

Thank you for consulting GMEU on the application at Smithie Garage, Spring Street, Ramsbottom (72383), for the proposed conversion of former garage into 1 No. two storey dwelling.

The application is accompanied by an Inspection & Assessment in relation to Bats and Breeding Birds report and Dusk Survey Results report (Tyrer Ecological Consultants, August 2025). Based on the submitted information, GMEU have the following comments:

Bats

- The Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) found the existing garage to have 'moderate' potential for roosting bats based on the Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) found, triggering the requirement for two bat emergence surveys. No trees were present onsite. I have no reason to doubt the findings of the PRA.
- Two emergence surveys were subsequently undertaken in July and August 2025 on the garage and it was ascertained to be host to a day roost for a single common pipistrelle bat. The surveys appear to have been carried out in line with best practice guidelines by suitably experienced ecologists, and I have no reason to doubt the findings.
- Given the day roost is one common pipistrelle bat only, GMEU can be confident that mitigation will be feasible to maintain the favourable conservation status of this species. As per the report, a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) for bats needs to be obtained from Natural England for works to proceed. As per the report, the application would be eligible for the streamlined "Earned Recognition" bat mitigation licence.
- The bat mitigation licence must be sought and approved, prior to any works taking place and after planning permission has been granted.
- We have no reason to disagree with the mitigation and enhancement measures provided in Section 6 of the report to safeguard bats and to apply for the licence. It is recommended that the applicant thoroughly reads the strategy as there are key things to consider such as toolbox talks and compensatory roost requirements prior to demolition. The mitigation and enhancement measures provided are subject to approval from Natural England for the mitigation licence.
- A compensatory bat box must be provided prior to demolition and has been proposed on a retained sycamore tree to the northeast of the site (as shown in Figure 6.1). An integrated bat box has also been proposed on the new building on the south-east elevation (as shown in Figure 6.2). These boxes must be implemented as part of the mitigation strategy.
- A sensitive lighting strategy is also required given that bats were identified in the locality during the surveys, as per the report.

Overall, GMEU are satisfied with the information provided for planning purposes however given the bat roost present and the works proposed, a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) must be obtained from Natural England after planning permission has been granted and prior to the commencement of works. A condition to this effect should be attached to any permission if granted.

Birds

- The report states that viable nesting platforms are present within the garage building, which could be utilised by nesting birds. As all wild birds, their nest and eggs are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), we would recommend that the following condition be attached to any permission, should it be granted:

No removal of or works to any buildings shall take place during the main bird breeding season 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent

ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check of vegetation for active birds' nests immediately before clearance and ensured that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site.

- At least one bird box is recommended to be implemented into the scheme as a biodiversity enhancement and should be placed at a north or east facing elevation of the new building and at a height of at least 3m above ground. It is recommended that this is secured by condition.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

The Application Form states that the proposal is exempt from a BNG assessment under the *de minimis* exemption (e.g. less than 25m² of habitat removal) and GMEU have no reason to disagree with this based on the information provided. Bury Council should be satisfied that this is accurate.

Summary

In summary, GMEU are satisfied that this application can be forwarded for determination and that any permission if granted is supported by the conditions recommended above, including the requirement for a bat mitigation licence required to facilitate the works given the bat roost confirmed within the garage.