

GMEU response

Summary

Ecological issues are materially unchanged from the previous application 69096.

Bats

A bat was again found roosting behind the boarding of the building to be demolished. A license will be required from Natural England. As only one bat was recorded on one occasion I am satisfied that this is a roost of low importance and that mitigation is achievable in-line with those proposed and that the conservation status of the local bat population maintained. I therefore recommend a condition along the following lines is applied to any permission.

The demolition of the workshop is likely to cause harm to common pipistrelle bats as identified in the Bat Surveys Report – HB Bat Surveys Updated July 2023 and shall not in any circumstances commence unless the local planning authority has been provided with either:

- a) a license issued by Natural England pursuant to Regulation 55, of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 authorising the specified activity/development go ahead: or*
- b) a statement in writing from the relevant licensing body or LPA to the effect that it does not consider that the specified development will require a license*

Other Protected Species

It is highly unlikely that there will be any impacts on any other protected species owing to the lack of suitable habitats on site or nearby. No further information or measures are required.

Nesting Birds

Tree removal is proposed, 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 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.

Invasive Species

Variegated yellow-archangel and Rhododendron ponticum were previously recorded on the site, both listed under schedule 9 part 2 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to introduce or cause to grow wild any plant listed under this schedule. I recommend a condition along the following lines is applied to any permission.

Prior to any earthworks a method statement including updated surveys detailing eradication and/or control and/or avoidance measures for rhododendron and variegated yellow archangel should be supplied to and agreed in writing to the LPA. The agreed method statement shall be adhered to and implemented in full unless otherwise agreed in writing by the LPA.

Contributing to and Enhancing the Natural Environment & Biodiversity Net Gain

Section 180 of the NPPF 2023 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. The development site appears to consist of negligible to low ecological value habitats. Wildlife interest includes bats and nesting birds. Native

tree planting and the indicative bat box proposals likely more than adequate to satisfy Natural England. As previously I am satisfied that mitigation can be achieved on the site.

It should however be noted that biodiversity net gain, now has significantly more weight in the planning system (mandatory for major application submitted from today). This application would however count as minor application and I am satisfied that it would be unreasonable to request a biodiversity net gain assessment given the previous acceptance that mitigation was achievable on the site and previous permission.

I therefore recommend the landscape proposals and bat boxes are conditioned with a requirement for final detail on one bird box.