

HURSTWOOD, CLARKES HILL, WHITEFIELD.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

December 2023



Report Control Sheet

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Site Address	Hurstwood, Clarkes Hill, Whitefield, Manchester, M45 7TG
Grid Reference	SD 78744 05416
Approximate Site Area	0.85ha
Current Site Use	The site currently consists of a residential dwelling with associated residential garden.
Designated Sites within Zone of Influence	The site falls within the impact risk zone of Ashclough SSSI located approximately 2.5km northwest from the site boundary. No negative impact upon the designated site is anticipated and a consultation with Natural England is not required.
Notable Habitat Features	Notable habitats present includes woodland, lines of trees and hedgerows.
Notable Species Applicable to the Assessment	• Bats (Potential foraging and commuting) • Breeding birds, • Common amphibians and great crested newt. • Reptiles • Badger • Hedgehog • Invertebrates
Mitigation Recommendations	• Reasonable Avoidance Measures for great crested newt, common amphibians, reptiles, badger and hedgehog during construction. • Vegetation clearance to occur outside of nesting bird season (March to September inclusive), or alternatively, a nesting bird check a maximum of 48 hours prior to works. • Lighting mitigation for bats. • Updated non-native invasive species walkover.
Recommended Further Surveys and Assessment	No further surveys are required should the following mitigation measures be followed.
Recommended Ecological Enhancements	• Bat and bird boxes could be placed on the new buildings / retained trees. A plan to show the locations of these boxes and the specifications should be produced by a suitably qualified ecologist once the layout is finalised. • The inclusion of 'hedgehog highways' to facilitate movement across the site. This includes holes of 13 x 13cm at the bases of fence panels, leaving a sufficient gap beneath gates and/or leaving brick spaces at the bases of brick walls.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. SCOPE & PURPOSE

1.1.1. Collington Winter Environmental Ltd was commissioned by Independent Surveyors Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) at Hurstwood, Clarkes Hill, Whitefield, Manchester M45 7TG. This report has been prepared to inform an outline planning application for the development of a single-story bungalow.

1.1.2. The author of this report is Katie Brewer BSc (Hons), Ecological Project Manager at Collington Winter Environmental. This report has been overseen by Katie Bird MEnvSci, ACIEEM Principal Ecologist at Collington Winter Environmental Ltd. Katie is highly experienced managing schemes and has produced many ecological reports to inform planning management plans.

1.2. LOCATION

1.2.1. Please refer to Figure 1.1 for the site location and Figure 1.2 for the proposed area of impact within the boundary. The site is located within a rural area of Whitefield and is located approximately 1.5km southwest from Whitefield town centre.

Figure 1.1 Site Location (site ownership)



Figure 1.2 Proposed Area of Impact



1.3. OBJECTIVES

1.3.1. The objectives of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal are as follows:

- Identify the major habitats present
- Ascertain the presence or potential presence of any legally protected or notable species or habitats
- Identify any mitigation or further survey required and opportunities for strategic wildlife enhancements and long-term management.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1. DESK STUDY

- 2.1.1. An initial desk-based assessment of the site was undertaken to collate baseline data. The desk study included:
- Review of Magic.gov.uk website for details of any designated sites, notable habitats and presence of European Protected Species Licences.
 - Review of aerial and OS maps for habitat information, as well as determining locations of potential waterbodies to be considered in the assessment.
 - Review of potential habitat links on and off site, to determine the potential zone of influence of the proposed development.
 - On site consultation with the landowner which provided valuable information regarding historic land use and known species and habitats present within the site.

2.2. VEGETATION AND HABITAT ASSESSMENT

- 2.2.1. An Ecological Appraisal of the site was undertaken by Katie Brewer BSc (Hons). The survey was undertaken on the 29th November 2023. The weather was clear (2/8 oktas), with no precipitation, wind speed 1 and 5°C.
- 2.2.2. The walkover survey was undertaken broadly in line with standard UK HAB Methodology (2023). The assessment is undertaken with consideration of methodology as per “Preliminary Ecological Appraisal” (CIEEM, 2018).
- 2.2.3. A UK HAB Plan has been produced and is presented in the Appendix of this report. Standard methodology has been used, though adjustments have been made based on judgement to demonstrate habitats in a clearer manner, or where standard guidance does not fit the conditions found on site.

2.3. FAUNA ASSESSMENT

- 2.3.1. A search for signs of protected and notable species of fauna was undertaken during the site walkover. This included both field signs of species, as well as potential for species to be present based on habitat availability.
- 2.3.2. The searches broadly included the following:
- Assessment of waterbodies on site and within 250m of the site boundary, and terrestrial habitats for suitability to support notable amphibians.
 - Searches for field signs of, and habitat suitability for bats.
 - Suitability of habitats to support reptiles, and searches for incidental field signs.
 - Searches for field signs of badger (*Meles meles*), including setts, mammal paths, snuffle holes, badger hair and latrines to indicate activity.
 - Searches of watercourses for signs of water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*), white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) and otter (*Lutra lutra*), and assessment of habitat availability for the species.
 - Assessment of the suitability of habitats to support notable birds and recording any field sightings of birds during the walkover.
 - Assessment of the sites ability to support notable invertebrates and flora.
 - Searches for non-native invasive species.

