

Summary

The most recent bat survey is still valid but becoming dated. Other ecological issues relating to nesting birds and enhancing the natural environment can be dealt with via condition and or informative.

Bats

Previous surveys have assessed the building as low risk, the most recent occurring in April 2020 when one emergence survey was carried out. No bats have ever been recorded as roosting. I am therefore satisfied that no update is required at this time, such reports being valid for one to two years, but that precautionary conditions, requiring updates if demolition is granted. I recommend a condition along the following lines.

If the demolition hereby approved does not commence before 1st April 2022, the buildings will be reassessed for bat roosting potential and the finding supplied to and agreed in writing by the LPA.

Nesting Birds

No evidence of birds nesting in the building was recorded in 2020, though previous surveys did report bird nests. Trees will also be lost and there is ivy on the building, both potential bird nesting habitat. All British birds nests and eggs (with certain limited exceptions) are protected by Section 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, as amended. I recommend a condition along the following lines be applied to any permission.

No works to trees or shrubs shall occur or ivy be removed between the 1st March and 31st August in any year unless a detailed bird nest survey by a suitably experienced ecologist has been carried out immediately prior to clearance and written confirmation provided that no active bird nests are present which has been agreed in writing by the LPA.

Contributing to and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Section 170 of the NPPF 2019 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. The development will result the loss of trees and potential bird nesting habitat. There is adequate space on site for replacement planting and provision of bird boxes on either the retained trees or buildings. The previous application provided a landscape proposal that was satisfactory. I recommend a similar condition to what was previously applied.

A landscape plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA, prior to commencement of development. The content of the plan should include elements to mitigate for loss of trees shrubs and bird nesting habitat.

Ecologist

GM Ecology Unit