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BAT SCOPING REPORT
MIDDLE RIGG FARM
STAINSACRE
NORTH YORKSHIRE

FOR
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Contents

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On:

Report approved by:
On:

Bat Survey Stainsacre, North Yorkshire

1. INTRODUCTION

Background to development

The proposed development is for the conversion of two existing stone barns with pan tiled roofs into holiday accommodation.
The property is located close the village of Stainsacre, North Yorkshire.
Naturally Wild has been commissioned by Kevin Howard, to conduct a Bat survey of the property in relation to the development proposal. The survey area is as above.

Status of protected species in the local/regional area

Bats are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Schedule 5 and the Conservation (Natural Habitats & c.) Regulations 1994, Schedule 2. These laws give protection to all species of British bats; it is an offence to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or take (capture) bats.
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.
- Deliberately disturb bats (whether in a roost or not).
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange a live or dead bat or any part of a bat.

As a result of this legal protection it is illegal to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any bat roost, whether occupied or not, or to harm or disturb a bat. Prosecution could result in imprisonment, fines of £5,000 (per offence and/or per animal affected) and confiscation of vehicles and equipment used in committing the offence. In order to minimise the risk of breaking the law it is essential to work with care to avoid disturbing or harming bats or disturbing or damaging bat roosts, to be aware of the procedures to be followed if bats are found during works, and to commission surveys and expert advice as required to minimise the risk of reckless harm to bats or bat roosts.

Planning Issues
Natural England currently advises local planning authorities that:

> Where developments requiring planning permission are likely to impact upon protected species it is essential that protected species surveys are undertaken and submitted to meet the requirements of paragraph 98 of ODPM Circular *06/2005*, accompanying Planning Policy Statement 9 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact within the Planning System, 16 August 2005) which states that:

'The presence of a protected species is *a material consideration when a planning authority* is *considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result* in *harm to the species or its habitat.* '

> In addition, paragraph 99 of ODPM Circular *06/2005* states:

'It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted'

> It should also be noted that paragraphs 41 and 45 of the ODPM Circular 08/2005 (Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System) state that:

'potential developers (at pre-application stage) and local planning authorities (at application stage) must provide sufficient information to the statutory consultee (Natural England) to enable it to give a substantive reply', and

'the period prescribed for the purpose of the duty to respond is 2 J days starting with the date the statutory consultee receives the information necessary to allow it to provide a substantive response, or any other period agreed in writing between both parties.'

Where development would result in damage to, or obstruct access to, any bat roost, whether occupied or not, or to harm or disturb a bat a licence is required from DEFRA to allow the development to proceed. Obtaining a DEFRA licence can take up to 60 working days.

Bats
Recent findings from the Bat Conservation Trust's ongoing National Bat Monitoring Programme (NBMP) suggest that populations of greater and lesser horseshoe bats, Daubenton's bat, Natterer's bat and the Common Pipistrelle have risen since regular monitoring began in 1997. Nationally, Daubenton's bat populations are estimated to

have been increasing at an annual rate of 4.4% since 1997.
However this is the first evidence that some bat populations could be recovering from historic population declines. The general consensus, both in Britain and continental Europe is that most other bat species are still declining and vulnerable.

Factors thought to have contributed to this decline include:

- Reduction in insect prey abundance, due to high intensity farming practice and inappropriate riparian management.
- Loss of insect-rich feeding habitats and flyways, due to loss of wetlands, hedgerows and other suitable prey habitats.
- Loss of winter roosting sites in buildings and old trees.
- . Disturbance and destruction of roosts, including the loss of maternity roosts, due to development and the use of toxic timber treatment chemicals.

Because of past declines, some species including Pipistrelle, have been designated as priority species by the government and have individual Species Action Plans; these contain objectives relating to the maintenance and restoration of populations to former levels.

Objective(s) of survey
The objective of the survey was to:

- Ascertain if bats are using the buildings as a roost sites.

Survey area
Two stone barns with pan tiled roofs together with attached lean to structure (Buildings B & C on attached plan).

Habitat description
The site comprises of a traditional farm steading with associated barns and stables. The proposed conversion relates to buildings B & C on the attached plans.

Building B, is a stone built stable on a East West alignment with a pan tiled roof. The walls of the building are of cut sandstone block to the outside with random sandstone to the internal walls with a rubble infill. The internal walls have been painted white. There is a doorway to the eastern gable with a window over. There is a further doorway and window to the south face. The stable is attached to a building A the farmhouse situated to the west. As stated the roof is covered in pan tiles, below is found laths with roof trusses and support beams. The roof appears original and is showing signs of age with visible gaps in places where tiles are displaced or damaged. Water is entering the building in some locations resulting in damp walls. The building is currently used as a fuel and tool store.

