Birkdale High School – Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Kirklees Council

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Executive Summary

Cura Terrae Land & Nature Ltd (Cura Terrae) was commissioned in April 2026, by Kirklees Council to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) for Birkdale High School located at Wheelwright Drive, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, WF13 4JB.

A PEA is a baseline audit of ecological resources within the survey area and does not provide an assessment of impacts arising from proposed works.

The PEA focused on the vacant school buildings and habitats present within the site boundary, hereafter referred to as 'the Site' and as shown in **Figure 1**.

The proposed works consist of the demolition of three vacant buildings as detailed within drawing 722062-WCL-SGN-XX-DR-S-0101 (Wilde, 2026), provided by Wilde Consulting Civil and Structural Engineers on 27th March 2026.

Habitats recorded within the Site include buildlings (u1b5), other developed land (u1b6), lowland mixed deciduous woodland (w1f), mixed scrub (h3h), bramble scrub (h3d), rhododendron scrub (h3f), modified grassland (g4), and sparsely vegetated urban land (u1f). Lowland mixed deciduous woodland is a HPI under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 and is listed as a priority habitat within the LBAP.

Designated Sites for Nature Conservation on/near Site include Lower Spen Wildlife Area Local Nature Reserve and Local Wildlife Site and Caulums Wood Quarry Local Geological Site. There is a lack of connectivity between these statutory and non-statutory sites and the Site and no direct or indirect impact pathways identified.

Table overview of results and recommendations:

Ecological Constraints	Reason	Recommendations
Habitats	Removal or degradation of priority habitat.	Consultation with the local planning authority regarding any planned loss of this habitat and the suitability of any compensatory measures. If the habitat is due to be retained, appropriate pollution prevention measures are to be implemented and root protection areas established.
Amphibians	Removal or disturbance of suitable habitat.	Works are undertaken in accordance with a Non-Licence Method Statement (NLMS) for GCN and common amphibians

Badger	Removal or disturbance of suitable sett creation habitat.	Best Practice Measures (BPM) for badger.
Bats (roosting)	Destruction of potential roosting habitat.	Dusk emergence surveys of buildings B1, B2 and B2a to be completed prior to any works.
Bats (foraging and commuting)	Removal or disturbance of suitable habitat.	Night-time bat walkover Surveys (NBWS) and static automated surveys to be completed prior to any works.
Birds	Removal or disturbance of suitable habitat for nesting birds.	Works are to be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (March to the August, inclusive). If this is not possible, the areas requiring de-vegetation and all buidlings due to be demolished should be checked for active nests by an ecologist. This should be done a maximum of 24 hours before vegetation removal work begins.
Invertebrates	Removal or disturbance of suitable habitat.	BPM for invertebrates.
Reptiles	Removal or disturbance of suitable habitat.	BPM for reptiles.
INNS	Risk of further spread during work activities.	INNS Management Plan should be prepared and implemented prior to the commencement of any works.

1. Introduction

1.1.1 Cura Terrae Land & Nature Ltd (Cura Terrae) was commissioned in April 2026 by Kirklees Council to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) (Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), 2017) for a school and the surrounding land located at Wheelwright Drive, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, WF13 4JB, hereafter referred to as 'the Site' and as annotated in **Figure 1**.

1.1.2 This report details the findings of a data consultation, habitat survey and initial protected species suitability assessment carried out in May 2026. The methodologies employed and all survey findings are described along with an evaluation and assessment of the ecological importance of habitats present within the Site and a discussion of likely protected/priority species presence. Any requirement for further survey or assessments and/or mitigation/enhancement is also detailed as required.

1.1.3 The purpose of the PEA was to record and map habitats and assess the potential for the Site to support (or contain) species protected under UK nature conservation legislation, namely the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the Habitats Regulations) and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC).

1.2 Site Location

1.2.1 The Site was approximately 2.88 ha and is located within Dewsbury, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR): SE 23422 22639. The Site extent and habitats can be viewed in **Figure 2** and Site photographs can be viewed in **Section 3.2**. The Site is located within a residential area with open green parkland, playing fields and scattered sections of woodland present throughout.

1.3 Project Scope

1.3.1 The proposed works consist of the demolition of three vacant buildings as detailed within drawing *722062-WCL-SGN-XX-DR-S-0101*, provided by Wilde Consulting Civil and Structural Engineers on 27th March 2026. No further information has been provided.

1.4 Legislation & Conservation Status

1.4.1 The primary purpose of the PEA was to identify any ecological constraints to the proposed works, including designated Sites, habitats and species protected by legislation and policy, including, but not limited to:

- The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) ("the Habitats Regulations");
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992;
- The Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006; and
- The Environment Act 2021.
- Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (the Bern Convention).
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (the Bonn Convention).
- Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC).
- Kirklees Biodiversity Action Plan.

2. Methodology

2.1 Data Consultation

2.1.1 To inform an assessment of the effects of land use change, a comprehensive desk study was undertaken; this included a search for biodiversity data to identify protected, priority or sensitive sites, habitats or species potentially affected by the proposal under consideration. Desk studies are an important component of a PEA, the first stage of identifying ecological constraints of a development proposal.

