

# Sundayshill Farm Falfield South Gloucestershire

## Non-licensed Bat Precautionary Working Method Statement

September 2023

Client Name:	Mr D. Hudson
Reference:	23_566
Issue:	1-0
Date:	19 September 2023
Prepared by:	Tim Smith
Position:	Managing Director and Principal Ecologist





## Version Control

Version	Changes Made	Changes Made By	Date
1-0	Issued to client	Tim Smith	23 Sept 2023

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# Contents

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Aims and Objectives .....	3
<b>2. Contractor Awareness and Precautionary Methods of Working.....</b>	<b>5</b>
Contractor Awareness .....	5
Precautionary Methods of Working.....	5
<b>Appendix 1 Legislation, Planning Context, Scope and Identified Roosts .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Appendix 2 Location of Incidental Roost C (and incidental Roost D).....</b>	<b>12</b>

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 In September 2023 Five Valleys Ecology was commissioned by Mr D. Hudson (hereafter referred to as the Client) to produce a Precautionary Working Method Statement (PWMS) with regard to bats for a development at Sundayshill Farm, Falfield, South Gloucestershire GL12 8DQ centred at Ordnance Survey grid reference ST6701193706 (What3Words receive.installs.sunk), hereafter referred to as 'the Site'.
- 1.2 Planning consent was granted in September 2023 by South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) for conversion of the Outbuilding/Workshop at the Site to accommodation (Application No. P23/01830/F).
- 1.3 The main body of the PWMS is specifically written with the construction team as the primary audience so that the construction team understand what is needed to carry out the work, the details for necessary actions which are arranged in a way that is aligned with the construction programme and avoids unnecessary technical and/or background information. This reduces the likelihood of confusion and frustration for the construction team and/or the ecologist at the implementation stage.
- 1.4 SGC and other consultees should refer to Appendix 1 which provides further information on the legislation, planning context, site description and context, scope together with the identified bat roosts in order to demonstrate that due process has been followed.
- 1.5 The following roosting bats were incidentally recorded in the House directly adjacent to the Outbuilding/Workshop which was subject to dusk emergence/dawn re-entry surveys undertaken by Five Valleys Ecology during July and August 2023:
- Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* roost on southeast corner of the main roof of the House (Roost C); and
  - Common Pipistrelle roost at eaves level on the west elevation close to the dormer window in the central part of the roof over the House (Roost D)
- 1.6 Roost C is located outside the area of works (Appendix 2), however, due to its close proximity to the works a separate PWMS was recommended in the Bat Survey Report (Report Ref. 23\_546 1-0) to set out practical measures for contractors to follow to avoid potential impacts to the roost during the construction phase.

## Aims and Objectives

- 1.7 The aims and objectives of the PWMS are to provide information to the Client and onsite contractors in order to:
- Prevent obstruction and/or destruction of Incidental Roost C during the works;
  - Prevent killing and/or injury of bats;
  - Avoiding obstruction of flight lines to incidental Roost C with scaffolding through appropriate design and erection of the scaffolding in consultation with an ecologist;



- Basic preventative measures to control noise, dust, vibration which may potentially affect incidental Roost C; and
- Set out the procedure to follow in the event that bats or signs of bats such as the presence of droppings are found during the works



## 2. Contractor Awareness and Precautionary Methods of Working

- 2.1 An awareness of bats by contractors and implementation of appropriate precautionary working practices will minimise the possibility of impacts to incidental Roost C and/or bats during the construction phase.

