

The Works, 49 Bury Road, Radcliffe M26 2UT

DAYTIME LICENSED BAT SURVEY AND ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Including a Statement in Relation to the Biodiversity Net Gain Condition

September 2024

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Document Control

Survey Type:	Surveyors ¹	Survey Date(s)
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Reporting	Personnel	Date
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Signature(s)		
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SUMMARY

Introduction and Scope

- i. This daytime licensed bat survey and ecological and assessment has been prepared for The Works, 49 Bury Road, Radcliffe M26 2UT. The assessment was requested to inform a planning application proposing the demolition of the dilapidated buildings and the construction of a new workshop.
- ii. This report presents the results of a desktop study, an extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and a licensed daytime bat survey and assessment carried out in June 2024. The survey was carried out by an appropriately licensed, qualified and experienced ecologist and is in accordance with standard, recognised survey guidelines. The scope of survey undertaken is appropriate to identify potential ecological constraints, the remit of mitigation required and opportunities for biodiversity associated with the redevelopment proposals.

Results of Survey and Assessment

- iii. The site is located on the west side of Bury Road and comprises a dilapidated workshop building with a lean-to and associated hard-standing.
- iv. The proposals will have no adverse direct or indirect effect on statutory or non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation.
- v. No Priority Habitat, semi-natural or irreplaceable habitat will be affected by the proposals. No invasive plant species, as listed on Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended), were detected.
- vi. No evidence of the current or previous use of the buildings by roosting bats was detected. The main workshop building is assessed to be of 'negligible' suitability for use by roosting bats at all times of year and the lean-to has a suitability of 'none' in accordance with *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn)* (Collins, J. (ed), 2023). No further surveys for roosting bats are required to inform the planning application.
- vii. Appropriate and proportionate survey effort and / or assessment, in accordance with standard survey guidelines, has been applied to discount adverse effects on other relevant protected species. No further surveys for other protected species are required to inform a planning application.
- viii. In consideration of the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) condition, due to the conditions at the site the baseline score is '0'. The site therefore meets the *de minimis* exemption in relation to statutory BNG (refer to **Section 5.2**). Guidance in relation to satisfying the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in relation to securing other benefits for biodiversity is described in **Section 5.2**.

Recommendations and Conclusion

- ix. This ecological survey and assessment has demonstrated that the redevelopment proposals are feasible and acceptable in accordance with ecological considerations and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- x. In the presence of the mandatory actions and best practice measures described in **Section 5.0**, adverse effects on protected species are reasonably discounted. The proposals will have no impact on designated sites for nature conservation or other ecologically valuable habitats.
- xi. This report demonstrates that the proposals meet the exemption criteria in consideration of statutory 10% biodiversity net gain. The recommendations in **Section 5.2** aim to secure measurable gains for biodiversity to satisfy the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and best practice.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Rationale

- 1.1.1 ERAP (Consultant Ecologists) Ltd was commissioned to carry out an ecological assessment of The Works, 49 Bury Road, Radcliffe M26 2UT (hereafter referred to as the 'site'). The Ordnance Survey (OS) grid reference at the centre of the site is SD 78877 07700. An aerial image of the site and its surrounding habitats is appended at **Figure 1** (source image: ESRI World Imagery).
- 1.1.2 The assessment was requested to inform a planning application proposing the demolition of the dilapidated buildings and the construction of a new workshop.

1.2 Scope of Works

- 1.2.1 The scope of ecological works undertaken in June 2024 comprised:
- a. A desktop study for known ecological information at the site and the local area;
 - b. An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and assessment, and assessment of the habitats present at the site using the UK Habitats Classification;
 - c. Assessment of the ecological value of the habitats within the site with the use of the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) and the Ratcliffe criteria, as presented in *A Nature Conservation Review* (Ratcliffe, 1977);
 - d. A daytime bat walkover survey for bats, which has comprised a licensed preliminary roost assessment of the buildings (there are no trees at the site);
 - e. Survey and assessment of all habitats for relevant statutorily protected species¹ and other wildlife including badger (*Meles meles*), bird species and barn owl (*Tyto alba*) and reptiles;
 - f. The identification of any potential ecological constraints on the proposals and the specification of the scope of mitigation and ecological enhancement required in accordance with wildlife legislation, planning policy guidance and other relevant guidance; and
 - g. The identification of any further surveys or precautionary actions that may be required to inform the progression of the site through the planning process or prior to the commencement of construction activities.

