REPORT OF BAT SURVEY

7 – 27 Moston Lane
Harpurhey
Manchester

Provided for:

Manchester City Council
Corporate Services
Level 5, Heron House
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Manchester
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Date: 7th April 2014

Provided *by:*

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Summary

A bat survey was commissioned by Manchester City Council for disused mixed use buildings on 7 – 27 Moston Lane, Harpurhey, Manchester to inform proposals to demolish the buildings. This is a report of the survey.

Bats and their roosting sites receive a high level of legal protection under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010

A bat survey of the buildings on Moston Lane, Harpurhey, Manchester was undertaken on 7th April, 2014. The survey consisted of an inspection of the exterior and interior of the building. An assessment of surrounding habitat for its suitability to support bats and a desk-top study to identify any previous records of bats associated with the buildings were also conducted.

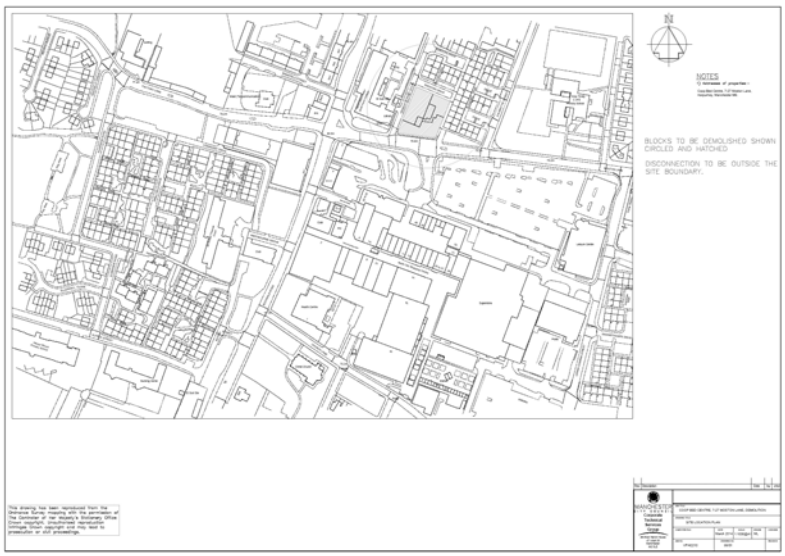
No evidence of bats using the building was found and the majority of the building was assessed as having low potential to support roosting bats. However there were parts of the building with some limited potential to support roosting bats (these areas are highlighted at appendix B). Although no bats or signs of bats were found we would recommend that the roof tiles in these areas should be removed by hand with care, with the presence of bats borne in mind. Although it is concluded that demolition works can take place without further survey work, precautions are recommended to ensure that bats are not harmed by the proposed works.

Parts of the building were being used by a large number of feral pigeons and some of them were nesting. Nesting pigeons have legal protection under the terms of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and a general license will be required from Natural England to allow work to proceed that would damage pigeon's nests. The licence can be downloaded from Natural England's website.

1 Introduction

1.1 Reason for survey

The buildings that make up 7 – 27 Moston Lane, Harpurhey, Manchester are due to be demolished. Bats have previously been recorded in the area, although not associated with this building.



Location of the Building

1.2 Legal protection offered to bats

All species of bats found in the UK receive a high level of legal protection under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. In summary, it is an offence –

- To kill, injure or take any wild bat
- To damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a wild bat uses for shelter or protection (known as a roost). Since bats are mobile in their habits and can use different places for shelter depending on the time of year this is taken to mean all identified bat roosts, whether bats are present in the roost or not.
- To disturb any wild bat while it is occupying a structure or place used for protection

It is possible to obtain licences for activities affecting bats that would otherwise be in breach of the law. In the case of development works (including building demolition) a licence can be issued under Section 39 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Strict tests must be satisfied before Natural England will agree to issue such a licence. These tests are –

- That the development is to preserve public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment
- That there is no satisfactory alternative
- That the issue of a licence will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range

1.3 Surveying for bats in buildings

Bats often use buildings as roosting sites because they provide a choice of safe, dry places. Buildings can provide a range of potential roost sites, e.g.

