

# Facts about swift bricks

Working together to give nature a home



*Action for Swifts*



# Swift Bricks

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.

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.

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.

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 at a minimum height of 4metres (5 metres is better).

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:

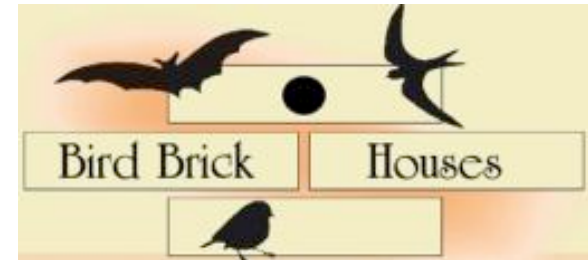
Biodiversity Requirements of the [Exeter Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document](#) (section 9.28), Exeter City Council

**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.



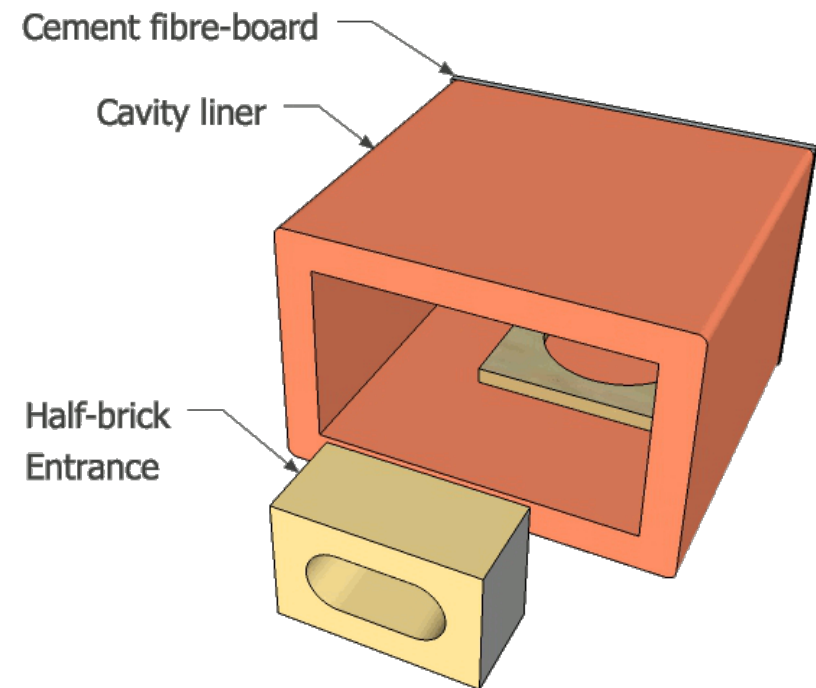
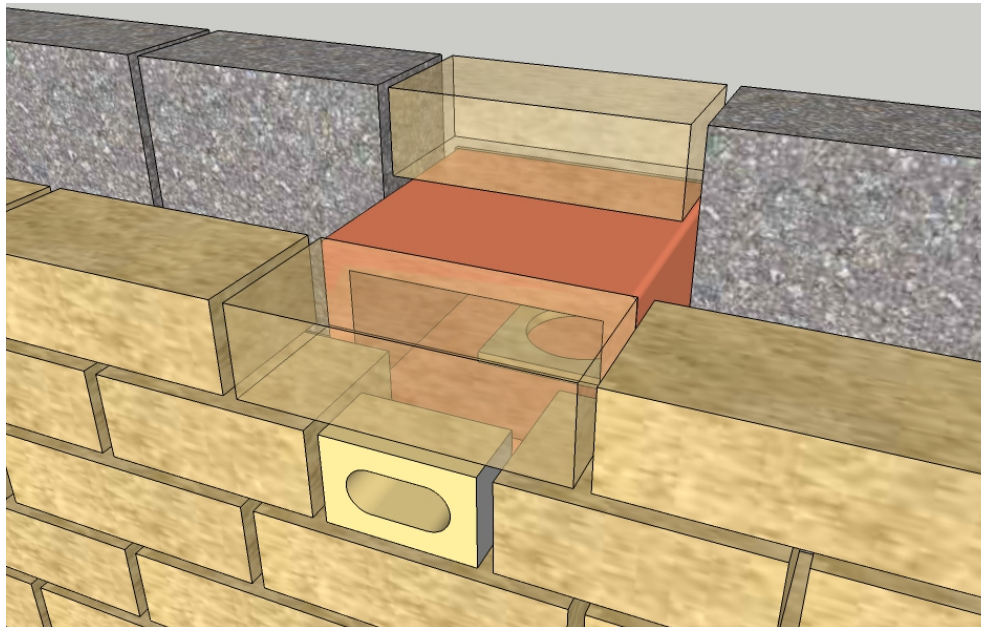
URL: <http://www.birdbrickhouses.co.uk/brick-nesting-boxes/nesting-boxes/>



