

ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

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



Provided for:

Manchester City Council

September 2022

Provided by:

The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit
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Summary

An Ecological Assessment was commissioned by Manchester City Council for Gorton Library, Garrett Way, Gorton, Manchester. This is a report of the survey.

A desk top study did not identify any local wildlife sites within a 1km buffer zone of the site. The results of the desk top survey are presented at Appendix 1.

The Ecology Unit visited the site in September 2022 to carry out the Ecological Appraisal and Tree Survey (Tree Survey provided separately).

The site is located in the Gorton area of Manchester. The site comprises a public library building, hardstanding, amenity grassland, scattered trees, a beech hedge and shrubs. The building is at present in use as a public library, and was assessed as having some potential to support bats. This report should be read in conjunction with the separate Bat Survey Report

The site is located on Garrett Way, Gorton, approximately 4 miles from Manchester City Centre. The building is located in a dense urban area; which comprises a mix of residential, retail and business units.

A number of broadleaved trees are present around the perimeter of the site. None of the trees had features which could support roosting bats.

The trees, hedge and shrubs on the site 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 works to trees, hedges and shrubs should not be undertaken in the main bird breeding season (March to August inclusive), unless nesting birds are found to be absent, by a suitably qualified ecologist.

Cotoneaster was present on the site. Certain species of cotoneaster are invasive and listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. The City Council should be aware of its presence and it should be disposed of accordingly during any works to develop the site.

1 Introduction to the Survey

1.1 Reason for Survey

Manchester City Council is proposing to demolish the Gorton Library building and clear the site in order to make way for a new development.



Fig 1 Site Location (in red)



Fig 2 Aerial View of the site

1.2 Legal protection offered to bats

The most significant ecological constraint likely to be associated with the site and the planned development of the site is considered to be the possible presence of 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 Legal Protection offered to 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).

1.4 Overall Site Description

The site comprises a relatively building, still in use as a public library, hardstanding, a beech hedge, scattered trees around the perimeter of the site, amenity grassland and shrubs.

The site is located in the Gorton area of Manchester in a dense, busy location. The site is located on Garrett way, in a mixed residential/retail area of Gorton.

2.0 Aims of the Survey

- To undertake a desk based study to identify any existing records for protected or notable species and habitats present within 1km of the site
- To undertake a Preliminary Ecological Assessment of the site to establish the presence or potential presence of any protected or notable species
- To ascertain if bats currently use, or have used, the trees for roosting purposes
- To ascertain the likely importance of the trees for bats
- To identify the potential for the trees to support nesting birds
- To ascertain if any nesting birds are present
- To identify if invasive species are present

3.0 Methodology

A desk top search of the Greater Manchester Local Record Centre database was undertaken for any existing records for protected and notable species and habitats

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

An assessment was made of the potential of the trees to support nesting birds.

An inspection of the trees was undertaken in September 2022 from ground level. Close-focussing Minox 8 x 32 binoculars were used during the tree inspections. The surveys were undertaken by Mandy Elford BSc Hons, MCIEEM, Ecologist and an 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 surveys were carried out in line with the recommended methods contained in The Bat Conservation Trust Bat Survey Good Practice Guidelines (*Collins 2016*).

A separate Bat Survey of the building was undertaken and this report has been submitted separately.

4 Results

Desktop information

- 4.1** The desktop search shows that bats have been recorded within 1km of the site and three known bat roosts (*Pipistrelle sp*) have been recorded approx. 560 metres, 610 metres and 970 metres to the north north-east of the site (see Appendix 1).
- 4.2** A record for a dead badger and historic records for a badger sett are also recorded within the 1km buffer zone, albeit some distance away from the site. This map has not been included in the report as it shows sensitive information relating to badgers, which is not for the public record.
- 4.3** Song Thrush a S41 species is also recorded within the 1km buffer zone.
- 4.4** No other wildlife records have been identified from the GMLRC Database.

Field Survey

- 4.5** The relatively simple site supports –
- The Library building
 - Close-mown amenity grassland
 - Broadleaved trees
 - Shrubs

All of the habitats on the site are common in the area. No notable or priority habitats were recorded.



Photo 1 – showing the beech hedge and trees on the perimeter of the site



Photo 2 – trees and shrubs



Photo 3 – cotoneaster



Photo 4 – amenity grassland and trees

- 4.6** The trees on the site had no evidence of current or past usage by bird nesting, but this does not negate the use of the trees by nesting birds. The beech hedge and shrubs present also have the potential to support nesting birds.
- 4.7** There were no signs of badgers on the site and the site was considered to have negligible potential to support badgers.