- Behind tiles or weatherboarding
- In cavity wall spaces
- In crevices between wall spaces and roofs
- Under soffit boards
- In roof spaces

Bats are mobile in their habits and can occupy a range of different roosting sites depending on the time of year and the stage of their life cycle. The most obvious use of buildings by bats is between May and August when the pregnant females gather in maternity roosts to give birth and raise their young. Although females and young often remain at one roost site all summer, they are sometimes known to move and can change roosting sites if conditions become unsuitable. Although some bats (e.g. brown long-eared bats) occupy the same roosting sites throughout the year, most summer colonies will have dispersed by the autumn. Temporary roost sites can then be occupied in the autumn before bats then move again into hibernation roosts for the winter. Hibernation roosts are often used by single or small numbers of bats and can be very difficult to detect.

Many buildings in areas supporting good feeding habitat can be used as temporary night roosts or feeding perches.

Since bats move roosting sites and can be difficult to detect directly the key identification feature to identify the presence of bats is droppings. Sometimes droppings are found on the outside of buildings. Otherwise droppings found in loft spaces or around chimneys or gable ends can be typical of bats. Other features used to identify the presence of bats include:

- Characteristic odour
- 'Chittering' by bats, usually in warm summer weather or when bats are active at dusk and are about to leave the roost
- Staining around possible access points

Any survey should include a desk-top survey for any existing records of bats close to the building being inspected and an assessment of the quality of the habitat surrounding the building. Since very many types of building can support bats, one of the best indicators of the possible presence of bats in a building is the presence of good feeding habitat for bats nearby.

It should be noted that the species of bat most commonly associated with buildings in urban areas is the pipistrelle and that pipistrelles, in spite of their protected status, remain relatively common the UK (estimated population is 2.5 million).

2 Aims of the survey

2.1 To identify any potential bat roosting features

2.2 To ascertain if bats currently use, or have used, the buildings for roosting purposes.

2.3 To ascertain the likely importance of the building/s for bats.

2.4 To recommend any further actions required resulting from the survey findings.

3 Methodology

A desk-top survey was undertaken for any existing records of bats within 1km of the site (see Appendix A).

An assessment was made of the potential of the buildings to support bats.

An inspection of the inside and outside of the building was made during daylight on the 7th April 2014, searching for bats or signs of bats and assessing the general suitability of the building to support bats. Close-focussing Avian F 8 x 32 binoculars and a one million candle power torch and the use of ladders were used during the building inspections.

3.1 Survey limitations

Given the mobile (and sometimes cryptic) habits of bats it is possible that a one-off survey such as that conducted for the buildings making up 7-27 Moston Lane, Harpurhey, Manchester may miss signs of bats if they are not occupying the roost at the time of survey. Even if bats are present they can be very difficult to detect if they are occupying inaccessible cracks or crevices. A bat survey cannot therefore hope to provide a definitive 'negative' result. Rather, results are expressed in terms of the *probability* of a particular planned development affecting bats.

3.2 Judgement of potential for bat roosts

The following table was used to both assess potential and to aid decisions about recommendations for example for further surveys.

Level of Potential	Justification
High Potential	• Abundant features suitable for use as bat roosts e.g. gaps into soffits, lifted and/or missing roof slates/tiles and ridge tiles, wall cavities, accessible enclosed roofspace, accessible below-ground structures. • Bat roosts known from similar structures in the vicinity. • Evidence of bats found on site e.g. droppings, feeding signs. *Surrounding landscape supports abundant features for foraging, commuting and possibly roosting bats e.g. mature trees, waterbodies, pastureland, high connectivity. *Bat activity recorded in vicinity of survey site
Medium Potential	• Occasional features suitable for use as bat roosts. • Bat roosts known from similar structures in same borough. *Surrounding landscape supports occasional features for foraging,

	commuting and possibly roosting bats *Bat activity recorded from the borough around survey site
Low Potential	• Few Features suitable for use as bat roosts. • Bat roosts known from similar structures within Greater Manchester. *Surrounding landscape supports few features for foraging, commuting and possibly roosting bats. *Bat activity recorded from the Greater Manchester area

* Additional factor used in combination with those listed above.

