall plate is also layered with anti-vandal paint, the viscosity of the substance would hinder any bats entering the building. Owing to the above in conjunction with the height (approximately 2m) of the building, the exposed nature and the highly illuminated surroundings the substation building is therefore duly categorised as pertaining to a bat roost suitability of '**None**', in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust – Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th ed. (2023).
- 6.5 During the GLTA of it was determined that a single tree a Narrow Leaved Ash offers potential for bats however the feature was determined be PFI owing to the narrow limb and upward facing nature of the feature, thus it is likely susceptible to water ingress. Additionally, it was noted that a bat box is present within T13.
- 6.6 As the buildings are currently vacant it is considered that the buildings on site offer limited hibernation potential as non-classic hibernation site. This is the first year the buildings will be empty over winter and thus previously the site would have been considered unsuitable for hibernation as buildings are typically heated through the winter months by their residents making them unsuitable for hibernation. Is it therefore considered unlikely that bats would utilise the buildings in large numbers, as bats are habitual in relation to the hibernation sites and will return to the same hibernation sites each winter. However, as the buildings are now vacant, they may offer suitable conditions to support hibernating bats such as cool and stable temperatures.

Breeding birds

- 6.7 In relation to WCA Schedule 1 specially protected bird species such as barn owl, the site's urban location, surrounding road network and lack of connectivity to suitable feeding habitat makes it unsuitable as a site for nesting and no evidence of historic nesting was present. Therefore, direct impacts to specially protected bird species can be ruled out.
- 6.8 In relation to more common bird species, the site offers various nesting platforms for passerine species, T4 is host to several bird boxes. While a historic nest was located in T2 which was attributed to wood pigeon (*Columba palumbus*). The gaps at the soffits also offer possible egress into the soffits for species such as house sparrows and starlings. Feral pigeons (*Columba livia 'domestica'*) were noted to be present within the buildings as some had damaged/missing/open windows during the diurnal assessment.

BNG Baseline Summary

- 6.9 See **Table 6.1** below for baseline information and habitat descriptions; refer to **Appendix I** for any supporting imagery. Refer to **Appendix III** – UK Habitats Map for the location of described habitats. **Appendix III** features full Condition Assessment Sheets.

Table 6.1 – UK Habitat types within the survey area

Area habitat	Sec. Codes	Description
u1b5 Buildings	-	Various buildings around the site.
		Condition: N/A Habitat Area: 0.318 ha Strategic Significance: Area / compensation not in local strategy / no local strategy
u1b6 Other developed land	-	Carparks paving and hard standing across the site, these support very limited flora joints in pathways support species such as toad rush (<i>Juncus bufonius</i>) and Ivy-leaved toad flax (<i>Cymbalaria muralis</i>) however these species do not cover an area large enough to map or quantify a change in habitat.
		Condition: N/A Habitat Area: 0.822 ha Strategic Significance: Area / compensation not in local strategy / no local strategy
g4 modified grassland (1)	107 Mown collected	Various mown areas of grassland throughout site, these areas are dominated by perennial rye grass (<i>Lolium perenne</i>) and red fescue (<i>Festuca rubra</i>) along with white clover (<i>Trifolium repens</i>)
	108 Frequently Mown	Condition: Moderate Habitat Area: 0.318 Strategic Significance: Area / compensation not in local strategy / no local strategy

