



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL (DBW) OF 7 GREENSIDE CROWTHORNE



**Prepared for:
Mrs S Gajula
7 Greenside
Crowthorne
Wokingham
RG45 6EX**

29 August 2025

Ref: SPH/NP/PEA-25/12.08



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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 Mrs S Gajula to conduct a preliminary ecological appraisal (daytime bat walkover [DBW]) of 7 Greenside, Crowthorne, Wokingham RG45 6EX. This is to support a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council.

The site visit was carried out on Tuesday 12 August 2025 at 1.20pm, 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 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 seven statutory designated sites are located within, and four current European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) for bats have been granted within 2km of the proposed development site. To the north, east and south, the area has a low level of habitat suitable for roosting, commuting and foraging bats due to the dense nature of the urban environment however, there is direct ecological connectivity to the wider landscape via the back garden.

The DBW comprised a detailed search of the interior and exterior of the property 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 is in a good condition externally, however there are raised roof tiles and moved/raised hanging tiles on the property, and these features could provide potential roosting opportunities or access into the building for bats.

The building's suitability to support roosting bats was assessed and potential roost features identified during the preliminary inspection. In addition, a low number of bat droppings were recorded within the loft of the property, indicating that bats are or have been using the building for roosting.

In line with best practice guidelines¹, three separate dusk emergence surveys are required on the building in order to assess the status of the roost currently and to inform appropriate mitigation for the proposed works.

¹ 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 Mrs S Gajula to conduct a DBW of 7 Greenside, Crowthorne, Wokingham RG45 6EX 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 two storey side extension, single storey extension on the opposite elevation, single storey rear extension and make changes to the front porch, see plan at Appendix 1.

1.4 Surveyor Background and Experience

The preliminary ecological appraisal for bats was undertaken by Nick Powell and the report 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 (SCI-64844). 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 SU82916437, see Figure 1 below. An overview of the immediate area is shown on Figure 2, courtesy of Bing Maps.

Figure 1. 7 Greenside, Crowthorne highlighted.



Figure 2. 7 Greenside, Crowthorne overview of the immediate area.





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3.2 Site Description

The application site comprises a detached, brick-built property with attached carport and garage, see cover photograph. The remainder of the site comprises a paved driveway/parking area with large lawn and mature trees and shrubs, and a large rear garden which is mainly laid to lawn, with seating area and some shrubs and mature trees on the boundaries, see Figure 3 below. The site itself offers good foraging and commuting habitat for bats and there is direct ecological connectivity to alternative habitat for foraging and commuting bats in the wider landscape.

Figure 3. Rear garden. 7 Greenside, Crowthorne. 12.08.25



4. Survey Methodology

4.1 Pre-Survey Data Search

The client has advised that, to their knowledge, no previous bat surveys have been conducted on the 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 application site is situated in the village of Crowthorne with properties and gardens of varying styles and sizes to the north, east and south. To the west and connected directly to the rear garden lies East Berkshire Golf Club which connects onto Heath Lake Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and, further afield to the south large areas of woodland and recreational grounds, all of which are likely to provide good habitat to support roosting, commuting and foraging bats and are within travelling distance for bats. Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas (SPA), Sandhurst to Owlsmoor Bogs and Heaths SSSI, Broadmoor to Bagshot Woods and Heaths SSSI, Wellington College Bog SSSI, Heath Lake SSSI and LNR, Ambarrow Court LNR and Edgbarrow Woods LNR lie within 2km of the proposed development site, although the only ecological connectivity from the proposed development site is to Heath Lake SSSI and LNR.



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A search of the Magic interactive website revealed four 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
2020-48238-EPS-MIT	07/2026	Common pipistrelle and brown long eared
2017-31639-EPS-MIT	10/2027	Common pipistrelle
2018-37292-EPS-MIT	10/2028	Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and brown long eared

4.2 Daylight Survey

The DBW of 7 Greenside, Crowthorne, Wokingham, RG45 6EX was carried out by Nick Powell on Tuesday 12 August 2025 at 1.20pm. The weather conditions for the survey were dry and bright with a temperature of 30 degrees. Equipment used included a high-powered torch, a digital camera on a telescopic pole, binoculars and a ladder.

