

GMEU

Summary

Ecological issues include nesting birds and mitigation for loss of trees and hedge.

Protected Species

It is very unlikely that there will be any protected species issues associated with this development. The structures and trees on site are very low risk for bats, there are no ponds nearby known to hold great crested newts, no watercourses on the site and the site too small to be of importance in terms of foraging for mobile species such as bats or badger. I am satisfied that no further information or measures are required.

Nesting Birds

The development will require the removal of trees and a section of hedge, 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.

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 what appear to be ornamental trees; a section of non-native hedge and; the associated habitat for nesting birds and other wildlife. No mitigation appears to be proposed. I recommend that mitigation in the form of native trees, two silver birch appear appropriate as already present in the retained garden and two or three bird boxes. Alternatively a native hedge between the two properties. Off site compensation in the retained garden could also be provided. These are however only suggestions.

The details can be conditioned along the following lines.

Prior to site clearance a biodiversity mitigation plan for loss of trees, hedge and associated bird nesting and other wildlife habitats will be provided to and agreed in writing by the LPA.