

Thank you for consulting GMEU on this application at Sandy Lane, Prestwich for the demolition of existing garages and erection of 2 dwellings. The application is accompanied by an Ecology Survey and Assessment (ERAP, 2024) and Preliminary Assessment of Biodiversity Net Gain (ERAP, 2024).

Based on the submitted information, I have the following comments to make:

Bats

The buildings on site were assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential, and as such no further survey effort is required. Based on the evidence provided, I have no reason to disagree with this assessment. As such, no further survey effort is required.

Nesting birds

A condition should be secured to ensure the building works and vegetation removal take place outside the main bird nesting period (March – August inclusive) unless it can otherwise be demonstrated that no active bird nests are present.

Other protected species

No other protected species or evidence of protected species were recorded on the site, although habitat is present that could be suitable for species such as badger, hedgehog, and reptiles.

A pre-commencement survey for badger should be carried out no more than 3 months prior to the commencement of works on the site.

A number of Reasonable Avoidance Measures for species such as badger, hedgehog and reptiles have been identified in Section 5.2.10 of the ecology report should be followed during the works. An informative should be used so that the applicant is aware of the legal protection that certain species receive and that the granting of planning permission does not negate the need to abide by the laws that are in place to protect biodiversity. If at any time any protected species are found or are suspected of being present on the site and adversely affected by the development, work should cease immediately, and an ecologist/LPA should be contacted.

Invasive species

Virginia Creeper was identified on site which is included within Schedule 9 Part 2 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, as amended. It is an offence to introduce or cause to grow wild any plant listed under this schedule.

The applicant should be reminded that care should be taken to ensure that this species is not spread off the site.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The Preliminary Assessment of Biodiversity Net Gain indicates that a loss of biodiversity units will be incurred on site as a result of the development, with 0.06 habitat units required to be mitigated for to achieve a 10% net gain. The report indicates that a 10% net gain is achievable on site, should at least 0.016 ha of mixed scrub be created outside of the vegetated gardens. Further clarification should be provided as to whether this will be implemented, or if off site compensation or an offset conservation payment will be required.

Enhancements

Wherever possible, measures to enhance the site for biodiversity should be secured as part of this planning application, and could include integration of bat or bird boxes into the proposed buildings, as outlined in Section 5.3 of the Ecology Survey and Assessment.