# Hanson clay air brick liner



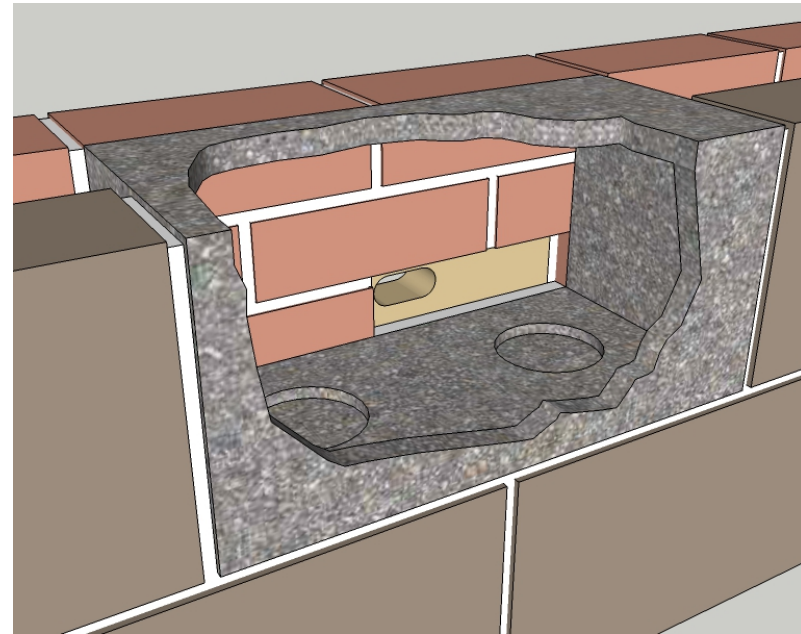
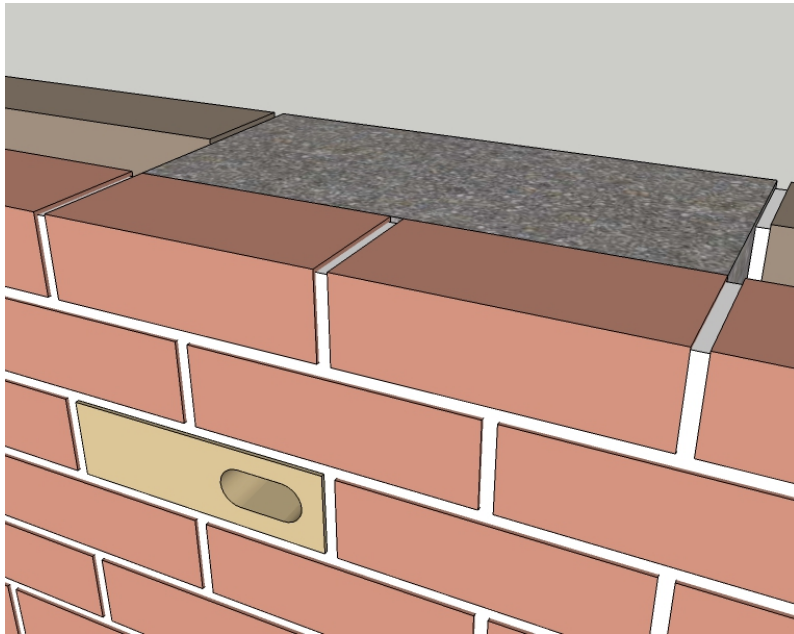
The air brick liner (aka cavity liner) is not marketed by Hanson as a Swift brick, but the 215mm x 140mm Model 401 makes an attractive low cost solution by blocking off the end with cement-fibre board, such as undercloak. The Cambridge System is a concept comprising an entrance piece and a nest box embedded in the cavity and inner leaf. It is particularly suited to gable ends at roof-space level.



