



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) – *Final report*

311 Kingsway, Rochdale

April 2026

Prepared by Principal Ecologist Rob Coles, PhD on behalf of:



BUILDING AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

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Report Overview	
Scheme reference	311 Kingsway, Rochdale
Works description	Demolition of existing properties and construction of new buildings for use as a car wash
Revision	Version 1 (Final)
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Prepared by	 Robert Coles, PhD – Principal Ecologist
Reviewed by	 Helen Archer BSc (Hons) MCIEEM – Associate Ecologist

Acknowledgements

Rob Coles Ecology Ltd would like to thank Greater Manchester Local Records Centre (GMLRC) for the provision of historical ecological records and details of non-statutory designated sites to supplement the findings of this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rob Coles Ecology Ltd was commissioned by ARC Building and Project Management Ltd to complete a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) with respect to the development proposals at the premises of 311 Kingsway, Rochdale. The application site is an irregularly-shaped parcel of land which is positioned to the west of Rochdale Bypass within a predominantly commercial/residential setting. The site is located approximately 1.6km north-east of the centre of Rochdale while the Rochdale Canal SSSI and SAC is located approximately 250m to the east of the application site.

As part of the commission, a UK Habitat Classification and Protected/Priority Species Scoping Assessment of the application site was carried out by Principal Ecologist Robert Coles, PhD on 30th March 2026. The walkover was supplemented by historical records of protected species, priority habitats and statutory/non-statutory designated nature conservation sites falling within 2–10km of the application site. These were obtained through consultation with the Greater Manchester Local Records Centre (GMLRC).

A summary of mitigation advice, pertaining to ecological receptors, is given in Table 1, below. This advice would require revising should details of the location, nature and/or extent of the works be altered from those stipulated in this report.

Table 1 – Overview of findings and recommendations

Habitats and biodiversity
It is recommended that any introduced landscaping is species-rich and incorporates native plants and shrubs sourced from local provenance. Species of greatest value to pollinators, and other aerial invertebrate should be selected as these offer a greater potential food source for locally foraging bats, mammals, avifauna and herpetofauna.
Nesting birds
The demolition works and removal of vegetation of sufficient density to harbour nesting birds should be completed outside of the main nesting bird season (nesting season runs March-August, inclusive), where practicable. Should these works be scheduled during the main nesting bird season, all suitable habitats for nesting activity should be firstly checked by a suitably experienced ecologist in advance. If active nests are found, these must be fully safeguarded and left undisturbed until all chicks have fledged.
Foraging and commuting bats
As a precautionary measure, and in order to avoid impacts upon nocturnal bat activity, dark and unlit corridors should be maintained around and across the site, allowing bats to pass through unhindered

by artificial lighting. All introduced lighting must be sensitive to nocturnal bat activity and be curtailed to avoid impacting light-sensitive bat species.

Introduced lighting should be positioned at a minimum of 7m from trees, and hedgerows occurring within the immediate vicinities of the site. Mercury or metal halide lamps must also be avoided. The hours of illumination could be restricted to provide a minimum of 8 hours of darkness per night. Introduced lighting should further comprise a maximum of 1 lux which is comparable to moonlight conditions.

Other priority species

Hedgehogs, which may utilise the habitats on, and adjacent to the site, may become entrapped, be harmed or killed during the construction phase of the proposed works. Therefore, it is recommended that porous, hedgehog-friendly fencing is used within and across the site.

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1.0 INTRODUCTION	6
2.0 PLANNING POLICY AND LEGISLATION	8
3.0 METHODOLOGY	13
4.0 RESULTS	15
5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	23
APPENDIX I – DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS	25
APPENDIX II – SPECIES METHODOLOGIES	26
APPENDIX III – PHOTOGRAPHS	28
APPENDIX IV – UKHABS HABITAT MAP	31

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Rob Coles Ecology Ltd was commissioned by ARC Building and Project Management Ltd to complete a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) with respect to the development proposals at the premises of 311 Kingsway, Rochdale (hereafter referred to as 'the application site'). The application site is an irregularly-shaped parcel of land which is positioned to the west of Rochdale Bypass within a predominantly commercial/residential setting. The site is located approximately 1.6km north-east of the centre of Rochdale while the Rochdale Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located approximately 250m to the east of the application site.

