

ecoreport

including bat roost assessment

for

Land at 8 Fairfax Avenue,
Manchester,
M20 6AJ.

July 2022



bringing ecological excellence to local environments

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bringing ecological excellence to local environments

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Swift Box Information



1.0 Introduction

1.0 Introduction

This report is produced to inform of any potential ecological constraints associated with the proposed development site.

- 1.1 Whistling Beetle Ecological Consultants were commissioned in July 2022 to undertake a full ecological assessment of a site located on land behind 8 Fairfax Avenue, Manchester, M20 6AJ.
The purpose of the assessment is to identify any potential ecological constraints to any proposed works at the earliest opportunity, to minimise future delays to potential works and provide advice as to how works on site will avoid breaching any UK or European nature conservation legislation.
- 1.2 The proposal is to develop the site with a residential property.
- 1.3 The ecological site assessment was carried out on the 25th of July 2022 and immediately assessed that apart from bats and breeding birds no other European Protected Species or Species of Note would be present on the site due to no suitable habitats being present that would support any of these species.
- 1.4 All assessments and surveys work detailed within the report were carried out or personally supervised by Whistling Beetle's Principal Ecologist or by appropriately qualified, licenced and/or experienced surveyors working under the direct supervision of the Principal Ecologist. The Principal Ecologist takes full responsibility for the quality of data collected and any subsequent interpretation. Raw survey data and names of individual surveyors may be provided for bone fide reasons, upon request, but only where this is strictly necessary and does not otherwise conflict with client, landowner or surveyor confidentiality and privacy.
- 1.5 Whistling Beetle's Principal Ecologist Graham Workman has over forty years professional experience in the ecology field. He has the specialist knowledge and ecological skills to undertake and complete all the surveys contained within this report. He was accompanied by two ecological technicians who have had several years' experience in undertaking ecological assessment surveys.
- 1.6 The results from the Assessment determined that a Bat Roost Assessment, Evidence/Opportunity Survey be carried out focused on the two stands of trees present on site. This will determine if there are opportunities for roosting present and if a dusk emergence survey is necessary to confirm presence absence of bats using the trees.
- 1.7 A check of all trees and shrubs on site would also be carried out to identify and evidence of active or past seasons nests. If any active nests were recorded a strategy would be developed to protect the nest from disturbance. The measures adopted would be to identify a 4m exclusion area or if this was not possible to delay works until nesting had been completed and juvenile birds left the nest.

2.0 Site Description

- 2.1 The site is located on land to the rear of Land at 8 Fairfax Avenue, Manchester, M20 6AJ. The survey focused on an area of land that was



formerly the garden to 8 Fairfax Avenue. There are no buildings within the site.

Drawing no 8FF/WB/SL/01 is located in Appendix 1 showing the site and immediate environs.

Photo sheet of the current site features, aspects are included in Appendix 2, 8FF/WB/PS01

- 2.2 The site covers an area of approximately 0.4Ha and has been managed as a garden to the property in the past. It is of a rectangular aspect with detached properties flanking the site on the Essex Avenue portion.
- 2.3 The majority of the site is managed as close mown lawn.
- 2.4 Two stands of mature conifer trees ((Cupressocyparis sp.) are present within the site. One of the stands of three trees had been unsympathetically 'topped off' in the past.
- 2.5 Small shrubs and ornamentals are planted on the boundary of the site.
- 2.6 The bottom of the site has become overgrown with bramble thickets dominating the area.
- 2.7 The site is bordered by similar sized plots and residential properties in the wider area.

3.0 Bat Survey Legislation

- 3.1 This legal information is a current summary and intended for general guidance only. Significant changes could occur as a result of Brexit. It is recommended that the original documentation be referred to for detailed and definitive information. Web addresses are located in the References and Bibliography section of this report.
- 3.2 In England and Wales, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006 imposes a duty on all public bodies, including local authorities and statutory bodies, in exercising their functions, *"to have due regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity"*[Section 40 (1)]. It notes that *"conserving biodiversity includes restoring or enhancing a population or habitat"* [Section 40 (3)].
- 3.3 All British bats and their roosts are afforded full protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). All bat species are also listed under Annex IV of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994 which requires that they are given full protection. All bat species in the UK are therefore classed as European Protected Species and as such are a material consideration in the determination of any planning application which may affect them or their habitat.
- 3.4 Legal protection makes it an offence to:
 - intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (or take) bats;
 - deliberately disturb bats (whether in a roost* or not);
 - recklessly disturb roosting bats or obstruct access to their roosts;
 - damage or destroy bat roosts



- possess or transport a bat or any part of a bat, unless acquired legally;
- sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats, or parts of bats.