### Contractor Awareness

#### Toolbox Talk

- 2.2 Immediately prior to any works an appropriately qualified, experienced and licensed ecologist will make the contractors aware of:
- The protection afforded to bats and their roosts;
  - The results of the bat survey and location of incidental Roost C (and incidental Roost D) (Appendix 1);
  - How to recognise a bat and the procedure to follow if bats or signs of bats such as the presence of droppings is found; and
  - The precautionary methods of working to be followed (as detailed in this document)

### Precautionary Methods of Working

- 2.3 The following precautionary working practices will be adopted:
- Prior to any works incidental Roost C will be demarcated by the contractors as advised by the ecologist using tape/signage, as appropriate;
  - Scaffolding will be designed and erected in consultation with the ecologist to be keep the area around incidental Roost C unobstructed in order to maintain clear flight lines for bats to the roost throughout the construction phase;
  - Avoid excessive dust levels in close proximity to incidental Roost C. If cutting and grinding operations are carried out on site equipment and techniques incorporating the best available dust suppression measures will be used to keep dust emissions to a minimum;
  - Water sprays to minimise dust from cutting equipment will be used, as appropriate;
  - Standard angle grinders and disk cutters with no dust control will not be used;
  - Any high and/or prolonged noise/vibration will be kept to a minimum as far as is possible in consultation with an ecologist. Precautionary measures may include ensuring that any such work is undertaken away from the immediate vicinity of incidental Roost C; for example undertaking at ground level or at the southwest corner of construction zone. Screening may also be used, where appropriate; and
  - External lighting will not be used at night during the construction phase

### Action if a Bat (or Signs of Bats) is found by Contractors

The following measures regarding the possibility of Contractors finding bats or signs of bats such as the presence of droppings will be implemented:

- The possibility of Contractors finding bats is considered unlikely; however, as bats are highly mobile and opportunistic instruction on how to recognise a bat will be given by the ecologist as part of the toolbox talk;
- Should bats or signs of bats be recorded by contractors during the construction period, all works will cease immediately and Tim Smith of Five Valleys Ecology who is a licenced ecologist (Natural England Bat Class Licence No. 2015-10870-CLS-CLS) to advise on further action. The ecologist will liaise as appropriate with SGC Biodiversity Team and NE;
- Five Valleys Ecology licensed ecologist Tim Smith can be contacted as follows:
  - Mobile 07732 397984; and/or
  - Main office 01453 759306 Choose Option 1

### Compliance/Monitoring

The ecologist will liaise with the Client throughout the construction phase by phone and/or email at minimum fortnightly intervals until the end of construction to ensure that the measures set out in the PWMS are carried out and that they are effective.

In the unlikely event of a possible breach of legislation/planning consent it will be the responsibility of the Client/Contractor to report promptly to SGC and any other relevant parties, as appropriate. The ecologist may also have professional obligations which may potentially require them to report any such incidents to SGC and/or the Police, as appropriate. If so, the ecologist would fulfil such obligations using their professional judgement and based upon the available information and evidence.



# **Appendix 1 Legislation, Planning Context, Scope and Identified Receptors**



## Legislation

All British bats are protected under both UK law; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) (as amended), and European law (The Habitats Directive); which is transposed into law in England and Wales by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('Habitats Regulations').

Schedule 5 of the WCA affords protection against:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance of bats or obstruction of any structure or place used for shelter or protection; and
- Selling, offering or exposing for sale (alive or dead, including parts or derivatives).

Schedule 6 states that bats cannot be killed or taken by certain methods, such as traps and nets, poisons, automatic weapons, electrical devices, smoke/gases etc.

All British species of bat are listed on Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as a European Protected Species (EPS) of animal. Regulation 41 (1) of the Regulations makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure an EPS;
- Deliberately disturb an EPS;
- Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of an EPS; or
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of an EPS.

Some rare bat species, namely Greater Horseshoe Bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, Lesser Horseshoe Bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, Barbastelle *Barbastellus barbastellus* and Bechstein's *Myotis bechsteinii*, are afforded greater protection under European legislation, being listed under Annex II of the EC Habitats Directive which lists species whose conservation requires the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).

