

Ascerta

Landscape, Arboricultural & Ecological Solutions
for the Built Environment

Bat Assessment

550b Wilbraham Road,
Manchester, M21 9LB

22 August 2016

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Bat Assessment

Of

**550b Wilbraham Road,
Manchester,
M21 9LB**

For

Peter Carstensen

22 August 2016

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ascerta has been instructed by Peter Carstensen to carry out surveys to determine if bats are using the building as a roost at 550b Wilbraham Road, Manchester, M21 9LB. The site was visited on 3rd August, 2016 by Dr Rosalind King MCIEEM and Rachael Hamilton MSci (Hons) when the building inspection took place following revised guidelines set out by the Bat Conservation Trust (2016).

The building is a bungalow and was subject to a preliminary search internally and externally using torches to check for signs of bats. The building is currently inhabited as a residential family dwelling and all rooms including the garage are in constant use. Within the building there was one small loft void. Inside the garage there is a small gap between ceiling panels, however, it is considered unlikely that bats are able to access this from either the inside or outside of the building, as no bat access points to the garage were identified. Holes were identified within the western soffit box, however, it was deemed that this area is too low down and would be too draughty and well-lit to support roosting bats. No signs of bats were found inside or outside the building. The building was assessed as offering **negligible** bat roost potential and no further surveys are required as part of this application.

The trees on site offer suitable nesting habitat for birds but were assessed as offering **low** potential for roost features suitable for use by bats. The habitats on site offer **negligible** commuting and foraging habitat for bats. The site is situated within a landscape that offers a broader range of higher quality habitat and roosting opportunities for bats.

The site is considered to be of **negligible** value for roosting bats due to the lack of potential roosting features on buildings and trees and the lack of suitable foraging and commuting habitat.

The following is recommended to enable the proposals to satisfy current wildlife guidance and legislation including the NPPF and policy EN 15 within the Manchester Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document:

1. If works are not begun by August 2017, a further daytime assessment may be required to confirm bats are not using the site as a roost;
2. Works to the building should occur outside the period 1 March to 31 August to protect breeding birds, unless an ecologist has confirmed that the actions proposed will not disturb bird breeding on the site;
3. In order to mitigate for loss of bird nesting habitat it is recommended that one house sparrow terrace should be fitted to the retained building on the site;
4. In order to maintain the value of the site and its surrounding features for bats it is recommended that lighting levels a sensitive to the needs of bats in the area;
5. In order to enhance the site for bats a bat brick or bat tile could be included within the new proposals as there are records of bats in the area.

1.0 Introduction

Ascerta has been instructed by Peter Carstensen to carry out a building inspection for bats at 550b Wilbraham Road, Manchester, M21 9LB (OS Grid Ref: SJ 811 940).

An external and internal inspection of the building on site was carried out on 3rd August 2016 by Dr Rosalind King MCIEEM and Rachael Hamilton MSci (Hons). The inspection and the survey followed guidelines within the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines '*Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines – 3rd Edition (2016)*'.

This report presents the results of the surveys and includes recommendations for further actions where applicable in order to satisfy current wildlife legislation and in order to achieve our client's objectives.

2.0 Objectives

Our client's objective is to ascertain the potential constraints within the site with a view to developing the site at a later date.

Our objectives are as follows:

- Carry out an internal and external inspection of the buildings on site;
- Provide recommendations for mitigation measures where current legislation requires;
- Provide recommendations that seek to enhance the ecological value of the site where possible; and
- Provide recommendations to assist our clients in achieving their objectives whilst satisfying current wildlife legislation.

3.0 Relevant Legislation

The key UK legislation is the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000) which consolidates and amends existing national legislation to implement the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Birds Directive) in Great Britain. It is complemented by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, which implements Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (EC Habitats Directive). The Regulations provide for the designation and protection of 'European sites', and the protection of 'European protected species'.

In England, all bats and their roosts are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Several species of bat are also highlighted as Priority Species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and within the Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) 2012 – 2016.

