

Inspection & Assessment in relation to Bats & Breeding Birds

May 2022

1 Hereford Drive
Prestwich,
Manchester,
M25 0JY

National Grid Ref: SD82390280



Document Title	Inspection & Assessment in relation to Bats & Breeding Birds
Issue no.	1.0
Prepared for	My Property Survey
Prepared by	Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd

Surveyors	Mr. B. Richards Qualifying CIEEM
Author	Mr. B. Richards Qualifying CIEEM
Survey Date	26/04/2022
Reviewed by	Mr. J. Pescod Qualifying CIEEM
Review date	11/05/2022
Approved by	Mrs. K. Wilding CEnv MIEMA ACIEEM
Date of Issue	11/05/2022

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Executive Summary

As part of a proposed planning application at 1 Hereford Drive, Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd carried out a daytime preliminary roost assessment in relation to bats with an inclusive inspection for breeding birds in March 2022. The survey was commissioned by My Property Survey; the extent of proposals are currently unknown.

Detailed methods, findings, conclusions and recommendations are presented throughout the report; however, the reader should be aware of the following Key points:

Bats: Based upon the findings of the survey covered through section 6.0 - 7.0 in the report, 1 Hereford Drive is determined to offer 'Low' bat roost potential in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust - Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd ed. (2016); and a further survey by way of a dusk/dawn survey is recommended to be carried out to establish if the building supports a bat roost.

Table 7.3 Recommended minimum number of survey visits for presence/absence surveys to give confidence in a negative result for structures (also recommended for trees but unlikely to give confidence in a negative result).

Low roost suitability	Moderate roost suitability	High roost suitability
One survey visit. One dusk emergence or dawn re-entry survey ^a (structures). No further surveys required (trees).	Two separate survey visits. One dusk emergence and a separate dawn re-entry survey. ^b	Three separate survey visits. At least one dusk emergence and a separate dawn re-entry survey. The third visit could be either dusk or dawn. ^b

It is recommended that one dusk and/or dawn emergence/re-entry survey is conducted at the site during the active season of bats (May – August, extending into September), in order to establish if/how the building is being used by bats, and if so, identify the species present, abundance, roost locations and flight lines around the site following emergence/re-entry. Two surveyors would be required to monitor the potential roost features described at the building.

Breeding Birds: No impacts are applicable in relation to any Sch.1 (WCA) specially protected bird species such as Black Redstart and no further surveys or recommendations are necessary in relation to specially protected birds at this time. In relation to common birds, both the buildings, shrubs and trees present could offer small birds nesting habitat, particularly during the breeding bird season; however, no evidence of breeding birds was encountered during the survey.

In the interests of potential impact avoidance it is recommended that any proposed works which may impact these areas of nesting potential should be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season. The nesting bird season is weather dependent but generally extends between March and September inclusive (peak period March-August). For works within the breeding bird season, any areas that can support nesting birds should be checked by a professional Ecologist for nesting birds within 48 hours or less prior to works commencing. If birds are found nesting any works which may affect them would have to be delayed until the young have fledged and the nest has been abandoned naturally, for example via the implementation of an appropriate buffer zone (species dependent) around the nest in which no disturbance is permitted until the nest is no longer in use.

Biodiversity Enhancement: As a means of enhancement and aiding the design of the scheme in keeping with local and national planning policy considering biodiversity net-gain principles, the proposals may consider incorporating wildlife friendly provisions in addition to those described. Further recommendations, regarding birds, native species and invertebrates are provided within Appendix II.

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction & Reasons for Survey

2.0 Protected Species & Their Requirements

3.0 Protected Species in Greater Manchester

4.0 Survey Methodology

5.0 Limitations

6.0 Desk Study Results

7.0 Field Study Results

8.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

9.0 Bibliography

Appendix I: Site Photographs

Appendix II: Biodiversity Enhancement: General Recommendations

1.0 Introduction & Reasons for Survey

- 1.1 As part of a proposed planning application at 1 Hereford Drive, Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd carried out a daytime preliminary roost assessment in relation to bats with an inclusive inspection for breeding birds in March 2022. The survey was commissioned by My Property Survey; the extent of proposals are currently unknown.
- 1.2 The aim of the survey was to ascertain if the building was of value to bats, whilst an assessment for birds was also carried out. If any potential roost features (PRF's) were found to be suitable for bats, or signs of use were observed, then more detailed surveys would be recommended i.e. dusk/dawn emergence/re-entry surveys during the main active season of bats which is May – August (extending into September).
- 1.3 If additional surveys are required following the initial site visit, this report will outline the details of those further requirements.
- 1.4 If it was determined that bat(s) or their roost/place of rest/shelter will be subsequently impacted by the works then a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) from Natural England would be legally required to proceed with the development.
- 1.5 If evidence indicated breeding birds may be impacted by proposals, tailored recommendations would be made accordingly, species pending.
- 1.6 As part of the local authority's planning policies and obligations to the Planning Framework, ecological surveys are generally required prior to planning permission being granted where protected/priority habitats and species are, or may be present, that could be affected by the proposals for which the application seeks consent. Where more detailed surveys are recommended by the ecologist, following an initial daytime investigation, then Local Planning Authorities (LPA) on the advice of their ecological advisors, will not grant permission until such time that all relevant information is gathered.
- 1.7 In accordance with *Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice principles for development* (CIEEM *et al*, 2019) the site visit also aims to identify enhancement opportunities for biodiversity in line with national and local planning policy.