2.4. PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT

- 2.4.1. A Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) and Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) of the site was undertaken by Katie Brewer. This has been overseen by Katie Bird who holds a Class 2 Bat Survey Licence from Natural England (Reference 2020-48950-CLS-CLS).
- 2.4.2. The survey was undertaken following guidance set out in Collins (2023). This includes undertaking a detailed internal and external inspection of any features to compile information on potential and actual bat entry/ exit points, roosting locations and evidence of bats.
- 2.4.3. The commuting and foraging assessment methodology is based on information contained within the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines 4th edition (Collins, 2023).

2.4.4. The GLTA and Potential flightpaths and foraging habitats were assessed as per categories listed in Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 6.2, demonstrated below (Collins, 2023).

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.		
Potential suitability	Description	
	Roosting habitats in structures	Potential flight-paths and foraging habitats
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines, or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).
Negligible ^a	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions ^b 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 and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats ^c).	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths 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 with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^b and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is 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 flight-paths 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 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 ^b and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths 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.

Assessment Criteria for Bat Roosting Potential

Table 4.2. Guidelines for assessing the suitability of trees on proposed development sites for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.

Suitability	Description
NONE	Either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any
FAR	Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree
PRF	A tree with at least one PRF present

Table 6.2. Guidelines for categorising the potential suitability of PRFs on a proposed development site for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.

Suitability	Description
PRF-I	PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats.
PRF-M	PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.

2.5. HABITAT SUITABILITY INDEX (GREAT CRESTED NEWT)

2.5.1. There were two ponds located within 250m of the site boundary (P1 and P2). The ponds were to undergo a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment following the methodology set out in ARG UK Advice Notice 5 (Oldham et al., 2010). However, P1 was found to be dry during the survey and P2 was located on private land and could not be accessed therefore a HSI could not be completed.

Figure 2.1 Pond Locations and References



2.6. SURVEY LIMITATIONS

- 2.6.1. This survey does not constitute a full botanical survey. Key species for each habitat type have been identified to give a broad representation of habitats present within the site.
- 2.6.2. It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no investigation can ensure the complete characterisation of the natural environment. This survey does not constitute a full botanical survey. Plant species may have been under-recorded, unidentifiable or not visible due to a number of factors including the time of year the survey was carried out.
- 2.6.3. November is a suboptimal time for carrying out Habitat Surveys due to being outside of the optimal plant growing season. Therefore, it is likely that some plants are present on the site but were not evident at the time of the survey and were not recorded.
- 2.6.4. The protected species assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species occurring on the site. This is based on the suitability of the habitat, known distribution of the species in the local area (provided by data searches) and any direct evidence within the survey area.
- 2.6.5. The findings of this report represent the professional opinion of qualified ecologists and do not constitute professional legal advice. The client may wish to seek professional legal interpretation of the relevant wildlife legislation cited within this document.
- 2.6.6. P2 could not be accessed during the survey and P1 was dry. As such, a HSI assessment could not be conducted on the ponds. This limitation has been considered within the assessment.

2.7. PROPORTIONALITY

- 2.7.1. Collington Winter Environmental Ltd provide recommendations in line with the British Standard for Biodiversity (BS42020). Within BS42020, proportionality is encouraged for both ecologists and Local Authority Decision Makers and Consultees. Please refer to the below extract from Section 5.5 of BS42020.

“The work involved in preparing and implementing all ecological surveys, impact assessments and measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to

biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development. Consequently, the decision-maker should only request supporting information and conservation measures that are relevant, necessary and material to the application in question. Similarly, the decision-maker and their consultees should ensure that any comments and advice made over an application are also proportionate.

NOTE 1 This approach is enshrined in Government planning guidance, for example, paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework for England [41].

NOTE 2 The desk studies and field surveys undertaken to provide a preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) might in some cases be all that is necessary.”

3 SURVEY RESULTS

3.1. SITE CONTEXT

3.1.1. The site is located within Whitefield and is surrounded by grassland and agricultural fields on all aspects. A notable area of woodland is located approximately 100m southwest from the site boundary which connects directly to Clifton Marina/ Clifton Country Park. This park consists of further area of woodland, grassland and a body of water. A golf course is located 280m northeast from the site boundary which consists of managed grassland with surrounding woodlands. Outwood Country Park is located 1km north from the site boundary which runs along the River Irwell. It is anticipated that these surrounding habitats will provide suitable habitat to support local flora and fauna.

3.2. DESIGNATED SITES

3.2.1. A total of two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) were located within 5km of the site boundary, this includes:

- Ashclough SSSI is located approximately 2.5km northwest from the site boundary. The site comprises two sections of the steep south bank of the River Irwell, representing the type and best available exposures for showing the Ashclough Marine Band and its associated strata. The Marine Band is of particular interest since it represents the first marine incursion after a period of more or less exclusively non-marine conditions lasting from the middle Westphalian A to the lower Westphalian B (Carboniferous Period).
- Nob End SSSI and Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located approximately 3.6km northwest from the site boundary. It lies at the confluence of the Rivers Croal and Irwell and the site consists of a flat topped, steep-sided tip of alkali waste produced as a by-product of the Leblanc process for the making of sodium carbonate. The plateau of the tip is approximately 10 m above the level of the rivers. It is the best example in Greater Manchester and Merseyside of the nationally rare species rich variant of the tall fescue–coltsfoot plant community and is of especial interest because of its development on an unusual and scientifically interesting substrate. It is characterised by an open-structured sward in which grasses play a minor role and herbs typical of limestone grasslands predominate. As natural limestone grassland does not occur in Greater Manchester, many of the species found here are rare in the county. Orchids are well represented within the site and several species occur here in large numbers. Small areas of sycamore woodland and patches of hawthorn scrub add to the habitat diversity of the site, and this is reflected in a high entomological interest. Particularly notable are the large populations of burnet moths (*Zygaena filipendulae*) and common blue butterflies (*Polyommatus icarus*).

