

**FORMER AMBULANCE STATION HQ,
ST ASAPH, DENBIGHSHIRE**

BAT & BIRD BOX SCHEME

JANUARY 2023

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Author	SW
Checked	LO
Revised	-

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Cheshire Ecological Services (CES), the commercial division of Cheshire Wildlife Trust, was commissioned to formulate a scheme for the permanent provision of features suitable for roosting bats and nesting birds in connection with a proposed residential development of a site at the Former Ambulance Station HQ, St Asaph, Denbighshire.
- 1.2 The proposals include the demolition of existing buildings on site and the construction of 28 dwellings, which will form part of the adjacent Maes Yr Haul development. A bat and bird box scheme was formulated for the adjacent site after the County Ecologist requested that bat and bird boxes be incorporated into the structure of new dwellings on site, with either a bird or bat box incorporated equal to the number of dwellings on site.
- 1.3 This bat and bird box scheme has been produced to show the location of incorporated bat and bird boxes into the proposed development.
- 1.4 This scheme for the provision of bat and bird roosting/nesting features should be submitted to the Denbighshire Borough Council as part of planning. The features shall then be installed during construction and prior to occupation.
- 1.5 **This proposed scheme does not seek to mitigate for the loss of any known bat roosts resulting from the development; this would be a licensable action.**

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The proposed development site is centred on OS grid reference: SJ 04450 73675.
- 2.2 The site totals approximately 0.74 hectares and is located to the south of the small cathedral city of St Asaph, in North Wales. The Former Ambulance Station HQ site is an extension to the Upper Denbigh Road site, the Maes Yr Haul development, which is currently under construction. It will involve the demolition of the existing buildings and construction of 28 residential dwellings.
- 2.3 The site was bounded to the north by a new development of residential properties and to the east by a woodland belt, which likely occupies the site of an old railway line, and agricultural fields. To the south was the Upper Denbigh development (under construction) and to the west was St Kentigern Hospice and the Upper Denbigh development.
- 2.4 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) conducted by CES in November 2022 found the site to be mainly comprised of the former Ambulance Station HQ buildings surrounded by hardstanding with pockets of unmanaged grassland, scrub, amenity shrub planting and a small area of the improved grassland field to the south.

3.0 PROPOSED SCHEME

Bats

- 3.1 A total of 8 bat tubes will be integrated into the structure of the new residential dwellings on site. These will consist of Vivara Pro Built-in Woodstone Bat Tubes. Refer to Appendix A – Bat & Bird Box Plan and Appendix B – Bat & Bird Box Images.
- 3.2 The bat tubes will be integrated into the fabric of the building with gaps in the façade specifically made to allow access into the features by bats. The features are targeted at crevice-dwelling species such as common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle (*pipistrellus pygmaeus*), which were repeatedly recorded during the bat surveys undertaken for the adjacent site in 2021.
- 3.3 The boxes will be mounted at no less than 3m from the ground, on a southern or south-east or south-west aspect of the dwelling so they are exposed to the sun for most of the day.
- 3.4 The boxes will be positioned within the dwellings to avoid direct spillage of artificial light onto the roost entry/exit points from lighting within the site, and positioned close to retained vegetation and gardens where possible. Given that the boxes will be situated on residential properties, they have been sited to avoid doorways and windows, which may otherwise create conflict with the new residents (see Appendix B).
- 3.5 If any of the box specifications is required to be altered, then the developer will first consult with the ecologist and local planning authority in order to ensure the chosen roosting features are suitable to the environment and target species.
- 3.6 The provision of the above boxes is separate from any need for bat boxes required as mitigation if a bat license is required at the site; which would be additional to the boxes proposed above.

Birds

- 3.7 As part of the 2022 PEA, an ecological data-search returned records of numerous species of birds within 1km of the site. Of those records, species such as house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) are considered most likely to utilise the site, as well as other common and widespread garden birds. Furthermore, numerous old birds' nests were present on the existing buildings on site indicating birds have historically used the site to breed. Given the residential proposals for the site, this scheme targets only those species of conservation concern that are known to readily utilise nest boxes in such urban areas. As such, the scheme focuses on swift (*Apus apus*) and house sparrow.
- 3.8 Swift and house sparrow are Birds of Conservation Concern Red Listed species (Stanbury et al, 2021) which have experienced a severe decline (of more than 50%) in the UK population size over 25 years or longer.

- 3.9 All species are colonial nesters, so several boxes in close proximity are proposed where possible.
- 3.10 Recent research has shown that integral ‘swift bricks’ are readily utilised by both swift and house sparrow, as well as other small bird species (Barlow et al, 2020). House sparrow also show a preference for swift bricks over the specific terrace nest boxes designed for them (a row of usually three adjoining boxes, each with an access hole of a size specifically designed for house sparrow). Therefore, installing a ‘universal’ swift brick increases the chance of them being used quickly as well as increasing the number of species that may benefit from nest boxes.
- 3.11 In light of this, 20 integrated Manthorpe ‘swift bricks’ will be installed on the north-oriented aspects of new dwellings on site (refer to Appendix A).
- 3.12 This aspect has been identified as suitable as to avoid the direct mid-day sunlight.
- 3.13 Swift bricks **should not** be provided on southern aspects due to the risk of overheating in the sun.
- 3.14 The swift bricks will be built into the eaves at a height no lower than 4 metres above the ground, located at 1m intervals, as close to the eaves or roof-line as possible. They will be integrated into the fabric of the building with gaps in the façade specifically made to allow access into the features by birds.
- 3.15 The specification for the Manthorpe ‘swift brick’ is provided in **Appendix B**. The type chosen may depend upon how well it will integrate into the fabric of the building. It is therefore recommended that prior to purchase, the appointed ecologist is consulted to confirm functionality of the intended model.

