

FILE NOTE: NESTING BIRD SCOPING SURVEY AT 26 NETHERHALL GARDENS

Introduction

- 1.1 Greengage were appointed by Savills to undertake a nesting bird scoping survey at 26 Netherhall Gardens in the London Borough of Camden in order to identify the potential for the site to support nesting birds and identify appropriate mitigation measures in light of the findings.
- 1.2 This survey was conducted to ensure legislative and policy compliance for the proposed development at site, which seeks the demolition of the existing two storey garage structure and extension of the building with a three-storey side wing plus part basement to create four new residential units.
- 1.3 The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) states all birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law and it is thus an offence, with certain exceptions intentionally to:
 - Kill, injure or take any wild bird;
 - Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built; and
 - Take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

Methodology

- 1.4 A site visit was undertaken in the morning of 9th July 2019 during warm, clear weather conditions to observe and inspect the building and adjoining garden. The survey took place between 8:30am and 9:00am in favourable weather conditions.
- 1.5 Vegetation was observed and any bird activity was recorded. Trees and shrubs were inspected for old or active nests as well as features of the building with potential value for bird nesting.

Results

- 1.6 Common bird species were recorded within the garden, including blackbird (*Turdus merula*), wood pigeon (*Columba palumbus*) and robin (*Erithacus rubecula*). Additionally, a number of swifts (*Apus apus*) were recorded overhead. Foraging and loafing behaviour was observed by species within the garden, however no nesting behaviour was identified.
- 1.7 Despite the absence of nesting behaviour or active nests observed at the time of the assessment, the site has high potential to support nesting birds associated with the dense scrub vegetation and trees within the garden.

Discussion and Recommendations

- 1.8 As all areas of the garden, besides the limited area of amenity grassland, possess high potential to support nesting birds, it is recommended that any vegetation clearance required is undertaken outside of nesting bird season (taken to run from March to August inclusive). Where this is not possible, a nesting bird check by a qualified ecologist should be undertaken no more than 24 hours prior to vegetation clearance.
- 1.9 Should clearance be required during the nesting bird season, a phased approach is recommended to allow more thorough nesting bird checks to be undertaken by an ecologist.
- 1.10 If an active nest is discovered, no works that could stand to destroy the nest, egg or birds may be undertaken until the young have fledged and the nest is abandoned.

Figure 1.1 Dense vegetation at rear of garden



Figure 1.2 Hedge around the garden perimeter



- 1.11 Some species will nest all year round and therefore, where works are undertaken outside of the breeding bird season, care and attention should be paid to confirm absence prior to vegetation clearance.
- 1.12 It is recommended that bird boxes are included in the final development to attract house sparrows and swifts which are Species of Principal Importance and Biodiversity Action Plan species. These boxes can be built into the building itself, installed on the outside of the building or hung on trees. Bird boxes should face between north and west, out of direct sunlight and be located near to vegetation.
- 1.13 Should the recommendations made in this report be adhered to, it is predicted that the proposals will be fully compliant with relevant legislation and planning policy. Enhancement of the ecological value of the site for birds could be secured through planning condition.