1.1.2 The location of the application site (centred at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference (OSGR) SD 91411 13096 in context with the local landscape is shown in Figure 1, below.



Figure 1 – Location of the site in context with the local landscape

1.2 Proposed development

- 1.2.1 With reference to the *Proposed Site Plan Layout* prepared by SRA Architecture (Drawing Number J/25/115/04, Rev: C; see Appendix I), it is understood that the current commercial units, which occupy the central extent of the application site, will be demolished and replaced with new buildings to accommodate a car wash.

1.3 Objectives

- 1.3.1 The purpose of this report is to identify any potential ecological receptors occurring within or adjacent to the proposed works area. These include protected species, habitats and designated nature conservation sites.
- 1.3.2 This report also details any potential ecological constraints to the works (e.g., invasive plants), the requirement for any further ecological survey and/or monitoring works and provides details of proportionate mitigation measures, where appropriate.

2.0 PLANNING POLICY AND LEGISLATION

2.1 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act

- 2.1.1 There is a requirement under Section 40(1) and (2) for each Secretary of State to take steps *'to be reasonably practicable to further the conservation of the living organisms and types of habitat'* included in the list and there is a legal obligation on public bodies in England to have regard to these organisms and habitats whilst carrying out their functions.
- 2.1.2 Currently, there are 56 habitats and 943 species of principal importance included on the S41 list.

2.2 Biodiversity Compliance

- 2.2.1 The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Earth Summit, was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and produced the 'Biodiversity: The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) (UK Biodiversity Partnership, 2007¹) which lists priority species and habitats in the UK requiring conservation action.
- 2.2.2 The goal of the UK BAP is to *'Conserve and enhance biological diversity within the UK and contribute to the conservation of global biodiversity through all appropriate mechanisms.'* The UK BAP now includes 1,150 species and 65 habitats; these are allocated individual action plans for conservation known as Species Action Plans (SAPs) and Habitat Action Plans (HAPs).
- 2.2.3 As a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) which was opened at the Earth Summit and entered into force in 1993, Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) were developed by local authorities and counties to conserve fauna, flora and habitats at a local level.

2.3 National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.3.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is the top tier of planning policy and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. NPPF also sets guidance to local authorities on planning policy within the planning system.
- 2.3.2 Section 15 relates to 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment'. Relevant policies in relation to planning applications include:

¹ UK BAP. UK Biodiversity Action Plan – Priority Species and Habitats [online]. Available at: <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110303145245/http://www.ukbap.org.uk/newprioritylist.aspx> [Accessed January 2024].

Paragraph 187. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;*
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate*

Paragraph 192. “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 biodiversity⁶¹; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation⁶²; 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 193. “When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

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;

- a) 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;*
- b) 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 reasons⁶³ and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and*
- c) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.*

Paragraph 194. The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

- a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;*
- b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites⁶⁴; and*
- c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.*

Paragraph 195. The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.

2.4 Manchester City Council Local Plan

- 2.4.1 The Manchester Local Plan sets out a blueprint for local development and planning policy for the area. Relevant policies in relation to this planning application include:

Policy EN 15: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

The Council will seek to maintain or enhance sites of biodiversity and geological value throughout the City. Particular consideration will be given to:

- *sites with international or national designations for their biodiversity value. Manchester contains one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (Cotteril Clough); there is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and an SSSI just over the border in Oldham (both on the Rochdale Canal within Oldham);*
- *other sites of biodiversity value, including Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs); Manchester currently has 35 SBIs (including the Rochdale and Ashton Canals) and 7 LNRs; priority habitats found within Manchester, as listed in the Manchester Biodiversity Strategy and included in the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (GM BAP);*
- *protected and priority species, as listed in the Manchester Biodiversity Strategy and included in the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (GM BAP);*
- *sites that are recognised for their geological importance;*
- *the Council's objective to protect and conserve the City's existing trees and woodlands and the aim for a net increase in trees across the City.*