¹ In accordance with Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and Their Impact on the Planning System (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2005) developers should not be required to undertake surveys for protected species unless there is reasonable likelihood of the species being present and affected by the development. In this instance (for example) there are no water bodies or water courses within or adjacent to the site; there has been no requirement to consider water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*), otter (*Lutra lutra*) or other riparian fauna as part of this assessment. There are no ponds within the site and no ponds are located within an unobstructed 500 metres radius of the site (the site is bordered by existing built development on wall sites; the need to consider great crested newt and other amphibian species as part of the assessment for this planning application is reasonably discounted).

2.0 METHOD OF SURVEY

2.1 Desktop Study and Data Search

2.1.1 The following sources of information and ecological records were consulted:

- a. MAGiC Maps: A web-based interactive map which brings together geographic information on key environmental schemes and designations, including details of statutory nature conservation sites;
- b. Ancient Tree Inventory (Woodland Trust, 2024): An online database of ancient and veteran trees; and
- c. Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

2.2 Survey Date, Surveyor and Conditions

2.2.1 The scope of survey described below was carried out by Victoria Burrows B.Sc. (Hons) M.Sc. CEnv MCIEEM on 19th June 2024. The weather conditions were dry and sunny with a light air (Beaufort scale 1) and an air temperature of 18°C.

2.3 Vegetation and Habitats

- 2.3.1 A habitat and vegetation map was produced for the site and the immediate surrounding area and is appended at **Figure 2**. The mapping is based on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee Phase 1 Habitat Survey methodology (JNCC, 2010) with minor adjustments to illustrate and examine the habitats with greater precision.
- 2.3.2 The plant species within the site boundary were determined with estimates of the distribution, ground cover, abundance and constancy of individual species. The estimation of abundance was based on the DAFOR system, where D = Dominant, A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional and R = Rare, this being a widely used and accepted system employed by ecological surveyors. The terms L = Locally and V = Very were additionally used to describe the plant species distributions with greater precision.
- 2.3.3 Where appropriate the stands of vegetation and habitats were described and evaluated using the National Vegetation Classification (NVC). The NVC provides a systematic and comprehensive analysis of British vegetation and is a reliable framework for nature conservation and land-use planning.
- 2.3.4 Habitats within the site were assessed in accordance with *The UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* (UKHab Ltd, 2023). The UK Habitat Classification, or 'UKHab' has been designed to function at two scales of minimum mappable unit (MMU): fine scale (25m² or 5 metres length) and large scale (400m² or 20 metres length). It has been considered for the purposes of this survey that the fine scale of 25m² or 5 metres length MMU is appropriate.
- 2.3.5 Searches were made for uncommon, rare and statutorily protected plant species, those species listed as protected in the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) and species which are indicators of important and uncommon plant communities. Plant nomenclature follows *New Flora of the British Isles 3rd Edition* (Stace, 2010).

- 2.3.6 Searches were carried out for the presence of invasive species, including those listed on Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended), including Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Indian Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*).

2.4 Daytime Bat Walkover Survey and Assessment

Surveyor and Guidelines

- 2.4.1 The daytime bat walkover survey and assessment was carried out by Victoria Burrows (Natural England Class Survey Licence WML CL18 (Bat Survey Level 2), Registration Number 2015-10390-CLS-CLS). Victoria's qualifications and experience meet the criteria as defined in the *Technical Guidance Series Competencies for Species Survey: Bats* (CIEEM, 2013).
- 2.4.2 The survey was carried out in accordance with standard methodology including the *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* (Mitchell-Jones, 2004), the *Bat Workers' Manual 3rd Edition* (Mitchell-Jones & Mcleish, 2004) and *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn)* (Collins, J. (ed), 2023). Habitat Assessment for Commuting / Foraging Bats
- 2.4.3 Habitats within and adjacent to the site were assessed for their value and suitability for commuting and foraging bats in accordance with Table 4.1 of *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn)* (Collins, J. (ed), 2023). Reference has been made to the categories and descriptions / examples, presented below.

Table 2.1: Guidelines for Assessing the Potential Suitability of Proposed Development Site for Bats

Potential Suitability	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 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 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 features on site likely to be used by 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 and / or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by large numbers 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).	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 a small number of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.

Potential Suitability	Roosting Habitats in Structures	Potential Flight Paths and Foraging Habitats
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such a 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 and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts (e.g. maternity or class 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 could be used regularly by foraging bats such as broad-leaved 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 use to roost or forage (due to one attribute) but it is unlikely that they actually would (due to another attribute).		