Building C, is a stone built barn on a East West alignment with a pan tiled roof. This roof has at sometime been removed and replaced below the tiles is a waterproof membrane with wooden support beams below. The walls of the building are of cut sandstone block to the outside with random sandstone to the internal walls with a rubble infill. The wall tops have been sealed with cement. There is a doorway and window to the western gable the windows originally to the southern wall have been filled with stone blocks. The eastern gable wall has been removed; attached to this gable is a lean to structure constructed of a dwarf wall to the south with timber framework and corrugated sheet steel. The building is currently used as a workshop

and wood store. To the upper section on the internal west gable is a dove cote with a hinged doorway. Holes through the outer wall provide access for birds. To the North East of the original building is a small extension of stone with a pan tiled roof there is a small doorway into this area which is used as a farmyard store.

Limitations to this scoping exercise

UK bats are insectivorous; therefore during the winter when few insects are available bats hibernate. During September and October prior to hibernation the bats gain weight, then as mean temperatures fall they locate roosts appropriate for over wintering. Bats are capable of reducing body temperature and slowing their metabolism in order to conserve there food reserves until the following March April. Bats can also enter a state of torpor as a result of inclement weather conditions preventing foraging. Disturbance of bats during the hibernation period increases the amount of energy used with a subsequent reduction in food availability for over wintering. The figure below shows the typical bat year.

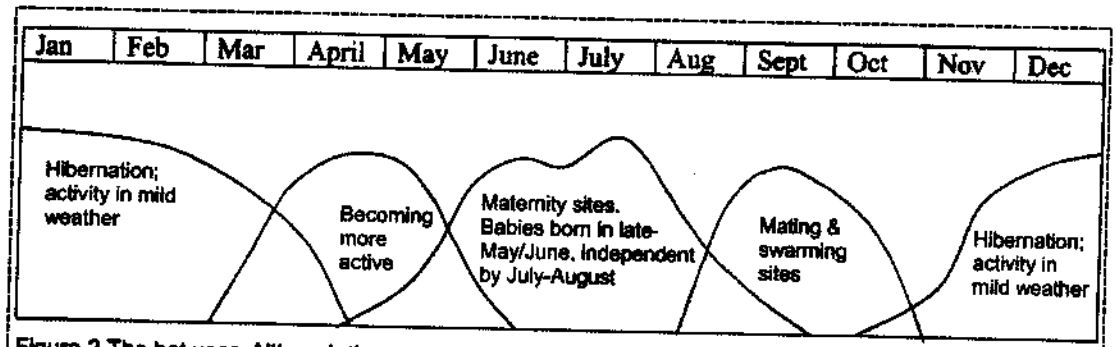


Figure 2 The bat year. Although there are species-specific differences, the bat year can be divided into the two major phases of breeding and hibernation, with other activities interspersed.

(Bat Mitigation Guidelines A. J. Mitchell-Jones 2004)

Although the site was visited in July this initial survey was undertaken during daylight when bats tend to be inactive. Therefore readers of this report should take this into consideration. During the visit observations were made for evidence of bats having been present both externally and internally to the building. Other factors were also taken into account when compiling this report e.g. the building condition, dampness of walls, missing roof tiles, presence or absence of cob webs, concentrations or occasional bat droppings together with locations found, moth and butterfly wing concentrations especially on gable walls etc.

As bats are small nocturnal species it can be very hard to demonstrate that they are absent from a site, particularly given a single visit especially during daylight hours. As a result the assessment and development approaches are based on an informed risk assessment, and where appropriate the worse-case scenario to help ensure that bats are not recklessly harmed by the proposals.

In their guidelines for bat surveys Natural England indicate the types of building and trees that are more or less likely to support bat roosts. Sections relevant to this site are highlighted:

- *Presence of **built structures** which appear to have a high probability of use by bats:-*
  Properties older than 1939, with multiple roofs within 200m of woodland or water.
  Properties older than 1914 within 200m of woodland or water.

Listed buildings or monuments.
Traditional ranges of farm buildings.

