

Harrow Avenue, Rochdale, Preliminary Ecological Report

Revisions

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Summary

Ecological Constraints	Reason	Potential Impact	Recommendations
Invasive plant species	Confirmed presence of Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam encroaching onto site.	Spread of a schedule 9 invasive plant species.	Follow recommendations in section 5.
Bats	Potential of bats using the site for foraging and commuting.	Direct adverse impact on species.	Follow recommendations in section 5.
Birds	Potential of birds using the site for foraging and commuting.	Direct adverse impact on species.	Follow recommendations in section 5.
Hedgehog	Likely presence of hedgehogs in the wider landscapoe	Direct adverse impact on species.	Follow recommendations in section 5.
Biodiversity Net Gain	The Local Plan recommends the development should achieve no net loss for biodiversity.	Adverse impact to biodiversity.	It is recommended that a biodiversity impact assessment is undertaken in line with the Local Plan.

1. Introduction

EPS Ltd has been commissioned by Cube Architecture and Design to undertake an ecological assessment of the land adjacent to the rear of Harrow Avenue, Rochdale, OL11 4DS.

The report details the findings of an ecological assessment undertaken to determine as far as reasonably possible the potential impacts of the proposed works upon the environment, any ecological features, protected species and, or habitats of conservation importance in or close to the site.

Scope of Works

To construct three new dwellings on the land adjacent to Harrow Avenue in Rochdale.

Site Location

The area of works is located on the land adjacent to the rear of Harrow Avenue, Rochdale, OL11 4DS. The site is situated to the north of Eton Close and south of the B6222 Bury Road. The site is bounded by residential properties. The central grid reference for the site is; SD 87531 12865 and is shown in Figure 1.

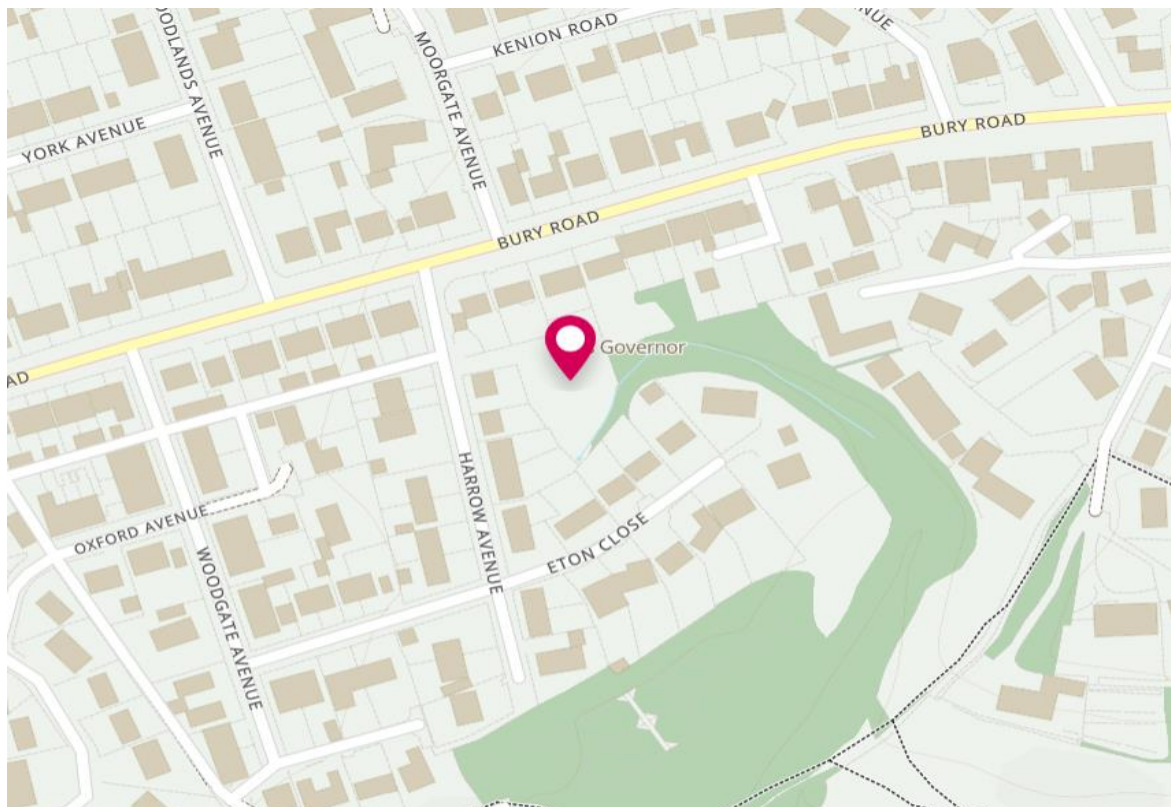


Figure 1: Site Location

Ordnance Survey. © Crown copyright and database rights 2020 Ordnance Survey 0100040692.

