



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL (DBW) AT 372 BARKHAM ROAD WOKINGHAM



**Prepared for:
Mr & Mrs Booth
372 Barkham Road
Wokingham
RG41 4DL**

12 May 2025

Ref: SPH/NP/PEA-25/29.04



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CONTENTS

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Instruction
- 1.2 Aims and Objectives
- 1.3 Proposed works
- 1.4 Surveyor Background and Experience

2. Legislation and Planning Policy

- 2.1 Legislative Background

3. Site Location and Description

- 3.1 Site Location
- 3.2 Site Description

4. Survey Methodology

- 4.1 Pre-Survey Data Search
- 4.2 Daylight Survey
- 4.3 Constraints

5. Survey Findings

- 5.1 External Inspection
- 5.2 Internal Inspection

6. Evaluation

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 Interpretation
- 7.2 Contingency plan

8. References

9. Queries

Appendix 1

Appendix 2

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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.



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Executive Summary

Urban Tree Experts was commissioned by Mr & Mrs Booth to conduct a preliminary ecological appraisal (daytime bat walkover [DBW]) of 372 Barkham Road, Wokingham, Rg41 4DL. This is to support a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council.

The site visit was carried out on Tuesday 29 April 2025 at 11.30am, during daylight hours. An internal and external inspection of the property and detached garage took place to look for signs of bats.

The DBW consists of a desk top 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 that 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 landform to the south of the site provides suitable habitat for roosting, commuting and foraging bats with tree and hedge lined agricultural fields which provide rich and diverse habitats suitable for a wide range of bat species.

The DBW comprised a detailed search of the interior and exterior of the property and detached garage 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 properties and detached garage suitability to support roosting bats were assessed and potential roost features identified on the property during the preliminary inspection. The property is in a good condition internally and externally however, there are moved hanging tiles on all the dormers which could provide potential roosting opportunities for bats, and the presence or absence of bats could not be determined. In line with best practice guidelines, the property was assessed as having low potential¹ to support roosting bats.

In line with best practice guidelines², one separate dusk emergence survey is required on the property in order to establish the presence or absence of roosting bats. If bats are recorded emerging from the building during the survey, two further activity surveys and an EPSL will be required in order for the development to proceed legally.

No roosting features were identified on the detached garage and no further survey effort is required on this building.

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 & Mrs Booth to conduct a DBW of 372 Barkham Road, Wokingham RG41 4DL. This is 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 buildings.
- Provide information on previous bat ecological surveys/reports.
- Provide information on the status of bats using the buildings 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 DBW 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 make changes to the garage roof, rear dormer and extending at the front to connect to the garage, to include recladding the existing dormers with vertical timber boarding, 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 Powell. Nick commenced surveying bats in 2022 and holds a Class 2 Bat License (CLS-11742) and has received training in bat ecology and surveying, bat detector use, acoustic monitoring/sonogram analysis, architectural terms for bat workers, bats and development, H & S awareness for bat workers, legislation for bat workers, British bats their ecology and conservation, surveying trees for bats, Bat ID and handling, bat biology.

Simon holds Class 3 (CL19) and 4 Bat (CL20) Licenses (Nos. 17637 and 17638) and a Science and Education license (SCI64844). He has 35 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 SU78596722, see Figure 1 below. An overview of the immediate area is shown on Figure 2, courtesy of Bing Maps.

Figure 1. 372 Barkham Road, Wokingham, highlighted.



Figure 2. 372 Barkham Road, Wokingham, overview of the immediate area.





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3.2 Site Description

The application site comprises a detached two-storey, brick-built property with conservatory on the rear elevation and detached garage to the front. The remainder of the site comprises a paved driveway/parking area and a rear garden, that is mainly laid to patio and lawn, with some trees and shrubs on the boundaries, see Figure 3 below. The site itself offers some foraging and commuting habitat for bats and there is direct ecological connectivity to the wider landscape that provides good habitat for foraging and roosting bats.

