

Facts about swift bricks

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Action for Swifts



SWIFTCONSERVATION
KEEPING THE SKIES ALIVE
www.swift-conservation.org

Swift Bricks

Accommodation for Swifts built in to buildings is to be preferred to accommodation retrofitted on the outside. Planning departments are now conditioning new developments and renovations to provide space for building dependent species in the interests of biodiversity: bats, House sparrows, Starlings and Swifts. This document is intended to summarise the available options for Swifts.

Accommodation within the eaves, on top of the wall, is one good idea, making sure that nesting places are completely isolated from the roof space, so that roof insulation cannot deny space to the birds, nor can the birds invade the roof space.

Although custom solutions are often used, the Schwegler Delta box (No 604) is one of the few products on the market for this situation

The rest of this document deals with Swift bricks and Swift boxes suitable for embedding in a wall below the eaves; these are now available from a range of suppliers.

All encroach on the cavity to some extent, or even span the cavity. If they are placed high up under eaves, or under a fascia board on a gable end, this should not be a problem. Lower locations, though less desirable, may need a cavity tray.

It is easier for builders in the UK if the Swift brick can fit within a multiple of standard UK brick sizes. For example, the height of 2 bricks, including the mortar between them, is 14cm, and 3 bricks is 21.5cm. There is a table of dimensions at the end.

All of these boxes can accommodate smaller species such as House sparrows and tits, and those with larger entrances may also accommodate Starlings.

We do not think that access for maintenance is of critical importance, as Swifts make a minimal nest, and natural nesting places never get maintained or cleared out. However, should one wish to clear out old House sparrow, Starling or tit nests, then a removable front may be an advantage.

Most of these Swift bricks will not overheat in a south-facing wall, but the ones with thinner front walls should not be placed in the sun, but sheltered under eaves would be acceptable. Many of these products are well proven and Swifts have bred successfully in them. So the choice may be one of architectural aesthetics and price.



Schwegler No 604

How many do I need?

There is no generic answer to this. Therefore, each development must be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. In residential developments good practice is generally accepted as a ratio of one roosting/nesting cavity per residential unit and most commercial industrial and public buildings will offer similar opportunities.

It is most likely some parts of a development will be better suited for multiple provisions on appropriate structures. Therefore, it is suggested better to install them in small groups of 2/6 approx. one metre+ apart in suitable locations (i.e. avoiding direct sunlight and prevailing weather conditions at a minimum height of five metres), the numbers are required to prevent undue competition.

An experienced ecologist with knowledge of the site and its surrounding can advise on target species, how many units should be included and where.

The products illustrated in this guide are primarily intended for swifts, but other species such as house sparrows, starlings and crevice roosting bats may use them as well.

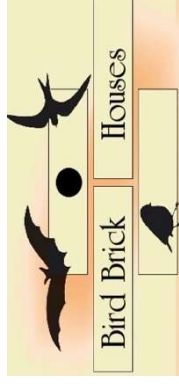
References:

Planning for a Healthy Environment: Good Practice for Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity (2012), Town and Country Planning Association and The Wildlife Trusts
See also **Annex C, Model Policies and Approaches** of the above.
Biodiversity Requirements of the **Exeter Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document** (section 9.28), Exeter City Council
Designing for Biodiversity: A technical guide for new and existing buildings (second edition), 2013, Kelly Gunnell, Brian Murphy and Dr Carol Williams. Bat Conservation Trust, RIBA Publishing (available from the **RIBA bookshop**)

Disclaimer

The authors of this booklet do not endorse the products within. To the best of our knowledge, they are the most reliable of their kind available for use in buildings. The authors do not accept liability in the unfortunate event of any failure either during or after installation.

Birdbrickhouses



This is a box designed so that the removable front can be matched with any existing brickwork. The body of the box and the brick front enclosure is made of 3mm thick injection moulded plastic. The floor of the box is roughened and it is supplied with a concave nesting platform. It can be retrofitted into a wall without cutting bricks.

URL: <http://www.birdbrickhouses.co.uk/page53.html>

Review: <http://actionforswifts.blogspot.co.uk/2013/03/product-review-bird-brick-houses-swift.html>

Hanson clay air brick liner



The air brick liner is not marketed by Hanson as a Swift brick, but the model 401 makes an attractive low cost solution made by cutting an entrance and blocking off the ends with slate or fibre-cement board, such as soffit board. Many building supply merchants hold them in stock. It is exactly the length of 1 brick and the height of 2 bricks. It is a proven solution.

