Brief biographies of support letter writers:

Kevin McCloud is a British designer, writer and television presenter best known for his work on the Channel4 series 'Grand Designs', a programme covering unusual and elaborate architectural homebuilding projects which is now in its thirteenth series. In the course of the latter series, McCloud demonstrated his fluency in French and Italian, occasionally acting as a translator for people who have houses built abroad in places where they don't know the language. He is also editor-at-large for Grand Designs magazine, and sat on the steering committee for the associated exhibition "Grand Designs Live" in 2005 and 2006.

Alain de Botton is a Swiss-British writer, philosopher, and television presenter resident in the United Kingdom. His books and television programmes discuss various contemporary subjects and themes, emphasizing philosophy’s relevance to everyday life. He has published a host of best-selling books including ‘How Proust Can Change Your Life’ (1997), ‘Status Anxiety’ (2004) and 'The Architecture of Happiness' (2006). In August 2008, he was a founding member of a new educational establishment in London called 'The School of Life'. In May 2009, he was a founding member of a new architectural organisation called 'Living Architecture'.

Dominic Bradbury is a freelance writer, journalist and consultant. He has contributed to many magazines and newspapers in the UK and around the world, including The Telegraph, The Sunday Times, The Financial Times, World of Interiors, Architectural Digest, Wallpaper, Elle Decoration, Vogue Living, Belle, Dwell, House & Garden and many others. His first book was published in 2000 and since then he has written a wide range of titles on architecture, interiors and design. New titles for 2014 include New Brazilian House, Mountain Modern and the landmark book, Mid Century Modern Complete, a definitive study of 1950s and '60s design, furniture and interiors, published by Thames & Hudson/Abrams. Other books include New Country House, Vertical Living and Mediterranean Modern. Two key titles to date are The Iconic House and The Iconic Interior published by Thames & Hudson. These international surveys of the landmark houses and interiors of the 20th Century have been translated into many languages and published around the world. He is married with three children and lives in Norfolk, England. Dominic's father was the great writer Sir Malcolm Bradbury.

Jeremy Melvin is senior lecturer in the History of Architecture at South Bank University, and guest lecturer at Cambridge, Architectural Association, ETH Zurich and other schools. He contributes regularly to the Architect's Journal and the Architectural Review and has written a number of books on architecture including 'Country Houses Today', in 2006.

Alan Powers is a British teacher, researcher and writer specialising in architecture and design. As a writer Powers has been prolific, writing reviews, magazine articles, obituaries of artists and architects as well as books. He has concentrated on 20th century British architecture. He is joint editor of the journal 'Twentieth Century Architecture' and joint editor of the series of monographs, Twentieth Century Architects, published by RIBA and English Heritage with the Twentieth Century Society. He was until recently Professor of Architecture and Cultural History at the University of Greenwich in London. An expert on 20th-century architecture, Alan Powers was awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the RIBA in 2008.

Richard Weston is an award-winning architect, landscape architect and author. A well known author on architecture, Richard’s dozen books include Modernism, winner of the International Book Award of the American Institute of Architects; Alvar Aalto, winner of the Sir Banister Fletcher Prize; and what was described in Blueprint as possibly the finest monograph ever produced about an architect, on the work of Jørn Utzon, architect of Sydney Opera House.

Isabel Allen is the former editor of the ‘Architect’s Journal’ (19999–2007) where she oversaw a major redesign of the title in 2005 and winning a string of awards, including PPA Editor of the Year and BSME Editor of the Year. She joined HAB Housing Developments as Design Director in 2007, putting theory into practice, which has already resulted in a stack of design and sustainability awards, most recently for a social housing scheme ‘The Triangle’ in Swindon. Isabel is a highly respected writer and commentator on architecture.
28th August 2014

Waverley Borough Council
c/o John Pardey Architects
Beck Farm Studios, St Leonards Road
Lymington, SO41 5SR

I am not normally moved to support planning applications by others but I write to warmly support the planning application by John Pardey Architects to build a house known as ‘The Aviary’ in the countryside under paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Paragraph 55 was written for such a proposal as this.

This design would occupy the site of derelict chicken sheds - although the site cannot technically be classed as brownfield, there are extensive redundant buildings on site - and should be considered as a unique exemplar of its kind. As proposed, the building delicately synthesises several key ideas: the formal, orthogonal shape of some of the purer 20th century pavilions and modernist country houses that are its antecedents; the repeated vertical motifs of the surrounding trees; and even the modest design of the former chicken sheds.

The purity of the concept is retained through the use of slender columns to lift the principal dwelling box above ground as though floating, and by secreting many of the services and transport functions of the home underground. The use of a buried storey also allows the house to sit low among the trees.

The elegance of the design lies in the use of the broken screen to wrap the first floor box in an arrangement of sticks. This refers clearly to the vertical arrangements of tree trunks in the surrounding setting but it also serves to mask and camouflage the mass of the building by setting up interference shadow and scattered views and by shading the principally glazed walls of the ground floor. The overall effect will be to suggest that the building has largely dematerialised or is dematerialising. The idea of this in a woodland setting of deep shadows and moving foliage is charming.