Preliminary Roost Assessment: Buildings

- 2.4.4 A systematic inspection and assessment of the external surfaces and walls of the buildings was carried out to search for potential bat roosting habitat or accesses into crevices or areas where roosts may be present. Searches for evidence of bat presence in the form of droppings, urine stains, feeding signs, grease marks and other evidence were carried out.
- 2.4.5 Where required and where it was safe to do so, ladders were used to gain closer inspections of specific features at the external elevations of the buildings.
- 2.4.6 The internal areas of the garage was searched for roosting bats and / or evidence of previous use by bats such as droppings and prey remains.
- 2.4.7 The suitability of the buildings for use by roosting bats has been assessed in accordance with Table 4.1 of *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn)* (Collins, J. (ed), 2023) (reproduced at **Table 2.1**), taking into account the presence of any gaps suitable for access by bats, features suitable for use by roosting bats within the building (including crevice dwelling species and species which can roost in the open in roof voids), and the suitability of the surrounding habitats for use by foraging and commuting bats.

Equipment

- 2.4.8 A list of equipment used / available for use during the surveys is provided below.

Table 2.2: Survey Equipment Used / Available for Use During Daylight Bat Survey

Ladders and stepladders
LED Lenser P14 torch
Canon Ixus digital camera
8x20 binoculars
Ridgid Micro Inspection Camera Endoscope CA-300

2.5 Other Protected Species and Animal Life

Badger

- 2.5.1 The survey area for badger covered the site only (as annotated on **Figure 2**). The Metrolink line to the east of the site was excluded from the survey.
- 2.5.2 The survey was conducted in accordance with guidance presented within *Badgers and Development* (Natural England, 2007) and *Badgers: advice for making planning decisions* (Natural England, 2022).
- 2.5.3 The following signs of badger activity were searched for:
- Sett entrances, e.g. entrances that are normally 25 to 35cm in diameter and shaped like a 'D' on its side;
 - Large spoil heaps outside sett entrances;
 - Bedding outside sett entrances;
 - Badger footprints;
 - Badger paths;
 - Latrines;
 - Badger hairs on fences or bushes;
 - Scratching posts; and
 - Signs of digging for food.
- 2.5.4 Habitats within and surrounding the site were assessed in terms of their suitability for use by foraging and sheltering badger in accordance with their known habitat preferences as detailed in current guidance and *Badger* (Roper, 2010).

Bird Species

- 2.5.5 Bird species observed and heard during the survey were recorded.
- 2.5.6 The buildings were searched for evidence of previous use by nesting birds and the buildings were assessed for their suitability for use by nesting birds including barn owl in accordance with the guidance outlined in *The Barn Owl Conservation Handbook* (Barn Owl Trust, 2012) and *Barn Owl Tyto alba Survey Methodology and Techniques for use in Ecological Assessment. Developing Best Practice in Survey and Reporting* (Shawyer, 2011).
- 2.5.7 Habitats throughout the site and in the immediate surrounding area were assessed for their value to roosting, feeding and nesting birds.

Reptile Species

- 2.5.8 The site and its surroundings were assessed in terms of their suitability for use by reptile species using the important characteristics for reptiles outlined in the draft document *Reptile Mitigation Guidelines* (Natural England, 2011), and the *Reptile Habitat Management Handbook* (Edgar, et al., 2010). These habitat characteristics are outlined in **Table 2.3**.

Table 2.3: Important Habitat Characteristics for Reptiles

1. Location (in relation to species range)	7. Connectivity to nearby good quality habitat
2. Vegetation Structure	8. Prey abundance
3. Insolation	9. Refuge opportunity
4. Aspect	10. Hibernation habitat potential
5. Topography	11. Disturbance regime
6. Surface geology	12. Egg-laying site potential

2.6 Survey and Reporting Limitations

- 2.6.1 Access to inspect the north-facing pitch of the roof on the workshop was not possible owing to the presence of other buildings. Due to the conditions present elsewhere at the building, the habitats bordering the site and the presence of the other buildings which cover the eaves (and therefore obstruct any potential roost features) this is not considered to be a significant survey limitation.
- 2.6.2 No other limitations on the intended scope of survey were identified or experienced.
- 2.6.3 All measurements within this report are approximate only, and have been either estimated whilst on site or calculated using mapping software (QGIS) or internet-based mapping services such as MAGIC Maps and Google Earth.

2.7 Evaluation Methods

- 2.7.1 The habitats, vegetation and animal life were evaluated with reference to standard nature conservation criteria as described in *A Nature Conservation Review* (Ratcliffe, 1977). These are size (extent), diversity, naturalness, rarity, fragility, typicality, recorded history, position in an ecological or geographical unit, potential value and intrinsic appeal.
- 2.7.2 Habitats have been assessed to determine whether they meet those described in *UK Biodiversity Action Plan: Priority Habitat Descriptions* (Maddock, A (ed), 2008); these lists are used to help draw up the statutory lists of Priority Habitats, as required under Section 41 of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006*. Where suitable, the ecological value of the habitats present has been assessed using the terms outlined in *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine* (CIEEM, 2018). Each habitat and individual trees have been assessed to determine whether they are 'irreplaceable habitat', defined in *National Planning Policy Framework* (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2023)² as 'Habitats which would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. They include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, blanket bog, limestone pavement, sand dunes, salt marsh and lowland fen'. The

²Hereafter the NPPF

further detail presented in *The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024* (GOV.UK, 2023) draft document has also been referred to.

