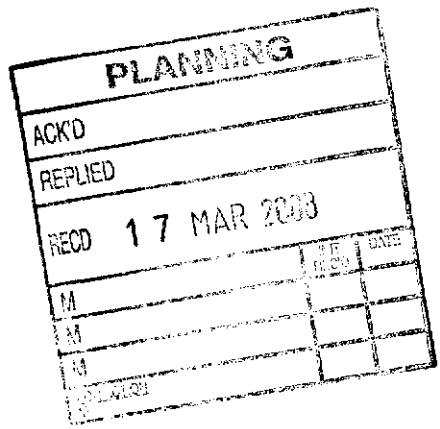

CASTLEFIELD CHAPEL
DEANSGATE, MANCHESTER
BAT SURVEY
678800N353

Submitted to:

Bluetree Estates Limited
Altrincham, Cheshire

Submitted by:

AMEC Earth & Environmental
Richmond, North Yorkshire

March 2006

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In February 2006, AMEC Earth & Environmental (UK) Ltd was commissioned by Bluetree Estates Limited to undertake a bat survey and assessment of Castlefield Chapel, Deansgate, Manchester. In addition, the Local Planning Authority requested that a barn owl *Tyto alba* survey be undertaken. The building will be subject to a detailed planning application to be converted to offices.

2.0 GENERAL SITE DESCRIPTION

Castlefield Chapel is located at 380 Deansgate, Manchester (SJ 833976). A Site Location Plan is included as Appendix A, whilst photographs of the building are included as Appendix B.

The Chapel is situated within a predominantly commercial environment within the centre of the city although the Bridgewater Canal is in close proximity, approximately 50m to the south of the Chapel. The building is brick built with a slate roof and no loft space. In addition, on one elevation there is a brick tower.

The Chapel is bordered to the north by Castle Street, to the east by Deansgate Road, to the west by an area of hardstanding and to the south by a railway line.

3.0 BACKGROUND/SCOPE OF THE SURVEY

A detailed Planning Application for conversion of the Chapel into office dwellings is to be submitted. Recent consultation with the Local Planning Authority has indicated that ecological surveys to determine whether bats or barn owls may be using the Chapel should be undertaken and included as part of the Planning Application. The scope of the bat and barn owl survey was therefore to identify as far as possible any roosts/nest sites present within Castlefield Chapel or the potential for the building to support these species. Should any evidence be found then adequate mitigation measures must be put forward in order to satisfy the requirements of the Local Planning Authority.

4.0 LEGISLATION

4.1 Legislative Considerations

All bat species are protected in accordance with Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended). This protection extends to both the species and roost sites. Likewise, bat roosts are protected at all times of the year, regardless of whether bats are present at the time. In addition, all bat species are also listed under Annexes II of the European Union Habitats and Species Directive (No. 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural

Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora) which is translated into UK legislation in The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994.

Barn owl *Tyto alba* is specially protected under Schedule 1 Part 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This affords protection to the species at all times. The main points in relation to nest sites are: "*It is offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb them at or near a nest containing eggs or young. Intentionally damage or destroy a barn owl nest whilst in use or being prepared for use. It is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb dependant young of a wild barn owl.*"

4.2 Policy Considerations

4.2.1 Planning Policy Statement 9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS 9) sets out Government's national planning policies on the protection of biodiversity and geological conservation through the planning system. It replaces Planning Policy Guidance Note 9 (PPG 9) which was published in 1994. With regard to species protection, PPS 9 states that "*Many individual wildlife species receive statutory protection under a range of legislative provisions and specific policies in respect of these species should not be included in local development plans.*" It goes on to states that "*other species have been identified as requiring urgent conservation action as species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. Local authorities should take measures to protect the habitats of these species from further decline through policies in local development plans. Planning authorities should ensure that these species are protected from the adverse effects of development, where appropriate, by using planning conditions or obligations. Planning authorities should refuse permission where harm to the species or their habitats would result, unless the need for, and benefits of the development clearly outweigh that harm.*"

