

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Survey site:

Land Adj To, Platting Lane, Rochdale, OL11 2JT

Client:

B&L Homes Ltd

Survey date:

03/10/2024

Project:

The clearing of the existing site and subsequent erection of 2 residential dwellings with associated garden and parking.

PEA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: [PEA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.](#)

PRA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: [PRA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.](#)

The site survey was undertaken by Nic Baxter, Graduate Ecologist (Accredited Agent on Natural England Bat Licence number provided on request).					
Date of survey	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (km/h)	Rain
03/10/2024	12	74	10	6	None

Ecological Survey Factor Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations	Detailed using desk study and site survey (carried out under optimal weather conditions). Any specific limitations noted within relevant section. This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice. The survey results and recommendations contained within this report are valid for 18 months. An updated site visit may be required if the report is to be used any longer than 18 months after completion.
Habitats and Plants	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i> <i>(UKHab codes used)</i>	<u>Site Context</u> The site is located at National Grid Reference SD 90353 11715 and has an area of approximately 0.05ha. The site is characterised by unmanaged grassland, scattered trees, mixed scrub and introduced shrubs in addition to areas of hard standing and a dilapidated shed. The Sudden Brook runs down the northeast boundary of the site which is surrounded by trees of varying ages and further grassland. Immediately to the north of the site is an area of hard standing, to the west is Platting Lane and to the south is a row of residential dwellings. The site is located within an urban context, less than 1km from Rochdale town centre. As a result, the site is surrounded by extensive urban habitats with limited green spaces in the immediate surroundings. There are habitats of ecological value to the south in the form of amenity greenspaces including trees and grassland. A location plan is provided in appendix 2. <u>Priority Habitats</u> There are no priority habitats within or immediately adjacent to the site. The nearest priority habitat is deciduous woodland which is located ~330m to the southwest and a second parcel located ~380m to the northwest. <u>Limitations</u> It was not considered that there were any significant limitations to the completion of the survey.

UK Habs Codes

- Buildings (u1b5)
- Developed land; sealed surface (u1b)
- Modified grassland (g4) – Scattered trees (32), introduced shrub (847)
- Mixed scrub (h3h)
- (offsite) Other rivers and streams (r2b)

Buildings (u1b5)

A single dilapidated shed is present to the southeast of the site. The structure no longer has a roof and



Figure 1 - Dilapidated shed located to the southeast of the site.



Figure 2 - Inside of shed onsite.

Developed land; sealed surface (u1b)

There is an area of concrete to the centre of the site and a concrete access road to the shed. A pathway is also present to the north of the site.



Figure 3 - View of hard standing path leading to the shed.



Figure 4 - View of hard standing to the centre of the site.

Modified grassland (q4) – Scattered trees (32), introduced shrub (847)

The site is dominated by grassland which, from google images, appears to have been present onsite and under infrequent management since at least 2009. Species include perennial ryegrass (d), ribwort plantain (a), common ragwort (f), creeping buttercup (f), false oat grass (o), Yorkshire fog (o), creeping thistle (o), common nettle (o), broadleaved dock (o), smooth cat's ear (r), fescue (r), and white clover (r). More than 6 species are present per metre squared and sward height is varied due to infrequent management. Scrub and bracken accounts for less than 20% of the grassland and there are no Schedule 9 invasive species within the grassland. Bare or damaged ground accounts for less than 10% of the grassland.

Introduced shrubs are present within the grassland and include species such as Japanese barberry and California privet.

Scattered trees are also present along the east and south of the site with a total of 8 trees ranging from young to mature. Species included predominantly ash with signs of dieback and a mature goat willow. Blackthorn, cherry and field maple were also present.



Figure 5 - View of the modified grassland.



Figure 6 - View of the modified grassland.

Mixed scrub (h3h)

To the south, southeast and central west are areas of dense scrub with species including dominating California privet, self-seeded ash saplings, blackthorn, hazel, hawthorn, bramble, common nettle, spear thistle, and honeysuckle. Scrub was not mature and did not have a developed edge, clearings or glades.



Figure 7 - View of the mixed scrub.



Figure 8 - View of the mixed scrub.

(offsite) Other rivers and streams (r2b)

The Sudden Brook is located along the eastern boundary of the site. There is rubbish stored along the banks of the brook with the banks being dominated by a thin layer of ivy and bramble. There are steps leading down to the brook and then up the other side with stepping stones and a plank across allowing crossing by foot. The steps are free from vegetation suggesting this is a regularly used walkway. Some debris including old furniture has fallen into the brook. The brook is approximately 1-1.5m wide and less than knee depth. The banks feature trees of varying ages.



