

Memo

To: Marcelina Rejwerska

From: Cathy Holwill (RBC Ecology Consultations)

CC:

Date: 15 August 2024

Re: Application ref: PL/23/0988

Address: 2 Mason Street, Reading, RG1 7PD

Description: Proposed roof alterations, part two part single storey extensions and conversion of the existing building to 3 x flats. Resubmission of Planning Permission 190533

The application is an end of terrace house where it is proposed to add a number of extensions and convert the building to three flats.

Given the location of the house, the habitats on and surrounding the site are of poor suitability for use by bats or other protected species. Furthermore, the development appears to be entirely on hardstanding and is not subject to biodiversity net gain requirements. As such, there are no ecological objections to the application.

However, this part of Reading hosts a population of swifts, a species that nests in buildings particularly the older terraced houses such as this one. The swift population is declining in part due to the loss of nesting sites as buildings are renovated or extended. It is therefore recommended that, in accordance with paragraph 186 of the NPPF which states that “*opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design*” and Policy EN12 of Reading’s Local Plan, a condition is set to ensure that two swift bricks are built into the new extension (see https://www.swift-conservation.org/swift_bricks.htm for examples of swift bricks). Example wording is provided below:

Condition: Prior to commencement of development, details of biodiversity enhancements, to include two integral swift bricks, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the council. The biodiversity enhancements shall thereafter be installed as approved.

Reason: Swifts although common in Reading and other areas are declining and a bird of conservation concern due in part to a lack of nesting sites which are usually in buildings. This condition will result in biodiversity improvements in and around the development in accordance with Paragraph 186 of the NPPF.