

## Nationwide Louvre Company

Environmental protection for bell tower

NLC is a family-run company based in Great Barr, Birmingham which for the last twenty three years has specialised in the installation of aluminium louvres, acoustic louvres and louvred screens. A couple of years ago the company was asked by architect Hank Strik of Caroe Partnership to come up with a way of preventing water ingress into the bell tower of Chris Church in Swindon. NLC designed, supplied and installed weather louvres with high-performance motorised shut-off dampers to the rear. While the bells are not in use, the dampers remain shut but are switched open when the bells are to be rung. This prevents water, airborne moisture such as fog, snow, and even driving rain from entering the building. The dampers are fitted with fail-safe motors that automatically close in the event of a power failure (although this function can be manually overridden by

pressing a button and disengaging the actuator gearing).

Following the installation the company was informed that the church was extremely pleased with the works carried out. Soon afterwards, NLC was contacted by John Beauchamp of Benjamin and Beauchamp, conservation architects for St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin.

Because of the very exposed position of the cathedral, double bank weather louvres with motorised shut off dampers to the rear were requested. The units were approximately 2800mm wide x 4600mm

high (louvred area) and were fitted to all four sides of the Minor's Tower making 32 motorised shut-off dampers altogether.

More images can be found at [www.nlcontracts.co.uk/case-studies/](http://www.nlcontracts.co.uk/case-studies/).

As stone restoration work was being carried out to the Minor Tower the structure was accessible from the scaffolding, so the modular sections of louvres and damper could be taken into the tower through one of the external openings.

The architect was working in anticipation of a new EU law which is expected to state that the ringing of bells may now be covered by broader noise pollution requirements: the principle of the cathedral was here first no longer applies. It is hoped that the installation of the shut-off dampers will be an additional benefit. Should it be necessary, one or possibly two elevations of the tower can be closed off whilst the bells are being rung, to reduce noise levels in the direction of a complaint.

For more information:

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Dampers with fail-safe motors



The finished louvres in the Minor's Tower



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can have bad luck**

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