- 2.7.3 Government advice on wildlife, as set out in the NPPF and associated government circulars has been taken into consideration. Legislation relating to protected species, such as those listed under Schedules 1, 5, 6 and 8 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) and *The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*, is referenced where applicable, and any impacts to protected species are evaluated in accordance with current guidance.
- 2.7.4 The presence of any Priority Species, as listed under Section 41 of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006* is noted, and habitats are assessed in terms of their suitability and value for these species. The presence of habitats and / or species listed by the Lancashire BAP has been taken into account in the evaluation of the site.

3.0 SURVEY RESULTS

3.1 Desktop Study and Data Search

Statutory Designated Sites for Nature Conservation and SSSI Impact Risk Zones

- 3.1.1 The site and adjacent land have no statutory designation for nature conservation.
- 3.1.2 The site lies within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone for:
 - a. Ashclough SSSI which is located 2.6 kilometres to the west and is designated for its geological interest; and
 - b. Rochdale Canal Special Area of conservation (SAC) and SSSI located 9.4 kilometres to the east and designated for its aquatic plant diversity including the presence of Floating Water-plantain (*Luronium natans*), a nationally scarce plant and European protected species.
- 3.1.3 The SSSI Impact Risk Zone requires the Local Planning Authority to consult with Natural England on likely risks from the following development categories (Ordnance Survey, 2024):
 - a. Airports, helipads and other aviation proposals.
 - b. Planning applications for quarries, including: new proposals, Review of Minerals Permissions, extensions, variations to conditions etc. Oil and gas exploration / extraction.
 - c. Livestock and poultry units with floorspace greater than 500m², slurry lagoons and digestate stores greater than 750m², manure stores greater than 3500 tonnes.
 - d. General combustion processes greater than 50MW energy input. Including: energy from waste incineration, other incineration, landfill gas generation plant, pyrolysis / gasification, anaerobic digestion, sewage treatment works, other incineration / combustion.
- 3.1.4 The proposals do not meet any of the development categories which would require further consultation with Natural England on likely risks from the proposed development to the statutory designated sites for nature conservation present in the wider area.

Non-statutory Designated Sites for Nature Conservation

- 3.1.5 The site and adjacent land have no non-statutory designation for nature conservation, called Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) in Greater Manchester.
- 3.1.6 The nearest SBI is the Wetland near Radcliffe SBI located 129 metres to the west and on the opposite side of the Metrolink line.

Priority Habitats Inventory

- 3.1.7 The Priority Habitats Inventory³ was checked via MAGiC Maps. No Priority Habitats are identified at or adjacent to the site by the inventory.

Ancient Tree Inventory

- 3.1.8 No ancient or veteran trees are identified at the site by the inventory.

3.2 Vegetation and Habitats

General Description

- 3.2.1 The 0.03ha site is located on the western side of Bury Road and comprises a dilapidated workshop building with a lean-to. The buildings are bordered by hard-standing. Land in the wider area (off-site) is occupied by other buildings. The Metrolink line lies 21 metres to the west.
- 3.2.2 A Phase 1 Habitat Survey map is appended **Figure 2**. Photographs are appended in **Table 8.1**.

Buildings

- 3.2.3 The buildings (workshop and lean-to) are described in relation to their suitability for use by roosting bats in **Section 3.3**.
- 3.2.4 The buildings are typically devoid of vegetation with the exception of occasional plants of Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) and Butterfly-bush (*Buddleia davidii*) saplings growing out of the gutter at the workshop.
- 3.2.5 The buildings are described by the UKHab as u1b5 buildings.

Hard-standing

- 3.2.6 Refer to **Photo 1**. Hard-standing is present around the curtilage of the buildings. Gaps in the hard-standing and areas at the base of the perimeter walls of the buildings supports a sparse plants of ruderal herbs such as occasional Annual Meadow-grass (*Poa annua*), Greater Plantain (*Plantago major*), Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), Wavy Bittercress (*Cardamine flexuosa*) and Common Mouse-ear (*Cerastium fontanum*). The cover of vegetation is less than 5%.
- 3.2.7 The hard-standing is described by the UKHab as u1b developed land; sealed surface.

³ A spatial dataset that describes the geographic extent and location of Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) Section 41 habitats of principal importance.

Invasive Plant Species

- 3.2.8 No Japanese Knotweed or other invasive plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) was detected at the site.