Study Area

The ecological 'study area' includes the site location and up to a 5km radius from the site (various search distances apply in relation to protected habitats and species data).

For protected species, the ecological study area is defined as the extent of the works (Figure 1) plus a 1km buffer, herein referred to as the '1km study area'. The 1km study area has been used for the desk-based assessment to gather existing ecological records for the species with the area. For nationally designated sites, the study area is also defined as the site plus 1km buffer. However, this buffer has been extended to 5km to capture any European designated sites.

Survey Objectives

The objective of this report is to identify and present potential ecological constraints, mitigation, licensing and enhancement requirements relating to the works by undertaking the following tasks:

- Identification of any known records of protected, notable or scarce species on site or in the surrounding habitats up to 1km radius;
- Identification of any designated nature conservation sites within a 1km radius that could be affected by the works;
- Recording Phase 1 habitat types present on and immediately surrounding the site, using the methodology defined in 'Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey' Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC, 2010);
- Carry out an appraisal of the potential of the habitats at the site to support protected or notable species of fauna and flora;
- Suggesting mitigation measures to prevent or reduce any negative impacts to the ecological receptors identified (if necessary); and
- Advise on compliance with relevant UK and EU wildlife legislation.

2. Wildlife Legislation

Legislation

Relevant wildlife legislation is summarised in Appendix A. The legislation relevant to the protected and notable species present, or potentially present on the site is listed below:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended) (EU Exit) which transposed the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (Habitats Directive);
- The Birds Directive 2009;
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006;
- The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000;
- Protection of Badgers Act 1992, and
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended).

The above legislation has been considered when planning and undertaking this ecological assessment using the methods described in Section 3.

3. Methodology

Desk Study

A desk study was carried out to identify nature conservation designations, and records of protected and/or notable habitats and species potentially relevant to the site.

The desk study was carried out using the data sources detailed in Table 1.

Table 1 Desk Study Data Sources	
Data Source	Data Obtained
Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website	Statutory designations within 1 km Ponds and watercourses.
Greater Manchester Local Records Centre	Protected/notable species within 1 km of the site.
Online aerial photography	Information on habitats and habitat connections (based on aerial photography) relevant to interpretation of planning policy and assessment of potential protected and notable species constraints.
Ordnance Survey (OS) Mapping	Ponds and watercourses

Phase 1 Habitat Survey

Habitats on site were recorded in accordance with standard survey methodology (JNCC, 2010). The standard Phase 1 habitat survey method was extended to record information on protected, notable and invasive species. The information gained from the extended Phase 1 survey has been used to determine the likely ecological importance of the site (in terms of habitats present and the potential of these habitats to support protected and/or notable species).

The survey was undertaken on 3rd July 2023 by Nick Carter MCIEEM who recorded all habitat types present within the vicinity of the works, along with any important ecological features observed.

Typical and notable plant species were recorded for different habitat types and reflect the conditions at the time of survey. The presence on any invasive non-native plant species was also recorded during the survey.

Limitations

Good survey coverage was achieved during the survey and there were no significant limitations to the preliminary ecological assessment.

It should be noted that the site has been recently cleared of vegetation, levelled and an aggregate stone surface laid.

Through further enquiry it has been found that the previous land use was the rear gardens of the neighbouring properties.

4. Results

Desk Study

This section provides the results of the desk study relevant to the works.

Statutory Sites Designated for Nature Conservation

There are no statutory sites within 1km of the site.