Figure 9 - View of brook showing steps down both banks of the brook allowing for crossing.



Figure 10 - View of brook showing bank vegetation and debris.



Figure 11 - View of mature tree on the bank of the brook.



Figure 12 - View of furniture which has fallen into the brook.

<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	The loss of mature trees, grassland and scrub will result in a reduction of the biodiversity of the site. The loss of mature trees is considered to be of local level significance. The loss of grassland and scrub is considered to be of site level significance. The proposed development may cause pollution to the adjacent brook both during the construction and operational phases of the proposed development. Additionally, bank erosion may occur both during the constructional and operational phase of the proposed development without the implementation of appropriate mitigation.
<i>Recommendations</i>	<u>Mitigation & Enhancement</u> A biodiversity net gain assessment is being completed on the proposed development to ensure that any losses are mitigated for fully in addition to providing an enhancement of 10% whether onsite, offsite or through an appropriate credit scheme. A Construction Environmental Mitigation Plan (CEMP) will mitigate any potential impacts of the development as a result of both the construction and operational phase of the development. Planting of trees and shrubs as well as retention of the existing mature trees along the bank of the brook provides stability to the banks and prevents encroachment of machinery during the construction phase of the development.

	This will also provide a filter that may reduce pollution and reduce bank erosion due to root networks holding the banks together. Building the bank around the trees also furthers the stability of the bank and discourages recreational pressures on the Brook.
Locality and Designated Sites	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	<u>Statutory Designated Sites</u> The following Statutory Designated sites are present within 2km of the site: Rochdale Canal (SAC)(SSSI) ~0.37km northwest – <i>“The Rochdale Canal contains important habitats for submerged aquatic plants and emergent vegetation, including extensive colonies of the nationally scarce SAC species floating waterplantain Luronium natans. The site also supports a diverse assemblage of aquatic flora, notably its assemblage of pondweeds, Potamogeton spp; the nine species of which found in the canal represent a balanced community which reflects the quality of water.”</i> <u>Non-Statutory Designated Sites</u> The presence of non-statutory designated sites cannot be determined without the results of a biological records centre search.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	Due to the small scale of the proposed development, distance from protected sites and presence of physical barriers between, it is not considered that the proposed development will result in any major impacts to statutory designated sites. There is potential for low levels of pollution to occur during the construction phase of the development.
<i>Recommendations</i>	<u>Mitigation</u> Best practice measures to minimise the possibility of pollution must be implemented during construction.
Bats	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	<u>Limitations</u> It was not considered that there were any limitations to the assessment of the site for bats as all structures and trees were accessible and fully visible. <u>Local Records</u> The following European Protected Species Licenses (EPSLs) are present within 2km of the site: - EPSM2012-5119 for common pipistrelle covering the destruction of a resting place. Located approximately 1.06km southwest. - EPSM2011-2750 for common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle covering the destruction of a resting place. Located approximately 1.08km north. 2016-20262-EPS-MIT for common pipistrelle covering the destruction of a resting place. Located approximately 1.20km southwest.

	• 2015-8047-EPS-MIT for common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and daubentons covering the destruction of a resting place. Located approximately 1.73km northwest. • EPSM2009-709 for common pipistrelle covering the destruction of a resting place. Located approximately 1.86km northwest. <u><i>Bat Foraging and Commuting Value</i></u> The site contains several large mature trees which provide suitable habitat for foraging and commuting bats. The brook running down the northeast border of the site also has value for foraging bats. Grassland and scrub provide further foraging value for bats but due to the small size of the site, this value is considered limited. The surrounding environment offers limited foraging value in the form of vegetated gardens and scattered trees. There is an absence of lines of trees or hedgerows within the immediate surroundings which may be utilised by commuting bats. Due to the urban setting and therefore high light pollution in the surrounding area, the site is not considered suitable for particularly light sensitive or rare species of bats. <u><i>Bat Roosting Value (B1)</i></u> There is a wooden storage shed on site which is no longer intact and does not have a roof. The remainder of the structure was thoroughly searched for evidence of bats or potential roosting and the building is considered to be of negligible value for roosting bats. <u><i>Bat Roosting Value (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T8)</i></u> Following an inspection of the trees, no features suitable for bats were recorded and it is therefore considered that these trees are not suitable for roosting bats. <u><i>Bat Roosting Value (T7)</i></u> Following an inspection of T7, several superficial knot holes were recorded which appeared suitable for bats but upon closer inspection with a torch, did not provide the required cavity space required by roosting bats. A further fissure was recorded in one of the trunks of the goat willow which is considered to be suitable for only 1 or low numbers of bats due to its high exposure and urban setting. It was therefore classified as PRF-I and was fully inspected with the use of a torch. All areas of the cavity were visible with the use of the torch and no bats or evidence of bats was discovered. It is therefore considered that no bats are roosting within T7.
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Figure 13 - View of T7 with red circle indicating potential roosting feature.