Developers will be expected to identify and implement reasonable opportunities to enhance, restore or create new biodiversity, either on-site or adjacent to the site, contributing to linkages between valuable or potentially valuable habitat areas where appropriate, with reference to:

- *the Manchester Biodiversity Strategy, which provides further details of priority habitats within Manchester and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement including corridors such as the Mersey, Medlock and Irk river valleys, the canals and disused railway lines and areas of managed greenspace particularly in parks;*
- *the Green Infrastructure Framework for Greater Manchester, which encompasses an ecological framework that seeks to guide and inform habitat creation and repair, including identifying large 'biodiversity opportunity areas' including the Moston Brook Corridor and Nutsford Vale;*
- *the Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study, which identifies areas where there is a deficit of natural and semi-natural greenspace, opportunities for green corridors and other linkages;*
- *Manchester's Climate Change Action Plan;*
- *the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for Manchester;*
- *the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for Manchester, which gives detailed consideration to Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), including the Rochdale Canal SAC just outside the district boundary;*
- *the River Basin Management Plan for the North West;*
- *the Manchester Tree Strategy.*

Any adverse impacts on biodiversity will need to be justified against the wider benefits of the proposal, assessed against other LDF policies. Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, developers will be required to provide appropriate mitigation and/or compensation.

Development should wherever possible seek to maintain, enhance or restore existing geology.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

NB: Detailed methodologies pertaining to individual protected species are included under Appendix II of this report.

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 A PEA was undertaken of the site following guidance produced by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environment Management (CIEEM)². The assessment included:

- A desk-based search for historic records of protected, notable and invasive non-native species on the site and local vicinity. Data for locally and nationally designated nature conservation sites were obtained;
- An ecological walkover survey of the proposed works area (shown in Figure 1). The study area was extended beyond the works area, where appropriate, e.g., to undertake species-specific surveys;
- Identification of invasive non-native species; and
- Assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed works on habitat and floral/faunal receptors, as well as designated sites.

3.2 Desk study

3.2.1 To supplement the ecological walkover, a desktop study was undertaken in April 2026. This included a search of data, including historic records for protected species and statutory and non-statutory designated nature conservation sites from the following the sources:

- Greater Manchester Local Records Centre (GMLRC);
- Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)³; and
- Aerial imagery.

3.2.2 The following geographical extents of the search area for potential zones of influence for nature conservation sites were considered to be appropriate:

- 10km from the site for sites of International Importance (e.g., Special Area of Conservation (SAC); Special Protection Area (SPA)); and,
- 2km from the site for sites of National or Regional Importance (e.g., Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)); and for protected and notable species (including biological records, post-2000) and non-statutory designated sites (e.g., Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs)).

² CIEEM (2017) *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd edition*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

³ www.magic.gov.uk accessed April 2026

3.3 Field survey

UK Habitat Classification Survey

- 3.3.1 A UK Habitat Classification⁴ (UKHabs) survey and ecological walkover was completed on 30th March 2026 by Principal Ecologist Rob Coles, PhD. The survey was completed in accordance with the UKHabs system and involved identifying all habitats, including notable/protected habitats, that are established on the application site. Photographs taken during the survey, as referenced within Section 4.2 of this report, are shown under Appendix III of this report and a detailed UKHabs Survey Map is included under Appendix IV. Ecological features of particular interest are denoted as Target Notes (TN) under Appendix IV.

Protected and Priority Species Scoping Assessment

- 3.3.2 At the same time as the UKHabs survey, an ecological walkover was conducted to assess the potential of the application site to support protected, priority and/or notable species based on habitat quality and known historic presence. Any incidental sightings or field signs of such species, such as footprints or droppings, were also noted during the survey.

3.4 Survey limitations

- 3.4.1 An absence of desk study records cannot be relied upon to infer the absence of a species/habitat as a lack of records may be a result of under-recording within a given search area. UKHabs survey aims to characterise the habitat on the site and is not intended to give a complete list of plant species present.

3.5 Scoped out

- 3.5.1 Given a lack of suitable habitat opportunities for white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* and riparian mammals, including water vole *Arvicola amphibius* and otter *Lutra lutra* these protected faunae have been scoped out of this assessment.

