

GMEU response

Thank you for consulting the GMEU.

Summary

Bats were identified as roosting in the building.

Bats

A valid bat report has been provided. As previously this assessed the building as low risk and one emergence survey carried out. However, unlike in 2021 one bat emerged demonstrating the building is used as a roost. Further surveys were commission, with a second survey recording 3 bats roosting but the third survey identifying no bats roosting. The species recorded on each occasion was common pipistrelle. It can therefore be concluded that the building proposed for demolition is utilised as an occasional day roost for this species. I have no reason to doubt the findings of the report.

Given the species present (the most common bat species) and the low numbers, I am satisfied that mitigation can be achieved on-site and the conservation status of this species maintained in the locality. I therefore see no reason why a derogation from the Habitats Regulation can not occur and I am satisfied that Natural England will agree and a license will be issued. I therefore recommend that as part of any permission a condition along the following lines is applied.

The demolition of the Coach house is likely to cause harm to common pipistrelle bats as identified in the Bat Survey and Mitigation Report, Verity Webster, June 2023 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 form the relevant licensing body or LPA to the effect that it does not consider that the specified development will require a license*

Note the design and access statement inaccurately states no bats were present.

Nesting Birds

No mention is made of birds nesting on the building and the site appears to lack trees or shrubs. A barn owl was recorded flying over the building but there is no suitable nesting habitat associated with this building for this species. I am therefore satisfied that the risks are low. I recommend an informative along the following lines is applied to any permission.

The applicant is reminded that, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended it is an offence to remove, damage, or destroy the nest of a wild bird, while the nest is in use or being built. Planning consent does not provide a defence against prosecution under this act. If a birds nest is suspected work should cease immediately and a suitably experienced ecologist employed to assess how best to safeguard the nest(s).

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. The habitats on site appear to be of low ecological value, with minimal species interest. The proposed layout indicates a similar percentage of low value habitat and building with no impact to the boundary trees. No soft landscaping is shown in the layout proposal. I am however satisfied that mitigation and enhancement can be achieved on the

site through soft landscaping, bird and bat boxes. Whilst the latter will now in part be determined by Natural England, I am satisfied that a condition along the following lines will suffice.

Prior to development a biodiversity mitigation and enhancement plan that will include bird and bat boxes, will be provided to and agreed in writing by the LPA

Ecologist

Planning

Planning and Transportation

Place