4.2.2 Biodiversity Conservation

The conservation of biodiversity is a fundamental consideration of any development proposal. In 1994, the Government published the UK Action Plan on biodiversity which sets out the broad strategy and targets for conserving and enhancing wild species and habitats over the next twenty years. A further report published in December 1995 and endorsed by the government in May 1996 provides detailed proposals for a large number of species and habitats which require urgent conservation action. The UK plan together with the individual action plans therefore provides the framework for the effective delivery of biodiversity conservation at the national level and provides the UK commitment to the Biodiversity Convention signed at Rio in 1992. This was given further importance with the implementation of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 which established a statutory obligation on

any government department to fully consider biological diversity and conservation in the exercising of their responsibilities. Consideration of the UK plan, and in particular those species and habitats which have been identified as requiring urgent conservation action is therefore important in any Ecological Assessment. Specific to this assessment, there is the potential for a number of bat species to occur within the study area which may have their own national Species Action Plan. Biodiversity is likewise important at the local level with both bats and barn owl being afforded their own Species Action Plan with the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan.

5.0 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The bat and barn owl surveys were conducted on 14th February 2006 by Stan Irwin of The Tyrer Partnership (English Nature bat Licence Number 20052881 and English Nature barn owl Licence Number 20052882) and consisted of a daylight walkover survey and assessment.

During the surveys, the surrounding habitat was also assessed in terms of potential usage and value to both species bats and barn owls.

5.1 Bat Survey Methodology

With respect to bats, the interior of the Chapel was inspected for signs of use, which mainly includes droppings or remains of prey items. The exterior of the building was also inspected for field signs indicating the use of the building by bats.

Most bat species will use buildings as roost sites or temporary shelter. The two main roost types encountered in buildings/structures are:

- breeding roost – early May to late August
- hibernation roost – October to April

Bats do not cause damage to buildings/structures that they use. Hibernating bats using buildings will normally be found in small numbers as opposed to greater numbers in a breeding roost and contractors should be aware of the differential.

5.2 Barn Owl Survey Methodology

The investigation for barn owl use was conducted outside of the breeding season. However, they will continue to use favoured sites for roosting and shelter throughout the year and evidence of use will remain for several years. Barn owls rely mainly upon undisturbed places for nest sites with suitable hunting habitat within its territorial range. Linear features such as hedgerow, ditches or watercourses act as links to other areas, which allow the expansion

of young barn owls looking for territories. All interior surfaces were inspected by torchlight for signs of barn owls, which would include pellets, discarded feathers or typical splashes of white faeces on or around roosting places such as beams.

5.3 Survey Limitations

Although the inspection took place at a time when bats will be in their hibernation season the results and conclusions are based upon surveyor experience and knowledge of bat ecology. However, depending upon species and roost location evidence of previous occupation can still be present. If roost potential was found to be high or the results of the survey were inconclusive then recommendations would indicate the requirement for nocturnal observations when bats are at their most active time.

6.0 SURVEY RESULTS

6.1 Bat Survey Results

Castlefield Chapel is situated in Manchester city centre amid a mainly commercial urbanized environment although the Bridgewater Canal is present to the south. Foraging habitat is, however, poor in the immediate vicinity of the Chapel which can influence the choice of buildings by bats. Where the local foraging habitat is of high value, then the percentage use of buildings by bats in close proximity will increase and vice versa.

The building is a brick structure with a slate roof and no loft space. The absence of loft space will significantly reduce opportunities for bat species that show a preference for enclosed loft spaces; typically Brown long-eared bats *Plecotus auritus*. Additionally there is no suitable foraging habitat for this species in the vicinity of the Chapel.

