

Thank you for your consulting GMEU on the application at Land to east of Poppythorn Lane, Prestwich (72466) for the proposed single storey extension to existing garage units.

The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) report (JCA, Sept 2025). Based on the submitted information, GMEU have the following comments:

Ecological Assessment

As detailed in the PEA report, the site holds minimal ecological value given that it is dominated by hardstanding areas and existing garages, with limited scattered ruderal vegetation growing through and therefore the proposal unlikely to have significant impacts on protected/priority species or nearby designated sites. The site however does hold some value for nesting birds and hedgehogs. The PEA report appears to contain robust ecological assessments, with no further surveys required and I have no reason to doubt the findings.

The recommendations in the report are to be followed (as per section 4), such as:

- Work that will impact on habitats where nesting birds may be present (for example vegetation clearance or building works), should not be undertaken in the main bird nesting season (March – August) unless suitable checks for active bird nests have been undertaken.
- A Construction Method Statement (CMS) should be produced and implemented to prevent any disturbance impacts to bats during the construction period.
- A sensitive lighting strategy should be implemented to reduce disturbance to bats (and other wildlife) in the locality - e.g. [Artificial Lighting Guidance - Buildings, planning and development - Bat Conservation Trust](#).
- Sensitive habitat clearance and covering any excavations to safeguard hedgehogs/badgers.
- Himalayan balsam (an Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)) – was identified onsite and it is an offence under the terms of Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to allow the plant to grow in the wild. We would therefore recommend that a condition be attached to any permission that prior to the commencement of any works on site (including vegetation clearance) a methodology for the control of invasive species be submitted to and agreed by the council. Once agreed the method statement must be implemented in full.

GMEU would also recommend the following:

- Protected species can turn up in unexpected places and the granting of planning permission does not negate the need to abide by the laws which are in place to safeguard biodiversity. An informative should be used so that the applicant is aware that they must seek ecological advice should they find or suspect that the proposals will impact on protected species.
- Planning policy encourages enhancements and net gains for biodiversity to be delivered through the planning system. Wherever possible measures to enhance the site for biodiversity should be secured as part of this planning application and could include the integration of a bat and bird box onto the existing garages.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

The proposal appears to be exempt from a BNG assessment under the de minimis rule, as less than 25m² of habitat removal is proposed. Bury Council should be satisfied that this is accurate.

In summary, GMEU are satisfied that this application can be forwarded for determination and that any permission if granted is supported by the conditions recommended above