Figure 14 - View of potential roosting feature on T7.

Foreseen Impacts

Foraging and Commuting Bats

	The proposed development will result in the removal of suitable bat foraging habitat and will result in an increase in lighting within the immediate area. The removal of these trees is considered inconsequential to local bat populations due to the presence of further bat foraging habitat immediately surrounding the site. The increase in lighting may further reduce the suitability of surrounding habitat for foraging and commuting bats and may result in disrupting the natural behaviour of bats and other nocturnal animals. <u><i>Bat Roosting Value (B1)</i></u> There are not considered to be any impacts on roosting bats as a result of the removal of B1. <u><i>Bat Roosting Value (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8)</i></u> The removal of these trees is not considered to have any impact on roosting bats.
<i>Recommendations</i>	<u><i>Foraging and Commuting Bats</i></u> A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during and post-development, which will include the following measures: • Light spill on to neighbouring vegetation and Sudden Brook should be avoided. • Use narrow spectrum light sources to lower the range of species affected by lighting. • Use light sources that emit minimal ultra-violet light. • Avoid white and blue wavelengths of the light spectrum to reduce insect attraction and where white light sources are required in order to manage the blue shortwave length content they should be of a warm / neutral colour temperature <4,200 kelvin. • Not use bare bulbs and any light pointing upwards. The spread of light will be kept in line with or below the horizontal. • Light spill will be reduced via the use of low-level lighting used in conjunction with hoods, cowls, louvers and shields. Lights will also be directional to ensure that light is directed to the intended areas only. • External lighting will be on PIR sensors that are sensitive to large objects only (so that they are not triggered by passing bats) and will be set to the shortest time duration to reduce the amount of time the lights are on. • Wall lights and security lights will be 'dimable' and set to the lowest light intensity settings. There are several products on the market that allow the control of the light intensity and the duration that the lights are on. All lighting on the developed site will make use of the most up to date technology available. <u><i>Bat Roosting Value (B1)</i></u> There are no further recommendations for roosting bats in B1.

	<u>Roosting Bats (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8)</u> There are no further recommendations for roosting bats in T1-T6 and T8. <u>Enhancements</u> The addition of 1 bat tile will be incorporated into the exterior wall of each new dwelling and will be placed in accordance with manufacturers guidelines at a height of 3m.
Birds	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	<u>Site Value</u> No evidence of nesting birds was recorded during the survey. There is value for common species of nesting birds within the trees and shrubs located around the garden. The site provides limited foraging value for birds and is not suitable for ground nesting birds due to the high disturbance and urban location.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	The proposed development is considered to be inconsequential to nesting bird populations within the context of the wider environment, but the removal of vegetation could result in the disturbance, harm or even death of nesting birds if present at the time of works.
<i>Recommendations</i>	<u>Mitigation</u> Any vegetation removal should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the vegetation should be undertaken immediately, by a qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged. Precautions should be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any retained nests so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during construction works. At least a 3-5m buffer should be created between any machinery and active nests until the young have fledged. <u>Enhancements</u> The addition of 2 x swift bricks placed adjacent within each of the new dwellings would provide additional nesting habitat for birds. All bird boxes should be installed in line with manufacturers recommendations.
Reptiles	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	<u>Local Records</u> There are no EPSLs for reptiles within 2km of the site. <u>Site Value</u> The structural heterogeneity of the grassland onsite provides potential refuge for reptiles and foraging opportunities due to its species diversity providing suitable habitat for a range of invertebrates. The scrub provides further refuge opportunities and rubble piles provide hibernating value. Areas of hard standing onsite provide potential basking

