



PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL SURVEY REPORT

LAND BETWEEN BOARSHAW ROAD AND BRASSEY STREET

MIDDLETON

ROCHDALE

M24 6AJ

AUGUST 2024

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**LAND BETWEEN BOARSHAW ROAD AND BRASSEY STREET
MIDDLETON
ROCHDALE
M24 6AJ**

A report for

**RECEDHAM DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED
APH BUILDING
BRADNOR ROAD
MANCHESTER
M22 4TE**

A report by



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 REASON FOR SURVEY

PENNINE Ecological were commissioned in July 2024 Recedham Developments Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of land between Boarshaw Road and Brassey Street, Middleton, Rochdale, M24 6AJ (hereafter referred to as 'the site') (refer to Figure 1 for the red line boundary).

The field survey, desk-based searches and subsequent report i.e., the study are required to support the submission of a planning application to construct three residential dwellings (Figure 2).

Figure 1 illustrates the approximate red line boundary of the site that was subject to a UK Habitat Classification survey (UKHabs, 2022) on the 17th of July 2024. An accompanying habitat map is provided in Map 1, Appendix A and photographs of the site are included within Appendix B.



- Birds, including Schedule 1 listed species of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (e.g., barn owl, hobby, kingfisher, etc.).
- European Protected Species (e.g., all bat species).
- Where relevant, other protected species (e.g., water vole, common toad, brown hare, hedgehog, reptiles, etc.) listed in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006 (DEFRA, 2006), Birds of Conservation Concern 5 etc. (Stanbury *et al.*, 2021).

The report provides a full evaluation of the ecological significance of the desk based and field survey results and includes recommendations for further survey if required and/or precautions when and where appropriate.

1.2 SITE LOCATION

The site is located between Boarshaw Road and Brassey Street in what is a predominantly urban environment with semi-detached properties and terraced housing and their gardens dominating the immediate surrounding landscape. Approximately 30m to the north of the site is an area of amenity grassland (Brassey Recreation Ground) and semi-mature trees. Whit Book is approximately 50m to the east of the site on the opposite side of Boarshaw Road to the site.

The central Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference¹ for the site is SD 87496 06558.

¹ Ordnance Survey National Grid reference used throughout the report.

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodologies relating to desk-based searches and field surveys undertaken in July 2024 are outlined below.

2.1 DESK-BASED STUDY

2.1.1 Defra's MAGIC Mapping Tool

The Multi Agency Geographical Information Centre (MAGIC) (www.magic.gov.uk) created by Defra was used to identify the following features of ecological interest (MAGIC was last accessed on the 13th August 2024).

- Statutory designated sites (e.g., Local Nature Reserves (LNR), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) etc. within 2km of the site (includes associated SSSI Impact Risk Zones).
- Granted European Protected Species Licence Applications within 1km.
- Great Crested Newt (GCN) Class Survey Licence Returns within 500m.

2.2 UK HABITAT CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM SURVEY

A UK Habitat Classification survey (UKHabs, 2022) of the site was undertaken on the 31st July 2024. The survey was undertaken by Stuart Macpherson, an experienced ecologist of 14 years with experience of undertaking Extended Phase 1 Habitat surveys and UKHabs surveys on both smaller planning applications and large Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. He also holds survey licences for great crested newts, bats and barn owl and is a NPTC qualified tree climber.

Weather conditions during the survey were 17°C, 3/8s cloud cover, light breeze with no precipitation.

The site's habitats were fully mapped and where required was done so with reference to Stace (1997). Higher vascular plant species (where present) were recorded and given abundance values according to the standard DAFOR scale where: D is dominant, A is abundant, F is frequent, O is occasional, and R is rare. Where appropriate the abundance values can be prefixed by the letter L (locally) or V (very), to provide more subtle biogeographical data.

2.3 BADGER SURVEY

A badger survey was undertaken to identify evidence of badger utilising the site. Surveys were undertaken in accordance with Surveying Badgers (Harris *et al.*, 1989) and Badger (Roper, 2010).

The badger survey used standard techniques for establishing the use of the site by badger, and includes searches for evidence of badgers including:

- Setts.
- Pathways.
- Footprints.
- Latrines.
- Foraging areas.
- Scratching posts.
- Boundary searches for runs, pathways, and latrines.

2.4 PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT FOR BATS

A preliminary bat roost assessment survey was undertaken in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn) Collins (2023). The survey was undertaken by Stuart Macpherson who is a Class 2 bat licensed ecologist (licence number 2021-10079-CL18-BAT). The survey included a survey for potential roost features (PRFs) within buildings, trees or any other structures which may support a bat roost (e.g., culverts, bridges, walls etc.) within the site boundary and which may be directly (or if relevant, indirectly) impacted on by the proposals. The site was also assessed for its suitability to support foraging and commuting bats.