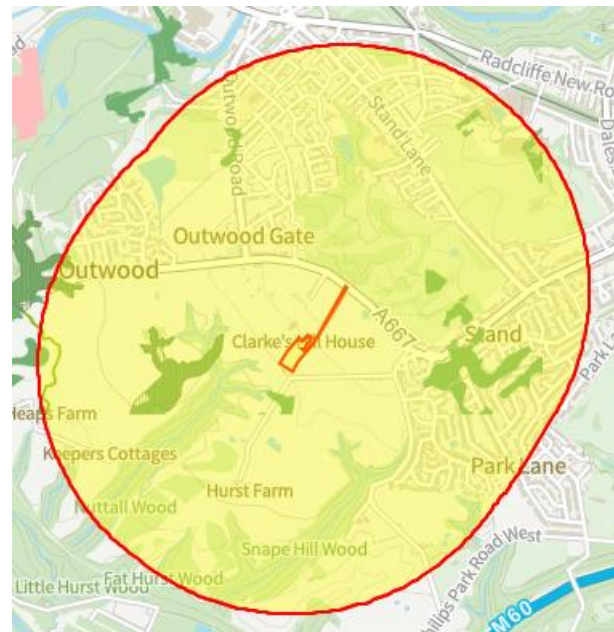
3.2.2. The site falls within the Impact Risk Zone of Ashclough SSSI located approximately 2.5km northwest from the site boundary.

3.2.3. The following LNR's are located within 5km of the site boundary:

- Chapelfield LNR located approximately 0.5km north from the site boundary which is designated due to the birds, waterfowl, dragonflies and aquatic fauna present.
- Clifton Country Park LNR located approximately 1.5km southwest from the site boundary which consists of woodland, bodies of water, and grassland.
- Philips Park LNR located approximately 1.5km southeast from the site boundary which consists of woodland, wildflowers, grassland and bodies of water. Butterflies including orange tip (*Anthocharis cardamines*) and meadow brown (*Maniola jurtina*) have been recorded within the site.
- Mere Blough LNR is located approximately 1.7km southeast from the site boundary which consists of large areas of woodland which supports local bird populations.
- Hollins Vale LNR located approximately 4km northeast from the site boundary which includes woodland and wetland habitats. The site is known to support local fauna and flora populations including bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*).
- Moses Gate LNR is located approximately 4.3km northwest from the site boundary which is a place of national scientific interest due to its unique wildlife.
- Kersal Moor LNR is located approximately 4.4km southeast from the site boundary which consists of grassland and woodland supporting local fauna and flora populations.
- Blackleach Country Park LNR is located approximately 4.7km west from the site boundary which consists of open water, grassland, scrub, woodland and wetland habitats. Wildlife has been recorded throughout the site which includes tufted duck (*Aythya fuligula*), pochard (*Aythya farina*), swifts (*Apus apus*), and swallows (*Aythya ferina*).
- The Cliff / Kersal Dale LNR located approximately 4.8km southeast from the site boundary which consists of open water, grassland, marsh and woodland habitats. Woodpeckers (*Picus sp.*) and kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) have been recorded within the site.

3.3. PRIORITY HABITATS

3.3.1. Consultation with Magic.gov.uk highlighted the presence of the following Priority Habitats within 1km of the site boundary, none of which was located onsite or adjacent.



Legend

- Priority Habitat Inventory - Calaminarian Grassland (England) - Priority Habitat Inventory - Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh (England) - Priority Habitat Inventory - Good quality semi-improved grassland (Non Priority) (England) - Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Calcareous Grassland (England) - Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Dry Acid Grassland (England) - Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Meadows (England) - Priority Habitat Inventory - Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pasture (England) - Priority Habitat Inventory - Upland Calcareous Grassland (England) - Priority Habitat Inventory - Upland Hay Meadows (England) - Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Heathland (England) - Priority Habitat Inventory - Mountain Heaths and Willow Scrub (England)	- Priority Habitat Inventory - Upland Heathland (England) - Priority Habitat Inventory - Blanket Bog (England) - Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Fens (England) - Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Raised Bog (England) - Priority Habitat Inventory - Reedbeds (England) - Priority Habitat Inventory - Upland Flushes, Fens and Swamps (England)	Ancient Woodland (England) - Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland - Ancient Replanted Woodland - Priority Habitat Inventory - Deciduous Woodland (England) - Forestry Commission Legal Boundary (England)	National Forest Inventory (GB) - Assumed woodland - Broadleaved - Cloud \ shadow - Conifer - Coppice - Coppice with standards - Failed - Felled - Ground prep - Low density - Mixed mainly broadleaved - Mixed mainly conifer - Shrub - Uncertain	- Windthrow - Young trees - Priority Habitat Inventory - Traditional Orchards (England)
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Figure 3.2 Priority Habitats within 1km from the Site (Magic.gov.uk, 2023)

3.4. HABITATS

3.4.1. Please refer to Drawing 20-1419 – 001 for the UK HAB Map for the site. Photographs of the site are presented in the Appendix.

