

Summary

Further information relating to bats is recommended. Issues relating to nesting birds, rhododendron and biodiversity enhancement measures can be dealt with via condition and or informative

Bats

The gate house was assessed as having moderate bat roosting potential and two further surveys recommended. These do not appear to have been carried out. Current guidance states it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development is established before the planning permission is granted otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision (UK Government Guidance within the ODPM Government Circular 06/2005). Prior to determination emergence surveys should be provided. It may also however given this is refurbishment that reasonable avoidance measures may be possible.

Three trees were also assessed as having bat roosting potential. All three trees could be retained but I note that two of the three trees are recommend for removal on arboricultural grounds. I recommend a condition along the following lines is applied to any permission.

The removal of the trees called Tree 1 and Tree 3 may has the potential to cause harm to bats as identified in the Ecological Survey and Assessment – ERAP Ltd ref. 2021-117. If removal is required works will be carried out in accordance with Method Statement outline in Section 5.5.5 of the Ecological Survey and Assessment – ERAP Ltd ref. 2021-117

Other Protected Species

All other protected species were reasonably discounted. I have no reason to doubt the conclusions of the report. As badger are recorded in the wider area, I recommend an informative along the following lines is applied to any permission.

The applicant is reminded that under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a badger sett. If a badger sett is found on or near the developments site work should cease immediately and a suitably experienced ecologist employed to advise on how best to proceed.

Nesting Birds

Trees and shrubs will be lost as a result of the development proposal. Potential bird nesting habitat. 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.

Rhododendron

Species such as Rhododendron ponticum are included within schedule 9 part 2 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, as amended. It is an offence to introduce or cause to grow wild any plant listed under this schedule. Rhododendron has been identified on the site, though this may be an

ornamental variety and therefore not covered by the schedule. The location a garden would also not be regarded as in the wild. Therefore as long as not excavated and dumped off-site there is minimal risk of an offence. I therefore recommend an informative along the following lines is applied to any permission.

It is an offence under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, as amended to introduce, plant or cause to grow wild any plant listed in Schedule 9 part 2 of the Act. Species such as Rhododendron ponticum are included within this schedule. If any such species will be disturbed and taken off-site a suitably experienced consultant should be employed to advise on how to avoid an offence.

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. I am satisfied that the soft landscape proposals are adequate to mitigate for the loss of low to moderate value grassland and scrub. ***I would have no objection to the landscape proposals being conditioned.***

Ecologist
GM Ecology Unit