

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Survey site:

Old Hall Street, Middleton, Manchester M241AG

Client:

Self-Storage Performance Management International Limited

Survey date:

08/06/2026

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council. The proposed development can be described as: *The construction of a new storage facility, residential units and the extension of the existing Middleton arena.*

On the assumption that site conditions and habitats remain unchanged, the results of this assessment will remain valid for 18 months from the date of this survey i.e. until December 2027, in accordance with CIEEM guidance in the lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys. This survey and report should be updated if a planning application has not been submitted within this timeframe.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following is work you will need to commission to obtain planning permission and to comply with legislation. Further information, along with opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, are outlined in the proceeding sections of this report.

Table 1: Summary of key findings arising from this survey.

Key Findings
• The habitats on site are of no specific conservation value but have value at the local level. These are to be partially destroyed. Loss or damage will contribute to net losses of biodiversity locally. There are no specific concerns relating to Protected or otherwise Important Species or Assemblages of a scale warranting further investigation. • Updated proposed plans show that the development area is outside the zone of influence for the River Irk, as the habitats on-site are all developed land sealed surface the development qualifies for the de minimis Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) exemption. • A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be requested by the LPA via condition. • Various precautionary working methods have been recommended which have been fully detailed within the fauna section of this report.

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the PEA was to obtain data on existing ecological conditions, and to conduct a preliminary assessment of the likely significance of ecological impacts on the proposed development. No previous ecology reports have been produced for this site by Arbtech Consulting Ltd or, to the author’s knowledge, by any other consultancy.

Methodology

PEA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: [PEA Methodology and Legislation - 2025](#).

Survey Details

The site survey was undertaken on 08/06/2026 by David Hill-Chambers MSc (Hons), BSc (Hons), Graduate Ecologist, an ecologist with 3 years of experience.

Table 2: The weather conditions during the survey.

Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (km/h)	Rain
12.0	94.0	99	16.8	None

Survey Limitations

It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to describe the baseline conditions within the survey area, and evaluate these features, this report does not provide a complete characterisation of the site. This assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species being present. This is based on suitability of the habitats on the site and in the wider landscape, the ecology and biology of species as currently understood. There were no specific limitations to the survey.

2. SITE LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

2.1 Summary of Survey Findings

Site Location & Context

The site is centred at National Grid reference SD 87196 06003 and has an area of approximately 0.8ha comprising a large area of developed land. The site is located within an urban context, ~5km northwest of Oldham town centre. As a result, the site is surrounded by urban infrastructure, with the river Irk running along the southern boundary of the wider land ownership ~17m southeast of the development area. The site is not considered well connected to nearby habitats given the urban landscape and the lack of linear features.

Priority Habitats

There are six priority habitats within 2km of the site. These comprise deciduous woodland, open mosaic habitats on previously developed land, ancient & semi-natural woodland, lowland fens, lowland raised bog and lowland dry acid grassland. The closest priority habitat comprises deciduous woodland, located 70m N from the site.

Designated Sites

Statutory Designations within 2km

There are four statutory designations within 2km of the site, as detailed below:

Table 3: The statutory designated sites within 2km of the site boundary.

Designation	Distance from Site
Rochdale Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	1525m NE

Alkrington Woods Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	470m SW
Hopwood Woodlands Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	1320m N
Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	1525m NE

SSSI Risk Zone

The site does fall within the impact risk zone for Rochdale Canal SSSI however, the proposed development type is not listed as possible high risk with regard to this designation.

Non-Designated Sites

The presence of non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site cannot be established without data from the local records centre. Whilst some habitats in the wider landscape may host designations, the immediate environs of the site do not host habitats likely to be of designable quality.

2.2 Foreseen Impacts

No direct impacts to any designated sites will occur as a result of the proposed development, due to the small scale and low overall impact of the development from such sites (where known), alongside additional factors such as distance in combination with connectivity disrupting barriers.

2.3 Recommendations

No recommendations.

3. ONSITE HABITATS

This section 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.