Under the current legislation as summarised on pages 8 and 9 of the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines – 3rd Edition (2016) it is a criminal offence to:

“To kill, capture, injure or take a wild bat;

- To damage or destroy a place used by a bat for breeding or resting. All offences of this nature are identified within the Habitats Regulations. This offence is unique in that it can be committed accidentally. No element of intentional, reckless or deliberate action needs to be evidenced;*
- To disturb bats anywhere (roosts, flight lines or foraging areas) if levels of disturbance can be shown to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, to rear or nurture their young, to hibernate or migrate or to affect significantly local distribution or abundance;*
- To intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat, whilst it is occupying a place of shelter or protection;*
- To intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place used by a bat for shelter or protection; and*
- To be in possession or control of a bat alive or dead (or any part of a bat or anything derived from a bat, although bat droppings are generally considered to be acceptable), or to transport a bat, to sell or exchange a bat or to offer to sell or exchange a bat taken from the wild.”*

The site lies within the Manchester City Council area and is subject to Manchester's Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted 11 July 2012). Policy EN 15 deals with Biodiversity and Geological Conservation and is the policy of relevance here which has been taken into account when preparing this report.

4.0 Survey Method

4.1 Bat Survey

The survey methods followed the guidelines set out by the Bat Conservation Trust (Collins 3rd Edition 2016).

Table 4.1: Guidelines for assessing Potential Roost Features (PRFs), commuting and foraging habitat within a proposed development site. Guidelines taken from table 4.1 page 35 of the Bat Conservation Trust Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines – 3rd Edition (2016).

Suitability	Roosting Habitats	Commuting and Foraging Habitats
Negligible	<i>Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.</i>	<i>Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats.</i>
Low	<i>A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions ^a and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation ^b). A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential. ^c</i>	<i>Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats such as a gappy hedgerow or un vegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.</i>
Moderate	<i>A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions^a and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).</i>	<i>Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting 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.</i>
High	<i>A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^a and surrounding habitat.</i>	<i>Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.</i>

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

^b Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten et al., 2015). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in large buildings in highly urbanised environments.

^c This system of categorisation aligns with BS 8596:2015 Surveying for bats in trees and woodland (BSI,2015).

4.0 Survey Method (continued)

Record Search

The local biological records centre Greater Manchester Ecology Unit was consulted for records of bats within 1km of the site. Due to the nature of the proposals and the site no other records were considered necessary on this occasion.

Internal/External Inspection of the Building

A daytime internal and external inspection of the building was carried out on 3rd August 2016. The building was searched externally looking for signs of bats, including staining on barge boards, soffits and more commonly droppings on flat surfaces i.e. window ledges that would indicate potential roosting sites. Possible bat access points such as loose tiles, cracks and crevices or crawl spaces beneath and/or behind roofing materials such as roofing felt, panelling, soffits and tiles were identified and checked for signs of use by bats, for example droppings, scratch marks and staining. A Clulite Smartlite torch was used to aid the inspection of crevices.

Internally, all areas of the buildings, including the cellar (where present), were accessed and inspected for signs of use by bats. The lofts were accessed where possible and fully inspected for potential use by bats. Features noted included light gaps (indicating potential access points), loft dimensions, presence of roofing felt and loft conditions such as ventilation, temperature and cobweb coverage. Signs of use by bats were searched for including droppings, scratching, staining, dead bats (particularly in uncovered water tanks) and actual bats.

Temperature, wind speed/direction and cloud cover were recorded at the beginning and end of the survey, along with any significant weather changes during the survey (e.g. heavy showers).

Limitations

The small roof void could not be fully accessed. This is not considered to limit the conclusions of the report as the void was small in area, with no potential bat access points and could be fully inspected with a torch from a ladder.

5.0 Survey Results and Evaluation

5.1 Site Description

The site comprises a residential bungalow which is currently inhabited as a family home. The site sits within a residential area of south west Manchester surrounded by large houses and gardens with an area of amenity grassland 380m west and Longford Park 450m north west of the site.

The habitats on the site comprise buildings, hardstanding (flagstones, bare ground, tarmac and loose stones), amenity grassland, ivy covered fencing and scattered trees. These habitats are small in area and provide little in the way of forage or shelter resource to local ecology (see section 5.5). The habitats are considered to be of **negligible** ecological value or ecological value within the **Zone of Influence** of the site only. Their loss is not considered to adversely affect the local ecology and there is scope for replacement of any lost habitat within the proposals.