(Mitchell-Jones and McLeish, 2004)

**The term 'roost' has been used to simplify the phrasing within the legislation which refers to 'any structure or place which any wild animal...uses for shelter or protection'. As bats generally re-use the same roosts after periods of vacancy, legal opinion is that the roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time.*

- 3.5 Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system “provides administrative guidance on the application of the law relating to planning and nature conservation as it applies in England. It complements the expression of national planning policy in Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (PPS9) and the accompanying Guide to Good Practice”.
- 3.6 The Circular states that “It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision”.
- 3.7 If a European protected species is recorded during the survey then a licence to derogate from the Habitats Regulations will be required from Natural England to implement any proposals. A licence application will require the preparation of a detailed mitigation package that will ensure the protection of the species and maintenance of its ‘favourable conservation status’ within the area.
- 3.8 In the case of a building, tree or other feature not already known to be a bat roost, **if bats are found during the course of work contractors must stop work immediately and seek advice from the consultant involved with the project**, if one had been appointed, or Natural England, before proceeding. Assuming a good-quality bat survey had been carried-out before the commencement of work and its recommendations followed, it would be unlikely that the discovery of bats during the course of the work would be considered to be “reckless” interference.
- 3.9 **The National Planning Policy Framework**
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has replaced the existing Planning Policy Guidelines. (PPG’s) In relation to wildlife PPG 9 was one of the documents to which Planning Authorities referred to, particularly where a specially protected species is or may be present and will be affected by a development for which a Planning application seeks consent. The aims of the NPPF in relation to species and habitats are that it places a clear responsibility on Local Planning Authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity and to encourage the consideration that should be given to Protected Species where they may be affected by development. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 06/2005 provides administrative guidance on the application of the law in relation to planning and nature conservation.
This is supported by a guide to good practice entitled ‘Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: Building in Biodiversity’ in which paragraphs 5.34 and 5.35 identify that species such as bats are highly dependent upon built structures for survival and that roosts can be easily incorporated into existing and new developments/conversions to benefit these species. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following



principles. If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused

3.10 Biodiversity Action Plans

The original objective of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) was to fulfill the requirements of the Rio Convention on Biological Diversity in 1992, to which the UK is a signatory. A list of national priority species and habitats has been produced with specific action plans defining the measures considered necessary to ensure their conservation. Regional and local BAPs have also been developed for species/habitats of nature conservation importance both regionally and locally.

The UK BAP, which details conservation plans for the biological resources of the UK, lists seven bat species as conservation priorities, including soprano Pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, noctule, *Nyctalus noctula* and brown long-eared bat, *Plecotus auritus*. The Cheshire LBAP, which contributes to national targets wherever these are relevant to Cheshire but also sets local targets based upon local expertise, considers six species (all listed in the UKBAP) to be of local conservation importance.

3.11 Biodiversity Duty

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 Section 40 requires all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their functions. This is commonly referred to as the 'Biodiversity duty'.

Section 40(1) imposes a duty to conserve biodiversity:

"Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity."

Section 40(3) of the Act explains that:

"Conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat".

The duty applies to all local authorities and extends beyond just conserving what is already there to carrying out, supporting and requiring actions that may also restore or enhance biodiversity.

Section 41 (S41) of this Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list (in consultation with Natural England) of habitats and species which are of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal (e.g. planning) functions. The S41 list includes 56 habitats of principal importance and 943 species of principal importance (list updated 2010).

3.12 Seven bat species are species of principal importance (SPI) these are –

- Barbastrelle Bat
- Bechstein's Bat
- Brown Long-eared Bat
- Greater Horseshoe Bat
- Lesser Horseshoe Bat
- Noctule Bat



- Soprano Pipistrelle Bat

3.13 There are no buildings on site which removes any potential for bats to roost in any built structures.

4.0 Bats and Trees

- 4.1 The key document guiding ecologists attempting to locate bat roosts (of any species) is the Bat Conservation Trust's 'Bat Survey Guidelines' (BCT, 2007) in which Chapter 8 deals specifically with bats in trees. In addition, there are various other documents that surveyors refer to when designing bat surveys; including Natural England's Bat Habitat Assessment Prior to Arboricultural Operations: Guidance for Natural England's National Nature Reserves (Natural England, 2010) and The Arboricultural Associations' Trees and Bats Guidance Note No 1 (Cowan, 2003).
- 4.2 All bats rely upon woodland for either foraging or as roost sites, some species, such as Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) are more dependent upon trees than others. Places used by bats vary from small crevices, gaps behind loose bark, natural/woodpecker holes and cracked or rotted limbs.
- 4.3 The identification of tree roosts is generally more difficult to confirm by comparison with those in buildings, as evidence quickly degrades and bats often will have more than one roost within woodland.
- 4.4 Where woodland or individual trees are affected by works, it is important to assess its value to local bat populations and how best to mitigate during and following those works.
- 4.5 In small to medium sized woodlands, noctules will use trees as roosts. However, they might forage up to 20km from the woodland at night.
- 4.6 **Bat Roost Potential (BRP) Assessment – Trees**
Any suitable trees identified on the site were assessed for their potential to support a bat roost (see Table 1 for categorisation of bat roosting- trees). Binoculars were used to examine the trees for opportunities to support bats such as cracks, crevices and hollows in the trunks or branches as a result of decay, weathering or pruning. Any trees that had features suitable to support a bat roost were also checked for signs of bats, such as droppings, scratch marks and staining around possible entrance holes. All tree inspections were undertaken by visual observation, aided by binoculars (Swarovski Pure12X42NL), from ground level.

