BSG ecology

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Our ref: P23-488

09 June 2023

Mr Steven Jenkins
Planning Enforcement Officer
Development Management
Wiltshire County Council

Dear Steven

Re: Quakers Walk – Planning Reference 15/01388/OUT – Bat and bird nest box alternative locations

Background

We are writing to you on behalf of our client, Bellway Homes (South West) with reference to the site known as Land at Quakers Road Devizes (the 'Site' hereafter – planning reference 15/01388/OUT). The documents submitted with the application committed to the following features for birds and bats were integrated in the fabric of new buildings during construction:

- ten house martin boxes;
- ten swift boxes;
- seven house sparrow terraces;
- four bat tubes;
- one bat box.

We have been informed that during the construction stage of the new residential units at the Site, a number of integrated bat and bird nest boxes and house martin boxes were not installed. As a result our client is keen to replace these in an appropriate manner.

We were approached by the client to determine what might be viable alternatives to the missing features. The features which we understand were installed are: five house martin boxes, ten swift boxes and two house sparrow boxes. However we understand from Bellway Homes that the following were not installed: five house sparrow terraces; five house martin boxes; four bat tubes and one bat box.

The client did explore whether these could be retrofitted but this is not possible as the units have been sold and are now occupied. The client approached the owners of the units where these were meant to be installed but the residents refused to allow the retrofitting to be carried out. The following sections set out potential alternatives.

Bat boxes

The four bat tubes and one bat box proposed for the Site were not installed. We therefore propose to install six suitable bat boxes in retained trees on the western edge of the Site along the tree-lined avenue. This includes very large mature lime trees on an unlit footpath. The proposals for the Site include habitat enhancement work along this margin, providing a dark corridor and enhancement of its

value as a foraging and commuting route for bats, therefore these would be located in habitats which should support various bat species.

The nature of the boxes to be provided will include a variety of types. Three suitable for crevice dwelling species will be installed, such as the “Improved Crevice Bat Box” available from NHBS[1]. A further three suitable for cavity dwelling species will also be installed, such as the Improved Cavity Bat Box” available from NHBS[2].

If these were not available then an alternative type would be used but the proposed boxes reviewed for suitability by an ecologist prior to installation.

These would be positioned at a minimum of 4 m from ground level and may be paired on given trees, with two boxes facing different aspects on a suitable tree, so as to offer a range of conditions within them. Figure 1 attached shows indicative locations for these.

Bird Boxes

A total of five house martin boxes, ten swift boxes and two house sparrow boxes were installed within the development, however five house sparrow terraces and five house martin boxes proposed for the Site were not installed. These species do not typically use tree-mounted boxes and no other structures are available for use (retrofitting) other than the residential units. It is therefore proposed that these ten boxes are replaced with boxes suitable to support other Species of Principal Importance likely to be present within the area. The species most likely to benefit would be starling, so Bellway Homes proposes to install ten starling boxes on the mature trees along the tree-lined avenue.

These would be positioned at a minimum of 4 m from ground level individually on the north, north-east or eastern aspects of the tree. Figure 1 attached shows indicative locations for these.

We hope that the proposals above meet with your acceptance and we welcome your response at your earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely

John Baker

Principal Ecologist

For and on behalf of BSG Ecology

[1] https://www.nhbs.com/improved-crevice-bat-box?bkfno=187782&ca_id=1495&adlocale=uk&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIr9b4g5ix_wIVz8btCh3sawF5EAYYAiABEgIpFvD_BwE

[2] https://www.nhbs.com/improved-cavity-bat-box?bkfno=187778&ca_id=1495&adlocale=uk&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIp7CgxJix_wIVwvftCh306AtcEAQYASABEgJFaPD_BwE



Legend

- Bat box - crevice dwelling species type
- Bat box - cavity dwelling species type
- Starling nest box
- Site boundary

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PROJECT TITLE

QUAKERS WALK

DRAWING TITLE

Figure 1: Nest and bat box locations- proposed

DATE: 07/06/2023 CHECKED: JMG SCALE: 1:1,500

DRAWN: JB APPROVED: JMG VERSION:1.0

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