Figure 3. Rear garden. 372 Barkham Road, Wokingham. 29.04.25



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 property. 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 EPSPs within 2km of the site. Due to suburban area, 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 property is situated in the village of Barkham, on the outskirts of Wokingham, and is adjacent to properties and gardens of differing sizes and styles. To the north lies a housing development, which does not provide good habitat for bats. Immediately to the south lies a farm and associated fields, which are likely to provide good habitat for bats and are within travelling distance for bats. Further south lies Rook Nest Wood Country Park and to the north-west Coombes Wood, both of which are known to support roosting, foraging and commuting habitat for bats and are connected to the site via ecological corridors such as tree and hedge lines.



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Longmoor Bog Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Nature Reserve (LNR) lies to the south and within 2km of the proposed development site, although there is no ecological connectivity from the proposed development site to this designated area. A search of the Magic interactive website revealed that one current EPSL for bats has 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
2016-24999-EPS-MIT-1	02/2027	Common and soprano pipistrelle

4.2 Daylight Survey

The DBW of 372 Barkham Road, Wokingham, Rg41 4DL was carried out by Nick Powell on Tuesday 29 April 2025 at 11.30am. The weather conditions for the survey were dry and bright with a temperature of 21 degrees. Equipment used included a high-powered torch, a digital camera on a telescopic pole and a ladder.

During the DBW an external and internal inspection of the property and detached garage 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 buildings – 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 buildings.
- 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. This includes the rear conservatory as, due to construction materials and light ingress, it does not offer any roosting opportunities.

4.3 Constraints

Access to the site during the visit was made possible by the client. A thorough inspection of the loft space could not be conducted due to the low ridge height, restriction caused by the water tank and partial boarding but given the good condition of the roof externally this was not thought to be a significant constraint to the survey.



5. Survey Findings

5.1 External Inspection

The external features of the property and detached garage 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 chalet style bungalow with various dormers and single storey rear conservatory, see Figure 4 below. The multi pitched roof is covered in tightly fitted interlocking tiles, none of which were slipped or broken, see Figure 5 on page 9. The ridge and hip tiles are firmly attached with no gaps that crevice dwelling bat species could exploit, see Figure 6 on page 9. The verges are well sealed with no missing mortar (see Figure 7 on page 10), and the valleys are sealed. The soffits and fascias are tight to the wall with no gaps that could be exploited by crevice dwelling bat species, see Figure 8 on page 10. There are three dormer windows on the front elevation, the hipped roofs of which are covered in well fitted interlocking tiles with no missing mortar from the ridge and hip tiles, see Figure 9 on page 11. The sides of the dormers are covered in hanging tiles, some of which (especially on the corners) have slipped leaving gaps that could be exploited by bats, see Figure 10 on page 11. The roof of the dormer window on the rear elevation is covered in well fitted bitumen felt with no rips or tears (see Figure 11 on page 12), and the sides and front covered in hanging tiles again which have moved leaving gaps suitable for bats, see Figure 12 on page 12.

The hipped roof of the detached garage is also covered in interlocking tiles, none of which are broken or slipped, and the hip tiles are securely mortared, see Figure 13 on page 13. The soffits and fascias are tight to the wall and offer no roosting opportunities, see Figure 14 on page 13.

No bats or evidence of bats were recorded during the external inspection of the property or detached garage although there are various features on the property that provide potential crevice roosting opportunities for bats.