⁴ UKHab Ltd (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* (at <https://www.ukhab.org>). UKHab Ltd

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Statutory Designated Nature Conservation Sites

National / European / International designated sites for nature conservation

- 4.1.1 Rochdale Canal SSSI⁵ and SAC⁶ and South Pennine Moors SSSI⁷ SPA⁸ and SAC⁹ are both national, European and international statutory designated sites for nature conservation. Details pertaining to the interest features forming these national, European and international designated sites, and their proximity to the application site, are summarised in Table 2, below.

Table 2 – National, European and international designated sites occurring within 2km of the application site

Designated site	Interest features	Proximity to site
Rochdale Canal SSSI and SAC	The Rochdale Canal hosts vital habitats, including submerged aquatic plants and emergent vegetation, featuring the nationally scarce floating water-plantain <i>Luronium natans</i> . Spanning about 20 km from Littleborough to Failsworth, it traverses urban spaces and agricultural land, with water partially sourced from the acidic Pennines. Its aquatic flora reflects mesotrophic conditions, supporting diverse species including various pondweeds, water violet, and emergent vegetation like reed sweet-grass. The canal also features uncommon species such as the water soldier and American pondweed, and maintains a rich invertebrate community, including nationally scarce species, alongside breeding waterside birds like coot, moorhen, and mallard.	0.25km south-east
South Pennine Moors SSSI, SPA and SAC	Notable for the largest unenclosed moorland in West Yorkshire, including Ilkley Moor and Haworth Moors. The geology consists of millstone grit, found	4km north-east

⁵ Natural England (2000) *Rochdale Canal SSSI*. Avail. at: <https://tinyurl.com/4yw27mbd> [Accessed 06.04.2026].

⁶ JNCC (2005) *Rochdale Canal SAC*. Avail. at: <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0030266> [Accessed 06.04.2026].

⁷ Natural England (1994) *South Pennine Moors SSSI*. Avail. at: <https://tinyurl.com/4ssuerss> [Accessed 06.04.2026].

⁸ JNCC (1997) *South Pennine Moors SPA*. Avail. at: <https://tinyurl.com/27bemnpv> [Accessed 06.04.2026].

⁹ JNCC (2005) *South Pennine Moors SAC*. Avail. at: <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0030280> [Accessed 06.04.2026].

Designated site	Interest features	Proximity to site
	at Boulsworth Hill, with elevations ranging between 300m and 517m. The distinct landscape features blanket peat, diverse upland plant communities, and classified habitats under the EC Habitats Directive. Vegetation includes cotton-grass, heather, and other dwarf shrubs, with crowberry thriving on eroding bog edges. Wet heath areas contain cross-leaved heath and cranberry, while lower slopes show thick heather moorland interspersed with acid grassland, where mat-grass and wavy hair-grass dominate. The diverse habitats support significant bird populations, including breeding merlin, golden plover, and twite, which depend on specific environments for nesting.	

- 4.1.2 Given that the works will be confined entirely to within the application site and considering the wide distance and level of separation between the application site and the Rochdale Canal SSSI and SAC, and South Pennine Moors SSSI, SPA and SAC, the works are predicted to result in neutral impacts upon interest features forming these statutory designated nature conservation sites. Subsequently, national, European and internationally designated sites for nature conservation are not considered to be potential receptors with respect to the development proposals.

Nationally designated sites for nature conservation

- 4.1.3 Other than the two sites listed above, the application site does not fall within significant proximity to any nationally designated sites for nature conservation.

Non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation

- 4.1.4 The GMLRC identified five Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) in the form of Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) within a 2km radius of the application site. Details pertaining to the interest features forming these non-statutory designated sites, and their proximity to the application site, are summarised in Table 3, overleaf.

