

THE SEAMAN PARTNERSHIP

56 East Front Road, Pagham, West Sussex

Protected Species Assessment: Swallow and Starling

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Position: Principal

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Landscape Architecture



Environmental Design



Landscape Planning

Lizard Landscape Design

Lizard Landscape Design



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SUMMARY

Lizard Landscape Design has been commissioned to undertake a Protected Species Assessment for Swallow / Martin species (*Hirundinidae* – hereafter referred to as Swallow) and Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* at 56 East Front Road, Pagham, West Sussex (hereafter referred to as the Site).

The Site was subject to a walkover survey to assess the potential for Swallows and Starlings to nest / roost on 26th August 2011. This is outside of the bird breeding season (*March-July inclusive*) and therefore the survey was specifically targeted to identify the potential nesting opportunities on Site and not confirmed nest sites.

No nests were found during the survey visit. Likewise no items suggestive of recent nesting such as broken egg shells or accumulated nesting material were found during the survey visit.

Based on the evidence collected during the survey visit it is suggested that re-provision of Nesting / Roosting opportunities for Starlings is not required as the potential represented on Site is *Low*.

Based on the evidence collected during the survey visit it is suggested that a precautionary approach with regard to nesting Swallows would be to re-provide nesting opportunities within the footprint of the post-construction layout on Site. This is because the Site as a whole has been designated as representing *medium-high potential* with regard to nesting opportunities for Swallows.

Swallow nests can be purchased from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (*RSPB*). In this instance they should be affixed to the northern elevation of the main building underneath shelter that provides cover from rain or in any 'outhouse' that provides suitable shelter and access points.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Lizard Landscape Design has been commissioned to undertake a Protected Species Assessment for Swallow / Martin species (*Hirundinidae* – hereafter referred to as Swallow) and Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* at 56 East Front Road, Pagham, West Sussex (*hereafter referred to as the Site*).
- 1.2 The Site was subject to a walkover survey to assess the potential for Swallows and Starlings to nest / roost on 26th August 2011. This is outside of the bird breeding season (*March-July inclusive*) and therefore the survey was specifically targeted to identify the potential nesting opportunities on Site and not confirmed nest sites.
- 1.3 The Site is located on East Front Road, Pagham which is found on the coast road at the South-Eastern end of Pagham, West Sussex (SZ 893 974) and approximately 1.2 kilometres North-East of Pagham Harbour National Nature Reserve *NNR*. No existing Rights of Way exist across the site and permission has been sought to access the site.
- 1.4 The Site is situated within an urban setting with sizeable amounts of farmland found to the North. There are less common habitats found to the south-west to the Nature Reserve that includes Saline Lagoon and Mudflats. The Site is approximately 4.0 metres above sea-level.
- 1.5 The Site itself appears to have been disused for more than one year with a significant amount of Ivy having colonised the shed at the northern end of Site. The Ivy growth around the garden area would also appear to have not been managed in more than one year.
- 1.6 This report establishes the potential ecological resource for Swallows and Starlings within the site and outlines where any ecological constraints may occur.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The Site was subject to a walkover survey to assess the potential for Swallows and Starlings to nest on 26th August 2011. This is outside of the Bird Breeding Season (*March-July inclusive*) and therefore the survey was specifically targeted to identify the potential nesting opportunities on Site and not confirmed nest sites.
- 2.2 The survey and analysis was designed and implemented to incorporate the species-specific nesting preferences and requirements of each species.

3.0 RESULTS

- 3.1 The Main Building on Site offered negligible nesting opportunities for each species respectively (*refer to Photographs No. 1-8; Appendix No. 1*). There were no holes in to which Starlings might access the potential nesting opportunities inside the house and minimal points on to which Swallows might construct a nest. The main building has been designated as having *negligible potential* for both species.
- 3.2 The Garage found to the northern extent of Site has a missing panel of glass on the southern elevation (*refer to Photograph No.9; Appendix No. 1*) that would allow access to the potential nesting opportunities inside. In addition there are sheltered ledges inside the garage on the eastern and western elevations that could be exploited for Nesting by Swallows and Starlings (*refer to Photograph No. 9-10; Appendix No. 1*). The Garage was inaccessible at the time of survey and a detailed inspection was unobtainable however no large accumulations of faeces were seen from the vantage point of the missing panel.
- 3.3 These conditions may be appealing to Swallows however the behaviour of Starlings negates much of the potential observed. Starlings form large roosts at

night (*Holden and Cleeves 2006*) and the amount of space and lack of significant faecal deposits suggests this is not used as such.

- 3.4 The garage has been designated as having high potential to provide nesting opportunities for Swallows as light levels were low; access was possible and suitable ledges were available.
- 3.5 The octagonal shed found at the northern end of Site offered *negligible potential* for roosting Starlings. The ledges were too small to be useful for even a small number of Starlings.
- 3.6 There were numerous opportunities for Swallows to construct a nest in the octagonal shed found at the northern end of Site (*refer to Photographs 12-14*). Access to the structure was limited at the time of survey although a partial view was possible. No direct evidence such as old nests or eggs were seen in the structure. The nesting potential has been designated as having *medium potential*.
- 3.7 No nests were found during the survey visit. Likewise no items suggestive of recent nesting such as broken egg shells or accumulated nesting material were found during the survey visit.

