

GMEU response

Summary

One bat emergence survey has been recommended. There are only a couple of weeks left in the bat emergence survey season.

Bats

A valid bat assessment has been provided. This has assessed the development as requiring one emergence survey in line with current best practice guidelines. I have no reason to doubt the consultant's recommendation.

Current guidance states it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development is established before the planning permission is granted otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision (UK Government Guidance within the ODPM Government Circular 06/2005)

I therefore recommend that prior to determination the findings of one dusk or dawn survey are provided. It should however be stressed that we are now moving out of the bat survey season. Whilst we are still accepting surveys for low risk buildings such as this we are likely to review this by mid-September. If a survey has not been carried out by then, it may result in a delay until next April.

I therefore recommend this email is passed on asap.

Nesting Birds

The consultants note the likely loss of 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 garden, including trees, a non-native hedge and associated bird nesting habitat. As for the previous application, I recommend mitigation through new hedge planting, which appears to be proposed, tree planting and provision of bird and or bat boxes. ***The details can likely be conditioned, but may need to be change dependent on the findings of the bat survey.***