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Good afternoon,

Thank you for consulting GMEU on the application at Harwood Street Garage, Harwood Street, Littleborough (24/01269/FUL).

The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Preliminary Roost Assessment (PEA) report (Arbtech, January 2024) and a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Exemption Statement (JHA Pullman, Dec 2024). Based on the submitted information, GMEU have the following comments:

Ecological Appraisal

The PEA survey was carried out in January 2024 and the report subsequently submitted. In line with CIEEM guidance, it is recommended that an updated survey is undertaken to ensure that the current site conditions are captured and the impacts are relevant to the current proposals (one dwelling), given that around 18 months has now passed. The submitted PEA refers to a different proposal which includes the demolition of all existing buildings onsite and the creation of nine dwellings. Given these points, a full review of the PEA has not been undertaken as the survey data requires an update.

Given that bat roosting potential was found onsite, please can you clarify as to whether any buildings and trees will be removed to facilitate the proposal for one dwelling?

The PEA recommends Environmental DNA (eDNA) surveys on the pond onsite and all ponds within 250m to determine whether great crested newts (GCN) are present. It appears that these surveys have not been carried out, however this will be required given the very close proximity of the onsite pond to the development area. The eDNA survey season is between mid-April to end of June so it is likely that these surveys will need to be carried out in 2026 if they have not been done already.

The above information is required prior to determination of the application.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The proposal is listed as a self-build/custom build application and is therefore exempt from a BNG assessment. Rochdale Borough Council must be satisfied that this is accurate.

Summary

In summary, insufficient information has currently been provided for this application including consideration for great crested newts, out of date survey data and clarifications as to whether any buildings/trees will be removed which may support roosting bats. The information is required prior to determination of the application.

If you have any queries about these comments, please let me know.

Kind regards,

Melissa Sullivan
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