3.1 Summary of Survey Findings

Developed land; sealed surface (u1b)

The site exclusively consists of areas of hardstanding comprising access driveways and former parking spaces and the foundation of the previous building which has now been demolished following a fire. In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, this habitat is not subject to a condition assessment.

3.2 Foreseen Impacts

No direct impacts to any notable habitats will occur as a result of the proposed development. However, indirect effects such as pollution or habitat damage could occur during construction, especially in relation to the river Irk.

3.3 Recommendations

Best practice measures to minimise the possibility of pollution must be implemented during construction. This should include the following measures:

- Remove only the minimum of habitat required to facilitate the development
- Use of Heras or other appropriate fencing to prevent encroachment by contractors onto retained habitats.
- Protect retained turf and soil resource from destruction and compaction using plastic matting and wooden boarding. Do not store skips and other heavy materials on retained turf.

- Grasscrete, cell web or any other porous surface treatment facilitating recovery of vegetation is preferred to hard standing.
- A Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEMP) will be required, outlining best practice measures delineate the construction zone and to minimise the possibility of pollution and habitat damage during construction.
- No habitats of value are present on site. Although the site ownership boundary falls within the riparian zone of the adjacent river, the site boundary sets >10m away from the river and therefore is not expected to impact the river or its riparian zone. The proposed development will therefore not require a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment, as no habitat value is present on site.

4. INVASIVE SPECIES

This section 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.

4.1 Summary of Survey Findings

No non-native invasive or otherwise problematic plants were recorded on site or are considered likely to be on site,

4.2 Foreseen Impacts

None.

4.3 Recommendations

No further surveys but remain vigilant.

5. FAUNA: BATS

This section 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.

5.1 Summary of Survey Findings

EPSL data and local records

A search of the magic.gov.uk database for granted EPSLs within a 2km radius of the site has been completed. Displaced bats from licensed sites <2km away from the survey site will find alternative habitat either within the mitigation measures implemented as part of the licence or will relocate to other known roosts sites in close proximity to the licensed site. No EPSLs are present within a 2km radius of the site.

Table 4: EPSL survey returns for bats within a 2km radius.

EPSL Reference	Bat Species Affected	Distance from Site <i>(EPSL records are accurate to 100m)</i>	Impacts Allowed by Licence
2015-8774-EPS-MIT	Common Pipistrelle	~0.65km north	Destruction of a breeding place
2014-2836-EPS-BDX	Common Pipistrelle	~1.7km south	Destruction of a breeding place

There are no Special Areas of Conservation designated for bats within 10km of the site.

Foraging and commuting habitat

No foraging or commuting habitats are present on the site due to its sealed surface nature. Habitats recorded adjacent to the site are assessed to provide foraging and commuting opportunities for bats in the form of the adjacent river, and offsite within 2km including deciduous woodland, open

mosaic habitats on previously developed land, ancient & semi-natural woodland, lowland fens, lowland raised bog and lowland dry acid grassland. These habitats are likely to provide micro-climatic conditions that support invertebrates that will in turn provide foraging opportunities for local bat populations. The river Irk likely forms part of commuting and foraging routes for local bat populations.

Roosting habitat

There are no buildings or trees on the site to provide suitable roosting habitat.

5.2 Foreseen Impacts

Roosting habitat [Buildings]

There are no buildings on site, therefore no impacts are foreseen.

Roosting habitat [Trees]

There are no trees on site, therefore no impacts are foreseen.

Foraging and commuting habitat

The proposed development will not result in the removal of any habitats which could be used by foraging or commuting bats. However, the proposed development will include the use of lighting which could spill on to bat roosting, foraging or commuting habitat and deter bats from using these areas.

Artificial lighting

The proposed development may lead to an increase in the amount of current lighting of surrounding habitats or the retained building without mitigation. This may disturb commuting bats.

5.3 Recommendations

Roosting habitat [Buildings]

None.

Roosting habitat [Trees]

None.

Foraging and commuting habitat

No further surveys are required.