4.0 SUMMARY

- 4.1 In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework, the bat and bird box scheme seeks for the proposed residential development at former Ambulance Station HQ site, St Asaph to contribute towards enhancing the natural environment and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible.
- 4.2 This document should be submitted to the local planning authority for approval of the bat and bird box scheme. Once approved, the scheme should be delivered in full prior to the occupancy of the new dwellings on site.

5.0 REFERENCES

Camilla Barlow, Mike Priaulx, and SLN Swifts & Planning Group. Issue 02, December 2020 - *Swift Bricks- the 'universal' nest brick*. https://www.swift-conservation.org/universal_swift_nest_brick02.pdf

CES (2023) Former Ambulance Station HQ, St Asaph, Denbighshire – *Preliminary Ecological Appraisal* (January 2023)

Stanbury, A. et al (2021) The status of our bird populations: the fifth Birds of Conservation Concern in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man and second IUCN Red List assessment of extinction risk for Great Britain. *British Birds* 114: 723-747.

Appendices

Appendix A: Bat & Bird Box Plan



St Kentigern
Hospice

Assigned Buffer to
St Kentigern Hospice - 1700m




Cheshire
Ecological Services

Bickley Hall Farm
Bickley
Malpas
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SY14 8EF

Project:	Former Ambulance Station, St Asaph
Map:	Bat & Bird Box Plan
CES Ref:	CES/750.160/01-23/KM
Scale:	Approximate
Date:	January 2023
Baselayer obtained from 'Proposed Site Plan', Revision O, Castle Green Homes, with whom all rights remain.	

 Site Boundary

 Manthorpe Swift Brick (20 total)

 Vivara Pro Build-in Woodstone Bat Tube (8 total)

Appendix B: Bat & Bird Box Images



Image of Vivara Pro Build-in Woodstone Bat Tube (integrated)

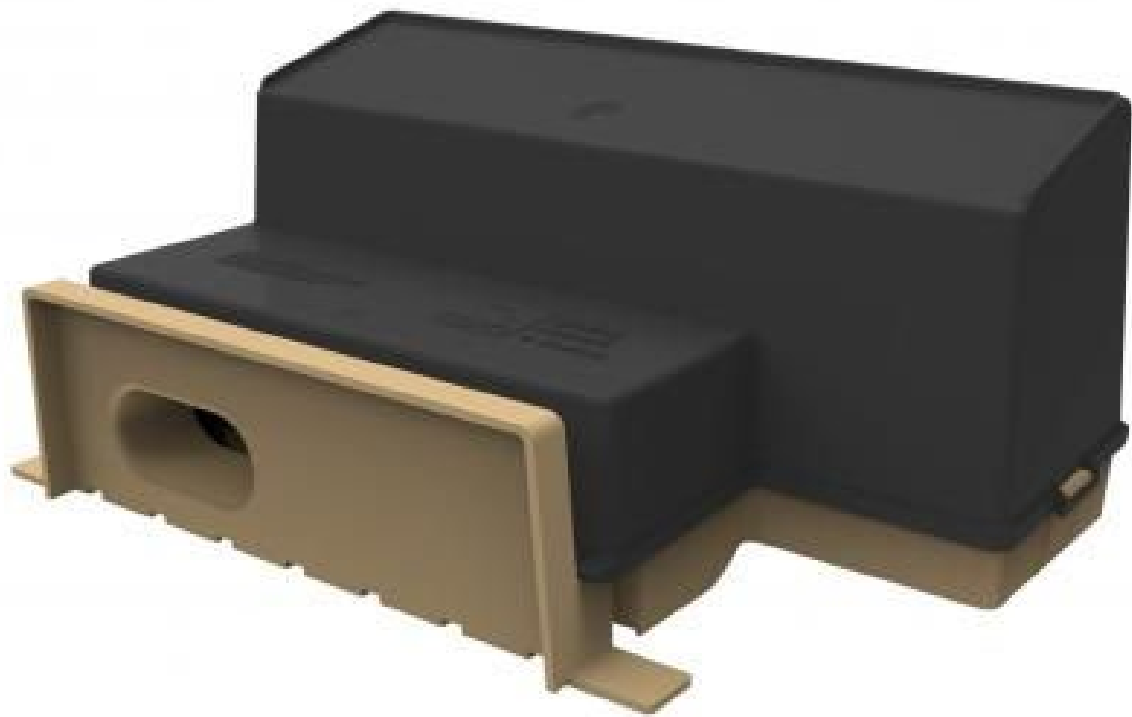


Image of Manthorpe Swift Brick (integrated)



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