2.5 BREEDING BIRD HABITAT ASSESSMENT

Breeding birds were evaluated by an assessment of the sites habitats to support such activity and any evidence of current (e.g., singing, territorial displays etc.) or historic nesting (e.g., old nests) within hedgerows, trees, buildings etc. Habitats suitable for breeding birds could include but are not limited to buildings, scrub, hedgerows, woodland and individual trees. The assessment includes those species listed in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) e.g., barn owl, hobby, kingfisher, red kite etc.

2.6 LIMITATIONS

There were no limitations to the survey.

3. RESULTS

The results of the desk-based searches, the UKHabs survey and the species-specific surveys are outlined below.

3.1 DESK-BASED SEARCHES

3.1.1 Statutory Designated Sites

There are four statutory protected sites within 2km of the site. These are listed below with their respective directions and distances from the site.

- Hopwood Woodlands LNR; 770m north.
- Alkrington Woods LNR; 1.2km south.
- Rochdale Canal SSSI and SAC; 1.1km north west.

The site is within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone for Rochdale Canal SSSI. The SSSI is designated for its aquatic plants and emergent vegetation. Due to proposals having no ecological connectivity to the SSSI and being localised and small scale, the likelihood of adverse impacts on the SSSI from the proposals is anticipated to be negligible. Therefore, it is the opinion of PENNINE Ecological that consultation with Natural England is not required.

3.1.2 Protected and/or Notable Species

(a) Granted European Protected Species Licence Applications

There is EPSL mitigation license within 1km of the site boundary. It appears the licence is immediately north of the site (no exact grid reference is provided for the licence). The licence details are as follows.

- Bat licence reference number 2015-8774-EPS-MIT, immediately north of the site. The licence was for the destruction of a common pipistrelle bat breeding site and resting place. The licence start and end dates were from 13/04/2015 to 01/06/202.

(b) Great Crested Newt Class Survey Licence Returns

There are no GCN returns within 500m of the site.

3.2 UK HABITAT CLASSIFICATION SURVEY

3.2.1 General Description

The site measures approximately 650m² and was dominated by amenity grassland that was subject to regular maintenance. The sward height at the time of survey was no more than 5cm. The species recorded within the grassland included perennial rye grass (D), annual meadow grass (A), white clover (F), dandelion (F), wall barley (R), and plantain (O).

Four trees were recorded on site, the species being cherry, goat willow, rowan and London plane. The cherry and plane were semi-mature both being approximately 15m tall. Both trees were in very good condition with no evidence of disease or failing branches. DBHs of both trees was approximately 60cm. The rowan too was semi-mature, in good condition and was approximately 8m in height. The willow was immature and likely self-seeded, it was suspected to be no more than 5 years old.

The site didn't have any boundaries as such except for the end terraced house to the south and the Working Men's Club to the north. The site was freely accessible to members of the public.

The habitats recorded within the red line boundary of the site are listed below (UKHabs codes, including secondary codes, are included where relevant).

- g4 Modified grassland
- u1 Built-up areas and gardens (Secondary code - 200 Trees)

3.2.2 Target Notes

As the site is homogenous no target notes are included within this report. Refer to the general description above.

3.3 PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEY RESULTS

3.3.1 Badger Survey

No setts, paths, footprints and/or guard hairs etc. from badger were recorded within the red line boundary.

3.3.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for Bats

All trees on site were of negligible suitability to support roosting bats.

3.3.3 Breeding Bird Habitat Assessment

The trees on site could potentially support nesting birds for commonly occurring, urban species such as robin, wren, blackbird etc. No evidence of any nests or breeding was recorded during the survey.

3.4 OTHER PROTECTED SPECIES

Issues in relation to other potential protected species where no specific survey was undertaken are assessed in the following section.

4. ECOLOGICAL EVALUATION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Where relevant, this section evaluates the site in relation to statutory sites, and protected habitats/species listed in national and local legislation and policy.

4.1 STATUTORY DESIGNATED SITES

(i) Evaluation

There are four statutory protected sites within 2km of the site. There is no ecological connectivity between the site surveyed and the statutory protected sites.

The site is within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone for Rochdale Canal SSSI. The SSSI is designated for its aquatic plants and emergent vegetation. Due to proposals having no ecological connectivity to the SSSI and being localised and small scale, the likelihood of adverse impacts on the SSSI from the proposals is anticipated to be negligible. Therefore, it is the opinion of PENNINE Ecological that consultation with Natural England is not required.

(ii) Recommendations

No further recommendations.