g4 modified grassland (2)	521 Unmanaged	An area of previous cleared land, which has now succeeded to grassland, the grassland is dominated by perennial rye grass (<i>Lolium perreyne</i>), Timothy (<i>Phleum pratense</i>), Cock's-foot (<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>), Red fescue (<i>Festuca rubra</i>) Yorkshire Fog (<i>Holcus lanatus</i>) is also abundant in the sward. Herbs include species such as ox-eye daisy (<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>), ribbed melilot (<i>Melilotus officinalis</i>), alsike clover (<i>Trifolium hybridum</i>), selfheal (<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>), bush vetch (<i>Vicia sepium</i>), white clover (<i>Trifolium repens</i>), ribwort plantain (<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>).
		Condition: Good Habitat Area: 0.070 Strategic Significance: Area / compensation not in local strategy / no local strategy
u1 Built up areas and gardens	847 Urban introduced shrub	Across the site there are small areas of planting which comprise of various introduced shrubs such as Portuguese laurel (<i>Prunus lusitanica</i>), cherry laurel (<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>), Arrowwood (<i>Viburnum dentatum</i>)
		Condition: N/A Habitat Area: 0.035 Strategic Significance: Area / compensation not in local strategy / no local strategy
u1 Built up areas and gardens	616 Allotments	There is a small allotment area to the south of Newstead apartment block, this contains various raised beds, pathways and a small green house. The floral species with area
		Condition: Good Habitat Area: 0.027 Strategic Significance: Area / compensation not in local strategy / no local strategy
h2a6	823 Children's play space	Within The allotment there are two willow living willow tunnels, while these areas are not dense enough to be considered willow scrub in order to include them within the sites baseline value it was considered appropriate to include each 'line' of willow as a native hedgerow as they are not tall enough to be considered trees. Condition: Poor Total Length: 0.014 Strategic Significance: Area / compensation not in local strategy / no local strategy

		The habitat has been excluded from the strategic significance as it not actually a native hedgerow but a native linear feature.
Urban trees	200 Tree	Eight trees were found to be in good condition within the redline boundary Inclusive of T1, T2, T4, T5, T9, T12, T13, T14. The species include Narrow leaved ash (<i>Fraxinus angustifolia</i>), Hornbeam (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>), Norway maple (<i>Acer platanoides</i>), and Rowan (<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>).
		Six trees on site were found to be in moderate condition inclusive of T3,T6, T7, T8, T10 and T11 Species include Narrow leaved ash, downy birch (<i>Betula pubescens</i>), Norway maple, and Cherry (Cherry sp.).

Incidental observations

- 6.10 The site is also likely to support species such as Hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*), which could utilise the shrubs and grassland on site as commuting and foraging areas.

7.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

Bats

- 7.1 Based upon the findings of the survey covered through sections 5.0 – 6.0 of the report and supported by **Appendix I**, the six buildings at Phase 5, Sherrif Street are determined to offer a bat roost suitability of '**Low**' in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust - Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th ed. (2023); further survey work is recommended to be carried out at the site before an impact assessment can be concluded (see **Figure 7.1**).

Table 7.2. Recommended minimum number of survey visits for presence/absence surveys to give confidence in a negative result for structures (also recommended for trees but unlikely to give confidence in a negative result).

Low roost suitability or PRF-I	Moderate roost suitability	High roost suitability or PRF-M
One survey visit. One dusk emergence survey ^a (structures). No further surveys required (trees).	Two separate dusk emergence survey visits ^b .	Three separate dusk emergence survey visits ^b .

Figure 7.1 – BCT extract on 'Low' suitability criteria

- 7.2 It is recommended that **one dusk emergence survey** is conducted at the building during the active season of bats (May – August, extending into September) in order to establish if, and if so, how it is being used by bats, identify the species present, abundance, roost locations and flight lines around the site following emergence. A total of **24 surveyors** will be required to adequately monitor all elevations and areas of the building that were identified as containing bat roost potential during the daytime inspection and assessment.
- 7.3 Additionally, the bat box on T13 will need to be inspected if trees 12-14 are to be impacted upon by the proposals.
- 7.4 Natural England provides information and guidance about licensing and the following extract is included in that guidance:

"If you intend to apply for a licence for development, you are advised to seek the guidance of a consultant ecologist. Natural England's view is that a licence is needed if the consultant ecologist, based on survey information and specialist knowledge of the species concerned, considers that on balance the proposed activity is reasonably likely to result in an offence under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2019 (as amended).