Adapted from BCT Bat Survey Guidelines (2nd Edition) 2012

4 Results

4.1 The desktop search shows three roost records of pipistrelle sp and common pipistrelle bat roosts. The closest roost is approximately 500 metres to the north-west of the building; the other two roosts are located approximately 900 metres away from the buildings one to the south east and the other to the west.

4.2 There are a number of buildings which make up 7-27 Moston Lane, some are single storey but the majority are double storey. The buildings are of brick construction with a mix of slate, metal and corrugated roofs.

4.3 The loft area above what used to be the fitness centre hadn't been used by pigeons and was a dry roof space. The area was inspected through a hole in the ceiling but due to health and safety issues we were unable to inspect the space thoroughly. The roof tiles on this section had some gaps which would allow bat access. We were also unable to access the building adjoining this (shown on the photograph at appendix B). Both of these parts of the building should have the roof tiles removed by hand with the presence of bats borne in mind.

4.4 The buildings are located north of Manchester City Centre in a dense urban setting, opposite a shopping centre and 24 hour petrol station. The building is located on a busy well lit main road.

4.5 The immediately surrounding habitat is poor for bats. The wider landscape was considered to have low to moderate habitat value for feeding/commuting bats given that the River Irk runs approximately 600 metres to the west of the site and Boggart Hole Clough approximately 600 metres to the north of the site.

4.6 All of the buildings are disused are unheated, have been unoccupied for some time and have been subjected to a significant amount of disturbance.

4.7 Parts of the building were being used by a large number of feral pigeons and were wet and draughty.

4.8 No bats or signs of bats were found during the building inspections.

4.9 The buildings were assessed as being of low potential to support roosting bats



Photo 1 – Front of the buildings



Photo 2- Side of the buildings from Hemsley Street



Photo 3 - The rear of the buildings

5 Limitations of the Survey

5.1 The survey was limited to a single visit in April.

5.2 A common issue on many sites is that the external field signs of bat presence, such as droppings and urine staining may be lost over time due to the weathering and damp conditions; this is a common issue when surveying buildings. It is therefore possible that signs of bats on the exterior of the buildings may not have been apparent at time of survey.

5.3 Another frequent limitation when surveying buildings is that droppings and other field signs of the presence of crevice dwelling species such as the Pipistrelle bat are often not visible. Droppings often accumulate in hidden areas which may not be found during routine non-invasive surveys.

5.4 It wasn't possible to access all of the loft spaces due to health and safety issues.

5.6 This type of survey helps to determine the presence of bats but does not prove absence.

6 Conclusions

6.1 There was no evidence to suggest that bats were roosting in the building at the time of the survey.

6.2 There was no evidence to suggest that bats have used the building for roosting prior to the survey.

6.3 The buildings that comprise 7 – 27 Moston Lane were considered to have low potential to support roosting bats.

6.4 A general licence will need to be obtained from Natural England to allow work to proceed that would damage pigeon's nests.

