



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL (DBW) AT BLACKMOOR BASINGSTOKE ROAD, THREE MILE CROSS



**Prepared for:
Mr S Chandrasekaran
Blackmoor
Basingstoke Road
Three Mile Cross
RG7 1AS**

22 September 2025

Ref: SPH/NP/PEA-25/02.09



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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 S Chandrasekaran to conduct a preliminary ecological appraisal (daytime bat walkover [DBW]) of Blackmoor, Basingstoke Road, Three Mile Cross, Reading, RG7 1AS. This is to support a current planning application to Wokingham Borough Council for a two-storey wraparound extension with flat roof as shown on drawings at Appendix 1.

The site visit was carried out on Tuesday 2 September 2025 at 11.45am, 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 desktop search was conducted based upon a minimum 2km search radius and it revealed no statutory designated sites are located within, and two current European Protected Species Licenses (EPSLs) for bats have been granted within 2km of the proposed development site. The surrounding habitat, with tree and hedge lined agricultural fields and copses provide rich and diverse habitats suitable for a wide range of bat species and there is ecological connectivity to these areas from the site.

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 potential roost features identified during the preliminary inspection. The building is in a fair condition internally and externally, however there is missing mortar from the majority of the ridge and hip tiles and front verge and a missing roof tile on the southern elevation, these features may provide potential roosting opportunities or access into the building for bats.

As the current plan does not affect the potential bat roosting features there will be no requirement for further survey effort. However, should the client or their agents seek a retrospective application to alter the design or repair the gaps that may provide potential roosting opportunities this may potentially disturb, damage or destroy the potential roosting features and at least one bat activity survey would 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 S Chandrasekaran to conduct a DBW of Blackmoor, Basingstoke Road, three Mile Cross, Reading, RG7 1AS. To support a current 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 current planning application to Wokingham Borough Council (number 251846), 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 Bat (CL20) 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.

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.



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3. Site Location and Description

3.1 Site Location

The building is located at Grid Reference SU71506754, see Figure 1 below. An overview of the immediate area is shown on Figure 2, courtesy of Bing Maps.

Figure 1. Blackmoor, Three Mile Cross, highlighted.