Table 3 – LWSs occurring within 2km of the application site

LWS	Interest features	Proximity to site
Rochdale Canal, Scowcroft Farm to Warland SBI	Holds significant ecological value, supporting floating water plantain (<i>Luronium natans</i>). This canal section houses nine pondweed species, prominently the American pondweed (<i>P. epihydrus</i>), and various aquatic flora, including common duckweed and water milfoil. Marginal vegetation features species like reed sweet-grass and yellow flag-iris. The canal supports white-clawed crayfish and a range of terrestrial plants and grasses. Biodiversity highlights include water voles and breeding birds, notably moorhen and mallard.	0.25km south-east
Stanney Brook SBI	Includes diverse habitats such as marsh, acid grassland, and flush communities featuring species like soft rush, creeping buttercup, and marsh thistle. Supports acid grassland and semi-improved grassland with various flushes. The southeastern region contains swamp habitats benefiting birds, including the reed bunting. Water voles have become extinct due to mink; however, new habitats have been established for translocated mud snails.	0.6km south-east
Slopes by River Beal, Fir Grove Farm SBI	The site is characterized by mosaics of neutral and acid grassland, which are significant for biodiversity in the area. The slopes directly border the River Beal, contributing to a vital riparian corridor that connects ecological sites, supporting aquatic and bankside flora. Consists of sloping, often marshy or semi-natural, grassland, which increases the diversity of habitats compared to surrounding improved agricultural land.	0.8km north-east
Marsh near Turf Hill SBI	The site is characterized as a marshy grassland, supporting the mud snail. Is listed as a Grade B SBI (site of district importance).	1.7km south

LWS	Interest features	Proximity to site
Shaw Moss SBI	Recognized for supporting significant breeding bird populations. As an SBI, it is recognized as a locally designated site containing habitat or species that are considered important for nature conservation. The site sits within a broader landscape containing undeveloped land that supports wildlife and helps with flood risk mitigation.	1.9km north-east

- 4.1.5 In view of the localised nature of the proposed works, and the wide level of separation between the application site and all non-statutory designated sites occurring within a 2km radius, the works are not expected to adversely impact upon the integrity of interest features which form these designations. Subsequently, non-statutory designated nature conservation sites are not considered to be potential receptors with respect to the proposed works.

Priority Habitats

- 4.1.6 A search using MAGIC identified that no priority habitats occur on or within significant proximity to the application site. Subsequently, priority habitats are not considered to be potential receptors with respect to the proposed works.

4.2 UK Habitat Classification

- 4.2.1 The application site is an irregularly-shaped parcel of land which is positioned to the west of Rochdale Bypass within a predominantly commercial/residential setting. The site is located approximately 1.6km north-east of the centre of Rochdale while the Rochdale Canal SSSI and SAC is located approximately 250m to the east of the application site.
- 4.2.2 All habitats established within the boundary of the application site are described under the following sub-headings, with the Polygon (P), and Building (B) habitat references corresponding to the locations shown in the UKHabs map under Appendix IV. Ecological features of particular interest are denoted as Target Notes (TN) under Appendix IV.

Polygon reference	-	B1 and B2
Habitat type	-	Buildings
UKHabs code	-	u1b5815
Habitat value	-	Of site value

4.2.3 B1 and B2 represent buildings currently used for commercial purposes. B1 constitutes a single-storey property of brick construction with a flat felt-lined roof. B1 also supports a forecourt canopy which extends from the main building eastwards, this is composed of corrugated metal sheeting and a steel framework. (see Photograph 1, Appendix III).

4.2.4 B2 constitutes a single-storey property constructed of a steel framework with single-skinned corrugated metal sheeting for the walls and a flat felt-lined roof (see Photograph 2, Appendix III).

Point reference - **P1**
Habitat type - **Urban – Built-up Areas and Gardens: Introduced shrub**
UKHabs code - **u1847**
Habitat value - **Of site value**

4.2.5 P1 consists of a stand of honeysuckle *Lonicera* sp., which is encroaching onto the application site from the neighbouring land parcel. This habitat also sustains common ivy *Hedera helix* and very sparse bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., which are also encroaching onto the application site (see Photograph 3, Appendix III).

Polygon reference - **P2 and P3**
Habitat type - **Urban – Sparsely vegetated urban land**
UKHabs code - **u1f**
Habitat value - **Of site value**

4.2.6 P2 comprises ruderal species such as willowherb *Epilobium* sp., dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg., and herb Robert *Geranium robertianum*, located in the north-west corner of the site (see Photograph 4, Appendix III).

