
Albert Memorial, Our Town Hall

Preliminary Roost Assessment

Issue: For Comment
Rev: 01
Date: January 2021

Issue Status

Rev	Date	Comments	Author	Checked by
01	18/01/2021		AN	MC

Contents

1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Methodology	5
3.0	Results	7
4.0	Conclusion and Recommendations	10
5.0	References	11
	Appendix A - Planning Policies.....	12
	Appendix B - Ecological Data Search.....	13
	Appendix C - Photograph Plates.....	14

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 This Preliminary Roost Assessment has been prepared by BDP on behalf of Manchester City Council to accompany a Listed Building Consent application for works to the Grade I Listed Albert Memorial.

1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 The Albert Memorial (ref. figure 1) is located within Albert Square in the heart of Manchester City Centre. The habitats surrounding the memorial comprise predominately buildings and hardstanding with infrequent scattered trees. The wider landscape is dominated by developments with small pockets of green space and scattered trees. The River Irwell runs approximately 500m north-west of the application site, with the Rochdale Canal approximately 540m south of the site.

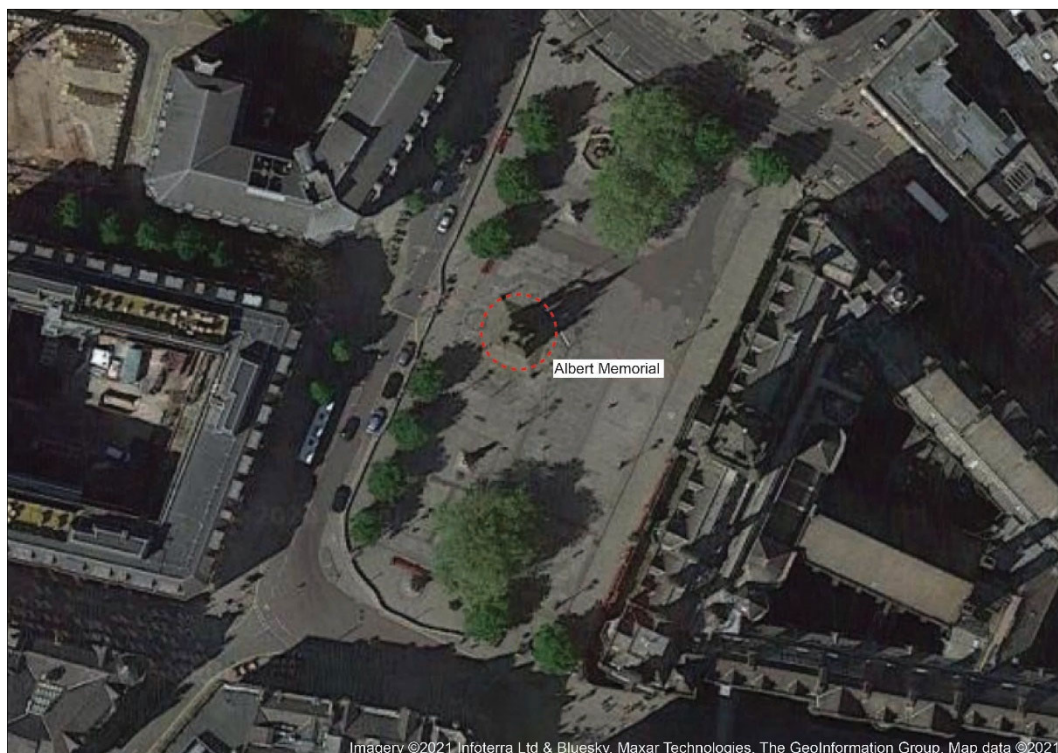


Figure 1. Albert Memorial

1.3 Proposed Works

- 1.3.1 The report will support the following Listed Building Consent application:

Works to the Grade I Listed Albert Memorial, including cleaning, repair and replacement of masonry, refurbishment of existing lighting and installation of new lighting, reinstatement of railings, drainage systems and structural supports to pinnacles, and restoration of plinths.

1.4 Legislation

1.4.1 All British bat species and their roosts are protected under European Law (Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017) and UK Law (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended). As such it is an offence to undertake the following acts;

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats
- Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost

1.5 Planning

1.5.1 Biodiversity is a material consideration to the planning process and consideration must be given to the protection, retention and improvement, of existing biodiversity features. The proposed works to the Albert Memorial will impact a structure which could potentially support protected species and particular consideration should be given to roosting bats, nesting birds and other protected and notable species which are supported by built structures.

