



PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

**LAND AT MOUNT PLEASANT,
SIMISTER, GREATER MANCHESTER**

AUGUST 2025

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Land at Mount Pleasant, Simister, Greater Manchester

A report for

Paul Drinnan
Chartered Architect
7 East Cliff, Preston, Lancashire, PR1 3JE

A report by



Stuart Macpherson BSc (Hons), MSc, ACIEEM

PENNINE Ecological Glossop Ltd.

1a Turnlee Road
Glossop
Derbyshire
SK13 6JS
Tel. 07883438666

email: stuart@pennineecological.co.uk

web: www.pennineecological.co.uk

Version	Author	Check / Review	Description	Date
1.0	Luke Pilling QCIEEM	Stuart Macpherson ACIEEM	Draft report	05/08/25

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	2
1.1	Reason for Survey	2
1.2	Site Location	2
2.	Methodology	4
2.1	Survey Methodology	4
2.2	Surveyor Experience	6
2.3	Survey Constraints	6
3.	Results	7
3.1	Results Summary	7
3.2	Habitats	7
3.3	Protected Species	8
4.	Ecological Evaluation	12
4.1	Desk Study	12
4.2	Habitats	13
4.3	Protected Species	13
5.	Recommendations	16
5.1	DesK Study	16
5.2	Habitats	16
5.3	Protected Species	16
	References	18
	Appendix A - Figures	19
	Appendix B – Site Photographs	20

Terms of Use

This report has been compiled by Pennine Ecological with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the instruction and permissions granted by the client. The results, conclusions and recommendations of this report are proportionate and in line with the British Standard 42020:2013.

This is a technical report and does not represent legal advice/opinion.

The report is for the sole use of the commissioning client in connection with the development project described in the report, and must not be used for any other purpose, copied, re-produced, or sent to any other party other than the Local Planning Authority without the permission of Pennine Ecological.

This report remains the property of Pennine Ecological and cannot be relied upon until full payment has been made. Pennine Ecological reserve the right to retract any survey reports submitted to planning where payments are outstanding.

Pennine Ecological will retain the right to re-publish data obtained, and to forward data collected during all its ecology surveys to the local wildlife records centre.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 REASON FOR SURVEY

PENNINE Ecological have been commissioned by Mr. Paul Drinnan to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of land at Mount Pleasant, Simister, Bury, Greater Manchester (Figure 1.1).

The proposals includes the construction of seven residential dwellings with associated parking and soft landscaping (Figure 1.2).

The study includes the following elements:

- UK Habitat Classification Survey.
- Badger Survey and Evaluation.
- Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment.
- Breeding Bird Survey and Evaluation.
- Great Crested Newt Evaluation.
- Scoping for other protected or notable species potentially present within the site.

The study also includes a full evaluation of the ecological significance of the survey findings, and recommendations/precautions where appropriate.

1.2 SITE LOCATION

Access to the site is via the avenue of Mount Pleasant, Simister, Bury, Greater Manchester, England, M25 2SD, grid reference SD 83585 05884. The M62 and M60 motorways are approx. 470m and 530m north and west respectively. The village of Simister is to the north of the site. The landscape to the south of the site is dominated by improved grassland fields.



Figure 1.1: Approximate surveyed area at Mount Pleasant, Simister.



Figure 1-2: Site proposals.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The methodologies where specific surveys were applied are outlined below.

2.1.1 Desk Based Study

The Multi Agency Geographical Information Centre (MAGIC) www.magic.gov.uk was referred to in respect of statutory sites, GCN licence returns, and European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) issued in respect of GCN and bats (and other species where relevant).

2.1.2 UK Habitat Classification Survey

A UK Habitat Classification (UKHabs) survey (UKHab Ltd, 2023) of the habitats within the red line boundary was undertaken on the 23rd of July 2025.

A habitat condition score for each of the habitats was completed (Pennine Ecological, 2025).

2.1.3 Badger Survey

A badger survey was undertaken to identify evidence of badger utilising the site and up to 50m from the site (if access permitted). Surveys were undertaken in accordance with 'Surveying Badgers', Harris et al., (1989) and 'Badger', Roper (2010).