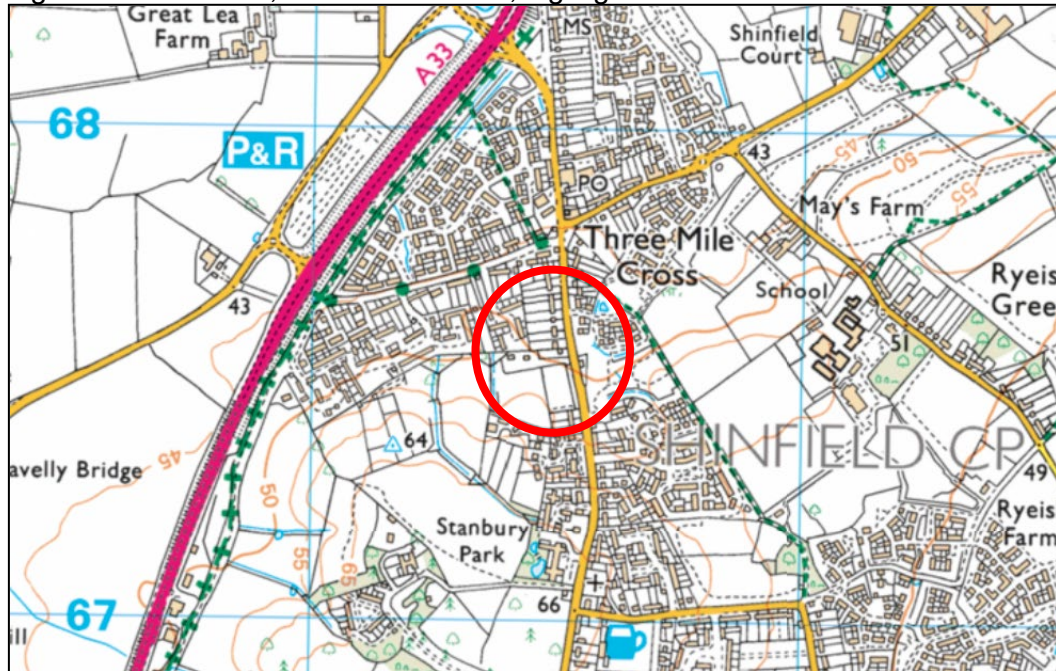
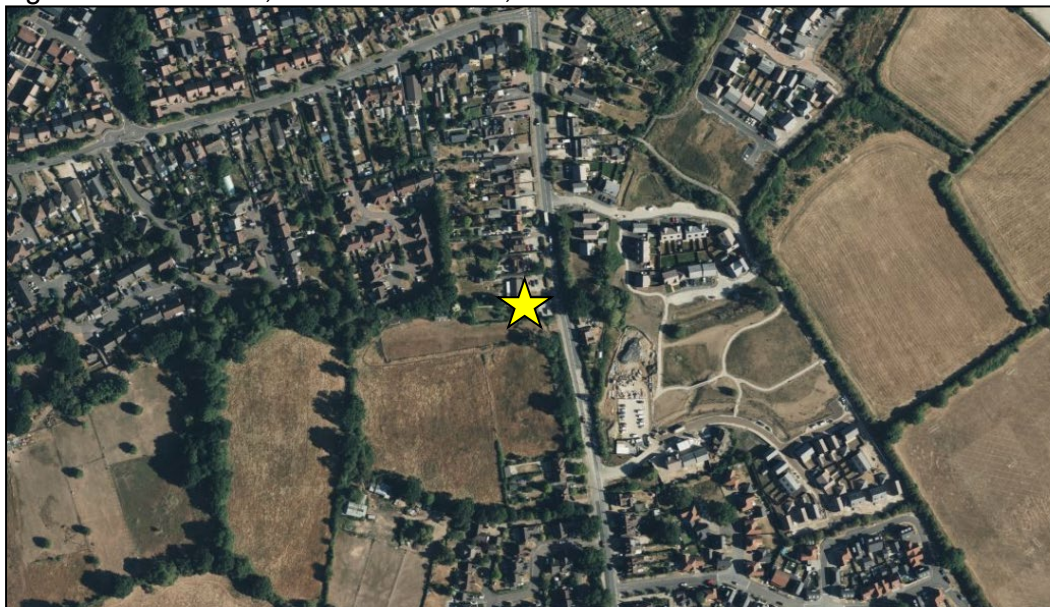


Figure 2. Blackmoor, Three Mile Cross, overview of the immediate area.





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3.2 Site Description

The application site comprises detached brick-built two storey property. The remainder of the site comprises a front garden and parking/driveway and shrubs, and a large rear garden that is mainly laid to lawn with patio area and mature trees and hedgerows, see Figure 3 below. The site itself offers good foraging and commuting habitat for bats and there is direct ecological connectivity to bat foraging and commuting habitat in the wider landscape.

Figure 3. Rear garden. Blackmoor, Three Mile Cross. 02.09.25



4. Survey Methodology

4.1 Pre-Survey Data Search

The client has advised that, to their knowledge, no previous bat surveys have been undertaken at 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 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 site is situated in a semi-rural area, on the southern edge of the village of Three Mile Cross, with properties and gardens of varying sizes and styles to the north, east and west. To the south are tree and hedge-lined agricultural fields and improved grassland which connect down to Stanbury Park further south. All of these areas are likely to provide good habitat for roosting, commuting and foraging bats and are connected to the site via ecological corridors. Further afield lies the River Loddon and areas of woodland, parkland and farmland, which provide good habitat for bats, some of which are connected to the site via tree and hedge rows.



