

Thank you for consulting the GMEU

Summary

No significant ecological issues were identified by the developer's ecological consultant. Issues relating to bats, nesting birds and biodiversity mitigation and enhancement can be resolved via condition and or informative.

Bats

A valid bat report has been provided. The building was assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential. Given the photos of the building, I have no reason to doubt the findings of the report.

Whilst the building to be converted has been assessed as negligible risk for bats, the applicant is reminded that under the Habitat Regulation it is an offence to disturb, harm or kill bats. If a bat is found during construction all work should cease immediately and a suitably licensed bat worker employed to assess how best to safeguard the bat(s).

Nesting Birds

No evidence of birds having nested in the building was recorded. The building was however assessed as having bird nesting potential and it is unclear from the information provided whether any trees or shrubs, potential bird nesting habitat will be lost. 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 as a precaution a condition along the following lines be applied to any permission.

No building works shall commence or vegetation clearance 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 demolition 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 174 of the NPPF 2021 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. No mitigation appears to be required for bats or nesting birds. Mitigation should be provided for any loss of trees, shrubs or hedge removal. As enhancement for nesting birds, I recommend provision of one bird box. *The details of soft landscaping and biodiversity mitigation and enhancement can be conditioned.*