2.1.2 West Yorkshire Joint Services (WYJS) were approached in May 2026, to provide biological records from the last 10 years within 2 km of the Site. A 2 km Search Area was appropriate due to the small spatial nature of any effects arising from the proposed works.

2.1.3 The data obtained from WYJS includes records of protected and notable species, invasive non-native species (INNS) and non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation.

2.1.4 The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website[1] was consulted in June 2026 for information on statutory designated sites of nature conservation interest, including the presence of Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) to assess likely impacts to statutory designated sites as a result of the proposed development.

2.1.5 In addition, MAGIC was searched for the presence of Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) and woodland included within the Ancient Woodland Inventory.

2.1.6 MAGIC was used to identify the presence of European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences within 2 km of the Site. MAGIC was also used to search for information relating to survey licence return data within 2 km and GCN pond survey data (2017-2019) within 500 m of the Site, as well as the presence of watercourses within 30 m of the Site.

2.1.7 Natural England's (NE) and NatureSpace Partnership's GCN Risk Zone datasets were consulted to give an understanding of the potential presence of GCN in the local area and therefore the likelihood of the species being present on the Site. This dataset identifies areas where the distribution of GCN has been categorised into district zones relating to GCN occurrence and the level of impact development is likely to have on this species. These zones are split into Red, Amber, and Green.

[1] http://magic.defra.gov.uk

2.1.8 Information obtained from WYJS, MAGIC, and NE is included within the report where appropriate.

2.1.9 Table 1 summarises the search radii used in the desk study.

Table 1: Desk study radii

Feature	Search Radius
International sites (e.g. SAC)	5 km
National sites (e.g. SSSI)	2 km
Non-statutory sites	2 km
HPI	2 km
EPS mitigation licences	2 km
GCN licence returns & pond data	500 m
GCN risk zones	500 m
Species records	2 km

2.2 Ecological Walkover Survey

2.2.1 The Site was surveyed on the 6th of May 2026 by experienced ecologist Daniel Heaton BSc (Hons) and Joshua Lesser BSc (Hons) MSc, following good practice guidance for habitat mapping: the UK Habitat Classification System (UKHab 2.0) (UKHab Ltd., 2023). This survey method aims to define the habitat types present and is not intended to provide a complete list of all plants occurring across the Site.

2.2.2 The UKHab survey covered land within the Site as illustrated by the red line boundary in **Figure 2**.

2.2.3 Habitats and vegetation types present inside the Site were recorded and mapped using primary codes. Where possible, notable, rare or scarce plant species, including other features of ecological interest, were highlighted and marked using Target Notes (TN) and are presented in **Figure 1**. The current management of habitats and associated features were noted and assigned UKHab secondary codes where relevant. Secondary codes are denoted in square brackets e.g. [32 - Scattered trees] within the report and **Figure 2**.

2.2.4 Evidence of protected species, species of nature conservation importance and INNS were recorded where present at the time of survey. Habitats present that are listed as Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 or as priority habitats in the Kirklees Biodiversity Action Plan; were also noted.

2.2.5 Survey findings and TN are detailed in **Section 3** and annotated on **Figure 1 and 2**, with details of TN provided in **Appendix 1**.

2.2.6 In line with the CIEEM PEA Guidelines, a determination of whether habitats within the Site are considered 'important' in ecological terms and whether protected species may be present within the Site is provided within Section 3.

2.3 Protected and Key Species

2.3.1 Any evidence of protected species or groups encountered during the survey was recorded. These included observations of field signs and an assessment of the suitability of the habitats present to support protected species.

Amphibians including GCN

2.3.2 A desk-based search for waterbodies within 500 m of the Site, which are not separated by a significant barrier to amphibian dispersal (such as a major road or watercourse), were searched for using 1:10,000 OS mapping.

2.3.3 As garden ponds within residential properties are often absent from OS map sources, aerial photography was also used to search for additional ponds[2].

2.3.4 Habitats within the Site were assessed for their suitability to support amphibians during their terrestrial and aquatic stages. The connectivity of any suitable habitat within the Site to other habitat within the surrounding area was assessed during the Site visit and through visual analysis of aerial imagery.

Badger

2.3.5 Signs of badger *Meles meles* activity were searched for within the Site.

2.3.6 The survey followed standard methodology detailed in 'Surveying Badgers' (Harris et al., 1989) and the approach as described in 'The History, distribution, status and habitat requirements of the badger in Britain' (JNCC, 1990). This included survey for badger setts, latrine/dung pits, foraging

[2] STATE SEARCH AREA, DATE AND MAPPING SOURCE INCLUDING DATE OF AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY EXAMINED

marks, feeding signs (e.g. snuffle holes), footprints, badger hairs and worn pathways, particularly along linear features and boundaries in the Site.

2.3.7 Particular attention was paid to areas with suitable topography and/or vegetation for sett building as well as key habitats favoured for foraging such as woodland, hedgerows and banks.

Bats

2.3.8 A Daytime Bat Walkover (DBW) assessment of the habitats and features (buildings/trees etc. - where accessible) on Site was undertaken during the ecological walkover survey using the recommended survey protocol (Collins, 2023).