VEGETATED GARDEN (MODIFIED GRASSLAND)

3.4.2. Modified grassland located within the site. Species identified within the site included perennial rye grass (*Lolium perenne*), docks (*Rumex sp.*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), chickweed (*Stellaria media*), mugworts (*Artemisia vulgaris*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), willow herb (*Epilobium sp.*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*) and common nettle (*Urtica dioica*). The grassland was assessed as modified grassland as it was well managed and there were only approximately 5 species per meters squared.

TALL FORBS

3.4.3. Tall forbs habitat was located on the southwestern aspect of the site, this consisted of common nettle and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus agg.*) as this runs adjacent to the bramble scrub habitat.

BRAMBLE SCRUB

3.4.4. An area of unmanaged dense bramble scrub was located on the southwestern section of the site.

BROADLEAVED WOODLAND

3.4.5. A patch of woodland is located within the site which separates the proposed development from the current residential garden. Species within the woodland include sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), apple tree (*Malus domestica*), Leyland cypress tree (*Cupressus x leylandii*) and elder (*Sambucus nigra*). The understory of the woodland consisted of cow parsley, docks and common ivy (*Hedra helix*).

NATIVE HEDGEROW

3.4.6. A hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) hedgerow ran along the eastern boundary of the site, this was found to be unmanaged. Species also identified within the hedgerow included bramble and snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*). The understory of the hedgerow consisted of common ivy, mosses (*Bryophyta sp.*) and common nettle.

INDIVIDUAL TREES

3.4.7. A total of six individual trees were located within the site comprising sycamore and Leyland cypress.

LINE OF TREES

3.4.8. A line of trees was located along the northwestern boundary of the site, species included elder, goat willow (*Salix caprea*), sycamore, Leyland cypress, silver birch (*Betula pendula*) and holly (*Ilex aquifolium*).

3.4.9. A conifer treeline was located within the centre of the site which consisted of mature Leyland cypress trees.

DEVELOPED LAND, SEALED SURFACE

3.4.10. One residential dwelling was located on the northern aspect of the site with an associated driveway, footpath, and access road. Wooden shed and two corrugated metal sheds were also located within the site nearby the residential dwelling.

3.4.11. One disused shelter was located southwestern aspect of the site which is to be demolished during the proposed works.

VACANT LAND

3.4.12. Vacant land was located surrounding the disused shelter on the southwestern aspect of the site. There was no vegetation on the vacant land and was covered by leaf litter. It is considered that due to the density of the leaf litter specimens may have been missed.

3.5. SPECIES

FLORA

3.5.1. The site mainly consisted of a well-managed residential garden. There were no notable flora species identified within the site and due to the intense management, the site is considered unlikely to support any notable flora species.

INVERTEBRATES

3.5.2. Much of the site consisted of well managed modified grassland, this provides limited features for invertebrates due to limited flowering species. It is anticipated that the unmanaged habitats within the site including the bramble and hawthorn hedgerows may attract some invertebrates to the site. It is considered that this may attract local and notable invertebrates to the site.

3.5.3. Overall, it is anticipated that some features of the site will support local invertebrates however, they are not anticipated to utilise the site in significant numbers.

AMPHIBIANS

3.5.4. The following EPSLs for great crested newt were located within 5km from the site boundary, based on consultation with Magic.gov.uk:

Case reference of granted application	Species on the licence*	Distance from site (KM)	Licence Start Date	Licence End Date	Does the Licence				
					impact on a breeding site?	allow damage of breeding site?	allow damage of a resting place?	allow destruction of breeding site?	allow destruction of a resting place?
2014-1594-EPS-MIT	GCN	1.9 S	09/09/2014	01/11/2015	N	N	Y	N	N
2015-8369-EPS-MIT	GCN	4 E	16/03/2015	31/12/2015	N	N	Y	N	Y
2015-8369-EPS-MIT-1	GCN	4 E	22/10/2015	31/05/2016	N	N	Y	N	Y
EPSM2013-6663	GCN	3 SE	01/03/2014	01/05/2015	N			N	Y
2016-26556-EPS-MIT-1	GCN	4 E	20/07/2017	01/04/2018	N	N	Y	N	Y
2017-31812-EPS-MIT	GCN	3.5 NE	19/12/2017	31/12/2019	N	N	Y	N	Y
2014-1594-EPS-MIT-8	GCN	1.9 S	20/11/2017	31/05/2018	N	N	Y	N	Y
2014-1594-EPS-MIT-7	GCN	1.9 S	22/02/2017	22/02/2017	N	N	Y	N	Y
2016-26556-EPS-MIT	GCN	4 E	16/11/2016	16/11/2016	N	N	Y	N	Y
2014-1594-EPS-MIT-11	GCN	1.9 S	30/05/2018	30/11/2018	N	N	Y	N	Y
2019-40377-EPS-MIT	GCN	4.8 W	10/05/2019	31/07/2024	N	N	Y	N	Y
2020-46281-EPS-MIT	GCN	1.8 SE	20/04/2020	31/12/2020	N	N	Y	N	Y
2014-1594-EPS-MIT-1	GCN	1.9 S	22/10/2014	01/11/2015	N	N	Y	N	Y
2014-1594-EPS-MIT-2	GCN	1.9 S	03/11/2014	01/11/2015	N	N	Y	N	Y
2014-1594-EPS-MIT-3	GCN	1.9 S	06/05/2015	01/11/2015	N	N	Y	N	Y
2014-1594-EPS-MIT-4	GCN	1.9 S	15/09/2015	30/06/2016	N	N	Y	N	Y
2014-1594-EPS-MIT-5	GCN	1.9 S	01/07/2016	30/09/2017	N	N	Y	N	Y
2014-1594-EPS-MIT	GCN	1.9 S	09/09/2014	01/11/2015	N	N	Y	N	N

