



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

**- Land at The Barn, Vandyke Street, Norden, Rochdale, OL12
7QQ.-**

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A report for

Zoe Thompson

9 Hawthorpe Grove,
Uppermill,
Oldham,
OL3 6BW

Report authors



PENNINE ecological

24 The Highgrove
Heaton
Bolton
BL1 5PX

Tel. 07505 172 087

email: bob@pennineecological.co.uk

web: www.pennineecological.co.uk

Robert N. Leatham B.Sc. (Hons.), P. dip.

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PART 1 INTRODUCTION:

1.1 REASONS FOR SURVEY:

PENNINE ecological have been commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of this site. The purpose of this study is to address any potential ecological issues in relation to the construction of a new residential dwelling. The location is shown on the map and aerial image below.

The survey was undertaken on November 12th 2025. The sites grid reference is SD 8685 1410.

The study includes a vegetation and badger survey, together with assessment for other potential protected species issues. In addition, a desk top study with the governments Magic website has been completed.

The report includes a full evaluation of the ecological significance of the survey findings.

A Biodiversity Net Gain Metric calculation has also been completed by Pennine Ecological.

1.2 SITE LOCATION:

The site is located approximately 3.14km west of Rochdale town centre accessed off the A680 Edenfield Road, Norden. The site location is shown below indicated by the red line boundary.





Google Earth aerial image showing site location.

1.3 Site Status:

A desk top consultation study with Greater Manchester Local Record Centre (GMLRC) ecological data base was not undertaken for this study. Searches for statutory sites were undertaken, as detailed below.

1.3.1 Statutory Sites:

Details of statutory sites were sought from the Natural England web site search:

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

There are no statutory sites within 500m of the site.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zones (IRZ's):

The site falls within a distant SSSI Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) associated with Rochdale Canal SSSI which is approximately 4km to the south east of the site. However, the nature / size and scale of the development does not require notification to Natural England.

1.3.2 Non-Statutory Sites:

Reference to the GMLRC web site map app, reveals that there are no non-statutory sites (Sites of Biological Importance, (SBI's)) within 500m of the site.

1.3.3 Protected Species / Habitat Data:

Section 41 Habitats of Principal Importance in England (NERC) Act 2006;

There are no Section 41 Habitats of Principal Importance in England (NERC) within the red line application boundary.

Section 41 Species of Principal Importance in England (NERC) Act 2006;

There were no Section 41 species recorded during the survey.

1.4 SURVEY CONSTRAINTS:

The survey was conducted on 12th November 2025 which is a sub optimal time for vegetation surveys, however given the nature of habitats on site this is not considered a constraint.

All the habitats within the survey area have been defined / classified accurately and sufficiently assessed. All parts of the site were accessible.

1.5 SURVEYOR EXPERIENCE:

Surveyor experience:

The surveys and assessment were undertaken by Robert Leatham, a highly experienced ecological consultant and surveyor with over 30 years' experience in a wide range of ecological survey and assessment.

Key skills include the following;

- Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and National Vegetation Classification Survey.
- Highly proficient field botanist, including some difficult plant groups.
- Mammal surveys including surveys for badger, water vole*, otter*, brown hare and preliminary bat roost assessment surveys.

*Over 400km of river reaches surveyed in England for the National Rivers Authority / Environment Agency.

- Extensive experience in great crested newt (GCN) survey, evaluation, licensing and mitigation. Natural England Class Licence WML-CL08 held. Over 25 Great Crested Newt development licences held (*Natural England / Defra licences*).

- ¹Contributor to English Nature (*Natural England*) research papers in respect of great crested newt licensing and mitigation issues.
- Several Great Crested Newt Conservation Licences (*Natural England*) held, including extensive work at Hic Bibi Local Nature Reserve, Coppull, safeguarding a high population of Great Crested Newts.
- Bats: Accredited agent on the Class 2 Licence of Mr Stuart Macpherson, (Natural England Class 2 bat licence (2021-10079-CL18-BAT). Under this accreditation Mr Leatham is permitted to carry out work on all bat species in all UK counties using artificial light only.
- Ecological Evaluation and Impact Assessments in association with large scale commercial development and civil engineering.