If the consultant Ecologist, on the basis of survey information and specialist knowledge of the species concerned, considers that on balance the proposed activity is reasonably unlikely to result in an offence being committed then no licence is required. However, in these circumstances Natural England would urge that reasonable precautions be taken to minimise the effect on European protected species should they be found during the course of the activity. If European protected species are found, cease the work until you have assessed whether you can proceed without committing an offence. A licence should be applied for if an offence/s is unavoidable, and the work should not commence until a licence is obtained.

The application should be completed by the developer and a consultant ecologist. The ecologist will need to be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of Natural England that they have the relevant skills and knowledge of the species concerned.

- 7.5 Where more detailed bat surveys are recommended by the Ecologist, following an initial daytime investigation, then Local Planning Authorities, on the advice of their ecological advisors, may not determine the application until such time that all relevant information is gathered, i.e., by conducting dusk / dawn surveys. The advice that is provided by the ecological advisors is also in accordance with the obligations placed upon Local Authorities by way of its duties under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2019 (as amended). Therefore, it would be prudent to make enquiries to the relevant departmental Planning Officer before submitting a Planning Application that includes an ecological survey report that recommends more detailed surveys.
- 7.6 In relation to hibernation, the site is unlikely to be utilised by large numbers of bats owing to the history of the site. However, in line with Bat Conservation Trust - Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th ed. (2023) at non-classic sites the presence of hibernating bats needs to be considered and progressed accordingly, as stated in Figure 5.1 where only individual / low numbers of hibernating bats are likely to be present alternative approaches to hibernation surveys should be considered; particularly where the identified features i.e soffits are on the outside of buildings and thus any deployed static detectors are likely to pick up passing bats outside of the structure.
- 7.7 Therefore, it is recommended that timings in relation to bats are considered as part of the demolition works; and it is recommended that the demolition of the buildings take place outside of the hibernation season November – February and a number of bat boxes are incorporated into the post development on differing elevations to allow for varied climatic conditions throughout the year to compensate.
- 7.8 Installation of overly harsh artificial lighting as part of any development that exceeds current levels may have a negative impact upon foraging / commuting bats in the landscape, subject to their presence, particularly if increased light spillage occurs in areas that are currently free from illumination, particularly including the agriculture fields and tree lines beyond the site boundary. A bat-sensitive lighting plan is therefore recommended in order to avoid potential impacts to bats. Several options to consider have been listed overleaf (see **Table 7.1**), though the reader is referred to the Bat Conservation Trust's 'Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night' guidelines (August 2023) for further information.

Table 7.1 – Extract from *Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night*, BCT (August 2023)

Appropriate luminaire specifications: Light sources, lamps, LEDs and their fittings come in a myriad of different specifications which a lighting professional can help to select. However, the following should be considered when choosing luminaires and their potential impact on Key Habitats and features:

- All luminaires should lack UV elements when manufactured. Metal halide, compact fluorescent sources should not be used
- LED luminaires should be used where possible due to their sharp cut-off, lower intensity, good colour rendition and dimming capability
- A warm white light source (2700Kelvin or lower) should be adopted to reduce blue light component
- Light sources should feature peak wavelengths higher than 550nm to avoid the component of light most disturbing to bats (Stone, 2012)
- Internal luminaires can be recessed (as opposed to using a pendant fitting) where installed in proximity to windows to reduce glare and light spill
- Waymarking inground markers (low output with cowls or similar to minimise upward light spill) to delineate path edges
- Column heights should be carefully considered to minimise light spill and glare visibility. This should be balanced with the potential for increased numbers of columns and upward light reflectance as with bollards
- Only luminaires with a negligible or zero Upward Light Ratio, and with good optical control, should be considered - See ILP GN01
- Luminaires should always be mounted horizontally, with no light output above 90° and/or no upward tilt
- Where appropriate, external security lighting should be set on motion-sensors and set to as short a possible a timer as the risk assessment will allow. For most general residential purposes, a 1 or 2 minute timer is likely to be appropriate
- Use of a Central Management System (CMS) with additional web-enabled devices to light on demand
- Use of motion sensors for local authority street lighting may not be feasible unless the authority has the potential for smart metering through a CMS
- The use of bollard or low-level downward-directional luminaires is strongly discouraged. This is due to a considerable range of issues, such as unacceptable glare, poor illumination efficiency, unacceptable upward light output, increased upward light scatter from surfaces and poor facial recognition which makes them unsuitable for most sites. Therefore, they should only be considered in specific cases where the lighting professional and project manager are able to resolve these issues.
- Only if all other options have been explored, accessories such as baffles, hoods or louvres can be used to reduce light spill and direct it only to where it is needed. However, due to the lensing and fine cut-off control of the beam inherent in modern LED luminaires, the effect of cowls and baffles is often far less than anticipated and so should not be relied upon solely.