Figure 4. Rear view of property. 372 Barkham Road, Wokingham. 29.04.25





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Figure 5. Example sealed roof tiles. 372 Barkham Road, Wokingham. 29.04.25



Figure 6. Example sealed ridge and hip tiles. 372 Barkham Road, Wokingham. 29.04.25





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Figure 7. Example sealed verges. 372 Barkham Road, Wokingham. 29.04.25



Figure 8. Example sealed soffits and fascias. 372 Barkham Road, Wokingham. 29.04.25





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Figure 9. Example sealed roofs of front dormers. 372 Barkham Road, Wokingham.
29.04.25



Figure 10. Example gaps hanging tiles on front dormers. 372 Barkham Road, Wokingham. 29.04.25





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Figure 11. Bitumen roof of rear dormer. 372 Barkham Road, Wokingham. 29.04.25



Figure 12. Example moved hanging tiles on rear dormer. 372 Barkham Road, Wokingham. 29.04.25





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Figure 13. Well-sealed roof and hip tiles on garage. 372 Barkham Road, Wokingham.
29.04.25



Figure 14. Example sealed soffits and fascias on garage. 372 Barkham Road, Wokingham. 29.04.25





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5.2 Internal Inspection

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

The remaining loft space was accessed via a loft ladder and is in a good condition. The loft space is cluttered, lit, partially boarded and insulated (see Figure 15 below), and due to the low ridge height and belongings a thorough inspection could not be conducted. The roof tiles are lined with bitumen felt, all of which that could be seen appeared to be in a good condition.

There is no loft space in the garage, the building being open to the rafters and the roof tiles lined with bitumen felt, all of which was in a good condition with no rips or tears, see Figure 16 below.

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the internal inspection of the property or garage and internally there appeared to be no roosting opportunities for bats within these spaces.

Figure 15. Example loft space. 372 Barkham Road, Wokingham. 29.04.25



Figure 16. Internal view of garage roof. 372 Barkham Road, Wokingham. 29.04.25



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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 list above provides generic screening criteria only and there are exceptions to consider.

7. Conclusions

7.1 Interpretation

The property and detached garage are in a good condition internally and externally. The gaps in the hanging tiles on the property provide crevice-like features suitable for bats to roost and we are unable to determine the presence or absence of bats in the property without further survey effort. When the findings are combined with the desk top study the property was assessed as having a low potential to support roosting bats.

Based on the Bat Workers Manual and the Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines, one dusk emergence survey need to be undertaken on the property, between May and August, to establish the presence or absence of roosting bats and in order to inform appropriate mitigation for the proposed works if necessary. The features identified will require five survey positions, two equipped with bat detectors and all five with night vision cameras in order to cover the potential bat roosting features. If bats are recorded emerging from the building during the survey, two further activity surveys and an EPSL will be required in order for the development to proceed legally.



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No roosting features were identified on the detached garage and no further survey effort is required on this building.

7.2 Contingency Plan

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 the site may become more suitable to support roosting bats.

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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APPENDIX 1

