[*Name*

*House number/Name and Street*

 *Village/Town/City*

 *County*

 *Post Code*]

 [*Phone number*]

[*Email address*]

 [*Date*]

[*Name of* planning casework officer assigned to application]

[*Local Authority office address*]

**Application reference: XXX/XXXXX/XXX**

Dear [*Name of* planning casework officer assigned to application],

As a local resident, I **object** to the above named planning application and request [*Name of Local Authority*]takes measures to ensure that the existing swift nests on site remain available to these threatened birds. These traditional nest sites will be lost because of these plans for [*demolition/redevelopment*], unless mitigating measures are taken to incorporate swift nest sites into the new development.

**If [*Name of Local Authority*] intends to grant permission for the above planning application, I urge you to make installation of [*X*] swift nest bricks a planning condition.**

Section 40 of the **Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006,** states: “*Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.*”1

This is supported in Section 109 of the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**, which states: “*The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: …minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government’s commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures…*”2

Installing integral swift nest bricks would contribute to these objectives and demonstrate the commitment of [*Name of Local Authority*]to protecting and enhancing biodiversity.

Designing for and installing swift bricks into the fabric of the new building during the construction phase is easy, inexpensive, and will last the life-time of the building. Based on [*insert your evidence e.g. anecdotal observations, swift survey data, etc*], I believe there are approximately [*X*] pair(s) of swifts nesting on this site.

As a minimum requirement, an equivalent number of swift bricks are needed to mitigate for the loss of swift nest sites currently present. Ideally, aim to locate them in an area of the new building as close as possible to where the original colony was situated. Further increasing the number of swift nest sites available through this development would be preferable.

1 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/pdfs/ukpga_20060016_en.pdf>

2 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/11-conserving-and-enhancing-the-natural-environment>

**Why are swifts important?**

Swifts are a quintessential sign of British summertime and an intrinsic part of[*Name of town/city*]. They are often seen soaring over rooftops on late summer evenings, with their dark sickle-shaped wings and distinctive ‘screaming’ calls. These charismatic birds spend nearly their whole lives in flight and are migrant birds, arriving all the way from central/southern Africa in early May just to breed in the UK, before leaving again in August.

However, swifts are in trouble, having declined by 47% between 1995-2014 (that’s 3% per year). Swifts are now an ‘Amber-listed’ species on the list of Birds of Conservation Concern3 and a Priority species for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

**Without our help, swifts will be lost as a breeding species in the UK.**

Swifts are entirely reliant on buildings to nest. Nest sites are being lost when buildings are demolished or refurbished - and because swifts are faithful to their nest site, breeding success of swifts is being severely affected. The RSPB and the British Trust of Ornithology believes this loss of nest sites is a key driver behind the dramatic decline of swifts.

All is not lost, however. There are lots of simple and inexpensive solutions, easily deployed in all manner of developments which addresses the issue - swift nest bricks being one such example.

I enclose an annex which lists a range of possible solutions, products and resources.

If we do not take action now to save swifts, future generations will no longer hear the exhilarating sound of screaming parties of swifts soaring over rooftops on a summer evening. With their loss, a part of our British heritage will be lost with them too.

Yours sincerely,

[*Your Name*]

3 [www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/bird-and-wildlife-guides/bird-guide/status\_explained.aspx](http://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/bird-and-wildlife-guides/bird-guide/status_explained.aspx)