5.2 Record Search

The biological record search returned records within 1km of the site. Two records of roosts were returned, one for unidentified bat species at 730m north west of the site and one for common pipistrelle 780m north west of the site. Records of bat sightings were also returned within the vicinity of the site. Nineteen records of common pipistrelle were returned with the closest being recorded immediately along the northern boundary of the site. Ten records of unidentified pipistrelle species were returned, with the closest 510m south east of the site. Two records of soprano pipistrelle were returned, with the closest from 270m south east of the site. Two records of unidentified bat species were returned with the closest being 720m north east of the site. One record each of Daubenton's bat (200m west) and myotis species (740m north-west) were also returned (*Appendix 2, Greater Manchester Ecology Unit*).

5.3 Internal/External Inspection

The weather during the daytime building survey was warm (19°C), humid and sunny with $\frac{5}{8}$ cloud cover. There was a Force 2 (Beaufort scale) light breeze during the survey. These weather conditions were considered suitable for this type of survey.

5.0 Survey Results and Evaluation (continued)

Internal Inspection

The site comprises a brick built residential bungalow with three parts to the building (Photograph 1, *Appendix 2, Photographs*). The building is currently rented out and lived in as a family home with all rooms and the garage in regular use. The garage is well lit internally due to the large windows on the western wall (Photograph 2). There are no holes in the brick work which would allow potential access points for bats. One ceiling panel has fallen slightly allowing access for bats (Photograph 3), however it is considered unlikely that bats would be able to access this opening from the inside or outside of the building. The main part of the building is used as a lounge and is open to the shed roof with no loft void (Photograph 4). There is a small loft space above the hallway between the lounge and kitchen which is not large enough for human access but could be visually assessed from beneath. The loft space is open to the rafters, unlined and heavily cobwebbed (Photograph 5). It is completely dark with no light gaps therefore bats are not considered to be using the loft void. The eastern part of the building is used as kitchen and bedrooms which are in regular use and are also open to the roof.

External Inspection

The westernmost part of the building is a brick garage with a flat roof, three large single glazed windows built into the western wall and a large wooden garage door. The central and eastern sections of the building are bungalows with shed roofs and breezeblock cavity walls. The roofing is felt, with no tiles. There are plastic and asbestos soffits around the eastern and western edges of the buildings which are tightly sealed with no holes along most of their extent (Photograph 1). However, there are a series of large holes in the soffit on the eastern side of the building which provide potential access points for bats (Photograph 6). The number and size of holes would provide a light and breezy environment unsuitable for use by bats, furthermore, the eastern side of the building has windows all along, which could provide light to the soffit at night. Therefore, it is considered that, despite the potential access points for bats, the eastern soffit is unsuitable for use as a roosting site for bats. In addition, a wasp's nest was noted in the north eastern corner of the soffit during the site visit.

The central part of the building has wooden cladding on the outside which is fully intact offering no potential roost sites for bats. There are gap between the cladding and the wall where the central section of the building joins the garage, however, this is heavily cobwebbed suggesting that it is not in use by bats (Photographs 7 & 8). A safety light also site above the door of the property possibly discouraging the used of the site by bats. All doors and windows are tight fitting providing no potential access points for bats. No droppings or signs of bats were found during the survey.

The building on site was therefore assessed as offering **negligible** bat roost potential.

Tree Inspection

There are few trees on-site, however, linear features of trees run along the eastern and western site boundaries within neighbouring gardens. None of the trees on-site are mature enough to have developed features suitable for use by bats as roost sites and are therefore assessed as offering **low** potential for roost features.

5.0 Survey Results and Evaluation (continued)

Habitat Assessment for bats

The habitats on site comprises the building and trees assessed as **low** and **negligible** respectively as well as hard standing, bare ground and amenity grassland which offer **negligible** commuting and foraging habitat for bats.

The area surrounding the site provides better quality habitat for bats. Trees line the eastern and western fences of the site within neighbouring gardens. A three storey residential dwelling neighbours to the east and a two story dwelling neighbours to the west. These buildings offer higher rooflines more suitable for roosting bats and both offer pitched, tiled roofs with potential suitability for crevice dwelling and void dwelling bats.