Table 1: Categorisation of bat roosting trees (see overleaf)



Low	From the ground, the tree appears to have features (holes, cavities or cracks) that extend back into a cavity. Owing to the aspect, the feature may support single bats outside of hibernation. Alternatively, if no features are visible but owing to its size and age and structure, the tree is considered likely to have hidden features that only an elevated inspection may reveal. In respect of ivy cover, this is not dense (i.e. providing BRP in itself) but may mask the presence of BRP features. Emergence and activity surveys may be required. If following all surveys the feature remains categorised as low BRP, works typically proceed under supervision by an experienced bat worker, as a precautionary measure. For example, including a re-inspection immediately prior to works and sectioned felling of a tree. The requirements of Natural England European Protected Species licensing will be re-considered should bats or evidence of bat activity be identified during the supervision.
Medium	Features include holes, cracks, crevices that extend or appear to extend back to cavities suitable for bats. Alternatively, ivy cover is sufficiently well-established and matted so as to create potential crevices between the growth and the trunk. Emergence and activity surveys may be required. A Natural England European Protected Species (EPS) Licence is not required for works that affect unconfirmed roosts. However, if following all surveys the feature remains categorised as medium BRP, works should proceed only under supervision by a licensed bat worker following pre-agreed procedures. The requirements of Natural England European Protected Species licensing will be re-considered should bats or evidence of bat activity be identified during the watching brief.
Confirmed Roost	Bats or evidence of bats recorded – both of recent and/or historic activity. Emergence surveys will be required to qualify and quantify usage if such a feature is to be affected by proposed works. A Natural England European Protected Species (EPS) Licence is required for all works affecting features supporting confirmed roosts.

4.7 No trees were identified with opportunities for bat roosting.

5.0 Results of Bat Survey

5.1 The objectives of the bat survey were to provide an assessment of the current status of bats on site and if present to assess any impact from any proposed development. If evidence of bats were recorded further surveys and mitigation proposals would need to be developed for the protection of this species.

5.2 **No evidence of bat activity or occupation was recorded either on or within the trees on site. No evidence of bat activity was recorded in any area on site during the survey. No further efforts are considered necessary as the surveys confirmed no bat presence either current or historic.**

5.3 **The small area that the site covers would not provide bats with significant foraging or feeding opportunities. Clearance and development of the small site will have no impact upon the status of bats in this area.**

6.0 Limitations of the Assessment Surveys

6.1 There were no limitations in surveying all areas of the site.

6.2 There were no limitations in gaining access to the ground areas around the bottom of the trees to check for droppings or other evidence of bats or evidence of breeding birds.



- 6.3 There were no limitations in thorough searching of the bramble thickets to check for any evidence of breeding birds.

7.0 Results

- 7.1 The survey results indicate that the land behind 8 Fairfax Avenue offers negligible ecological value and no evidence of any presence either current or historic was recorded of any European Protected Species or species of note during the surveys.
- 7.2 No evidence of active or past seasons nests were recorded in any of the trees or bramble thicket.
- 7.3 **UK BAP species**
Some of the area on site has limited potential to support the foraging activities of West European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*), bird species Hedge Accentor (*Prunella modularis*), Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*), House sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), Eurasian tree sparrow (*Passer montanus*), Common starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), and herptile species such as Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*). It is considered likely that all these species have the potential to be occasionally present within the site and the surrounding area.
- 7.4 The clearance of the small area of bramble should be carried out carefully by hand.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 **Taking into consideration the results and findings from the ecological assessment surveys conclusions were that no further surveys are necessary.**
- 8.2 The ecological site assessment results confirms the sites status of low ecological value and the development of the site will have no negative impact on local biodiversity.

9.0 Recommendations

- 9.1 As an overall increase into the biodiversity value of the site it is recommended that provision for bats could be enhanced by the incorporation of bat bricks or bat boxes and bird nesting boxes located in suitable positions within the new build properties. (See Appendix 3 for details of suitable bat roost and bird box opportunities).
- 9.2 To further enhance the site once completed marginal planting of the site should include (where possible) native tree species or ecologically sound ornamental species. The planting of nectar rich flower species in suitable areas will also be beneficial for invertebrates especially bees.
- 9.3 As all wild birds, their nests, eggs and young are protected during the bird breeding season any proposed removal of the hedges or ornamental shrubs should be undertaken outside this period (April to August inclusive).
- 9.4 Please note that birds can nest outside the bird-breeding season and therefore should any nests be identified or suspected to be present on site at



any time, then works should cease and an ecologist contacted to attend site and provide advice on appropriate working methods.

- 9.5 If there is an urgent requirement during the bird breeding season for any hedge, tree or shrub removal then they should be checked for the presence of breeding birds prior to any works by a suitably experienced ecologist.
- 9.6 **Mammal Ramps**
During construction works any excavations that need to be left overnight should be covered or fitted with mammal ramps to ensure that any animals that enter can safely escape.
- 9.7 In the interest of best ecological practice, between October and March, any piles of wood or suitable materials should be checked for hibernating hedgehogs before disturbance. Any hedgehogs found should ideally be left alone. If this is not possible, the hedgehog should be carefully and safely relocated to suitable habitat away from the development site.
- 9.8 To prevent any adverse impacts on biodiversity within and adjacent to the site as a result of construction activities it is recommended that:
- A safe system for the correct storage of materials/chemicals should be implemented to ensure that materials are stored in a suitable manner as to avoid potential impacts on vegetation and watercourses adjacent to the site.

Although the presence of construction waste is unavoidable, it is recommended that waste is removed at the earliest opportunity to avoid contamination of ground and possible disturbance to wildlife. Contractors should also avoid leaving construction waste within the site.

10.0 Hedgehogs

Hedgehogs are listed as a UK 'Priority Species' under S41 of the NERC Act (2006). They also have limited protection under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended, which means they cannot be caught or trapped without a license. The Wild Mammals (Protection) Act (1996) prohibits cruel activities and mistreating of hedgehogs.