During the DBW an external and internal 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 in building voids for example 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. A thorough inspection of the loft space could not be undertaken due to construction of an internal wooden frame.



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 two-storey detached brick-built building that is in a fair to good condition externally. The pitched roof is covered in composite tiles, some of which on both elevations have moved, leaving gaps that roosting bats could exploit, see Figure 4 below. There is also missing mortar from the ridge tiles which roosting bats could exploit, see Figure 5 on page 9. The lead flashing around the chimney was all tightly fitted with no gaps in which bats could utilise for roosting (see Figure 6 on page 9) and the uPVC soffits and fascias are all tightly fitted to the walls and have no visible gaps in which bats could use for roosting, see Figure 7 on page 10. There are areas of hanging tiles on the front and rear elevations of the property with various gaps (see Figure 8 on page 10) in which crevice dwelling bats could utilise for roosting. The roof and ridge tiles on the front porch are well fitted and there is no missing mortar from the ridge tiles however, the hanging tiles on the front elevation are lifted leaving gaps suitable for bats in which to roost, see Figure 9 on page 11. On the southern elevation is a subservient side section with hanging tiles that have gaps in them, however this section of hanging tiles is not being affected by the proposed works, see Figure 10 on page 11.

The attached car port and garage is also brick-built and in a good condition externally with a false pitched roof to the front and well fitted bitumen covered flat roof to the rear with no rips or tears (see Figure 11 on page 12) and the verge and fascias are sealed offering no roosting opportunities for bats, see Figure 12 on page 12.

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded externally on the property although there are features which could provide potential roosting opportunities for bats externally or provide access into the building for roosting bats.

Figure 4. Example raised roof tiles. 7 Greenside, Crowthorne. 12.08.25





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Figure 5. Example gaps in ridge tiles. 7 Greenside, Crowthorne. 12.08.25



Figure 6. Example sealed lead flashing. 7 Greenside, Crowthorne. 12.08.25





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Figure 7. Example uPVC soffits and fascias. 7 Greenside, Crowthorne. 12.08.25



Figure 8. Example gaps in hanging tiles. 7 Greenside, Crowthorne. 12.08.25





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Figure 9. Front porch with moved hanging tiles with gaps. 7 Greenside, Crowthorne.
12.08.25



Figure 10. Subservient side section of property and hanging tiles. 7 Greenside, Crowthorne. 12.08.25





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Figure 11. Example sealed bitumen felt on car port/garage. 7 Greenside, Crowthorne.
12.08.25



Figure 12. Example sealed verges and fascias on car port/garage. 7 Greenside, Crowthorne. 12.08.25





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 ladder, the space was partially lit, partially boarded and insulated, see Figure 13 below. A thorough inspection of the loft space could not be undertaken due to a wood frame construction, see Figure 13 below. The roof tiles that could be seen were lined with bitumen felt, see Figure 13 below. Occasional bat droppings similar to those of pipistrelle *sp.* or brown long-eared bats were observed under the central ridge in the loft, see Figure 14 on page 14.

The attached garage/rear habitable space were also inspected internally. The ceiling of the garage is timber lined, and the ceiling of the rear habitable space was boarded and both had no cracks or splits in which roosting bats could exploit, see Figure 15 on page 14.

Figure 13. Internal view of loft and wood framed construction. 7 Greenside, Crowthorne. 12.08.25





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Figure 14. Example bat droppings. 7 Greenside, Crowthorne. 12.08.25



Figure 15. Internal view of garage/rear habitable space. 7 Greenside, Crowthorne. 12.08.25





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 list on the previous page provides generic screening criteria only and there are exceptions to consider.

7. Conclusions

7.1 Interpretation

The property is in a good condition externally and internally, however there are raised roof tiles and moved hanging tiles on the front and rear elevations providing crevice like roost features or access into the building for bats. Low numbers of bat droppings are normally associated with low numbers of bats or individual bats and it is recommended that the droppings are sent for DNA analysis to ascertain the species of bat(s) that are or have been using the building to roost.