### Brexit Changes to the Habitats Regulations

The UK exited the European Union (EU) on 31 January 2020 and entered a transition period until the end of 2020. For England, amendments to the Habitats Regulations are largely limited to 'operability changes' that will ensure the regulations continue to have the same working effect after the transition period. Most of these changes involved transferring functions from the European Commission (EU) to the appropriate authorities in England and Wales. All other processes or terms in the Habitats Regulations remain unchanged and existing guidance is still relevant<sup>1</sup>.

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in the UK no longer form part of the EU's Natura 2000 ecological network. The Habitats Regulations have created a national site network on land and at sea, including both the inshore and offshore marine areas in the UK. The national site network includes:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://cieem.net/brexit-changes-to-the-habitats-regulations/>



- Existing SACs and SPAs
- New SACs and SPAs designated under these Regulations

Any references to Natura 2000 in the Habitats Regulations and in guidance now refers to the new national site network<sup>3</sup>.

## Planning Context

The development at the Site is for the erection of a two storey side extension to form additional living accommodation (SGC Application Reference: P23/01830/F). Planning Condition 4 states the following:

*Prior to the commencement of works, a Precautionary Working Method Statement shall be submitted to the Council for agreement and approval in writing. The Precautionary Working Method Statement shall be based on the recommendations proposed within the Bat Survey Report (Five Valleys Ecology, August 2023) and shall include measures to avoid potential impacts to bat roosts on the main dwellinghouse during the construction phase.*

### Reason

*To comply with PSP19 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Policies, Sites and Places Plan Adopted November 2017 and the National Planning Policy Framework.*

## Site Description and Context

This is a rural site located approximately 4.5km northeast of Thornbury town centre in South Gloucestershire. The Site itself is dominated by Buildings and Hardstanding and the surrounding gardens which are dominated by Amenity Grassland. Standing Water, specifically a pond which is hereafter referred to as P1, is also present.

Based on inspection of online mapping and aerial imagery the areas to the north, south, east and west of the Site are dominated by Arable and/or Grassland, well connected Hedgerows and Scattered Trees. 12 separate blocks of ancient woodlands occur within a 2km radius of the Site<sup>2</sup>, the nearest of which is Sundayshill Wood which is located <0.1km southwest of the Site. The nearest Standing Water (notwithstanding P1) in the form of three ponds (if they remain extant) are located approximately 0.5km east, west and south of the Site respectively. The nearest Running Water (unnamed watercourse) is located approximately 1.0km east of the Site.

NE recognises 120 bio-geographic zones termed 'Natural Character Areas' (NCAs), which are defined by geology, landscape character and habitats. The Site lies within the NCA Profile No. 118 Bristol, Avon Valleys and Ridges<sup>3</sup>.

The western and north-western edge overlooks the flat Lower Severn Levels of the Severn and Avon Vales NCA, with further views across the estuary to the Forest of Dean and Wales. To the south, the Mendip Hills NCA rises from the Chew Valley. To the east and the south, the Cotswold scarp and Mendip Hills rise in an abrupt boundary, while at the south-eastern corner of the NCA the southern end of the Cotswolds and eastern end of the Mendips merge<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4646942?category=587130>



The River Avon cuts a steep-sided valley through the area from the east, having passed through the Severn and Avon Vales NCA and Cotswolds NCA. The River Severn connects this NCA with others that border the estuary.

The most extensive areas of woodland lie between Congresbury and the Avon Gorge and on the Failand Ridge. These are internationally significant, containing rare endemic Whitebeam *Sorbus* sp. Elsewhere, woodlands are smaller and fragmented and mainly confined to steeper land.

Agriculture is predominantly livestock rearing, with arable in the flatter land to the north-east, with larger field sizes and infrequent hedgerow trees. Valleys and steeper slopes in the south-east tend to have irregular fields and overgrown, species-rich hedges.

This NCA is a diverse landscape important for Greater Horseshoe Bat (SoPI) and Lesser Horseshoe Bat (SoPI). Grasslands of high nature conservation interest remain on the wetter valley bottoms and dry downland slopes.

