

Thank you for consulting the GMEU

Summary

The developer's ecological consultant identified no significant ecological issues.

Bats

As for the previous survey the buildings were assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential. The photos again clearly support the assessment and I therefore have no reason to doubt the findings. As individual bats can on occasion turn up in unexpected locations I recommend an informative along the following lines be applied to any permission.

Whilst the building to be demolished 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 during demolition 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.

Nesting Birds

The building is very low risk for nesting birds. It appear that the existing hedgerow and trees are retained. I therefore recommend the following informative 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 & Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Section 180 of the NPPF 2023 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. 10% BNG is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).

The development results in the loss of existing buildings and what appears to be low ecological grassland to dwelling and garden. There appear to be no wildlife issues associated with this development. Good numbers of native trees are proposed.

The applicant has claimed the development is exempt from mandatory BNG as it is a self-build application. If this is a self-build development then the applicant is correct.

Assuming the development is exempt, I am satisfied that the proposed soft landscaping is adequate and that the proposals can be conditioned. I recommend provision of one bird and one bat box as enhancement for wildlife. The details can be conditioned.

Ecologist

Planning

Investment, Development and Housing

Place