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No statutory designated sites lie within 2km of the proposed development 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
2016-25203-EPS-MIT	09/2026	Common pipistrelle and brown long-eared
2018-36705-EPS-MIT-1	10/2028	Common pipistrelle and brown long-eared

4.2 Daylight Survey

The DBW of Blackmoor, Basingstoke Road, Three Mile Cross, RG7 1AS was carried out by Nick Powell on Tuesday 2 September 2025 at 11.45am. The weather conditions for the survey were overcast with a temperature of 16.5 degrees. Equipment used included a high-powered torch, a digital camera on a telescopic pole, endoscope and a ladder.

During the DBW, an internal and external inspection of the property was 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. There was no access to the void above the side 'lean-to' but given the good condition of the roof tiles on this section of the building this was not considered a significant constraint to the survey.



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, two-storey brick-built building, which is in a good to fair condition externally. The hipped roof of the property and front bay window are covered in tiles (see Figure 4 below), the majority of which are well fitted however, on the southern elevation a tile is missing, see Figure 5 on page 9. There is missing mortar from the majority of the ridge and hip tiles (see Figure 6 on page 9), and there is missing mortar from the verge over the bay window, see Figure 7 on page 10. The lead flashing around the chimney stacks is flush and offers no roosting potential (see Figure 8 on page 10), and the soffits and fascias are tightly fitted to the walls and have no visible gaps in which bats could use for roosting, see Figure 9 on page 11.

On the northern elevation is a 'lean-to' style building, the roof of which is also covered in tiles, all of which are well fitted with no gaps and are firmly attached to the main dwelling. The verges are sealed and the fascias firmly attached with no gaps with no gaps that could be exploited by crevice dwelling bat species, see Figure 10 on page 11.

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the external inspection of the property although there were features that could provide potential roosting opportunities or access into the building for roosting bats.

Figure 4. Example of roof tiles. Blackmoor, Three Mile Cross. 02.09.25





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Figure 5. Missing roof tile and missing mortar. Blackmoor, Three Mile Cross. 02.09.25



Figure 6. Examples missing mortar from ridge and hip tiles. Blackmoor, Three Mile Cross. 02.09.25





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Figure 7. Missing mortar from front verge and evidence of rodent damage. Blackmoor, Three Mile Cross. 02.09.25



Figure 8. Example sealed lead flashing. Blackmoor, Three Mile Cross. 02.09.25





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Figure 9. Example sealed soffits/fascias. Blackmoor, Three Mile Cross. 02.09.25



Figure 10. Lean-to building on northern elevation. Blackmoor, Three Mile Cross. 02.09.25





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5.2 Internal Inspection

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

The loft space in the property was accessed through a hatch via a loft ladder and is in a good condition internally. The loft is uncluttered, lit, boarded and the roof tiles lined with insulation, see Figure 11 below. There was no access to the void space in the lean-to building however given the good condition of the roof of this building externally this was not considered a constrain to the survey.

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the internal inspection of the property.

Figure 11. Example of loft space and unlined roof tiles. Blackmoor, Three Mile Cross. 02.09.25





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 is missing mortar from the majority of the ridge and hip tiles and front verge and a missing roof tile on the southern elevation which provide features suitable for bats to roost and may provide access into the building for roosting bats.

The presence or absence of bat cannot be determined without further survey effort and if the roof were to be directly affected by the proposal or the potential roost features (missing mortar be repaired) a minimum of one bat activity survey would be required. As the current plan (Rev 2) does not affect the potential bat roosting features there will be no requirement for further survey effort. However, should the client or their agents seek a retrospective application to alter the design or repair the gaps that may provide potential roosting opportunities this may potentially disturb, damage or destroy the potential roosting features and at least one bat activity survey would be required.