3.5.5. Two ponds were identified within 250 m of the site boundary. As great crested newts' upper dispersal limited is generally considered to be up to 250 m from a waterbody, these ponds have been included within the assessment. Please refer to Figure 2.1 for the pond locations.

3.5.6. P1 was accessible during the survey however this pond was found to be dry and covered by vegetation and not considered further within the assessment.

3.5.7. P2 was not accessible during the survey and was not subject to a HSI. It is unknown whether P2 has suitability for great crested newts.

- 3.5.8. Suitable habitats for amphibians in their terrestrial phase related to the woodland, lines of trees, hedgerows and bramble scrub. These habitats are anticipated to provide suitable foraging and cover resources for the species group. The site is connected to further habitats which includes grassland fields with connecting hedgerows and lines of trees. These surrounding areas will provide suitable habitat to support local amphibians.
- 3.5.9. It is anticipated that common amphibians and great crested newt could be present onsite.

REPTILES

- 3.5.10. The lines of trees, woodland and scrub habitats provide suitable habitats for reptiles. The site is also connected to further habitats which includes unmanaged grassland and connecting features. These habitat features onsite and within the surrounding area could support local reptile populations.
- 3.5.11. It is considered that reptiles could be present onsite within the scrub and unmanaged habitats on the southwestern aspect.

BIRDS

- 3.5.12. The site provides suitable nesting habitat for breeding birds relating to hedgerows, scrub, line of trees and woodland within the boundary of the site. During the survey black bird (*Turdus merula*), robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) and pigeon (*Columba livia*) were identified within the site. It is anticipated notable bird species associated with residential gardens and agricultural areas will utilise these habitats.
- 3.5.13. A disused shelter was located on the southern aspect of the site which consisted of breezeblock walls with a corrugated metal roof. This had a large opening on the northern aspect and internal supporting wooden beams were present. A historic bird's nest was located on top of the eastern breeze block wall, confirming nesting value.
- 3.5.14. The disused shelter was located adjacent to the bramble scrub, this connecting habitat provides suitable nesting habitat for ground nesting bird populations.
- 3.5.15. The other buildings within the site consisted of a wooden shed, corrugated metal shed and a residential dwelling. These were not found to provide value for local nesting birds. These are not to be impacted during the works and they are anticipated to be a sufficient distance from the working boundary that they will not be disturbed during the works.
- 3.5.16. The site provides suitable habitat to support local nesting and foraging bird populations.

BATS

- 3.5.17. The following EPSL's were located within 5km from the site boundary based on consultation with magic.gov.uk:

Case reference of granted application	Species on the licence*	Distance from site (KM)	Licence Start Date	Licence End Date	Does the Licence				
					impact on a breeding site?	allow damage of breeding site?	allow damage of a resting place?	allow destruction of breeding site?	allow destruction of a resting place?
EPSM2012-5060	C-PIP	4.9 N	08/04/2013	01/10/2015	Y	-	-	Y	N
EPSM2013-6681	C-PIP;S-PIP	2 SW	18/11/2013	01/10/2016	Y	-	-	Y	N
2017-30556-EPS-MIT	C-PIP	4.8 S	29/08/2017	31/10/2019	Y	Y	N	N	N
2017-30556-EPS-MIT-1	C-PIP	4.8 S	09/08/2018	31/10/2019	Y	Y	N	N	N
2015-16549-EPS-MIT	C-PIP	2 SE	16/11/2015	01/11/2020	N	N	N	N	Y
2015-8936-EPS-MIT-1	C-PIP	4.8 N	01/05/2015	30/06/2020	N	N	N	N	Y
EPSM2009-1596	C-PIP	1.1 NE	03/02/2010	31/01/2012	Y	-	-	Y	Y
2015-15221-EPS-BDX	C-PIP	2.2 NE	15/09/2015	31/10/2015	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
2018-33380-EPS-BDX	C-PIP	4.6 N	01/04/2018	30/04/2018	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

2018-37079-EPS-MIT	C-PIP	1.7 NW	21/09/2018	01/01/2019	N	N	N	N	Y
2019-40402-EPS-BDX	C-PIP	4.6 N	11/04/2019	30/04/2019	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
2019-40402-EPS-BDX-1	C-PIP	4.6 N	26/04/2019	03/05/2019	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
EPSM2011-3345	C-PIP	2.3 SW	23/08/2011	31/07/2013	N	-	-	N	Y
2015-8936-EPS-MIT	C-PIP	4.8 N	01/05/2015	30/06/2020	N	N	N	N	Y

Species on the licence*	Species name	Latin
C-PIP	Common pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>
S-PIP	Soprano pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>

3.5.18. One building is to be impacted by the proposed works and was subject to the PRA assessment. Please refer to Table 3.1. The residential dwelling and two outdoor buildings did not undergo a PRA as they are not to be impacted by the proposed works in the site and are a sufficient distance from the boundary of the works that any roosting bats will not be impacted.