	opportunities. Due to the small size of the site, it is not considered suitable to support a large number of reptiles and is likely only utilised by a potential small and isolated population of reptiles that may be present within the wider habitat surrounding the brook, the rear of the neighbouring site and nearby vegetated gardens.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	The loss of habitats onsite is considered inconsequential to local populations due to the low potential for reptiles to be present within this isolated area and the presence of further suitable habitat surrounding the brook and within neighbouring gardens. Additionally, the post development site will include vegetated gardens which will provide habitat for any displaced reptiles to return to the site. It is therefore considered that the proposed development may result in the harm or death of reptiles if present at the time of construction but no impacts to reptiles are predicted during the operational phase of the development.
<i>Recommendations</i>	<u>Mitigation</u> Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts to reptiles, further surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures: • Site clearance will be undertaken outside of the reptile hibernation season (November to February) insofar as is possible. • A toolbox talk will be given to contractors regarding the possible presence of reptiles at the site. • A pre-commencement inspection of the site will be undertaken for reptiles. • A staged approach will be adopted for vegetation clearance, whereby the vegetation will be strimmed to 15cm and left overnight to allow any reptiles to disperse. The vegetation can then be cleared to ground level and must be maintained at this level for the duration of construction to deter reptiles from the working area. • Any rubble piles will be dismantled by hand and debris and brash will be stored on pallets or removed from the site to prevent reptiles from utilising these areas. • Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. • Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. • In the unlikely event that a reptile is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist. <u>Enhancements</u> The addition of an unmown wildlife strip to the rear of the new gardens would provide additional habitat for reptiles by increasing refuge and foraging opportunities within the post development gardens.
Great Crested Newts (GCN) & Other Amphibians	

<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	<u>Local Records</u> There are no EPSLs for great crested newts (GCN) within 2km of the site. <u>Pond Locations</u> There are no ponds present on or within 500m of the proposed development. The Rochdale Canal is located 370m to the north and the Sudden Brook is located along the northeastern boundary of the site which are both considered to be a barrier to dispersal for amphibians. Additionally, the site is located in an urban environment and is surrounded by built up areas and roads which are also considered to be barriers to dispersal. <u>Site Value</u> Habitats onsite offer limited foraging and refuge value for amphibians but lack the connectivity to surrounding habitats for terrestrial amphibians. It is therefore considered unlikely that amphibians utilise the site.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	Due to the absence of suitable water bodies and urban environment, GCN and other amphibians are not considered to be present at the site and therefore there are not considered to be any impacts on these species as a result of the proposed development.
<i>Recommendations</i>	<u>Mitigation</u> No further mitigation is required for GCN or other amphibians as a result of the proposed development.
Badgers & Other Mammals	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	<u>Limitations</u> There were no limitations to the badger scoping aspect of the survey with all areas of the site accessible and visible. <u>Setts</u> No setts or evidence of badgers was recorded during the site visit on or surrounding the site. Due to the urban nature of the surroundings, it is considered that sett building habitat is very limited on and around the site. <u>Foraging and Commuting</u> Badgers are known to commute across all habitat types, and it cannot be discounted that badgers may commute across the site. Additionally, the grassland and scrub onsite provide limited foraging value for badgers. Additionally, hedgehogs are also known to commute across all habitat types and the site has foraging and refuge value for hedgehogs within the grassland and scrub. Hedgehogs may also use any rubble piles onsite for refuge.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	<u>Setts</u> There are not considered to be any foreseen impacts on badger setts as a result of the proposed development. <u>Foraging and Commuting</u>

	The loss of habitats onsite is considered inconsequential to badger and hedgehog populations, but the construction stage of the development may result in the harm or death of these species if present.
<i>Recommendations</i>	<u>Mitigation</u> A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures: • Site clearance will be undertaken outside of the hedgehog hibernation season (November to March) insofar as is possible. • A toolbox talk will be given to contractors regarding the possible presence of hedgehogs at the site. • A pre-commencement inspection of the site will be undertaken for hedgehogs. • Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. • The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which mammals could use. • Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. • If any hedgehogs are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance. • In the unlikely event that a badger sett is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist. <u>Enhancements</u> Hedgehog highways should be incorporated into any fencing which will be erected as part of the proposed development. The addition of 1 hedgehog house into the gardens of each new dwelling will provide refuge opportunities to hedgehogs which may utilise the area.
Riparian animals	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	<u>Local Records</u> Records cannot be determined without the purchase of biological records data. However, otter sightings have been publicly reported within the local area. <u>Site Value</u> The Sudden Brook present along the northeast of the site was thoroughly searched for evidence of riparian mammals. No potential burrows, footprints, scat, trails or foraging evidence was recorded which may suggest potential presence of otters or water voles. No further water courses are present within 100m of the site and due to the largely urban nature of the site and surroundings, it is not considered likely that the site is used by commuting riparian mammals.