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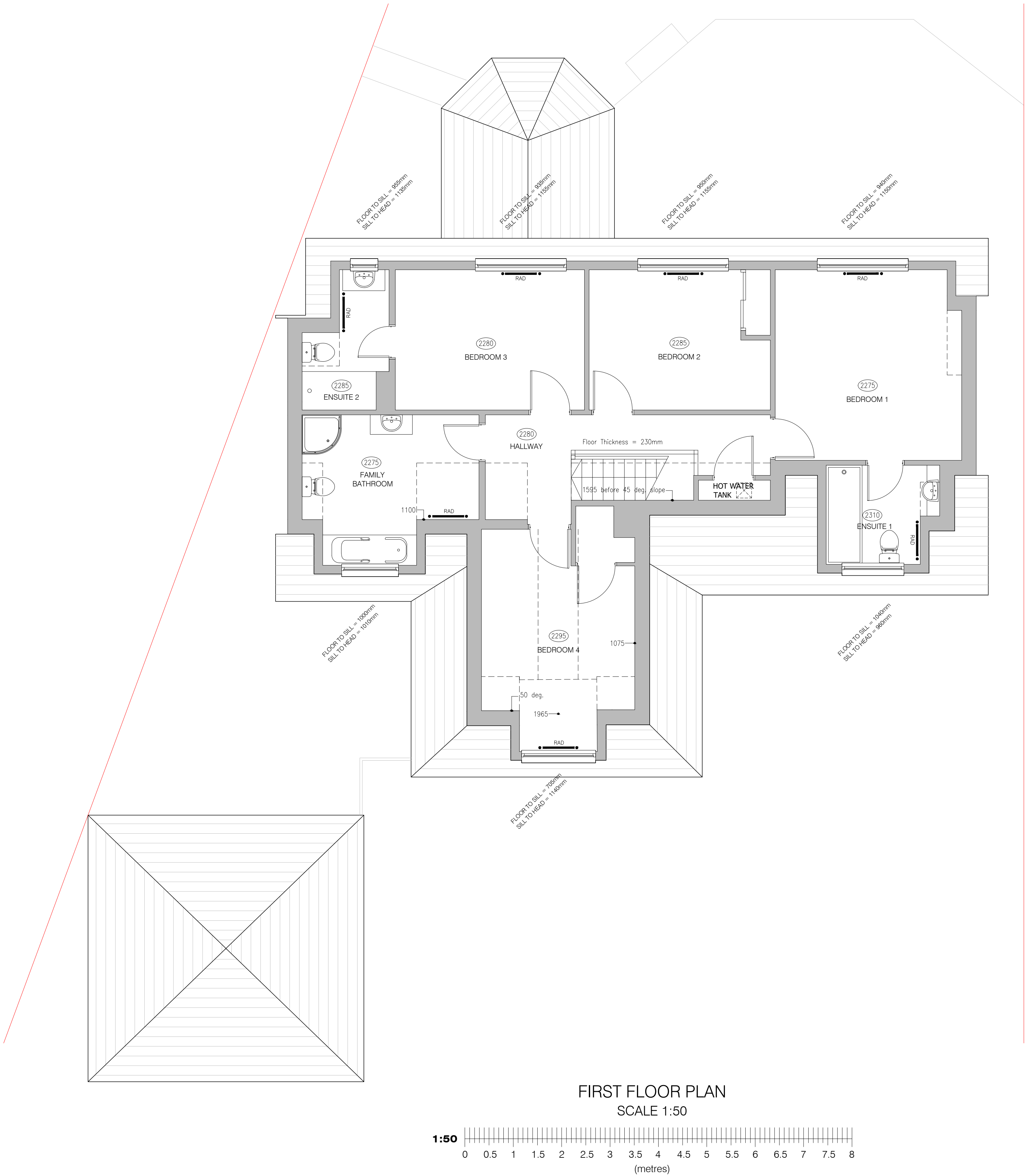
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Rev.	Date	Revisions