5 Overall Assessment and Conclusions

- 5.1 The trees on the site were assessed as having negligible potential to support roosting bats. The trees did not have any features suitable for bats to use for roosting.
- 5.2 The building was assessed as having low potential to support bats and further bat surveys were carried out. No bats were recorded as roosting in the building.
- 5.3 Bats are mobile in their habits and can turn up in the most unlikely places. In the unlikely event that bats are found during tree works. Work should cease immediately and GMEU contacted (0161 342 2250).
- 5.4 The trees, shrubs and beech hedge 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 works to trees, shrubs and the hedge should not be undertaken in the main bird breeding season (March to August inclusive), unless nesting birds are found to be absent, by a suitably qualified ecologist.
- 5.5 Cotoneaster was present on the site. Certain species of cotoneaster are invasive and listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. The City Council should be aware of its presence and it should be disposed of accordingly during the course of any development works.

6 Implications and Recommendations

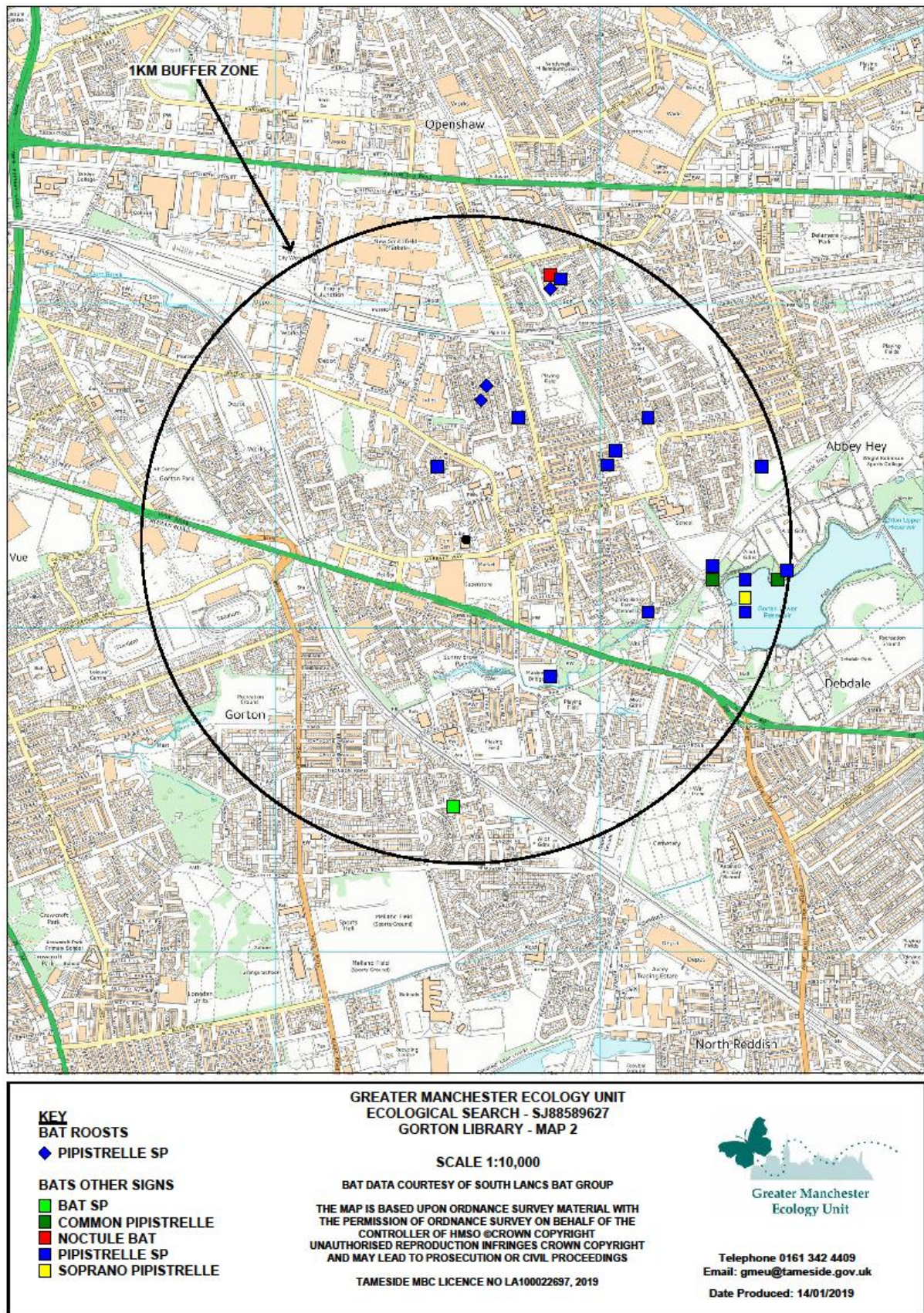
- 6.1 There are no significant ecological constraints associated with the site which would preclude development.
- 6.2 All of the trees on the site are considered to have a negligible potential to support roosting bats.
- 6.3 Notwithstanding the above, bats can turn up in unlikely places. Precautions should be taken throughout tree works at any time of year, with the possible presence of bats borne in mind. **If bats are found or suspected at any time then work must cease immediately and GMEU contacted (0161 342 2250).**
- 6.4 The trees, shrubs and beech hedge on the site 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 works to trees, shrubs and the ivy should not be undertaken in the main bird breeding season (March to August inclusive), unless nesting birds are found to be absent, by a suitably qualified ecologist.
- 6.5 The trees and shrubs on the site have local biodiversity value. Efforts should be made to retain trees if possible, or to replace any trees lost with new planting.
- 6.6 Any future development of the site should include enhancements for biodiversity.

