



Muncaster
Environmental
Planning Inc.

August 5, 2016

Uganda High Commission
350 Sparks Street, Suite 1210
Ottawa, Ontario
K1R 7S8

Attention: Ms. Elizabeth Wamanga

RE: UHC Chancery Building 231 Cobourg Street, Ottawa
Project ADMN/216/276/01
Scoped Environmental Impact Statement - Chimney Swift Surveys

The Uganda High Commission Chancery building at 231 Cobourg Street in Ottawa has an open chimney (Photo 1). The open chimney could be habitat for chimney swift, which is designated a threatened Species at Risk under the provincial Endangered Species Act (2007). There is the potential for future work in proximity or otherwise cause a disturbance to the open chimney. Thus surveys before and at dusk were undertaken in July and early August, 2016 to determine if chimney swifts are utilizing the chimney for nesting.

Before European settlement chimney swifts mainly nested on cave walls, in rock crevices and in hollow trees or tree cavities in old growth forests. Today, they are more likely to be found in and around urban settlements where they nest and roost (rest or sleep) in chimneys and other manmade structures as well as abandoned woodpecker nesting cavities. They also tend to stay close to water as this is where the flying insects they eat congregate.

Methodology

Following Ministry of Natural Resource and Forestry protocol, three evening surveys of the open chimney and general area were completed on July 20th and 28th and August 4th, 2016. Authorization to complete the surveys was provided on July 19th. The surveys began between 19:55 and 20:12 each evening, representing at least 30 minutes before sunset and continued 30 minutes after sunset.

Weather during the three surveys was very good for observations, with a light breeze or calm winds, air temperatures between 23° and 31° C and partly cloudy or clear skies. Ambient noise, consisting of cars and insects, was minimal and did not impact the ability to hear avian activity.

Results

Chimney swifts were observed flying in the general area during the July 20th and 28th evenings surveys, with no chimney swifts observed on August 4th. Six observations of chimney swifts, ranging between one and six birds per observation, were made on both July 20th and 28th. The chimney swifts were observed between 25 minutes before sunset and 8 minutes after sunset. The chimney swifts were flying in small packs of up to 6 birds well above the open chimney and building at 231 Cobourg Street. The chimney swifts were generally darting high in the evening skies, likely catching insects as they flew. At no time were the chimney swifts observed in the immediate vicinity of the chimney, including entering the chimney. The chimney swifts were not specific in the direction that they left the general area and were seen flying away in all directions.

Other birds observed during the surveys included European starling, rock pigeon, ring-billed gull, white-breasted nuthatch, American robin, northern cardinal, song sparrow, American crow, house sparrow and American goldfinch.

Summary and Recommendations

The open chimney at 231 Cobourg Street represents potential significant habitat for chimney swifts, a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (2007). Thus evening surveys were completed in July and early August, 2016.

Chimney swifts were observed flying in the general area on July 20th and 28th, with frequent activity observed on both dates. The chimney swifts were not flying in the vicinity of the open chimney or building at 231 Cobourg Street and did not fly into the chimney. After observations the chimney swifts flew in all directions away from the general area.

As the open chimney was not used by chimney swifts it is not considered significant habitat for chimney swifts. It is recommended that the chimney be removed, capped or screened, with this work completed after October 31st and before April 15th, 2017.

Please call if you have any questions on this scoped environmental impact statement.

Yours Sincerely,
MUNCASTER ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING INC.



Bernie Muncaster, M. Sc.
Principal

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Photo 1 – Open brick chimney on the top of the building at 231 Cobourg Street



Photo 2 – South half of the building at 231 Cobourg Street with the chimney on south face of the building