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Plot Date: MARCH 25			
Scale	1:50 @ A1		
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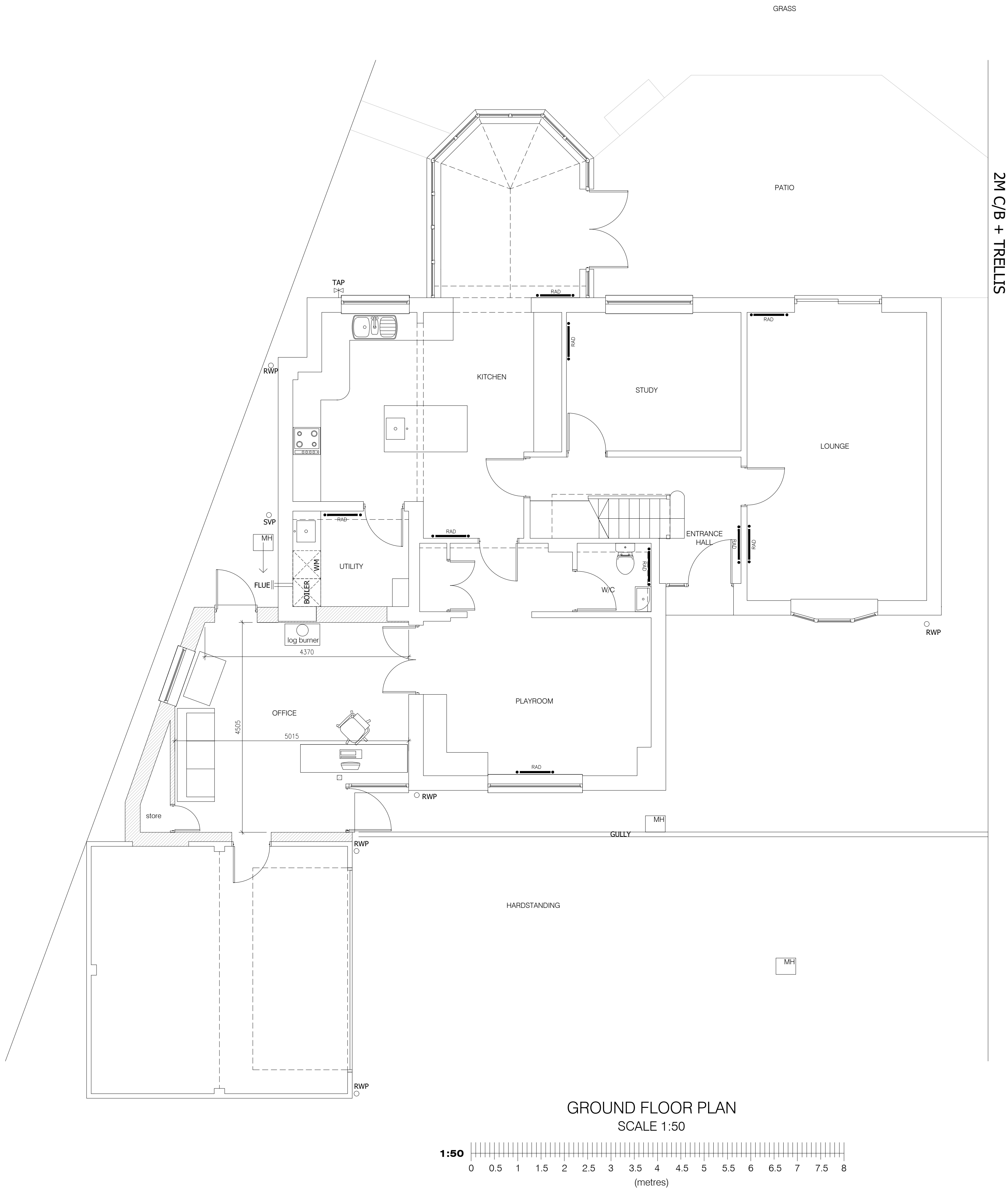
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Property:
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Drawing Title:
DETAILS OF EXISTING
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

