

GMEU recommendation

Summary

There are unlikely to be any significant ecological issues associated with this development.

Bats

The building was subject to daytime survey for bats by a suitable consultant. No evidence of bats was found and the building assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential. The photographs support the assessment and google imagery shows that the roof has been gradually replaced over the last few years. I therefore have no reason to doubt the findings of the report. As individual bats can on occasion turn up in unexpected locations, I recommend an informative along the following lines.

Whilst the building to be converted has been assessed as negligible risk for bats, the applicant is reminded that under the 2019 Regulations it is an offence to disturb, harm or kill bats. If a bat 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.

Other Protected Species

There is no suitable habitat on site and no desktop evidence that any other protected species are present nearby. No further information or measures are required.

Nesting Birds

A swallows nest was located in one of the stables. 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 building 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

Section 174 of the NPPF 2021 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. There is limited vegetated habitat within the development footprint. Species impacts are limited to loss of swallow nesting habitat. I am satisfied that mitigation is possible on-site given the retention of some of the stables ie swallow nest cups could be erected. ***The details can be conditioned.***