

BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT MEASURES

APRIL COTTAGE, HUGH TOWN, ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY



Client: Council of the Isles of Scilly

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Executive Summary

Project Outline

The proposals involve works to convert the existing single dwelling to three self-contained residential units. The garden and landscaping would be retained with only the addition of a gateway at the end of the driveway.

These works required are restricted to modifications of the internal layout of the property – no works to the exterior of the property are involved.

Scope of Document

This report does not provide an independent assessment of ecological impacts arising from the proposals and no site visit has been undertaken – the information outlined is based on the understanding that there are no ecological impacts arising from the proposed modifications to the property.

The scope of this document is restricted to a specification for appropriate and proportionate biodiversity enhancement measures to be introduced within the final development.

Biodiversity Enhancement Measures

Careful consideration is given to the scope for biodiversity enhancement; the likelihood of use by various species; and the ability to secure continuity and maintenance of these enhancements in the long term.

Bird boxes were considered to be unsuitable for this property due to the absence of suitable mature trees or shrubs in which to site them, and difficulty securing long-term cleaning and maintenance in a communal garden area. Siting a box on the building itself would be possible but positioning a box at a height where it would be suitable for use by most bird species would involve a high risk of disturbance from day-to-day activities of new tenants.

Other garden enhancements such as hedgehog boxes or bee hotels would similarly be difficult to secure in the long term and may not be appropriate to the needs of new tenants.

The enhancement measure chosen is the installation of a maintenance-free bat box on the gable of the building. This would be an open-based box which would not require cleaning and its positioning would ensure that no issues arise through bat droppings below the box. The location and aspect would be optimal for bats such as common pipistrelle which is the dominant species present on the island and the most likely species to use residential gardens and their environs for foraging and roosting. The proximity of the eastern gable to the palm tree in the front garden would secure a vegetated fly-in/out habitat for bats linking directly to green space to the north of the property.

Appendix 1 provides a specification for the bat box, and installation instructions for the contractors undertaking the works.

APPENDIX 1 – BOX SPECIFICATION

Box Specification

The box selected should be suitable for use by common pipistrelle bats – the species most abundantly present on St Mary's and those most likely to make use of bat box features associated with buildings in a residential location.

The Schwegler 1FF bat box would be optimal but supply issues can occur with this manufacturer. Therefore if this option is not available at the time of works, suitable alternative boxes are detailed below which would secure the biodiversity enhancement.

 Improved Crevice Bat Box	 Beaumaris Woodstone Bat Box
 1FF Schwegler Bat Box With Built-in Wooden Rear Panel	 NHBS Kent Bat Box

These boxes can be sourced from online retailers such as NHBS.

Box Location and Siting

The box should be sited close to the apex on the eastern gable of the property in the location indicated through the red circle on the photograph below.

This location has been chosen as it provides vegetated fly-in/out habitat for bats, with reference to the palm tree located in the front garden. The green space to the north of the property can then be directly accessed by bats providing connectivity to foraging habitat within the wider landscape.

The box should be positioned in such a way that it is not directly above a window-sill ensuring that any droppings would fall directly onto the single-pitch roof below and be washed away through the guttering system, thereby avoiding the requirement for maintenance and making sure that droppings do not represent an inconvenience to new tenants.



Box Installation

The box should be fixed following the manufacturer's recommendations and using the fixings provided. Whilst its eastern aspect should provide a good degree of protection from the prevailing winds, care must be taken to ensure that the installation of the box is secure and stable in high wind conditions.

Lighting

It is important that the box is not lit by external lights such as security lights. Any external lighting in this area should be ground mounted and cowled to prevent light-spill.