

65963 – Lake Hill, Walshaw Road, Bury

Summary

Six bat roosts were identified in the existing buildings. A license from Natural England will be required. Badger and invasive species surveys are due an update. Issues can however be dealt with via condition

Bats

An emergence survey carried out by a very experienced consultant identified six different roost locations within the existing buildings. Three within the main building are regarded as likely avoidable, three within the extension to the north, regarded as unavoidable. The conversion of the main house will as a minimum required a reasonable avoidance method statement, the works on the northern extension will require a license from Natural England. Current numbers of bats and the species common pipistrelle, would indicate that the works on the northern extension could be done under a low impact license. I have no reason to doubt the findings of the report. I recommend a condition along the following lines are applied to any permission.

The development is likely to cause harm to common pipistrelle bats as identified in the Dusk emergence survey at Lake Hill Report date 28/8/20 by Angela Graham Bat Consultancy Service and no part shall 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 to the effect that it does not consider that the specified development will require a license***
- c) a statement in writing from the LPA that that specific part of the development will not impact on bats***
- d) A reasonable avoidance method statement for bats where a specific part of the development has the potential to impact on bats but is avoidable through pre-cautionary measures.***

Badgers

A previous survey carried out in 2016 found no evidence of a badger sett. This survey is no longer valid. The site was however assessed as having low potential. Therefore whilst the survey could be updated now, I am satisfied given the development may not come forward for some time, that further surveys can be dealt with via a condition along the following lines.

Prior to development a survey of the site and within 30m of boundaries for badger setts will occur and the findings supplied to and agreed in writing by the LPA.

Nesting Birds

It is not proposed that any trees will be removed but I note the close proximity of trees to the buildings, along the driveway and around the car parking area. It can be envisaged that some cutting back may be required or a change in plans result in the removal of potential bird nesting habitat. The bat consultant also noted that swifts were around the buildings and may potentially nest. I therefore recommend the following informative be applied to any permission.

The applicant is reminded that, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended it is an offence to remove, damage, or destroy the nest of a wild bird, while the nest is in use or being built. Planning consent does not provide a defence against prosecution under this act. If a birds

nest is suspected work should cease immediately and a suitably experienced ecologist employed to assess how best to safeguard the nest(s).

Invasive Species

At pre-application it was noted that Himalayan balsam was present along the banks of the lodge but that assuming works were restricted to the buildings this should not be an issue. A survey was carried out in 2016 for Japanese knotweed. None was found on the site. I noted in 2016, from photographs, that rhododendron is present on site another species now regarded as an invasive species. They are however along the drive and are as long as they are being retained not an ecological issue. These surveys and photographs are no longer valid. I recommend that they are either updated prior to determination or a condition along the following lines applied to any permission.

Prior to development a survey for invasive plant species including Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam and rhododendron will occur and the finding supplied to and agreed in writing to the LPA. If any invasive species are present and are unavoidable a method statement detailing control and eradication measures should also be supplied to and agreed in writing by the LPA, prior to any earthworks.

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 currently has minimal impact on the natural environment other than the loss of bat roosts. Recommendations for mitigation are provided in the bat report which proposes a number of bat boxes located on the mature trees that are to be retained. If any trees do end up requiring removal these too should be mitigated for. I also recommend enhancement through provision of swift bricks or boxes on the converted buildings. The details can be conditioned along the following lines.

Prior to first occupation a scheme for biodiversity enhancement of the site for bats and swift shall be provided to and agreed in writing by the LPA

Ecologist
GM Ecology Unit