

71524

Thank you for consulting GMEU regarding the below application, which is accompanied by a Biodiversity Statement. The statement outlines that the new lightwells will be constructed on an area of existing hardstanding. As such no existing habitats will be disturbed, and the application is exempt from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain. Nevertheless, landscaping enhancements have been proposed, as well as construction processes to minimise disturbance on wildlife. Such measures will help to deliver a measurable net gain on site as per the policies of the NPPF and should therefore be secured via a condition.

No information has been provided regarding the potential impact of the proposed works on roosting bats. However, the rooms to be converted are located within the basement, which already comprises a heavily disturbed living area, highly unlikely to support the constant cool and humid conditions that bats require for hibernation. Additionally, the building appears to be in generally good condition (based on Google Streetview, dated June 2024) and considering the ground-level location and small scale of the proposed external works, these are not anticipated to disturb any potential roost features. As such, no further survey effort is deemed necessary as protected species surveys should only be requested when there is a reasonable likelihood of the species being present and impacted by a development. Nevertheless, protected species can turn up in unexpected places and the granting of planning permission does not negate the need to abide by the laws which are in place to safeguard biodiversity. An informative should be used so that the applicant is aware that they must seek ecological advice should they find or suspect that the proposals will impact on protected species.

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