The timing and method of habitat clearance has an impact on hedgehogs, but will need to be balanced with other biodiversity needs.

Bramble disturbance is least hazardous in autumn to avoid the bird breeding season, the bulk of hedgehog breeding, and hibernation. Hedgehogs are generally absent from long grass in winter, making this the least hazardous time for cutting, but this isn't necessarily the best time to cut wildlife meadows. Rotational cutting is recommended so that there's always an area left untrimmed for insects to feed on and hedgehogs to nest in.

A high-cut, low-cut method allows nest checks in-between, and increasing the blade height of mowers will minimise risks. Ensure all machine users are trained to be hedgehog aware.

Areas of well-connected native hedging, scrub, bramble, shrubs, dead hedging and piles of dead wood become important nesting and foraging sites. Keeping fallen leaves on the ground or in accessible leaf stores is especially useful for breeding and winter nest building. Mosaic grass management provides the mix of long grass, short turf, open soil and tussocks needed for foraging and day nesting. Developing nectar sources and herbaceous vegetation provides the diverse microhabitats needed for the invertebrates hedgehogs rely upon. Edge habitat is especially important as hedgehogs often navigate landscapes by following linear features



Hedgehog Highways

Link parcels of land by ensuring boundaries are permeable to hedgehogs. Hedging or hedgehog-sized holes in fencing or walls help create Hedgehog Highways. Ground-level boundary holes should measure 13x13cm and should link as many neighbouring pieces of land as possible. These are easy to include for most fencing contractors, and both wooden and concrete hedgehog-friendly gravel boards can be purchased from some suppliers ready-made. Cinder blocks or piping can be used to deter use by pets.

In the interest of best ecological practice, between October and March, any piles of wood or suitable materials should be checked for hibernating hedgehogs before disturbance. Any hedgehogs found should ideally be left alone. If this is not possible, the hedgehog should be carefully and safely relocated to suitable habitat away from the development site.

11.0 Closure

This report has been prepared by Whistling Beetle Ecological Consultants Ltd with all reasonable skill, care and diligence. Information reported herein is based on the interpretation of data collected and has been accepted in good faith as being accurate and valid.

The report is in accordance with the agreement under which our services were commissioned. No warranty, express or implied, is made as to the advice in this report or any other service provided by us. This report may not be relied upon by any other party except for whom the report is intended without the prior written permission of Whistling Beetle Ecological Consultants Ltd.

The findings of this report represent the professional opinion of qualified ecologists and do not constitute professional legal advice. The client may wish to seek professional legal interpretation of the relevant wildlife legislation cited in this document.

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12.0 References

Bat Conservation Trust (2007) *Bat Surveys - Good Practice Guidelines*, Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004) *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*, English Nature, Peterborough.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. and McLeish, A.P. (Eds) (2004) *Bat Workers' Manual*, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.

Cheshire Mammal Group (2008). *The Mammals of Cheshire*. Liverpool University Press.

Richardson P (2000). *Distribution atlas of bats in Britain and Ireland 1980 – 1999*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Bat Conservation Trust (2012) *Bat Surveys - Good Practice Guidelines 2nd Edition*, Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Web addresses for access to full UK legislation and policy text:

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010:

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2010/uksi_20100490_en_1

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981:

www.opsi.gov.uk/RevisedStatutes/Acts/ukpga/1981/cukpga_19810069_en_1

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000:

www.legislation.hms.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000037.htm

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006:

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2006/ukpga_20060016_en_1

Planning Policy Statement 9:

www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/147408

Appendix 1



Project
Ecological Site Assessment

Title
Land at 8 Fairfax Avenue,
Manchester,
M20 6AJ.

-  8 Fairfax
-  Development Site
-  Approximate area of Ecological Assessment

Photo Sheet 8FF/SL/WB/01

Date July 2022

Scale N/A

Appendix 2



1. Lawn area and trees on site – view towards Essex Avenue



2. Stand of conifers that had been 'topped out' in the past



3. Evidence searching within tree branch cover



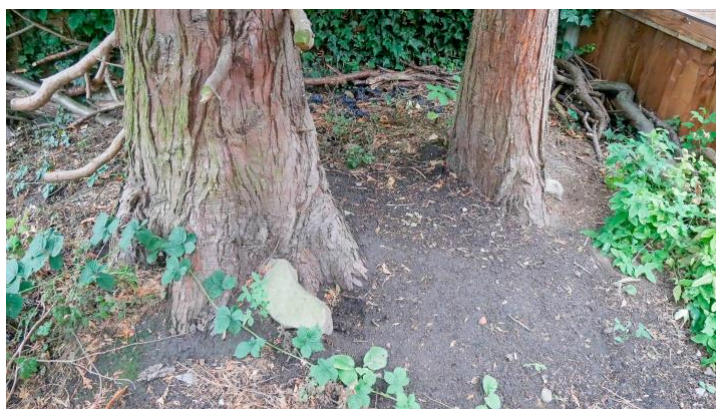
4. All trees and shrubs on site were subjected to detailed evidence searching



5. Conifer trees on Essex Avenue boundary



6. Interiors of stands were subjected to detailed evidence searching



7. All ground areas were subjected to detailed evidence searching



8. Detailed and thorough evidence searching in brambles searching for evidence of active nests



9. Poor quality sward of lawn area



Project

Land at 8 Fairfax Avenue,
Manchester,
M20 6AJ.