2.1.4 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment and Evaluation

A daytime survey was conducted in accordance with the methodology outlined in Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn) Collins, J. Bat Conservation Trust (2023).

There are no buildings within the site's red line boundary. There were several trees within the survey area that were subject to assessment.

During the survey the surrounding habitat was evaluated in relation to bats as very often roost selection is closely correlated with the surrounding habitat.

2.1.5 Bird Survey and Evaluation

The site was assessed for its potential to support breeding birds. This included identifying any evidence of current or historic nesting within the site (i.e. within buildings, trees and hedgerows).

2.1.6 Great Crested Newt Evaluation

The site was evaluated by means of desk study and the surveyor's specialist knowledge of the species, in particular its terrestrial habits and breeding requirements. One pond was located immediately adjacent to the site. Where access permitted the ponds were subject to a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment.

The index applies ten suitability indices which are multiplied together to produce a score for each pond (Oldham *et al*, 2000). Based on the score a pond suitability for supporting GCN is applied to each pond (see Table 2.1 below).

Note: The HSI system is not sufficiently precise to conclude that any particular pond with a high score will support newts, or that any pond with a low score will not support newts.

Table 2.1: HSI scores

HSI Score	Pond Suitability
< 0.5	Poor
0.5 – 0.59	Below Average
0.6 – 0.69	Average
0.7 – 0.79	Good
> 0.8	Excellent

2.1.7 Scoping of Other Protected and Notable Species

Consideration was given to other protected and notable species potentially present within the site. The following species / species groups have been scoped out for further assessment, with reasoning provided below:

- Riparian Mammals – There are no watercourses on the site but a large pond is immediately adjacent to the site on its western boundary. There are no watercourses connecting the pond with any other waterbodies so it can be concluded with reasonable certainty that riparian mammals are unlikely to be present within the site or locally.
- Reptiles – The site comprises of predominantly other neutral grassland, tall forbs and scrub. The habitats on site are generally of limited value to reptile species being dominated by unmanaged grassland and tall ruderal. The surrounding landscape is predominantly modified grassland and urban habitats such as residential housing and there is limited connectivity to suitable reptile habitat in the wider landscape. It is concluded with reasonable certainty that reptiles are absent from the site and locally.
- Invertebrates – The site comprises of predominantly neutral grassland, tall forbs and scrub. Habitats on site are not typical of habitats which are capable of supporting notable invertebrate assemblages (Buglife, 2015). It is concluded with reasonable certainty that notable invertebrate assemblages are absent from the site.
- Other notable mammals – Whilst it is accepted that species such as brown hare and hedgehog may potentially be present, the site is not considered capable of supporting significant populations of any notable mammal species. No observations were recorded during the survey. Standard precautionary working measures would avoid impacts on individual mammals.

These species are not discussed further within this report.

2.2 SURVEYOR EXPERIENCE

The surveyor and author of this report is Stuart Macpherson. Stuart is an Associate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM) and has over 15 years' experience in ecological survey and evaluation. Key skills include the following.

Key skills include the following:

- Highly experienced in conducting Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey / UK Habitat Classification Surveys on small planning applications, large housing schemes, and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.
- Proficient field botanist.
- Highly experienced with the recently introduced Biodiversity Net Gain assessments.
- Natural England licensed bat surveyor; licence reference number 2021-10079-CL18-BAT. I was accredited under two colleagues CL18 licences from 2017.
- Named (and Accredited) Ecologist on numerous bat mitigation licences.
- Bat carer with the South Lancashire Bat Group.
- Natural England licensed barn owl surveyor, licence reference number CL29/0477.
- Committee Member of the Mid-Cheshire Barn Owl Conservation Group.
- Natural England licensed great crested newt surveyor, licence reference number 2015-16213-CLS-CLS.
- NPTC qualified tree climber (Units 206 and 306 Tree climbing and Aerial Rescue).
- I have undertaken breeding, wintering and passage bird surveys on a range of habitats including coastal and estuarine habitats, moorland, lowland heath, chalk downland and farmland.
- Mammal surveys including badger, otter and water vole.
- Ecological Evaluation and Impact Assessments in association with large scale infrastructure projects.