3.3 Daytime Bat Walkover Survey and Assessment

Habitat Assessment for Commuting and Foraging Bats

- 3.3.1 The buildings and hard-standing within the site which is located on a busy, artificially lit road are assessed to be of 'negligible' suitability for the attraction of foraging bats. The vegetation corridor along the Metrolink line (21 metres to the west of the site) is assessed to provide a linear corridor that is of 'moderate' suitability for use by foraging and commuting bats.

Daytime Survey: Buildings

Workshop

- 3.3.2 Refer to **Photos 2 to 10**. The workshop is a single storey brick and concrete block building with a pitched roof. The roof is covered with concrete tiles at the northern pitch and slates are present at the southern pitch.
- 3.3.3 No gaps suitable for bat access were found in the elevation brickwork or at the eaves. The concrete window sills and the lintels above the doorways are well-sealed with no opportunities for bat access.
- 3.3.4 Minor gaps are present at the roof verge at the west-facing gable end; however this area is covered with barbed wire which is considered to create an unsuitable condition for the attraction of bats.
- 3.3.5 The slate covered roof is in a poor condition and gaps have been infilled with expandable foam and other materials which is not consistent with a typical potential roost feature.
- 3.3.6 The internal inspection confirmed that there is no roof void and a mix of undertile felt and timber sarking beneath the slate and tile covered roof is visible from the workshop area. The sarking is in poor condition and is missing in frequent areas which has permitted rainwater ingress and has caused the creation of damp and rotten timbers. No insulation is present and the building is unheated. Skylights are present in the roof which permits daylight to illuminate the internal area. No bats, droppings or other evidence to indicate previous use of the workshop building by roosting bats was found inside the building.
- 3.3.7 Overall, the workshop is assessed to have a 'negligible' suitability for use by roosting bats.

Lean-to

- 3.3.8 Refer to **Photos 11 to 15**. The lean-to is attached to the southern elevation of the workshop and comprises a metal and timber framed structure with corrugated sheet metal elevation walls and roof. The lean-to has been damaged by water ingress and the ceiling / gutter at the point where the lean-to meets the workshop has partially collapse causing water damage to the interior.
- 3.3.9 No bats, droppings or other field signs to indicate use by roosting bats were found at the lean-to.
- 3.3.10 The lean-to is assessed to have a suitability for use by roosting bats of 'none'.

3.4 Other Protected Species and Animal Life

Badger

- 3.4.1 No setts or signs of badger were detected in the surveyed area during the survey. The hard-standing habitats at the site and immediate surroundings provide no opportunities for use by badger. The presence of badger is reasonably discounted.

Bird Species

- 3.4.2 No bird species were recorded at the site on 19th June 2024
- 3.4.3 No evidence of the current or previous use of the workshop and lean-to by nesting bird was found; no ledges or opportunities for the construction of nests are present.
- 3.4.4 To the immediate west of the workshop is an area of sparse Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) shrub. The site provides very limited opportunities for use by nesting birds and the pre-cautionary guidance at **Section 5.3** is provided in accordance with best practice.

Reptiles

- 3.4.5 The hard-standing habitats within the site are unsuitable / sub-optimal habitat for use by sheltering, basking and hibernating reptiles. The site is not adjacent to or linked to any areas of favourable habitat for reptile species in the wider area. Based on this assessment, the presence of reptiles within the site is reasonably discounted.

4.0 EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

4.1 Introduction and Description of Proposals

- 4.1.1 The proposals comprise the demolition of the workshop and the lean-to and the construction of a new workshop building.
- 4.1.2 **Section 4.2** provides an assessment of any impacts of the proposed development on the designated sites for nature conservation present in the wider area. The ecological value of habitats within the site is evaluated at **Section 4.3**, and protected and notable species are considered at **Section 4.4**.

4.2 Designated Sites for Nature Conservation

- 4.2.1 It is considered that the distance from the site, lack of hydrological connectivity and absence of supporting habitat to any statutory designated sites for nature conservation present in the wider area is such that the proposals works can be achieved with no risk of a direct or indirect effect on any statutory and non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation.

4.3 Vegetation and Habitats

- 4.3.1 None of the habitats present are representative of semi-natural habitat or are classed as irreplaceable habitat.
- 4.3.2 No rare or uncommon plant species were found at the site. No invasive plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) were detected.

- 4.3.3 In terms of each habitat's importance in a geographical context⁴ the buildings and hard-standing are not considered to hold any importance on a geographical scale.

