

Comments for planning application S62A/2026/0159

Graham Knight <[REDACTED]>

Section 62A Applications



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Good evening

Please see below comments for planning application s62A/2026/0159, Maple House, High Street, Potters Bar

Kind regards

Graham Knight

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This comment is made on behalf of Hertfordshire Swift conservation groups

This development is suitable for Swift bricks to be integrated into the walls of the new buildings, as set out in the recent updates to the NPPF and NPPG as well as the Hertfordshire Nature Recovery Strategy.

Swift bricks are universal nest bricks as they conform to the British Standard for integral nest boxes, BS42021:2022, meaning they provide nest cavities for a variety of small birds.

The ecology report proposes 13 Swift bricks per block, and this is fully supported.

Policy N2 (1) of the Natural Environment part of the NPPF is a National Decision-Making Policy and as such is a material planning consideration of critical importance. Policy N2 states:

“To contribute positively to the natural environment, and support nature’s recovery, development proposals should:

f. Minimise any adverse impacts on biodiversity and include features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs. Development proposals should incorporate integrated nest boxes (commonly known as swift bricks) into their construction unless there are compelling technical reasons which prevent their use, or would make them ineffective”

Paragraph 17 of the Natural Environment section of the NPPG states the following:

“The National Planning Policy Framework expects development proposals to bolster wildlife by incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs.

The use of swift bricks is particularly important in this context because swifts rely on urban cavities for nesting, and the national loss of suitable nesting sites through building renovation has been part of the reason for the species' decline.

Developments should include integrated nest boxes (commonly known as swift bricks) where possible, with the general aim across a development of a minimum of one nest box

per unit. Nest boxes can provide important habitat for other species as well as swifts, such as starlings and sparrows”

The Hertfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy also contains policy actions in relation to Swift bricks

The unmapped urban priorities section includes action 5, for making new developments more nature-friendly: *“Swift bricks, bat bricks/tiles and hedgehog highways installed as standard on new development”*

Please consider securing Swift bricks by way of a specific condition, the suggested wording of which is based on a standard planning condition produced by the Swifts Local Network Planning Group, of which the author is a member:

"No development shall take place until written details are approved by the LPA of the model and location of 52 integrated Swift bricks, to be fully installed prior to completion of the external walls of each building and retained thereafter", in accordance with the NPPF