

BAT SURVEY REPORT

**Gorton Library
Garratt Way
Gorton
M18 8HE**



Provided for:

Manchester City Council

Date: January 2019 – *updated Sept 2022*

Provided by:

The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit
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Summary

Bat surveys were carried out to inform proposals to demolish the library at Gorton, Manchester and re-develop the site.

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.

An inspection of the buildings at Gorton Library were undertaken on the 9th September 2022. This inspection was a repeat of a former assessment of the site carried out in January 2019. The bat survey consisted of –

- an inspection of the interior and exterior of the building to identify bats or signs of bats and to identify any potential bat access points;
- an assessment of surrounding habitat for its suitability to support bats;
- a desk-top study to identify any previous records of bats associated with the building and
- bat emergence activities carried out on the evening of the 9th September, 2022.

The survey findings concluded that the building has a low potential to support roosting bats and that no bats were recorded as roosting in the building at the time of the surveys.

Although it is concluded that development works can take place with low risk of damaging a bat roost, precautions are recommended to ensure that bats are not harmed by the proposed works in the event that bats are discovered during works.

Other Ecological Considerations

Nesting Birds

There are hedges and scattered trees and shrubs around the garden of the site, which have the potential to support nesting birds. All birds, with the exception of certain pest species, and their nests are protected under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). We would therefore recommend that the removal of the hedge, shrubs and any of the trees, if required, should not be undertaken in the main bird breeding season (March to July inclusive). If this is not possible then we would recommend that they are inspected by a suitably qualified ecologist prior to any works commencing

1 Introduction

1.1 Reason for survey

The building Gorton Library is to be demolished to facilitate the redevelopment of the site. Bat activity has previously been recorded in the wider area, however there are no records associated with the building itself or within the immediate area. The closest known bat roost (*Pipistrelle* sp.) is recorded approximately 415 metres to the north of the site (see Appendix 1).

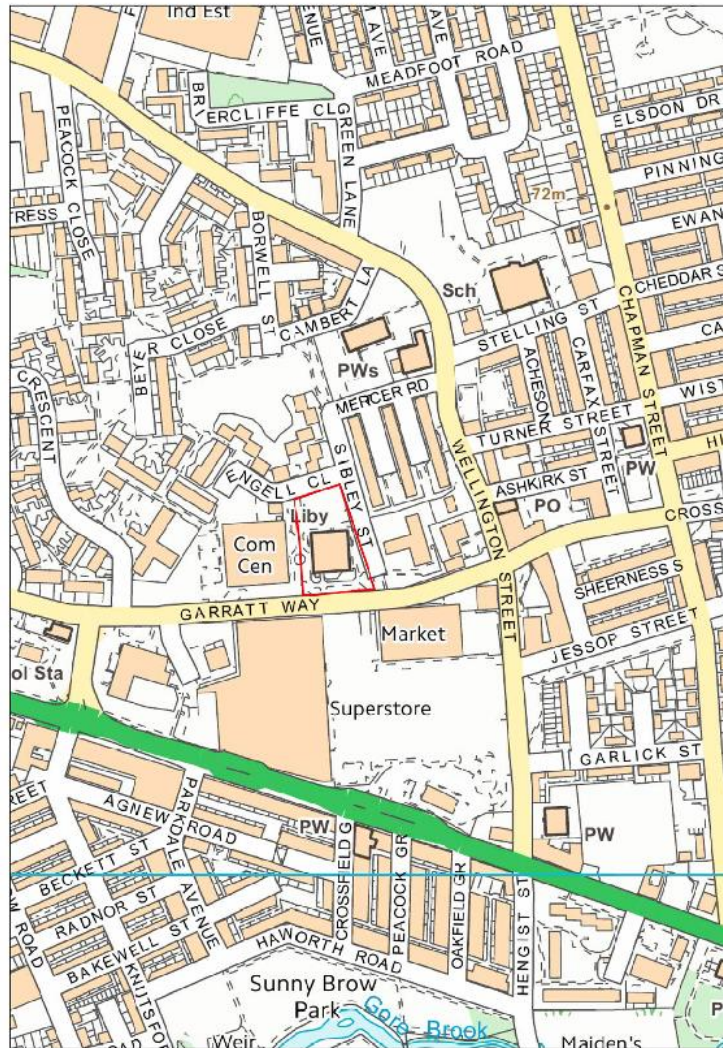


Fig 1 - Location of building surveyed (in red, not to scale)



Fig 2 – Aerial view 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 2017 (as amended). 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 the terms of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

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 of Greater Manchester 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 building for roosting purposes.
- 2.3** To ascertain the likely importance of the building 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 1).

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

An inspection of the inside and outside of the building was made during daylight on the 15th January 2019 searching for bats or signs of bats and assessing the general suitability of the building to support bats. Close-focussing Minox F 8 x 32 binoculars, summit telescopic extension ladders and a one million candle power torch were used during the building inspections.

