

GMEU recommendation

Summary

No ecological information has been provided, though I am aware that previous surveys are still valid. Previous recommendations re. 66744 still apply

Bats

The previously supplied bat report is still valid and should be submitted as part of this application. Evidence that common pipistrelle bats are roosting under roof slates was confirmed, with four individual bats recorded under 3 different slates over two surveys. A license will therefore also be required from Natural England in order for the development to progress assuming roof repairs are to occur. Given only low numbers of the commonest species of bat were found, I am satisfied that mitigation can be provided and the bats safeguarded during works. The nature conservation status of this European protected species can be preserved in the locality and a license will be issued by Natural England (or the works carried out under a low impact license).

I recommend a condition along the following lines is applied to any permission.

Any works to the roof is likely to cause harm to common pipistrelle bats as identified in the bat survey date September 2020 by Anthony Nickson Ecology and shall not in any circumstances commence unless the local planning authority has been provided with either:

- a) a license issued by Natural England pursuant to Regulation 55, of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 authorising the specified activity/development go ahead: or***
- b) a statement in writing form the relevant licensing body or LPA to the effect that it does not consider that the specified development will require a license***

Nesting Birds

Probable evidence of bird nesting was found associated with the building as well as the removal of three mature trees and some areas of scrub, 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 external works to the building commence 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 and monbretia are present on the site the former appearing to be quite widespread. Both are listed under 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. I recommend a condition along the following lines is applied to any permission.

Prior to any earthworks a method statement detailing eradication and/or control and/or avoidance measures for himalayan balsam and monbretia 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 170 of the NPPF 2019 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. The development still appears to result in the loss of three mature trees, associated bird nesting habitat and bat roosting habitat. The latter should be dealt with via the bat license. Given the majority of mature trees are to be retained, I would recommend that mitigation through native shrub species would be the best option or hedge planting either under the retained trees or elsewhere on the site. Provision of bird boxes one on a retained tree and one on the converted church for species such as house sparrow should be provided for loss of bird nesting habitat. ***The detail can however be conditioned.***