Based on the Bat Workers Manual and the Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines, three dusk emergence surveys must be undertaken on the property, between May and September, to assess the current status of roosting bats and in order to inform appropriate mitigation for the proposed works. The features identified will require 4 survey positions equipped with bat detectors and night vision cameras in order to cover all the potential bat roosting features.



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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 different species or larger number of 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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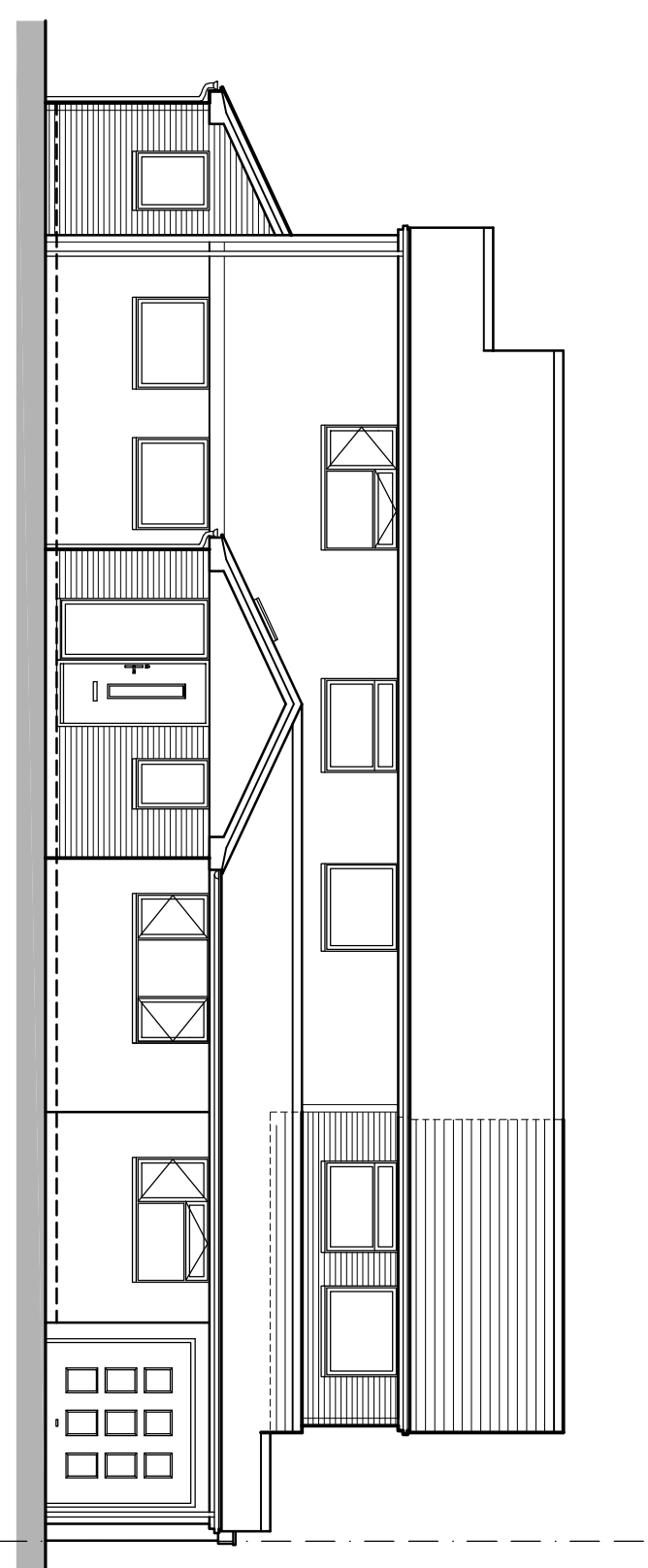
Simon Holmes MSc. CEnv.
Consultant, Urban Tree Experts
Natural England Licence CLS-CLS-17637, CLS-CLS-17638



