

READING ORACLE, RIVERSIDE: LOCATION OF BIRD BOXES

1. Introduction

1.1 Ecological Planning & Research Ltd (EPR) has been commissioned by Hammerson Plc to provide ecological advice in relation to their proposals to redevelop the frontage of the Reading Oracle to provide a new restaurant, kiosk and improvements to the public realm. The proposed development was consented by Reading Borough Council on 17 August 2016 (App no 151537)

1.2 Condition 15 of the planning consent was added at the request of the Environment Agency, and states:

“15. Prior to the first use of the Class A3 unit hereby approved, details of the location, design and specifications of at least 12 bird boxes shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved bird boxes shall be provided in full prior to the first use of the Class A3 premises hereby approved and retained thereafter.”

1.3 This technical note has been submitted to enable Condition 15 to be discharged.

2. Location of Boxes

2.1 Barton Willmore drawing number RG-L-40B shows the proposed location of the proposed 8 Swift nest boxes and 4 House Sparrow Terraces, comprised of:

- 4 Schwegler standard No.17 (single compartment) Swift Boxes;
- 4 Triple Swift Box No 17A (Three Compartment) nest boxes; and
- 4 Schwegler 1SP House Sparrow Terraces.

2.2 As shown on the Barton Willmore drawing, all of the abovementioned Swift boxes are to be located on a north-facing aspect of House of Fraser to the east of Bridge Street. The proposed location is high up, close to the top of the building façade. The north-facing aspect will ensure that the nest boxes remain cool in summer (important for Swifts), and the elevated position with clear airspace for several metres both in front and below the boxes will enable plenty of space for Swifts to utilise their characteristic ‘swooping’ entry to the boxes.

2.3 The House Sparrow terraces are to be located nearby, on the west-facing aspect of the building located to the east of the Swift boxes. House Sparrows are communal nesters, and so all of the boxes will be placed in relatively close proximity to each other. The position chosen will receive a little more sunlight than the Swift boxes, particularly in the afternoon, but will be shaded in the heat of the day by the main house of Fraser building. The location chosen is sheltered, and also sufficiently far away from the large window to avoid accidental disturbance of nesting birds during routine maintenance such as window cleaning.

2.4 In summary, the location of all abovementioned bird boxes is considered to be appropriate to the target species concerned.

EPR, 23 June 2017