

GMEU response

Summary

Issues relating to bats, nesting birds and biodiversity enhancements can be dealt with via condition.

Bats

An updated and valid bat report has been provided. This has found no change in circumstances since the previous surveys ie all outbuildings have negligible potential with the main farmhouse still high risk and still probably utilised as a day roost.

No emergence surveys have been provided as no significant disturbance is planned to the farm house roof, with development restricted to demolition of existing single storey extensions with negligible potential and a new extension that will not impact on the roof. They have therefore concluded that reasonable avoidance measures as previously agreed as part of the previous proposal are still valid. I have no reason not to disagree with this proposal. I recommend a condition along the following lines.

The recommendations contained in the Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment at Holly Mount Farm Ecology Solutions, Appendix 1 Section 5 shall be carried out in full unless agreed in writing by the LPA

Nesting Birds

Swallow nests were previously found in one of the outbuildings. All British birds nests and eggs (with certain limited exceptions) are protected by Section 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, as amended. Please apply the following condition to any permission.

No building works including demolition shall 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 174 of the NPPF 2021 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. The development will have little impact on vegetated habitats, the proposed layout including significantly more soft landscaping than currently present on the site. In terms of species mitigation and enhancement, measures for bats and nesting birds are recommended.

I have no objection therefore to the conditioning of the proposed landscape plan but recommend that a condition also be applied requiring bat and bird boxes, bricks or slates on the new build.