2.0 Protected Species & Their Requirements

Bats

- 2.1 All British bats and their **roosts are afforded full protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) and are listed in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019) (EU Exit). When dealing with cases where a European Protected Species (all UK bats) may be affected, a planning authority is a competent authority within the meaning of Regulation 7 of the Regulations, and therefore has a statutory duty, as the local authority, to have due regard to the provisions of the Regulations in the exercise of its functions.
- 2.2 Uses of Buildings by Bats
 - a) Summer breeding roost (May-August)
 - b) Hibernation roost (October-March)
 - c) Transitional or temporary roost (other months)

- 2.3 Roost selection is often closely correlated to suitable foraging habitat within a reasonable commuting distance from the roost and different sites are used depending upon insect densities and abundance; climatic conditions can also affect their ability to successfully forage. All British bats are insectivorous.

*** The term roost is generically referred to as a place that bat/s use for the any of the above reasons, however it should be noted that under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019) (EU Exit) (Regulation 43 (d) the term roost is not used but refers to “a breeding site or resting place of such an animal” and is afforded legal protection. The roost, breeding site or resting place of bats, which ever terminology is used is legally protected whether or not bats are in occupation.*

Birds

- 2.4 All wild birds, no matter how common, their eggs, young and nests, whilst being built or occupied, are protected under both the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA 1981) and Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC Act 2006). Birds listed on Schedule 1 of the WCA 1981, for example Black Redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*), are afforded a greater level of protection and are protected also from disturbance.
- 2.5 Any work that would damage an occupied nest, eggs or young of breeding birds must be avoided; any damage to nests that may occur as a result of the development should be outside of the main breeding bird season (March-August). On occasions nests can become unoccupied during the breeding season but the status of the nest(s) should be determined by a suitably experienced ecologist before any damage takes place.

Policy

- 2.6 Paragraph 180 of the National Policy Planning Framework (as revised in July 2021) states:

When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) 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;

b) 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;

c) 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 reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and,

d) 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.

- 2.7 Policy EN15 of the Manchester Core Strategy 2012 to 2027, titled Biodiversity & Geological Conservation, echoes this national focus on ecological conservation, and states:

“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...”

and:

“Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, developers will be required to provide appropriate mitigation and/or compensation”, “It is important to recognise that brownfield sites often contain diverse and valuable biodiversity.”

2.8 Where more detailed surveys are recommended by the Ecologist following a daytime assessment, then the Local Planning Authority, upon the advice of their ecological advisors, should not determine an application until such time that all relevant information is gathered, i.e. - until all required survey work has been completed. This is in accordance with the obligations placed upon Local Authorities in the exercise of its functions by way of its duties under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2019 (EU Exit).

2.9 Figure 2.1 is a process model that surmises how ecological issues should be dealt with in the context of the planning process.

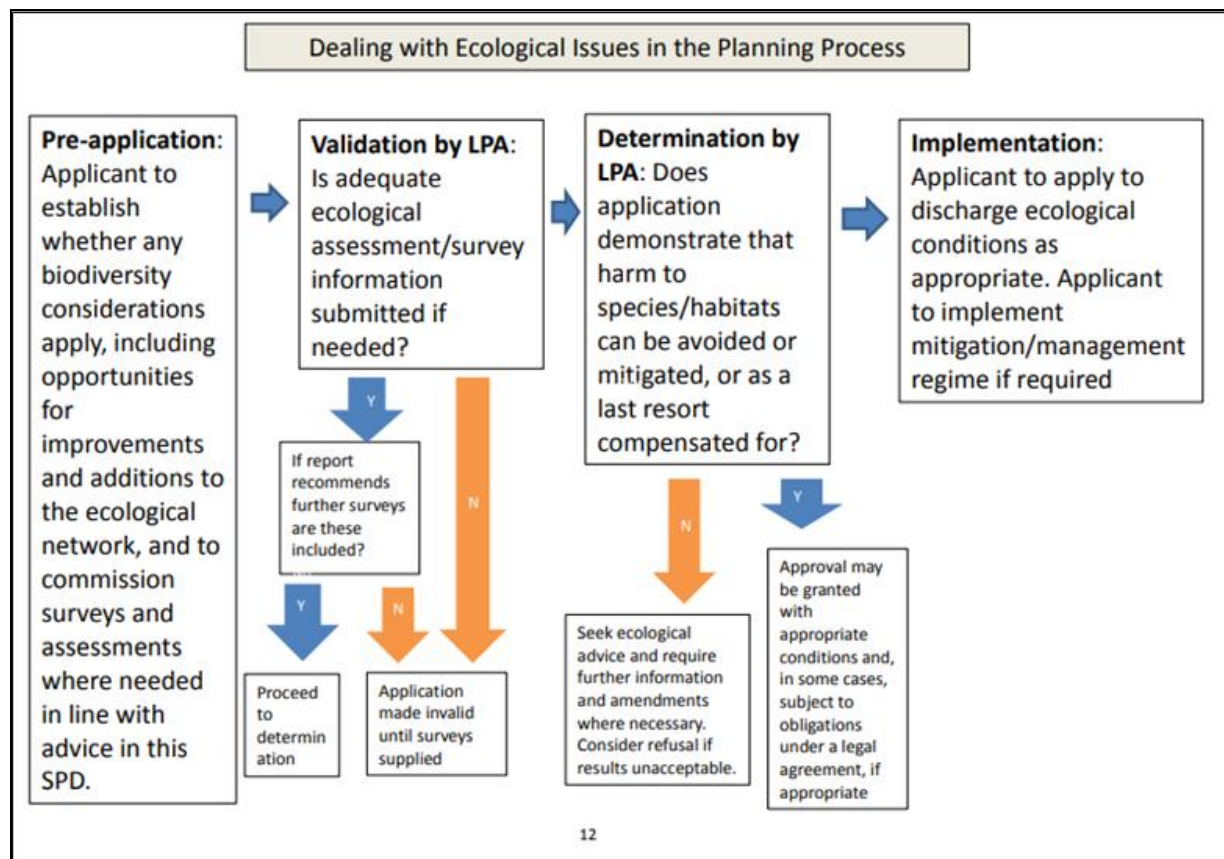


Figure 2.1 – Dealing with ecological issues in the planning process

3.0 Protected Species in Manchester

3.1 Up to ten bat species have been recorded in Manchester, most of which use built structures, notably occupied residential properties, for roosting. All bats feature on the local biodiversity action plan for the area; the most frequently encountered bat species is the Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) which will roost in building crevices, and its abundant status in Manchester is reflected throughout the UK.