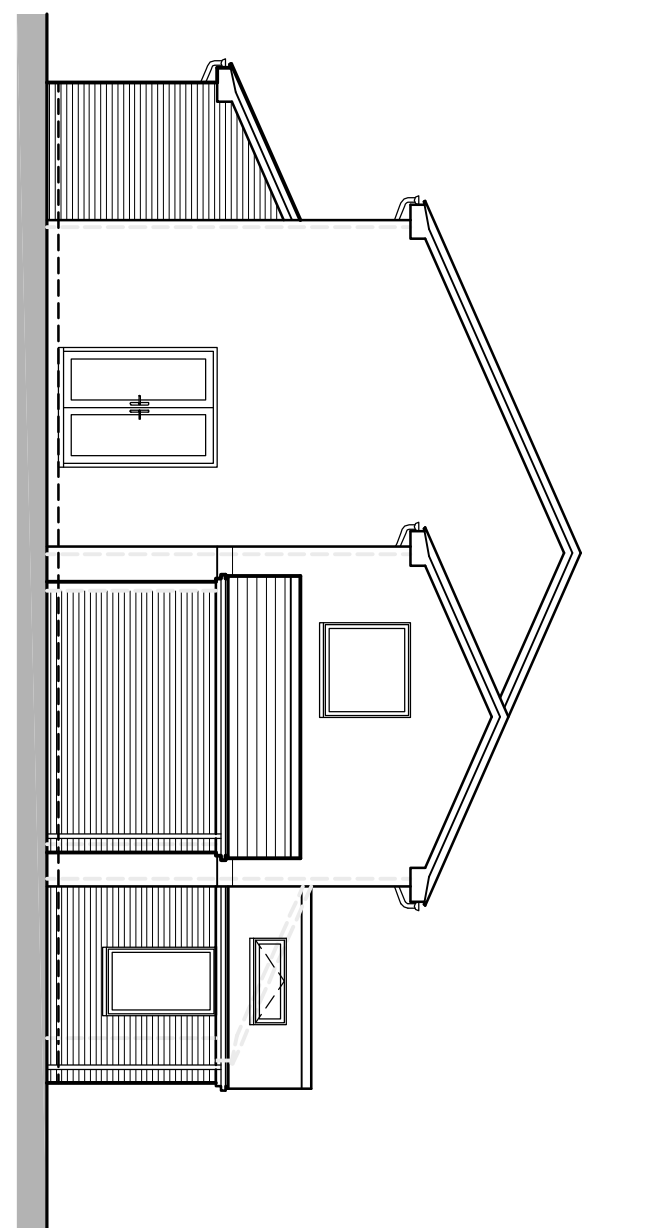
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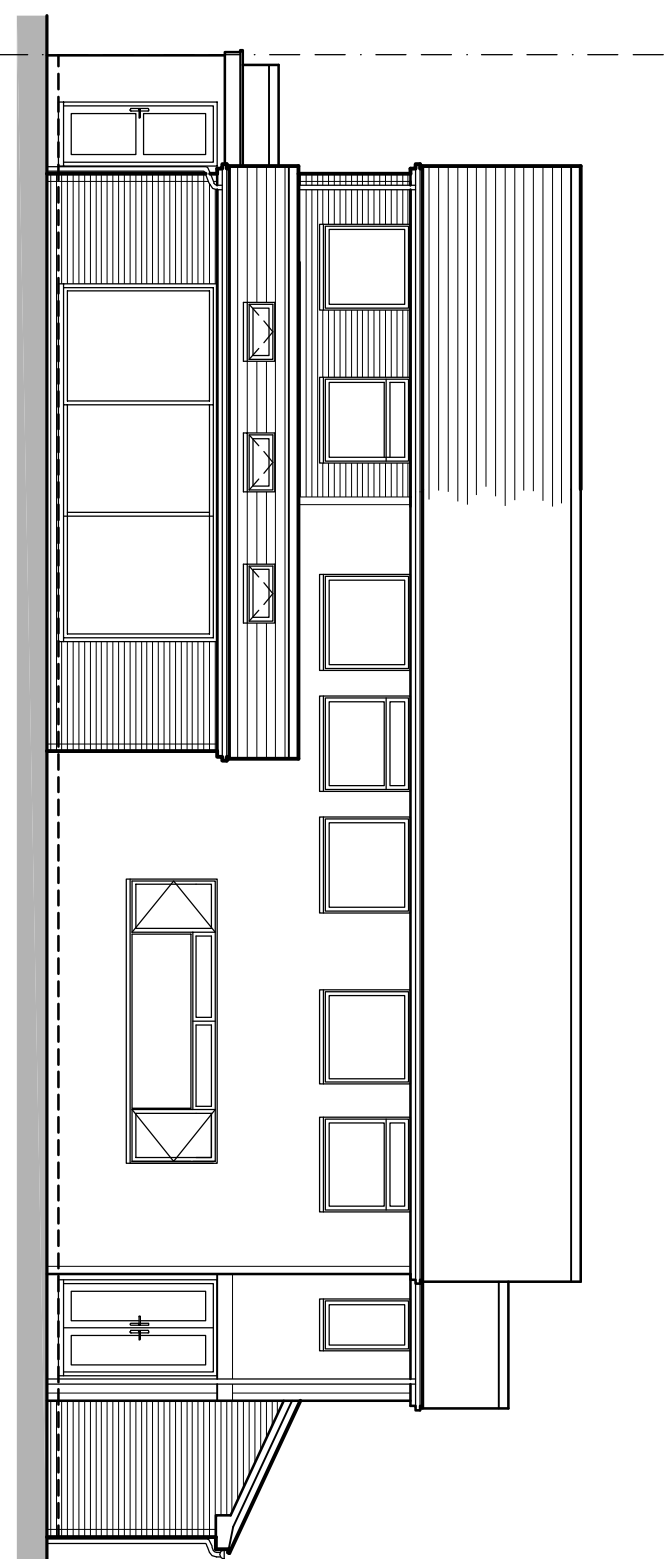
APPENDIX 1