4.2.7 P3 consists of a sparsely populated habitat predominantly comprising ruderal species such as willowherb, dandelion, thale grass *Arabidopsis thaliana*, wood forget-me-not *Myosotis sylvatica*, Canadian fleabane *Erigeron canadensis*, and the perennial species columbine *Aquilegia vulgaris*. This habitat is located along the south-eastern site boundary (see Photograph 5, Appendix III).

Polygon reference - **P4**
Habitat type - **Urban – Developed land; sealed surface**
UKHabs code - **u1b**
Habitat value - **Of site value**

- 4.2.8 P4 is an area of hardstanding, in the form of concrete, found encompassing the properties on the site (B1 and B2), and predominantly forming the areas constituting the entrance to the site and the carpark (see Photograph 6, Appendix III).

4.3 Species

Amphibians

- 4.3.1 The data returned by the GMLRC yielded two records representing commonly occurring species of amphibian within a 2km radius of the application site. These included records for common toad *Bufo bufo* with the closest record located approximately 1.2km north-east of the application site dated to 2024. A total of 14 records for great crested newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* were also returned, with the most recent of these being recorded in 2017. The closest of these records to the site is for 29 adult GCN and 1 egg located approximately 1.2km south-east of the application site and dated to 2014.
- 4.3.2 The application site does not sustain any standing waterbodies on the site and nor does the application site include any habitats with any suitability to support any form of activity by great crested newts. The nearest waterbody to the site is located approximately 550m north-west of the site and is poorly connected to the application site. Furthermore, the application site is generally not well connected to the wider ecological landscape and specifically for habits that support great crested newts. Given the distinct lack of habitats on the site with the suitability to support GCN activity and the poor connectivity to the wider ecological landscape, the potential for GCN and other more commonly occurring amphibians to inhabit the site is considered to be negligible. Subsequently, amphibians are no longer considered within the assessment.

Reptiles

- 4.3.3 The GMLRC did not return any records of reptiles from within a 2km radius of the application site. The application site does not sustain any habitats with any suitability to support any form of activity by any species of reptiles. Given the distinct lack of habitats on the site with the suitability to support reptile species and the poor connectivity to the wider ecological landscape, the potential for reptiles to inhabit the site is considered to be negligible. Subsequently, reptiles are no longer considered within the assessment.

Birds

- 4.3.4 The local records centre returned multiple records of commonly occurring bird species from within 2km of the application site and multiple records of species listed under Schedule 1 of

the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended). However, given the principally urban and commercial nature of the application site and on-site habitats, no suitable/optimal habitats for these species were identified, nor were any sightings made of Schedule 1 birds at the time of the walkover.

- 4.3.5 Occasional bird activity was recorded on the site and was limited to single sightings of passerine species such as wood pigeon *Columba palumbus* and blackbird *Turdus merula*. No evidence of nesting activity was observed during the walkover, in either of the two properties on the site or the areas of vegetation. However, the introduced shrub mixed with common ivy (P1), the overhanging vegetation from the neighbouring land parcels (TN1 – TN7), and the horizontal ledges/surfaces associated with the on-site buildings (B1 and B2) all have the potential to provide habitat opportunities for nesting birds. In the absence of mitigation, nesting birds could be inadvertently impacted by the vegetation removal activities and building demolition works required to facilitate the proposed development.

Bats

- 4.3.6 The GMLRC returned multiple records of bats from within a 2km radius of the application site. The most recent of which being a common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* record from 2023 located approximately 1.2km south-west of the site.

Roosting bats

- 4.3.7 The buildings on the site (B1 and B2) are of relatively simple construction, predominantly consisting of simple steel frames and single-skinned corrugated metal sheeting for the walls and roofing. These constructions are generally not favourable to roosting bats.
- 4.3.8 Internally, both buildings consist of open rooms and lack roof spaces or roof voids. Artificial light exposure is also prominent throughout these rooms and is expected to deter roosting activity. Furthermore, no evidence of roosting activity was found to be associated with the internal fabric of the buildings.
- 4.3.9 Taken together, the lack of suitability, the absence of Potential Roost Features (PRFs), and the heavy light exposure within the properties during the day, these properties was appraised as having 'negligible' roosting potential in line with roosting categories contained within current Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) survey guidelines¹⁰. As a result, roosting bats are no longer considered in this assessment.