- 3.2 All wild birds (with only minor exceptions) and their nests, whilst being built or containing eggs or dependant young, are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Some species are, however, subject to a greater level of protection, for example Black Redstart, which is listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), with nests of birds from these species being protected from disturbance as well as destruction. The species is red-listed on Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC 4) with fewer than 100 breeding pairs recorded in the UK; decline in Manchester is part-attributed to regenerative works across the city resulting in the loss of nesting sites and feeding areas as this is a species typically linked with abandoned sites close to water, railways and industry, whilst habitat such as forest, meadow and areas of dense vegetation of any height are typically avoided. Black Redstarts have their own action plan within Manchester (Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan: Black Redstart) which recommends enhancement for this species in suitable areas across the Greater Manchester conurbation.

4.0 Survey Methodology

- 4.1 As part of the Inspection & Assessment for Bats & Breeding Birds report, a desk-top and field-based study is conducted. Methods for both components of the appraisal are given below.

Desktop Study

- 4.2 Prior to a site visit a desktop study was conducted using online resources to obtain information pertaining to any sites afforded statutory (e.g. SSSI) and non-statutory (e.g. LWS) designations within 2.0 kilometres of the site boundary. To do so, the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGiC – provided by DEFRA) was accessed to gather such information; this particular interactive mapping service was also used to locate any locally granted European Protected Species Mitigation Licenses (EPSML) and species records to further inform conclusions concerning such species in the context of the study site and its proposed development.
- 4.3 Historic satellite imagery was reviewed using sources such as Google Earth (© 2021/22) to help establish past use of the land and determine the nature of adjoining and extending habitats; such information aids in the understanding of how the site might interact with its surroundings ecologically and its value in that context, and how the development may impact at a wider scale.
- 4.4 A commercial data request to the Local Environment Records Centre serving the area – Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) – has not been sourced and is justified through application of the following recent guidance:

1) The Guidelines for Accessing, Using and Sharing Biodiversity Data in the UK (CIEEM, 2020) states:

“It is generally expected that a desk study, including a data search, will be a key part of the ecological surveys or reports produced to inform a planning application. Freely available web-based sources of data and contextual information should always be used; in some cases, it may be acceptable to not undertake a data search with the LERC or other relevant NSS or local interest groups, for example:

ii) Situations where the data search would be extremely unlikely to provide information needed to inform the assessment, due to the scale and location of the proposed development. The appropriateness of excluding a data search will need to be judged on a case-by-case basis as, in most situations, it will be essential to carry out such a search even if the development is very small or is likely to have a low impact. It can be very difficult to demonstrate that a data search would not have provided relevant information without obtaining and reviewing those data.

*iii) In some cases for Preliminary Roost Assessments of buildings in **low impact / small-scale scenarios**, such as an extension to a residential property, loft conversions (full or partial), installation of Velux/dormer windows, single modern agricultural or similar building conversion or demolition; however, it should not be assumed that data searches are never required for such scenarios and this must be judged on a case by case basis and justified accordingly.*

2) The Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017) also states:

*“Very occasionally it might be possible to carry out a robust PEA without obtaining LERC/NBDC/CEDaR data; this will usually only apply to low impact or **small-scale projects** (e.g. by virtue of size, extent, duration of works, magnitude and locality), and should be determined on a case-by-case basis.”*

- 4.5 As exemptions as made **bold** above can be applied at 1 Hereford Drive, in good practice, it is considered unnecessary to conduct a commercial data request following the desk study effort and daytime assessment at this time which offers a proportionate level of survey effort, however, if a data search is considered to be necessary by the Local Authority to inform the ecological impact assessment following any further surveys recommended in this report, a proportionate data search should be commissioned with results interpreted into the conclusions and recommendations of a re-issued/updated report.

Field Survey

- 4.6 In context with the above, a diurnal inspection and assessment of the building and its immediate environment in relation to bats and breeding birds was conducted on 26th April 2022 in dry conditions (10°C), wind 1/12 (Beaufort scale), average 70% cloud, by Mr. B. Richards Qualifying CIEEM, a trainee Ecologist who has received extensive training in conducting Preliminary Roost Assessments and who also holds an MBiolSci in Biological Sciences (Zoology).
- 4.7 Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) - Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd ed. (2016) states:
- “The guidelines should be interpreted and adapted on a case-by-case basis according to site-specific factors and the professional judgement of an experienced ecologist. Where examples are used in the guidelines, they are descriptive rather than prescriptive.”*
- 4.8 The bat and breeding bird survey was conducted in tandem; the building was inspected for potential places that may be of value to bats or breeding birds, and to determine if evidence of use by either group was present.
- 4.9 External elevations were investigated with the aid of high-powered torch and close focus binoculars (where necessary) for places that could be used as a roost by bats or as a means of ingress for bats and birds leading to areas of roosting/nesting potential. These features are typically referred to as potential roost features (PRFs) when concerning bats. All external features were able to be surveyed without constraint.
- 4.10 The surrounding habitat was also considered in terms of general suitability for bat and bird species associated with the local habitat types.
- 4.11 Trees on site were inspected for places that may be of value to bats and to determine if evidence of use was present; this typically involves a search for potential roost features along with an investigation of those features using a high-powered torch or close focus binoculars. Potential roost features can include woodpecker holes, rot holes, hazard beams, other vertical or horizontal cracks or splits in stems and branches, partially decayed lifted bark, knot holes,

man-made holes, tear-outs, cankers in which cavities have developed, other hollows or cavities, including butt-rots, double-leaders forming compression forks with included bark, gaps between overlapping stems or branches, partially detached Ivy with stem diameters in excess of 50mm or bat/bird boxes. Trees (where present) were also checked for evidence of nesting birds and suitability for relevant species.