The Site is comprised of a single-storey Outbuilding/Workshop area which is attached to the east elevation of the farmhouse. The original part of the farmhouse is considered to possibly date from 1700's, however, the Outbuilding/Workshop is of more recent construction (2023, Pers. Comm., David Hudson, 04 April) but would be expected to be >50years old.

The walls of the Outbuilding/Workshop are constructed from rubble/coursed stone with some later brickwork additions such as brick arches over the windows on the north elevation. The Outbuilding/Workshop is divided into a larger main section and an additional smaller section to the east; each of the two sections has a pitched roof covered with clay pantiles. The eastern section of the Outbuilding/Workshop is partly divided by central wall with open doorways on the northeast and southeast corners.

## Scope

In April 2023 Five Valleys Ecology was commissioned by the Client to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment of the Outbuilding/Workshop at the Site (see Preliminary Roost Assessment Report Ref. 23\_540\_2--0). The results of the Preliminary Roost Assessment concluded the Outbuilding/Workshop was of high roosting potential.

In April 2023 following the Preliminary Roost Assessment Five Valleys Ecology was commissioned by the Client to undertake emergence/re-entry bat surveys of the Outbuilding/Workshop to determine presence/absence of bats and whether mitigation to avoid impacts was required. The survey work undertaken comprised of two dusk emergence surveys one dawn re-entry survey together with an automated survey which were undertaken during July and August 2023 (see Bat Survey Report Ref. 23\_546 1-0).

This PWMS builds upon what was presented in the Bat Survey Report by describing how construction activities will be controlled to seek to avoid and, if necessary, mitigate potential adverse impacts to incidental Roost C that was recorded during the surveys. It also sets out the monitoring and auditing activities designed to demonstrate that such measures are carried out and that they are effective.

This PWMS covers the principal construction activities at the time of Planning Application.

## Identified Roosts

The following roosting bats were also incidentally recorded in the House directly adjacent to the Outbuilding/Workshop during the dusk emergence/dawn re-entry surveys:

- Common Pipistrelle roost on southeast corner of the main roof of the House (Roost C); and
- Common Pipistrelle roost at eaves level on the west elevation close to the dormer window in the central part of the roof over the House (Roost D)

Roost C is located outside the area of works, however, due to its close proximity to the works a separate PWMS was recommended in the Bat Survey Report (Report Ref. 23\_546 1-0) to set out practical measures for contractors to follow to avoid potential impacts during the construction phase to incidental Roost C on the southeast corner of the roof over the House.

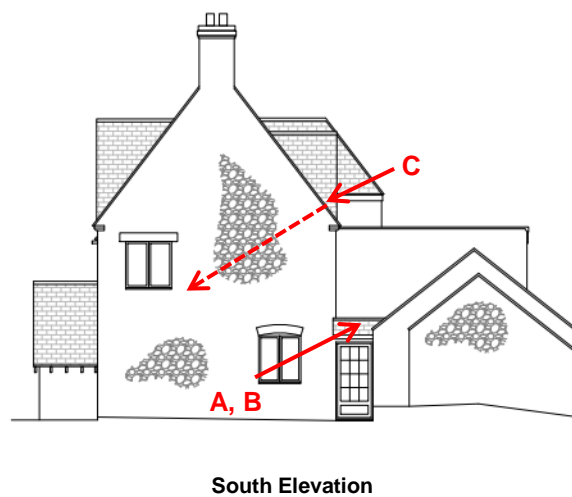
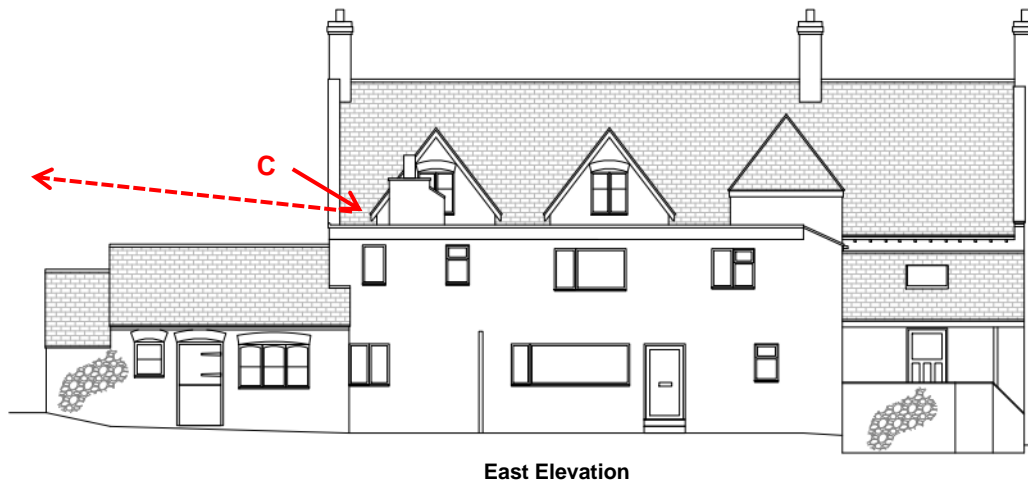
Incidental Roost C detailed above is therefore the subject of this PWMS and expanded upon in Section 2.