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Drawing No. A1/436/02	Rev.
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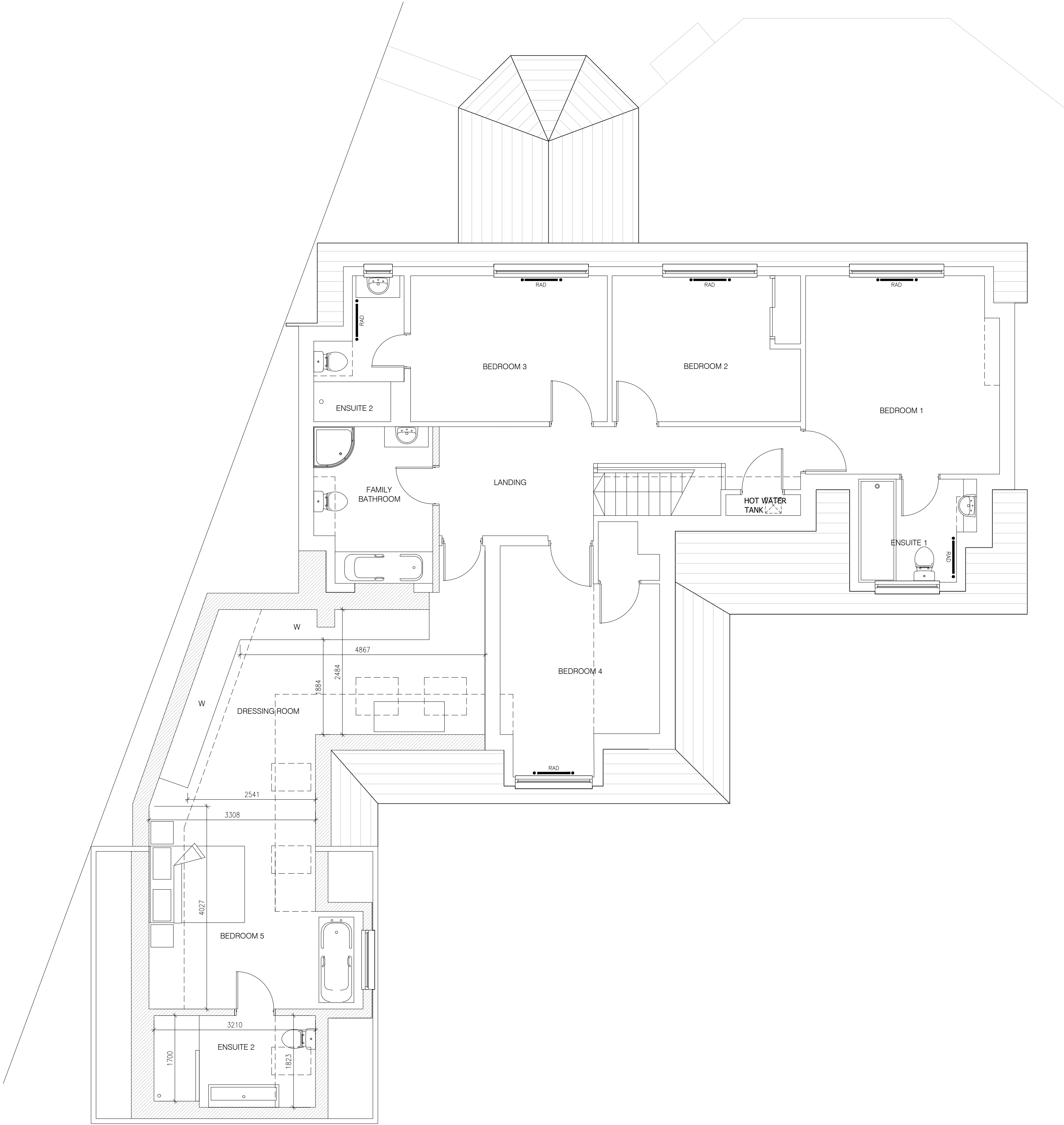
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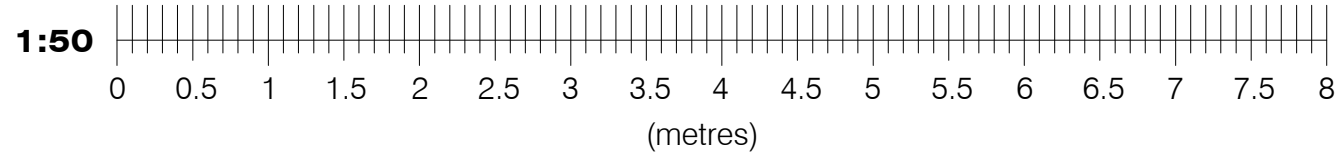
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FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1:50