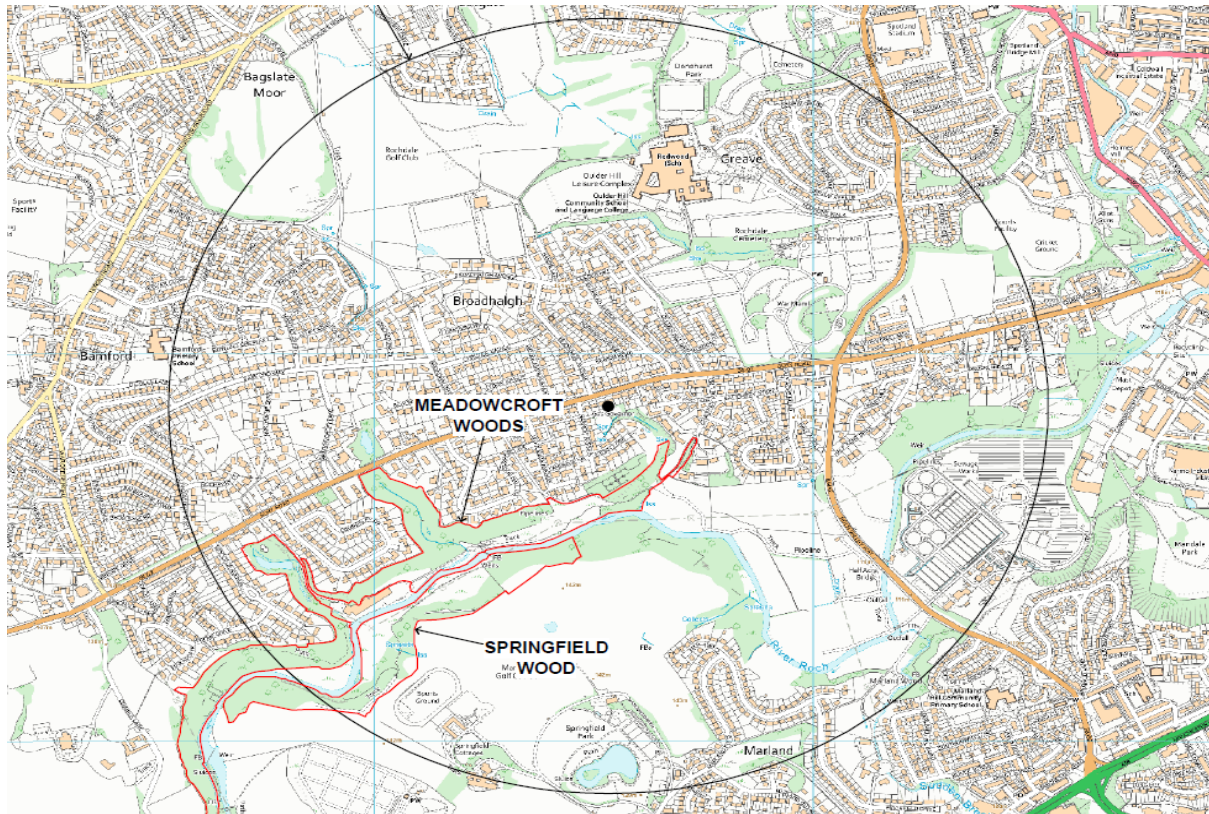


Figure 2: Designated sites within 1 km

The nearest statutory designated site is the Rochdale Canal Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Site Name/ Designation	Description from Citation	Approx. Distance and Direction from Site
Rochdale Canal SSSI	The Rochdale Canal contains important habitats for submerged aquatic plants and emergent vegetation, including extensive colonies of the nationally scarce SAC species floating water plantain <i>Luronium natans</i> .	2.1.km south-east

The proposed development will not have an impact upon the listed statutory designated site.

Non-Statutory Designated Sites

There are two sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) within the search area. SBI citations for sites within/adjacent to the search site are below.

Site Name/ Designation	Description from Citation	Approx. Distance and Direction from Site
Meadowcroft Woods SBI	Large area of semi-natural broadleaved woodland on the slopes above the River Roch. The majority of the wood has been identified as Ancient in the Provisional Inventory of Ancient Woodland (Natural England 2013). A number of streams occur throughout the site. Such woodland is a UK Biodiversity Priority Habitat.	0.45km south-west
Springfield Woods SBI	A steep sided Ancient Woodland (Natural England, 2007) on the southern bank of the River Roch. Such woodland is a UK Biodiversity Priority Habitat. The site contributes to a corridor of woodland habitats along the river valley. Other associated habitats include small areas of acid grassland and flushed marsh communities.	0.7km south-west

Meadowcroft and Springfield Woods SBI are functionally linked to the site by the unnamed brook that runs off site from the southwest. Further mitigation in relation to the local SBI is discussed further in section 5.