- 4.12 Criteria for roost assessment are based upon the determinants given in the Bat Conservation Trust - Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd ed. (2016): (see Figure 4.1).

Table 4.1 Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement.

Suitability	Description Roosting habitats	Commuting and foraging habitats
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions ^a and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation ^b). A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential. ^c	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^a and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^a and surrounding habitat.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

^a For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance.
^b Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten et al., 2015). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in large buildings in highly urbanised environments.
^c This system of categorisation aligns with BS 8596:2015 Surveying for bats in trees and woodland (BSI, 2015).

Figure 4.1 – BCT guidelines extract

- 4.13 An assessment of the building was conducted when birds are within their breeding season (this is typically March – August inclusive). Elevations were inspected for evidence of birds that show a high dependency upon built structures, many of which are in a state of decline. These might include the following species for example:

- Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*): Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) red status
- House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*): BoCC red status
- House Martin (*Delichon urbica*): BoCC amber status
- Swift (*Apus apus*): BoCC red status

- 4.14 Additional to the site's capacity to support common species of bird, the area was subject to an assessment for capacity to support specially protected species such as Black Redstart, a species protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) with its own Biodiversity Action Plan in Greater Manchester.

- 4.15 The results, conclusions and recommendations are based on a number of factors i.e.
- Practical experience of surveyor,
 - Knowledge of bat/bird species relevant to the site location and geographical range,
 - Nature of immediate/surrounding habitat in relation to foraging/commuting,
 - Condition of the building,
 - Presence/absence of a loft space or cellar and reasonable practicality of use,
 - Presence/absence of roost potential,
 - Value of roost potential – if present.
- 4.16 All aspects of the field survey were undertaken in line with government and CIEEM (2020) standing guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 4.17 The results, conclusions and recommendations of this report have been assessed by Mrs. K. Wilding, the Director of Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd, and her assessment is consistent with that of Mr. Richards.

5.0 Limitations

- 5.1 The survey was conducted in April 2022 at a time when bats are within their transitional period and are moving towards the time when they will be entering their summer roosts. Evidence of bats can be less apparent in these months; however, bat roost potential and suitability of potential roost features can be adjudged as decisively as within the main active season of bats, saving time and unnecessary delay to applicants, thus frequently the assessment can be as conclusive as if it was carried out in the main active season and timing is therefore not considered a constraint in this instance.
- 5.2 The survey took place early on within the breeding bird season (typically March – September), therefore incidental breeding bird behaviour has a lower probability of being encountered than later in the season. Suitability for breeding birds is readily identifiable all year round however, and often nesting material can attest to presence of breeding birds at buildings, with some species beginning to build their nests and even begin to rear chicks in this period.
- 5.3 No significant access limitations were experienced at key areas; therefore, having considered possible survey constraints, no significant limitations were experienced that might adversely influence the results, conclusions, and recommendations of this report.

6.0 Desk Study Results

- 6.1 The proposed development site (referred to in part as “the application site” and “the site”) is situated north-east of Hereford Drive in Prestwich and is located approximately 4.9 kilometres north-west of Manchester city centre (see Figure 6.1).



Figure 6.1 – *Location of the application site (red boundary) within the landscape (Source: Google Earth Pro 2021/22)*

- 6.2 The immediate habitat surrounding the site is distinctly sub-urban, with typical associated infrastructure including smaller road networks, including Tewkesbury Drive and Canterbury Drive, each lined by residential properties with landscaped gardens accompanied by linear hedgerows and lines of trees. Amenities serving the large numbers of houses are also present in the immediacy, with St. Gabriel C of E Church situated 90 metres east of the site, and St. Gabriel Medical Centre immediately south of the church. Semi-natural environs are limited in the vicinity of the proposed works, with the prior mentioned amenity gardens and grounds of the church.
- 6.3 The extending environment is entirely similar to that of the immediate, with sub-urban infrastructure present in every direction. The site is linked to its surrounding via the A56 Bury New Road, which passes approximately 0.40 kilometres to the west, and the A665 Bury Old Road, both of which link the Metropolitan area of Prestwich to Higher Broughton, Cheetham Hill and the city of Manchester. Semi-natural environs are present in the contiguous landscape, with Prestwich Golf Club, located 0.66 kilometres to the west, constituted of open areas of managed grassland interspersed by small patches of woodland and areas of scrub. More Priority Habitat Inventory - Deciduous Woodland can be found to the north-east of the site in Heaton Park, alongside open grassland, and an aquatic habitat in the form of Heaton Park Boating Lake. All of these environs are linked to the site via lines of trees which flank roads in the area, as well as hedgerows which border amenity gardens.

- 6.4 Collectively, the surrounding environment provides moderately suitable habitat for bats and birds associated with urban environments, with modest connectivity between the wooded areas to the north, south and east of the application site and the site itself via garden trees, linear hedgerows / treelines and dimly lit areas, all of which provide a foraging and commuting corridor for bats and birds. The protected species most typically associated with the habitats described are the Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) bat, a species which has adapted to metropolitan settings and can regularly be found even in dense urban areas, and is frequently associated with using buildings in sub-urban areas.