¹⁰ Collins (2023). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, Good Practice Guidelines, 4th Edition*. BCT

Foraging/commuting bats

- 4.3.10 The vegetation in the north-west corner of the application site (P1) and the trees/vegetation in the immediately adjacent land parcels (TN1 – TN3) to the south-west of the application site boundary have the potential to provide foraging and commuting opportunities for locally occurring bat populations. Furthermore, these habitats are situated approximately 150m north of a railway line. This railway line and its associated tree lines/vegetation provides linear habitats and connectivity to the wider ecological landscape that has suitability to support commuting and foraging bats. Therefore, the application site is considered to be of ‘Low’ suitability for foraging and commuting bats in line with categories contained within current BCT guidelines.

Badger

- 4.3.11 No records of badger *Meles meles* were returned by the GMLRC from within a 2km radius of the application site. No habitats are present on the site with the suitability to support any form of badger activity. Subsequently, badgers are no longer considered within the assessment.

Other priority species

- 4.3.12 The data search returned a single record of brown hare *Lepus europaeus* and multiple records of west European hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*. No on-site habitats are present that provide any suitability to support brown hare; however, habitats on the site with the suitability to support hedgehogs are limited. The introduced shrub and ruderal species (P1 and P2) in the north-west corner of the application suite and the habitats in the immediate vicinity to the site (TN1 – TN7) provide limited opportunities for hedgehog activity. As a result, in the absence of mitigation, this species may become entrapped, be harmed or killed during the construction phase of the proposed works and the foraging/dispersal behaviour of hedgehogs could become compromised.

Invasive non-native species

- 4.3.13 No evidence of invasive non-native species (INNS) was identified during the walkover and so no interactions with such species are expected during the proposed works. Therefore, INNS are not considered to be a constraint at the site and are no longer considered within this assessment.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Habitats and biodiversity

- 5.1.1 The application site does not support any habitats of nature conservation value on a local, county or national scale. All of the on-site habitats were appraised as having 'low' or 'negligible' nature conservation value on a site scale.

Biodiversity

- 5.1.2 **It is recommended that any introduced landscaping is species-rich and incorporates native plants and shrubs sourced from provenance. Species of greatest value to pollinators, and other aerial invertebrate should be selected as these offer a greater potential food source for locally foraging bats, mammals, avifauna and herpetofauna.**

5.2 Species

Birds

- 5.2.1 All nesting birds and active nests are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended) which makes it an offence to take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built, and to take or destroy the egg of any wild bird. Certain birds, listed under Schedule 1 of the Act, are also protected against disturbance whilst building a nest, or when on or near a nest containing eggs/unfledged young.
- 5.2.2 The site offers habitat opportunities for birds to establish nests in the form of the introduced shrub and common ivy (P1), neighbouring vegetation (TN1 – TN7), and the buildings (B1 and B2).
- 5.2.3 **The demolition works and the removal of vegetation of sufficient density to harbour nesting birds should be completed outside of the main nesting bird season (nesting season runs March-August, inclusive), where practicable. Should these works be scheduled during the main nesting bird season, all suitable habitats for nesting activity should be firstly checked by a suitably experienced ecologist in advance. If active nests are found, these must be fully safeguarded and left undisturbed until all chicks have fledged.**

Bats

- 5.2.4 Bats receive protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to take, kill or injure a bat, damage or destroy a resting place of a bat, or disturb a bat whilst it is occupying a place of shelter.