2.3.9 The Site was also assessed for its suitability for use by foraging and commuting bats in accordance with good practice guidelines (Collins, 2023).

2.3.10 A Preliminary Bat Roost assessment (PBRA) of all buildlings on Site was undertaken to assess the suitability of each structure to support roosting bats. Following industry best practice guidance (Collins, 2023), each structure was classified to be of negligible, low, moderate, or high roosting suitability for bats based on the presence of Potential Roosting Features (PRFs). PBRAs entailed detailed visual examination of structures, undertaken from ground level, during daylight hours. The visual examination involved the identification of potential entry/exit points for bats or other PRFs such as holes in brickwork, cracks, gaps at the eaves, gaps in masonry etc.

2.3.11 A Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) of trees on Site was also undertaken to assess the suitability of each tree to support roosting bats. Following industry best practice guidance (Collins, 2023), each tree was classified as None, PRF-I (one or more PRFs suitable for individual bats or small numbers of bats) or PRF-M (PRFs suitable for multiple bats) based on the presence of PRFs.

Birds

2.3.12 The desk study data was filtered for WCA 1981 (as amended) Schedule 1 bird species and those species protected under Annex 1 of the EU Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds, also known as the Birds Directive. Priority species (NERC Act 2006, LBAP) were likewise highlighted and the Birds of Conservation Concern list[3] was also referred to.

2.3.13 During the survey, any species of birds encountered were recorded and habitats were assessed for their potential value to nesting, passage, wintering and foraging birds.

[3] Birds of Conservation Concern | BTO - British Trust for Ornithology

Invertebrates

2.3.14 The habitats present on the Site were assessed for their suitability to support protected and notable invertebrates. Suitable features include decaying timber, nectar sources, structural patchwork, rotational management, botanically-poor wetlands, still air habitat, connectivity, ecoclines and bare earth. Any incidental observations of invertebrates at and adjacent the Site were also noted.

Reptiles

2.3.15 The habitats present within the Site were assessed for their suitability to support reptiles[4], with reference to their connectivity with other areas of suitable habitat within the wider landscape. Any incidental reptile encounters made during the survey were recorded.

Riparian Mammals and White-clawed Crayfish

2.3.16 A desk-based search for watercourses on, and within 30 m of, the Site which are not separated from the Site by a significant barrier to dispersal was undertaken using OS 1:10,000 mapping.

2.3.17 Where present and access was possible, watercourses were subsequently assessed for their suitability to support otter *Lutra lutra*[5], water vole *Arvicola amphibius*[6] and white-clawed crayfish[7] *Austropotamobius pallipes*.

Other Key and Notable Species

2.3.18 Incidental records of other notable species, or notable species potential were made during the Site visit.

Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

2.3.19 Any evidence of invasive non-native plant species listed under Schedule 9 of the WCA 1981 was recorded during the survey.

2.3.20 Incidental evidence of invasive non-native animal species was noted, and any relevant recommendations have been made in **Section 4**.

[4] Using the Herpetofauna Workers Manual (2003) and Froglife Advice Sheet 10: Reptile Survey (1999)
[5] Kruuk *et al* 1998
[6] Dean *et al* (2016)
[7] Peay (2003)

2.4 Assumptions and Limitations

2.4.1 Every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the Site, but the following specific limitations apply to this appraisal.

2.4.2 Part of the woodland behind B3 was inaccessable.

2.4.3 Buidling inspections for bats were carried out oustide the building, no internal building inspections were carried out during the survey.

2.4.4 Much of B2a was obscured by dense vegetation.

2.4.5 The survey undertaken was intended to provide a rapid assessment of the habitats present within the Site and was not intended to replace detailed vegetation or protected species surveys. Where a greater level of information is necessary to inform an assessment, recommendations have been made to undertake further detailed survey.

3. Findings and Evaluation

3.1 Designated Sites for Nature Conservation

3.1.1 There was one statutory designated site for nature conservation and onenon-statutory designated sites within the search area as detailed in **Table 2 and 3** below.

Table 2 : Statutory Designated Site Records within 2 km of the Site

Site	Reason for Designation	Approximate Distance and Direction from Site
Lower Spen Wildlife Area Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	This LNR is designated for its woodland, scrubland, meadow, wetland. The meadows contain flowers that attract butterflies and bees. Woodland areas provide shelter and nest sites for birds. The water quality in the River Spen is improving, and it supports a wide range of wildlife on the shallow stony bed and well-vegetated riverbanks.	1.6 km to the south west of the Site.

Table 3: Non-statutory Designated Site Records within 2 km of the Site

Site	Reason for Designation	Approximate Distance and Direction from Site
Lower Spen Wildlife Area Local Wildlife Site (LWS)	Designated due to its status as a Local Nature Reserve.	1.6 km south west.

3.1.2 The Site is not located within a relevant SSSI Impact Risk Zone (IRZ).

3.2 Habitats

Habitats of Principal Importance

3.2.1 The desk study recorded one priority habitat within the search area, deciduous woodland, the closest section of which is located 60 m south of the Site. No areas of ancient woodland are present within 500 m of the Site. Records are shown on **Figure 5**.