- 7.9 If any trees are to be planted during the proposals, then they should constitute native species, suitable examples are suggested in **Appendix II**.

Breeding Birds

- 7.10 No impacts are applicable in relation to any Sch.1 (WCA) specially protected bird species such as barn owl and no further surveys or recommendations are necessary in relation to specially protected birds.
- 7.11 In relation to more common birds, the site offers numerous nesting platforms for common bird species the site offers numerous nesting platforms in the form of mature trees and shrubs. It was also observed that feral pigeons were able to entre some of the vacant buildings through open/damaged windows, the gaps in the soffits are also considered large enough to allow egress for species such as house sparrow and starling. Thus, all of the structures on site and the taller vegetation are considered to offer suitable nesting platforms for birds during the breeding bird season of March – August, inclusive.

NB: *All wild birds (with only minor exceptions) and their nests whilst being built or containing eggs or dependant young are protected from destruction, damage and disturbance under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is a punishable offence to interfere in any way with an active nest.*

- 7.12 Any works impacting upon these areas of potential suitability (i.e. the buildings as well as any taller vegetation) should therefore be carried out outside of the breeding bird season, typically March – September inclusive. For works within the breeding bird season, any areas that can support nesting birds should be checked by a professional Ecologist for nesting birds within 48 hours or less prior to works commencing.

Point 3.24 of the British Standards Publication 42020:2013 defines a professional ecologist as: *“a person who has, through relevant education, training or experience, gained recognised qualifications and expertise in the field of ecology and environmental management.”*

- 7.13 Where / if active nests are / have been located by the Ecologist, then any works which may affect them would have to be delayed until the young have fledged and the nest has been abandoned naturally, this can be aided, for example, via implementation of appropriate buffer zone(s) around the nest site (typically 5 – 10 metres) in which no disturbance is permitted until the nest is no longer in use. This would have to be coordinated through the expert judgement of the professional ecologist and species pending.

- 7.14 feral pigeon are present inside the buildings. Given the field signs, feral pigeon breeding presence may need to be addressed from a pest control point of view as breeding habits in relation to this species are untypical of other bird species and can last throughout the year. A General Licence is therefore likely to be necessary to legally control the species. From 1 January 2021, you must follow the conditions of general licence GL41 to control certain target birds for the purposes of preserving public health or public safety. The main changes to the licence conditions are:

- Species that can be controlled under licence are listed by 3 health and safety purposes of: slips and falls; spread of human disease; birds nesting,
- Magpie, carrion crow and rook are removed from the licence,
- Licence users must comply with the standard licence conditions for trapping wild birds and using decoy birds in traps (WML-GL33),
- You may use the licence on or near a protected site as long as you have any necessary consent from Natural England to do so and comply with any site-specific conditions on the licence.

For further information on General Licencing see - [Wild birds: licence to kill or take for public health or safety \(GL41\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wild-birds-licence-to-kill-or-take-for-public-health-or-safety-gl41).

Incidental observations

- 7.15 Owing to the likely hood of hedgehogs utilising the vegetated areas of the site it is recommended reasonable avoidance measures (RAM's) for this species are drawn up by a suitably qualified ecologist; this document should include the requirement for a destructive search whereby the sites vegetation is cleared in tandem with hand search undertaken by the attending ecologist.