NB: *Where quality habitat is present close to buildings then the percentage use of those buildings, by bats, increases given that roost opportunities are available and vice versa.*

- 6.5 There are three statutory designated sites within 2.0 kilometres (see Table 6.1).

Table 6.1 – Statutory designation types and reasons for designation within 2.0 kilometre buffer

Site name	Designation type	Interest features
Kersal Moor (0.74 kilometres south-west)	Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	A 7.93-hectare moorland with a mosaic of grassland and scattered trees.
The Cliff (Kersal Dale) (1.00 kilometres south)	Local Nature Reserve	A 30.8-hectare urban fringe site, with habitats including woodland, open water, marsh and semi-natural woodland. Species that can be seen here include Greater Spotted Woodpecker (<i>Dendrocopos major</i>) and Kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>), which frequent the woodland along the River Irwell.
Blackley Forest (1.52 kilometres north-east)	Local Nature Reserve	A 34.21-hectare urban site, with habitats including broadleaved woodland, plantation woodland, grassland, lake, marsh and the River Irk.

- 6.6 An online search of MAGiC maps revealed one European Protected Species Mitigations licence (EPSML) has been granted within a 2.0 kilometre radius of the application site (see Figure 6.2); this license pertains to a non-breeding Common Pipistrelle bat roost, and is situated approximately 1.95 kilometres south from the application site.
- 6.7 Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd have previous and ongoing projects involving bats within the 2.0km area surrounding the application site – as such, the following biological data is readily available to the Ecologist from the company database – all data has been previously submitted to the LERC serving the area, which, in this case, is Greater Manchester Local Record Centre.
- 1.26 kilometres north-west / 2020 / Emergence of a single Common Pipistrelle bat
 - 0.66 kilometres south-east / 2021 / Commuting by a single Common Pipistrelle bat

1 Hereford Drive, Prestwich, Manchester, M25 0JY **Inspection & Assessment in Relation to Bats & Breeding Birds**

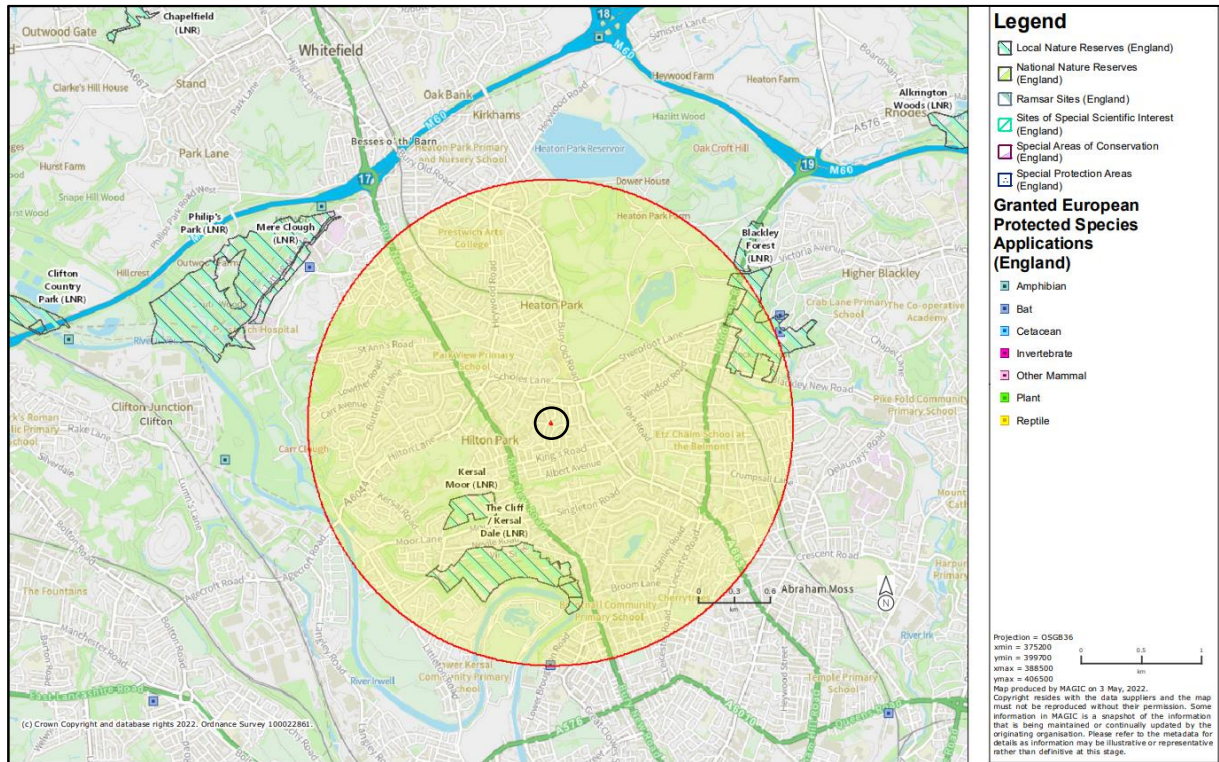


Figure 6.2 – EPSML data for the area within 2.0 kilometres of the application site, with EPSMLs circled in black (MAGiC Maps 2022)