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Informed by the proposed plans (Rev 2), results of the survey and the factors highlighted in Section 6, it is concluded that there are features with potential for roosting bats within the property, but they will not be affected by the proposal. Based on recommendations in the Bat Workers Manual and the Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines, no further survey effort is required.

7.2 Contingency Plan

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

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.

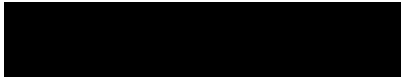
Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004). Bat Workers' Manual (3rd Edition). Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

9. Queries

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

Telephone: 01189 762902
Email: info@batsurveys-uk.com

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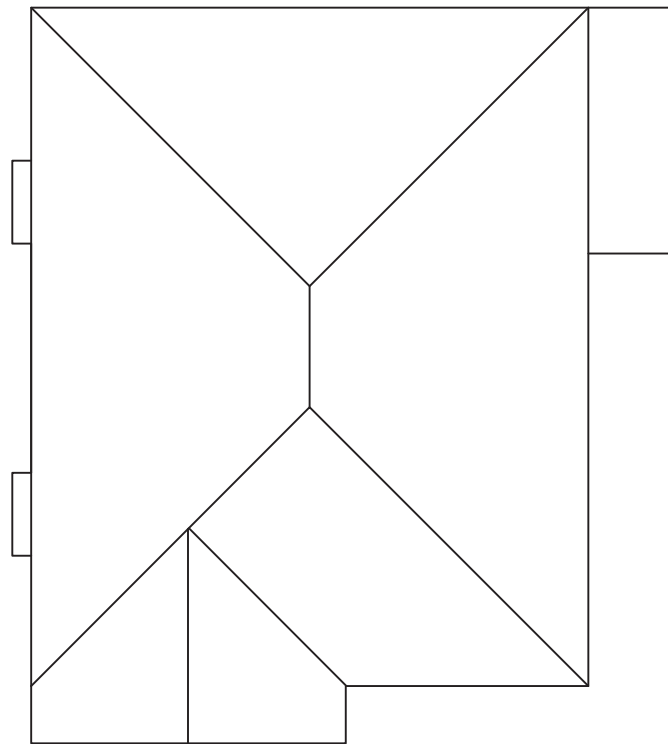

Simon Holmes MSc. CEnv.
Consultant, Urban Tree Experts
Natural England Licence CLS-CLS-17637, CLS-CLS-17638