8.0 Biodiversity Statement

- 8.1 Based on the information gathered during the diurnal assessment, Phase 5, Rochdale, is unlikely to be exempt from the Biodiversity Gain pre-commencement planning condition.
- 8.2 The site is host to the following biodiversity value:
- Habitat: **4.53**
 - Hedgerow: **0.02**
 - Watercourse: **0.00**
- 8.3 It is understood that at this stage of the development there are no post development plans, and it is unknown if any trees are to be retained as part of the proposals, therefore it is likely that the required 10% net gain will be achieved through a mixture of onsite and offsite habitat creation/enhancement.
- 8.4 This Section should be read in conjunction with the hard copy of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric tool – see external Appendix.

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Appendix I: Site Photographs



Plate 1 – *Character of buildings on site*

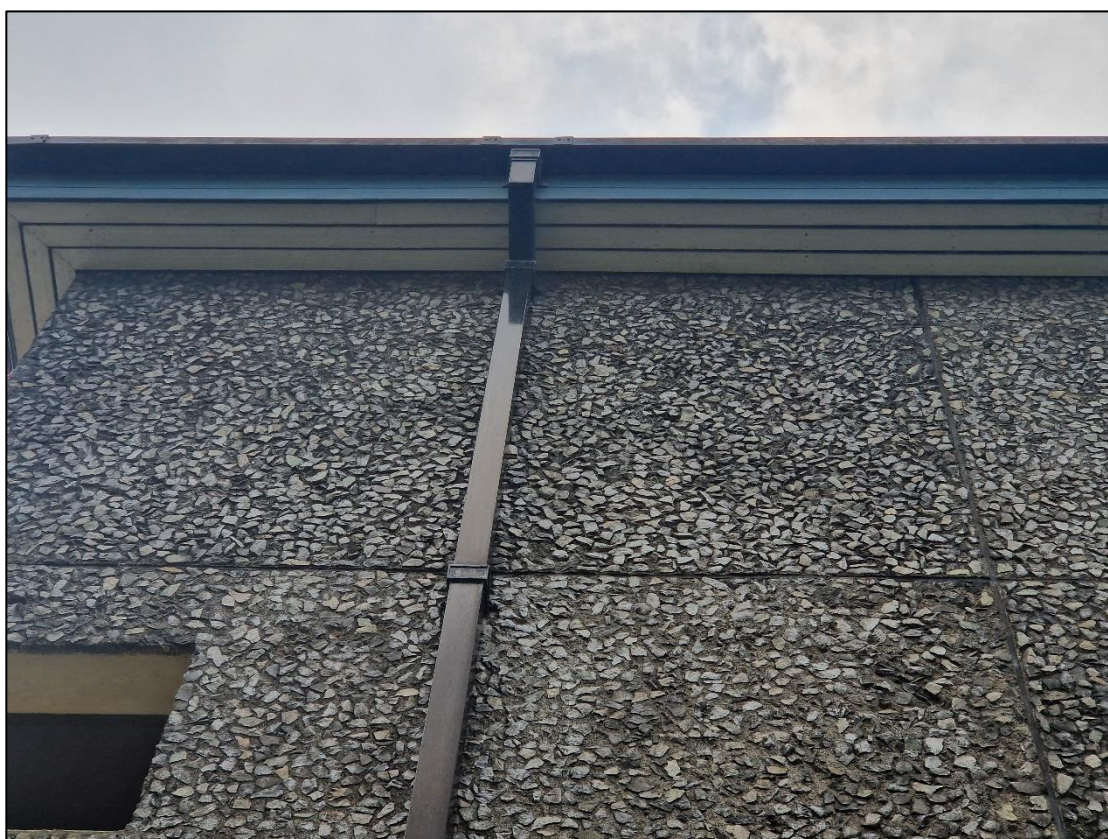


Plate 2 – *Gaps at the soffit*



Plate 3 – *Character of site*



Plate 4 – *Character of allotments on site*



Plate 5 – *Character of T4 on site*



Plate 6 – *Character of T1 and T2 - narrow leaved ash and Norway Maple*



Plate 7 – *Introduced shrubs and T3 cherry sp.to the centre of the site*



Plate 8 – *Character of T11 and T10 Downy birch and Norway maple repectively*



Plate 9- *Bat box in T13 - hornbeam*



Plate 10 – *Character of T12 - hornbeam*



Plate 11 – T14 - rowan

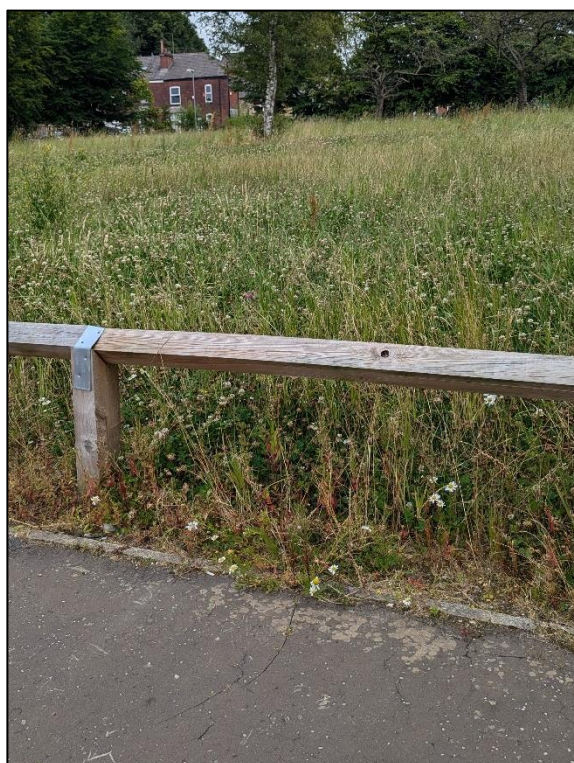


Plate 12 – Character of modified grassland (good condition)

Appendix II: Biodiversity Enhancement: General Recommendations

Breeding Birds – House Sparrow

The sparrow terrace has been designed to help redress the balance of falling house sparrow numbers. The current UK population is now half of what it previously was in 1980 and this is widely attributed to habitat destruction and lack of suitable nesting spaces. House sparrows are social birds and like to nest in company, therefore, this terrace provides ideal nesting opportunities for three families. The terrace can be fixed on to the surface of a suitable wall or incorporated into the wall. It is suitable for all types of buildings.