Table 3.1 PRA Summary

Building Ref	Description	Photograph
Disused Shelter	A disused shelter was located on the southwestern aspect of the site within the proposed working area. This consisted of an approximately 1m tall building with breezeblock walls and a corrugated metal roof. It was open along the northern aspect with no wall or doors present meaning that it was open to weather conditions. The breeze block walls internally and externally were all well sealed and there were no cavities within the brickwork that could support roosting bats. There was no roofing felt along the roof and the corrugated metal sheets were supported by wooden beams. There were small gaps identified within the corrugated metal however, this is anticipated to fluctuate in temperature and is open to all weather conditions and was not considered a PRF. There were no bat droppings or feeding remains identified. One historic bird nest was identified on top of the breeze block wall on the eastern aspect. The building was assessed as providing 'no' bat roosting potential.	 

3.5.19. All trees onsite underwent GLTA following guidance from Collins 2023, none of which were assessed as providing bat roosting potential.

3.5.20. The habitats onsite provide value for commuting and foraging bats as the features onsite are anticipated to attract invertebrate prey. The site is also connected to further habitats which are anticipated to provide features to support bats.

3.5.21. Overall, the site is considered of value for local commuting and foraging bat populations.

BADGER

- 3.5.22. There were no signs of badger presence identified within the site. The site is connected to further grassland fields and connecting habitats and it is therefore anticipated that badger could be present within the local area.
- 3.5.23. Overall, there were no badger setts onsite however they are likely present.

OTHER TERRESTRIAL MAMMALS

- 3.5.24. The site consisted of habitat features which could support European hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europeus*). The grassland provides suitable features for foraging and the woodland, scrub and hedgerows will provide suitable cover. It is anticipated that hedgehog could be present within the site.
- 3.5.25. The site is anticipated to have limited value for brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*) as it consists of a residential garden. They are likely present in the local area however they are not anticipated to be present on site.

NON-NATIVE INVASIVE SPECIES

- 3.5.26. Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifer*) was identified onsite within the southwestern area (to be impacted by the works). There were no further species identified however, November is a sub-optimal period for identification, and it is possible specimens may have been missed.

SPECIES DISCOUNTED FROM ASSESSMENT

- 3.5.27. Water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*), otter (*Lutra lutra*), beaver (*Castor fiber*) and white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) have been discounted from assessment as no aquatic habitats are located on site or within proximity. The closest aquatic habitat is located approximately 1.22km north from the site boundary in relation to the River Irwell. The river is sufficiently separated from the site by anthropogenic barriers as such no negative impacts would occur on aquatic species during the proposed development.
- 3.5.28. Hazel Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) mainly occur in southern counties, especially in Devon, Somerset, Sussex, and Kent. There are few recorded localities north of the Midlands, though they are present in parts of the Lake District and in scattered Welsh localities (Matthews et al, 2018). The species are not generally known to be present within the Greater Manchester area (Wembridge et al., 2016). The habitats on site are of limited value due to limited areas of extensive woodland and scrub. As such, the species are reasonably discounted from site.
- 3.5.29. Red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) has been discounted from the assessment. Red squirrel populations are limited to small areas of northern England and are not known to be present in the Greater Manchester area. It is anticipated that high abundances of grey squirrel are present within this region (Shuttleworth/RSST n.d.). This species will displace red squirrel through competition as well as cause increased red squirrel mortality through the spread of squirrel pox (The Mammal Society, 2020).

4 MITIGATION RECOMMENDATION

4.1. DESIGNATED SITES

- 4.1.1. The site falls within the impact risk zone of Ashclough SSSI located approximately 2.5km northwest from the site boundary. Consultation with Magic.gov.uk states that a consultation with Natural England is not required as the proposed works are residential and relating to a single dwelling to be erected.
- 4.1.2. It is anticipated that the designated sites are a sufficient distance away and are separated by anthropogenic barriers such as the residential areas, such that no impacts as a result of development are anticipated. The development includes the creation of one residential bungalow as such there will be no risk of increased pressure on the site as the it is a small sized scheme.
- 4.1.3. There are numerous LNRs within 1km of the site, the closest of which was located approximately 500m from site. As such, it is not anticipated any impacts from the construction works will incur whilst the development relates to a single residential unit.

4.2. HABITATS

WOODLAND, LINES OF TREES AND HEDGEROWS

- 4.1.4. The woodland, lines of trees and hedgerow habitats are to be retained during the proposed works. Bramble scrub and tall forbs are to be removed during the proposed works, all remaining habitats are to be retained.
- 4.1.5. Generally, the protection measures of retained trees will be through used of temporary protective demarcation fencing to protect the trees and shrubs. The fencing must extend outside the canopy of the retained trees and must remain in position until all plots have been developed to ensure protection is provided throughout the construction phase.
- 4.1.6. The fencing will be in accordance with BS 5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction: Recommendations.