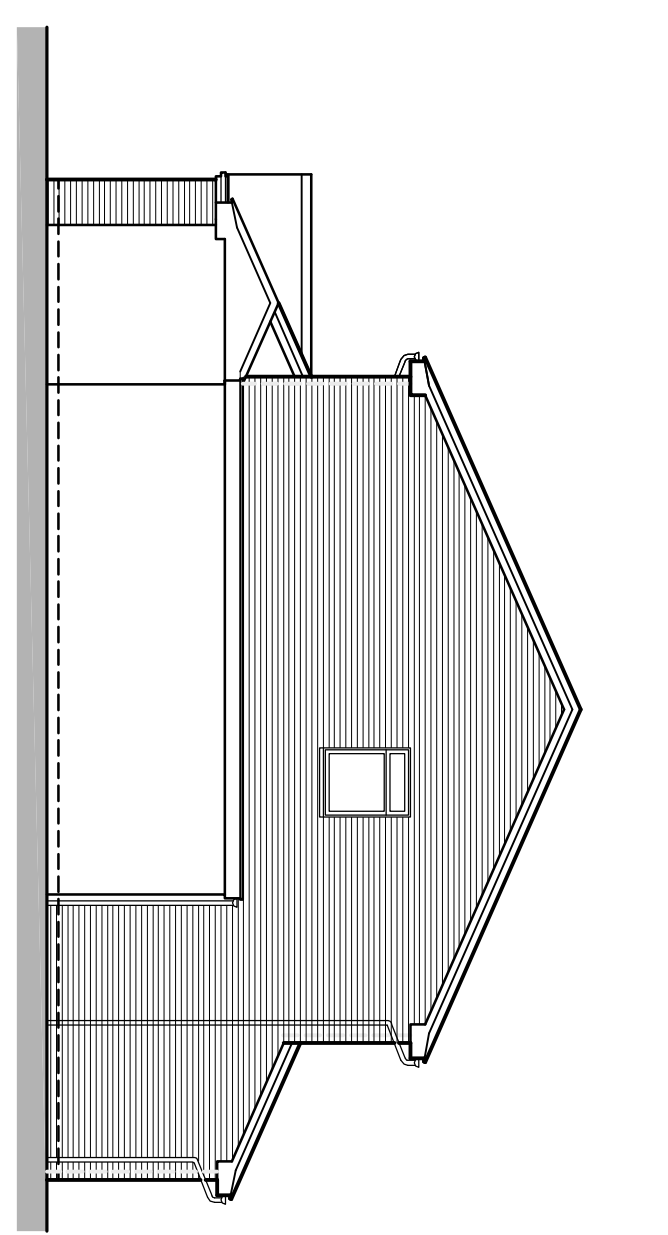
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Proposed Front Elevation



