

Weld mesh used to protect a refurbished bridge in London

At A Glance

Location: Southwark, London
Structure: Bridge

Problem: Pigeon Proofing
Solution: Weld Mesh Sheeting & Bird Free Gel

Overview

Southwark in London is undergoing an era of refurbishment and renovation making it one of the most desirable places to visit and live in London. Many projects are being undertaken across the area. Buildings and structures are being cleaned and refurbished, but one ongoing problem exists, the constant attack from pigeons roosting and defecating on newly refurbished buildings and surfaces.

Rapid Environmental Services, working with refurbishing and commercial painting specialists, have provided cleaning, painting, anti-graffiti and bird protection solutions for several bridge refurbishment projects across the borough.

The Problem

Before any refurbishment can be undertaken, the areas must be cleaned and all pigeon guano removed to allow the painting to take place. Pigeons pose an ongoing problem on structures due to the amount of guano they produce, mostly on either the building or on unsuspecting areas or people below. Pigeon faeces can contain pathogens harmful to humans, but the faeces also create a cleaning problem in the surrounding areas.

Once the bridge is painted, the bird protection must be installed immediately to prevent the problem recurring. Pigeons have very powerful homing instincts; so will always attempt to return to their chosen roosting spots – usually where they are hatched, so the instinct to return is overwhelming.

The Challenge

The challenge was how to get the area protected quickly before the pigeons could make a mess again. This means that we have to follow as soon as the paint is dry. As the structure is a bridge, accessibility could only be achieved using cherry pickers and scissor lifts.



The Solution

Our bird proofing solution was based upon weld mesh sheeting being installed to prevent the birds gaining access to the underside of the bridges and beams. Weld mesh is fast becoming the standard media for bird proofing bridges and other public structures where traditional nylon netting has been used before and damaged, allowing pigeons to re-enter and become trapped, causing the unnecessary death of the pigeon, distress to the public and action by pigeon protection groups.

The main reasons for this are:

- Once installed, the structure will last for many years without any maintenance,
- If bridge maintenance is required, the sections can be removed and replaced without issue,
- Vandals cannot easily damage and create breaches in the weld mesh – normal netting systems are easy to destroy,
- Birds cannot gain entry, so therefore cannot be trapped inside, causing distress to the birds and the public,
- The return on investment is quickly achieved due to low/no maintenance – fit and forget.
- Weld Mesh blends in and quickly adds to the overall look of any structure once installed

As the bridges are old, most of the structure has been modified or changed in some way, so each sheet is measured and cut to fit exactly in the gaps. Clamps were used to ensure the mesh, once positioned, would be permanent, with the threads locked using thread adhesive to prevent shaking and vibrations working them loose.

Further vibration protection was added under the weld mesh and fixings to complete the solution.

The Result

By using a combination of weld mesh and bird gel, the end client is benefiting from major cost savings in cleaning up bird excrement from the pavement and also removing rubbish from the site. Also pigeons are not getting trapped inside the netting – a common issue in previous bird proofing methods used, so the solution is ideal for the welfare of the pigeons too.



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