4.3. SPECIES

AMPHIBIANS

- 4.1.7. It is unknown whether P2 support great crested newts. Some habitats onsite were identified as suitable to support common amphibians and great crested newts. Without any further survey data, it is not possible to confirm the absence or presence of great crested newts, whilst common amphibians were deemed as likely present.
- 4.1.8. A Natural England Rapid Risk Assessment (RRA) has been conducted. The RRA found that an offence is “highly unlikely” due to the approximately 0.12 ha of land >250m from the pond being affected.

Component	Likely effect (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom)	Notional offence probability score
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.1 - 0.5 ha lost or damaged	0.1
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
		Maximum:
		0.1
Rapid risk assessment result:	GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY	

Table 4.1 Rapid Risk Assessment

- 4.1.9. The RRA notes the assessment as:

Green: offence highly unlikely" indicates that the development activities are of such a type, scale and location that it is highly unlikely any offence would be committed should the development proceed. Therefore, no licence would be required. However, bearing in mind that this is a generic assessment, you should carefully examine your specific plans to ensure this is a sound conclusion, and take precautions (see Non-licensed avoidance measures tool) to avoid offences if appropriate. It is likely that any residual offences would have negligible impact on conservation status, and enforcement of such breaches is unlikely to be in the public interest".

4.1.10. The bramble scrub is to be removed during the works, a feature that was identified as suitable to support great crested newts. The remaining habitats are to be retained during the works at the site. Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) should be adopted during the construction phase. The following RAMs are to be undertaken under the supervision of a licenced great crested newt ecologist:

- All site contractors are to be inducted through a Toolbox Talk hosted by a suitably qualified ecologist on the presence of great crested newts and their legal protection. All contractors are to sign the Toolbox Talk and agree to the proposed RAMs.
- A designated working area will be maintained to minimise total working area, which will be marked out by the ecologist (where necessary). A fence and/or sign will be situated to mark the working areas to ensure no contractors and vehicles do not enter areas which have not been checked for great crested newts.
- Any vegetation on site to be cleared should first be strimmed to approximately 15 cm and left overnight, allowing any animals the chance to naturally disperse from site. A fingertip search of any vegetated areas should then be undertaken to check for the presence of great crested newts.
- Once the ecologist has declared all areas of potential for great crested newts have been checked, the proposed works can continue unsupervised.
- Storage of materials is to be on pallets i.e. raised off the ground and on areas of hard standing or tarmac. No materials to be stored on vegetation.
- All working areas are to be maintained as bareground or hardstanding throughout the construction phase.
- All open pits and pipes are to be covered during the night, with a check for presence of amphibians conducted prior to covering.
- If excavations are exposed and/or created, a slope will be positioned within the excavation to allow amphibians and mammals to escape should they fall in.
- Under no circumstances should site contractors attempt to handle great crested newt.
- Ecologist to undertake a site visit upon completion of works to confirm that the works have been undertaken using the above risk avoidance measures and that habitats have been restored.

REPTILES

4.1.11. The site was found to be of limited value for reptile however the bramble scrub was found to be a habitat that is suitable for reptile species. It is recommended that the RAMs recommended for great crested newts are also to consider the presence of reptiles to minimise the likelihood of killing, injuring or disturbing any reptiles present on site during the construction phase.

4.1.12. The precautionary destructive search work will be undertaken during the summer at a time of year when reptiles are active. The ecologist will be present during the strimming works. Any reptiles found during the search will be relocated to the adjacent field on the eastern aspect of the site.

BREEDING BIRDS

4.1.13. The woodland, scrub, hedgerows, and disused shelter was found to provide suitable habitat for local nesting birds. The scrub habitat and disused shelter are to be removed during the works; the remaining habitats are to be retained. As such, it is not considered that the loss of these habitats will cause a significant impact to the local breeding population.

4.1.14. The removal of vegetation and shelter should be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season (March to September, inclusive). If this is not possible, a suitably qualified ecologist should undertake a nesting bird check no more than 48 hours prior to removal. If nesting activity is observed, the nest(s) should be left in situ until the young have fledged. A suitable buffer will be maintained and determined by the ecologist.

BATS

- 4.1.15. The habitats of highest potential value for bats included the trees, hedgerow and scrub habitats which are anticipated to attract a range of invertebrate prey. All habitats of value, apart from bramble scrub is to be retained, as such it is not considered that the development will cause a significant loss of foraging habitats.
- 4.1.16. Slow-flying species such as brown long-eared bat, which are anticipated to be in the local area, are sensitive to lighting and may be impacted by the proposed development, should no mitigation for lighting be considered.
- 4.1.17. It is advised that a light mitigation plan is produced to assess the pre and post development changed in lighting to advice on the appropriately sensitive lighting scheme as part of the development.
- 4.1.18. The following measures should be implemented in the final proposed lighting strategy, following guidance outlined in the Institute for Lighting Engineers document “Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Lighting” (2005) and BCT’s “Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night” (2023):
- Keep site lighting to minimum levels.
 - LED lighting with a warm white light to be used over cool white light (<2700Kelvin).
 - Lighting feature peak wavelengths great that 550nm.
 - Light placement to be downward facing to prevent excess horizontal or vertical light spill.
 - Avoid illuminating habitats of value
 - Use of timed security lights should be set on motion-sensors and using shore, 1-minute timers to minimise light use.