4.0 DISCUSSION

- 4.1 The Site as a whole offered very limited opportunities for Starlings to Nest / Roost. There were opportunities found in the garage however the flocking and communal roosting behaviour of Starlings negates much of the potential observed. The Site as a whole has been deemed to represent *low potential* for nesting / roosting Starlings.
- 4.2 The Site as a whole offered some opportunities for Swallows to nest. There are appropriate areas for nesting found in the garage and octagonal shed. The disused and therefore undisturbed nature of these structures increases the

potential for nesting Swallows. Negating factors such as being relatively exposed to predators such as cats in the octagonal Shed; and the lack of any direct evidence such as old nests reduces the nesting potential. The Site as a whole has been deemed to represent *medium-high potential* for Swallows to nest.

- 4.3 The Bird Breeding Season is *April-July (inclusive)* and therefore it is suggested that no active bird's nest will be adversely affected if construction activities are conducted outside of this period.
- 4.4 Based on the evidence collected during the survey visit it is suggested that re-provision of nesting / roosting opportunities for Starlings is not required.
- 4.5 Based on the evidence collected during the survey visit it is suggested that a precautionary approach with regard to nesting Swallow would be to re-provide nesting opportunities within the footprint of the post-construction layout on Site.

Recommendations

- 4.6 Swallows prefer outbuildings such as sheds or garages which provide dark ledges and spaces for nesting. These are mild in cold weather and cooler when ambient temperatures are hotter. Swallows can enter a building through a very small hole and need very little light.

To create nesting opportunities in a garage or outhouse it is recommended:

- Create a small opening (*min. 50 mm high & 70 mm wide*) under the eaves.
- Fix a nest platform where you would like them to nest, high in the building, out of the reach of cats. Swallow nests can be purchased from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (*RSPB*).

- Place a plastic bag below the nest to catch droppings and block off sites where you don't want nesting to occur, for example by attaching polythene to a beam, then to the roof and back to the beam again

4.7 If this option is unsuitable then an appropriate Swallow Nest Box should be fixed to the northern elevation of the main building below the eaves to provide shelter from prevailing weather conditions and to ensure low levels of light.

5.0 LIMITATIONS

5.1 The survey was conducted outside of the Bird Breeding Season and therefore the actual presence/absence of bird nests of the previous nesting season could not be confirmed. The survey was only able to assess the potential for nesting / roosting of the targeted species.

5.2 Access to areas of the Site was limited and therefore a comprehensive inspection was not possible, therefore it is possible that there may have been evidence may was overlooked.

6.0 REFERENCES

Holden P & Cleeves T (2006) RSPB Handbook of British Birds. RSPB, LONDON

Appendix 1 – Site Photographs

APPENDIX NO. 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph No. 1 - North-Eastern Elevation of Main Building on Site. Negligible Nesting opportunities for Swallow or Starling respectively. Ventilation hole in centre of Photograph is closed.



Photograph No. 2 - North-Eastern Elevation of Main Building on Site. Negligible Nesting opportunities for Swallow or Starling respectively.

56 EAST FRONT ROAD, PAGHAM, WEST SUSSEX
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APPENDIX NO. 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



**Photograph No. 3 - South-Western Elevation of Main Building on Site.
Negligible Nesting opportunities for Swallow or Starling respectively.**



**Photograph No. 4 - South-Western Elevation and Roof of Main Building on Site.
Negligible Nesting opportunities for Swallow or Starling respectively.**

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APPENDIX NO. 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph No. 5 - South-Eastern Elevation of Main Building on Site. Negligible Nesting opportunities for Swallow or Starling respectively.



Photograph No. 6 - South-Eastern Elevation and Roof of Main Building on Site. Negligible Nesting opportunities for Swallow or Starling respectively.

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APPENDIX NO. 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph No. 7 - North-Eastern Elevation of Main Building on Site. Negligible Nesting opportunities for Swallow or Starling respectively.



Photograph No. 8 - North-Eastern Roof of Main Building on Site. Negligible Nesting opportunities for Swallow or Starling respectively.

APPENDIX NO. 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph No. 9 - Broken panel allowing access to Nesting space within the Garage on Site. Opening is of a suitable size to allow Birds of either species to enter and exit.



Photograph No. 10 - Potential space for Nesting Swallows found at juncture of Wall and Roof in Garage on Site. Potential space for Nesting Starlings on ledges found to the Northern end of Garage found on Site.

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APPENDIX NO. 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph No. 11 - Potential space for Nesting Swallows found at juncture of Wall and Roof in Garage on Site. Potential space for Nesting Starlings on ledges found to the Northern end of Garage found on Site.



Photograph No. 12 - Potential Nesting Space for Swallows at juncture of Wall and Roof in Octagonal Shed found at Northern End of Site.

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APPENDIX NO. 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph No. 13 - Potential Nesting Space for Swallows at juncture of Wall and Roof in Octagonal Shed found at Northern End of Site.



Photograph No. 14 - Potential Nesting Space for Swallows at juncture of Wall and Roof in Octagonal Shed found at Northern End of Site.

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