7 Implications and Recommendations

7.1 The buildings that comprise 7 – 27 Moston Lane were considered to have a low potential to support bats.

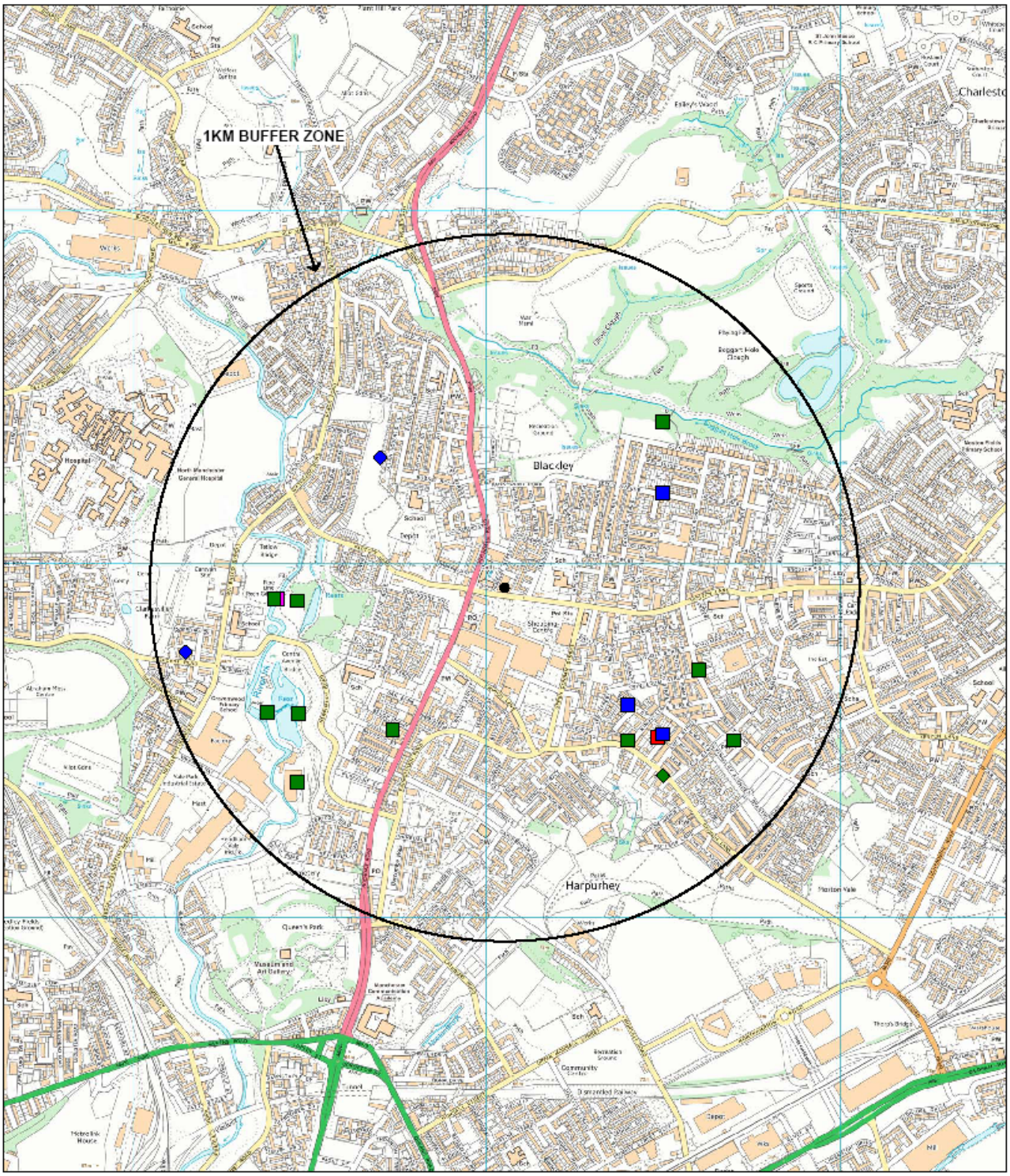
7.2 The roof tiles on the eastern part of the building should be taken off by hand with care, with the presence of bats borne in mind.

7.2 Demolition can proceed without the need for further bat surveys.

7.3 Notwithstanding the above, bats can turn up in unlikely places. Precautions should be taken throughout demolition works at any time of year, with the possible presence of bats borne in mind. If bats are found at any time then work must cease immediately and advice sought from a suitably qualified bat worker.

7.4 Parts of the building were being used by feral pigeons and some of them were nesting. Nesting pigeons have legal protection under the terms of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and a general license will be required from Natural England to allow work to proceed that would damage pigeon's nests. The licence can be downloaded from Natural England's website.

Appendix A – Data Search, showing Bat Records



KEY

BAT ROOSTS

- COMMON PIPISTRELLE
- PIPISTRELLE SP

BATS OTHER SIGNS

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

GREATER MANCHESTER ECOLOGY UNIT
ECOLOGICAL SEARCH - 7-27 MOSTON LANE
HARPURHEY, MANCHESTER

SCALE 1:10,000

BAT DATA COURTESY OF SOUTH LANCS BAT GROUP

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Appendix B



Photo showing the roof areas where the slates should be removed by hand.
Access was limited/not possible in these areas