



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL (DBW) AT 7 PINE DRIVE FINCHAMPSTEAD



**Prepared for:
Mr R Curry
7 Pine Drive
Finchampstead
RG40 3LD**

6 May 2025

Ref: SPH/NP/PEA-25/22.04



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This report is valid for 12 months from the site inspection. The lifespan of this report may be subject to change if the site conditions change due to unspecified works that affect the site.



Executive Summary

Urban Tree Experts was commissioned by Mr R Curry to conduct a preliminary ecological appraisal (daytime bat walkover [DBW]) of 7 Pine Drive, Finchampstead, RG40 3LD. This is to support a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council.

The site visit was carried out on Tuesday 22 April 2025 at 2pm, during daylight hours. An internal and external inspection of the property took place to look for signs of bats.

The preliminary ecological appraisal consists of a desktop study prior to the survey to review existing information about the site and its surroundings and to inform the design of subsequent bat surveys, if required. The desk top study was conducted based upon a minimum 2km search radius and it revealed one statutory designated site is located within, and two current European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) for bats have been granted within 2km of the proposed development site. The immediate surrounding environment does not provide suitable habitat for roosting, commuting or foraging bats, due to the dense urban design.

The DBW comprised a detailed search of the interior and exterior of the building for bats, signs of bats and features suitable for use by roosting bats. This includes droppings, scratch marks, rubbing and staining at exit holes, live or dead bats and other features such as missing tiles, this list is not exhaustive.

The building's suitability to support roosting bats was assessed and no bats or evidence of bats were observed, and no potential roost features identified on the sections of the property to be affected by the proposed works during the preliminary inspection. When combined with the data from the desktop study this results in the sections of the property to be affected by the proposed works being characterised as having negligible potential¹ to support roosting bats.

In line with best practice guidelines², no further survey effort is required.

Should the development plans change, and the dormer windows on the front or rear elevation of the property and/or the hanging tiles on the front elevation of the property be affected, then further survey effort will be required.

¹ Table 4.1 Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats. Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition.

² Collins, J. (ed) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition).



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1. Introduction

1.1 Instruction

Urban Tree Experts was instructed by Mr R Curry to conduct a DBW of 7 Pine Drive, Finchampstead, RG40 3LD to support a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The DBW is designed to:

- Identify the presence/likely absence of bats within the building.
- Provide information on previous bat ecological surveys/reports.
- Provide information on the status of bats using the building currently or previously).
- To add confidence where no bats are found, or to categorise the nature of a roost where evidence of bats are found.
- To establish whether further surveys, mitigation or an EPSL is required.

The preliminary ecological appraisal (bats) and report writing were carried out in accordance with Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines 4th edition.

1.3 Proposed Works

The survey was commissioned in connection with a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council that will seek to construct a single storey rear extension and front garage extension, see plans at Appendix 1.

1.4 Surveyor Background and Experience

The preliminary ecological appraisal for bats was completed by Nick Powell and the report was written by Simon Holmes MSc. CEnv.

Nick holds a Class 2 Bat License (CLS-11742) and has been surveying bats for 3 years with various ecological consultancies and has received training in surveying techniques, bat detector use, bat biology, identification, acoustic monitoring, echolocation analysis and netting.

Simon holds Class 3 (CL19) and 4 (CL20) Bat Licenses (Nos. 17637 and 17638) and a Science and Education license (SCI64844). He has 34 years' experience of carrying out bat surveys and bat conservation work.

2. Legislation and Planning Policy

2.1 Legislative Background

All species of British bat are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. Under this legislation it is an offence to kill or injure a bat or interfere with any roosting or resting site. A bat roost is interpreted as "*any structure or place used for shelter or protection*" whether or not bats are present at the time. A summary of the main legislation and planning considerations are included at Appendix 2.



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Seven species of bat are also Species of Principal Importance for nature conservation in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. This places a duty on all government departments to have regard for the conservation of these species and on the Secretary of State to further, or promote others to further, the conservation of these species.

3. Site Location and Description

3.1 Site Location

The building is located at Grid Reference SU80116541, see Figure 1 below. An overview of the immediate area is shown on Figure 2, courtesy of Bing Maps.

Figure 1. 7 Pine Drive, Finchampstead, highlighted.