Title

Photographs of Buildings

Photo Sheet

8FF/WB/PS01

Date July 2022

Scale N/A

Appendix 3



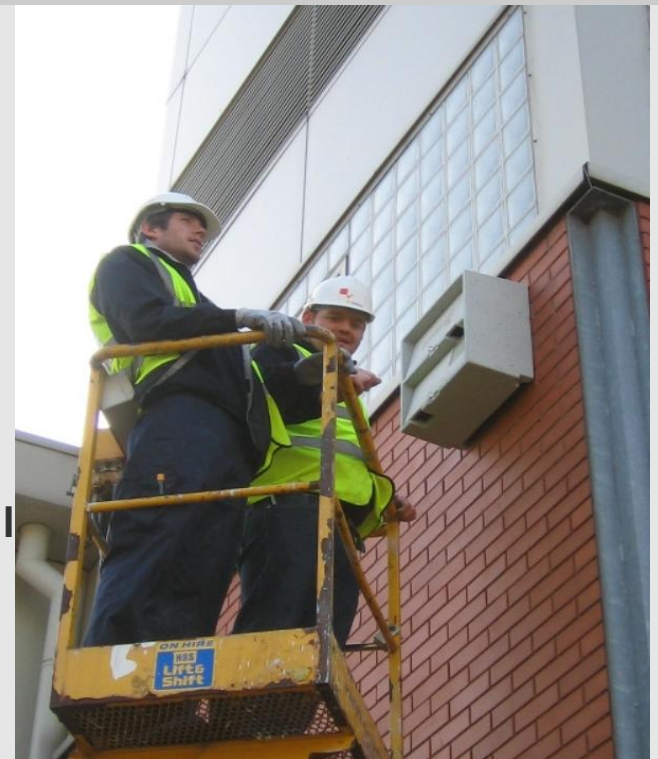
Fitting Swift Nest-places

- [1 Built in](#)
- [2 Retro-fitted](#)
- [3 Do It Yourself](#)
- [4 Where to fit them](#)
- [5 Attracting Swifts to them](#)
- [6 Safety & legal aspects](#)

down

Click on the topic or scroll

Photograph © Iain Boulton (London Borough of Lambeth)



Built in is the best way to create new nest places for Swifts, ensuring longevity, safety and minimal maintenance needs.

There is a huge variety of ways to do this, from installing commercial "Swift Bricks" in blockwork walls, to making dedicated box eaves, to ingeniously creating holes in suitable walls. See the pages below for some ideas.



A Swift Brick under the eaves at Horsham Library, West Sussex, a built-in Swift box being installed inside a building in Haarlem, Holland, and the entrance holes to a built-in Swift colony in Kronberg, near Frankfurt. These are simple low-cost ways to provide permanent Swift nest places inside the walls of buildings. Photos © Graham Roberts, Hans Willemsen & Erich Kaiser



Nest Places inside Eaves - install in both existing and new buildings



Nest Places in Pantile Roofs - new or existing



Nest Places in Solid Walls - stone, rock, concrete and rubble core



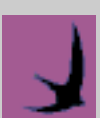
Nest Places in Cavity Walls - new build, or re-built



Internal Nest Trays for use behind louvres or openings in towers, spires, high walls and cupolas



Gable Colonies - make a colony box and set it up behind a gable



Tower Colonies - create a colony on top of an existing tower or design something special!

Retro-fitted Ready-made Commercial Swift nest boxes - there's a wide variety of designs to suit most applications, both internal and external. There should be a nestbox suitable for your site.



Click on the Swift to visit our Shopping! page and select nest boxes



External Swift Nestboxes at Islington Council Offices, London, and on a private house near Antrim. Right, Swift chicks inside a nestbox at the Cathedral in Alcudia, Valencia, Spain. This is a simple way to provide Swifts with nest places on existing buildings. The boxes are bolted to a suitable strong surface high up in locations where the birds won't be disturbed. Photos © E Mayer & J Sanz

Do It Yourself

Make your own nest boxes! Try a design from the ones below - just click on the Swifts



Advice on choosing a hole type and size for your D-I-Y Swift nest box



The Leuven Pattern D-I-Y Swift nest box - highly successful!



Mark Glanville's D-I-Y twin compartment Swift nest box as seen on BBC SpringWatch!



D-I-Y easy to build Swift nesting box with extra Pipistrelle Bat roosting space



D-I-Y Quick & Simple single nest place under-eaves or wall-mounted box - ideal for home use



D-I-Y Triple Swift nest box with ample roosting space at rear for small bats too



Marcel Jacquat's Simple Swiss-style eaves nest box for deep eaves



Bernard Genton's Swiss-style eaves nest box with Sparrow-exclusion door

These D-I-Y Plans are PDF files and need the Adobe® Reader™ to open. Download it here



Need advice, or a bespoke box design? contact Swift Conservation



DIY plywood nestboxes at Bradford on Avon in Wiltshire, where wildlife artist Jonathan Pomroy created his own Swift colony

Commercial & DIY Swift nest boxes

The concrete types are made by Schwegler and sold in the UK - see our "Shopping!" page



They can be used in walls, on vertical surfaces and under eaves.