UK Habitat Survey

3.2.2 Habitats recorded on the Site, their distribution and composition are discussed in order of dominance below, a note has been added where any habitat qualifies as a Habitat of Principle Importance (HPI) under the NERC Act (2006). Habitat locations and TN depicting features of ecological interest are annotated on **Figures 1 and 5**. TN descriptions are provided at **Appendix 1**.

Buildings – u1b5

Secondary codes – vacant or derelict land (82), unmanaged (521)



Plate 1: Main School Building (B1).



Plate 2: Secondary school building (B2) attached to B1 by an enclosed bridge.





Plate 3: Shed (B2a) attatched to northern aspect of B2.

Plate 4: Tertiary building (B3) located on south of the Site.

3.2.3 The Site includes three main buildings (B1, B2 and B3) and a small shed attatched to B2 (B2a) dispalyed in **Figure 2**.

- **B1** (Plate 1) and **B2** (Plate 2) are derelict/vacant brick buildings joined by an enclosed bridge to the west of B1 and east of B2. Many features of the buildings are in disrepair such as the windows and slate roofing tiles.

- **B3** (Plate 4) is a vacant/derelict building with a brick foundation and corrugated metal encapsulating the walls. There are signs of vandalism such as graffiti present.

3.2.4 This habitat is devoid of vascular floral species.

3.2.5 Buildings are not a HPI under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006, or is listed as a priority habitat within the LBAP (Kirklees council, 2007).

3.2.6 Buildings, as a habitat are not a contraint to the proposed work. This habitat has potential to house bats which are a European protected species. Bats are discussed in section 3.3 below.

Other developed land – u1b6

Secondary codes – unmanaged (521), road (800), car park (804), children's play space (823)



Plate 4 – Car park 1 located to the east of site.

3.2.7 Other developed land surrounds the three buildings and runs throughout the Site to the east (road). The surface is tarmac (Plate 4) and no floral species were present.

3.2.8 Other developed land is not a HPI under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006, or is listed as a priority habitat within the LBAP (Kirklees council, 2007).

3.2.9 Other developed land is not a constraint to the proposed works.

Lowland mixed deciduous woodland – w1f

Secondary codes – semi-natural woodland (30), unmanaged (521), scattered scrub (10)



Plate 5 – Lowland mixed deciduous woodland behind B3

3.2.10 Semi-natural lowland mixed deciduous woodland borders the west and south of the Site boundary. This habitat encompasses part of the surroundings of B2 and B3 (Plate 5). The species present within the habitat were the same across the Site.

3.2.11 Abundant species present include horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, Norway maple *Acer platanoides*, hornbeam *Carpinus betulus*, ivy *Hedera helix*, wood avens *Geum urbanum*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus agg.*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* and herb robert *Geranium robertianium*. Occasional species include birch sp. *Betula sp.*, garlic mustard *Alliaria petiolata*, goat willow *Salix caprea*, willow herb sp. *Epilobium sp.*, cleavers *Galium aparine*, common nettle *Urtica dioica*, cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* and wall cotoneaster *Cotoneaster horizontalis*. Rare species include bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*.

3.2.12 Lowland mixed deciduous woodland is a HPI under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 and is listed as a priority habitat within the LBAP (Kirklees council, 2007).

3.2.13 Lowland mixed deciduous woodland may be directly affected by the works proposed and is therefore a constraint to the works.

Mixed Scrub – h3h

Secondary codes – unmanaged (521)



Plate 6: Mixed scrub habitat found south of B1 in the centre of the Site.

3.2.14 Parcels of mixed scrub (Plate 6) are distributed throughout the site. Building B1 has multiple areas of mixed scrub in the surroundings with the largest area being east of B1. The areas of mixed scrub are unmanaged (521) causing overgrowth and spread. The species present within this habitat are consistent throughout the Site

3.2.15 Abundant species present include, bramble, common hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, wall cotoneaster, cherry laurel, ivy, dandelion and herb robert. Occasional species include Norway maple, goat willow , sycamore, false acacia *Robinia pseudoacacia*, birch sp., garlic mustard, willow herb, cleavers, common nettle, buckthorn *Rhamnus sp.,* buddleja *Buddleja davidii*, common dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*, bush vetch *Vicia sepium* and indian cluster berry *Lonicera ligustrina*. Rare species include bird cherry *Prunus padus*.

3.2.16 INNS were recorded within this habitat throughout the Site. The species identified were wall cotoneaster *Cotoneaster horizontalis* (TN5) at SE 23417 22705, rhodedendron *Rhododendron ponticum* (TN4) located at SE 23490 22587 and Japanese rose *Rosa rugosa* (TN3) located at SE 23463 22617.

3.2.17 Scrub is listed as a local priority habitat within the LBAP (Kirklees council, 2007).

3.2.18 Bramble scrub is a constraint to the proposed works.

Bramble Scrub – h3d

Secondary codes – unmanaged (521)



Plate 7: Bramble scrub located to the south west of the Site.

3.2.19 Parcels of bramble scrub (Plate 7) are distributed throughout the site. A majority of this habitat boarders the Site boundary with lowland mixed deciduous woodland adjacent to most areas.