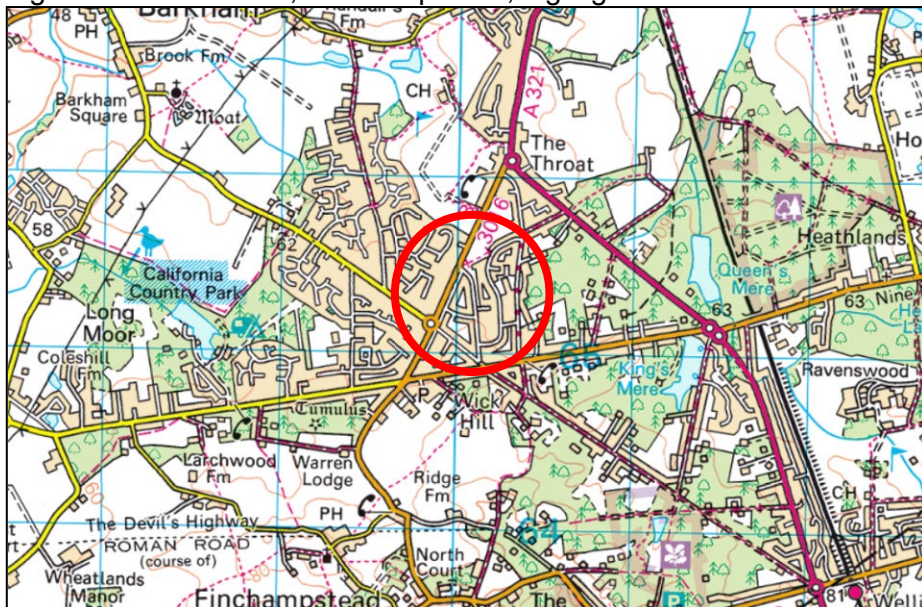
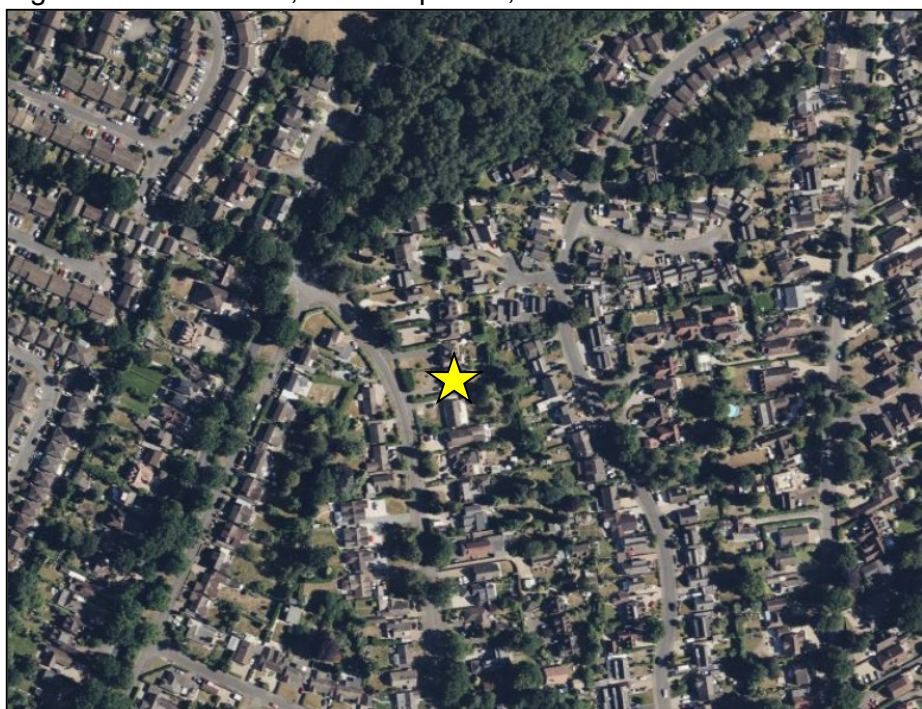


Figure 2. 7 Pine Drive, Finchampstead, overview of the immediate area.





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3.2 Site Description

The application site comprises a detached, brick-built 2 storey property with integral garage. The remainder of the site comprises a large front garden with tarmacked driveway/parking area, lawn and mature hedgerows and a rear garden which is mainly laid to lawn, with patio area and flowerbed/shrubs throughout, see Figure 3 below. The site itself offers good foraging and commuting habitat for bats and, via the garden network, there is some ecological connectivity to bat foraging and commuting habitat in the wider landscape.