4.2 HABITATS AND HIGHER PLANT SPECIES

(i) Evaluation

No nationally scarce or red data listed plant species were recorded on site. The remaining habitats on site are considered to be of 'site' value only.

(ii) Recommendations

There are no requirements for further surveys.

Low distinctiveness habitats and above, in this case modified grassland and individual trees according to the Biodiversity Net Gain Defra Metric Calculator Version 4.0 need to be sufficiently compensated for. Therefore, it is recommended a formal Biodiversity Net Gain assessment is undertaken using Defra's Metric Calculator Version 4.0.

4.3 BADGER

(i) Evaluation

Badgers are protected under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which prohibits deliberate interference with the animal or its sett. Further information is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/badgers-protection-surveys-and-licences>.

No evidence of badger was recorded during the surveys.

(ii) Recommendations

No further recommendations required.

4.4 BATS

(i) Evaluation

In England, the main pieces of legislation pertaining to the protection of bats in the UK are The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Environmental Damage (Prevention and Remediation) (England) Regulations 2015. For further information and direction to further legislation relevant to bats please refer to Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn) Bat Conservation Trust.

All trees on site were of negligible suitability to support roosting bats.

(ii) Recommendations

No further recommendations.

Although no roost has been identified, the proposal may consider enhancements for bats to demonstrate a biodiversity net gain for this site, in accordance with local and national planning policy. A number of potential enhancement measures are provided below.

External lighting

In all cases illumination of peripheral boundary areas should be avoided. Where lighting is required, this must be low level, low intensity and directed downwards away from boundaries. The following principles will apply.

- Where and if lighting is required, this will be directed internally within the site avoiding spillage towards boundary habitats.
- The use of low powered sodium lights or similar will be used and these will be fitted with cowls / covers that prevent lateral light spillage towards boundary habitats.
- Wherever possible and only if required low level (1-1.5m high) bollard lighting will be used.
- If required lights will be fitted with timer controls that minimise the duration of lighting.

Lighting requirements will follow guidance provided by the Bat Conservation Trust; links are provided below.

- Bat Conservation Trust's Acritical Lighting Guidance. Webpage link <https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/lighting>
- Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK. Webpage link <https://cdn.bats.org.uk/uploads/pdf/Resources/ilp-guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting-compressed.pdf?v=1542109349>

Bat boxes could be erected on the trees to be retained on the site. Recommended bat boxes are as follows;

- 2F Schwegler bat boxes
- 2FN Schwegler bat box

Additionally the building should consider, where appropriate, ridge tile access for bats made with the incorporation of traditional Bitumen 1F underfelt immediately beneath ridge tiles (Figures 3 and 4). Breathable BRM membrane can cause significant problems where bats are in contact with it, whereby their fine claws become entangled within the fibres of the membrane, entrapping and killing bats.

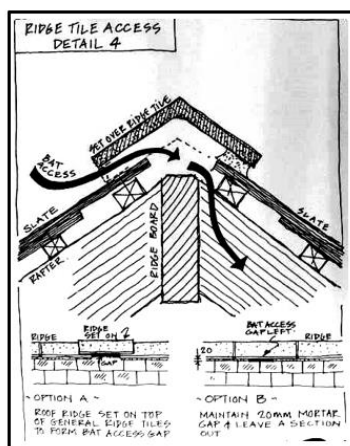


Figure 3 – Ridge access



Figure 4 – Breathable membrane

4.5 BIRDS

(i) Evaluation

All birds are offered various levels of protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended (e.g., barn owl) and Section 41 of Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. The site is likely to support nesting birds particularly within the woodland.

(ii) Recommendations

The breeding bird season is accepted to be from and between March 1st to August 31st inclusive. Any removal of vegetation should take place outside of the breeding season, i.e., between September 1st and February 28th. Following the removal, any piles of brash should be removed from the site, failure to do so could provide potential nest sites if left in situ until the following breeding season. If vegetation removal is envisaged during the breeding season, prior to removal checks should be made by a suitably experienced ecologist to establish any nesting or breeding activity. Should it be identified that birds are nesting or breeding then works should be paused until the young have naturally fledged the nest.

The proposals may consider improving nesting opportunities for birds on site by erecting nesting boxes on proposed buildings. Numerous boxes are widely available for a variety of species, examples of boxes include the following:

- 1B Schwegler nest box; likely to be used by a range of species and are durable, long-lasting boxes.
- Vivara Pro Seville 32mm WoodStone Nest Box – The material used is long lasting and is unlikely to rot like wood constructed equivalents and are available for numerous species such as tit species, house and tree sparrow, nuthatches, pied and grey wagtail, song thrush and blackbirds.

4.6 OTHER PROTECTED SPECIES

No further recommendations.