7.0 Field Study Results

Bats

- 7.1 The surveyed building resides in the centre of its plot to the north-east of Hereford Drive and is currently unoccupied whilst undergoing work. Structurally, it is a detached, brick-built, part rendered, two storey building with a multi-pitched rosemary tiled roof with approximate maximum dimensions of 13 metres x 9 metres x 6 metres (Length x Width x Height). Collectively, the building features components such as open timber eaves, UPVC windows and sills with brick lintels, timber barge boards and timber soffits. In respect of its condition, the surveyor is not qualified to assess structural state, however the aesthetic condition of the building was adjudged to be moderate, with deterioration noted to the timber elements and to the roof, which was in a poor state of repair.
- 7.2 Internally, there is a single loft space present which covers the entire footprint of the house and is accessed via a loft hatch and ladder. The space present is cold, dark with light ingress through missing / slipped / damaged tiles, slightly draughty with heavy cobwebbing throughout, and a thick layer of dust on all the surfaces, with the loft not currently being utilised. No insulation is present beneath the tiles, with areas of Rockwool present on the floor, and the apex height is circa 2 metres.
- 7.3 Given the open nature of the loft space, it is considered that the structure does partly meet the breeding preferences of loft-dwelling bats such as the Brown Long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), as this is a species which prefers unrestrictive loft spaces with room to fly; however, this species also prefers spaces with consistent thermal characteristics for breeding purposes, with the cold and draughty conditions of this loft inconsistent with this preference. Despite the immediate and extending habitat offering favourable potential for this species, no recent or historic evidence was located upon appraisal, however this, alongside the thermal characteristics of the space, does not necessarily exclude the loft from being utilised by low numbers of bats from this species.
- 7.4 A bitumastic underlining is not present beneath the roof tiles; where present, bitumen 1F underfelt or other such underlining typically improves a buildings value to bats, notably for crevice-dwelling bats of the *Pipistrellus* genus, whereby the bats roost between linings and the roof cover material provided external access opportunities exist. Conversely, an absence of roof linings can lower a structures value in the same respect, whilst membranes such as that present at the site can entangle bats feet leading to injury or death. No evidence of such bats was found; however, this is often the case due to the crevice dwelling nature of these species.
- NB:** *The breeding roosts of Pipistrelle bats are proportionally higher in occupied residential dwellings where the warm, dry conditions favour the requirements of a maternity colony but other structures are also used, especially for hibernation or by male bats which do not need the same conditions as a maternity colony.*
- 7.5 Externally, there are a number of PRFs, with gaps at roof verge level beneath the barge boards / soffits to the western, southern and eastern elevations, with access into the cavity beneath. Another ingress opportunity was noted beneath lifted tiles on the northern elevation.
- 7.6 There are a number of trees within the site boundary; all of these were assessed to check for bat roost potential, with none of them determined to offer any potential for bats. Trees within the red line boundary should, however, be considered valuable to bats in a local context in that they provide valuable foraging/commuting habitat to bats, offering shelter, cover and habitat connectivity when in foliage.

Breeding Birds

- 7.7 In relation to WCA Schedule 1 specially protected bird species such as Black Redstart, no evidence was found to suggest any form of site use or historic nesting, and the setting offers no real feeding value to this species. Records of Black Redstart suggest they are more prominent towards the city centre where green roofs, old canals, warehouses and large public buildings with ephemeral roofs offer more variety and opportunities for this species to thrive, where the presence of waste patches colonised by weed species with many bare disturbed areas of soil, and an ample supply of song posts and cavities for nest building provides an ideal habitat for this species.
- 7.8 In relation to common bird species, no evidence, historic or recent, of nesting was discovered at the site; however, the potential roost features described previously for bats to the exterior could feasibly also support small birds adapted to urbanisation, such as House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*), for example. The site does also support a range of mature shrubbery within the vicinity of the proposed works that would provide a plethora of suitable nesting platforms for common bird species, particularly during the breeding bird season. The nesting bird season is weather dependent but generally extends between March and September inclusive (peak period March-August).
- 7.9 The following bird species were encountered during the survey (see Table 7.1).

Table 7.1 – Bird species encountered during the survey

Species	Scientific Name	Status	Context (where relevant)
Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Green	Seen within the trees to the south of the site
S.41 - a bird listed on section 41 of the Natural Environment Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act) LBAP - A local biodiversity action plan listed species Q - Qualifying species of nearby SSSI site(s) SPEC - a species of conservation concern, Amber or Red, Red being the highest conservation priority			

8.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

Bats

- 8.1 Based upon the findings of the survey covered through section 6.0 - 7.0 in the report, 1 Hereford Drive is determined to offer 'Low' bat roost potential in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust - Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd ed. (2016); and a further survey by way of a dusk/dawn survey is recommended to be carried out to establish if the building supports a bat roost.

Table 7.3 Recommended minimum number of survey visits for presence/absence surveys to give confidence in a negative result for structures (also recommended for trees but unlikely to give confidence in a negative result).		
Low roost suitability	Moderate roost suitability	High roost suitability
One survey visit. One dusk emergence or dawn re-entry survey ^a (structures). No further surveys required (trees).	Two separate survey visits. One dusk emergence and a separate dawn re-entry survey. ^a	Three separate survey visits. At least one dusk emergence and a separate dawn re-entry survey. The third visit could be either dusk or dawn. ^b

Figure 8.1 – BCT extract on Low roost potential requirements

- 8.2 It is recommended that one dusk and/or dawn emergence/re-entry survey is conducted at the site during the active season of bats (May – August, extending into September), in order to establish if/how the building is being used by bats, and if so, identify the species present, abundance, roost locations and flight lines around the site following emergence/re-entry. Two surveyors would be required to monitor the potential roost features described at the building.
- 8.3 The applicant should be aware that, if during further surveys, evidence is gathered by the Ecologist that confirms bat(s) or their roost(s) are found and will be impacted upon, then an EPSML may be required to legally commence with the proposals.
- 8.4 Natural England provides information and guidance about licensing for Bats and the following extract is included in that guidance: -

"If you intend to apply for a licence for development, you are advised to seek the guidance of a consultant ecologist."