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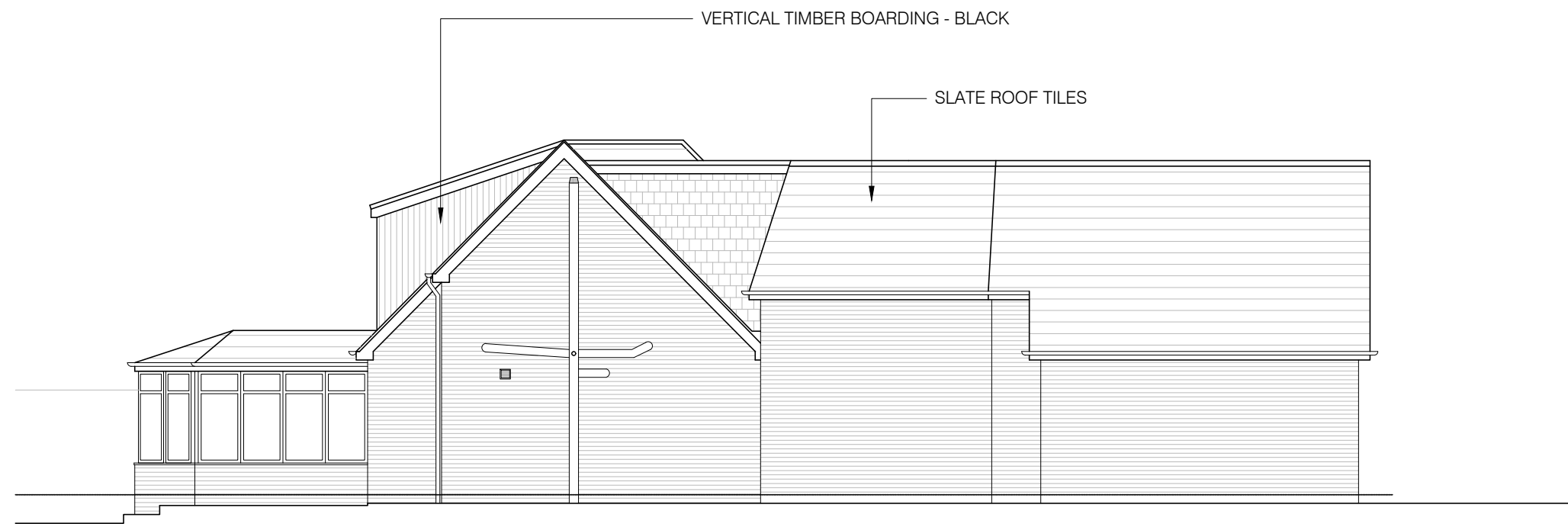
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Rev.	Date	Revisions