Habitats

The individual habitat types recorded within and immediately adjacent to the site is discussed in further detail below and a selection of site photographs can be found in Appendix B.

Site Assessment

Developed Land; Sealed Surfaces

The interior of the site consists of levelled hardstanding composed of hardcore. The south of the site is bare earth with invasive plant species encroaching onto the site from the dry ditch to the boundary. The Schedule 9 invasive plant species present include; Japanese knotweed *Reynoutria japonica* and himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifer*. There is also Rhododendron *Rhododendron* and laurel *Laurus nobilis* to the southern boundary.

Protected Species

Great-crested newts

Desk Study

The data search revealed one record of great-crested newt *Triturus cristatus* approximately 0.95km to the east of the site boundary and there are significant barriers between the record and the development site. Based on a review of maps and aerial images, there are no ponds within a 500 m radius of the site that could provide potential breeding habitat for great crested newts.

Site Assessment

The cleared development footprint of the site offers little terrestrial habitat opportunities for great crested newts. This species is therefore considered unlikely to be present on site and no further survey or mitigation is proposed for this species.

Breeding Birds

Desk Study

The desk study returned records for 72 species of passerines within 1km of the site boundary.

There are eight previous records of kingfisher *Alcedinidae* within 1 km of the site. The nearest record is approximately 0.3km to the south of the site boundary.

However, the site does not contain suitable nesting habitat. It is therefore unlikely that kingfisher are present on the site and this species is not considered further.

There are two previous records of peregrines within 1 km of the site. The nearest record is approximately 0.7km to the south-east of the site boundary.

However, the site does not contain suitable nesting habitat. It is therefore unlikely that peregrines are present on the site and this species is not considered further.

Site Assessment

The unvegetated nature of the site offers no opportunities for nesting birds. It is understood that the boundary trees will be retained.

Further mitigation in relation to nesting birds and is detailed in section 5.

Reptiles

Desk Study

There have been no records of reptiles from previous surveys and no records returned within 1km of the site.

Site Assessment

As the site consists of hard standing and recent bare ground, reptiles are unlikely to be present and no further survey or mitigation is proposed for this species group.

Bats

Desk Study

The desk study returned records of the following bats within 1km of the site;

- common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*,
- pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*,
- whiskered/brant's bat *Myotis mystacinus/ brandtii*,
- brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auratus* and
- whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus*

The nearest recorded roost is a pipistrelle roost located approximately 200m south of the site.

Site Assessment

There are a few trees on site that may have low potential for bats and contain roosting features such as knot holes and large cracks.

The ditch to the southern boundary provides a linear habitat which is likely to be used for commuting and foraging bats.

Further mitigation in relation to bats is detailed in section 5.

Badgers

Desk Study

The desk study returned records for eurasian badger *Meles Meles* within 1km of the site. The nearest record is approximately 0.75km to the south-east of the site boundary.

Site Assessment

No evidence of badgers was recorded within the site during the extended Phase 1 habitat survey.

Water Vole

Desk Study

The desk study returned no records for water vole *Arvicola amphibius* within 1km of the site.

Site Assessment

No evidence of water vole was recorded within the site during the extended Phase 1 habitat survey. The site itself offers no terrestrial habitat for water vole and the ditch to the rear of site offers sub-optimal habitat.

Other BAP Species

Desk Study

At least 12 noteworthy species are recorded from places within 1 km of the site boundary. Noteworthy species include species of principal importance that are listed under Section 41 of The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

These include bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*, dunnoek *Prunella modularis*, hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*, house sparrow *Passer domesticus*, lesser redpole *Acanthis cabaret*, olive earthtongue *Microglossum olivaceum*, s41 moth, small heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*, song thrush *Turdus philomelos*, starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, tree sparrow *Passer montanus* and white-letter hairstreak *Satyrion w-album*.

Site Assessment

The field survey did not record the presence of any other animals of nature conservation importance; however the wider landscape is considered suitable for European hedgehog and further future mitigation is details in section 5.

Invasive species

Site assessment

Japanese knotweed *Reynoutria japonica* and Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* are present on site.