Natural England's view is that:

"A licence is needed if the consultant ecologist, on the basis of survey information and specialist knowledge of the species concerned, considers that on balance the proposed activity is reasonably likely to result in an offence under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019) (EU Exit)".

- 8.5 If the consultant ecologist, on the basis of survey information and specialist knowledge of the species concerned, considers that on balance the proposed activity is reasonably unlikely to result in an offence being committed then no licence is required. However, in these circumstances Natural England would urge that reasonable precautions be taken to minimise the effect on European Protected Species (EPS) should they be found during the course of the activity. If EPS are found, cease the work until you have assessed whether you can proceed without committing an offence.
- 8.6 A licence should be applied for if offences are unavoidable, and the work should not be re-started until a licence is obtained. The application should be completed by the developer and a consultant ecologist. The ecologist will need to be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of Natural England that they have the relevant skills and knowledge of the species concerned.

- 8.7 Where more detailed bat surveys are recommended by the Ecologist, following an initial daytime investigation, then Local Planning Authorities, on the advice of their ecological advisors, may not determine the application until such time that **all relevant information is gathered, i.e., by conducting dusk/dawn surveys.**

The advice that is provided by the ecological advisors is also in accordance with the obligations placed upon Local Authorities by way of its duties under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2019 (as amended). Therefore, it would be prudent to make enquiries to the relevant departmental Planning Officer before submitting a Planning Application that includes an ecological survey report that recommends more detailed surveys.

- 8.8 Installation of overly harsh artificial lighting as part of any development that exceeds current levels may have a negative impact upon foraging/commuting bats in the landscape, particularly if increased light spillage occurs in areas of that are currently free from illumination. A bat-sensitive lighting plan is therefore recommended in order to avoid potential impacts to bats that may use the surrounding treelines. Several options to consider have been listed below, though the reader is referred to the Bat Conservation Lighting Guidelines for further information.

Appropriate luminaire specifications: Luminaires come in a myriad of different styles, applications and specifications which a lighting professional can help to select. The following should be considered when choosing luminaires.

All luminaires should lack UV elements when manufactured. Metal halide, fluorescent sources should not be used. LED luminaires should be used where possible due to their sharp cut-off, lower intensity, good colour rendition and dimming capability. Lighting should be directed to where it is needed, and light spillage avoided. This can be achieved by the design of the luminaire and by using accessories such as hoods, cowls, louvres and shields to direct the light to the intended area only. Planting can also be used as a barrier or manmade features that are required within the build can be positioned so as to form a barrier.

Predicting where the light cone and light spill will occur: There are lighting design computer programs that are widely in use which produce an image of the site in question, showing how the area will be affected by light spill when all the factors of the lighting components listed above are taken into consideration. This should be a useful tool to inform the mitigation process.

Light levels: The light should be as low as guidelines permit. If lighting is not needed in any particular area, do not light. Numerous software programmes are currently available which can be used inform lighting plans, demonstrating how lighting decisions will illuminate a site.

Please refer to the 'Landscape and urban design for bats and biodiversity' (Gunnell *et. al.*, 2012, Bat Conservation Trust) Guidance Note 8 'Bats and Artificial Lighting' 2018, Bat Conservation Trust for further information.

- 8.9 No recommendations are necessary in relation to bats and trees, as the trees on site are not adjudged to offer any roosting potential for bats.

Breeding Birds

- 8.10 No impacts are applicable in relation to any Sch.1 (WCA) specially protected bird species such as Black Redstart and no further surveys or recommendations are necessary in relation to specially protected birds at this time.

- 8.11 In relation to common birds, both the buildings, shrubs and trees present could offer small birds nesting habitat, particularly during the breeding bird season; however, no evidence of breeding birds was encountered during the survey.
- 8.12 In the interests of potential impact avoidance it is recommended that any proposed works which may impact these areas of nesting potential should be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season. The nesting bird season is weather dependent but generally extends between March and September inclusive (peak period March-August). For works within the breeding bird season, any areas that can support nesting birds should be checked by a professional Ecologist for nesting birds within 48 hours or less prior to works commencing. If birds are found nesting any works which may affect them would have to be delayed until the young have fledged and the nest has been abandoned naturally, for example via the implementation of an appropriate buffer zone (species dependent) around the nest in which no disturbance is permitted until the nest is no longer in use.

NB: *All wild birds (with only minor exceptions) and their nests whilst being built or containing eggs or dependant young are protected from destruction, damage and disturbance under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is a punishable offence to interfere in any way with an active nest.*

Biodiversity Enhancement

- 8.13 As a means of enhancement and aiding the design of the scheme in keeping with local and national planning policy considering biodiversity net-gain principles, the proposals may consider incorporating wildlife friendly provisions in addition to those described. Further recommendations, regarding birds, native species and invertebrates are provided within Appendix II.