3.2.20 Dominant species present include bramble. Occasional species include chinese bramble (*Rubus tricolor*), common nettle, and cleavers.

3.2.21 Scrub is listed as a local priority habitat within the LBAP (Kirklees council, 2007).

3.2.22 Bramble scrub is a constraint for the proposed works.

Modified Grassland – g4

Secondary codes – unmanaged (521)



Plate 8 : Modified grassland found to the west of B1 along the boundary of the Site.

3.2.23 Modified grassland (Plate 8) is found in small areas throughout the Site. It is located bordering sealed surface and scrub throughout. The largest parcels are to the north of the Site in the vicinity of B1.

3.2.24 Abundant species include cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, sweet vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis*, dandelion, creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense* and rough meadow grass *Poa trivialis*. Occasional species include cleavers, herb Robert, fescue sp *Fetstuca sp*, ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, willow herb sp. and white clover *Trifolium repens*.

3.2.25 Modified grassland is not considered a constraint for the works.

Rhododendron scrub – h3g

Secondary codes – bare ground (510)



Plate 9: A small patch of cherry laurel found at the northwest of the site.

3.2.26 Rhododenron scrub in the form of cherry laurel is found in one small patch at the northwest corner of the site boundary. As can be seen in plate 9, a cherry laurel had de-vegetation work done to removed parts of the branches. This work uncovered a patch of bare ground which is most probably caused by the laurel suffocating any flora growing beneath it.

3.2.27 The only species in this habitat is cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*.

3.2.28 Rhododendron scrub is not a constraint to the works.

3.3 Species

Amphibians including GCN

3.3.1 WYJS returned a total of three recent records of amphibians for locations within 2 km of the Site. One record pertained to great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* and two records pertained to common frog *Rana temporaria*. The closest record pertained to GCN recorded approximately 106 m north of the Site from 2016.

3.3.2 A search on MAGIC returned zero records of granted EPS mitigation licences related to GCN within 2 km of the Site.

3.3.3 There were no GCN Class Survey Licence Returns within 500 m of the Site.

3.3.4 There were no GCN eDNA Pond Surveys for District Level Licencing (DLL) returned within 500 m of the Site.

3.3.5 There is no GCN DLL for the Kirklees area and as such is not applicable to the proposed development.

3.3.6 One pond is located within 250 m of the Site. The pond is situated 187 m north of the Site. A road intersects between the Site and the waterbody, which causes minimal ecological connectivity for amphibians and GCN between the Site and the pond.

3.3.7 The Site contains suitable terrestrial habitat for GCN and amphibians, with refugia/hibernacula (TN1) identified within the Site boundary. Log piles are located within the Site and have the potential to be refuges and over-wintering sites for amphibians (including GCN), providing shelter and foraging opportunities.

3.3.8 There is one possible temporary waterbody, relating to a fountain within B1 (**Figure 2**), within the Site.

3.3.9 Dispersal oppurtunities for amphibians are limited due to the urban nature of the Site and the roads in the vicintiy which act as dispersal barriers. The habitats within the Site are considered sub-optimal for GCN and common amphibians as they are high fragment and lack ecological connectivity to any nearby waterbodies.

3.3.10 Given the presence of suitable waterbodies within 250 m of the Site, terrestrial habitat within the Site and amphibian and GCN records within 250 m of the Site, amphibians and GCN are considered a constraint to the works.

Badger

3.3.11 WYJS returned a total of one record of badger for locations within 2 km of the Site. As badger are highly persecuted exact locations remain confidential and only approximate locations are given. The closest of these locations pertained to a badger sett recorded approximately 1.3 km away from the Site.

3.3.12 No signs of badger, including setts or field signs such as mammal tracks or footprints were identified during the survey,

3.3.13 The modified grassland and unmanaged scrub on site provide optimal foraging habitat for badger. The lowland mixed decidous woodland provides optimal habitat for sett creation. Badgers are highly dynamic species and can create new setts overnight.

3.3.14 Given the sett creation potential, badger are considered a constraint to the works.

Bats

3.3.15 WYJS returned a total of 40 records for bats within 2 km of the Site, four of which were roost records. The records related to common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipitrellus,* soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus*, Leisler's *Nyctalus leisleri*, Myotis species *Myotis sp.,* and unidentified pipistrelle species. The closest roost record pertains to common pipistrelle , located on Site on the north east corner of the main school building B1 from 2025.

3.3.16 A search of MAGIC returned two records of granted EPS mitigation licences relating to bats within 2 km of the Site, the details of which are provided in **Table 4**.

Table 4: Granted EPS licences for bats within 2 km of the Site.

Licence number	Species	Approximate distance and direction from the Site	Licence impacts	Date
EPSM2011-3454	Common pipistrelle	190 m north of the Site	Destruction of a resting place	28/09/2011 - 01/12/2012
2019-38940-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle	840 m south of the Site	Destruction of a resting place	04/02/2019 - 31/03/2024

DBW Results – Buildings

3.3.17 Builidngs onite comprised of the main school building (B1), a second buidling attached to the main building by a bridged walkway and a third sports hall builidng.. Potential roosting features included lifted tiles, crevices within brickwork and acess to the buidling via smashed windows.