The risk of bat roosts being present will be higher where structures have:

- ***Pre-20th Century construction.***
- ***A lowland rural setting.***
- ***Woodland, mature trees, species-rich grassland and/or water nearby.***
- ***Large dimension roof timbers with cracks, joints and holes.***
- ***Numerous crevices in stonework and structures.***
- ***Uneven roof covering with gaps, though not too draughty.***
- ***Hanging tiles or roof cladding, especially on south-facing walls.***
- ***Roof warmed by the sun.***
- ***Disused or little used; largely undisturbed.***

The risk of bat roosts being present will be lower where structures have:

- ***Urban setting with little green space.***
- ***Heavy disturbance.***
- ***Small, cluttered roof void (particularly for brown long-eared).***
- ***Modern construction with few gaps or crevices that bats can fly or crawl through (though pipistrelles may still be present).***
- ***Prefabricated of steel or sheet materials***
- ***Active industrial premises***

Please note that the above 'trigger list' provides generic screening criteria only (BMG Section 5.2) and there are exceptions to consider. For example, pipistrelle breeding roost sites are often found in modern housing estates and therefore the absence of bats from such locations should not always be assumed.

- *Presence of **trees** with a high probability of use by bats. These include ancient woodland or parkland, large trees with complex growth form and trees with cavities, visible damage and loose bark (Coniferous plantation and young trees of simple form are less likely to support roosts). Except in the simplest of cases, it can be extremely difficult to be certain of the presence or absence of bat roosts in trees meeting the above criteria.*
- *Recent or historical **records of bats** on the site, or bat roosts in the general area.*
- *Presence of **underground structures** such as abandoned mines, tunnels, kilns, cellars or fortifications which provide appropriate hibernation conditions.*
- *Where a development has a **significant habitat impact** on woods, hedgerows with field trees, parkland, diverse grassland and wetland habitats potential impacts on tree roosts, foraging habitats and flight-lines should be considered.*

2. METHODOLOGY

Initial survey of the site involved following the external perimeter of the buildings dealing with individual features as they occurred. An examination of the walls, crevasses, holes, surfaces and ground externally and internally of the building was made looking for debris or signs consistent with occupation/use by bats. All holes crevasses considered by the surveyor likely to be used as a bat roost were examined with the aid of an endoscope to ascertain presence or absence of bats.

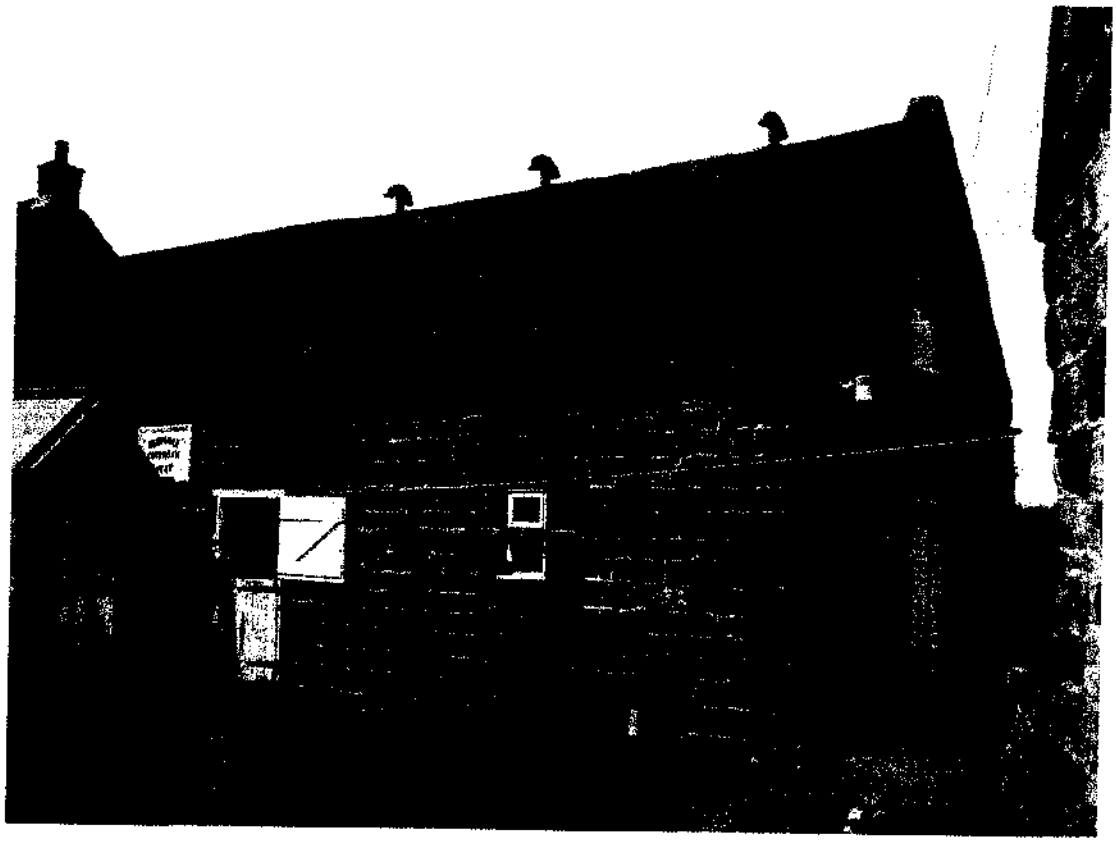
This initial detailed scoping exercise was undertaken using Visual Encounter Techniques (VES).