The survey findings also confirmed the presence of two day roosts (Roost A and Roost B) for four (no.) Common Pipistrelle; both roosts are located in the porch roof over the side door on the south elevation of the House and adjoining the adjacent west elevation of the Outbuilding/Workshop (Appendix 2). A licence to enable the destruction of two identified bat roosts (Roost A and Roost B) will be obtained from Natural England (NE) prior to the commencement of works.

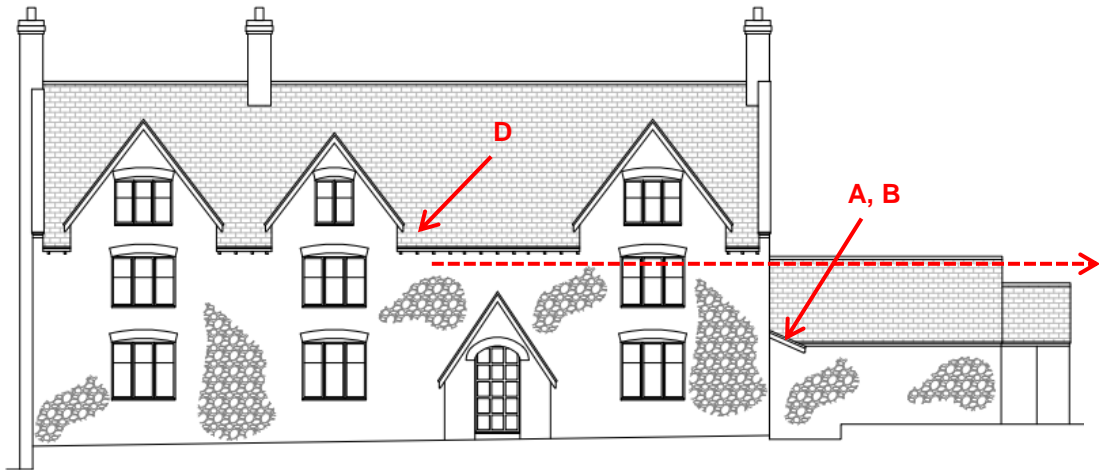


# **Appendix 2 Location of Incidental Roost C (and incidental Roost D)**

Appendix 2 Location of Incidental Roost C (and incidental Roost D)



South and East Elevations of the House Showing the Location of incidentally Recorded Roost C (Commuting Route Shown by Dashed Line) (and Roost A and Roost B). Not to Scale © Digital Planit



West Elevation

West Elevation of the House Showing the Location of incidentally Recorded Roost D (Commuting Route Shown by Dashed Line) (and Roost A and Roost B on South Elevation). Not to Scale  
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