Artificial lighting

A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during post-development which outlines the areas of the site that will be retained as dark corridors. Parameters can be found on the Bat Conservation Trust website: <https://www.bats.org.uk/news/2023/08/bats-and-artificial-lighting-at-night-ilp-guidance-note-update-released>

Suggested biodiversity enhancements

The installation of two bat boxes at the site will provide additional roosting habitat for bats. Bat boxes should be positioned 3-5m above ground level facing in a south or south-westerly direction with a clear flight path to and from the entrance, away from artificial light.

6. FAUNA: BIRDS

This section 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.

6.1 Summary of Survey Findings

Buildings

There are no buildings on site.

Trees and vegetation

There is no vegetation directly on the site. No bird nests were identified within the vegetation along the adjacent river; however the river does offer foraging and nesting opportunities. Due to the small size of the site and the extent and type of the habitats recorded, the site is not considered suitable to support a significant assemblage of protected and/or notable birds.

Barn Owls

The site does not appear to provide any suitable nesting sites for barn owls.

6.2 Foreseen Impacts

Buildings

No impacts are anticipated on nesting birds as a result of the proposed development.

Trees and vegetation

The development may lead to disturbance should any nest be present within the vegetation along the adjacent river banks which could lead to the abandonment of said nests.

Barn Owls

None foreseen.

6.3 Recommendations

Buildings / trees

None.

Trees and vegetation

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.

Barn Owls

No further barn owl surveys required.

Suggested biodiversity enhancements

The installation of a minimum of 2 bird boxes installed along the southern elevation of the proposed buildings will provide additional nesting habitat for birds e.g. Schwegler No 17 Swift Nest Box (buildings), Schwegler 1SP Sparrow Terrace (buildings), or a similar alternative brand. Boxes should be positioned approximately 3m above ground level where they will be sheltered from prevailing wind, rain and strong sunlight. Swift and sparrow boxes should be positioned at the eaves of a building and can be incorporated into the fabric of the building during construction.

7. FAUNA: REPTILES

This section 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.

7.1 Summary of Survey Findings

EPSL data and local records

A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for protected reptiles within 2km of the site.

Habitat suitability

There is no suitable habitat present on site for reptiles due to a lack of habitats such as scrub and rank grassland which would offer refuge for these species. Further, the site is surrounded by urban development (i.e. roads and buildings) which is considered sub-optimal for reptile migration and therefore reptiles are considered unlikely to migrate from any nearby suitable habitats to the development site. As such it is likely that reptiles are absent from the development site.

7.2 Foreseen Impacts

No impacts are anticipated on reptiles as a result of the proposed development.

7.3 Recommendations

No further reptile surveys required.

8. FAUNA: AMPHIBIANS

This section 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.

8.1 Summary of Survey Findings

EPSL and survey data

A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for amphibians within 2km of the site. Further, no positive class survey licence return or DLL historic survey data (2017 – 2019) for great crested newts (GCN) were present within 2km of the site.

A review of MAGIC database found no granted EPSL for great crested newts (GCN) within 2km of the site.

The site location falls within a Green Risk Zone under the Natural England GCN District Level Licensing Scheme and therefore would qualify under the scheme.

Aquatic habitat suitability (including ponds within 500m)

Great crested newts (GCN) exist in metapopulations and are known to utilise ponds and their connecting terrestrial habitat during their life cycle; great crested newts are typically found within terrestrial habitats up to 500m from breeding ponds (Langton et al. 2001).

No ponds are present on site or have been identified within 500m of the site.

Terrestrial habitat suitability

The developed land provides little opportunities for common amphibians given the lack of vegetation.

8.2 Foreseen Impacts

Given the lack of suitably connected breeding ponds within 500m of the site and the lack of vegetation on the site, the presence of GCN and other amphibians on-site is considered unlikely and therefore impacts to amphibians as a result of the proposed development are deemed to be acceptably low.

8.3 Recommendations

No further surveys required for amphibians.

