

From: David Dutton <tameside.gov.uk>
Sent: 04 September 2024 17:47
To: Booth, Claire <.gov.uk>
Subject: Planning application 70922 70 Ringley Rd West

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Hi Claire

Thank you for consulting the GMEU

Summary

The main ecological issue is biodiversity net gain.

Bats

The building to be demolished was assessed for bats and subject to two dusk surveys. No evidence of bats roosting was identified, with only low levels of common pipistrelle bat activity recorded. I have no reason to doubt the findings of the report. Updated surveys should occur if demolition does not occur prior to April 2026. I also recommend an informative along the following lines is applied to any permission.

Whilst the building to be demolished has been found to be 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).

Other Protected Species

No evidence of any other protected species. Whilst ponds are present within 250m, the consultant concluded based on the distance intervening habitats and scale of the development that even if great crested newts (gcn) were represent the risk of an offence would be very unlikely. I would agree and would also note that I am aware that these ponds have been surveyed in the past with no evidence of gcn being present. Whilst these surveys would not be regarded as valid they add weight to the consultant's conclusion. No further information or measures are required.

Nesting Birds

Whilst some tree and shrub clearance has already occurred, further tree removal and removal of the front hedge appears to be proposed, potential bird nesting habitat. No evidence of birds nesting in the building was reported. 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 between the 1st March and 31st August in any year unless a nesting bird survey method statement by a suitably experienced ecologist has been supplied to and agreed in writing by the LPA.

Other Wildlife

Habitats on site were assessed as suitable to provide cover for species such as hedgehog and that there was a risk of such species coming to harm during the construction. I accept that this is reasonable and that section 7.23 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal relating to reasonable avoidance measures is sufficient to mitigate the risk of harm. *I therefore recommend that this paragraph is conditioned as part of any permission*

Invasive Species

A number of invasive species were identified on the site including giant hogweed and two species of Cotoneaster. Photos of the front hedge also appears to show Japanese Rose, though this is not recorded in the ecological report and I may be mistaken. I therefore recommend that as part of any permission a condition along the following lines is applied.

Prior to any earthworks a resurvey for invasive plant species including japanese rose will occur and the finding supplied to and agreed in writing to the LPA. A method statement detailing control measures for species still present should also be supplied to and agreed in writing by the LPA, prior to any earthworks.

Contributing to and Enhancing the Natural Environment & Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Section 180 of the NPPF 2023 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. 10% BNG is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).

The development will result in a nett loss of garden to built development. Some tree removal had occurred prior to the ecological survey but based on google earth within the last year or two. Adverse effects on wildlife appear restricted to loss of bird nesting habitat. Soft landscaping is proposed.

I would not regard the development as exempt from mandatory BNG as more than 25sqm of area-based habitat are lost and more than 5m of hedge appears to be removed along the frontage.

A biodiversity assessment has been provided that indicates a 1.46BU shortfall in achieving 10% BNG. This includes correctly the already felled trees and taken the precautionary approach that they were in good condition. Unless the developer can provide evidence to the contrary, I accept that this approach is reasonable. I have two current issues that require addressing.

Firstly, I do not appear to have access to the excel metric and therefore cannot easily check the accuracy of the consultant's habitat baseline and habitat proposals. *Could you email a copy of the excel metric.*

Second given the relatively small nature of the development, I would recommend confirmation that the developer understands need to purchase off-site credits from a habitat bank or the government and how much these would cost.

I recommend inclusion of bat and bird bricks/boxes as mitigation and enhancement for wildlife. *The details can be provided via condition.*

David Dutton

Ecologist

Planning

Investment, Development and Housing

Place

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