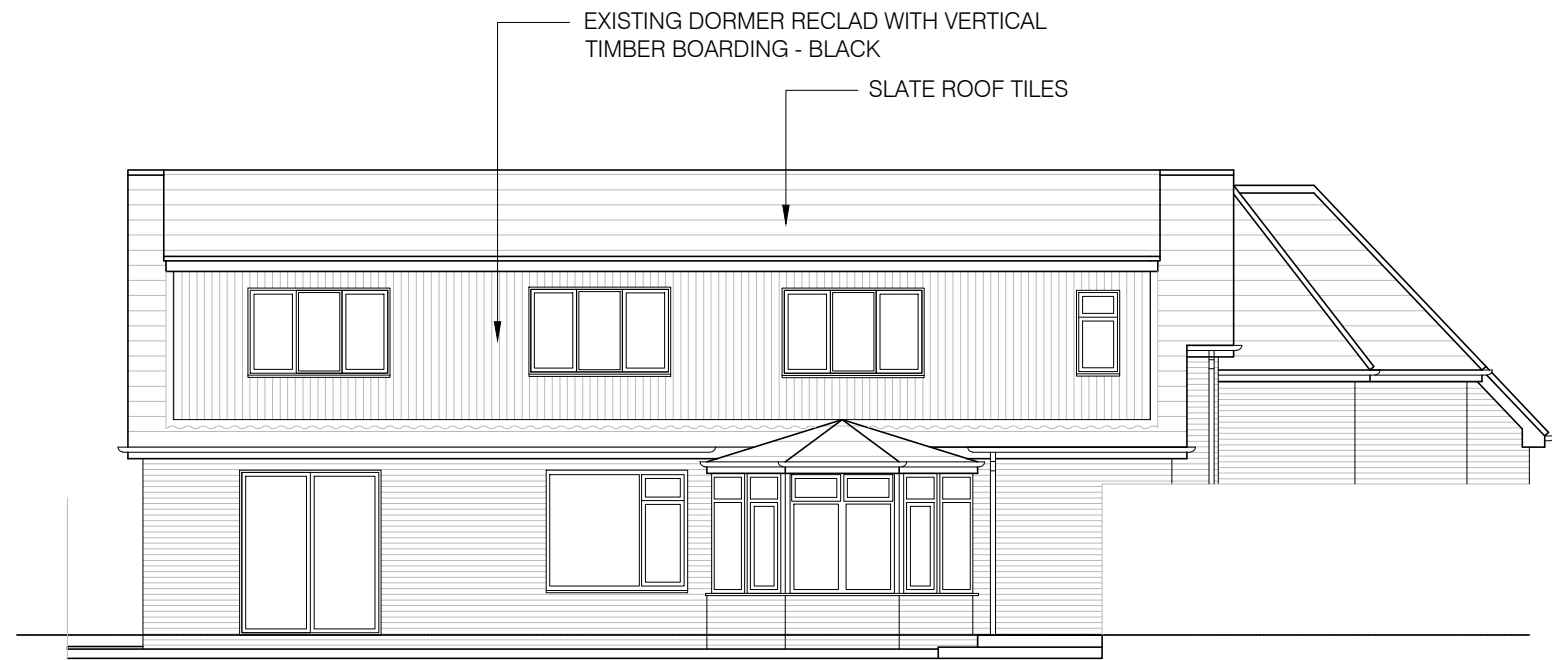
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Date	MARCH 25
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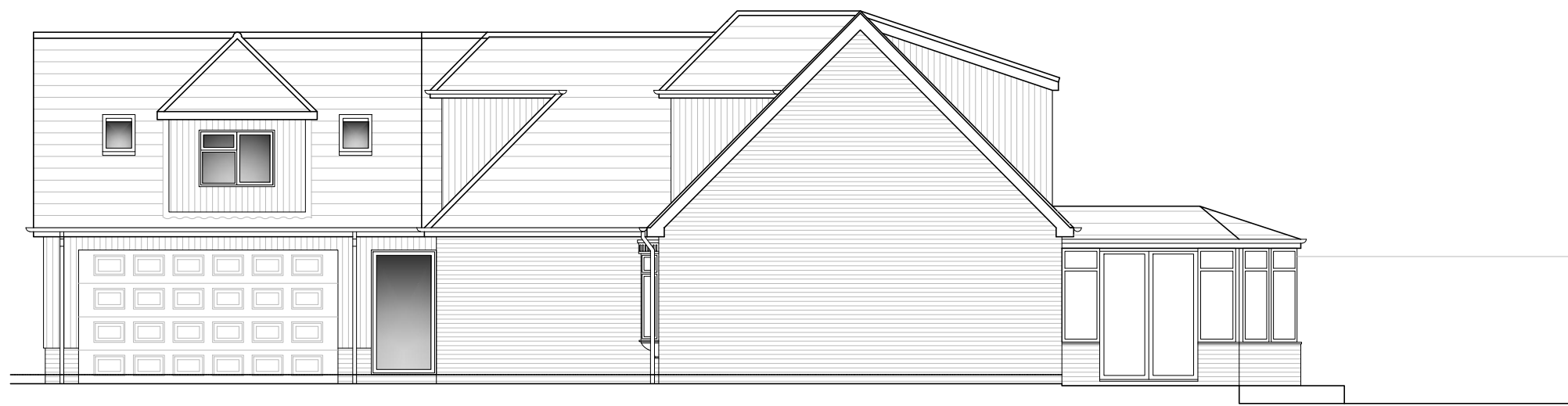
FRONT ELEVATION
SCALE 1:100



SIDE ELEVATION
SCALE 1:100



REAR ELEVATION
SCALE 1:100



SIDE ELEVATION
SCALE 1:100

BLOCK PLAN

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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.