



King's Cross Western Transit Shed, London

Hawks used to scare away pigeons



BAM people involved:

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Other organisations involved:

Hawkwise

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Derelict buildings
Health and safety

'Bringing Hawkwise onto site has been brilliant, the hawks are certainly very effective at scaring away the pigeons.'

Leo Amatino



Hawkwise on site

The feral pigeon is the number one urban pest and its presence at the King's Cross Western Transit Shed (WTS) construction site meant that an effective pest control solution was needed. A specialist company, [Hawkwise](#), were brought onto site and the results were astonishing.

Prior to construction on site, the 1850s train shed buildings had become largely unused and a habitat for pigeons. Not only did the pigeons present an unsightly mess in the old building, they are also plagued with many diseases. Their nesting sites created noise and smells and health and safety hazards which needed to be dealt with in order to provide safe working conditions for the operatives, especially those working at height.

The BAM site team had seen an article in the London Evening Standard about the use of birds of prey at the Olympic Park construction site to control the pigeons.

This prompted the team to contact the pest control company with the intention of sorting the problem of pigeons at the King's Cross WTS project.

Using hawks works by altering the behaviour patterns of the pigeons. The basic aim is to break the breeding cycle of the pigeons. Over the years they had become accustomed to living in the building. By introducing the hawks, the pigeons no longer want to stay in the area so they flew away. The pest control technicians are fully trained falconers and fly the hawks around the area, scaring the pigeons away. Dusk is the most effective time of the day for the hawks to come to site as that is when the pigeons are starting to roost and settle in the building.



Bringing the hawk in after flying around the King's Cross WTS site



Hawkwise falconer with hawk

The hawks do not kill the birds and no chemicals or poisons are used, which is more ethical than the use of extreme methods of disposal.

The results are not instant as it takes a number of visits for the pigeons' pattern of behaviour to be altered. The effects are maintained through a treatment plan which is specific to the site. Initially at King's Cross WTS, two to three visits were required per week but within a few weeks the number of pigeons drastically reduced and now there are no pigeons on site and the hawks are brought in just once every two weeks to maintain the results.

Did you know

Hawks can reach speeds of 40 mph in flight

Everyone on site is extremely pleased with the success of using hawks as a method of pest control and the site is now cleaner and poses less health and safety risks to operatives.