2.3 SURVEY CONSTRAINTS

The surveys were undertaken on 23/07/2025 in optimal weather conditions (sunny and dry weather).

3. RESULTS

3.1 RESULTS SUMMARY

- There are two statutory designated sites within the proposal site or within 2km of the site, The Blackley Forest and Alkington Woods Local Nature Reserves (LNR).
- There are no non-statutory designated sites within the proposal site or within 500m of the site.
- The proposal site is an unmanaged area of grassland with localised areas of tall ruderal and scrub. The site also includes native hedgerows and lines of trees along the northern boundary.
- The trees on site were assessed to have negligible bat roost suitability.
- No evidence of current or historic bird nesting was recorded on site. The individual trees and hedgerows provide localised bird nesting and foraging habitat.
- In addition, the pond immediately west of the site there are five ponds within 250m of the site. One pond adjacent to the site was accessed and subject to a HSI survey. The pond scored 'poor' for its suitability to support GCN.
- No evidence or sightings of other protected / notable species was recorded within the site.

3.2 HABITATS

3.2.1 UKHabs Classification Survey

The following habitats were recorded within the survey area:

- g3c Other neutral grassland
- g3c (16) Tall forbs
- h2a6 (11) Other native hedgerow (with trees)
- h3d Bramble scrub
- h3h Mixed scrub
- h3j Willow Scrub
- u1c Artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface

The site comprises an unmanaged area of grassland with localised areas of tall ruderal and scrub. The site also includes native hedgerows and lines of trees along the northern boundary. A pond, which is outside of the red line boundary was located immediately west of the site.

Habitat condition assessments (Pennine Ecological, 2025) were undertaken where applicable, with the results and brief description for each provided below.

3.2.2 Habitat Target Notes

(i) Target Note 1 – Tall forbs

Areas of tall forbs dominated the east and west boundaries of the site. The species identified were; bramble (F), knapweed, (LD), soft rush (A), nettle (O), broadleaved dock (LF), creeping thistle (LF), meadow buttercup (F), ragwort (O), goat willow (LD), yellow iris (LO), and bird's-foot trefoil (O).

(ii) Target Note 2 – Other neutral grassland

The majority of the site comprised other neutral grassland. The species identified were a continuation of the tall forbs' species list with more grassland species present, such as: meadow foxtail (F), bent fescue (F) Yorkshire fog (F), creeping buttercup (F), meadow vetchling (R), compact rush (F), clover (F), Himalayan balsam (LF), fern (LO), ash (R), horsetail (O), herb Robert (LF), selfheal (O), red clover (F), bird's-foot trefoil (LF), sow thistle (O), and bindweed (F).

(iii) Target Note 3 – Native hedgerow

A species poor native hedgerow separated the site from the adjacent residential properties along the northeastern boundary. The hedgerow was dominated by hawthorn with ash, sycamore and bramble also present.

(iv) Target note 4 – Line of trees

A line of leylandii cypress trees separated the site from the adjacent residential properties along the northwestern boundary of the site.

3.3 PROTECTED SPECIES

3.3.1 Badger

(i) Setts

The survey found no setts on site or within 50m of the site.

(ii) Foraging Signs and Pathways

No sign of badger activity was found on site or within 50m of the site. Therefore, it can be concluded that the species is not using this area for foraging or commuting.

(iii) Boundary Search

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

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

3.3.2 Bats

(i) Preliminary Roost Assessment

There are no trees within the application boundary with bat roost suitability.

(ii) Bat Habitat Suitability

The site provides suitable foraging and commuting habitat for bats, with the presence of hedgerows, scrub, and neutral grassland within the application site as well as a pond adjacent to the site boundary which is likely to provide good climatic conditions for invertebrates.

The habitats associated with the site and locally are considered to be of moderate suitability for bats.

Overall, the habitat associated with the site is considered to be of **'moderate'** suitability for bats (refer to Figure 3.1 below).