Further mitigation in Schedule 9 invasive plant species is detailed in section 5.

5. Conclusion/Recommendations

Summary

Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam are listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. As such, it is an offence to plant or otherwise cause this species to grow in the wild. Without mitigation, site works could result in the disturbance and dispersal of these species on and off site. This could result in a breach of legislation. The recognition and early (appropriate) management of invasive species will reduce the risk of excessive cost, potential prosecution and prevent physical damage to buildings and hard surfaces.

Designated Sites

There are two non-statutory sites within 1km of site; Meadowcroft and Springfield woods. These local SBI's being functionally linked to the site should be protected from the potential spread of invasive plant species from site and any sediment run off during the construction phase. The recognition and early (appropriate) management of on site invasive plant species is recommended.

Habitats

The habitat on site is common and of value to nature at a local level only.

Birds

Any vegetation removal should be undertaken outside of the typical breeding bird season (March-August inclusive) to avoid disturbance to or direct harm to breeding birds. If any vegetation clearance is necessary during this season, the area will need to be inspected immediately prior to works by the ECoW to check for nesting birds. If an active nest is found, an appropriate cordon and period of monitoring will be adopted by the ECoW to ensure that the nest is not damaged (or disturbed if a Schedule 1 species) by the works. The cordon will be in place until the ECoW deems the nest to be no longer active.

Although not directly impacted by the proposed works, there is potential for cetti's warbler to be using the reed bed upstream of the works, a thorough check of the reed bed should be undertaken prior to the works starting and if lighting is required beyond the stated work times, the lighting should be cowed and directed away from scrub and the reed beds.

Bats

If night work is required, then task-specific lighting should be used on the working area only to minimise light spillage on surrounding habitats. It is recommended that bat boxes are installed on the neighbouring mature trees to offer potential roosting opportunities for the locally present bat species.

Hedgehogs

Precautions should be taken during any planned works to avoid adverse effects to hedgehogs. Working at night should be avoided where possible and it is also good practice to cover any excavations over night to prevent hedgehogs (and other mammals) from becoming trapped in them. If it is not possible to cover excavations then an egress route should be provided to allow animals to climb out of excavations, should they become trapped (i.e. ramps or planks of wood).

Enhancements within the proposed development to support urban hedgehog and other species populations can include unlit hedgerows and holes in garden fences to improve habitat connectivity ('hedgehog highways') (PTES, 2019).

Invasive Species

Japanese knotweed

Japanese knotweed, a rhizomatous perennial was introduced from Asia to Europe in the mid-nineteenth century as an ornamental and fodder plant. It is an impressive species which grows to a height of 2-3 metres, with bamboo like stems, arching branches and clusters of creamy white flowers appearing late in the season. The orange to brown coloured, woody, dead stems persist erect throughout the winter and new shoots, produced from the extensive rhizome system, grow up amongst these the following spring to form dense thickets. The dead stems and leaf litter decompose very slowly and form a deep organic layer, which prevents native seeds from germinating. Once present at a site, Japanese knotweed increases in area very rapidly and soon forms monoculture stands.

Reproduction is primarily by vegetative regeneration of rhizomes and fresh stems. The rhizome system may extend from a parent plant up to 7 m laterally and to a depth of 4 m. Very small fragments of rhizome (as little as 0.7 g) give rise to new plants. Fresh stems produce shoots and roots when buried in a soil medium or floated in water. Stems in water may produce viable plants within 6 days.

Japanese knotweed thrives on disturbance and has been spread by both natural means and by human activity. In riparian areas, high water flows disperse fragments of the plant downstream where new colonies form. In the past, fly tipping and transportation of soil containing rhizome fragments have been a major cause of spread, particularly in the urban environment.

The Environment Agency has detailed the current guidelines developed by the Environment Agency for control of Japanese knotweed. The Environment Agency guidelines 'Managing Japanese Knotweed on Development Sites' (Environment Agency, 2013 as amended) detail several options for the control of Japanese knotweed.

The recognition and early (appropriate) management of Japanese knotweed will reduce the risk of excessive cost, potential prosecution and prevent physical damage to buildings and hard surfaces.