9. FAUNA: RIPARIAN ANIMALS

This section 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.

9.1 Summary of Survey Findings

A search of the magic.gov.uk database for granted EPSLs within a 2km radius of the site has been completed for riparian animals (otters and water voles). No EPSLs relating to riparian animals are present within a 2km radius of the site.

Habitat suitability

There are no water courses on or connected to the site. There are also no riparian habitats present on site or within an influencing distance.

9.2 Foreseen Impacts

No impacts are anticipated on riparian animals as a result of the proposed development.

9.3 Recommendations

No further surveys for riparian animals required.

10. FAUNA: HAZEL DORMOUSE

This section 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.

10.1 Summary of Survey Findings

EPSL data and local records

A search of the magic.gov.uk database for granted EPSLs within a 2km radius of the site has been completed for hazel dormouse. No EPSLs relating to hazel dormouse are present within a 2km radius of the site.

Habitat suitability

Dormice typically utilise a three-dimensional habitat structure as to commute between feeding and breeding sites whilst avoiding predation. As such habitats on site are considered unsuitable for hazel dormice and therefore the likelihood of this species being present on site is considered acceptably low.

10.2 Foreseen Impacts

No impacts are anticipated on hazel dormice as a result of the proposed development.

10.3 Recommendations

No further hazel dormouse surveys required.

11. FAUNA: BADGERS

This section 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.

11.1 Summary of Survey Findings

No badger setts, latrines, footprint on site or within a 30m radius of the site. The site is considered unsuitable for badgers given the lack of suitable sett excavation areas/ground and the highly urban nature of the site.

11.2 Foreseen Impacts

No impacts are anticipated on badgers as a result of the proposed development.

11.3 Recommendations

No further badger surveys required.

12. FAUNA: INVERTEBRATES

This section 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.

12.1 Summary of Survey Findings

The habitats present on-site, including developed land and the river Irk likely provide common invertebrates with opportunities to forage and shelter. The site contains no further notable habitats which may provide niches for specialised or protected invertebrates.

12.2 Foreseen Impacts

None foreseen.

12.3 Recommendations

No further surveys.

13. FAUNA: OTHER NOTABLE SPECIES

This section 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.

13.1 Summary of Survey Findings

Hedgehogs

The site provides limited foraging and commuting opportunities for hedgehogs, with woodland habitat nearby.