The survey was undertaken by Mandy Elford BSc Hons, MCIEEM, Ecologist and experienced bat surveyor, who currently holds a Natural England Class 2 bat licence (2015-11597-CLS-CLS) and Derek Richardson BSc Hons MPhil, also an experienced bat surveyor, with over 20 years' experience.

The survey was carried out in line with the recommended methods contained in The Bat Conservation Trust Bat Survey Good Practice Guidelines (2016).

A subsequent re-assessment of the building, and a bat emergence survey, was carried out on the 9th September 2022 by Principal Ecologist Derek Richardson and Ecologist Shea O'Neill MCIEEM.

Bat emergence surveys involved two surveyors using handheld ultrasound detectors (Magenta and Petterrsen detectors) to record bat activity. Survey commenced at one hour before sunset and concluded two hours after sunset. Sunset was at 19.40 pm. The weather was dry, mild and without noticeable wind.

Early September is rather late in the season to detect bat maternity roosts, but bats are still very active at this time of year and transient, mating roosts and year-round roosts can readily be detected in early September (*Collins 2016*).

3.1 Survey limitations

Given the mobile habits of bats it is possible that a one-off survey such as that conducted for Gorton Library 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 2011

4 Results

- 4.1** The desktop search shows that bats have been recorded within 1km of the building and three known bat roosts (*Pipistrelle* sp) have been recorded approx. 415 metres and 460 metres to the north of the site and 798 metres to the north north-east of the site (see Appendix 1).
- 4.2** The building which is to be demolished comprises a single storey brick building. The building is complex, and has a multi-hipped roof covered in concrete overlapping roof tiles. The hip and ridge tiles are also concrete. The windows of the building are covered in a metal mesh. Fascia boards and boxed cornices are present around the base of the roof line, which are wooden. A brick chimney and single storey brick structure with a single sloping roof is present at the rear of the building, this houses the boiler and heating system. There are vents within the structure; however there is metal mesh inside the vent negating any access for bats. The building is currently in use as a library.



Photo 1 — Building Surveyed



Photo 2 – side of the building showing the Windows covered in mesh



Photo 3 – overlapping concrete tiled roof



Photo 4 – structure to the roof which houses the boiler and heating equipment



Photo 5 – trees and shrubs



Photo 6 – beech hedge



Photo 7 – underside of the cornice



Photo 8 – Internal view

- 4.3 The building is in an urban location within 4km of Manchester City Centre, It is located on a Garret Way, which is a busy road that runs parallel with the busy A57 Hyde Road, which is well lit. The building itself is also well lit. A large Tesco Extra superstore is located on the opposite side of Garret Way to the front of the building, very well lit and very busy.
- 4.4 Internally it was not possible to access the roof space above the library as the building is still in use and in order to look inside the roof space, ceiling tiles would have had to be removed.
- 4.5 Internal access was possible into the rear brick single storey structure and chimney. No bats or signs of bats were found in this section of the roof.
- 4.6 No bats or signs of bats were found during the internal and external inspection either on the 15th January 2019 or on the 9th September 2022.
- 4.7 During the bat emergence survey no bats were seen to emerge from or return to the building. The first bat recorded was 22 minutes after sunset, foraging over trees to the rear of the building. Subsequently (32 minutes after sunset) a single bat flew over the building.

At 20.47 pm a single bat was again recorded feeding over trees to the rear of the building.

All the bats recorded were Common Pipistrelles. Generally, bat activity was very low.

5 Limitations of the Survey

- 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 building 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 are often not visible. Droppings often accumulate in hidden areas which may not be found during routine non-invasive surveys.
- 5.4 It was not possible to enter the roof space or look into the roof space above the main library as the library is still in use and it was not possible to remove the ceiling tiles.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 There was no evidence to suggest that bats were roosting in the building at Gorton Library at the time of the survey, although bats are present in the area.
- 6.2 There was no evidence to suggest that bats have used the building for roosting prior to the survey.
- 6.3 The surrounding habitat in the immediate vicinity of the site was considered to be poor for bat foraging and commuting. The building is located on a busy main road and is very well lit, with high levels of disturbance.