Figure 3. Rear garden. 7 Pine Drive, Finchampstead. 22.04.25



4. Survey Methodology

4.1 Pre-Survey Data Search

The client has advised that, to their knowledge, no previous bat surveys have been undertaken on this site. Google Earth and MAGIC maps (magic.defra.gov.uk) websites were used prior to the survey to determine the suitability of the surrounding habitat to support roosting bats and to identify any statutory designated sites or EPSLs within 2km of the site. Due to the suburban area, scale of the proposed development, and the very local impact that may occur, no data was sought from the local records centre at this time.

The property is situated in a residential area of Finchampstead and is surrounded by properties and gardens of differing sizes and styles. In all directions lie housing developments and roads, which do not provide good habitat to support bats. A large area of woodland lies to the north and east of the site, which are likely to provide good habitat to support bats and, via the garden network there is limited ecological connectivity from the site to these areas. Further afield to the north lies golf courses, to the west California Country Park and to the south areas of farmland and woodland, all of which are known to provide good habitat to support roosting, commuting and foraging bats, although housing developments and roads separate these areas from the site.



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Longmoor Bog Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which is also a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) lies within 2km of the proposed development site although there is no ecological connectivity from the site to this designated site. A search of the Magic interactive website revealed two current EPSLs for bats have been granted within 2km of the site, the details of which are provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Current EPSLs for bats within 2km of the site

EPSL reference	Licence end date	Species on licence
2020-45340-EPS-MIT	09/2025	Brown long-eared
2019-39174-EPS-MIT	03/2029	Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared and daubentons

4.2 Daylight Survey

The DBW of 7 Pine Drive, Finchampstead, RG40 3LD was carried out by Nick Powell on Tuesday 22 April 2025 at 2pm. The weather conditions for the survey were dry and bright with a temperature of 12 degrees. Equipment used included a high-powered torch, a digital camera on a telescopic pole, endoscope and a ladder.

During the DBW, an external and internal inspection of the property carried out to identify any signs of occupation by bats and features that could offer potential roosting sites following standard survey guidelines. Features investigated included:

- Construction of the building – soffits, loft space, tiles/slates, lead flashings etc.
- Building condition – structure of roof and walls.
- Internal conditions – microclimate stability, draughts etc.
- Access points – potential entry and exit points for bats.
- Roosting points – cracks and crevices, between underlay and roofing tiles/slates.

Field signs that would indicate the presence of bats were searched for. These included:

- Bat droppings on the floor and walls of the building.
- Feeding remains (particularly butterfly and moth wings).
- Evidence of urine and/or oily staining around possible roost entrances.
- Presence of areas cleared of cobwebs.
- Where a breathable roofing membrane has been fitted staining on the membrane may suggest use by bats.
- Odour can sometimes suggest the present of bats.
- Squeaking and chattering can reveal bats roosting between the tiles and roofing underlay.

Buildings or structures that were not to be affected by the current proposals or with no bat roosting potential were not inspected.

4.3 Constraints

Full access to the site during the visit was made possible by the client. The loft space was not boarded and deeply insulated making a thorough inspection impossible however, given the good condition of the building externally, with no gaps in the roof in which bats could enter the loft, this was not thought to be a significant constraint.



5. Survey Findings

5.1 External Inspection

The external features of the property were examined for signs described in section 4.2. Windowsills, exposed features around the windows, fascias and walls were inspected for any evidence of bat droppings or staining.

The property is a detached, brick-built building that is in a good condition externally. The part pitched, part hipped roof is covered in interlocking tiles, none of which are missing or broken, see Figure 4 below. The ridge and hip tiles are all tightly sealed with tile clips and had no gaps in which crevice dwelling bats could utilise for roosting, see Figure 5 on page 9. The verges are all well cemented with no gaps which roosting bats could exploit (see Figure 6 on page 9) and all lead flashing on the building is flush. The soffits and fascias are all tightly fitted to the walls and had no cracks or splits which bats could use to roost (see Figure 7 on page 10), as is the tightly fitted up-and-over garage door, see Figure 8 on page 10. There are dormer windows on the front and rear elevations of the property, see Figure 9 on page 11. The roofs of the dormers are covered in tiles, all of which are tightly fitted with no gaps in which roosting bats could exploit and the verges are sealed, see Figure 10 on page 11. The sides of the dormer windows are covered in hanging tiles and the fronts in wooden cladding, some of the wooden cladding on all the dormers is warped and lifted resulting in gaps which could be used by roosting bats, see Figure 11 on page 12. The front pitched elevation is covered in hanging tiles, the majority of which are tightly fitted with no gaps however, on the corner some tiles have moved leaving gaps that could be exploited by bats, see Figure 12 on page 12.