Table 5: Building External Inspection Findings

Building Reference	Description/ Features	Bat Roosting Suitability
Main School Building		

Building Reference	Description/ Features	Bat Roosting Suitability
B1 	This school building is a structure constructed primarily of red brick, featuring a grand central entrance framed by classical stone columns and topped by a large arched window and an ornamental crest. The building has signs of vandalism and abamdoment due to the lack of maintenance and vegetation growing in the building. The aerial view shows a large, self-contained building complex arranged around central courtyards, with interconnected wings and enclosed open spaces that create a secure, inward-facing layout characteristic of institutional architecture. Multiple access points for roosting bats present on the building including lifted tiles, cracks and crevices in brickwork, lifted bitumen, broken windows and gaps in eves.	High
Second School Building **B2** 	This brick school institutional building appears vacant or disused, with extensive broken upper-floor windows and weathered exterior features that suggest a prolonged period of neglect. The building is connected to the main school buidling via an above ground walkway bridge. The buidling is a square structure with a broad hipped roof that slopes inward on all sides towards a central flat section. There are multiple potential features for roosting bats and access points similar to the	High

Building Reference	Description/ Features	Bat Roosting Suitability
	main school building such as broken windows and gaps and crevices in brickwork and tiles.	
Shed for possible gas pipe managment adjacent to B2 **B2a** 	This shed is connected to the northern aspect of B2 and is constructed from redbrick. It has a lean-to roof obscured by vegetation. There is internal access via an open doorway partially covered by wooden boards and a sheet of metal.	Moderate
Sports Hall **B3** 	Building shows utilitarian charateristics and service structure clad with weathered green corrugated metal panels above a red brick base. The buidling follows a L-shaped structure with corrugated metal roofs. During the survey no PRFs were present on B3.	Negligible

DBW Results – Trees

3.3.18 The trees present on Site were not found to contain any PRFs and were therefore assessed as 'none' with respect to suitability for roosting bats.

Foraging and Commuting Bats

3.3.19 The Site contains lowland mixed deciduous woodland, mixed scrub, bramble scrub and modified grassland are suitable habitats for foraging and commuting bats. These habitats within the Site connect to other habitats in the wider area such as large parcels of grassland and areas of woodland. Given the suitable habitats present onsite and the ecological connection to other

habitats within the wider area, the Site displayed moderate suitability for commuting and foraging bats.

Birds

3.3.20 WYJS returned a total of 17 recent records comprising 15 bird species within 2 km of the Site. These included five species listed as Species of Principal Importance (SPI) under Section 41 of the NERC Act and 12 species listed as Red or Amber in the BoCC, as detailed in **Appendix 2.** The Site has the potential to support some of the species listed with areas of woodland, scrub providing suitable foraging and nesting habitat and the buildling having the potential to support nesting birds.

3.3.21 The buildings and woodland on the Site have the potential to support nesting birds. The grassland and scrub have potential for ground nesting birds. During the Site visit, wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*, black bird *Turdus merula*, chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* and wood pidgeon *Columba palumbus* were identified audibly.

3.3.22 No nests were identified during the Site visit.

3.3.23 It should also be noted that some species such as wood pigeon may nest all year round, so it is recommended that consideration is given to this species at any time of year.

3.3.24 Given the nesting potential, birds are a constraint to the works.

Invertebrates

3.3.25 WYJS returned a total of two recent records of invertebrates for locations within 2 km of the Site. The records related to small heath butterfly *Coenonympha pamphilus* and cinnabar moth *Tyria jacobaeae*. Both records are located approximately 1.5 km south west of the Site from 2019. Due to the presence of common ragwort, the cinnabar laval food source, cinnabar moths may be present. The unmanaged areas of grassland also have the potential to support small heath butterfly.

3.3.26 The woodland, scrub and grassland habitats offer suitable sheltering and foraging habitat for invertebrates. Deadwood piles were also loctaed onsite offering further areas of suitable habitat.

3.3.27 Given the presence of suitable habitat, invertebrates are a constraint to the works.

Reptiles

3.3.28 WYJS returned no recent records of reptiles for locations within 2 km of the Site.

3.3.29 During the survey, no signs of reptiles were recorded, however areas of scrub and deadwood piles offer suitable foraging habitat and refugia.

3.3.30 Given the presence of suitable habitat within the Site, reptiles are a constraint to the works.

Riparian Mammals and White-clawed Crayfish

3.3.31 WYJS returned a total of six recent records of riparian species for locations within 2 km of the Site. All records pertain to otter, located approximately 1.9 km south of the Site, within the River Calder, from 2024.

3.3.32 Given the lack of suitable watercourses within the Site and within the surrounding area, riparian mammals and white-clawed crayfish are not considered to be a constraint to the works.