Breeding Birds – Starling

Starling populations have declined dramatically in recent years and are now on the Red List of birds of high conservation concern. Loss of habitat is one of the major pressures on this species and household renovations and new buildings offer much fewer nesting sites than have previously been available. Providing these birds with a safe and secure habitat and nesting environment is a great way to help ensure their future survival.

This Vivara Pro WoodStone® Starling Nest Box has a 45mm diameter entrance hole which makes it ideal for starlings. It should be sited on an external wall or tree at a height of at least 1.5m using an aluminium nail or screw and wall plug (not included). Site near to vegetation if possible as this will provide additional protection and cover.



Breeding Birds – Other

This traditional design has proved to be highly effective in attracting Robins, as well as other small species such as Black Redstart, Spotted Flycatcher and Wren. It is designed to be installed on the walls of houses, barns, garden sheds or other buildings and should be hung so that the entrance is to one side (at an angle of 90° to the wall). The front panel can be easily removed for cleaning.

This type of box should not be made conspicuous on a tree or bush because small predators can enter through the unprotected opening. By hanging on a wall, predators won't be able to reach the box. Alternatively hide the box in Ivy, Honeysuckle or other climbing plants.



Invertebrates - Bee bricks

The Bee Brick can be used in place of a standard brick or block in construction to create habitat for solitary bees. Alternatively, it can be used as a standalone bee house in your garden or wild patch. It will provide much needed nesting space for solitary bee species such as red mason bees and leafcutter bees, both of which are non-aggressive.