All works was undertaken by fully experienced and licensed bat worker.

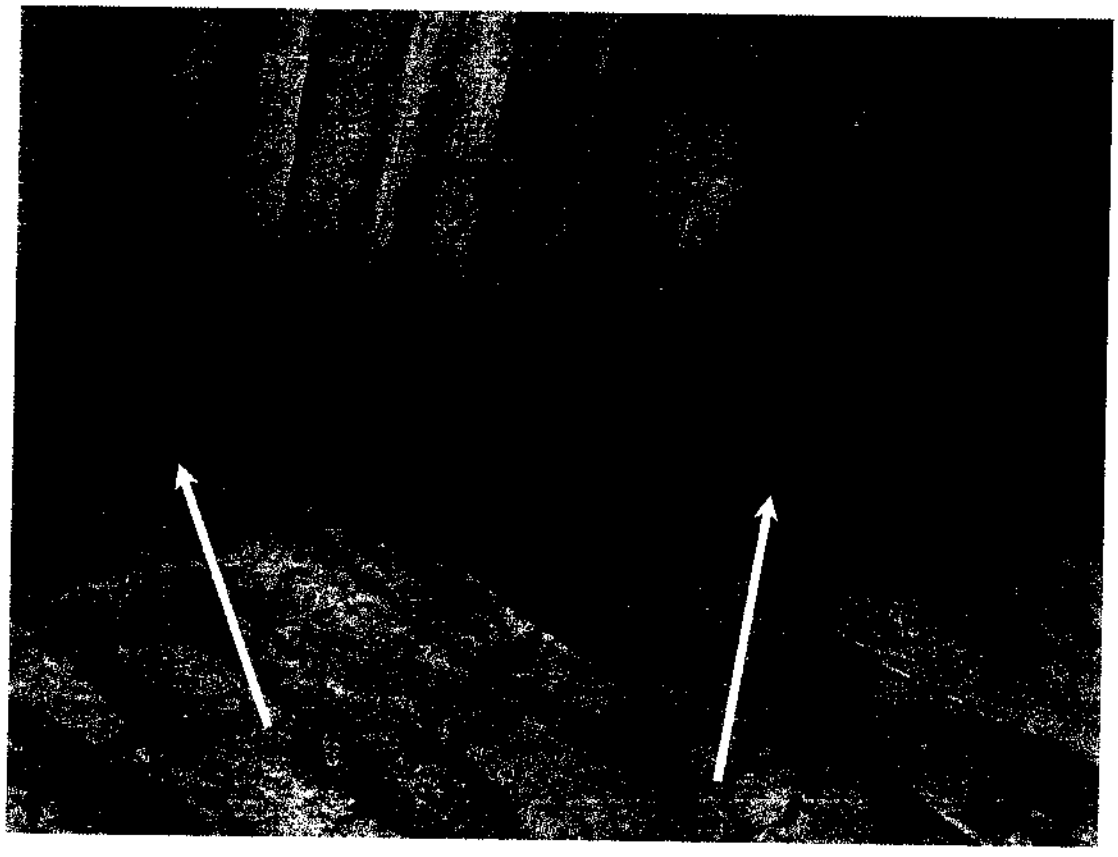
3. RESULTS

Building B

No evidence of bats was observed either externally or internally to this building. We understand that the area has suffered high levels of rainfall recently and as such droppings to external walls may have been washed away. Internally there are numerous suitable locations for bats to roost. We would still expect to find some evidence of bats being present should they be occupying this space. Gaps below pan tiles and along ridge lines and also at the junction of two buildings all provide roosting spaces for bats. The internal walls and roof showed a considerable build up of cobwebs, where cobwebs of this quantity are found bats tend to be absent.



South face of building B and eastern gable.