Figure 3-1: Extract taken from Collins, BCT (2023); Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition)

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 ^a 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 ^a 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.

^a Negligible is defined as 'so small or unimportant as to be not worth considering, insignificant'. This category may be used where there are places that a bat could roost or forage (due to one attribute) but it is unlikely that they actually would (due to another attribute).

^b For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance.

^c 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.*, 2016 and Jansen *et al.*, 2022). Common pipistrelle swarming has been observed in the UK (Bell, 2022 and Tomlinson, 2020) and winter hibernation of numbers of this species has been detected at Seaton Delaval Hall in Northumberland (National Trust, 2018). 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 prominent buildings in the landscape, urban or otherwise.

3.3.3 Birds

No evidence of bird nesting was recorded during the survey.

Bird activity within the site and locally was moderate with the following bird species heard or seen within or adjacent to the site. Where applicable, bird species are coloured coded based on their UK conservation status¹:

Greenfinch, chaffinch, greenfinch, wren, blackbird, robin, Canada geese, blue tit, and swallow.

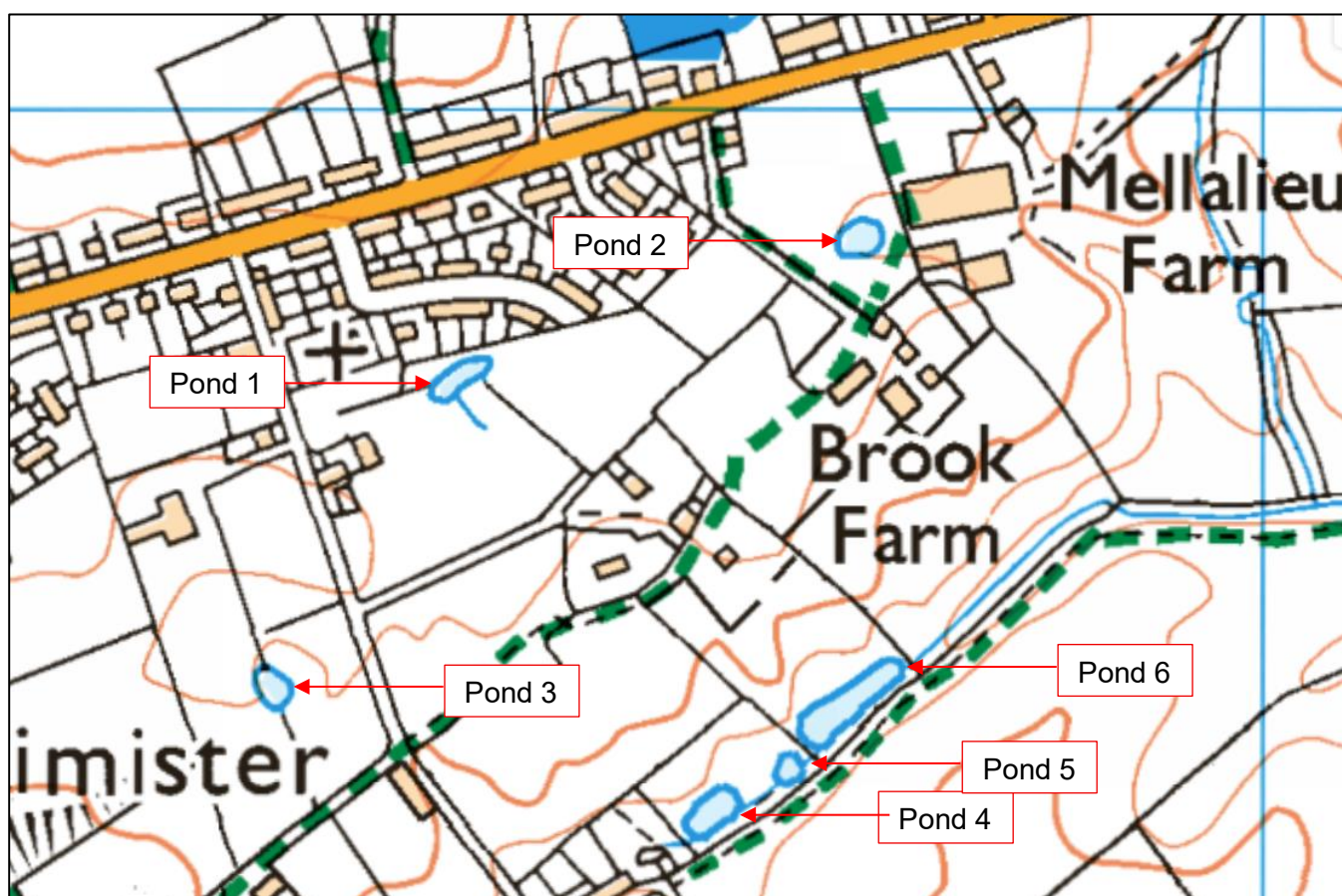
The site and immediate surrounds provide good nesting opportunities for typical garden and farmland birds with the presence of hedgerows and scrub.