REFERENCES

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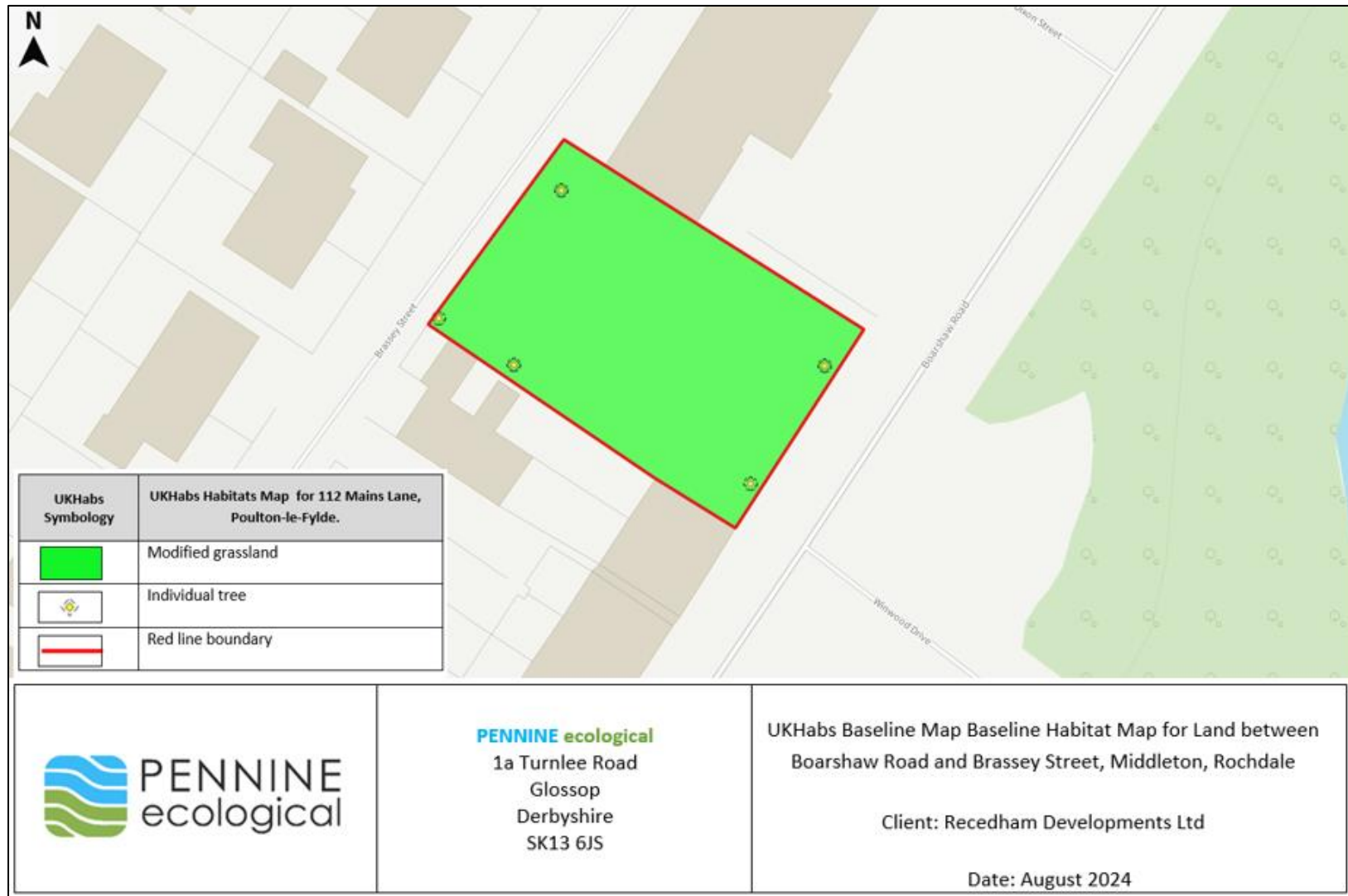
UKHabs Ltd (2023). UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (at <https://www.ukhab.org>)

Online References

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<http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

Google Earth. Accessed various dates. Latest access August 2024.

Appendix A: Figure 1 - UK Habitat Classification Survey Plan



Appendix B - Site Photographs 31st July 2024



Photograph 1: Eastern half of the site looking towards Boarshaw Rd.



Photograph 2: Northern 'boundary' of the site, adjacent to the Working Men's Club.



Photograph 3: North western corner of the site. Cherry tree in view.



Photograph 4: Rowan tree on the right of picture and overview of the modified grassland.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- Land between Boarshaw Road and Brassey Street, Middleton, Rochdale -



Photograph 5: Southern boundary of the site.



Photograph 6: Overview of the site.