

GMEU response

Summary

I previously broadly accepted the finding of the ecological report as part of the previous application. The ecological report is still valid.

Bats

The bat report for the building under construction assessed the building as having negligible bat roosting potential. I have no reason to doubt the findings of the report. No further information or measures are required.

Other Protected Species

No evidence of any other protected species was found and I am satisfied that no further survey is required given the nature of the development. We have no records of great crested newts from the locality with all ponds nearby having been surveyed in the past. We also have no records of reptiles from the locality.

Nesting Birds

Scrub and some tree removal may be required 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 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.

Invasive Species

Himalayan balsam, rhododendron and japanese knotweed are recorded nearby. These species are included within schedule 9 part 2 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, as amended. It is an offence to introduce or cause to grow wild any plant listed under this schedule. It would appear that they may be avoidable, though exact location are not shown on the plans. I recommend as a precaution a condition along the following lines is applied to any permission.

Prior to any earthworks, vegetation clearance a method statement detailing control or avoidance measures for himalayan balsam, rhododendron and japanese knotweed should be supplied to and agreed in writing to the LPA. The agreed method statement shall be adhered to and implemented in full unless otherwise agreed in writing by the LPA.

Contributing to and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Section 174 of the NPPF 2021 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Whilst no trees appear to be removed, part of the woodland will be lost to garden, resulting in a net loss of biodiversity. There is however significant habitat to the south and west that could be enhanced. Species mitigation through provision of bird boxes is viable on site with enhancement for bats also feasible

I recommend that prior to determination the developer confirms that they are willing to maintain and enhance the retained woodland and provide a defra metric demonstrating that biodiversity net gain is achievable on the site.

Note 10% BNG is now a material consideration in Greater Manchester following the 10% policy in PfE passing through the public enquiry.

Ecologist

Planning

Planning and Transportation

Place