

GMEU recommendation

Thank you for consulting the GMEU, I can confirm that I agreed that if they could provide a reason why best practice could be deviated from that I would be willing to condition further surveys.

Summary

I am satisfied that it best practice guidelines in this instance can be waived as there is no likelihood of works to the existing carriage shed in the near future.

Bats

The carriage shed was assessed as having low bat roosting potential by a suitable ecological consultant. This is because whilst there are numerous crevices for bats, these do not lead to any voids, the building is well lit by roof lights and unlined, with no roof void and the building subject to heavy engineering works. In line with best practice one emergence survey has been recommended.

I accept that the building is very unlikely to be an important roost site, but the numerous minor roost features make it high risk for day roosts. Day roosts on large building such as this can however be very difficult to locate with reasonable avoidance measures often a better way forward.

In this instance however the consultants have also noted that whilst refurbishment of the listed building forms part of the planning application, no funding is actually available, the funds that are in place for the phase 1 and phase 2 parts of the development, the new build, which do not impact on this building. Funds will only be applied for, when and if planning permission is in place and may not in any event be successful. There is no likelihood of works commencing in 2022.

I therefore accept that any dusk emergence survey at this time would not be valid by the time development came forward and likely in any event to be inconclusive given the scale of the building. It would therefore be unreasonable to request a survey that would be likely both inconclusive and invalid by such time as development commenced.

I am therefore willing to depart from best practice and recommend a condition along the following lines be applied to any permission.

In the peak activity season prior to refurbishment works commencing bat emergence surveys will be carried out and supplied to and a reasonable avoidance measures method statement for bats produced and agreed in writing by the LPA

Nesting Birds

The consultants were informed that feral pigeons nest in the building. Pigeons are capable of breeding throughout the year. Nesting pigeons have legal protection under the terms of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) but are also listed as a pest species and a 'general license' can be applied for from Natural England to allow work to proceed that would damage pigeon's nests, if present. I therefore recommend a condition along the following lines be applied to any permission.

No refurbishment works shall occur unless a detailed bird nest survey by a suitably experienced ecologist has been carried out immediately prior to works and written confirmation provided that no active bird nests are present which has been agreed in writing by the LPA unless the species present is feral pigeon in which case a general license issued by Natural England authorising destruction of feral nests should be provided to the LPA.