- 5.2.5 **The site supports habitats with low suitability for foraging and commuting bats and optimal habitat is available in the vicinity to the south of the site.**
- 5.2.6 **As a precautionary measure, and in order to avoid impacts upon nocturnal bat activity, dark and unlit corridors should be maintained around and across the site, allowing bats to pass through unhindered by artificial lighting. All introduced lighting must be sensitive to nocturnal bat activity and be curtailed to avoid impacting light-sensitive bat species.**
- 5.2.7 **Introduced lighting should be positioned at a minimum of 7m from trees, and hedgerows occurring within the immediate vicinities of the site. Mercury or metal halide lamps must also be avoided. The hours of illumination could be restricted to provide a minimum of 8 hours of darkness per night. Introduced lighting should further comprise a maximum of 1 lux which is comparable to moonlight conditions.**

Other priority species

- 5.2.8 Hedgehogs are listed on Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) which makes it illegal to kill or capture wild hedgehogs, with certain methods listed. Hedgehogs are a Species of Principle Importance in England under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 Section 41. All wild mammals are protected from cruel treatment under the Wild Mammals Protection Act (1996).
- 5.2.9 Hedgehogs, which may utilise the habitats on, and adjacent to the site, may become entrapped, be harmed or killed during the construction phase of the proposed works. **Therefore, it is recommended that porous, hedgehog-friendly fencing is used within and across the site.**

APPENDIX II – SPECIES METHODOLOGIES

The fauna included within this assessment is based on the habitats present, data from the desk-based searches, and the following legislation¹¹:

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992;
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, and
- The NERC Act 2006 – S41 Species of Principal Importance (SPI) for the conservation of biodiversity.

Amphibians

Where accessible, waterbodies within 500m of the site boundary were identified using online Ordnance Survey maps and aerial imagery¹² and were assessed for their suitability to support great-crested newts using a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI). The HSI is a numerical index, between 0 and 1. Values close to 0 indicate unsuitable habitat, 1 represents optimal habitat (Oldham et al., 2000)¹³.

Reptiles

An assessment of the suitability of the habitats present to support common reptile species was undertaken¹⁴. In accordance with current guidance this assessment involved a review of habitats and habitat structure for suitable shelter for reptiles such as areas of scrub and woodpiles, grassland with well-developed and varied structure, areas suitable for basking and large tussocks etc.

Birds

Based upon vegetation maturity, structure and density, an assessment of habitats was undertaken to determine the likely value to breeding and foraging birds.

Bats

Where accessible, a detailed internal and external inspection of on-site buildings was completed. The buildings were subjected to a detailed inspection from ground level with the use of a Cluson Clulite torch (1 million candle power).

¹¹ See www.legislation.gov.uk

¹² www.bing.com/maps accessed April 2026

¹³ Oldham et al., (2000). *Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the Great Crested Newt (Triturus cristatus)*. Herpetological Journal 10, 143-155

¹⁴ Froglife (1999). *Froglife Advice Sheet 10: reptile survey*. Froglife, London.

Tree assessments were undertaken from ground level with the aid of a torch and binoculars, where required. During the survey Potential Roosting Features (PRF) for bats following current best practice^{15, 16, 17} were recorded. The potential for the site and immediate surrounds to support foraging and commuting bats was also assessed, with particular regard given to the presence of continuous tree lines, watercourses and hedgerows providing good connectivity in the landscape, and the presence of varied habitat such as scrub, woodland, grassland and hedgerows in the vicinity.

Badger

Areas of suitable habitat were surveyed for evidence of badger activity, such as mammal paths, setts, snuffle holes or latrines¹⁸.

Legally controlled species

Evidence of species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended was recorded as seen.

¹⁵ Collins (2023). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, Good Practice Guidelines, 4th Edition*. BCT

¹⁶ Mitchell-Jones, A.J, & McLeish, A.P. Ed. (2004). *Bat Workers' Manual 3rd Edition*

¹⁷ BCT (2015) *Surveying for Bats in Trees and Woodland – Guide*. BCT

¹⁸ Natural England (2015) *Badgers: surveys and mitigation for development projects*. Natural England

APPENDIX III – PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph 1 – Building 1 (B1)



Photograph 2 – Building 2 (B2)



Photograph 3 – The introduced shrub and common ivy (P1)



Photograph 4 – Ruderal species in the north-west corner (P2)



Photograph 5 – Ruderal species along the south-eastern site boundary (P3)



Photograph 6 – Hardstanding entrance to the site (P4)

APPENDIX IV – UKHABS HABITAT MAP