4.4 Protected Species and Other Wildlife

Bat Species

- 4.4.1 No evidence of the current or previous use of the workshop and lean-to by roosting bats was detected during the survey.
- 4.4.2 The main workshop building is assessed to be of 'negligible' suitability for use by roosting bats at all times of year and the lean-to has a suitability of 'none' in accordance with *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn)* (Collins, J. (ed), 2023).
- 4.4.3 It is considered that appropriate and proportionate survey effort has been carried out to determine the likely absence of roosting bats at the site. No further surveys for roosting bats are required to inform the planning application.
- 4.4.4 Inappropriate use of artificial lighting around the exterior of the redeveloped site may have an adverse effect on use of the local area by foraging bats and other wildlife. Guidance to avoid a significant impact on foraging bats and to conserve and enhance habitats for use by foraging bats is provided at **Section 5.2**.

Bird Species

- 4.4.5 Mandatory and pre-cautionary measures to be applied to ensure the protection of nesting birds prior to and during the site preparation works and demolition are described at **Section 5.3** and recommendations to compensate for the minor losses and to provide enhanced opportunities for nesting birds are described at **Section 5.2**.

Other Animal Life

- 4.4.6 Appropriate and proportionate survey effort and / or assessment, in accordance with standard survey guidelines, has been applied to discount adverse effects on other relevant protected species. No further surveys for other protected species are necessary to inform a planning application.
- 4.4.7 In accordance with best practice, reasonable avoidance measures to be applied prior to the site clearance and during the construction period are outlined at **Section 5.3**.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The recommendations described below are appropriate and proportionate to the scale of the redevelopment proposals and aim to ensure that the proposals are implemented in accordance

⁴ Using the terms presented at Section 4.7 of *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine* (CIEEM, 2018), i.e. International and European, National, Regional, Local Authority-wide area, River Basin District, Estuarine system / Coastal cell or Local. The term 'site' value is additionally used to highlight ecological features considered to be of importance in the context of the wider site habitats, but which are of negligible value in the context of the local area.

with the mitigation hierarchy, relevant wildlife legislation, Natural England guidance, the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2023), local planning policy and best practice.

- 5.1.2 The recommendations aim to ensure compliance with Chapter 15, paragraph 186(d) of the NPPF which states:

‘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’.

5.2 Site Design and Enhancements for Biodiversity

Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 5.2.1 This Ecological Survey and Assessment has also collated relevant information to be able to answer the following question at Section 9 of *Application Form for Planning Permission. Town and Country Planning Act 1990*⁵:

‘Do you believe that, if the development is granted permission, the general Biodiversity Gain Condition (as set out in Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)) would apply?’

- 5.2.2 Based on the above, the habitats within the whole of the site are classed as ‘urban – developed land; sealed surface’ UKHab and BNG habitat type (refer to **Figure 2**). This habitat has a distinctiveness category of ‘V.Low’, an automatic condition assessment of ‘N/A – other’ and a score of ‘0’ habitat units in accordance with *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool* (Natural England, 2023), hereafter the ‘BNG Metric’.
- 5.2.3 No irreplaceable habitat⁶, Priority Habitat or any other habitat which holds any value under the BNG Metric is present at the site. No linear habitats, such as hedgerows, or watercourses are present.
- 5.2.4 In accordance with *The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024* (gov.uk, 2024) it is advised that the *de minimis* exemption for BNG will apply at the site in accordance with the statements given below.

De minimis exemption:

‘Development subject to the de minimis exemption. Development that does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than 25 square metres (e.g. 5m by 5m) of onsite habitat, or 5 metres of linear habitats such as hedgerows.’⁷

And:

⁵ *Application for Planning Permission. Town and Country Planning Act 1990* (GOV.UK, 2024)

⁶ As defined by *The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024* (GOV.UK, 2023)

⁷ (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain>).

*'It's worth remembering that existing sealed surfaces such as tarmac or buildings are assigned a zero score in the statutory biodiversity metric, meaning that these surfaces are effectively exempted from the 10% net gain requirement.'*⁸

- 5.2.5 For completeness, an assessment of the site in relation to the relevant conditions presented within *The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024* (gov.uk, 2024) is presented below.

Table 5.1: Assessment of the Site in Relation to the Relevant Conditions Relating to Exemption from Statutory BNG

The biodiversity gain planning condition does not apply in relation to planning permission for development which meets the first and second conditions, as set out below:	
Condition	Site Assessment
The first condition is that the development does not impact an onsite priority habitat ^A	No Priority Habitats are present within the site.
The second condition is that the development impacts: (a) Less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value ^B greater than zero; and (b) Less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat.	No habitats on site have a habitat value greater than zero. No linear habitats are present on site.
^A For the purposes of this regulation— (a) 'Priority Habitat' means a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the <i>Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006</i> ; (b) A habitat is impacted where the habitat is lost or degraded such that there is a decrease in the biodiversity value of that habitat; (c) 'Linear habitat' means the types of hedgerow habitat or watercourse habitat identified for the purposes of the biodiversity metric (which are measured by length (expressed in kilometres) rather than area)).	
^B See paragraph 3 of <i>Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990</i> for the definition of biodiversity value, which states: <i>'References to the biodiversity value of any habitat or habitat enhancement are to its value as calculated in accordance with the biodiversity metric'</i>	

- 5.2.6 Guidance in relation to satisfying the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in relation to securing other benefits for biodiversity is described below.
- 5.2.7 It is understood that the proposals meet the exemption criteria in consideration of statutory 10% biodiversity net gain. The recommendations outlined below aim to secure measurable gains for biodiversity to satisfy the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), *Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development* (CIEEM, 2016) and best practice.

