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Good morning,

Thank you for consulting GMEU on this application at 104A And 104B Durham St, Rochdale (25/00274/FUL).

No ecological documents such as a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) appear to have been submitted to assess the impact that the proposal may have on protected/priority species and nearby designated sites. For a proposal of this nature, it would likely only be bats and nesting birds that could be a constraint. A review of satellite imagery, Google Street View and GMEU's internal database has been undertaken, and the site is located within a densely urban area of Rochdale with limited bat records nearby to the site. Additionally, the building looks to be maintained in a good condition and appears to be well-sealed. It may however have some potential for crevice dwelling bats in small cracks and crevices that may be present, however the works overall are likely to be of low risk to bats.

However, as bats are highly mobile creatures, we would advise that the following informative be attached to any permission, should it be granted:

Whilst the works to the existing building has been assessed as very low risk for bats, the applicant is reminded that under the Habitat Regulation it is an offence to disturb, harm or kill bats. If a bat is found all work should cease immediately and a suitably licensed bat worker employed to assess how best to safeguard the bat(s). Natural England should also be informed.

I also have the following recommendations:

- Work that will impact on habitats where nesting birds may be present (for example building works/vegetation clearance), should not be undertaken in the main bird nesting season (March – August) unless suitable checks for active bird nests have been undertaken.
- Planning policy encourages enhancements and net gains for biodiversity to be delivered through the planning system. Wherever possible measures to enhance the site for biodiversity should be secured as part of this planning application and could include integration of a bat and bird box onto the building.

Given that the site appears to be hardstanding and buildings only, the proposal is likely to be exempt from a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment under the de minimis rule (less than 25m² of habitat removal). Rochdale Borough Council should be satisfied that this is accurate.

In summary, GMEU are satisfied that the application can be forwarded to determination and that any permission if granted is supported by the conditions above.

Kind regards,

Melissa Sullivan

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