

Summary

An additional bat survey is recommended. Other ecological issues relating to nesting birds and ecological mitigation can be dealt with via condition.

Bats

The classrooms to be demolished have been assessed as requiring one emergence survey by an experience bat consultant. I have no reason to doubt the findings of the report. Normally one would require the emergence survey prior to determination. This would however result in a significant delay to the permission as the bat emergence survey season does not start until early May.

Further information should therefore be supplied if a delay is to be avoided, in order to demonstrate why best practice need not be followed in this instance, through either a more detailed bat investigation, reasonable avoidance measures or information on when the actual demolition is likely to occur. For instance if it is not proposed to demolish the “temporary classrooms” until summer 2021, then conditions could potentially be applied. Any proposal should first be put to the bat consultant prior to submitting to the LPA.

Nesting Birds

The buildings to be demolished were assessed as having some bird nesting potential and it is likely that some trees and shrubs will be cut back/lost as part of the demolition process. 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 or demolition 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.

Contributing to and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Section 170 of the NPPF 2019 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. The developer has committed to mitigate for features of ecological value that will be lost and provided indicative areas for trees, pond etc subject to consultation on the detail with the school council. I support this approach. ***The final details can be conditioned.***

David Dutton

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