REPORT OF BAT SURVEY

Chase Street
Manchester
M4 4FJ

Provided for:

Manchester City Council
Corporate Services
Level 5, Heron House
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Manchester
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Date: 24th February 2014

Provided *by:*

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Summary

A bat survey was commissioned by Manchester City Council for part used, part disused warehouse buildings on Chase Street, 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

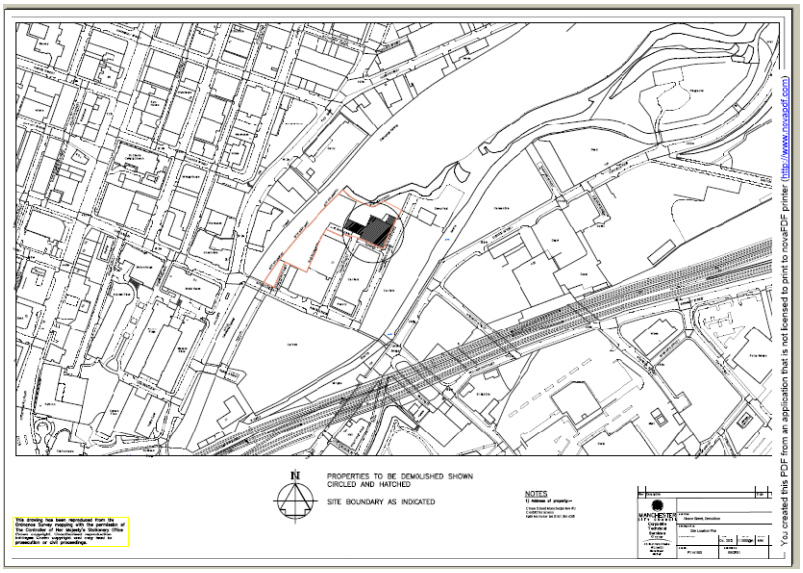
A bat survey of the building on Chase Street, Manchester was undertaken on 24th February, 2014. The survey consisted of an inspection of the exterior and interior of the building. An assessment of surrounding habitat for its suitability to support bats and a desk-top study to identify any previous records of bats associated with the buildings were also conducted.

No evidence of bats using the building was found and the building was assessed as having low potential to support roosting bats. Although it is concluded that demolition works can take place without damaging a bat roost, precautions are recommended to ensure that bats are not harmed by the proposed works.

1 Introduction

1.1 Reason for survey

The warehouse building on Chase Street, Manchester is 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 outside of the building was made during daylight on the 24th February 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 were used during the building inspections. An internal inspection of the building was also undertaken.

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 warehouse building on Chase Street, 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 one record of a Pipistrelle bat roost within 1km to the south-east of the site together with a number of Pipistrelle bat records within 1km of the building.

4.2 The building was assessed as being of low potential to support roosting bats. The building comprises of a part used/part disused warehouse building. The building is a double storey brick built structure with a pitched roof made of corrugated sheets; there are no roof voids. Most of the windows and doors are boarded up although one or two windows were without glass and open, with wind and rain ingress. The western end of the building is disused and was completely open at the gable end. Some of the roof was missing and/or collapsed and the building had recently been subjected to fire and subsequent water ingress. The eastern part of the building was still being partially used as a warehouse. Although most of the roof was still intact within this area there were gaps in the walls and the fire damage had also affected this side of the building. The buildings were draughty.

4.3 The building is located north of Manchester City Centre in a dense urban setting.

4.4 The surrounding habitat was considered to have low to moderate value for feeding/commuting bats given that the River Irk runs close to the south-east of the site. However, the River Irk is culverted to the south of the site.

4.5 Both the used and disused parts of the building are unheated and have been subjected to a significant amount of disturbance.

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



The building looking from east to west



Inside the unused part of the building showing the open western end



The partition between the used and unused section



The used part of the building



One of the windows without glass

5 Limitations of the Survey

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

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. This constraint is not regarded as significant in this circumstance.

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. This constraint is not regarded as significant in this circumstance.

5.4 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 warehouse building on Chase Street, Manchester was considered to have low potential to support roosting bats.