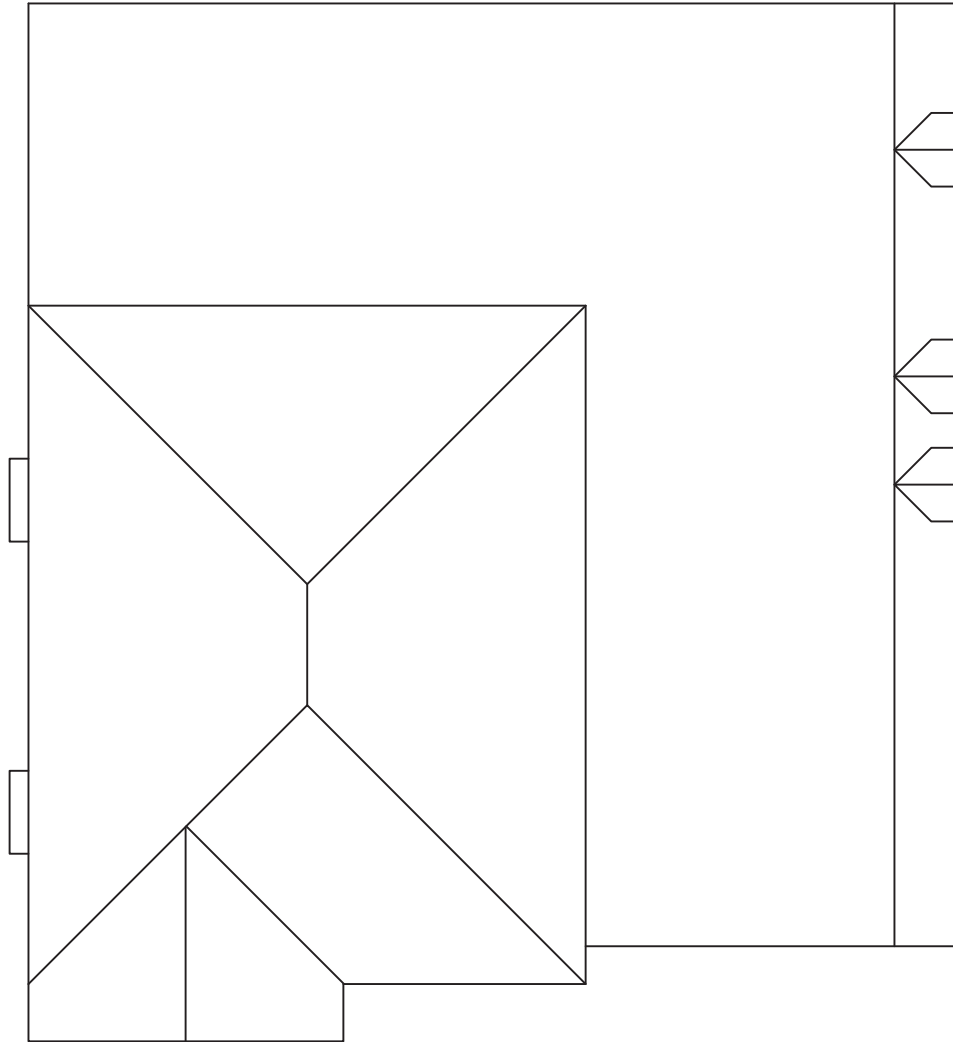
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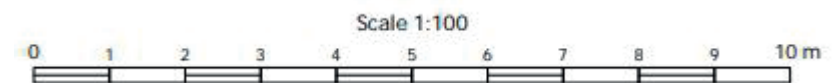
APPENDIX 1