1.5.2 This report will allow the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to assess the impact of the proposed works on any ecological features identified.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Desk Study

2.1.1 A review of ecological information held by the local record centre was undertaken, Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU), the local record centre for Manchester were asked to provide bat records for the site and a 1km radius thereof.

2.1.2 In addition to the consultation process a review was carried out of the local and national planning framework, including;

National Policy

- National Planning Policy Framework, 19 February 2019
- Habitats and Species of Principal Importance, August 2010

Local Policy

- Manchester Core Strategy, Manchester City Council, Adopted 11 July 2012
- Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plans, Greater Manchester Biodiversity Project, 2009

2.1.3 See Appendix C for relevant planning policies.

2.2 Site Survey

Habitat Suitability

2.2.1 The habitats present on site and within the surrounding area were identified by undertaking a site walkover and by reviewing publically accessible online maps. The habitats' suitability to support and provide connectivity for commuting and foraging bats was then determined.

Table 1. Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape

Suitability	Commuting and foraging habitats
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats.
Low	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.
Moderate	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.
High	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.

Preliminary Roost Survey

- 2.2.2 A preliminary roost assessment of the Albert Memorial was undertaken. An external inspection of the structure was undertaken to search for, and to assess the potential for, a bat roost to be present.
- 2.2.3 An external search included, for example, looking for gaps between any roof coverings, ingress opportunities and looking for bat droppings on the walls and ledges of the structure.
- 2.2.4 The Albert Memorial was then assessed in accordance with the guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats (BCT, 2016).

Table 2. Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats based on the presence of suitable roosting features within a structure

Suitability	Commuting and foraging habitats
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.
Low	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 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). 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.
Moderate	A structure or tree 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 – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
High	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 and surrounding habitat.

- 2.2.5 A pair of close focussing binoculars, a 125x optical zoom camera and a high-powered torch were used (where required) to search for evidence of bats.
- 2.2.6 The daytime bat survey was carried out on the 11 January 2021. Anthony Nickson carried out the daytime bat survey; Anthony is an active bat worker and holds a Natural England Class 2 survey licence (2015-16233-CLS-CLS) for bats; he is also a full member the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

2.3 Survey constraints

- 2.3.1 An external survey of the Albert Memorial was undertaken. The survey was undertaken at a sub-optimal time of the year to survey for bats and signs of bats; as it is outside the period when bats are most active.

2.4 Other protected species

- 2.4.1 In addition to surveying for bats, during the survey any direct observations or signs of other protected or notable species, in particular nesting birds, were also to be recorded.

3.0 Results

3.1 Desktop Study

- 3.1.1 GMEU the local record centre for Manchester, provided the following records from the site and within a 2km radius of the site:

Table 3. Summary of GMEU bat records

Species	Roosts	General	Closest Record
Common Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>)	24	46	The closest roost record is a maternity roost (33 bats) located on First Street, approximately 660m south of the application site.
			The closest general record is of a grounded bat from Barton Square, M3 2BW, approximately 275m north-west of the application site.
Pipistrelle species (<i>Pipistrellus</i> sp.)	2	17	The closest roost record is located in the Medlock culvert, approximately 620m south of the application site.
			The closest general record is of a grounded bat from Tib Lane, approximately 50m north of the application site.
Soprano Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>)	1	1	The roost record is located on Aytoun Street, approximately 625m east of the application site.
			The foraging record is from the River Irwell, approximately 890m west of the application site.
Bats (<i>Vespertilionidae</i>)	0	3	The closest record is of a single bat flying around on the 9th floor of a building in St Peter's Square which is adjacent to the application site.
Brown long-eared bat (<i>Plecotus auritus</i>)	0	1	The closest record is of a grounded/dehydrated bat from M3 5FS, approximately 565m north-west of the application site.
Daubenton's bat (<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>)	0	1	The record is of a foraging bat on the River Irwell approximately 565m north of the application site.

