

**Iain Bramble**

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**From:** Derek Richardson [derek.richardson@tameside.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 11 January 2010 11:46  
**To:** Iain Bramble  
**Subject:** Ecological Appraisal - site in Rochdale town centre

Dear Iain

**Re Ecological Appraisal, site in Rochdale town centre**

Thank you for consulting the Ecology Unit on the above site. Due to the recent inclement weather it has not been possible to carry out a very recent up-to-date walkover survey of the site, but the Ecology Unit did carry out a primary appraisal of this site and the adjacent site in October 2009 in connection with planning application D52579 (new bus station) and we would regard this appraisal as current. In addition, we have inspected the site in previous years in connection with other proposed developments in this area.

The proposed development site itself is not of substantive nature conservation value. The site is located in the urban and heavily built up Rochdale town centre. It is not designated for its nature conservation value and nor is it adjacent to any designated sites. It does not support any significant natural or semi-natural habitats and it has only low potential to support any protected and/or priority species. In fact the majority of the site comprises areas of bare ground, used as a surface car park, with limited shrub and ruderal vegetation at the fringes (mostly adjacent to the River course). There are no areas suitable for breeding amphibians and it is likely that the site as a whole supports only small numbers of birds typical of urban habitats. Although bats do use the River course here for foraging and therefore may pass across the site, the site itself is considered to have only low potential to support bats.

The proximity of the site to the River Roch, however, does add some nature conservation interest to the area. The Roch is a potentially important wildlife habitat and provides a potentially important wildlife corridor through the town centre. The watercourse has a moderate flow with a relatively silty substrate, with areas of gravel/cobbles and urban debris present. There is a weir close by. The retaining walls of the River have also been identified as potentially suitable for use by roosting bats. I would therefore recommend -

- That any proposed development follows construction best practice to avoid any possible pollution of the River.
- That if at any time works are planned to directly affect the River walls a survey for bats should be carried out.
- That steps be taken through the preparation of a landscape plan to improve the landscape and habitats within the site itself and/or within the River corridor to enhance the wildlife corridor function of the River.
- That any lighting proposed for the scheme is kept to a minimum in the vicinity of the River to maintain a 'dark corridor'. Certain wildlife (including bats) will actively avoid well lit areas and lighting of the river corridor will reduce its value for wildlife.

I hope that these comments are useful

Yours sincerely  
Derek Richardson  
Principal Ecologist

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