Appropriate Use of Lighting

- 5.2.8 Paragraph 191(c) in Chapter 15 (conserving and enhancing the natural environment) of the NPPF states that development should:

"limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation"

⁸ <https://defraenvironment.blog.gov.uk/2024/01/22/biodiversity-net-gain-what-are-the-exemptions/>

5.2.9 It is advised that any external lighting to be installed at the site should involve the use of appropriate products and screening, where necessary, to ensure no excessive artificial lighting shines over the adjacent habitats as lighting overspill may deter use by wildlife such as foraging bats.

5.2.10 The lighting scheme should be designed with reference to current guidance, namely:

- a. *Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night* (Institution of Lighting Professionals & Bat Conservation Trust, 2023); and
- b. Bats and lighting: Overview of current evidence and mitigation guidance (Stone, 2014).

Accommodation of Opportunities for Nesting Birds: House Sparrow

5.2.11 To enhance the opportunities for use by nesting birds at the redeveloped site and to assist with the conservation of this species in the local area, the installation of two house sparrow terraces⁹ at the new building (for example beneath the eaves on the western elevation) is recommended. RSPB advice states that boxes should ideally be sited facing north to east, to avoid exposure to direct sunlight, which may cause overheating of chicks in the nest. Examples of suitable house sparrow nest boxes are presented at **Insert 1**:



Insert 1: Schwegler 1SP House Sparrow Nesting Terrace (left) and Vivara Pro WoodStone House Sparrow Box (right). Both are available from www.NHBS.com

5.3 Guidance on the Protection of Features Prior to / During Demolition and the Construction Phase

Protection of Nesting Birds

5.3.1 All wild birds are protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) while they are breeding. It is advised works such as vegetation removal and demolition that will affect habitats suitable for use by nesting birds are scheduled to commence outside the bird nesting season. Commencement of works in the nesting season must be informed by a pre-works nesting bird survey, carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist. The bird breeding season typically extends between March to August inclusive.

5.3.2 If breeding birds are detected / present it is recommended that the area is left undisturbed until it is confirmed that the young birds have fledged / the nest is no longer active. Guidance from an ecologist should be sought, as needed.

⁹ House sparrow is a Priority Species associated with suburban areas. Monitoring suggests a severe decline in the UK house sparrow population, estimated as dropping by 71 per cent between 1977 and 2008 with large falls in both rural and urban populations (RSPB, 2023).

Invasive Plant Species and Biosecurity

- 5.3.3 To ensure no invasive or undesirable plant species are introduced to the site and local area it is essential that plant and machinery to be brought to the site is clean and clear of plant material and excessive mud and other materials. Contractors must not accept any hired plant or machinery onto the site that contains plant material or excessive mud / earth cover.

Method to be Applied During Demolition / Discovery of a Bat

- 5.3.4 During the demolition it is advised that the roof slates are removed by hand. Care must be taken to check the underside of the roof slates prior to discard or stacking.
- 5.3.5 If at any time during the works a bat is discovered or suspected all contractors must withdraw from the area and ERAP (Consultant Ecologists) Ltd (01772 750502) or the Bat Conservation Trust must be contacted for further guidance.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This ecological survey and assessment has demonstrated that the redevelopment proposals are feasible and acceptable in accordance with ecological considerations and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 6.2 In the presence of the mandatory actions and best practice measures described in **Section 5.0**, adverse effects on protected species are reasonably discounted. The proposals will have no impact on designated sites for nature conservation or other ecologically valuable habitats.
- 6.3 The recommendations in **Section 5.2** aim to secure measurable gains for biodiversity to satisfy the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and best practice.