I urge the planning department and committee to place their faith in what is a breathtaking, original and highly considered proposal by one of the country’s most admired and most august architects of houses.

Kevin McCloud
Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my support for a new build house project designed by John Pardey Architects, known as ‘The Aviary’ in Munstead, near Godalming.

I hope that my work as a writer and philosopher, as well as founder of ‘Living Architecture’ dedicated to the promotion and enjoyment of world-class architecture, allows me to voice an opinion on this project.

I have followed John Pardey’s work for many years now and have written about a range of his projects in the past and his ‘Duckett House’ featured in my 2007 book ‘The Architecture of Happiness’.

John is clearly at the forefront of his field and his work is always characterised by a particular concern with site and context and in this case, the cultural legacy of the country houses of Lutyens in this part of Surrey. I believe that this is exactly the kind of house that Paragraph 55 was designed to encourage: an outstanding design that reflects the highest standards of architecture and one that enhances the immediate setting as well as being sensitive to the local context.

I therefore express my hope that this project is given planning consent.

I believe the Aviary is going to be a building of major historical impact and interest at the end of the 21st century.

Yours sincerely,

Alain de Botton
22/8/14

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my support for a new build house project designed by John Pardey Architects, known as ‘The Aviary’.

I hope that my work as a journalist and writer, specialising in the fields of architecture and design, provides me with some relevant experience and that you will, therefore, allow me to voice an opinion on this project. I contribute to The Telegraph, The Financial Times and many other newspapers and magazines here in the UK and internationally. My many books include a title called New Country House and another entitled New Natural Home, both of which examine the subject of modern country houses.

I have followed John Pardey’s work for many years now and have written about a range of his projects in the past, including contemporary country houses of particular distinction. John Pardey is clearly at the forefront of his field and his work in a countryside context is always characterised by a particular sensitivity to site and context along with a deep understanding of local conditions and concerns, as well as the needs of his clients.

Having studied the design statement for The Aviary and the context of the proposed design, I would like to offer my full support for the project. To my mind, this is exactly the kind of house that Paragraph 55 was designed to encourage: an outstanding design that reflects the highest standards of architecture and one that enhances the immediate setting as well as being sensitive to the local context.
The design of The Aviary is considered, thoughtful and beyond reproach. It is complemented by a landscape proposal by Todd Longstaffe-Gowan – whose work I also know and respect – which further enhances the setting while preserving the character and biodiversity of the natural surroundings.

Given the current condition of the site, which is clearly marred by derelict former agricultural buildings, it seems to me that a project of this kind, which will replace these dilapidated buildings with an exemplary piece of modern architecture and provide for a carefully managed restoration of the immediate landscape setting, is an ideal way forward.

One has to remember, of course, that this is a single dwelling without any of the traffic management issues and environmental impact that a larger residential development of multiple dwellings might entail. At the same time, the tree cover around the site ensures the absolute discretion of the new building and means that any visual impact upon neighbours will be negligible.

I would like to express my sincere hope that this project is taken forward and fulfills its promise. My own belief is that one off projects of this kind – sensitively conceived masterworks of great character and distinction in discreet rural settings, which enhance rather than undermine our environment – should be favoured and encouraged. They are so much more benign and uplifting than some of the ill-conceived multi-residential developments that blight green belt sites and villages in my own part of the countryside, to my great regret.

I hope to have the opportunity to visit The Aviary at some point in the future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Dominic Bradbury.
The Aviary promises to be a very fine example of a modern country house: sensitive to its context, sustainable, a source of pleasure and delight for visitors and residents – and a worthy contribution to the long line of architectural innovation that the greatest English country houses represent.

It is particularly relevant that this house is close to several of the finest houses of Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944). Perhaps more than any of his contemporaries he proved that the English country house tradition could be adapted to a society where country estates were not the ultimate source of political and economic power. This set the scene for a new architectural challenge, of creating a more personal, sensory and subtle relationship between nature and building – and this contributes to their significance as works of architecture.

John Pardey’s work demonstrates the possibilities this challenge has for contemporary architecture. He draws on the spatial and formal innovations of modernism (there is a hint of Le Corbusier’s Villa Savoye in raising the house on piloti, and of Patrick Gwynne’s Homewood in Esher), but responds to the greater fluidity of family life, a world where technology brings new opportunities and experiences, and where sustainability is essential. In its careful selection and detailing of materials, in its imaginative spatial layouts (including an enclosed high level garden), and in its careful relationship to its setting, The Aviary constructs new forms of interaction between nature, building and people. This is the essence of the English country house tradition, from Elizabethan knot gardens through Capability Brown to Gertrude Jeckyll, and it suggests that The Aviary may be in due course as important as examples of their work.
From Dr. Alan Powers

2 September 2014

The Aviary, Munstead

In architecture since the Renaissance, the classical ideal of pure geometry and universal form has duetted with the sense of place and history represented as romantic. The late Victorian period was overtly romantic – historical and local references dominated, although an architect such as Lutyens displayed the formal discipline that made them material for the highest level of design.

