

Thank you for consulting the GMEU

Summary

A bat assessment is recommend prior to determination.

Bats

It is not possible from the information provided to determine whether the building proposed for demolition or the building to be extended have bat roosting potential. Sunnybank is a high risk location for Bats, located near the Parr Brook Valley, with a relatively high number of bat roosts recorded within adjacent housing.

Whilst the extension appears from the drawing to have only minimal impact on the existing buildings roof structure, the “temporary” classroom (present on aerial imagery from 2000) has a pitched roof and backs on to open land. Species such as common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), the species recorded nearby prefer confined roost sites, such as soffit boxes, eaves or under hanging tiles. The most common roosts are found between underfelt and boards or tiles, and inside cavity walls.

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 recommend that:

Prior to determination a bat assessment is carried out by a suitably experienced bat worker. The assessment should include as a minimum a visual inspection of any roof space for evidence of bats and exterior of the building for potential bat access points. Should the property be assessed as more than low risk, further information will be required prior to determination.

Nesting Birds

The buildings appear to be very low risk for nesting birds, assuming no bird boxes are present. The temporary classroom is located within a line of trees and scrub, potential bird nesting habitat that may be disturbed during demolition but given the level of disturbance associated with a school, I am satisfied that the risks are again very low. I therefore 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).

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. There appears to be minimal adverse effects on vegetated habitats or wildlife (subject to the findings of the recommended bat assessment). Mitigation is therefore likely limited to replacement of any trees and scrub that needs to be removed to facilitate the demolition. Given the footprint of the temporary classroom will need landscaping I am satisfied that replacement planting on the site will be feasible, within this area as

will any mitigation for bats or nesting birds. *The details of mitigation and enhancement can be conditioned.*

Ecologist

Planning

Planning and Transportation

Place