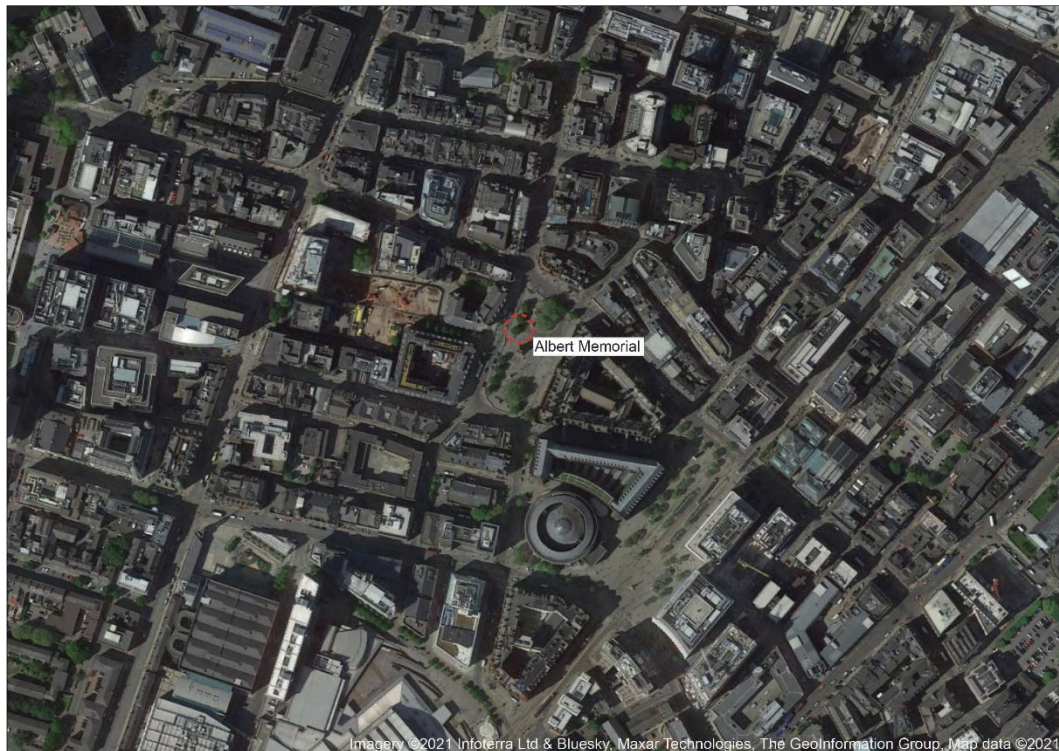
- 3.1.2 BDP carried out a full suite of bat surveys to support the restoration and refurbishment of Manchester Town Hall (BDP, October 2019). The surveys identified 2 no. common pipistrelle day-roost within the courtyards inside the Town Hall building which is a sheltered environment with no light spill.
- 3.1.3 As part of the suite of surveys a surveyor was placed adjacent to the Albert Memorial during a dawn re-entry survey on the 17 August 2018. No bats were recorded/observed during the survey.

3.2 Site Survey

- 3.2.1 Throughout the year, all British bat species use buildings or trees to roost, they favour areas that tend to be dark, sheltered and undisturbed.

Habitat Suitability

- 3.2.2 The landscape surrounding the Town Hall is dominated by buildings and hardstanding with urban lighting. The habitat is unsuitable to support a maternity roost but the scattered trees and small pockets of greenspace could potentially support a small number of roosting bats.



- 3.2.3 The most common species in Manchester and elsewhere in the UK are the common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle. These bats are found in a range of habitats including urban locations which can support their foraging requirements. These more common pipistrelle species are crevice dwelling bats and often roost behind underfelt and tiles, under flashing, behind window frames, under barge boards, soffits or eaves and in small cavities within external walls.
- 3.2.4 The bat species which favour loft voids of buildings include brown long-eared bats (third most common species of bat in the UK) and Natterer's bats (*Myotis nattereri*). The bat species which prefer to roost in loft voids tend to be woodland specialists, and the habitats within Manchester City Centre would not support the foraging requirements of these species.

Preliminary Roost Survey

- 3.2.5 The Albert Memorial (ref. plate 1) was built as a memorial to Prince Albert circa 1862-5 (restored in 1977). The Gothic canopy structure supported by columns is a sandstone construction and covers a white marble statue.
- 3.2.6 The steep octagonal spire (ref. plate 2) has a tile covering which does not provide any crevices for roosting or ingress points for bats into the structure. There are 4 no. trefoils openings (ref. plate 3) approximately 6 inches in radius 4 no. triangular openings (ref. plate 4) approximately 6 inches in radius and which provide access into the spire. There are also 4 no. hexagram carvings (ref. plate 5) set within the four gables of the structure which would provide access into the spire if it were not for netting behind the carvings which appear to have been installed to prevent access by birds.
- 3.2.7 The base of the canopy is closed (ref. plate 6) and there are no ingress points which provide opportunities to access the canopy from underneath.
- 3.2.8 There are four miniature replica structures (ref. plate 7) of the main structure located on the corners of the main structure. The smaller replicas do not appear to have any internally access spaces.
- 3.2.9 The canopy is supported by four moulded plinths sheltering a statue of a standing figure, mounted on a pedestal on top of the base of the structure. The plinths and base of the structure do not provide roosting opportunities for bats.
- 3.2.10 Four high powered uplights (ref. plate 8) are positioned on the corners of the structure. The lights artificially illuminate the structure and it is likely that this cover dusk and dawn when bats would be emerging and re-entering their roosts.