In the design of smaller country houses, the mid twentieth century marked a significant moment of change. This was not a change in architectural belief, but in the domestic arrangements of the upper middle class. The decrease of live-in domestic servants, to the point of extinction, meant that a house could be more freely planned, without the complication of a separate service entrance, or internal accommodation separated from the main body of the house. It became possible to revert to the classical forms of the Palladian villa, such as Chiswick House, where service functions were concealed in a basement.

As a historical idea from the ancient world, the villa is a compact house where the focus is on the outlook to nature and the enjoyment of country pleasures. The social change that removed domestic service allowed the fulfillment of Modernism’s promise of undivided continuous space (assisted by central heating), and the ideal conditions for villa design were restored. An early transitional example in Surrey is The Homewood, Esher by Patrick Gwynne, 1938, a substantial flat roofed house with living accommodation raised to first floor level in two linked pavilion blocks, and an exceptionally large open plan living room and dining room. The house is now a property of the National Trust.

Since the rejection of overt historical imagery by the majority of architects, we find the dualism of classical and romantic represented in more abstract ways than were used by Lutyens. The Aviary design by John Pardey combines ideas from two of the most famous villas of the Modern Movement. The open ground floor with its ‘pods’ resembles the Tugendhat House, Brno, Czech Republic, by Mies van der Rohe, 1930, while the way that the rectangle of the upper level overshails it, supported on slender columns, resembles the Villa Savoye at Poissy, France, by Le Corbusier, 1929. Both these houses have been interpreted as both classic and romantic, and were intended by their designers to offer a sophisticated contrast between geometry and nature, in which each element is enhanced by difference.

To this combination are brought new elements such as the regular vertical fins on the upper volume, in tune with the recent trend in architecture to animate the surface of the wall and create an ambiguous position between solid and transparent.
John Pardey is an architect with a subtle understanding of the evolution of Modern architecture, especially that of the private house and villa. In the design for The Aviary he has remixed the opposites of classical and romantic with skill and the building will surely enhance the experience of this exceptional site.

Alan Powers

Author of
The National Trust Book of the English House (with Clive Aslet), 1985
The Twentieth Century House in Britain, 2004
Modern, the Modern Movement in Britain, 2005
Britain (Modern Architectures in History) 2007
4 September 2014

Dear Sirs

I am writing to express my support for ‘The Aviary’ in Munstead, near Godalming, a new rural house designed by John Pardey Architects and submitted for approval under the ‘New Country House exception’ introduced in 1997.

I retired last summer after a 30-year career as a university teacher, latterly as Professor of Architecture at Cardiff University, and am an award-winning designer and writer on architecture. My books include the only comprehensive study of the development of the modern house, ‘The House in the Twentieth Century’, published by Laurence King in 2002.

John Pardey is one of the leading British architects of his generation, and to a great extent his reputation rests on a succession of exceptional domestic designs. To those familiar with his work, ‘The Aviary’ is recognizably a ‘Pardey House’, but in my opinion it also raises his work to a new level. As a specifically ‘country house’ it is in the tradition of such classics as the Villa Savoye and Farnsworth House, juxtaposing architectural forms and ‘flowing’ spaces of the utmost clarity with a natural setting, while addressing contemporary demands for sustainability and offering a more nuanced relationship between inside and out. As such, it seems to me to be precisely the kind of project that the Paragraph 55 exception was designed to encourage.

If the Aviary is built I have no doubt that it will be an outstanding candidate for inclusion in studies of ‘The House in the Twenty-First Century’.

Yours faithfully,

Richard Weston
Director

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Company reg. no. 05457006   VAT reg. no.: 987 6800 59
10th July 2014

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my enthusiasm and support for the designs for The Aviary in produced by John Pardey Architects.

Having followed John Pardey’s career with great interest – I published several of his houses in my previous role as Editor of the Architects’ Journal – I have no doubt that he is one of the most talented and significant architects practicing in the UK today.

In my capacity of AJ Editor I launched the ‘Save the Clause’ campaign to protect the principle of granting planning consent for one-off country houses provided that they are of truly outstanding architectural merit.

I felt strongly – and still believe - that it is vital that the UK’s proud tradition of outstanding country houses continues and evolves to reflect the lifestyles, culture, technology and tastes of contemporary generations.

In my view, John Pardey is one of the few living architects with the talent and vision to demonstrate that our generation is capable of producing architectural masterpieces to match – and even to surpass – the great historic country houses of centuries gone by.

His proposal for The Aviary is bold, original and absolutely appropriate. I have no doubt that it will prove to be not only a fabulous family home, but a showcase for British architecture and an important historic legacy for generations to come.

Yours sincerely

Isabel Allen

Design Director, HAB Housing