See Models 215 x 140 & 215 x 215

<https://www.buildershoponline.co.uk/Bricks/Airbricks-Liners>

# CJ Cambridge Swift Box System



The Cambridge System is a concept comprising an entrance piece and a nest box embedded in the cavity and inner leaf. It is particularly suited to gable ends at roof-space level.

The CJ product illustrated uses a WoodStone nest box, 44cm x 21.5cm x 20cm (the same size as an inner leaf block) and a whole-brick entrance insert.

There is the potential for other configurations with half brick or circular entrance pieces and with boxes wholly inside the roof space accessed via a 10cm dia pipe.

Website: <http://www.vivarapro.com/brochure/#p=20> or <http://www.vivarapro.co.uk/Swallows-and-Swifts>

## CJ Wildlife Woodstone



**Built-in Visible Swift box  
Number 90068**



**Built-in Visible Swift box  
Number 90096**



**Built-in hidden Swift box  
Number 90095**

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.

URLS: <http://www.vivarapro.com/brochure/#p=19>, <http://www.vivarapro.co.uk/Swallows-and-Swifts>  
<http://www.vivarapro.com/brochure/#p=21>

# Ecosurv



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

URL: <http://www.ecosurv.co.uk/product/bird-box-range>





## Forticrete



# Forticrete

an IBSTOCK plc company

Designed to be an attractive feature in any wall, this swift brick is designed to intrude minimally into the cavity. The box is made of cast stone.