URLs: http://www.heidelbergcement.com/uk/en/hanson/products/bricks/brick_specials/cavity_wall_bridging_ducts.htm
<http://actionforswifts.blogspot.co.uk/2012/08/the-air-brick-liner-swift-brick.html>

CJ Wildlife Woodstone



Built in Visible Swift box
Number 90068



Built in Visible Swift box
Number 90059



Built in hidden Swift box
Number 90060

These nest boxes are made of WoodStone®, a robust, durable mix of cement and wood fibres which offers protection from predators and a more consistent internal temperature.

URL: <http://www.birdfood.co.uk/ctrl/node:136;page:66;/woodstone>

Ecosurv



The Ecosurv Swift brick can be customised to match any brickwork. The materials include slate.

URL: http://ecosurv.co.uk/swift_box.html

Ibstock



An attractive brick, designed to encroach minimally on the cavity. It is thus one of the narrowest boxes on the market. The materials are frost resistant.

URL: <http://www.ibstock.com/sustainability-ecozone.asp>



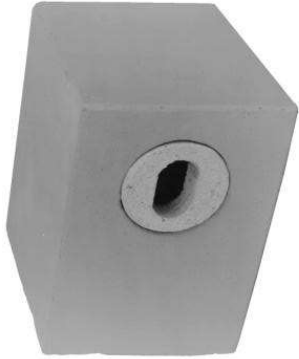
Schwegler



Schwegler 17



Schwegler 16 S



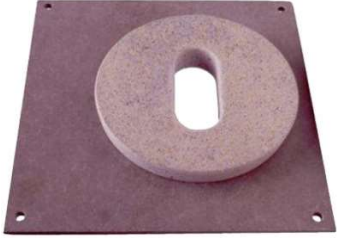
Schwegler 25



Schwegler 25A



Schwegler lightweight Type 1A



Schwegler Cavity Panel

Perhaps the oldest established company in the Swift brick business. Schwegler boxes have been very successful for Swifts. In addition to these are the Schwegler 16 and Schwegler 1MF double box, which, with their entrances in the floor, would need to protrude outside the wall.

URL: <http://www.schwegler-natur.de/index.php?main=home&sub=katalog-downloaden>

Table of dimensions and indicative prices

	Length x Width x Height cm		Entrance mm	Access for maintenance	Price (approx)
	Internal	External			
Birdbrickhouses	44 x 15 x 14	45 x 18 x 22.5	65 x 30	Yes	£75
CJ Wildlife Woodstone 90068	27 x 11 x 13	33 x 16 x 19	65 x 35	Yes	£25
CJ Wildlife Woodstone 90059	25 x 13 x 13	31 x 17 x 17	60 x 35	No	£25
CJ Wildlife Woodstone 90060	25 x 15 x 13	33 x 17 x 17	custom	No	£25
Ecosurv	28.5 x 16.5 x 10	32.5 x 20.5 x 14.5	70 x 35	No	£65
Ibstock	30 x 10 x 10	32.5 x 14 x 14	65 x 30	No	£35
Schwegler lightweight Swift box type 1	32 x 13 x 11.5	34 x 15 x 13.5	70 x 30	No	£35
Schwegler 1MF (double box)	36 x 16 x 17	43 x 22.5 x 46	60 x 45	Yes	£90
Schwegler 16 nest box	36 x 16 x 17	43 x 22 x 24	60 x 45	Yes	£55
Schwegler 16S nest box	36 x 16 x 17	43 x 22 x 24	70 x 30	Yes	£55
Schwegler 17 nest box	30 x 14 x 14	34 x 15 x 15	70 x 30	Yes	£55
Schwegler brick box type 25	21.5 x 17 x 13	26.5 x 22 x 18	55 x 33	Yes	£35
Schwegler brick box type 25A	27 x 10 x 13	32 x 15 x 18	55 x 33	Yes	£35
Schwegler cavity panel	Custom box	Custom box	70 x 30	Yes	£15 + DIY
Hanson clay air brick liner	20 x 17.5 x 10	21 x 21.5 x 14	Custom	No	£5 + DIY

Prices may vary between suppliers and through time. Any product with a custom component may incur additional time and cost.



This document has been prepared by Action for Swifts.
Should any supplier wish to have their products added or wish
modifications to the text, please get in touch. August 2013.
URL: actionforswifts.blogspot.com <mailto:actionforswifts@gmail.com>



Swift Conservation is a "not for profit" service providing free advice to individuals via
our website, by e-mail and on site. In addition we provide a commercial service
to building professionals.



The RSPB is the country's largest nature conservation charity, inspiring
everyone to give nature a home.

www.rspb.org.uk

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