Very few places for crevice dwelling bat species, such as Pipistrelle bats are present and generally the immediate environs are considered to be hostile for bats. The Bridgewater Canal to the south of the Chapel could be used for foraging or commuting but vegetation is predominantly absent which may reduce the quality and densities of invertebrates upon which bats feed.

A brick tower exists on one elevation, although access into the floors within the tower does not exist. However the interior was inspected with powerful torchlight and assessed in relation to roost potential. From this inspection the structure is not considered to be of high roost potential as towers of this nature tend to be draughty and too cold for a breeding roost. It is however always possible that bats' could use crevices for temporary use or for hibernation that are out of vision although bats in this situation are often extremely difficult to locate, even by experienced personnel.

6.2 Barn Owl Survey Results

The presence of a barn owl nest site in the city centre is considered to be remote and no sign of this species was located during the investigation. Furthermore evidence of previous barn owl occupation is absent and roost potential is low.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

Based upon the walkover survey and habitat assessment of Castlefield Chapel it was concluded that the potential use of the building for bat roosts is minimal, whilst foraging habitat is poor thereby reducing the potential use of the building as a breeding roost.

In addition, it can be concluded that the building holds no potential for barn owls and lacked any evidence of recent use.

In summary it can be concluded that the current development proposals would not result in the loss of a nesting site for barn owls or high value bat roost potential.

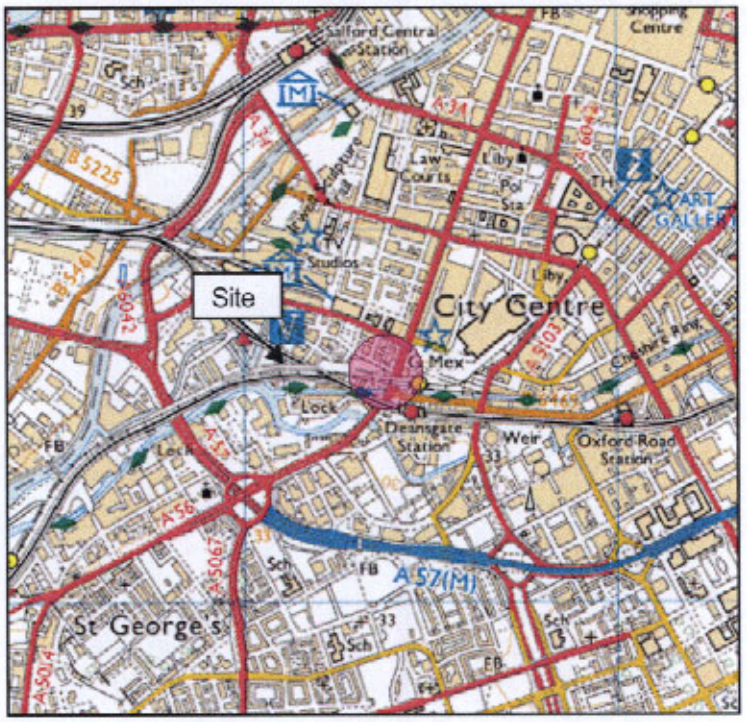
8.0 FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that if the upper section of the tower is subject to any future renovation works then as a precautionary measure it should be inspected for possible bat roost potential.

- As bats can be present in buildings at anytime of the year, contractors should be made aware of this possibility. If bats are found **or suspected** at anytime then, as a legal requirement, work in that area should cease until further advice has been sought from the acting bat consultant or alternatively English Nature.

- If timber treatment is to be used then the acting bat specialist should be notified and advice sought as to the appropriate chemical to use (incase bats use the Chapel at a future date).

Appendix A



amec Earth & Environmental UK Ltd	
Client: Bluetree Estates Limited	
Contract: Castlefield Chapel, 380 Deansgate, Manchester	**Job Ref:** 678800N353 **Date:** March 2006
Appendix: A	**Drawn by:** RF
Title: Site Location Plan	

Appendix B

Castlefield Chapel, 380 Deansgate, Manchester