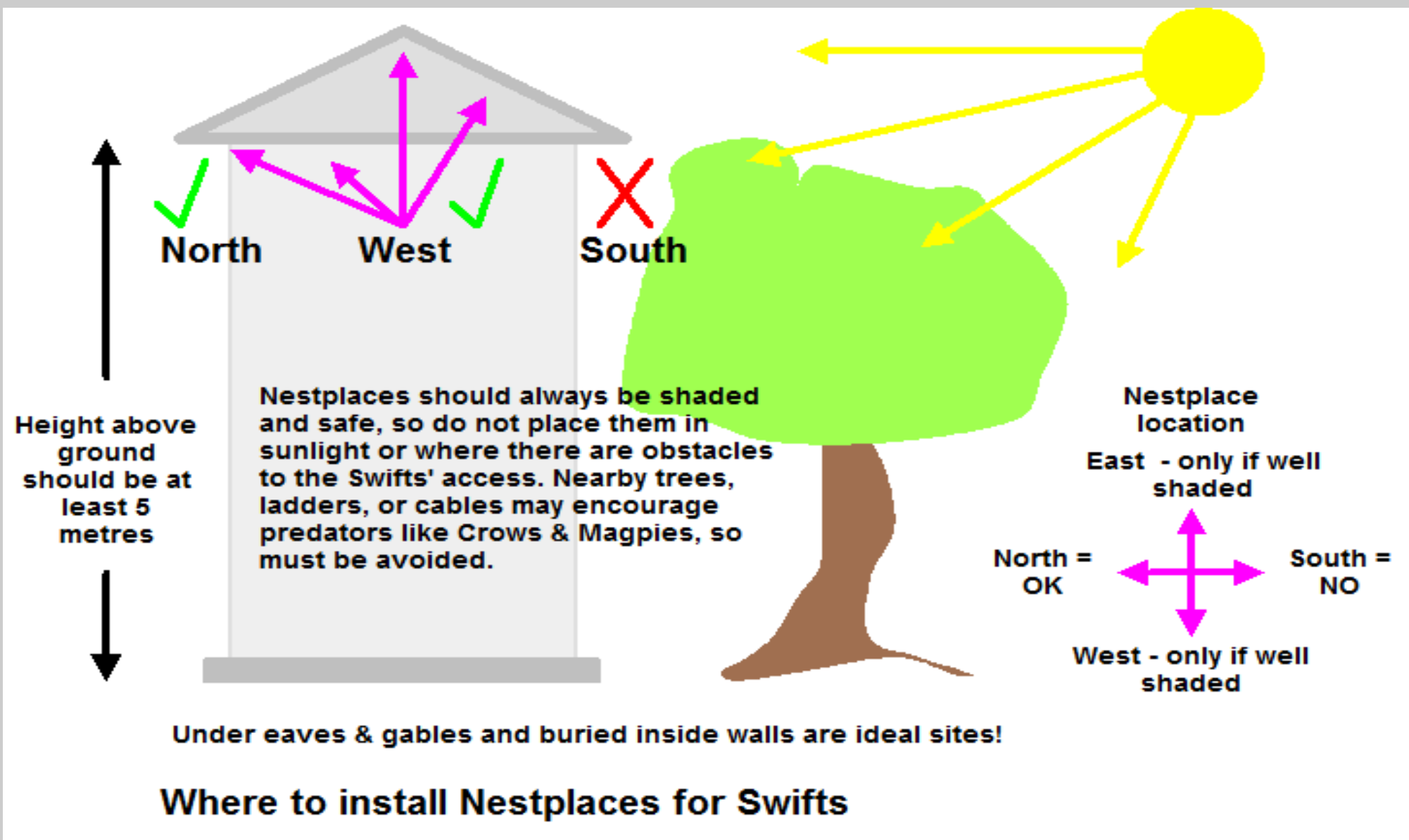
The wooden types are hand made from 12mm exterior quality plywood, to suit particular applications in and under a wide variety of eaves and roofs.

Photo © G Roberts



Where to fit Swift Nest Places

- out of direct sunlight, under deep eaves or on walls that do not receive much sun
- in undisturbed areas
- away from potential attack by Squirrels and Rats
- at least 5 metres above ground level
- with uncluttered adjacent airspace



Attracting Swifts using the Swift Calls CD



Order a Swift Calls CD- see our Shopping Page

There have been exciting developments in encouraging Swifts to find and occupy nest spaces. Installing loudspeakers and playing a Swift calls CD from the eaves or nest space, sufficiently loud for the birds to hear as they fly overhead when they arrive in May, can be very successful. Read the views of one successful user below -

"I have been able to attract swifts from a half mile away and more. I conducted a simple experiment using my wife and son and mobile phones. One was positioned at the house, the other a quarter of a mile away, and myself a half mile away. It's almost a straight line from my house to the centre of the village.

A phone call from myself and the CD was switched on at my house at full volume, I could hear it in the village. Swifts began to move towards my house and I could observe them through my binoculars, when they passed my wife she rang me, and when they arrived at the house my son rang me. I have 24 potential nesting sites and often have as many as ten speakers playing at once, positioned at ten boxes.

As I now have a colony established there are now many visits from Swift "prospectors" coming by themselves to investigate."

Equipment needed - CD player, an amplifier, a couple of small loudspeakers, and a Swift Calls CD (available from Swift Conservation - see our Shopping page via the link above). A power supply will be needed for the CD player and amplifier. Other types of audio equipment may be suitable. NB This work should only be done outside the Swifts' breeding season. The birds must never be disturbed at the nest.