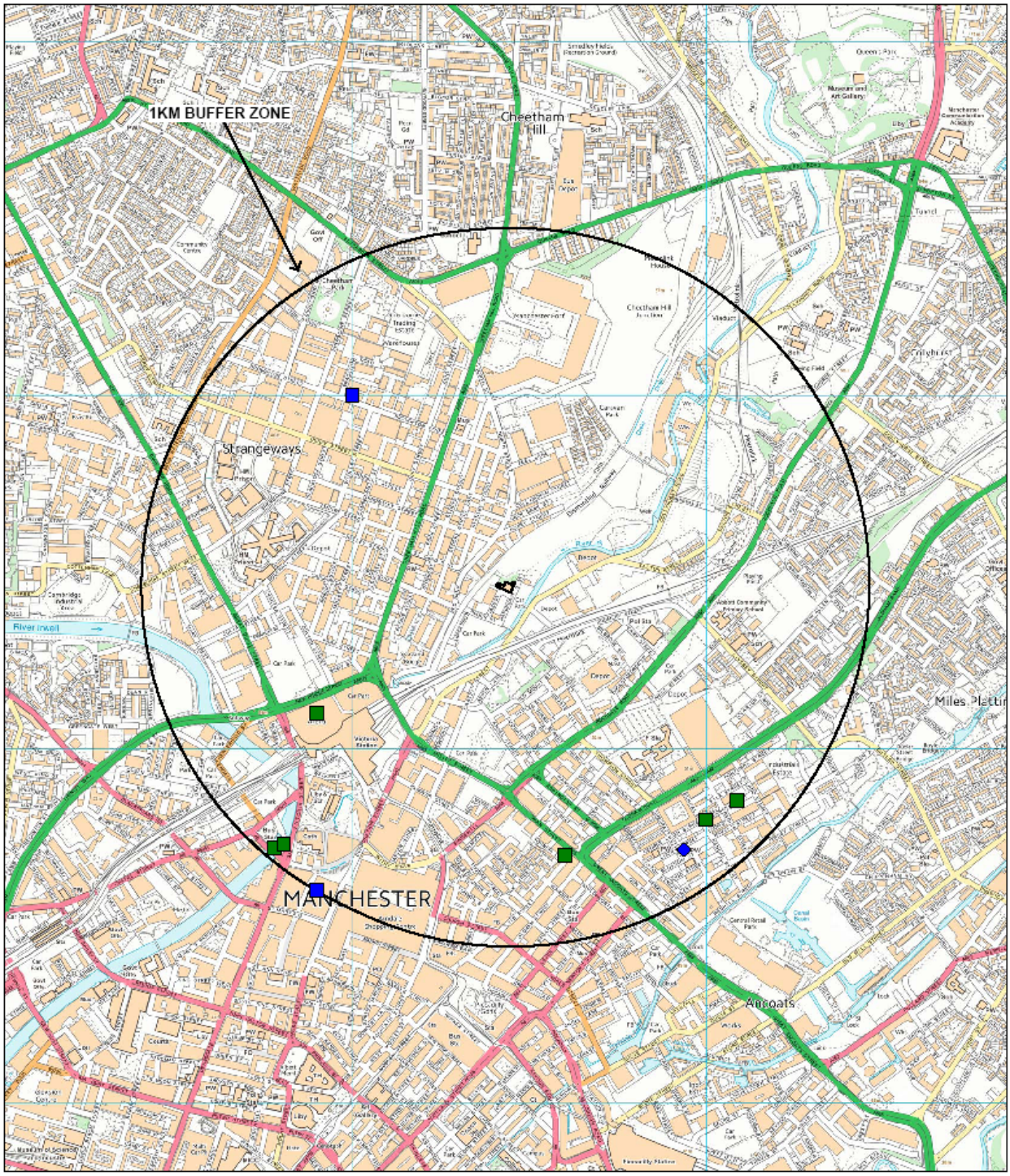
7 Implications and Recommendations

7.1 The warehouse building on Chase Street, Manchester is considered to have a low potential to support bats.

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.

Appendix A – Data Search, showing Bat Records



KEY

BAT ROOSTS

- COMMON PIPISTRELLE
- PIPISTRELLE SP

BATS OTHER SIGNS

- COMMON PIPISTRELLE
- PIPISTRELLE SP

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BAT DATA COURTESY OF SOUTH LANCS BAT GROUP

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