

5th November 2024

Planning Officer
Eastleigh Borough Council

Dear Ms Altman

RM/24/98388 Reserved matters relating to layout, scale, appearance and landscaping of the proposed development pursuant to outline permission O/19/86980 for the construction of 49 no residential dwellings. Land west of Allbrook Way, Allbrook, SO50 4LZ

I am writing to you on behalf of Hampshire Swifts, a charity devoted to the conservation of Swifts in Hampshire and part of a national network of Swift groups throughout the UK.

In the Ecological Impact Assessment Part 2 page 39, Ecosa say *"As a measure of enhancement, bird boxes will be incorporated in every Bargate home in line with the company's policy. The type of bird boxes to be installed will include a mixture of Vivara Pro Woodstone Sparrow nest boxes, Woodstone Build-in Swift nest boxes and Woodstone Built-in Open Hole nest boxes or similar alternatives."*

This proposal does not meet current best-practice guidance as regards integral nest bricks. According to British Standard BS 42021:2022 and CIEEM, new developments should contain at least 1 swift brick per home. Swift bricks are considered a universal nest brick suitable for a wide range of small bird species including swifts, house sparrows and starlings (e.g. see NHBC Foundation: Biodiversity in New Housing Developments (April 2021) Section 8.1 Nest sites for birds, page 42: https://www.nhbcfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/S067-NF89-Biodiversity-in-new-housing-developments_FINAL.pdf). BS 42021:2022 specifies that all integral nest bricks should be of swift brick design as this ensures that Swifts, House sparrows and other cavity nesting species can use them safely, with no risk of a bird getting trapped inside.

Swift bricks are the only type of bird box specifically mentioned as valuable to wildlife in national planning guidance (NPPG Natural Environment 2019 paragraph 023). The National Model Design Code Part 2 Guidance Notes (2021) also recommends bird bricks (Integrating Habitats section on page 25 and Creating Habitats section on page 26).

Swift bricks are preferable to external boxes as they are a permanent feature of the building with zero maintenance requirements, better thermal regulation with future climate change in mind, plus aesthetic integration with the design of the development.

Best-practice guidance is provided by BS 42021:2022, and CIEEM: <https://cieem.net/resource/the-swift-a-bird-you-need-to-help/> <https://knowledge.bsigroup.com/products/integral-nest-boxes-selection-and-installation-for-new-developments-specification-1?version=standard&tab=overview>.



We request that there should be at least one swift brick per home installed according to BS 42021:2022 and that this should be secured by condition. Bird boxes/ bricks and other species features are excluded from the DEFRA Biodiversity Net Gain metric, so require their own clear conditions.

Yours sincerely

Prof Catharine Gale
Trustee