Possible roosting areas arrows showing gaps

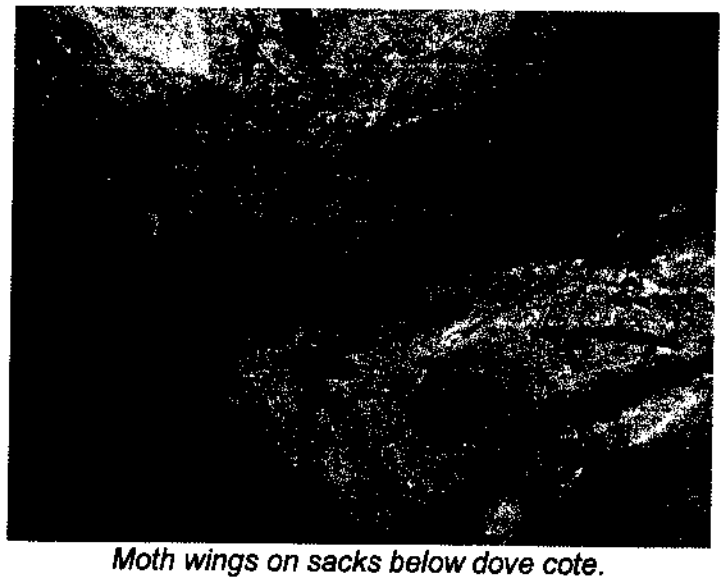
Building C
An external check of the walls failed to show evidence of bats being present. At the western end of the roof over the south wall there are several gaps below the pan tiles examination of these gaps showed a Pipistrelle bat roosting there.

Photo of single Pipistrelle bat roosting

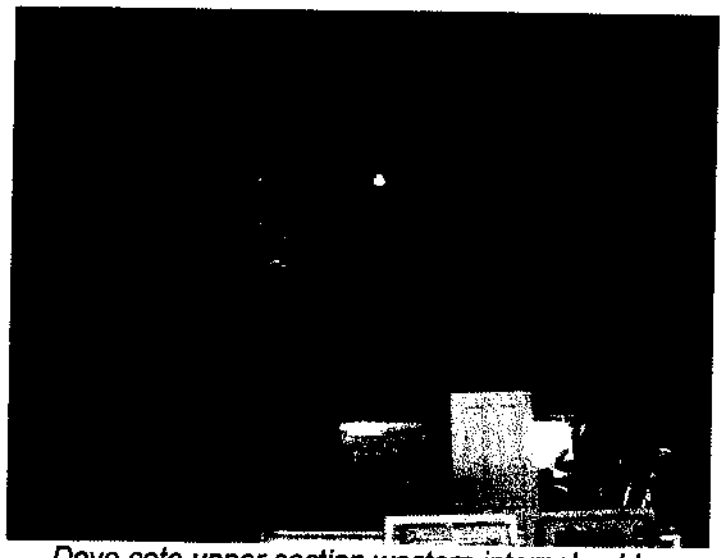
This was the only bat observed using these roosting spaces. Internal inspection showed fresh bat droppings along the building centre line, these were found upon various objects lying on the floor. Due to the dirt and debris on the floor it is difficult to estimate the quantity of droppings there. To the western end of the building

numerous moth wings were found on the floor these show evidence of feeding activity by Brown Long Eared Bats (*Plecotus auritus*) and or Natterer's (*Myotis nattereri)* bats. these were found directly below the eastern edge of the dove cote.

Bat dropping arrowed



Moth wings on sacks below dove cote.



Dove cote upper section western internal gable.