5.5 Other wildlife

No other notable wildlife was recorded and due to the size and nature of the habitats within the site it is considered that no other species such as amphibians or reptiles are using the site. In addition, the site is isolated from areas of suitable habitat so these species are unlikely to colonise the site in the near future and need no further consideration within the current planning application.

No invasive species were recorded during the survey.

5.6 Evaluation

Based on the results of the building and tree inspection the site is considered to be of **negligible** value for bats as there is no suitable roost habitat onsite despite the high level of activity returned from the local record search.

The building provides roost potential for crevice dwelling bat species within the eastern soffit, but this is limited due to the number and size of the holes within the soffit which may cause drafts and a high level of light penetration. It is highly unlikely that bats will use the building as a maternity roost or hibernation roost in the near future. The building is considered to have **negligible** bat roost potential and no further nocturnal surveys are considered necessary for the current planning application.

The trees on site may provide bird nesting opportunities and mitigation will be required to ensure no net loss of nesting habitat following development. There was no sign of bird use of the building for nesting. Breeding birds are protected and should not be disturbed during building works.

Given the setting of the site within better quality habitat for bats, it is considered unlikely for bats to be using the site and therefore considered that there will be no harm to bats within proposals.

6.0 Recommendations and Conclusions

The building is considered to provide **negligible** bat roost potential and the site is considered to be of **negligible** value to bats. As such works to the building can proceed without being detrimental to maintenance of the local bat population at a favourable conservation status (i.e. the proposals meet the third test of the 'three test assessment' as outlined in the Habitats Regulations).

Features on the buildings within the site still have a potential for supporting bat roosts and there are records of bats in the area. If works are not begun by August 2017, a further daytime assessment may be required to confirm bats are not using the site as a roost. If a bat roost is identified on site and is likely to be affected by the development, an application to Natural England will need to be made with regards to acquiring a European Protected Species licence in order that the bat roost can be destroyed in the appropriate manner.

As there are records of bats in the area it is recommended that lighting is sensitive to the needs of bats and follows guidelines within the document *Bats and lighting in the UK- bats and the built environment series* prepared by the Bat Conservation Trust.

Habitat exists for nesting birds on the site. In order to avoid harm to nesting birds, vegetation clearance and building works should not be undertaken during the bird breeding season (between 1 March and 31 August). If vegetation needs to be cleared during this period a nesting bird survey will be required, conducted by a suitably qualified ecologist, before works begin. If any active nests are observed during the survey, exclusion zones will be set up and works will not occur in these areas until nesting is complete.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made such as to satisfy current wildlife guidance and legislation including the NPPF and policy EN 15 within the Manchester Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted 11 July 2012).

1. If works are not begun by August 2017, a further daytime assessment may be required to confirm bats are not using the site as a roost;
2. Works to the building should occur outside the period 1 March to 31 August to protect breeding birds, unless an ecologist has confirmed that the actions proposed will not disturb bird breeding on the site;
3. In order to mitigate for loss of bird nesting habitat it is recommended that one house sparrow terrace should be fitted to the retained building on the site;
4. In order to maintain the value of the site and its surrounding features for bats it is recommended that lighting levels are sensitive to the needs of bats in the area; and
5. In order to enhance the site for bats a bat brick or bat tile could be included within the new proposals as there are records of bats in the area.

7.0 References

Nature on the Map Natural England:

<http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/>

Bat Conservation Trust (2000). *Distribution atlas of bats in Britain and Ireland 1980-1999*: Bat Conservation Trust, London.

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Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature

Appendix 1

Photographs



Photograph 1
Front view of building from the north



Photograph 2
Inside garage, note the windows to the west



Photograph 3
Gap in ceiling panel of garage



Photograph 4
Ceiling of main building, with no loft space



Photograph 5
Inside small loft void showing the unlined roof and exposure of cavity wall insulation.



Photograph 6
Showing series of large holes within the plastic and asbestos soffit box on the western side of the house.