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the external inspection of the property and externally there were no visible roosting opportunities for bats on the areas of the building to be affected by the proposed works, or access into the building for roosting bats.

Figure 4. Example of roof tiles. 7 Pine Drive, Finchampstead. 22.04.25





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Figure 5. Example of sealed ridge/hip tiles. 7 Pine Drive, Finchampstead. 22.04.25



Figure 6. Example sealed verges. 7 Pine Drive, Finchampstead. 22.04.25





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Figure 7. Example of soffits/fascias. 23b Pine Drive, Finchampstead, 02.07.24



Figure 8. Sealed fascias and up-and-over garage door. 7 Pine Drive, Finchampstead. 22.04.25





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Figure 9. Rear dormer windows. 7 Pine Drive, Finchampstead. 22.04.25



Figure 10. Tiles covering dormer windows. 7 Pine Drive, Finchampstead. 22.04.25





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Figure 11. Hanging tiles and gaps in timber cladding on dormer windows. 7 Pine Drive, Finchampstead. 22.04.25



Figure 12. Moved hanging tiles on corner of front elevation. 7 Pine Drive, Finchampstead. 22.04.25





5.2 Internal Inspection

An internal inspection of the property was undertaken and was examined for any signs of bats (as described in section 4.2).

The loft space was accessed via a loft ladder through a hatch and is in a good condition. The loft space is uncluttered, partially lit, not boarded and insulated, see Figure 13 below. The roof tiles were lined with membrane, none of which we observed was ripped or torn, see Figure 14 below.

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the internal inspection of the property and internally there appeared to be no roosting opportunities or access into the building for bats.

Figure 13. Example of loft space. 7 Pine Drive, Finchampstead. 22.04.25



Figure 14. Example of membrane lining. 7 Pine Drive, Finchampstead. 22.04.25





6. Evaluation

The bat roost potential of the features within the site have been assessed with reference to the following criteria and include seasonal variation where increased or decreased probability may arise. Where features are present, they are **highlighted in bold**.

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

- are of a pre-20th Century construction;
- are in a lowland rural setting;
- **have woodland, mature trees, species-rich grassland and/or water nearby;**
- have large dimension roof timbers with cracks, joints and holes;
- have numerous crevices in stonework and structures;
- have an uneven roof covering with gaps, though not too draughty;
- **have hanging tiles or roof cladding, especially on south-facing walls;**
- **have a roof warmed by the sun;**
- are disused or little used; largely undisturbed;
- provide appropriate hibernation conditions, such as abandoned mines, tunnels, kilns, or fortifications; or
- **Recent and historical records of bat roosts in the general area.**

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

- **are in an urban setting with little green space;**
- are subject to heavy disturbance (constant movement due to draughts and noise, also unstable microclimate);
- **have a small, cluttered roof void (particularly for brown long-eared);**
- **are of a modern construction with few gaps or crevices that bats can fly or crawl through (though pipistrelle bats may still be present);**
- are comprised of prefabricated steel or sheet materials; (some sections);
- are active industrial premises.

Please note that the above list provides generic screening criteria only and there are exceptions to consider.

7. Conclusions

7.1 Interpretation

The combined evidence from the desktop study and the internal and external inspection of the property provides a high level of confidence in support of the opinions set out in this report. There are no visible features externally on the sections of the building to be affected by the proposed works which could be utilised by roosting bats or in which bats could access the buildings to roost, and internally there are no potential roosting opportunities for bats.

Informed by the results of the survey and the factors highlighted in Section 6, it is concluded that there is negligible potential for roosting bats within the sections of the property to be affected by the proposed works. Based on recommendations in the Bat Workers Manual and the Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines, no further survey effort is required.



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Should the development plans change, and the dormer windows on the front or rear elevation of the property and/or the hanging tiles on the front elevation of the property be affected, then further survey effort will be required.

7.2 Contingency Plan

In the unlikely event that bats are found during the proposed works, all work must stop, and advice sought from Urban Tree Experts or another licensed bat ecologist.

If, for whatever reason, there is a time delay of greater than 12 months between this survey and the commencement of work, then the survey should be repeated as the condition of the building may change and bats may start roosting at the site.

8. References

Collins, J (ed.) (2023). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

HM Government (2017) Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations as (amended).

HM Government (1981) The Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended).

