

Planning application 69940 Whitefield Fire Station

Thank you for consulting the GMEU

Summary

The developer's ecological consultant identified no significant ecological issues. Issues relating to bats, nesting birds and biodiversity enhancement measures can be resolved via condition and or informative.

Bats

Buildings and trees on the site were subject to a day time bat assessment for roost potential. No evidence of bats was recorded and all buildings and trees assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential. I 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 is 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).

Nesting Birds

The development will result in the loss of trees, shrubs and a hedge line 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.

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 development will result in the loss of amenity grassland and the majority of the existing trees, to be replaced with a slightly increased area of amenity grassland and an increase in the number of trees on the site. As long as the trees are native, with at least 4 out of the 9 trees likely to reach 30cm dbh after 30 years net gain will be achieved.

With regards wildlife, I accept the recommendations of the ecological report that two bird and two bat boxes should be provided. The details of the landscape and biodiversity enhancement measures can be conditioned along the following lines.

Prior to development a biodiversity mitigation and enhancement plan that will include but not necessarily restricted to:

- *Nine native trees and;*
- *Two bird and two bat boxes*

will be provided to and agreed in writing by the LPA