¹ *English Nature (2004) *An assessment of the efficiency of capture techniques and the value of different habitats for the great crested newt (Triturus cristatus)*. English Nature Research Report 576. PENNINE Ecological were contributors to this study.

PART 2 SURVEY RESULTS:

2.1 EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY:

2.1.1 UK Habitat Classification Survey Methodology:

A UKHabs survey (UKHab Ltd, 2023) was undertaken and the following habitats identified. The location of habitats is shown on Map 1, Appendix 1. Condition assessments for relevant habitats recorded on site are provided in Appendix 2.

The site's habitats were mapped and higher vascular plant species were recorded and given abundance values according to the standard DAFOR scale, where:

D	=	Dominant
A	=	Abundant
F	=	Frequent
O	=	Occasional
R	=	Rare

Where appropriate these values can be prefixed by the letter L (locally) or V (very), to provide more subtle biogeographical data.

2.1.2 Habitats Present:

On Site Habitats (within red line boundary)

828 Vegetated garden
200 Trees (T1 – T3)
u1b Developed land – sealed surface

2.1.3 General Description:

The site is approximately 55 x 30m in maximum dimensions although much of this includes the existing access along Vandyke Street.

The site is dominated by developed land / hard standing comprising concrete and tarmac.

To the north of the site is an area of vegetated garden dominated by short sparse grassland with three non-native small trees.

The grassland is dominated by rye-grass species, Yorkshire-fog and creeping buttercup. Other species present include; great willowherb, curled dock, common nettle, hedge woundwort, dandelion species and common nettle.

2.1.4 Condition Assessment:

The three non-native trees on site are the only habitats requiring condition assessment.

T1 is a non-native multi-stemmed conifer species within a raised garden planting bed. The tree has a dbh of 20cm (small tree). The tree is in **Poor Condition**.

T2 is a non-native Birch species (*Betula* sp.) located within a lawn / vegetated garden. The tree has a dbh of 20cm (small tree). The tree is in **Moderate Condition**.

T3 is a non-native species located within a lawn / vegetated garden. The tree has a dbh of 14cm (small tree). The tree is in **Poor Condition**.

(See Appendix 2 for full details)

2.2 PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEYS:

During the Phase 1 Habitat Survey additional surveys were undertaken where appropriate for the presence of other potential protected species. The following surveys were undertaken.

2.2.1 Badger Survey:

Method:

A badger survey was undertaken of the site. 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.

The survey results are outlined below.

Results:

Sett Search:

The survey found no setts on site.

Search for Foraging Signs and Pathways:

The site was thoroughly searched for badger pathways and signs of foraging. No sign of badger activity was found therefore it can be concluded that the species is not using this area for foraging or commuting.

Boundary Search:

All of the boundaries of the site were walked and examined for potential runs, pathways and latrines. The search found no evidence to suggest badger activity along any of the site boundaries.

The absence of any activity signs indicates that badgers are not entering the site. The absence of latrines indicates a lack of territorial activity in the near vicinity of the site.

2.2.2 Bats:

During the survey an assessment of bat roost potential and foraging habitats was undertaken.

The daytime survey was conducted by Mr. Robert Leatham, who is an experienced ecologist and accredited agent on the Class 2 Licence of Mr Stuart Macpherson, (Natural England Class 2 bat licence (2021-10079-CL18-BAT)). Under this accreditation Mr Leatham is permitted to carry out work on all bat species in all UK counties using artificial light only.

Constraints:

There were no constraints to the bat roost assessment of the site.

Results:

There are no structures or features affected by the proposed work that have bat roost potential.

Foraging habitats:

The site is located in a sub-urban location with surrounding gardens and small areas of green space including woodland. Given the very small size of the site and immediate surrounding well-lit roads and residential areas the site itself is considered to be of negligible / low value for foraging bats.

2.2.3 Other Protected Species:

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

PART 3 ECOLOGICAL EVALUATION & RECOMMENDATIONS:

3.1 EVALUATION OF SURVEY & RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following section evaluates the site in relation to statutory/non-statutory sites, protected species and species/habitats listed on Section 41 Species/Habitats of Principal Importance in England (NERC) Act 2006.

