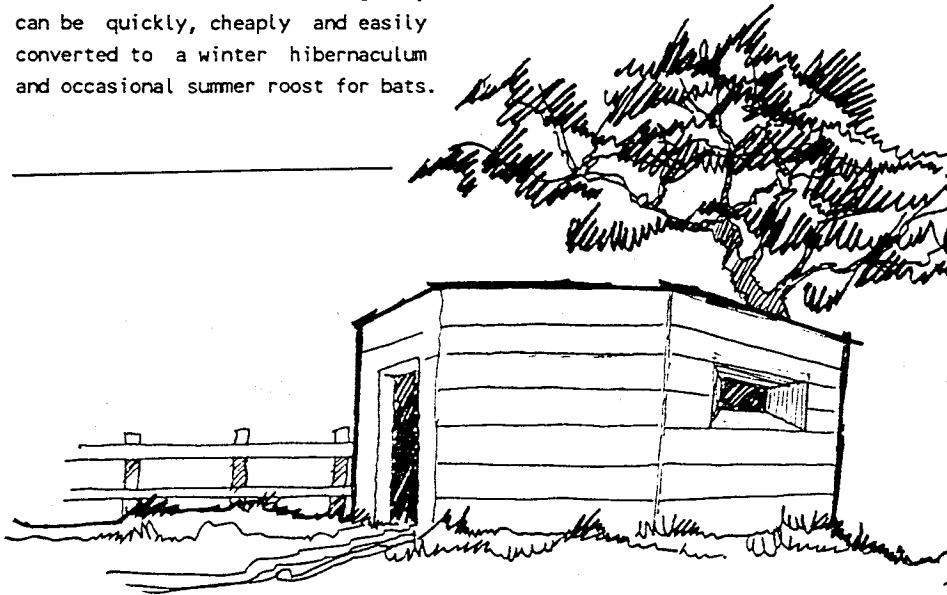


Creating a Pill-Box Fit for

BATS

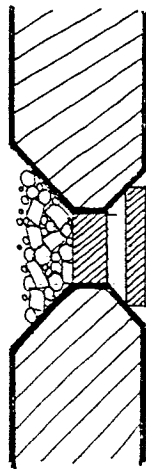
A Simple Conversion for Conservation Groups

The standard hexagonal pillbox, most common in the South East of England, can be quickly, cheaply and easily converted to a winter hibernaculum and occasional summer roost for bats.



.1.

The first requirement is to stabilise the interior temperature and humidity and limit light levels. Cut four-inch medium density concrete blocks in half and, from the inside, cement one into each of the firing slits at its narrowest point.



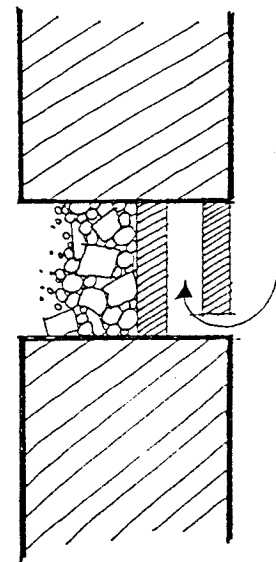
PLAN

The choice of box for conversion needs some thought. One of the many threats to a hibernating bat is excessive disturbance. Boxes near to houses, roads or footpaths should be a lower priority than remote boxes on private land. Unconverted sites are often already in use as summer night or feeding roosts, although not normally as day roosts. This means a converted box may be readily adopted, even in its first year.

Any conversion where disturbance is possible needs the protection of a stout gate. This increases costs.

.2.

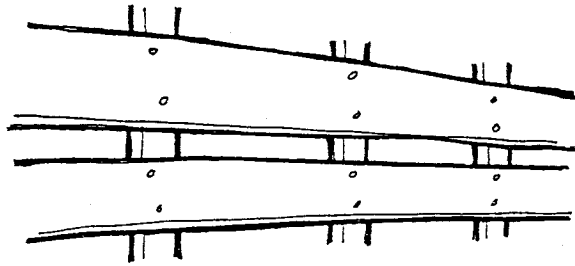
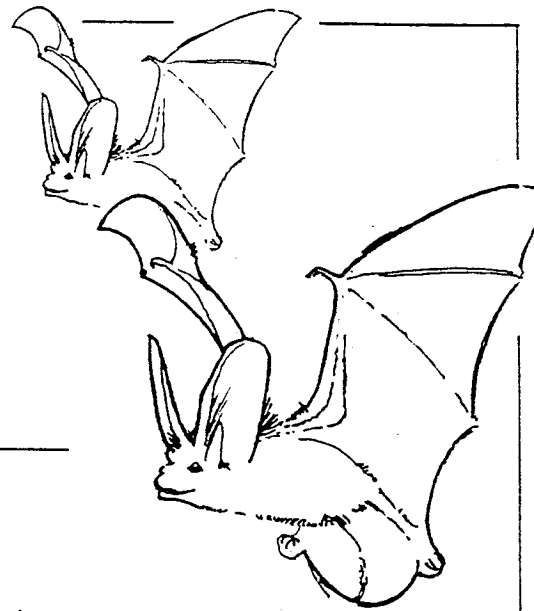
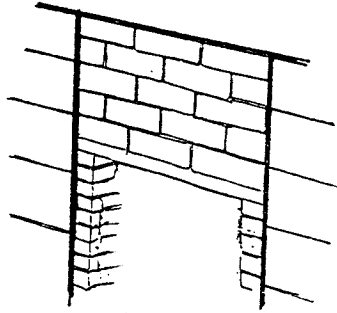
Three quarters of a similar block is now cemented into the outside, widest part of each firing slit. Leave an eight inch by three-quarter inch gap at the bottom cement layer. You have created a hollow between the inner and outer blocks with bat access to the outside.



SECTION

.3.

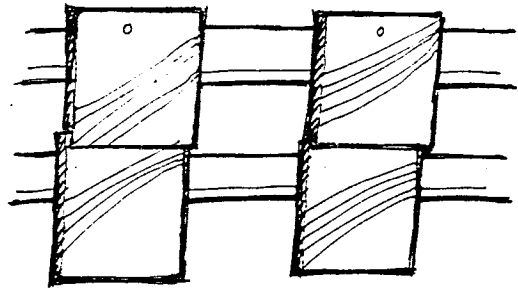
Next, the entrance needs to be half closed, from the roof downwards. Two small brick pillars, half way in and either side of the entrance passage, will support a lintel as a base for a block wall up to the roof. The access space should now be about three feet high.



The major part of the conversion is complete. But bats like cracks and a hole to hide in. You must create these well out of the reach of rats and foxes.

.4.

Nail wooden boards to walls leaving 15-20 millimetre narrow gaps between wall and board. The inner shelf of each firing slit can also built up leaving 20 m.m. gaps. Brickblock and tile is better than wood for these purposes, especially the type with lumps to lift them from the wall.



.5.

The roof should not be forgotten as a site for boards and tiles. The more crevices, the greater the possibility that bats will move in.

.6.

If a gate is needed, this is fitted where the entrance passage is half closed by your new block wall. If you know a gate is needed, use nine inch blocks for added strength. The door must be steel, with horizontal bars six inches apart, so that bats can fly through.

Finally, remember that a licence from the Nature Conservancy Council is necessary to enter a known bat roost. All such hibernacula are visited by experts who count the bats each winter. Arrange a visit to your converted pill box by contacting your Local Wildlife Trust or Bat Group.

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