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8.0 APPENDIX 1: TABLES AND FIGURES

8.1 Photographs

Table 8.1: Photographs



Photo 1: Lean-to and workshop bordered by hard-standing (taken from Bury Road)



Photo 2: Eastern elevation of the workshop



Photo 3: Western and southern elevations and the roof of the workshop



Photo 4: South-facing roof pitch of the workshop



Photo 5: Eastern elevation of the workshop showing sealed roof verge and concrete tiles on north-facing pitch



Photo 6: Barbed wire at western gable end of workshop



Photo 7: Interior of workshop with skylights



Photo 8: Interior of workshop



Photo 9: Interior of workshop with timber sarking



Photo 10: Interior of workshop



Photo 11: Southern and eastern elevations of the lean-to



Photo 12: Eastern and southern elevations of the lean-to



Photo 13: Eastern elevation of the lean-to



Photo 14: Interior of lean-to showing roof damage



Photo 15: Interior of lean-to



Photo 16: Vegetation along the Metrolink corridor to the east (off-site)

8.2 Figures

Figure 1: Aerial Image of the Site and its Surroundings

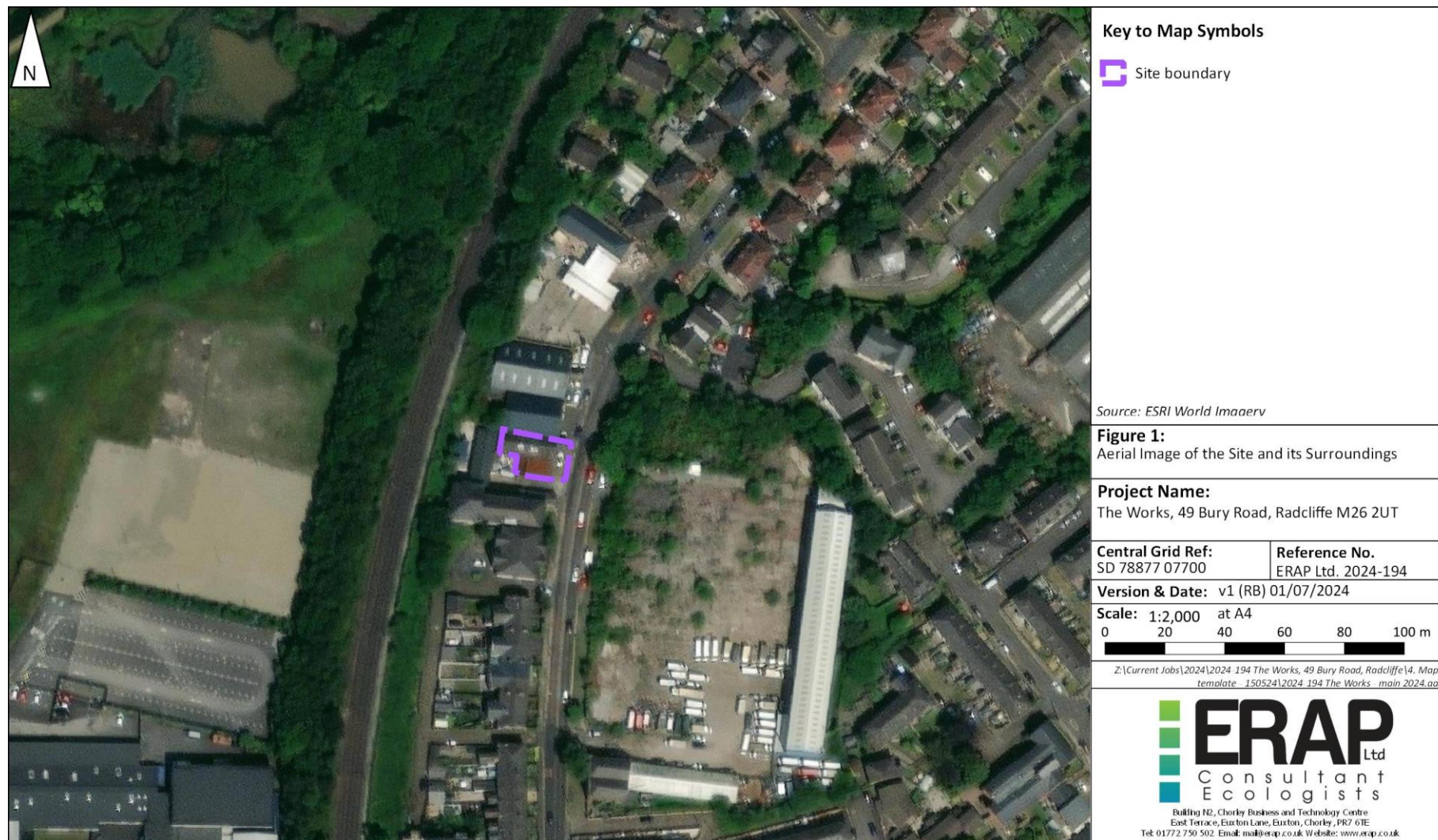


Figure 2: Phase 1 Habitat Vegetation Map of the Site