9.0 Bibliography

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Appendix I: Site Photographs



Plate 1 – The south-eastern elevation of 1 Hereford Drive



Plate 2 – The north-eastern aspect of the structure



Plate 3 – *The south-western elevation of the building*



Plate 4 – *Entry points on the north-eastern elevation, with a lifted tile to the left and an open barge board / soffit to the right*



Plate 5 – Gap behind the barge board / soffit on the south-eastern elevation



Plate 6 – Further gap on the opposite side of the same aspect



Plate 7 – Gap on the south-western elevation beneath the barge board / soffit



Plate 8 – The internal character of the loft space



Plate 9 – *The ridge beam, with heavy cobwebbing clearly present*

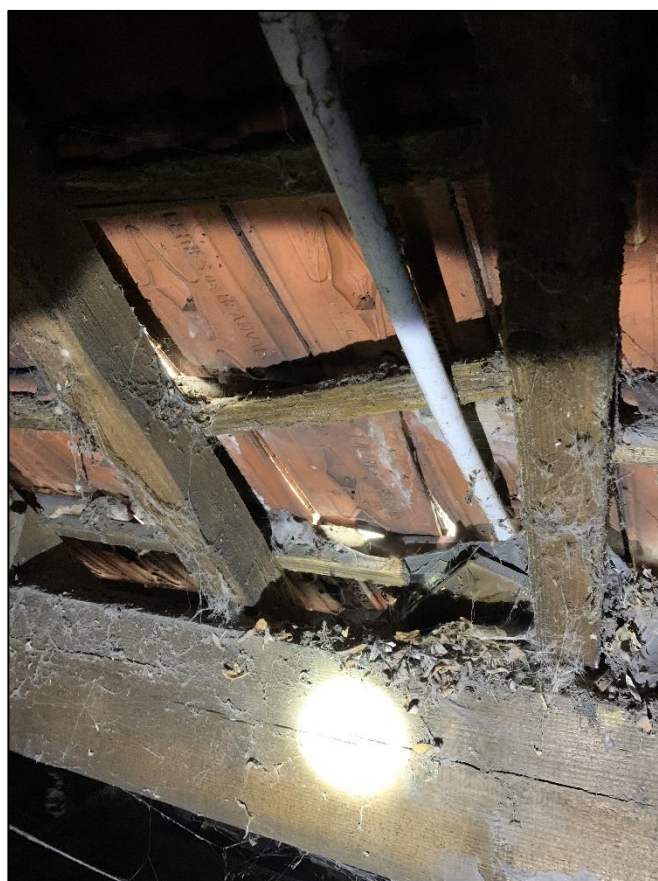


Plate 10 – *Further angle*



Plate 11 – *A further angle of the loft space, showing the water tank and boiler*



Plate 12 – *The garden at the property*

Appendix II: Biodiversity Enhancement: General Recommendations

Indicative Enhancement

Breeding Birds - House Sparrow

The Sparrow Terrace has been designed to help redress the balance of falling House Sparrow numbers. The current UK population is now half of what it previously was in 1980 and this is widely attributed to habitat destruction and lack of suitable nesting spaces. House Sparrows are social birds and like to nest in company, therefore, this terrace provides ideal nesting opportunities for three families. The terrace can be fixed on to the surface of a suitable wall or incorporated into the wall. It is suitable for all types of buildings.



Breeding Birds - Other

This traditional design has proved to be highly effective in attracting Robins, as well as other small species such as Black Redstart, Spotted Flycatcher and Wren. It is designed to be installed on the walls of houses, barns, garden sheds or other buildings and should be hung so that the entrance is to one side (at an angle of 90° to the wall). The front panel can be easily removed for cleaning.

This type of box should not be made conspicuous on a tree or bush because small predators can enter through the unprotected opening. By hanging on a wall, predators won't be able to reach the box. Alternatively hide the box in Ivy, Honeysuckle or other climbing plants.



Breeding Birds - Black Redstart

In conjunction with the above: the integral Black Redstart nest box is intended to be built into walls to provide nesting cavities. This provides much needed nesting provision for this protected and threatened Red listed species. Constructed from FSC certified Wood Stone this nest box will not deteriorate like a traditional wooden nest box. Externally fitted boxes are also available.



For information see - www.nhbs.com/woodstone-build-in-open-nest-box

Invertebrates - Bee bricks

The Bee Brick can be used in place of a standard brick or block in construction to create habitat for solitary bees. Alternatively, it can be used as a standalone bee house in your garden or wild patch. It will provide much needed nesting space for solitary bee species such as red mason bees and leafcutter bees, both of which are non-aggressive.

Each Bee Brick contains cavities in which solitary bees can lay their eggs before sealing the entrance with mud and chewed-up vegetation. The offspring will emerge the following spring and the cycle will begin again. Each cavity goes part way into the brick, which is solid at the back. Bee Bricks should be placed in a warm sunny spot on a south-facing wall at a minimum height of 1m, with no vegetation obstructing the holes. It is highly recommended that bee-friendly plants should be located nearby so that the bees using the bricks have food, otherwise it is unlikely that the brick will be used.

Available in a choice of four colours: white grey, dark grey, yellow and red.

Specification

- * Material: Concrete
- * Origin: Cornwall, UK
- * Dimensions: W 215mm x D 105mm x H 65mm
- * Weight: 2.9kg
- * Colours: White grey, yellow, dark grey and red



Native Planting and/or Landscaping

New feature landscaping should incorporate native woody plants as opposed to non-native species that are of significantly less benefit to biodiversity. Species such as Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*), Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), Guelder-rose (*Viburnum opulus*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) are native and will provide a valuable resource for a myriad of wildlife as opposed to non-native, exotic species which are generally much less effective, particularly to pollinator groups including bees, butterflies and moths.

Suitable Trees	Suitable Woody Shrubs
English Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>)	Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>)
Rowan (<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>)	Honeysuckle (<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>)
Wild Service Tree (<i>Sorbus torminialis</i>)	Guelder Rose (<i>Viburnum opulus</i>)
Silver Birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>)	Elder (<i>Sambucus nigra</i>)
Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>)	Wild Privet (<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>)
Goat Willow (<i>Salix capraea</i>)	Blackthorn (<i>Prunus spinosa</i>)
Beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>)	
Wild Cherry (<i>Prunus avium</i>)	