HM Government (2006) Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act.

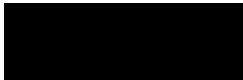
Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004). Bat Workers' Manual (3rd Edition). Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

9. Queries

Any queries regarding this report should be addressed, in the first instance, to Urban Tree Experts:

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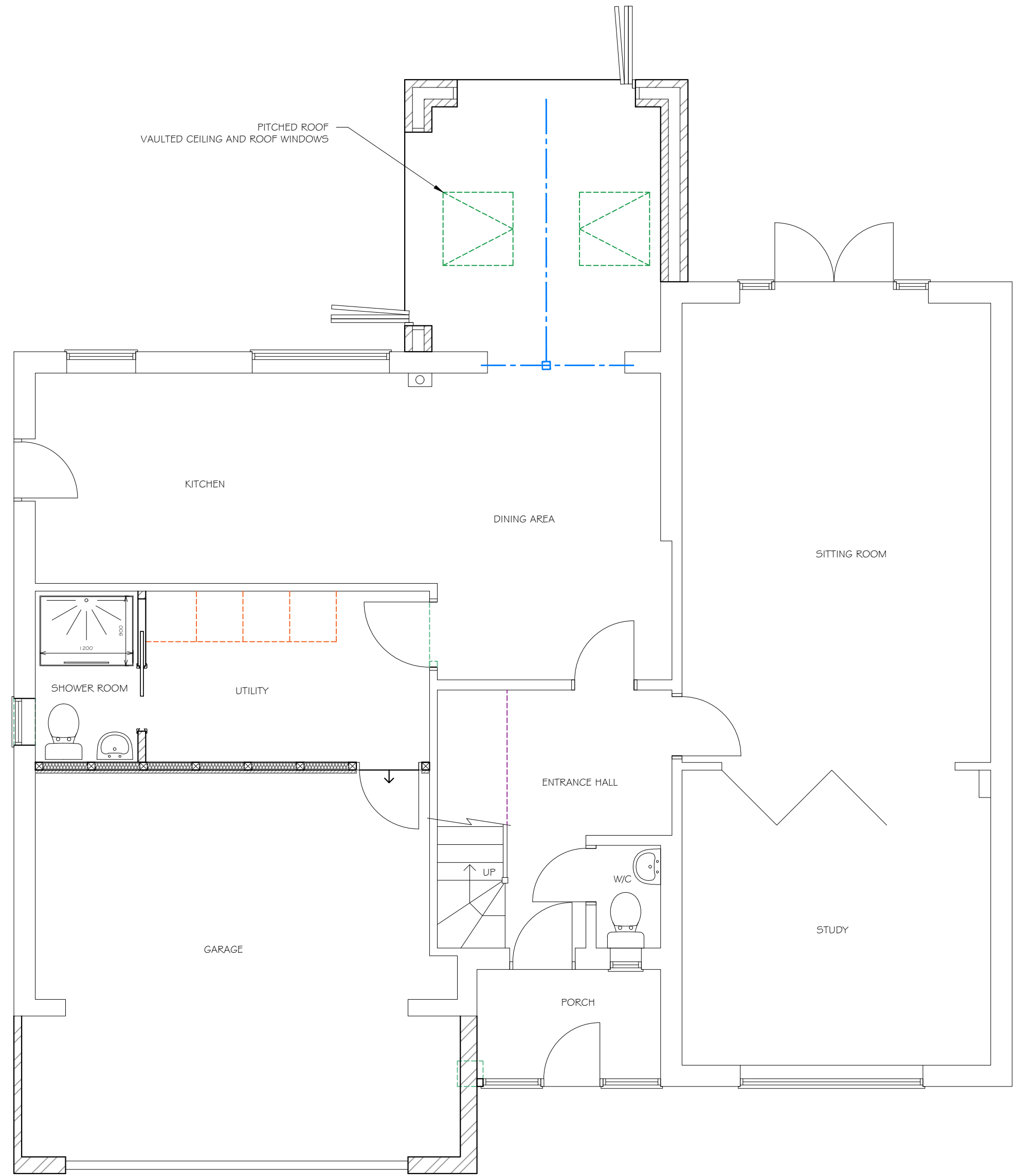

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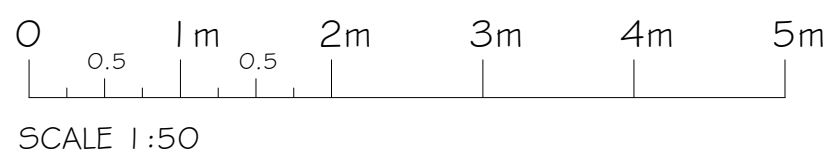
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APPENDIX 1



PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN



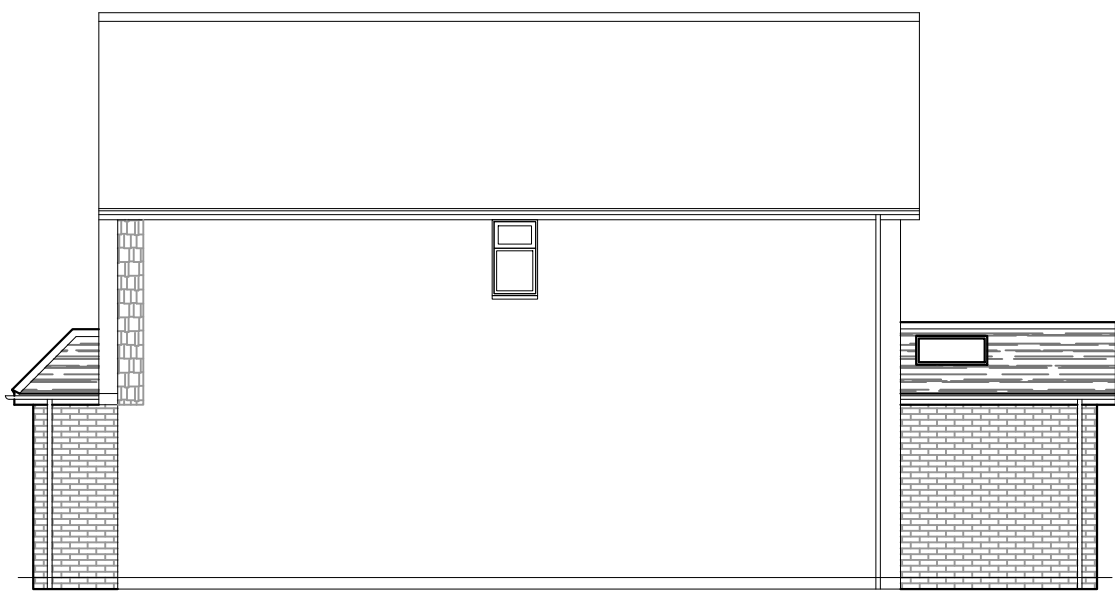
SCALE 1:50



PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION



SCALE 1:100



PROPOSED SIDE ELEVATION



PROPOSED REAR ELEVATION



PROPOSED SIDE ELEVATION

- EXISTING STRUCTURE
- PROPOSED STRUCTURE
- REMOVED STRUCTURE
- POSSIBLE STEEL BEAMS
- POSSIBLE KITCHEN PLAN

PROJECT
PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR REAR & FRONT
EXTENSION + PART GARAGE CONVERSION AT:
7 PINE DRIVE
FINCHAMPSTEAD
RG40 3LD

TITLE
PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN, ELEVATIONS
& ROOF PLAN

 **Cranford Design Ltd**
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DRAWING NUMBER

D3073-OPTION

A1 PAPER SIZE

These plans must not be acted upon
until the appropriate planning and
building regulation approvals have
been granted. Should the works be
undertaken prior to the above
approvals being in place it is done
so entirely at the clients own risk.



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APPENDIX 2

In summary, the legislation combined makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a structure or place used for shelter by a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats; in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair the ability of bats to survive, breed or reproduce or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migrating bats, to hibernate or migrate.
- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or take any bat.

Planning Considerations:

Developments that compromise the protection afforded to bats or roosts under the provisions of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 will require a European Protected Species (EPS) licence from Natural England (NE).

NE, the government's statutory conservation advisory organisation, is responsible for issuing EPS licences that would permit activities that would otherwise lead to an infringement of the Habitat Regulations.

Three tests must be satisfied before this licence (to permit otherwise prohibited acts) can be issued:

- Reg 44(2)(e) – the derogation is “in the interests of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment”.
- Reg 44(3)(a) – there is “no satisfactory alternative” to the derogation.
- Reg 44(3)(b) – the derogation is “not detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range”.

Tests (a) and (e) can be met with the issue of planning permission for the proposed works. Test (b) is determined by NE's ecology department that requires the development of a suitable mitigation strategy that would ensure that any bats present on site, are retained at the same population level or better.