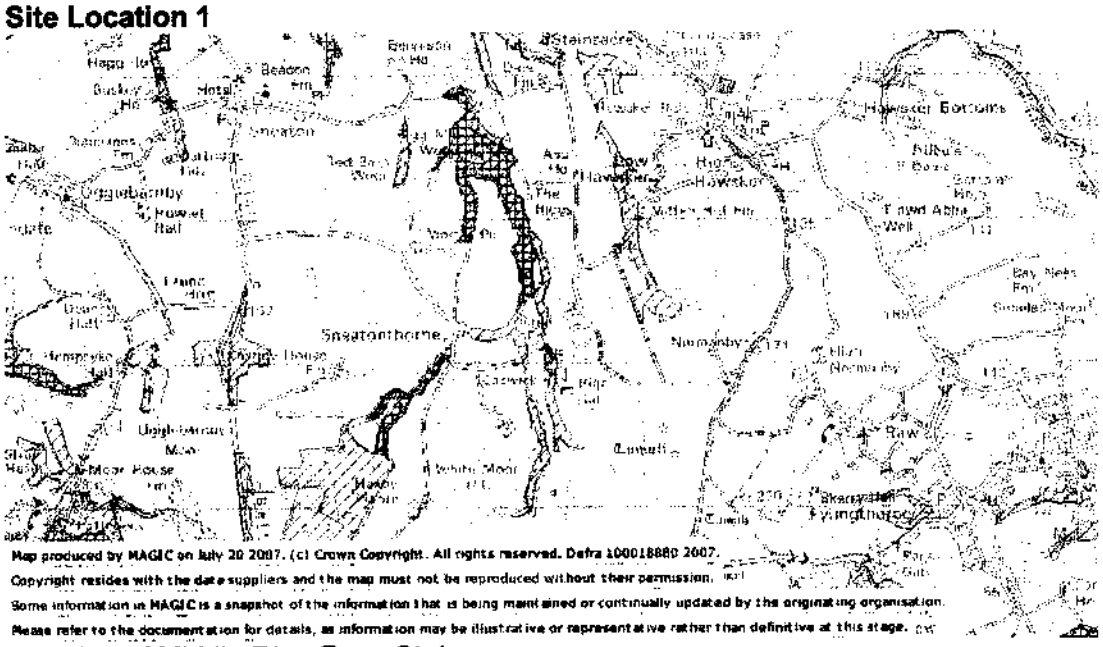
4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From information received we understand that the existing buildings are to be converted into holiday accommodation. We believe that the proposed plans for the conversion of the building C will have an adverse impact upon the bat or bats that utilise this roof void as a roost. As the estimated number using this void is very low 1-10 bats of at least two distinct species, the overall effect upon the local population would be negligible. Bats are mobile creatures and tend to have several different roost spaces within the local area, there are several houses and stone farm buildings situated a short distance to the property. Should this roost site be lost then other sites will be utilised.

As bats are currently using building C and the proposed development will result in the loss of a bat roost a Department of the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) licence will be required prior to works commencing.