These could include:

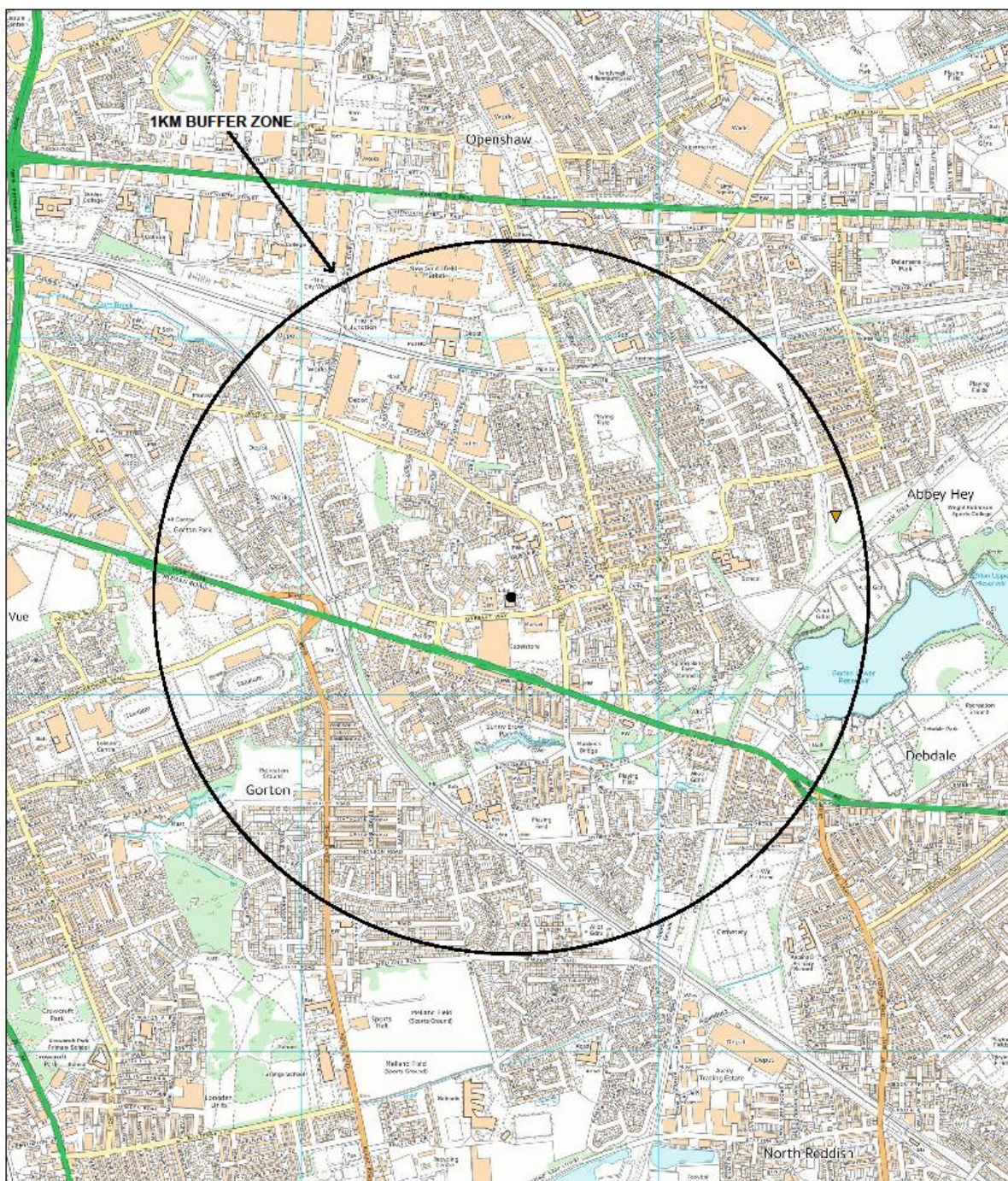
- Native tree and shrub planting.

- Bird boxes
- Bat boxes

Appendix 1 – Data Search



Gorton Library, Garrett Way, Gorton, Manchester



KEY
SECTION 41 SPECIES
 ▼ SONG THRUSH

GREATER MANCHESTER ECOLOGY UNIT
ECOLOGICAL SEARCH - SJ88589627
GORTON LIBRARY - MAP 3

SCALE 1:10,000

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