

Summary

Potential ecological issues include nesting birds and biodiversity net gain

Protected Species

I am satisfied that it is very unlikely that there will be any protected species issues associated with this development. Whilst bats could theoretically roost in the mature tree, the tree appears healthy and is retained. No further information or measures are required.

Nesting Birds

A length of hedgerow and bramble scrub are proposed for removal 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 precautionary working method statement for nesting birds by a suitably experienced ecologist has been supplied to and agreed in writing by the LPA.

Contributing to and Enhancing the Natural Environment & Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Section 187 of the NPPF 2024 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 will result in the loss of early successional habitats on the site of what was previously a dwelling and garden. Wildlife issues are restricted to nesting birds and loss of bat roosting potential associated with the now demolished dwelling.

A biodiversity net gain assessment has been provided. This indicates a shortfall of 0.65 area based units and 0.02 hedge units to achieve 10% net gain. There are no river units for this site. I have no issues with the BNG assessment or metric. As gardens are to be created there is no real potential to increase the on-site value of the site. I assume off-site credits will be purchased. The amount required I would assume is unlikely to make the development unviable. As the on-site measures only include gardens, no HMMP for the on-site measures will be required and therefore no HMMP condition or legal agreement.

To discharge the statutory condition, the developer will have to demonstrate that the off-site units have been acquired and registered with defra and provide the biodiversity gain plan and final version of the statutory metric.

For wildlife I recommend provision of one bird box per dwelling (swift brick unless it can be demonstrated another species would clearly benefit more) and two bat boxes. The details can be provided via condition.

Ecologist

Planning and Transportation Place