Overall, the habitat associated with the site is considered to be of moderate suitability for birds.

3.3.4 Great Crested Newts

(i) Pond Scoping

There are five ponds in addition to the pond immediately west of the site within 250m (Figure 3.2). Pond 1 is located immediately adjacent to the western boundary of the site. Access was not possible for the other five ponds within 250m of the site.



Pond 1 appears to be a disused fishpond located to the rear of several adjacent properties. The pond is stocked with fish as was recorded by PENNINE ecological during the survey. The pond is approximately 60m x 45m at its largest. The surrounding habitat is a combination of amenity landscaped garden, shrubs, and hedgerow with trees. A HSI survey was undertaken for Pond 1 and the details are provided below.

¹ Birds of Conservation Concern 5 (2021) – Red, amber, green status.

(ii) HSI Score

The results of the HSI survey for Pond 1 are provided in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: HSI Survey Result

Pond Ref / Grid Ref	Pond 1
Suitability Index Description	SD 83523 05838
Geographic location	1.00
Pond area	0.80
Pond permanence	0.90
Water quality	0.33
Shade	1.00
Water fowl effect	0.01
Fish presence	0.01
Pond density	1.00
Terrestrial habitat	1.00
Macrophyte cover	0.30
HSI SCORE	0.31
POND SUITABILITY	Poor

4. ECOLOGICAL EVALUATION

The following section discusses the significance of the survey findings. It should be noted that this part of the evaluation relates to habitats and species and includes reference to the following statutory/non-statutory instruments.

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and later amendments), with particular reference to protected species listed in Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the above act.
- Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.
- Section 41 Habitats and Species of Principal Importance in England. Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.
- Reference to any relevant Red Data List/Book species and Nationally Scarce species not covered by the above or any other lists / schedules of species rarity or importance.

The evaluation is based on the commissioned surveys and desk study only.

The following statements are relevant in respect of the above.

4.1 DESK STUDY

4.1.1 Statutory Sites

There are two internationally or nationally statutory designated sites within the site boundary or within 2km of the site; Blackley Forest and Alkrington Woods Local Nature Reserves (LNR) both lie on the edge of the 2km buffer surrounding the site.

The Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zones² (IRZ's) has been reviewed (see Figure 4.1 below). It is considered that the proposal site does not match any of the descriptions outlined in the IRZ.

Figure 4-1: IRZ summary for land at Mount Pleasant, Simister.

	Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest For local planning authorities to determine if a proposed development is likely to affect a terrestrial Site of Special Scientific Interest and when to consult Natural England.
Does the proposed development match any of the descriptions below?	
• Infrastructure: Airports, helipads and other aviation proposals. • Air Pollution: Any industrial/agricultural development that could cause AIR POLLUTION (including: industrial processes, livestock & poultry units with a floorspace > 500m², slurry lagoons > 750m² & manure stores > 3500 tonnes). • Combustion: General combustion processes >50MW energy input. Including: energy from waste incineration, other incineration, landfill gas generation plant, pyrolysis/gasification, anaerobic digestion, sewage treatment works, other incineration/combustion.	

² The Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) are a GIS tool developed by Natural England to make an initial assessment of the likely risk of impacts on SSSIs posed by developments.

