

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit

Summary

There are unlikely to be any significant ecological issues associated with this development.

Bats

A valid bat report has been provided. The building was assessed as moderate risk and a dusk and dawn survey carried out within the optimal survey season. I have no reason to doubt the findings of the report. Whilst both surveys were in August 2022, I am satisfied that adequate survey has been carried out and that the development is very unlikely to have an adverse effect on the conservation status of bats in the locality. As the survey is becoming dated, I recommend a condition along the following lines is applied to any permission.

If the development hereby approved does not commence before 30th April 2024, the building will be resurveyed for bats and the finding supplied to and agreed in writing by the LPA.

I also recommend an informative along the following lines.

Whilst the building to be converted has been found to be low risk for bats, the applicant is reminded that under the 2019 Regulations it is an offence to disturb, harm or kill bats. If a bat is found all work should cease immediately and a suitably licensed bat worker employed to assess how best to safeguard the bat(s). Natural England should also be informed.

Nesting Birds

Pigeon were recorded as nesting in the building to be converted/demolished. Whilst no trees appear to be lost some scrub may require removal, bird nesting habitat. I recommend a condition along the following lines be applied to any permission.

No works to trees or shrubs shall occur or works to the building commence 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

Japanese knotweed and variegated yellow-archangel were recorded on the wider site previously. Neither however appears to be present in close proximity to the building. I therefore recommend an informative along the following lines is applied to any permission.

It is an offence under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, as amended to introduce, plant or cause to grow wild any plant listed in Schedule 9 part 2 of the Act. Species such as Japanese knotweed and variegated yellow-archangel are included within this schedule. If any such species will be disturbed as a result of this development a suitably experienced consultant should be employed to advise on how to avoid an offence.

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

Section 174 of the NPPF 2021 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Now Places for Everyone (Pfe) has been through Inquiry,

thematic policies in the plan can now be given 'great weight' in planning decisions. This includes the BNG Policy.

The development is however restricted primarily to the building and the existing access track and bare ground, with wildlife issues restricted to loss of bird nesting habitat. I am satisfied that mitigation can be achieved on the site and note that the plan shows an area for tree restocking. *The details of soft landscaping and bird box provision can be conditioned.*

David Dutton

Ecologist

Planning

Planning and Transportation

Place