Other Key and Notable Species

3.3.33 No recent records of other key and notable species were returned by WYJS.

Invasive Species

3.3.34 WYJS returned a total of four recent records of INNS listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) within 2 km of the Site. The records related to ring-necked parakeet *Psittacula krameri*, giant hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum*, Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* and montberita *Crocosmia pottsii x aurea = C. x crocosmiiflora*. The closest record pertains to montbretia located approximately 105 m south-east of the Site from 2020.

3.3.35 INNS were recorded within mixed scrub habitats throughout the Site. The species identified were yellow azalea and wall cotoneaster.

3.3.36 INNS are considered to be a constraint to the works.

4. Ecological Constraints and Recommendations

4.1 Proposals

4.1.1 The proposals for the Site are the demolition of three vacant buildings (**B1, B2 and B3; Figure 2**) as detailed within drawing *722062-WCL-SGN-XX-DR-S-0101*, provided by Wilde Consulting Civil and Structural Engineers on 27th March 2026.

4.2 Constraints, Potential Impacts and Recommendations

4.2.1 The ecological constraints, potential development effects and further survey required to address the above are outlined in **Table 6** on the following pages. This table does not represent a formal Ecological Impact Assessment and provides an unquantified overview of likely impacts and recommendations.

4.2.2 In accordance with published advice from CIEEM (2019), this PEA report will remain valid for a period of 18 months from the date of the survey. Should there be changes to the Site within this timeframe which may result in a change in the presence of habitats and/or species, an update survey should be considered. After 18 months an update PEA including site visit and desk study are likely to be required to inform an assessment of the potential for impacts to ecological features and presence of protected species.

Table 6: Ecological Constraints and Recommendations

Feature/Constraint	Potential Development Effect	Recommendation	Timing
Priority Habitats	Removal or degradation of lowland mixed deciduous woodland (a HPI under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 and listed as a priority habitat within the LBAP.	It is recommended that the local planning authority is consulted regarding any planned loss of this habitat and the suitability of any compensatory measures. If the habitat is due to be retained, it is recommended that appropriate pollution prevention measures are implemented and root protection areas established. These should include: • Storage and handling of fuels, oils and chemicals in designated areas away from sensitive habitats. • The provision of spill kits and measures to prevent sediment-laden run-off, dust and other contaminants entering adjacent habitats. • Materials and waste should be appropriately stored and managed throughout thr works • All personel to be made aware of pollution prevention procedures and emergency response measures.	Prior to the works During the works
Amphibians	Removal or disturbance of suitable foraging, commuting, sheltering and hibernation habitats for GCN and common amphibians.	It is recommended that all works are undertaken in accordance with a Non-Licence Method Statement (NLMS) for GCN and common amphibians. The NLMS should incorporate Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) and be provided to all contractors working on site to ensure adequate measures are undertaken for the protection of amphibians. An Ecological Clerk of	During the works

Feature/Constraint	Potential Development Effect	Recommendation	Timing
		Works (ECoW) shall be present during all vegetation clearance works to ensure compliance with the NLMS. Should GCN be encountered during the works, all works must cease immediately and an ecologist must be contacted before works recommence. The animal must not be handled or moved by site personnel or unlicenced ecologists.	
Badger	Removal or disturbance of sett creation habitat for badger.	It is recommended that works within the Site should be carried out adhering to a scheme of BPM for badgers, which include the following: • Staff should remain vigilant for any new signs of badger activity on Site; • All excavations should be filled or covered overnight. If this is not possible, a large scaffold plank should be positioned at a 45-degree angle, or one side of the excavation graded or partially graded to provide an escape ramp for any badger that may fall in. All excavations should be checked for animals prior to works resuming the following day; • Any chemicals or other materials should be stored securely in accordance with best practice guidelines and no open pipework should be left overnight to reduce any risk of badgers taking refuge in them; • If a suspected badger sett is discovered on Site at any time, works should be halted in the immediate area,	During the works

Feature/Constraint	Potential Development Effect	Recommendation	Timing
		and an ecologist should be consulted for further advice.	
Bats (roosting)	Destruction of buildings B1 and B2 could results in the loss of bat roosts and/or killing or injury of bats.	It is recommended that buildings B1 and B2 are subject to three nocturnal dusk emergence surveys and B2a is subject to two nocturnal dusk emergence surveys. These surveys will use infa red cameras and acoustic detectors to determine presence/likely absence of roostings within the building and the specific species present.	April toSeptember prior to the works
Bats (foraging and commuting)	Removal of lowland mixed decidous woodland, mixed scrub, bramble scrub and modified grassland could results in the loss of suitable commuting and foraging habitat for bats.	Due to the size of the site and amount of vegetation that may be required to be removed walkover surveys are not necessary for the site. However, if substantial areas of lowland mixed deciduous woodland is to be removed the site should be subject to static automated surveys where data is to be collected for a minimum of five consectutive nights per month (April to October) in appropraite (or the best) weather conditions for bats.	April to October prior to the works.
Birds	Removal and disturbance of suitable foraging and nesting habitat for birds.	It is recommended that works are to be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (March to the August, inclusive). However, if this is not possible, the areas requiring de-vegetation and all buidlings due to be demolished should be checked for active nests by an ecologist. This should be done a maximum of 24 hours before vegetation removal work begins. If an active nest were to be discovered during the works, an exclusion zone around the nest would need to be established and maintained until a suitably qualified	Prior to the works.