4.1.2 Biological Heritage Sites / Non-statutory Sites

There are no known non-statutory designated sites within the site boundary or within 500m of the site.

There are no direct/indirect impacts to the designated sites anticipated from the development proposals.

4.1.3 Section 41 NERC Act 2006 Habitats and Species

There are no confirmed S41 habitats or species within the survey area.

4.2 HABITATS

The existing habitats on site are of very low to medium distinctiveness (in accordance with the BNG metric calculation tool). The majority of the site comprises g3c other neutral grassland. The site does not appear to have been managed for at least six years. There was some disturbance caused to the habitats as a result of the newly constructed property to the south of the site. In this time the grassland has started to transition into a more species diverse grassland with approximately 20% - 30% forb and sedge coverage.

Areas of dense bramble scrub (h3d) are located around the perimeters of the fields.

The remaining habitats within the site are urban habitats; u1c Artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface.

Based on the size and condition of the habitats on site, the value of the current sites habitats cannot exceed 'site' ecological value.

Due to the scale and nature of the proposals, impacts are not anticipated beyond the land directly affected by the proposals.

4.3 PROTECTED SPECIES

4.3.1 Badger

No evidence of badger activity was found within the site or the wider area during the survey.

It is concluded that badger are absent on site and locally.

4.3.2 Bats

The building and trees on site were found to have no bat roost potential.

The sites habitats are considered to be of 'moderate' suitability for bats. The scrub, hedgerow and tree line edges provide suitable commuting corridors around the site and into the wider landscape. The presence of scrub and the waterbody in proximity to the site will likely provide good climatic conditions for invertebrates, a valuable food source for bats.

Based on the size of the site and habitats present within the site, the value of the site for bats does not exceed 'site' ecological value.

Due to the scale and nature of the proposals, impacts to bats are not anticipated to extend beyond the land directly affected by the proposals.

4.3.3 Birds

No evidence of current or historic bird nesting was recorded on site. The areas of dense scrub, hedgerows and trees provide localised opportunities for common and widespread garden birds. Based on the sites size and habitats present, the value of the site for breeding birds does not exceed 'site' ecological value.

Due to the scale and nature of the proposals, impacts are not anticipated to extend beyond the land directly affected by the proposals.

4.3.4 Great Crested Newts (and other amphibians)

There are five ponds within 250m of the site. The pond located immediately west of the site was seen to have carp within it on the day of survey. It is well known that carp will prey upon any amphibians.

Reviewing aerial imagery Pond 2 appears to have completely vegetated over and may well have works undertaken on it as the northern bank seems to have been reprofiled by machinery.

Pond 3 is heavily shaded by overhanging trees which likely inhibits the development of an great crested newt eggs / larvae.

Ponds 4, 5 and 6 are likely stocked fishing ponds or at least historic fishing ponds. PENNINE ecological have surveyed within the locality of these ponds and fish were recorded within them, as were heron and wildfowl. The presence of fish and birds decreases the likelihood that amphibians are present. Should they be present the surrounding habitat is optimal terrestrial habitat for amphibians and its is known that if available, amphibians will not forage further than 100m of a pond that have bred in. The surrounding habitat acts as a terrestrial sponge.

Based on the ecological assessment above, and using professional judgement, it can be assumed that GCN are absent from the site and locally.



5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section outlines any mitigation or precautions required in respect of the survey findings.

5.1 DESK STUDY

5.1.1 Statutory Sites

No further assessments or precautions are required.

5.1.2 Non-Statutory Sites

No further assessments or precautions are required.

5.2 HABITATS

Appropriate habitat enhancement and creation measures will be required to compensate the loss of any habitat which is of low distinctiveness or higher. The compensation measures will need to ensure there is a measurable 10% net gain overall.

It is recommended that a Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation is completed to support this application.

The metric will need to consider impacts on habitats, hedgerows and the watercourse.

5.3 PROTECTED SPECIES

5.3.1 Badger

There are no requirements for any further surveys or assessment.

5.3.2 Bats

There are no requirements for any further surveys or assessment

5.3.3 Birds

No strategic bird surveys are required.