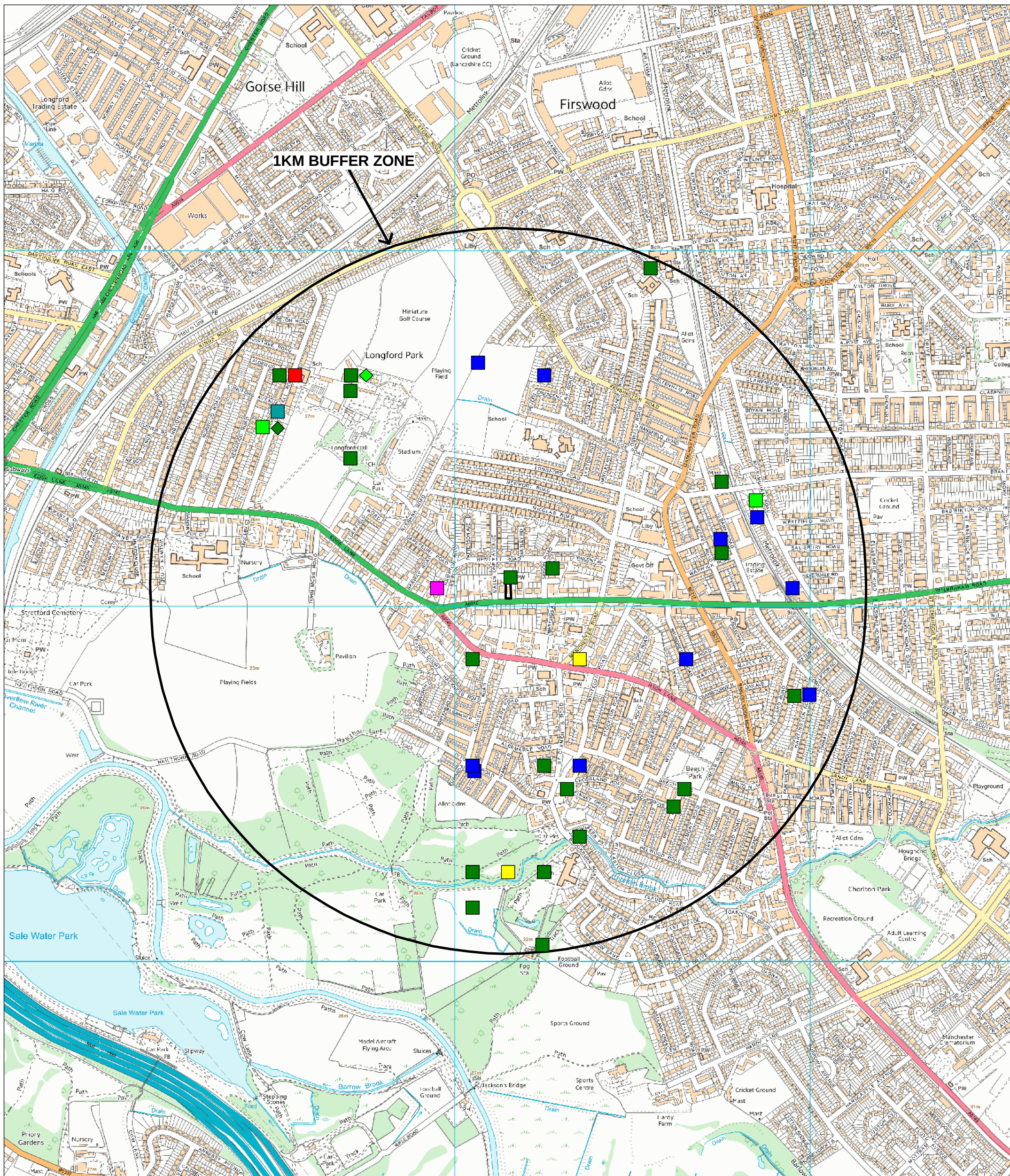
Photograph 7

Showing cobweb covered holes in the wooden cladding central to the north elevation of the building.



Photograph 8

Appendix 2



KEY

BAT ROOSTS

- ◆ BAT SP
- ◆ COMMON PIPISTRELLE

BATS OTHER SIGNS

- BAT SP
- COMMON PIPISTRELLE
- DAUBENTON'S BAT
- MYOTIS SP
- NOCTULE
- PIPISTRELLE SP
- SOPRANO PIPISTRELLE

GREATER MANCHESTER ECOLOGY UNIT ECOLOGICAL SEARCH - SJ811940 WILBRAHAM ROAD - MAP 4

SCALE 1:10,000

BAT DATA COURTESY OF SOUTH LANCS BAT GROUP

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