

68661 – Ainsworth Nursing Home, Knowsley Road, Ainsworth

Thank you for consulting the GMEU

Summary

The same ecological information has been supplied as was previously supplied for application 67342. Whilst becoming dated it is still valid and my previous recommendations largely apply.

Bats

The gatehouse was assessed as having moderate bat roosting potential and two further surveys recommended. This survey occurred in late summer 2021. No bats were seen to emerge from the building. It was therefore concluded that the development was unlikely to negatively impact on the conservation status of the bats. I have no reason to doubt the findings of the report.

The survey is now over one year old. It is therefore likely that development will not occur prior to best practice recommending a resurvey. I therefore recommend a condition along the following lines is applied to any permission.

If the works to the Gatehouse do not commence before 30th April 2023, the building will be reassessed for bat roosting potential and the finding supplied to and agreed in writing by the LPA.

Three trees were also assessed as having bat roosting potential. All three trees could be retained but I note that two of the three trees are recommend for removal on arboricultural grounds and one tree T3 is now shown as fallen. I recommend a condition along the following lines is applied to any permission.

The removal of the tree called Tree 1 may has the potential to cause harm to bats as identified in the Ecological Survey and Assessment – ERAP Ltd ref. 2021-117. If removal is required works will be carried out in accordance with Method Statement outline in Section 5.5.5 of the Ecological Survey and Assessment – ERAP Ltd ref. 2021-117

Other Protected Species

All other protected species were reasonably discounted. I have no reason to doubt the conclusions of the report. As badger are recorded in the wider area, I recommend an informative along the following lines is applied to any permission.

The applicant is reminded that under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a badger sett. If a badger sett is found on or near the developments site work should cease immediately and a suitably experienced ecologist employed to advise on how best to proceed.

Nesting Birds

Trees and shrubs will be lost as a result of the development proposal. 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.

Rhododendron

Species such as *Rhododendron ponticum* are 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. *Rhododendron* has been identified on the site, though this may be an ornamental variety and therefore not covered by the schedule. The location a garden would also not be regarded as in the wild. Therefore, as long as not excavated and dumped off-site there is minimal risk of an offence. I therefore 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 ponticum* are included within this schedule. If any such species will be disturbed and taken off-site 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. Whilst I would have preferred more native trees, I am satisfied that the soft landscape proposals are adequate to mitigate for the loss of low to moderate value grassland and scrub. ***I would have no objection to the landscape proposals being conditioned.***

Ecologist

GM Ecology Unit