

Summary

The main considerations for this application are bats, nesting bird and biodiversity net gain. All can be covered by either informative or condition text.

Bats

A Preliminary Roost Assessment and ground level tree assessment (Gritstone Ecology – October 2025) has been submitted. A full internal and external inspection of the property and trees found negligible potential for the building and trees to support roosting bats. GMEU have no reason to question the finding of the report. The Local Records Centre holds few records of foraging or roosting bats in the area. Having assessed the work planned, there is negligible potential for the works to disturb roosting bats and no further surveys are required.

Whilst the works have been assessed as having negligible risk for bats, the applicant is reminded that under the Habitat Regulation it is an offence to disturb, harm or kill bats. If a bat and the signs of bats is found all work should cease immediately and a suitably licensed bat worker employed to assess how best to safeguard the bat(s). Natural England should also be informed. We would suggest an informative to this effect be placed on any permission.

Nesting Birds

The two trees to be felled and the shrubs may support nesting birds. All British birds nests and eggs (with certain limited exceptions) are protected by Section 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, as amended. Should the tree and shrub removal be delayed until after the 1st of March, I would recommend the following condition be added.

No tree or shrub clearance shall occur or demolition of the building 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 works and written confirmation provided that no active bird nests are present, which has been agreed in writing by the LPA.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The information submitted with the application includes a basic Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) report and statutory Biodiversity Metric from Natalie Morris (Nee Woollacott) MCIEEM (August 2025)

The appraisal found the site had some ecological value, consisting of individual trees, shrubs and modified grassland

I have examined the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) metric spreadsheet and I am happy with the calculations provided.

After construction of the development, onsite biodiversity remediation and the 10% net gain requirement there is due to be a deficit of 0.39 Area Habitat units.

Given the availability of offsite units, this appears to be a realistic achievement for the site and therefore the LPA can be reasonably confident that the statutory biodiversity requirements could be discharged.

(Link to various wording for signposting applicant to statutory framework for Biodiversity Net Gain

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/663251d969098ded31fca800/BNG_Decision_Notice_Text.odt)

I would not consider the onsite biodiversity mitigation/enhancement to be significant and a habitat management and monitoring plan is not required.

If approved, the Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) and updated metric should be completed to show how the onsite/offsite biodiversity gain will be achieved and approved by the LPA, before the automatically applied statutory biodiversity gain condition can be released.

Biodiversity Enhancement

We would also expect any such scheme to include measures to enhance biodiversity at the site in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework. We would recommend that opportunities for biodiversity enhancement be incorporated into the new development. These should include:

- Bat bricks and/or tubes within the new development
- Bird box/swift nesting bricks
- Hedgehog friendly fencing

We suggest a condition to this effect be placed on any permission.

In conclusion we are satisfied that the application can be forwarded for determination and that any permission if granted is supported by the **conditions/informative** above.