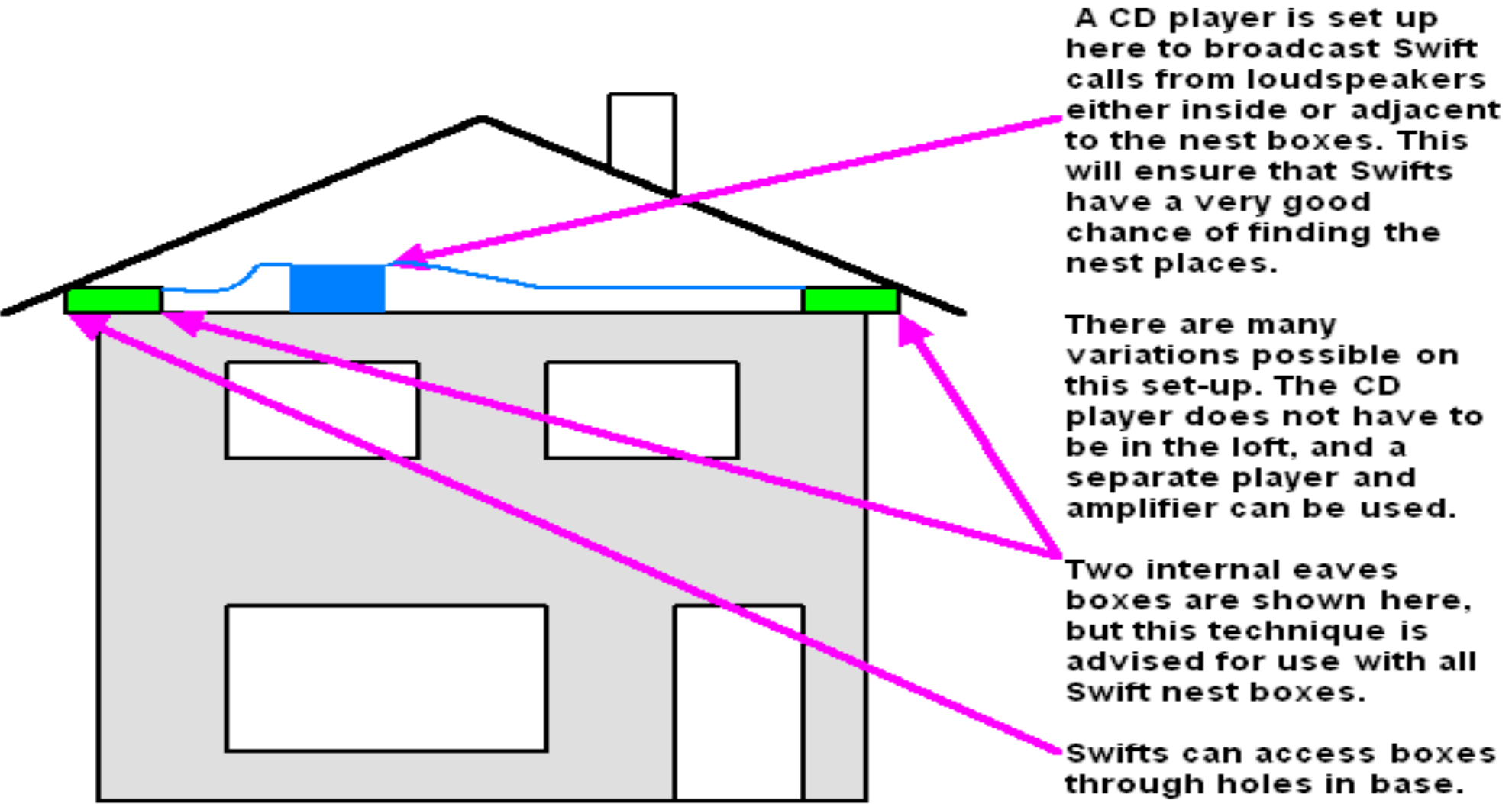
The Swift Calls CD consists of about 60 minutes of the calls of birds advertising they have a nest space, and also

calling to their mates from within the nest. It is an incentive to Swifts searching for a nest, something that occurs whenever new birds return to breed or older birds find their former nest sites unavailable.

🔧 Played from within the actual nest space (eaves, boxes, belfry or tower) it draws the birds in to investigate, and hopefully settle to breed.

 For further advice on obtaining and setting up suitable sound systems please contact Dick Newell via [this link](#)

Installing a CD system to play Swift attraction calls



Safety & legal aspects

- 🔧 Keep yourself, others and the Swifts safe! Before making, siting, maintaining or checking Swift nest-boxes ensure you have taken all precautions to avoid accidents to yourself and others, and to prevent any disturbance to the birds.
- 🔧 When using tools and access equipment observe all safety guidance.
- 🔧 When making and fitting nest-boxes ensure that your working site, methods, and means of access are safe.
- 🔧 Ensure the boxes are fixed soundly to resist severe weather and any other risks.
- 🔧 Ensure predators, (squirrels, rats, cats, rats, magpies, and crows), cannot gain access.
- 🔧 Take great care when accessing lofts and other potentially hazardous areas.
- 🔧 Electrical work should only be performed by competent qualified persons.
- 🔧 All manufacturers' instructions should be carefully studied and observed.
- 🔧 Building Regulations etc. You will need to satisfy yourself before installation that the relevant Building Regulations, Bye-laws, Planning Laws and Listed Building Consents etc. are being observed, that your site is suitable, and installation will not adversely affect the building. We believe that with some imagination and ingenuity, Swifts can usually be accommodated without difficulty.