URL: <https://www.forticrete.co.uk/>

## Ibstock



# IBSTOCK | BRICK

an IBSTOCK plc company

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/literature/eco-products/>

## Green & Blue Swift block



# Green&Blue

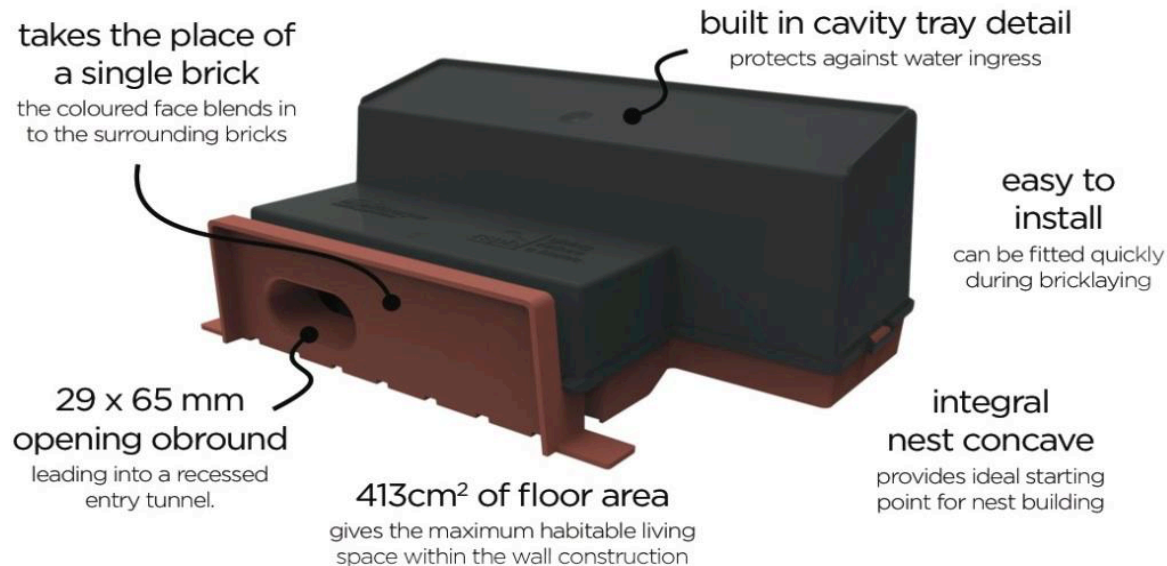


This attractive Swift brick features an internal nesting bowl, a small entrance hole to deter larger birds and predators, full instructions cast into the surface for easy fitting, a stylish entrance feature and is UK standard block size



URL: <http://www.ibstock.com/literature/eco-products/>

# Manthorpe Engineering



Minimal visual intrusion in the wall (1 brick)

Light weight

6 colours to match any brickwork

Ease of installation

Relatively low cost.

Can be ordered from any builders merchants that distribute Manthorpe's building products.



<https://manthorpebuildingproducts.co.uk/product/gswb-swift-nest-brick>

## Action for Swifts: Sbox

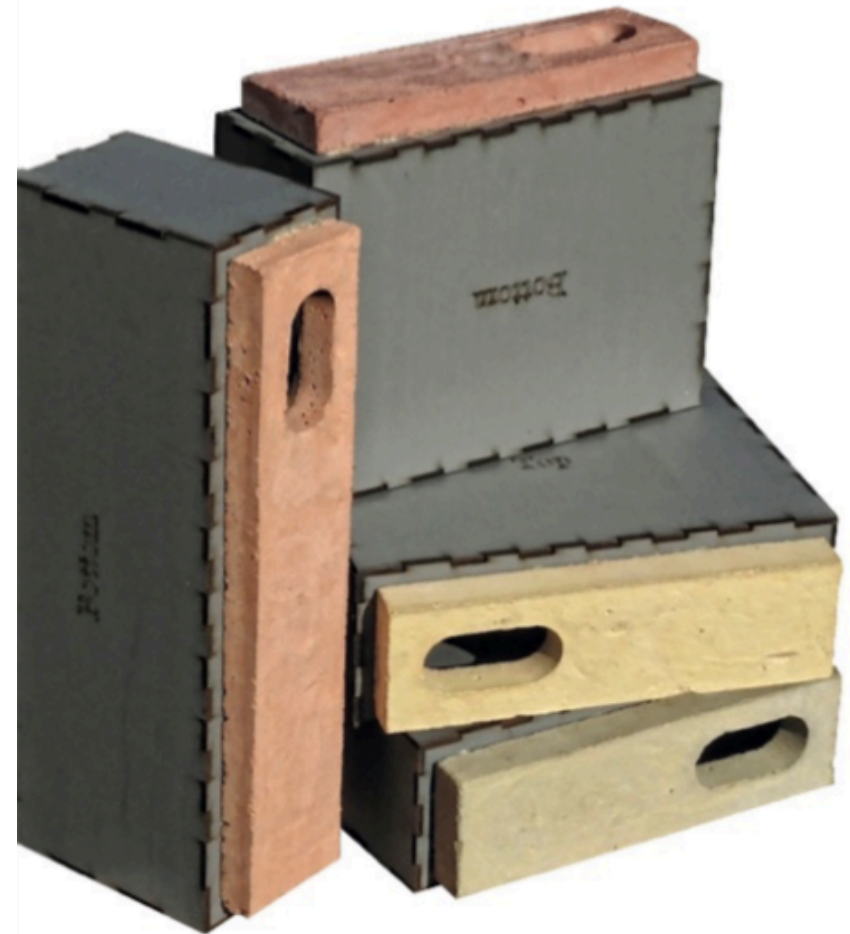


*Action for Swifts*



Designed for easy retrofit in brick cavity walls  
Occupies one course of bricks  
Minimal visual intrusion in the wall (1 brick)  
Tailored to any brick size or cavity width  
Light weight  
Brick slip front can match any brickwork  
Available in left and right versions  
Includes built in nest form  
Relatively low cost.

