

Pigeon Proofing a Listed Building in Oxfordshire

At A Glance

Location: Witney, Oxon
Structure: Listed Building

Problem: Pigeon Proofing
Solution: AVISHOCK

Overview

The Corn Exchange in Witney, Oxfordshire had been undergoing a clean and refurbishment on the outside of the building, so to prevent bird fouling damaging the stone works and to stop pigeons roosting and nesting on the building, a suitable pigeon proofing method needed to be employed.

The Problem

Pigeons are a major problem in Witney, with a long established and growing population in the town centre. Many of the surrounding buildings have extensive pigeon roosting points, but the Old Corn Exchange was by far the worst. A small square hosts regular markets and food sources are readily available, making this an ideal habitat.

Having spent upwards of £250,000 on cleaning and refurbishing this grade 1 listed building, an effective solution was required to be unobtrusive and effective to protect the investments made in the structure.

The Challenge

The challenges faced were:

- Installing a highly effective deterrent where such a large and persistent problem existed
- Providing a maintenance free solution as access to the building is limited
- Providing a discrete solution that could not be seen from ground level and in keeping with the type of building – this is a prestigious building which is photographed extensively
- Installing in a short window of opportunity – utilizing the scaffolding used for cleaning before removal on a deadline



The Solution

Rapid Environmental Services were asked to propose a solution that would blend in with the building, prevent pigeons from roosting and defecating on the cleaned surfaces and be cost effective in terms of installation and ongoing maintenance.

Rapid Environmental Services are very familiar in dealing with the list of requirements above, so a solution using Avishock, an effective electronic based deterrent system, combined with Bird Free Gel and a small amount of transparent netting was proposed. Our experience in working with local authorities allowed us to execute a solution to meet the time frames imposed.

The building has multiple levels and many ledges which have been used extensively across the building. By using Avishock on these ledges, we were able to install a permanent barrier to stop pigeons from using these ledges; basically, if you can prevent them landing on the ledge, they will not be able to roost or nest.

When a bird lands on or walks over the specially design Avishock track, it gets a small electric shock, a bit like a sheep fence, which educates it never to return. This seems to be communicated to other pigeons and so an effective solution is soon established.

The track is only 8mm high, so when installed is invisible from the ground. It is also available in stone colour so again against the sandstone building it is almost invisible. Where Avishock track could not be used, for example some ornate carvings, Bird Free Gel was installed. Again this educates birds not to go near it via touch and also an emitted light which pigeons see as danger.

The Result

The problem was solved almost overnight once the Avishock was turned on. A few birds attempted to land on the building, but soon left never to return. This behaviour seems to have been learned, so since the installation, the only building without pigeons roosting or settling on in Witney is the Corn Exchange

The client feedback was very positive about the design of the solution and the manner of installation, satisfying all pre-requisites of the project.

We recommend ongoing routine maintenance, which the client has accepted, to ensure the Avishock system is working perfectly and offers long lasting effectiveness.



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