 Next - Local help & Assistance

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Below is a list of bat related products that may be used for bat enhancement. However, please be aware that BCT does not endorse any particular product or brand as very little evidence is available to demonstrate that they are successful.

Bat Boxes	In situ	Description	Company	Estimated price
For external surfaces of buildings:				
		Schwegler 1 WQ Summer & Winter Roost Dimensions: 580 H x 380 W x 120 D Weight: 22Kgs	Alana Ecology Jacobi Jayne The Code Store	£90 to £139
		Schwegler 1 FQ Bat Roost Dimensions: 600H x 350W x 90D mm Weight: 15.8 Kgs	Alana Ecology Jacobi Jayne NHBS The Code Store	£70 to £90
	Internal or external 	1 Schwegler FE Bat Access Panel with optional back plate External Dimensions: H 30 x W 30 x D 8 cm Weight: 7.8 kg	Alana Ecology Jacobi Jayne NHBS The Code Store	£38 to £49
To integrate into walls:				
HABIBAT ACCESS BOX 001  	Can be built with timber, brick or stone facing to match walls. *BCT is using the Habibat as a research and monitoring tool.	Habibat Dimensions: 215 x 215 mm Or 215 x 290 mm	Habibat NHBS	£82.50 to £129

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		Schwegler 1FR Bat Tube Dimensions: H 475 x W 200 x D 125 mm Entrance W 150 x D 20mm Weight: 9.5kg	Alana Ecology Jacobi Jayne NHBS	£72 to £75
		Schwegler 2FR Bat Tube The 2FR bat box is based on the same design as the 1FR, but with the addition of holes in the sides. This allows multiple tubes to be placed next to each other to form a much larger bat roost.	Alana Ecology Jacobi Jayne NHBS	£72 to £76
		Ibstock enclosed bat box	Ibstock	
For trees:				
	Trees or flat surfaces	Schwegler 1FF Bat Box Dimensions: 430H x 270W x 140D mm. Entrance hole: 120 x 240mm	Alana Ecology Jacobi Jayne NHBS	£56 to £60
	Trees	Schwegler 2F Bat Box (General Purpose) Woodcrete 33cm H x diameter 16cm Note: location of access hole means that box is not self-cleaning.	Alana Ecology NHBS	£27.95

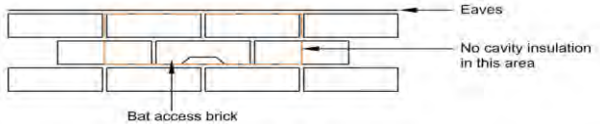
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	Trees	Schwegler 2FN Bat Box The 2FN Bat Box has two entrances - one at the front and one at the rear against the tree. It has a domed roof to form clusters and an increased internal height. 36cm H x diameter 16cm 4.3kg	NHBS Nature Counters	£34.95
	Trees	Schwegler 1FD Bat Box The 1FD is a large general purpose bat box. Effectively it is a larger version of the Schwegler 2F bat box, with the addition of two roughened wood panels inside the box which simulate crevices. Note: location of access hole means that box is not self-cleaning.	Alana Ecology NHBS	£49 to £55
Wooden bat boxes				
	Fitted to walls, other flat surfaces or trees	Kent Bat Box Materials to be made from untreated rough-sawn timbers. Timber should be 20mm thick. The box should be rainproof and draught-free. Crevices can be between 15 & 25mm wide	Self constructed. Instructions from BCT.	

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Access tiles or bricks	In situ	Description	Company	Estimated price
		Tudor Bat access tile set	Tudor Clay Roof Tiles	
		Ventilation tiles that can be adapted for bat access	Aspect Roofing	
		Bat access brick	Tamworth Property Services t) 01827 310475 chris@bat-survey.co.uk	
		Ibstock bat roost entrance arch brick	Ibstock	
		Bat access slate	JD Products Owens Slate Service Summit Slate	£40-80
		Habibat Roof Access Tile	Dreadnought Tiles Habibat	

Bat Conservation Trust



Positioning considerations:

Aspect

Temperature is known to be the major factor influencing successful uptake of artificial roost by bats. In general, bats seek warm spaces to help them with rearing young. For this reason, bat boxes should be located where they will receive the maximum amount of sunlight. In the northern hemisphere this will be the southerly aspects/orientation (south, south-west and south-east). However, it is helpful to install bat boxes in more than one aspect to allow a choice of roosting conditions. Bat boxes located on a shady side will remain cooler and will be more suitable for use during the hibernation period (winter) or by male bats all year round.

Height

Position the bat boxes a minimum of 2 meters above ground. Avoid placement above windows, doors and wall climbing plants, thereby reducing the likelihood of predation by cats. A position near the eaves or gable apex of the property would be preferable.

Other considerations

To make the bat box a potential roost for a wider range of bat species, it is helpful to consider whether there is nearby linear vegetation features such as hedges. This is because some bat species use these features for navigation between their roosting site and feeding ground and to avoid flying in open and exposed areas.

Resources:

- Williams, C. 2010. *Biodiversity for low and zero carbon buildings: a technical guide for new build*. RIBA Publishing, UK
- Bat Conservation Trust, 2010. *Bats in Buildings*. Bats and the Built Environment Series: Volume 1.
http://www.bats.org.uk/publications_download.php/247/Bats_and_Buildings_finalDec2010.pdf
- BCT webpages: http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/bats_and_buildings.html

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