Email [actionforswifts@gmail.com](mailto:actionforswifts@gmail.com) to discuss requirements





# Schwegler



Schwegler lightweight Type 1A



Schwegler 16 S



Schwegler 17



Schwegler 25



Schwegler 25A



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/vogelschutz/?lang=en>



## Table of dimensions

| Brick type                             | Length x Width x Height cm |                           | Entrance mm | UK brick compatible? |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
|                                        | Internal                   | External                  |             |                      |
| Birdbrickhouses                        | 44 x 15 x 14               | 45 x 18 x 22.5            | 65 x 30     | Yes                  |
| CJ Wildlife Woodstone 90096            | 27 x 11 x 13               | 33 x 16 x 19              | 65 x 35     | No                   |
| CJ Wildlife Woodstone 90095            | 25 x 13 x 13               | 31 x 17 x 17              | Custom      | n/a                  |
| CJ Wildlife Woodstone 90068            | 25 x 15 x 13               | 33 x 17 x 17              | 65 x 35     | No                   |
| CJ Cambridge System                    | 40 x 18 x 17.5             | 44 x 20 x 2.15            | 65 x 29     | Yes                  |
| Ecosurve                               | 28.5 x 16.5 x 10           | 32.5 x 20.5 x 14.5        | 70 x 35     | Yes                  |
| Forticrete                             | 28.15 x 10.4 x 9.4         | 32.75 x 15 x 14           | 46 x 31     | Yes                  |
| Green & Blue Swift block               | 39 x 12 x 16.5             | 44 x 16 x 21.5            | 65 x 30     | Yes                  |
| Hanson clay air brick liner            | 20 x 17.5 x 10             | 21 x 21.5 x 14            | Custom      | Yes                  |
| Ibstock                                | 30 x 10 x 10               | 32.5 x 14 x 14            | 65 x 30     | Yes                  |
| Manthorpe Swift Brick                  | 22 x 15 x 10               | 1 UK brick & 100mm cavity | 65 x 29     | Yes                  |
| Action for Swifts Sbox                 | 22.5 X 17.6 x 7.8          |                           | 65 x 29     | Yes                  |
| Schwegler lightweight swift box Type 1 | 32 x 13 x 11.5             | 34 x 15 x 13.5            | 70 x 30     | Yes                  |
| Schwegler 1MF double box               | 36 x 16 x 17               | 43 x 22.5 x 46            | 60 x 45     | n/a                  |
| Schwegler 16 nest box                  | 36 x 16 x 17               | 43 x 22 x 24              | 60 x 45     | No                   |
| Schwegler 16S nest box                 | 36 x 16 x 17               | 43 x 22 x 24              | 70 x 30     | No                   |
| Schwegler 17 nest box                  | 30 x 14 x 14               | 34 x 15 x 15              | 70 x 30     | Yes                  |
| Schwegler brick box Type 25            | 21.5 x 17 x 13             | 26.5 x 22 x 18            | 55 x 33     | No                   |
| Schwegler brick box Type 25A           | 27 x 10 x 13               | 32 x 15 x 18              | 55 x 33     | No                   |
| Schwegler cavity panel                 | Custom box                 | Custom box                | 70 x 30     | n/a                  |

The prices of these boxes vary between £15 and £176 (plus p & p), but sometimes there are discounts for bulk orders.



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](http://actionforswifts.blogspot.com) mailto:[actionforswifts@gmail.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](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

The RSPB is a registered charity in England & Wales 207076, in Scotland SC037654