- 3.2.11 No evidence of roosting bats was identified during the site survey, however, the structure has been assessed as providing low suitability to support void dwelling bats and negligible suitability to support crevice dwelling bats.

3.3 Nesting birds

- 3.3.1 The Albert Memorial provides suitable habitat for nesting birds during the nesting season (01 March and 31st August inclusive).

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Bats

- 4.1.1 The Albert Memorial has been assessed as providing low suitability to support void dwelling bats and negligible suitability to support crevice dwelling bats.
- 4.1.2 The surrounding habitat in the city centre are not suitable to support loft dwelling bat species such as brown long-eared and Natterer's bat. Furthermore, a previous dawn re-entry survey undertaken in 2018 did not identify any bat activity in Albert Square. The structure is also decoratively lit which further minimises the likelihood of its use by roosting bats.
- 4.1.3 Based on the survey information the proposed works to the Albert Memorial should proceed without the requirement for an EPSM licence in respect of bats.
- 4.1.4 If during the proposed works a bat, or an accumulation of bat droppings (ref. plate 9) is discovered at any time, work is to temporarily cease whilst a bat ecologist is contacted for guidance and assistance.

4.2 Birds

- 4.2.1 All bird species are protected at their nest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Due to the structure providing access / suitable habitat for nesting birds, it is recommended that any works to the memorial takes place outside the peak bird breeding season.
- 4.2.2 If site works to the structure will be undertaken within the nesting season then an appropriately qualified ecologist will be required to undertake a site walkover to visually assess potentially suitable nesting habitat for active nests. If active nests are discovered, then site works must cease until the nest is deemed inactive.

5.0 References

Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd Edition, The Bat Conservation Trust, 2016

Countryside and Wildlife Act, 1981

EU Habitats Directive, 1994

Manchester Town Hall (SJ8389198078) Ecological Data Search, GMEU, June 2018

National Planning Policy Framework, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 19 February 2019

Our Town Hall Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, BDP, October 2019

Phase 1 Habitat Survey – a technique for environmental audit, JNCC, Updated 2007

Appendix A - Planning Policies

National Planning Policy Framework

15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

170. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
 - recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
 - maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
 - minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
 - preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
 - remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
171. Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework⁵³; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.
172. Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited. Planning permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:
- the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
 - the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
 - any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.
173. Within areas defined as Heritage Coast (and that do not already fall within one of the designated areas mentioned in paragraph 172), planning policies and decisions should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation. Major development within a Heritage Coast is unlikely to be appropriate, unless it is compatible with its special character.

Habitats and biodiversity

174. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:
- Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
 - promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.
175. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:
- if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
 - development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
 - development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
 - development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.
176. The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:
- potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
 - listed or proposed Ramsar sites⁵⁹; and
 - sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.
177. The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.

Manchester's Local Development Framework Core Strategy

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

1. Manchester as a City recognises the importance placed on biodiversity and its role in delivering urban renaissance. The conservation and enhancement of our natural resources is a key factor in the building and delivery of safe and sustainable communities. Manchester seeks to protect, enhance and manage existing identified biodiversity resources. PPS9 and the accompanying Good Practice Guide set out national policy in relation to planning for Biodiversity and Geodiversity.

Policy EN 15 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

The Council will seek to maintain or enhance sites of biodiversity and geological value throughout the City. Particular consideration will be given to:

- sites with international or national designations for their biodiversity value. Manchester contains one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (Cotteril Clough); there is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and an SSSI just over the border in Oldham (both on the Rochdale Canal within Oldham);
- other sites of biodiversity value, including Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs); Manchester currently has 35 SBIs (including the Rochdale and Ashton Canals) and 7 LNRs; priority habitats found within Manchester, as listed in the Manchester Biodiversity Strategy and included in the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (GM BAP);
- protected and priority species, as listed in the Manchester Biodiversity Strategy and included in the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (GM BAP);
- sites that are recognised for their geological importance;
- the Council's objective to protect and conserve the City's existing trees and woodlands and the aim for a net increase in trees across the City.

