

Land at Cardiff Road, Reading (1005150)

Biodiversity Enhancement and Monitoring Scheme

Date: 21 August 2019

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. Aspect Ecology was originally commissioned in 2016 to undertake ecological survey and appraisal work in respect of the former Cox and Wyman site, located at Cardiff Road, Reading, centred at OS grid reference SU 709 741.
- 1.2. The findings of the previous work are set out within Aspect Ecology's Ecological Appraisal report, dated September 2017, which was submitted to Reading Borough Council to inform a planning application (ref: 171814) for the proposals, including demolition of the existing buildings and boundary treatments and erection of 96 no. new dwellings and associated works.
- 1.3. Subsequently, full planning permission has been received from Reading Borough Council in regard to the proposals, dated 19 November 2018, which is subject to a number of conditions.
- 1.4. Of these, condition 28 states:

"Prior to commencement of the development, a biodiversity enhancement and monitoring scheme to include a minimum of 30 swift bricks on and around the new buildings shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The submitted details shall include measures, such as the playing of swift calls, to encourage the use of the swift bricks, and a 5 year monitoring strategy, the results of which are to be submitted to the council and the local environmental records centre. The measures shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved plan and retained as such."

Reason: The site hosts a colony of swifts (a bird of conservation concern). This condition will help ensure that swifts can continue to use the site following completion of development in accordance with Policy CS36 of the Core Strategy."

- 1.5. Accordingly, this document provides details relating to the required Biodiversity Enhancement and Monitoring Scheme (BEMS), for submission to the LPA, in order to address the stated requirements of planning condition 28. The information set out includes reference to the previous survey work and ecological position at the site where appropriate, to inform details of the proposed enhancements, along with long term monitoring activities in line with the precise wording of the condition.

2. Existing Situation and Proposals

- 2.1. As set out within the previous Ecological Appraisal information, the vast majority of the site (including all internal areas) is formed by existing buildings and hardstanding, with vegetated habitats limited to small areas of amenity grassland, shrub/scrub planting and a small number of trees associated with the boundaries. The site is surrounded on all sides by existing roads, and development including residential properties and further industrial buildings.

- 2.2. It is therefore clear that the site currently supports negligible ecological value and does not contain, nor is it connected to any significant vegetated habitats or important ecological features.
- 2.3. Accordingly, the nature of the site is therefore such that opportunities for meaningful faunal enhancements are somewhat limited, however in line with the previously submitted information (along with the stated reason for the condition), Swifts were previously recorded nesting within the existing, small building at the north eastern corner of the site and as such (in line with the condition wording), opportunities will be focussed under the proposals in order to secure significant long-term gains in potential nesting sites for this species.

3. Provision of Swift Boxes

- 3.1. Planning Condition 28 requires details of a minimum of 30 Swift boxes to be installed on and around the new buildings to be submitted and approved by the LPA. Accordingly, Plan 5150/EE1 identifies the proposed locations of 30 Swift boxes to be installed at the site.
- 3.2. The locations of individual boxes have been determined based on the suitability and design of the individual permitted buildings, ensuring a variety of aspects, facing north, east and west, with in particular provision ensured in the north eastern corner of the site to provide direct replacement for the existing nest sites in this location.
- 3.3. It is proposed that integrated Swift boxes are provided (e.g. as shown at Appendix 5150/EE1), which will be placed as high as possible (immediately below eaves height in the majority of cases), in the locations shown at Plan 5150/EE1.

4. Measures to encourage use by Swifts

- 4.1. In order to prevent harm to any Swifts at the site and encourage use of the boxes by Swifts, the following measures are proposed, in line with the wording of planning condition 28:

Demolition

- 4.2. Demolition of the existing buildings at the site is understood to be scheduled for winter 2019 (currently programmed for September – December 2019), such that it will be undertaken (and completed) during the period when Swifts (summer migrants) will not be present. In any event, demolition works to building B2 in particular (previously recorded to support nesting Swifts) will take place outside of April to the end of August, when Swifts would not be present.

Swift Calls

- 4.3. Recent evidence indicates that Swift can be encouraged to occupy new nest sites by playing recordings of Swift calls from the location of the provision (with e.g. speakers placed within the eaves), whilst the wording of Condition 28 requires measures to encourage colonisation of new boxes by Swifts, including *“the playing of Swift calls”*.
- 4.4. As such, where possible, it is proposed that an automated system will be set up (likely including small speakers and amplifier) to play Swift calls at a single location in the vicinity of initial boxes during the first season following construction. Any such system should be set up to play the calls during the early evenings in May (when Swifts would be anticipated to return from their annual migrations). The precise location and timing will be guided by the final construction programme and progress, to ensure earliest installation (ideally May/June 2020, albeit should

final construction timescales be such that none of the relevant buildings are completed by this time, this element will be delayed until the 2021 nesting season). It is anticipated that this would be located within the show home (Plot 23, located at the east of the site) or central flat block to ensure appropriate access is available, but final location will be guided by construction progress and timings.

