

GMEU

Summary

Ecological issues associated with bats, nesting birds and landscaping can be dealt with via condition.

Bats

The previous approval required measures to protect bats during demolition and mitigation for loss of bat roosting opportunities, that were agreed prior to determination. The building (and mature trees) have now been removed and the proposed site layout amended. Condition 5 of the previous approval (62178) is therefore no longer applicable. Bat roosting opportunities should however still be produced in-line with what was previously agreed. I recommend a revised bat mitigation and enhancement plan is produced by a suitably experienced bat consultant. To avoid pre-commencement conditions this could be produced prior to determination, though it could be provided via a suitably worded condition.

Nesting Birds

Condition 6 of the previous approval is a standard bird nesting condition. Whilst most of the site clearance has now occurred removal of hedge and scrub is likely to be still required. 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 proposed landscape layout appears to provide adequate planting to enable mitigation. I recommend inclusion of native tree and shrub species and also the provision of a bird box on the retained tree. ***The details can be conditioned.***