<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	There are not considered to be any foreseen impacts on water voles and otters as a result of the proposed development as these species are not likely to be present onsite.
<i>Recommendations</i>	<u>Mitigation</u> No further mitigation is required for otters and water voles as a result of the proposed development.
Hazel dormouse	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	<u>Local Records</u> There are no EPSLs for dormice within 2km of the site. <u>Site Value</u> Only a handful of scattered trees are present on and surrounding the site with no connectivity from this parcel to the wider surrounding environment. Additionally, there is an absence of suitable dormice habitat within the surrounding landscape and the site is therefore not considered suitable for this species.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	Dormice are not considered to be present at this site and therefore there are no foreseen impacts on this species as a result of the proposed development.
<i>Recommendations</i>	<u>Mitigation</u> No further mitigation is required for dormice as a result of the proposed development.

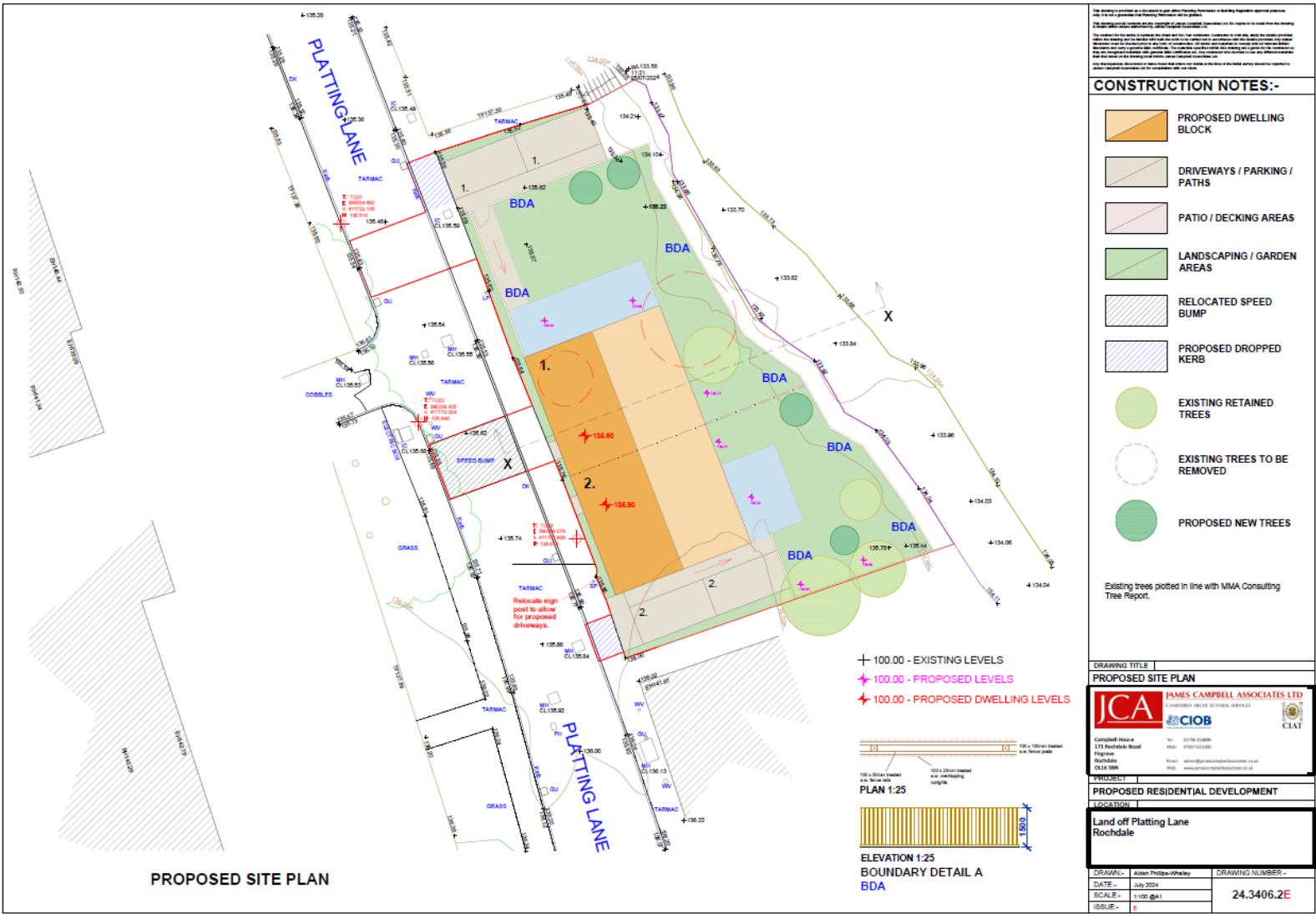
Appendix 1: Site Location



Appendix 2: UKHabs Map



Appendix 3: Proposed Plans



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