- 4.5. Where monitoring (see below) confirms any use of the new boxes at the site by nesting Swifts, these would be anticipated to return the following year and as such, further playing of Swift calls would not be required, albeit should monitoring indicate no colonisation of the new boxes, where possible, the potential for further use of the system the following year will be investigated (any subsequent use will likely be dependent on individual owners following completion of development works).

5. Monitoring

- 5.1. In order to monitor the success (or otherwise) of the new nesting provision for Swifts and address the stated requirements of planning condition 28 in this regard, it is proposed to undertake a single monitoring visit each year, during June/July (when nesting Swifts would be anticipated to be in residence) commencing the first year following construction.
- 5.2. Individual boxes would be monitored through visual inspection, with the results (in particular records of nesting activity) to be provided to Reading Borough Council and TVERC (local ecological record centre) on completion of the 5 year monitoring period in line with the stated requirements of planning condition 28.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. This note provides details of enhancement and monitoring measures to be implemented at the site, in the form of provision of 30 integrated Swift nesting boxes, along with measures to safeguard Swifts and encourage use of the new boxes and monitoring in line with the specific stated requirements of planning Condition 28. Accordingly, it is considered that the detail set out within this note would satisfy the identified pre-commencement requirement of Condition 28 of the planning permission for the site, and (subject to the successful implementation and retention of the measures set out), it is therefore considered safe for this element of the condition to be discharged.

Plan 5150/EE1

Proposed Ecological Enhancements



- Key:
- Site Boundary
 - Proposed Building
 - Suggested location of integrated Swift Brick (NB Total 30 No. required in order to address the stated requirements of planning condition 28)

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Cardiff Road, Reading PROJECT

Ecological Enhancements TITLE

5150/EE1 DRAWING NO.

A. REV.

August 2019 DATE



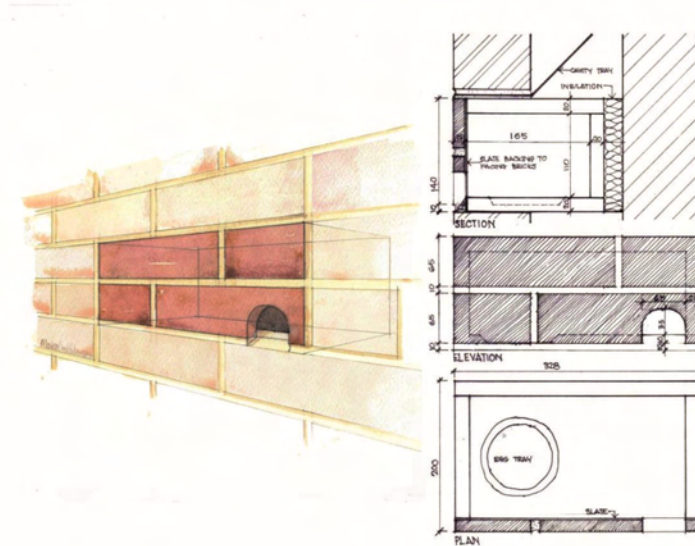
Based on Proposed Landscape General Arrangement Plan (Barton Willmore Drawing No. 24325 RG-L-01) and associated proposed elevations plans (Drawing Nos. 24325 A/PP-P13-01-04)

Appendix 5150/EE1

Example Swift Box specifications

Swift Box - Smooth Brick

The Swift Box is a cleverly designed bird box, that provides a permanent nesting site for hole-nesting birds, as an integral part of the fabric of a building.



The Swift Box is a large, solid box made of insulating concrete with an internal nesting space, which can be incorporated into the fabric of a building as it is built or renovated. The box is designed to be both unobtrusive and aesthetically pleasing.



Swift Brick Box

Entrance dimensions: 33 x 65 mm

The brick boxes are faced in standard Staffordshire Smooth brick (Red or Blue), and are ideal for new builds. They are supplied unpointed so they can be matched as closely as possible to the building. Some designs can be made to order and faced in brick to match your building.

Ibstock Swift Box

Ibstock Swift Box

Designed with Swifts in mind. Available in a variety of brick types.
An enclosed nesting box for installation at/near eaves. Ideal for new build and conservation work.

Dimensions 327 x 140 x 140mm.



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