Himalayan balsam

Himalayan Balsam is an annual plant and therefore the key objective for control of Himalayan balsam is to exhaust the plant's seed bank. This is done by repeatedly removing adults before they set seed. Seeds can spread up to 7 m from the plant. Therefore a 7 m radius around Himalayan balsam plants should be marked out to indicate the area of contamination. Seed bank longevity is about two years and control programmes should be undertaken for the whole of this period followed by a 3-year monitoring programme.

Control of Himalayan balsam should ideally happen when the plants have grown to a good height but have not yet flowered. This is usually around June. However, it may be easier to leave them until the end of June, start of July, when the plants have flowered, as they will be easier to spot, but before they have formed seed pods. Flowering may vary from season to season, but seeds generally mature / are released in August/September. Some balsam plants have been seen flowering in October in cleared areas, although it is uncertain whether these went on to produce seeds.

If the balsam is cleared before June/July, it is likely new balsam plants will germinate in the cleared areas and can grow and flower rapidly in the warmer summer soil. It is likely to have to clear it a further two times or even three times before winter.

The Environment Agency has detailed the current guidelines developed for control of Himalayan balsam. The Environment Agency guidelines 'Guide for the control of invasive weeds in or near water' (Environment Agency, 2007) detail several options for the control of Himalayan balsam within a development site.

The recognition and early (appropriate) management of Himalayan balsam can reduce the risk of excessive cost.

Biosecurity Measures

General

When within invasive plant areas the following procedures should be adopted:

- Only essential vehicles and plant machinery should be present in areas polluted with invasive plants. Care should be taken to ensure that polluted material is not dropped or transferred to other areas of the site.
- On leaving areas of the site known to contain invasive plants, any vehicle or machinery that has been used should be thoroughly cleaned within a designated area. All hand tools and footwear should be cleaned off in a similar manner.
- Even with great care, a certain amount of regrowth in the spring would be expected and any should be treated with herbicide.

No contaminated materials are to be moved across site to receptor areas unless on designated haul routes which are to be made from hardcore / crush. The specific locations, proposed design detail and specifications can be determined by the on-site contractor.

Opportunities For Enhancement

Biodiversity Net Gain

The primary aim of Biodiversity Net Gain is to secure a measurable improvement in habitat for biodiversity, to minimise biodiversity losses and to help to restore ecological networks whilst streamlining development processes.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes provisions for the delivery of biodiversity net gain. Additionally, there is a proposed 10% net gain requirement in the draft Environment Bill.

Local Plan policy within Rochdale looks to achieve no net loss.

In light of the above policy a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment of the site is recommended to help the site achieve no net loss.

Landscape

Many species would benefit from the provision of a semi-natural buffer between the proposed development and the adjacent landscape. This would help protect retained habitats from potential adverse effects associated with proposed development, including noise and light spill. The planting of native species including flower-, berry- and fruit-bearing species would benefit badgers, birds and other noteworthy species. Furthermore, planting trees and hedgerows on site would create a commuting corridor for many species including bats and hedgehogs. These features should be kept as dark corridors and should have strips of rough native grassland planted adjacent to them to attract invertebrates.

Nest/roost boxes

Bird and bat boxes and/or bricks should be incorporated into the development design, including those suitable for a range of bat species, swift, house sparrow and/or starling, which are all species of conservation concern and are likely to be present within 1 km of the site. These features would provide additional roosting/nesting sites for these species groups and help offset impacts associated with habitat loss.

Log piles and 'hedgehog highways'

Log piles should be incorporated into quiet and varied habitats in the development to offer refuge for hedgehogs and other species. Ideally, they should be created using any logs generated from vegetation clearance, or from native and local wood. Furthermore, 'hedgehog highways' (holes approximately 13 cm²) should be provided in garden fences to improve habitat connectivity for hedgehogs.

References

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Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, Local Records Centre.

Harris, S., Cresswell, P. and Jefferies, D. (1989) Surveying Badgers. The Mammal Society: London

Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2010) Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A technique for environmental audit. JNCC.

Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

National Biodiversity Network Gateway (2000) www.nbn.co.uk

PTES (2019), Hedgehog ecology and land management. People's Trust for Endangered Species & British Hedgehog Preservation Society.

Natural England (2011) Badgers and Development - A Guide to Best Practice and Licensing.