Developers will be expected to identify and implement reasonable opportunities to enhance, restore or create new biodiversity, either on-site or adjacent to the site, contributing to linkages between valuable or potentially valuable habitat areas where appropriate, with reference to:

- the Manchester Biodiversity Strategy, which provides further details of priority habitats within Manchester and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement including corridors such as the Mersey, Medlock and Irk river valleys, the canals and disused railway lines and areas of managed greenspace particularly in parks;
- the Green Infrastructure Framework for Greater Manchester, which encompasses an ecological framework that seeks to guide and inform habitat creation and repair, including identifying large 'biodiversity opportunity areas' including the Moston Brook Corridor and Nutsford Vale;
- the Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study, which identifies areas where there is a deficit of natural and semi-natural greenspace, opportunities for green corridors and other linkages;
- Manchester's Climate Change Action Plan;
- the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for Manchester;
- the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for Manchester, which gives detailed consideration to Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), including the Rochdale Canal SAC just outside the district boundary;
- the River Basin Management Plan for the North West;
- the Manchester Tree Strategy.

Any adverse impacts on biodiversity will need to be justified against the wider benefits of the proposal, assessed against other LDF policies. Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, developers will be required to provide appropriate mitigation and/or compensation.

Development should wherever possible seek to maintain, enhance or restore existing geology.

2. Developers will need to demonstrate how they have assessed and taken full account of the potential effect of their proposed development on biodiversity or geodiversity. When considering the potential impact of a development, the construction phase should be included in this consideration. It is important to recognise that brownfield sites often contain diverse and valuable biodiversity.
3. Priority habitats found within Manchester, as listed in the Manchester Biodiversity Strategy and included in the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (GM BAP), include various types of grassland, ancient/species-rich hedgerows, woodlands, lowland heath, managed greenspace, reedbeds, rivers, canals and ponds.
4. In addition to the priority species protected through European or national legislation, local priority species are identified by the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (GM BAP); the Manchester Biodiversity Strategy lists those that occur in the City of Manchester, including the great crested newt, water vole, brown hare, pipistrelle bats, 8 protected bird species, floating water plantain, grass-wrack pondweed, and the black poplar.