3.1.1 Statutory Sites:

There are no statutory sites within 500m of the site.

3.1.2 Non-statutory Sites:

There are no non-statutory sites (*Site of Biological Importance*) within 500m of the site.

3.1.3 Sites Habitats & Higher Plant Species:

There are no Section 41 Habitats of Principal Importance in England (NERC) Act 2006 affected by the proposed work.

Plant species and habitats recorded on site are common / widespread, considered to be of site value only.

Recommendations: Habitats:

A biodiversity net gain Defra Metric has been undertaken by the authors.

3.1.4 Protected Species:

Badgers:

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.

The survey found no evidence of historic, recent or current use of the site by badgers for foraging, commuting or occupation and the species is considered to be absent.

Recommendations: Badgers;

There are no issues in relation to badgers arising from the development. No further surveys are required.

Bats:

Bats are comprehensively protected by European legislation.

The survey has revealed that the site has **Negligible bat roost potential**.

The site is located within an area considered to be of negligible / low value for foraging bats.

Recommendations: Bats;

No further surveys are required.

Great Crested Newt:

Great crested newt (GCN) is comprehensively protected under European legislation. There are no ponds within 250m of the site.

Recommendations: Great Crested Newt;

There are no issues in relation to this species.

Birds:

All birds are offered various levels of protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended.

T1 has some potential to support breeding birds. T2 and T3 are too immature to support breeding birds.

Recommendations: Birds;

If the conifer (T1) is to be removed then before development and in order to minimize impacts on birds removal of T1 should take place outside of the breeding season, i.e. between September 1st and February 28th. Following the felling of the tree, 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 removal of the above feature is envisaged during the breeding season (*March 1st to August 31st*), then checks should be made to establish any nesting or breeding activity, prior to removal.

Enhancing the site for Birds:

Integrated bird box within the new building;

One integrated double chamber house sparrow nest boxes (Vivara Pro) will be installed in the upper northern or eastern elevation of the new property.

The following box is recommended;

House sparrow nest box (Vivara Pro), Double chamber:

House sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) are sociable opportunists that survive in most UK habitats, from towns and cities to farmland and countryside. Substantial declines in both urban and rural populations (estimated 71% decrease between 1977 and 2008) have led to concerns for this species.

This House Sparrow Nest Box is manufactured from WoodStone - a mix of concrete and FSC wood fibres. This material is strong and highly insulating which helps to provide a thermally stable environment within

the box. It also protects against damage from predators such as cats, woodpeckers and squirrels. The two breeding chamber version is particularly suitable for house sparrows as they prefer to nest in colonies.

The House Sparrow Nest Box will be integrated into the walls of the new property at upper floor level on the eastern elevation.



These are available here, or, from other suppliers; <https://www.nhbs.com/vivara-pro-woodstone-house-sparrow-nest-box>

PART 4 REFERENCES:

4.1 REFERENCES:

- Bat Conservation Trust (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, Good Practice Guidelines*, 4th Edition.
- Nature Conservancy Council (1990) *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey – A Technique for Environmental Audit*. Nature Conservancy Council.
- Rose, F. (1981) *The Wildflower Key*. Warne.
- Stace, C., (1997) *New Flora of the British Isles (Second edition)*. Cambridge University Press.

Web Sites:

- Google Earth.
- Natural England – Nature on the Map.

APPENDIX 1:

*Map 1: UKHabs Habitat Survey
(Separate file)*

Site Photographs

APPENDIX 2:

Condition_assessments_version July 2025 (separate file)

APPENDIX 1: SITE PHOTOGRAPHS: 12th November 2025



Looking north into the site from the southern boundary.



Developed land sealed surface (concrete).



South western part of the site.



Developed land sealed surface (concrete), looking east towards Vandyke Street.



Looking north into the northern part of the site.



Interface between concrete hardstanding and vegetated garden.



Vegetated garden in the northern part of the site.



Vegetated garden in the northern part of the site.



Vegetated garden in the northern part of the site.



Vegetated garden in the northern part of the site, looking south from the northern boundary.



Vegetated garden in the northern part of the site.