

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

The buildings were visually assessed for bats and one dusk survey carried out by an experienced bat consultant at an optimal time of year. No evidence of bats roosting was found and it was concluded that the development was unlikely to impact on the conservation status of bats. 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 buildings have been assessed as low 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.

Nesting Birds

No evidence of nesting birds was recorded on the site with no moderate or high value habitat for nesting present. As birds could theoretically utilise the building as nesting habitat, 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).

Section 170 of the NPPF 2019 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. There are no significant habitat impacts and no evidence of bat roosting or bird nesting habitat on the site. Any measures to improve the site for wildlife such as a native hedge or tree, bird or bat boxes would likely achieve net gain. ***The details can be dealt with via condition.***

Ecologist

GM Ecology Unit