BADGERS

- 4.1.19. No badger setts were identified during the survey; however, they may be within the local area. The following Precautionary Working Methods will be adhered to during the construction phase to ensure that no badgers are impacted by the proposed development (Badger Trust, 2023):
- A pre-commencement of work badger survey should be conducted by a suitably qualified ecologist to ensure the current badger situation is known and that the recommendations are correct.
 - All site personnel should be fully briefed concerning the method statement, the presence of badgers, the mitigation measures to be followed, the relevant legislation, the penalties imposed and who to contact should they need to.
 - Trees and shrubs should be felled so that they fall away from the direction of a sett and outside exclusion zones.
 - Ensure excavations or trenches left overnight are covered or have an escape route such as a shallow gradient at one or both ends.
 - Ensure excavations or trenches are inspected each morning and evening to ensure no badgers have become trapped.
 - Open pipework with a diameter of more than 120mm should be properly covered or capped at the end of the working day to prevent badgers from entering and becoming trapped.
 - During the work, the storage of any chemicals should be contained in such a way that they cannot be accessed or knocked over by any roaming badgers.
 - The storage of topsoil or other “soft” building materials within the site should be given careful consideration. Badgers will readily adopt such mounds and dig setts which would then be afforded the same protection as established setts. To avoid the adoption of such mounds, they should be subject to daily inspections before work commences or alternative measures put in place, such as being fenced off for higher-risk areas.
 - Litter, tools and potentially dangerous materials on site should be cleared at the end of the working day. Care should be taken that there are no sharp metal objects or pointed protrusions on the ground which could seriously injure a badger due to their poor eyesight.
 - Ensure no dogs are brought to the work site.
 - Security lighting should be kept to a minimum and away from setts to avoid disturbance to any badgers on site.
 - Fires should be lit only in secure compounds away from areas of badger activity and should be fully extinguished at the end of the working day.
 - Use of noisy plant or machinery should cease at least two hours before sunset and not commence until an hour after sunrise to avoid causing a disturbance to badgers or preventing access or egress to setts.
 - Badger paths must not be blocked to ensure access to foraging areas is maintained.

- 4.1.20. Adherence to these measures should be confirmed to planners at regular intervals by the project ecologist.

TERRESTRIAL MAMMALS

- 4.1.21. European Hedgehog are anticipated to be present within the site and are a Species of Principal Importance. During habitat removal, any areas of dense vegetation should first be carefully hand searched to check for the species. If identified during management, should be relocated carefully by hand to a location away from the working area. If any injured either species are located they should be taken to a local vets.

NON-NATIVE INVASIVE SPECIES

- 4.1.22. Himalayan balsam was identified on the southeastern aspect of the site (to be impacted), the survey was completed in November and it is possible that specimens may have been missed. It is recommended that an updated walkover is completed by a competent non-native invasive species contractor and the production of a Method Statement to include measures for the eradication of non-native invasive species.

5 FURTHER SURVEYS AND CONCLUSION

5.1. FURTHER SURVEYS

5.1.1. No further surveys are deemed necessary to inform the proposed planning application should the mitigation measures be followed.

5.2. MITIGATION MEASURES SUMMARY

5.2.1. A series of mitigation measures have been recommended to protect species of fauna should they be present on site, this includes:

- RAMS for great crested newt, common amphibians, reptiles, hedgehog, and badger during the works.
- Vegetation clearance to occur outside of nesting bird season (March to September inclusive), or alternatively, a nesting bird check a maximum of 48hours prior to works.
- Lighting mitigation for bats.

5.3. CONCLUSION

5.3.1. The site was found to comprise of a well-managed residential garden which is to be retained during the proposed works. Scrub, vacant land, and grassland was located on the southwestern aspect of the site and is to be impacted during the proposed works. Habitats within the site were found to be of potential value for foraging bats, invertebrates, reptiles, bats, badgers, common amphibians, birds, and great crested newts. Mitigation for the local fauna should be followed during the proposed works.

5.3.2. Specific enhancement recommendations for the site include the following:

- Bat and bird boxes could be placed on the new buildings / retained trees. A plan to show the locations of these boxes and the specifications should be produced by a suitably qualified ecologist once the layout is finalised.
- The inclusion of 'hedgehog highways' to facilitate movement across the site. This includes holes of 13 x 13cm at the bases of fence panels, leaving a sufficient gap beneath gates and/or leaving brick spaces at the bases of brick walls.

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Description	Photographs
Tall forbs	
Himalayan balsam	
Conifer Treeline	
Woodland	
Native hedgerow	

Managed modified grassland		
Native hedgerow at entrance		
P1		



Hurstwood, Whitefield - UKHab
Date: 06.12.23

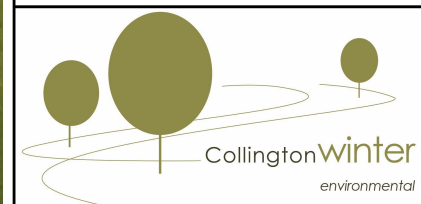
- Line of Trees
- Individual Trees
- Vegetated Garden
- Native Hedgerow
- Developed Land;
Sealed Surface
- Modified Grassland
- Broadleaved Woodland
- Japanese Knotweed
- Bramble Scrub
- Tall Forbs
- Proposed Working Area
- Red Line Boundary

Scale: 1:3500

Drawn By: CW

Checked By: KB

Approved By: KB



Client: Independent Surveyors Ltd

Site: Hurstwood, Clarks Hill, Whitefield,
Manchester M45 7TG

Project Number: 20-1419

Rev: 1.0

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