Appendix A Wildlife Legislation

Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended)

Part 1 of the WCA affords general protection to all species of wild bird and specific protection to flora and fauna listed in Schedules 1 (birds protected by special penalties), 5 (other animals), and 8 (flora, fungi and lichens). It is an offence (subject to exceptions) to:

- kill, injure, or take any wild bird;
- take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built;
- take or destroy an egg of any wild bird;
- disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 of the WCA while nesting, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird (e.g. quail);
- kill, injure or take any wild animal listed on Schedule 5 (e.g. bats, great crested newt, common lizard);
- damage, destroy or obstruct places used for shelter or protection by wild animals listed on Schedule 5 and covered by Part 4A of the WCA (e.g. bats and great crested newt);
- intentionally disturb wild animals listed in Schedule 5, and covered by Part 4A of the WCA, that are occupying places of shelter and protection (e.g. bats and great crested newt); and
- pick, uproot or destroy any plant, fungi or lichen listed in Schedule 8.

In certain circumstances, licences can be granted to permit some actions prohibited under the WCA.

Schedule 9 provides lists of non-native flora and fauna that it is an offence to release or cause to spread in the wild.

Part 2 of the WCA details the law regarding SSSIs and other protected areas within Great Britain.

Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW)

Schedule 9 of the CRoW amends SSSI provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, including increased powers for their protection and management of SSSIs. These strengthened provisions extend powers for entering into management agreements; place a duty on public bodies to further the conservation and enhancement of SSSIs; increase penalties on conviction where the provisions are breached; and introduce a new offence whereby third parties can be convicted for damaging SSSIs.

Schedule 12 of the CRoW amends the species provisions of the WCA, strengthening the legal protection for threatened species. The provisions make certain offences 'arrestable' and create a new offence of reckless disturbance.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC)

The NERC places a duty on Government Departments and public authorities to have regard for the conservation of biodiversity. Section 41 includes a list of habitats and species to be used by decision-makers, including local authorities, to guide the implementation of their duties under section 40 of the NERC to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended) (EU Exit)

The Habitats Regulations require the compilation and maintenance of a register of European sites, to include Special Area Conservations (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) classified under Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds (codified version). When considering potentially damaging operations, the precautionary principle applies i.e. consent for the operations cannot be given unless it is demonstrated that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the European site.

Affords protection to European Protected Species, e.g. bats and great crested newt, listed in Schedule 2. It is an offence (subject to exceptions) to deliberately capture, kill, disturb, or trade in listed animals. In certain circumstances, licences can be granted to permit some actions prohibited under the Habitats Regulations.

Regulation 9A requires that competent authorities must take such steps in the exercise of their functions as they consider appropriate to secure the preservation, maintenance and re-establishment of sufficient diversity and area of habitat for wild birds as appropriate, and having regard to the requirements of Article 2 of the Birds Directive.

Protection of Badgers Act 1992

The Act makes it an offence to kill or take a badger, to cruelly ill-treat a badger, or to interfere with a badger sett, including disturbing a badger while it is occupying a sett. In certain circumstances, licences can be granted to permit some actions prohibited under the Act.

Animal Welfare Act 2006

The Act contains the general laws relating to animal welfare. It is an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to any animal. The Act makes owners and keepers (including landowners) responsible for ensuring that the welfare of animals within their control is met.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018

The NPPF states the commitment of the UK Government to minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity. It specifies the obligations that the Local Authorities and the UK Government have regarding statutory designated sites and protected species under UK and international legislation and how this is to be delivered in the planning system. Protected or notable habitats and species can be a material consideration in planning decisions and may therefore make some sites unsuitable for particular types of development, or if development is permitted, mitigation measures may be required to avoid or minimise impacts on certain habitats and species, or where impact is unavoidable, compensation may be required. A summary of the paragraphs of the NPPF relevant to ecology and nature conservation, and to the Proposed Development, is provided below.

Paragraph 170 states that *"Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by... minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures"*.

Paragraph 171 states that *"Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries."*

Paragraph 174 states that *"To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:*

a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and

b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity".

Paragraph 175 states that *"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 incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.”

Appendix B Site Photographs



Photograph 1: Site of the proposed residential development.



Photograph 2: Stand of Himalayan balsam along the southern boundary.



Photograph 3: Japanese knotweed encroaching onto site.



Photograph 4: Rhododendron stand to the south east boundary.



Appendix C Phase 1 Habitat Map

