

GMEU

Summary

Ecological issues include a small bat roost, nesting birds and mitigation for loss of a small area of grassland.

Bats

A valid bat report consisting of a daytime assessment and two dusk surveys at an optimal time of year has been provided. One bat was recorded as emerging on one occasion from the building from a part of the building that will be retained. The consultant has concluded that the building is utilised as an occasional day roost by low numbers of bats. I have no reason to disagree with the findings of the assessment. Given only one bat was recorded from a part of the building that will be retained, I am satisfied that through a combination of avoidance and mitigation that the conservation status of the local bat population can be maintained.

The consultant has recommended that a license will be required for disturbance of the roost and whereas I would have thought that avoidance was also possible through timing of works, I accept that a license would provide more flexibility for the developer. I therefore recommend a condition along the following lines is applied to any permission.

The demolition and extension works are likely to cause disturbance to pipistrelle bats as identified in the nocturnal bat survey report, Collington Winter Ref: CW20-681 RPT 002 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 from the relevant licensing body or LPA to the effect that it does not consider that the specified development will require a license*

Nesting Birds

A bird's nest was identified on the building. No trees or shrubs appear to be lost. 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 demolition works shall 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.

Contributing to and Enhancing the Natural Environment & Biodiversity Net Gain

Section 174 of the NPPF 2021 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. The car park extension will result in the loss of around 0.05ha of low ecological value grassland. Adverse effects to wildlife include bats and nesting birds.

No soft landscaping or biodiversity enhancement proposals have been provided for the loss of around 0.1 biodiversity units. Ten standard native trees around the perimeter of the wider site would be the easiest mechanism for achieving 10% biodiversity net gain though this is just a suggestion.

Bird and bat boxes should also be provided. *The biodiversity enhancement details can be conditioned.*

Ecologist

Planning

Planning and Transportation

Place