

GMEU recommendation

Summary

There are unlikely to be any ecological issues with this phase of the development. Issues relating to bats and nesting birds can be dealt with via informative.

Bats

The buildings to be demolished were assessed as negligible risk as part of a visual assessment of the entire complex in January 2021. This assessment is still valid. With regard the buildings to be demolished in this phase I have no reason to doubt the findings of the report. In addition the three buildings that the infill building will adjoin were also assessed as negligible risk, which with regards the level of impact this building will have on these buildings I concur. Whilst certain elevations will be blocked these are primarily blank walls, with gable ends and the roof of two of the adjoining buildings higher than the new build.

As individual bats can on occasion turn up in unexpected locations, I recommend an informative along the following lines is applied to any permission.

Whilst the buildings to be demolished have been assessed as negligible 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 during demolition 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

The buildings are very low risk for nesting birds. Birds could however nest on the roof of adjoining buildings. I therefore recommend an informative along the following lines.

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 bird's 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 appear to be no habitat or species impacts resulting from this phase of the development. Enhancements could however be provided eg a nest or bat box on one of the brick gable ends of the building to the south of the infill development. ***The details could be conditioned.***