13.2 Foreseen Impacts

Hedgehogs

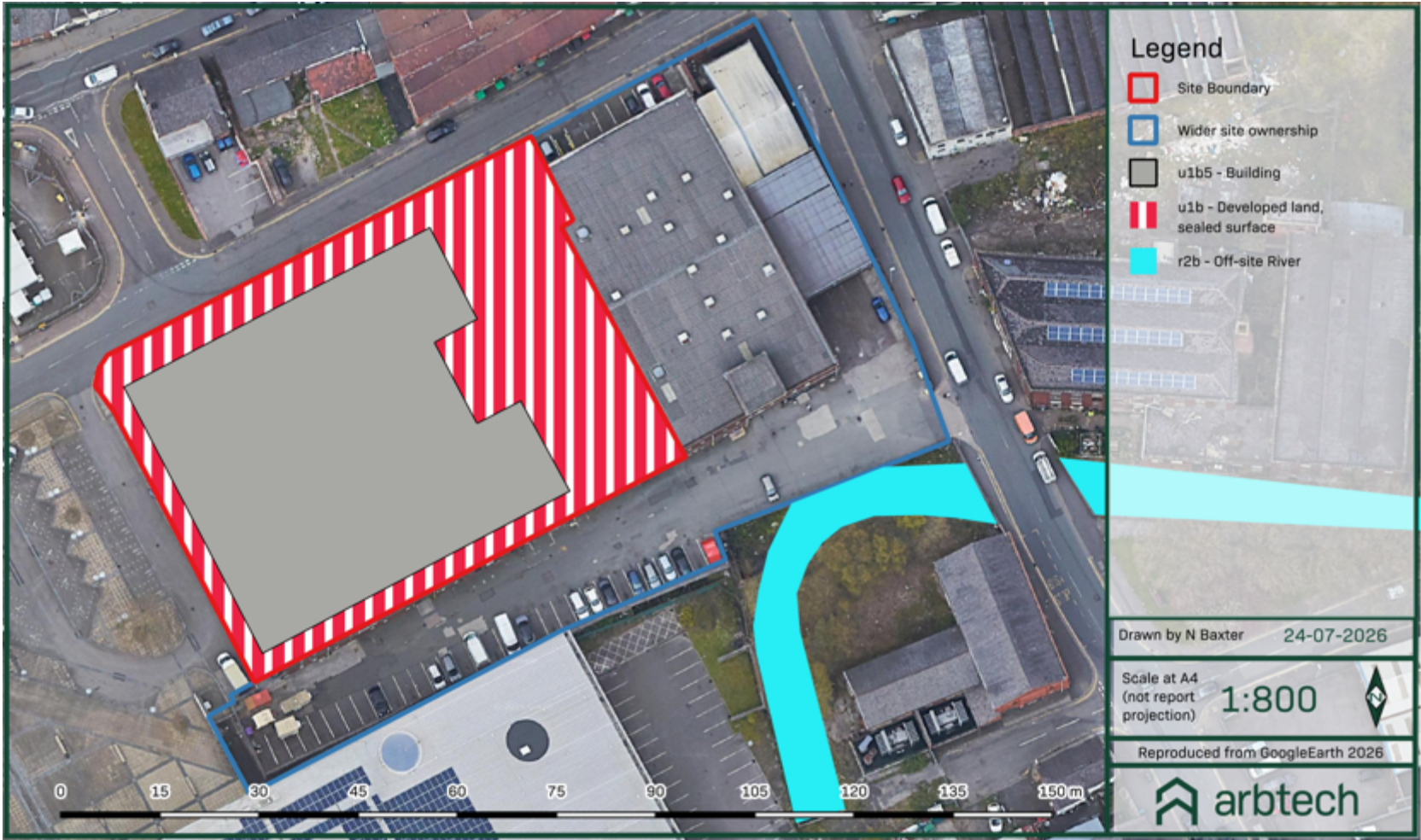
No impacts are anticipated on hedgehogs as a result of the proposed development.

13.3 Recommendations

Hedgehogs

None.

APPENDIX 1: SURVEY/HABITAT MAP



APPENDIX 2: LOCATION MAP





APPENDIX 4: HABITAT IMAGES



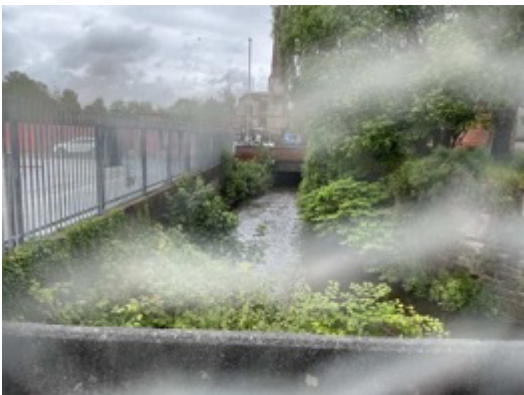
Developed land; sealed surface



Developed land; sealed surface



Developed land; sealed surface



Other rivers and streams, Canals



Other rivers and streams, Canals



Other rivers and streams, Canals

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VERSION CONTROL

Status	Issue	Name	Date
Draft	0.1	David Hill-Chambers MSc (Hons), BSc (Hons), Graduate Ecologist	09/06/2026
Proof	0.2	Elen Griffin BSc (Hons), MRSB, Senior Ecologist	17/06/2026
Final	1.0	David Hill-Chambers MSc (Hons), BSc (Hons), Graduate Ecologist	17/06/2026
Updated	2.0	Nicola Baxter MSc (Hons), BSc (Hons), Consultant Ecologist	24/07/2026