

Consultee Comments for Planning Application

A/22/94762/MAJOR

Application Summary

Application Number: A/22/94762/MAJOR

Address: Rockleigh Hotel 50 Bolton Road Ashton-In-Makerfield Wigan WN4 8PF

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings on site and construction of 26 cottage flats with associated car parking, landscaping and external works and new access thereto

Case Officer: Johndaniel Jaques

Consultee Details

Name: Mr David Dutton Greater Manchester Ecology Unit

Address: Dukinfield Town Hall, King Street, Dukinfield SK16 4LA

Email: Not Available

On Behalf Of: Greater Manchester Ecology Unit

Comments

Hi

Thank you for consulting the GMEU

Summary

Further bat survey is recommended. Other ecological issues relating to nesting birds and ecological mitigation can be dealt with via condition.

1. Bats

A valid bat report has been provided. This has assessed both buildings as low risk for roosting bats and in-line with best practice recommended a further dusk emergence survey for each building complex. All trees were assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential. I have no reason to doubt the findings of the report.

Current guidance states it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development is established before the planning permission is granted otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision (UK Government Guidance within the ODPM Government Circular 06/2005) .

-I therefore recommend that prior to determination the findings of at least one further emergence (or dawn survey) are provided and agreed in writing by the LPA-

Note that as such surveys can only occur between late April/Early May and September that the

applicant may need to withdraw and resubmit.

2. Nesting Birds

Ornamental hedge will be lost, potential bird nesting habitat. The buildings may also provide bird nesting opportunities, though none were noted in the ecological report. 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 or demolition commence 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.-

3. Hedgehog

The consultant notes that hedgehog may be present in the wider landscape and utilise the site. I would however regard the risks as very low, given that the majority of the site is hard standing and located in a very urban location, the surrounding housing being terraced and lacking large gardens. I am therefore satisfied that an informative will suffice along the following lines.

-The applicant is reminded that, under the Wild Mammal (Protection) Act 1996 it is an offence to inflict unnecessary suffering to wild mammals such as hedgehog. Planning consent does not provide a defence against prosecution under this act.-

4. 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 site is primarily hard standing to be replaced with residential buildings and gardens. A net gain assessment has been provided that indicates a large percentage gain. I see no reason to doubt this assessment given the very low value of the existing site and have therefore not interrogated the metric in detail. The landscape proposals can be conditioned.

I recommend bat and bird bricks/boxes are incorporated in to the new build as enhancement for these species. The details can be conditioned.

David Dutton
Ecologist
GMEU