EXISTING ROOF PLAN

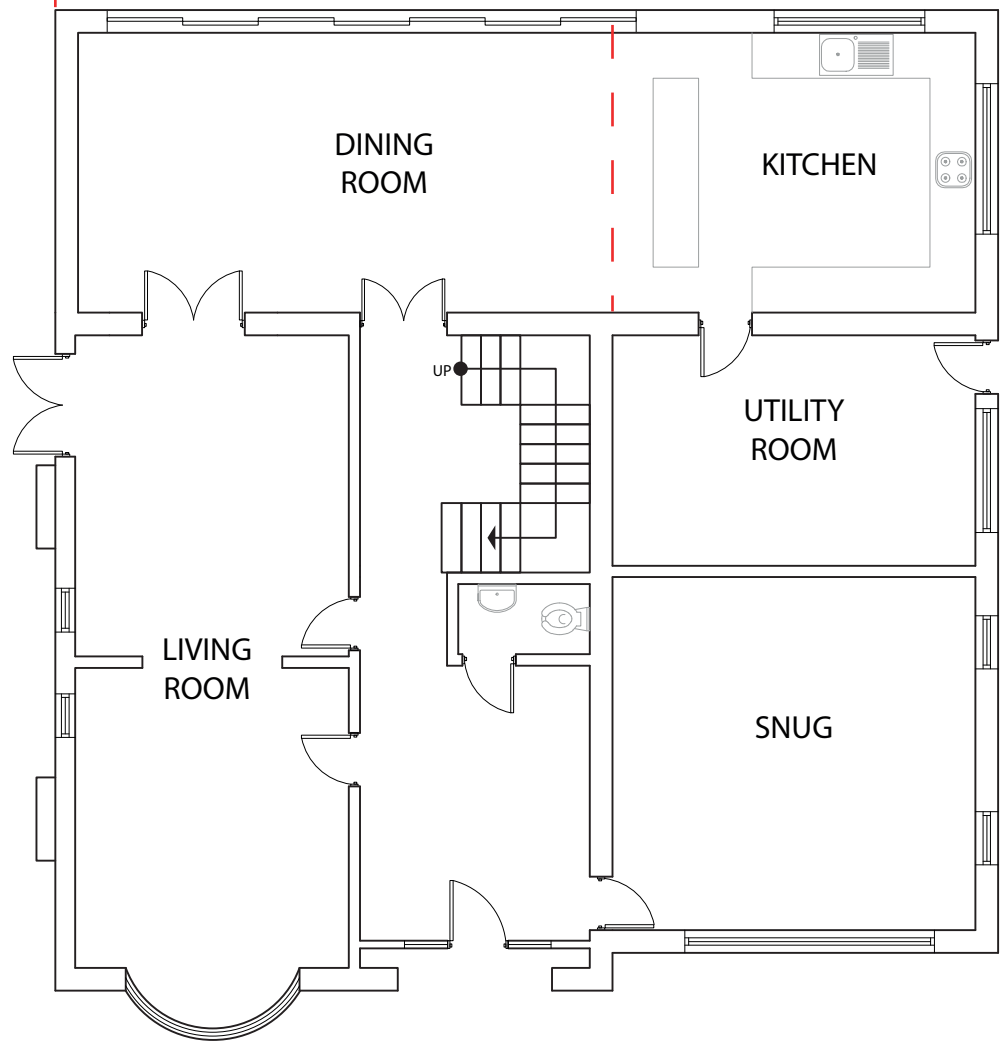


PROPOSED ROOF PLAN

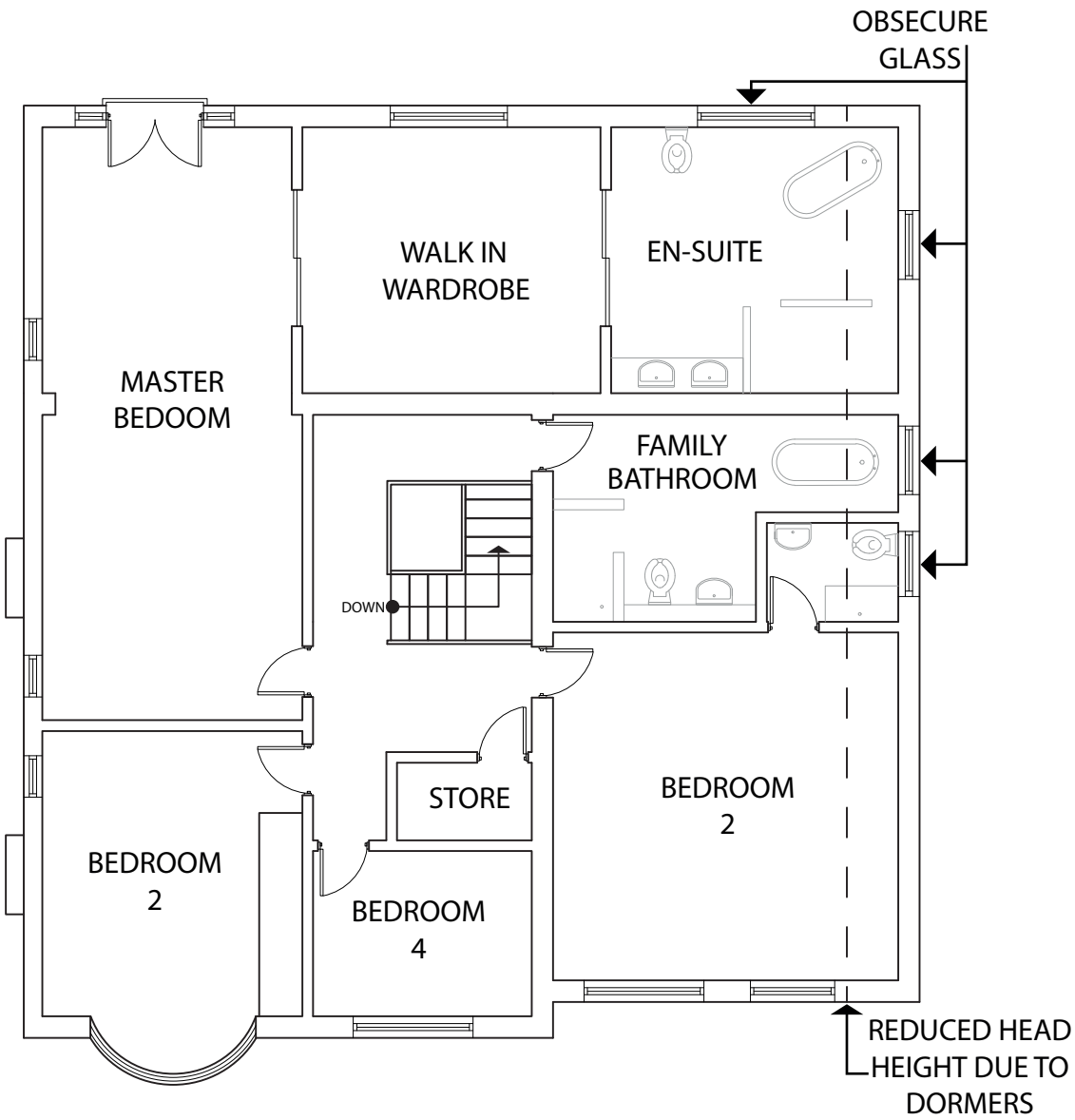


AGENT	HUMZAH KHUSHI BA ARCHITECTURE
SCALE	A31 : 100
DATE	10 / 09 / 2025
ADDRESS	BLACKMOOR BASINGSTOKE ROAD THREE MILE CROSS RG7 1AS
PROJECT	REV 02 ROOF PLAN EXISTING AND PROPOSED

APPROVED UNDER
APPLICATION
NUMBER 251574

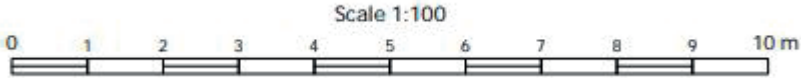


GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

AGENT	HUMZAH KHUSHI BA ARCHITECTURE
SCALE	A3 1 : 100
DATE	16 / 09 / 2025
ADDRESS	BLACKMOOR BASINGSTOKE ROAD THREE MILE CROSS RG7 1AS
PROJECT	





FRONT ELEVATION



REAR ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION



AGENT	
HUMZAH KHUSHI	
BA ARCHITECTURE	
SCALE	
A3	1 : 100
DATE	
16 / 09 / 2025	
ADDRESS	
BLACKMOOR BASINGSTOKE ROAD THREE MILE CROSS RG7 1AS	
PROJECT	
REV 003 PROPOSED ELEVATION	



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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:

Government guidance to Local Planning Authorities stipulates the need to consider biodiversity and protected species during the consideration of planning applications. The NPPF makes clear that the planning system should help minimise the impacts that development can have on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible. In addition, the ODPM Circular 04/2005 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”*.

Policy CP7 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (planning policy relating to the site) states *“Development which may harm habitats or, species of principle importance in England for nature conservation, veteran trees or features of the landscape that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna (including wildlife and river corridors), whether directly or indirectly will be only permitted if it has been clearly demonstrated that the need for the proposal outweighs the need to safeguard the nature conservation importance, that no alternative site that would result in less or no harm is available which will meet the need, and*

- i) Mitigation measures can be put in place to prevent damaging impacts; or*
- ii) Appropriate compensation measures to offset the scale and kind of losses are provided”*.

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.