Feature/Constraint	Potential Development Effect	Recommendation	Timing
		person has confirmed the birds have fledged or that the nesting attempt has concluded.	
Invertebrates	Removal or disturbance of suitable habitat for invertebrates.	It is recommended that works should proceed under BPM for invertebrates: • Existing areas of grassland, woodland and deadwood piles will be retained, where practicable, and protected from accidental damage during the works. • Any vegetation clearance required will be undertaken in a phased manner, where practicable, to allow mobile invertebrates to disperse into adjacent habitats. • Vehicle movements will be restricted to designated areas to avoid unnecessary habitat disturbance and soil compaction. • Measures will be implemented to prevent pollution and contamination of retained habitats during the works.	During the works.
Reptiles	Removal or disturbance of suitable foraging habitat and hibernacula for reptiles.	It is recommended that the works proceed under BPMs for reptiles: • All vehicles will be driven and/or parked on areas of hardstanding, bare ground, or short vegetation. • All heavy machinery and materials will be placed/ stored only on areas of hardstanding, bare ground or	

Feature/Constraint	Potential Development Effect	Recommendation	Timing
		short vegetation. This will help to ensure that reptiles are not inadvertently harmed or otherwise disturbed. • Long-term storage of debris and materials within the Site will be avoided. This will minimise the potential for inadvertent creation of new refuge areas for reptiles. • To minimise the risk of the disturbance to reptiles, ground works during hibernation periods (November-March) should be avoided wherever possible. In the event that reptiles are seen or encountered onsite, works must stop and the client or their contractor must immediately be contact the appointed ecologist for advice on how to proceed.	
INNS	Risk of further spread during work activities if not appropriately managed and controlled. Failure to implement suitable mitigation measures could result in the inadvertent transport of invasive plant material or contaminated soils beyond the site boundary, potentially causing ecological harm and leading to breaches of relevant environmental legislation such as the WCA Act 1981.	To minimise the risk of spreading Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) and to ensure compliance with relevant environmental legislation, an INNS Management Plan should be prepared and implemented prior to the commencement of any works. The plan set out the procedures for the identification, treatment, control, removal, transport, and disposal of INNS present on site. All management and eradication works should be undertaken by a licensed and competent contractor in accordance with current best practice guidance and legal requirements to prevent the further spread of invasive species both within and beyond the site boundary.	Detailed within INNS management plan.

4.3 Ecological Enhancements

4.3.1 **Bat boxes:** It is recommended that a minimum of one integrated or external bat box should be installed on new buildings, or on suitable mature trees where available, to provide additional roosting opportunities. Bat boxes should be positioned at eaves level on south elevations in locations away from direct and indirect lighting, as far as possible. Should roosting bats be identified during further surveys or the course of the works, additional mitigation and/or compensation measures may be required, and works may require a protected species licence.

4.3.2 **Bird boxes:** A range of bird nest boxes should be installed on retained mature trees and/or buildings, including boxes suitable for swift, a priority species recorded within 2 km of the Site, where appropriate. The boxes should be positioned at a minimum height of 3 m and avoid a true south orientation where there is a risk of over-heating in direct sunlight. Native planting should be incorporated to enhance habitat for breeding and foraging birds, including those recorded during the desk study.

4.3.3 **Reptile hibernacula:** Where space permits, a reptile hibernaculum should be created using logs, stones, rubble and soil in a sunny, undisturbed location to provide refuge and overwintering habitat for reptiles and other wildlife.

4.3.4 Invertebrate habitat: An invertebrate hotel or habitat piles comprising deadwood, logs and other natural materials should be incorporated to provide shelter and breeding opportunities for invertebrates.

4.3.5 **Hedgegog:** Small log-piles/brash piles and/or compost heaps should be created in areas which will remain predominantly undisturbed for hedgehog refuge. These areas can have material added to them during normal Site maintenance activities to ensure they remain valuable to hedgehogs.

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Appendix 1. Target Notes

TN1 – Dead wood pile

TN2 – Dead wood pile

TN3 – Japanese rose

TN4 – Rhodedendron

TN5 – Wall cotoneaster

Appendix 2. Bird Species Records Summary

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status
Bullfinch	*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*	***Amber, NERC S41***
Collared Dove	*Streptopelia decaocto*	Green
Curlew	*Numenius arquata*	***Red, NERC S41***
Dunnock	*Prunella modularis*	***Amber, NERC S41***
Goldfinch	*Carduelis carduelis*	Green
Greenfinch	*Chloris chloris*	Red
House Martin	*Delichon urbicum*	Red
Kestrel	*Falco tinnunculus*	Amber
Meadow Pipit	*Anthus pratensis*	Amber
Rook	*Corvus frugilegus*	Amber
Skylark	*Alauda arvensis*	***Red, NERC S41***
Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*	Green
Swift	*Apus apus*	Red
Woodpigeon	*Columba palumbus*	Amber
Yellowhammer	*Emberiza citrinella*	***Red, NERC S41***
Ring-necked Parakeet	*Psittacula krameri*	Schedule 9