7 Implications and Recommendations

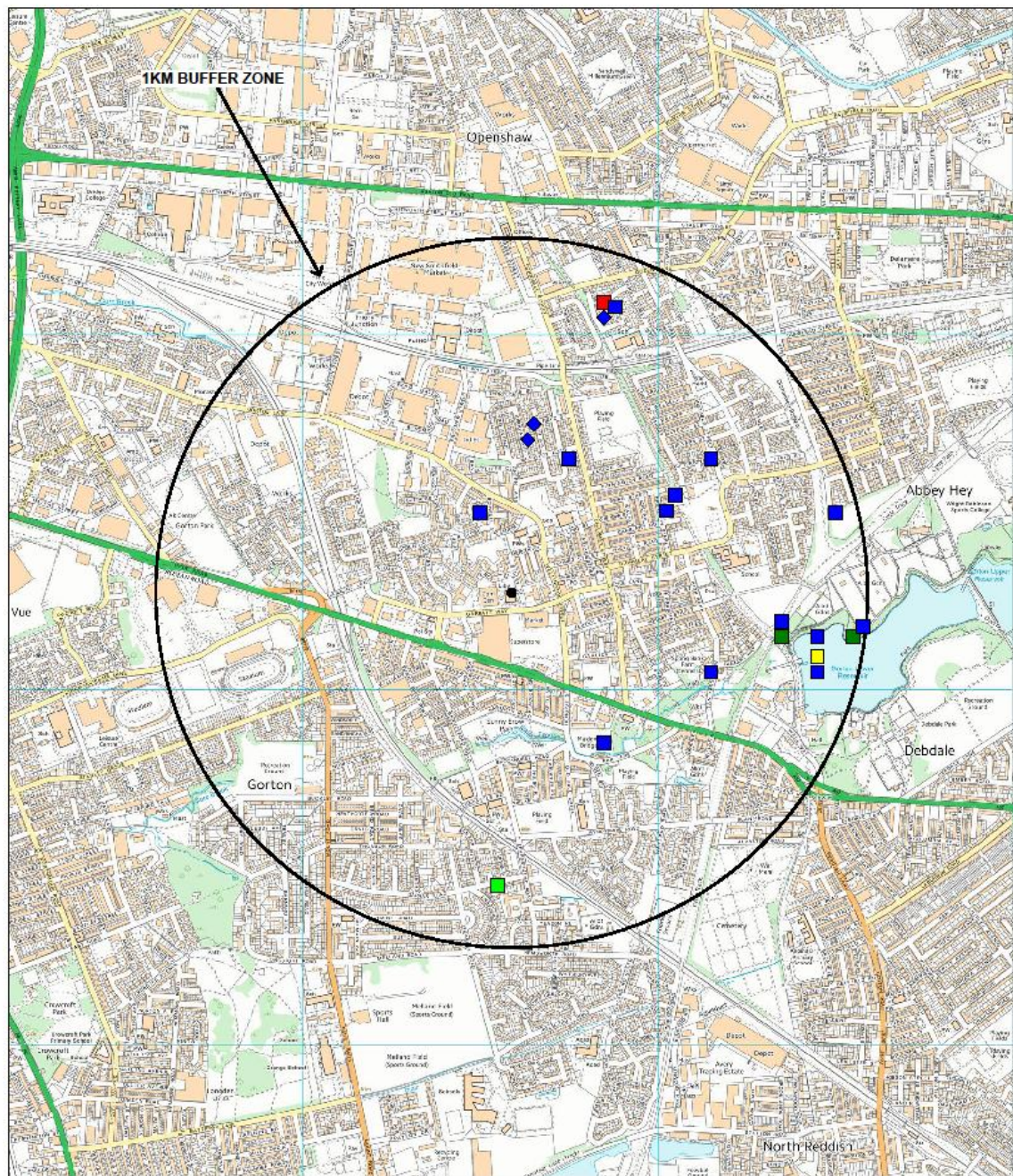
- 7.1** No bats were recorded roosting in the building at the time of the surveys. However, bats are mobile and cryptic in their habits and can turn up in unlikely locations. All contractors should be reminded of their legal responsibilities regarding bats prior to works commencing. If bats are found at any time, work must stop and advice sought from a suitably qualified person about how best to proceed.
- 7.2** Since bats are present in the area, a useful addition to any future development of the site would be to install artificial bat roosting boxes on any retained trees and/or new buildings which may be constructed on the site.

Other Ecological Considerations

Nesting Birds

The trees, beech hedge, and the shrubs that are present in the grounds have the potential to support nesting birds. All birds, with the exception of certain pest species, and their nests are protected under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). We would therefore recommend that the trees, hedge and shrubs should not be undertaken in the main bird breeding season (March to July inclusive). If this is not possible then we would recommend that the trees, hedge and shrubs be inspected by a suitably qualified ecologist prior to any works commencing.

APPENDIX ONE – Desk Top Data Search for Bat Records



KEY
BAT ROOSTS
 ◆ PIPISTRELLE SP
BATS OTHER SIGNS
 ■ BAT SP
 ■ COMMON PIPISTRELLE
 ■ NOCTULE BAT
 ■ PIPISTRELLE SP
 ■ SOPRANO PIPISTRELLE

GREATER MANCHESTER ECOLOGY UNIT
 ECOLOGICAL SEARCH - SJ88589627
 GORTON LIBRARY - MAP 2

SCALE 1:10,000

BAT DATA COURTESY OF SOUTH LANC'S BAT GROUP

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 Date Produced: 14/01/2019