Each Bee Brick contains cavities in which solitary bees can lay their eggs before sealing the entrance with mud and chewed-up vegetation. The offspring will emerge the following spring and the cycle will begin again. Each cavity goes part way into the brick, which is solid at the back. Bee Bricks should be placed in a warm sunny spot on a south-facing wall at a minimum height of 1m, with no vegetation obstructing the holes. It is highly recommended that bee-friendly plants should be located nearby so that the bees using the bricks have food, otherwise it is unlikely that the brick will be used. Available in a choice of four colours: white grey, dark grey, yellow and red.



Specification:

- * Material: Concrete
- * Origin: Cornwall, UK
- * Dimensions: W 215mm x D 105mm x H 65mm
- * Weight: 2.9kg
- * Colours: White grey, yellow, dark grey and red

Native Planting and/or Landscaping

New feature landscaping should incorporate native woody plants as opposed to non-native species that are of significantly less benefit to biodiversity. Species such as Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*), Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), Guelder-rose (*Viburnum opulus*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) are native and will provide a valuable resource for a myriad of wildlife as opposed to non-native, exotic species which are generally much less effective, particularly to pollinator groups including bees, butterflies and moths.

Suitable Trees	Suitable Woody Shrubs
English Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>)	Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>)
Rowan (<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>)	Honeysuckle (<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>)
Wild Service Tree (<i>Sorbus torminalis</i>)	Guelder Rose (<i>Viburnum opulus</i>)
Silver Birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>)	Elder (<i>Sambucus nigra</i>)
Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>)	Wild Privet (<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>)
Goat Willow (<i>Salix capraea</i>)	Blackthorn (<i>Prunus spinosa</i>)
Beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>)	
Wild Cherry (<i>Prunus avium</i>)	

Appendix III: Condition Assessment Sheets

Condition Assessment Score – Grassland (Low)

Condition Assessment Criteria		g4 (1)	g4 (2)
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² present, including at least 2 forbs. Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition. Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m ² (excluding those listed in Footnote 1), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.	N	Y
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	N	Y
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Y	Y
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	Y	Y
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens).	N	N
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Y	Y
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA).	Y	Y
Total Score		4	6
Condition Assessment Result		Condition Assessment Score	
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A		Good	
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including passing essential criterion A		Moderate	
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4 - 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)		Poor	

Condition Assessment Score – Individual trees

Condition Assessment Criteria		T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).	Y	Y	X	N	Y	N	Y
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	X
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	X
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Total Score		5	5	4	5	5	4	3
Condition Assessment Result		Condition Assessment Score						
Passes 5 or 6 criteria		Good						
Passes 3 or 4 criteria		Moderate						
Passes 2 or fewer criteria		Poor						

Condition Assessment Criteria		T8	T9	T10	T11	T12	T13	T14
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Total Score		5	5	3	3	6	6	6
Condition Assessment Result		Condition Assessment Score						
Passes 5 or 6 criteria		Good						
Passes 3 or 4 criteria		Moderate						
Passes 2 or fewer criteria		Poor						

Condition Assessment Score – Allotments

Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passes (Y/N)
A	Vegetation structure is varied, providing opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live, eat and breed. A single structural habitat component or vegetation type does not account for more than 80% of the total habitat area.	Y
B	The habitat parcel contains different plant species that are beneficial for wildlife, for example flowering species providing nectar sources for a range of invertebrates at different times of year.	Y
C	Invasive non-native plant species (listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ¹) and others which are to the detriment of native wildlife (using professional judgement) ² cover less than 5% of the total vegetated area ³ . Note - to achieve Good condition, this criterion must be satisfied by a complete absence of invasive non-native species (rather than <5% cover).	Y
Total Score		3
Condition Assessment Result		Condition Assessment Score
• Passes all 3 core criteria; AND • Meets the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.		Good
• Passes 2 of 3 core criteria; OR • Passes 3 of 3 core criteria but does not meet the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.		Moderate
• Passes 0 or 1 of 3 core criteria.		Poor

Appendix III: UK Habitats Map

