

Summary

The developer's ecological consultant identified no significant ecological issues. Issues relating to bats, nesting birds, invasive species and biodiversity enhancement measures can be resolved via condition and or informative.

Bats

A valid bat report has been provided. This assessed the building as low risk and in-line with best practice one emergence survey carried out. No evidence of bats roosting was recorded. I have no reason to doubt the findings of the report. Given the high-risk location, I recommend an informative along the following lines is applied to any permission.

Whilst the building to be demolished has been assessed as very low 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).

Nesting Birds

No evidence of nesting birds was found in the building proposed for demolition, but the proposals indicate removal of existing garden trees and shrubs, potential bird nesting habitat. 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 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.

Invasive Species

Site photographs indicate the presence of *Rhododendron ponticum*. I recommend an informative along the following lines is applied to any permission.

*It is an offence under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, as amended to introduce, plant or cause to grow wild any plant listed in Schedule 9 part 2 of the Act. Species such as *Rhododendron* are included within this schedule. If any such species will be disturbed and removed off site as a result of this development a suitably experienced consultant should be employed to advise on how to avoid an offence.*

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 result in the loss of the existing building and garden to be replaced with a building and garden. Species impacts appear likely to be restricted to nesting birds, but may include bats. Given the similar existing and proposed usage of the site, on-site mitigation and enhancement should be feasible, if higher ecological value planting provided ie native and or wildlife attracting species and mitigation for loss of bird nesting habitat. *The details can be conditioned.*