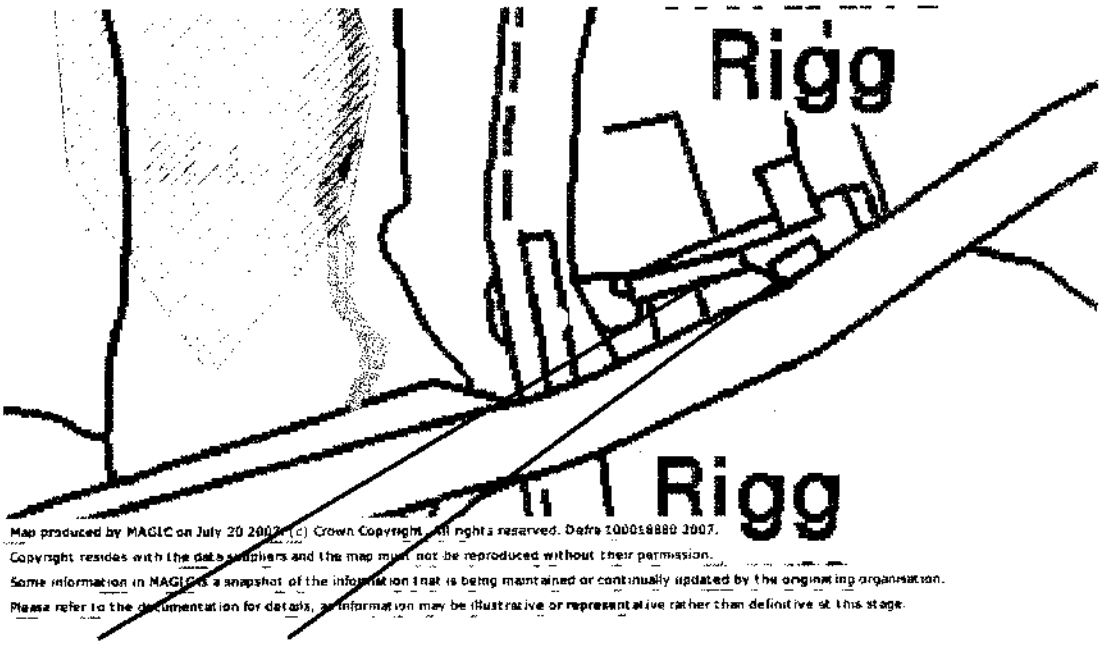
5 MAPS AND IMAGES

Site Location 1



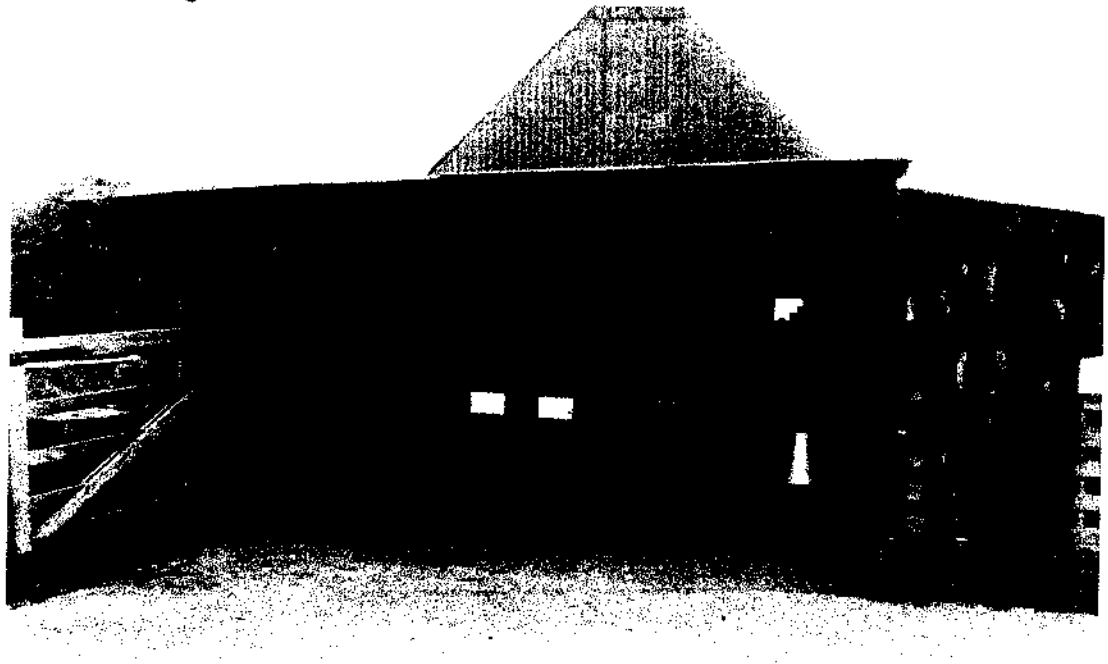
Location of Middle Rigg Farm Stainsacre

Site location 2

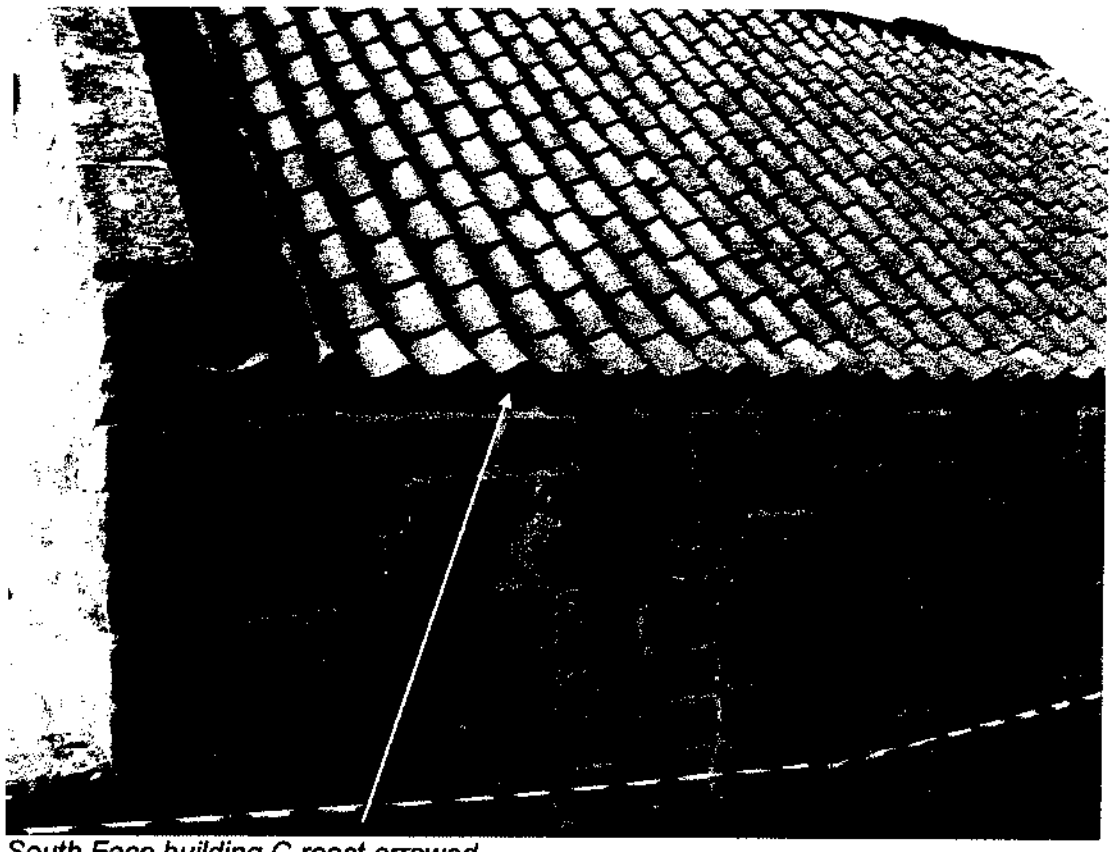


Building B Building C

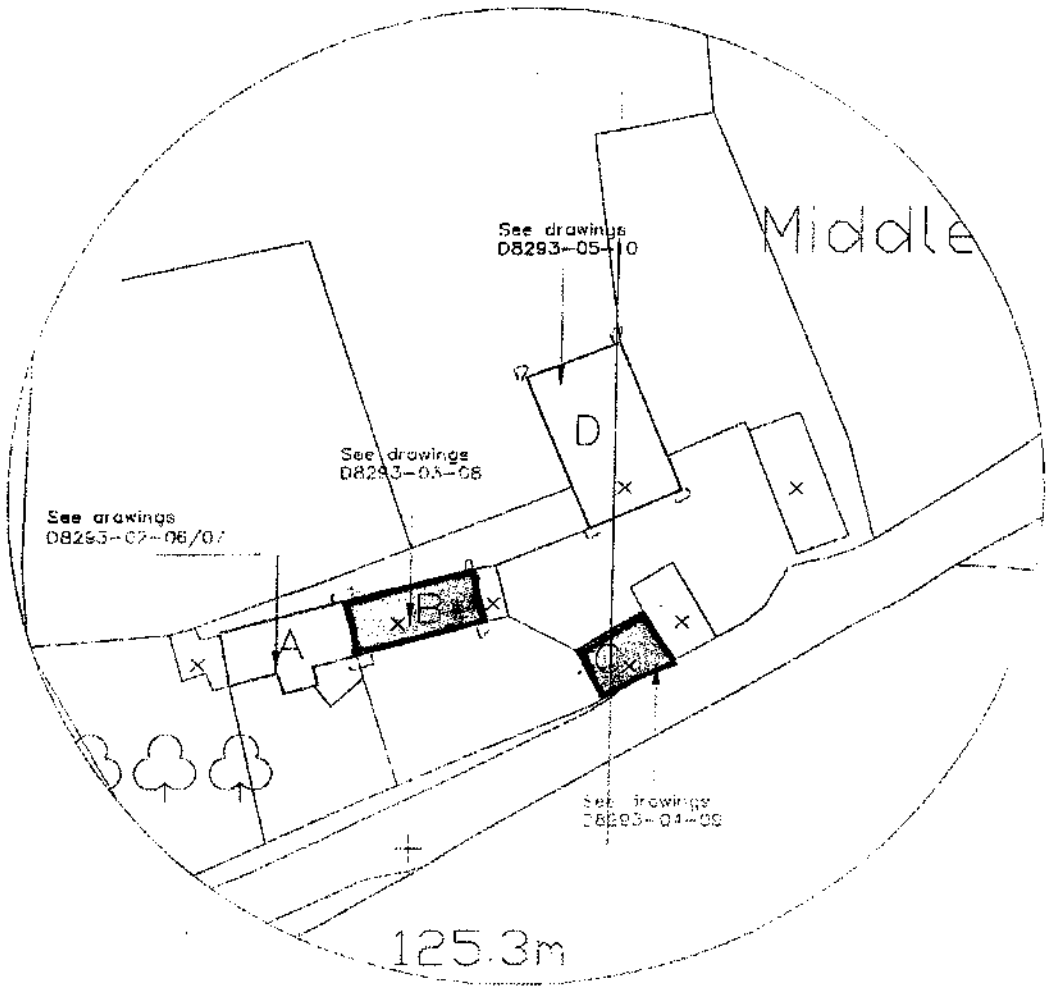
Inside building B



East face building C



South Face building C roost arrowed



Site Plan 1:500

BAT SURVEY

CLIENT: MR K. HOWARD			DRAWING TITLE: EXISTING SITE PLAN
PROJECT: MIDDLE RIGG FARM STAINSACRE			
AS	DRN: CSB	DATE: 03/08/06	DRAWING NR: D8293-01
AMENDMENT	CHKD APVD	SCALE: 1:1250/1:500 ISSUE: PRELIM	REV:

Scanned image of site