

Summary

Further bat surveys are recommended and a copy of the defra metric provided. Other ecological issues include nesting birds, other wildlife and invasive species.

Bats

The buildings and trees on the site were subject to a visual survey for bats. The building was assessed as moderate risk and two trees assessed as low risk. In-line with best practice further dusk surveys for the building have been proposed. Of the two trees, one appears to be retained and the other will require removal as within the footprint of the new build. Low risk trees can be removed under a precautionary method statement.

I therefore recommend that prior to determination the findings of a minimum of two dusk bat surveys during the optimal bat activity season ie beginning of May to beginning of September are provided to and agreed in writing by the LPA

I also recommend a condition along the following lines.

The removal of tree called T1 may have the potential to cause harm to bats as identified in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, e3p ref. 81-460-R1-1 and shall not in any circumstances occur unless precautionary measures or further survey have been provided to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority

With regards the external lighting, I am satisfied that there will be no significant effect on the ability of bats to forage and commute around the area.

Nesting Birds

Trees and shrubs will be lost, potential bird nesting habitat. Birds may also nest on the building though none is noted in the ecological report. 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.

Other Wildlife

The site is generally very low risk for other wildlife such as badger, hedgehog and for amphibians, with no evidence on site, no records within the zone of influence of the development and limited cover on the site. I am satisfied that the risks are low enough that it would be unreasonable to request reasonable avoidance measures. An informative re. hedgehogs will suffice.

The applicant is reminded that, under the Wild Mammal (Protection) Act 1996 it is an offence to inflict unnecessary suffering to wild mammals such as hedgehog. Planning consent does not provide a defence against prosecution under this act.

Himalayan Balsam