Appendix B - Ecological Data Search

Appendix C - Photograph Plates



Plate 1. Albert Memorial



Plate 2. Octagonal spire



Plate 3. Trefoil opening



Plate 4. Triangular opening

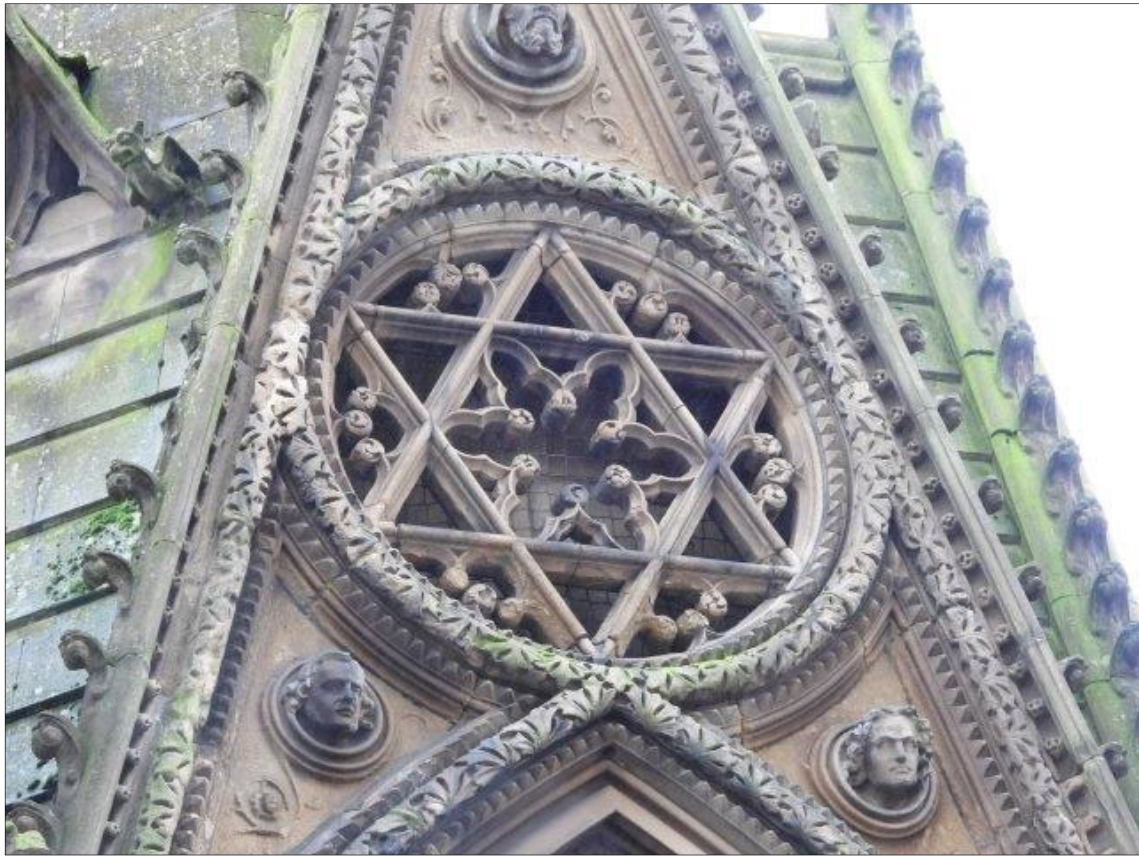


Plate 5. Hexagram carving

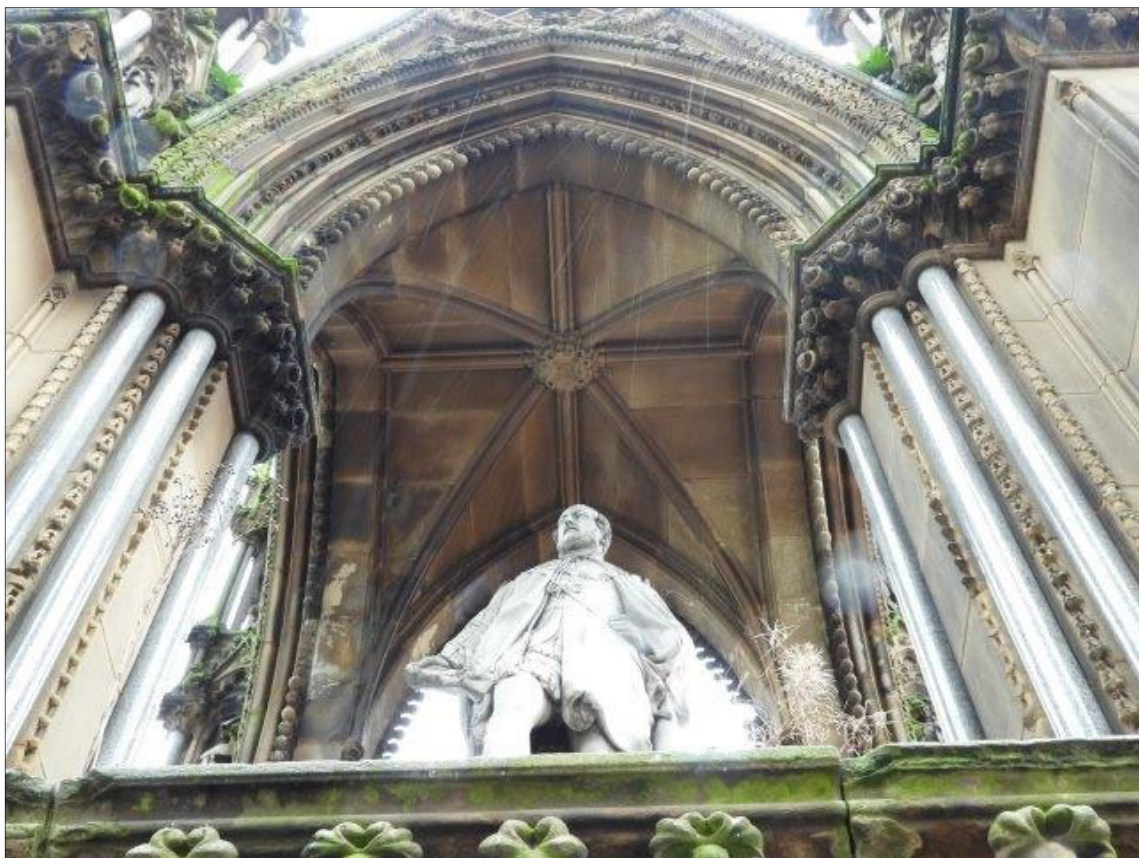


Plate 6. Base of canopy



Plate 7. Miniature structures



Plate 8. Uplight



Plate 9. For reference the picture indicates a fully grown common pipistrelle bat and pipistrelle bat droppings