Any removal of suitable nesting habitat (i.e. scrub and individual trees) should take place outside of the breeding season, i.e., between September 1st and February 28th. Following the removal, any piles of brash should be removed from the site, failure to do so could provide potential nest sites if left in situ until the following breeding season.

If the vegetation removal is envisaged during the breeding season, prior to removal, checks should be made immediately prior to any clearance by a suitably experienced ecologist to establish any nesting or breeding activity. Should it be identified that birds are nesting or breeding then works should be paused until the young have naturally fledged the nest.

5.3.4 Great Crested Newts

There are no requirements for further surveys. The following outlines the RAMs that will ensure that GCN, if present, or its habitat are not adversely affected during the proposed development.

Method: Ecological Clerk of Works and 'Toolbox Talk'

Rationale and Prescriptions:

- Prior to construction, a 'Toolbox Talk' will be provided by a great crested newt licensed ecologist to those involved in the construction, making all aware of the potential presence of great crest newt(s) and their legal status as a UK and European Protected Species (great crested newt are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017).

Method: Storage of building materials (including waste materials)

Rationale and Prescriptions:

- Great crested may utilise stored building materials as part of their terrestrial habitat.
- All building materials must be stored on pallets or in bags.
- All waste materials must be immediately removed from site and/or stored as described above.

Method: Excavations

Rationale and Prescriptions:

- If left overnight any holes / excavations etc. must be securely covered as such not to allow GCN or other amphibians to fall into them and not be able to escape.
- If it is not possible to securely cover any holes / excavations etc. then amphibian 'escape route' ramps must be implemented that would allow egress from such features e.g., a wooden board placed at approximately 45° from the base of the trench to the ground level.
- Before infilling excavations, checks for GCN and other amphibians must be made.

Method: Procedures in the event of amphibians being found during the development.

Rationale and Prescriptions:

- If GCN are found during the development, work must stop, and the ecologist called for advice on how the development can proceed without offence.
- In the unlikely event a significant population of GCN be found during the works then a EPSL will be required from Natural England before the works can proceed.
- Any other amphibian species found during the development will be removed from the site and placed in suitable habitat.

REFERENCES

- Buglife (2015) *Good planning practice for invertebrates: information sheets on surveys and mitigation*
- CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn) Bat Conservation Trust.*
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2024). *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide Date: July 2024*
- Harris, S., Creswell, P. & Jefferies, D. (1989) *Surveying Badgers*. The Mammal Society
- Pennine Ecological (2025) *Land at Hand Lane, Mawdesley - Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments* 23.07.24.
- Roper, T. J. (2010) *Badger*. New Naturalist Library – Collins.
- UKHab Ltd (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* (at <https://www.ukhab.org>)

Online References

- Joint Nature Conservancy Council - DEFRA (2006) Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 – Habitats and Species of Principal Importance in England. DEFRA/Natural England - <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/uk-bap-priority-habitats/> latest access 05/08/2025.
- Google Earth. Accessed various dates. Latest access 05/08/2025.
- Bury Metropolitan Borough Council Website – Search Planning applications. Accessed various dates. <https://planning.bury.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple&searchType=Application> Latest access 05/08/2025
- Natural England – MAGIC. Accessed various dates. <http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx> Latest access 05/08/2025

Appendix A - Figure

Figure 1 – UKhabs Baseline Map.



Appendix B – Site Photographs



Photograph 1: View of the bramble scrub and tall forbs in the eastern area of the site.



Photograph 2: View of the tall forbs in the southeastern corner of the site.



Photograph 3: View of the artificial substrate along the southern boundary.



Photograph 4: View of the individual silver birch along the hawthorn hedgerow on the northeastern boundary.



Photograph 5: View of the line of leylandii cypress along the northwestern boundary.



Photograph 6: View along the overgrown track along the centre of the northern boundary.



Photograph 7: View of the neutral; grassland comprising the majority of the site.



Photograph 8: View of the western area of the site.



Photograph 9: View of the willow scrub in the northwestern area of the site.



Photograph 10: View of Pond 1, which was subject to an HSI assessment.