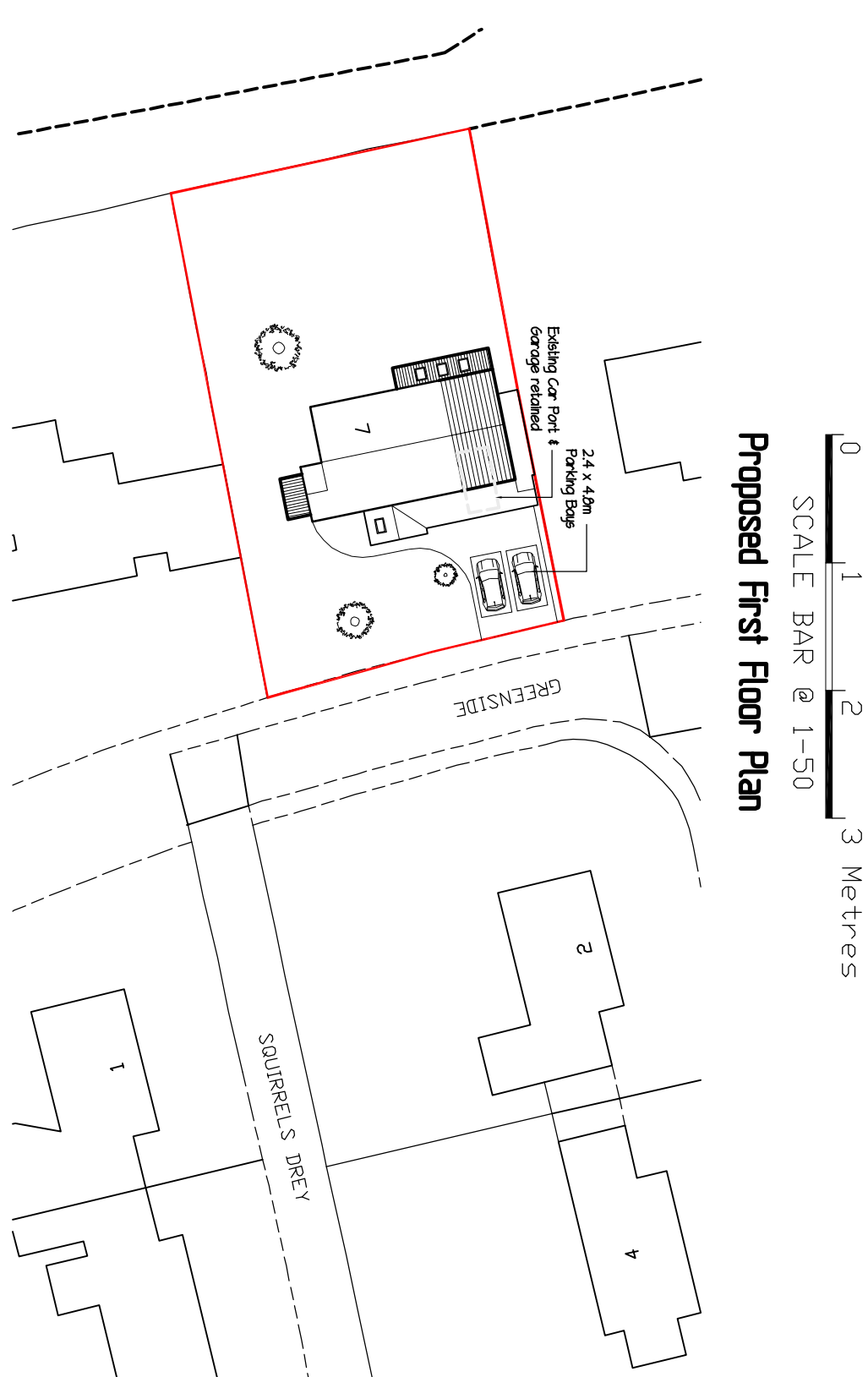
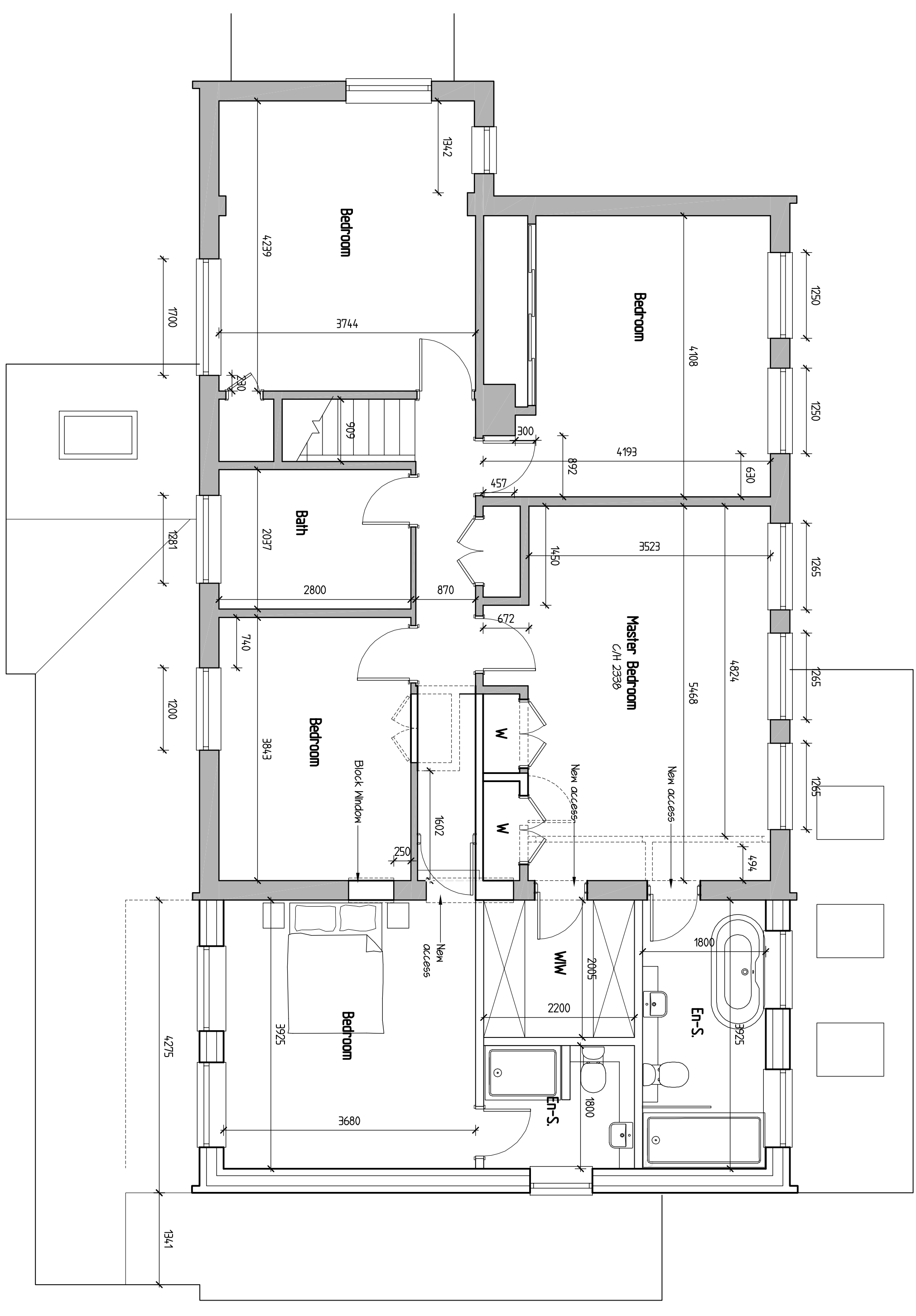
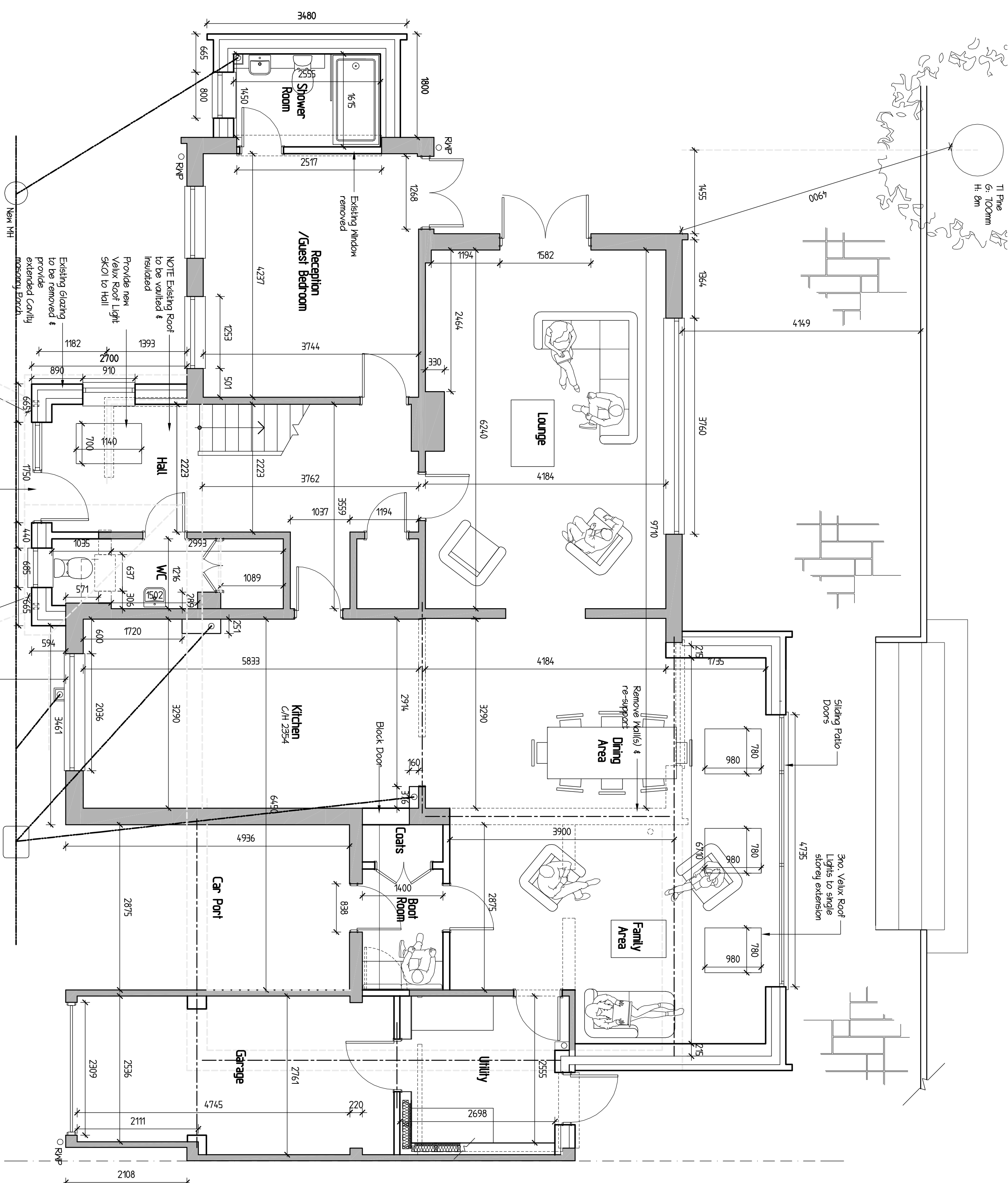
0 1 2 3 Metres
SCALE BAR @ 1-100
Proposed Side Elevation



0 1 2 3 Metres
SCALE BAR @ 1-100
Proposed Rear Elevation



0 1 2 3 Metres
SCALE BAR @ 1-100
Proposed Side Elevation



REVISIONS		
Rev.	Description	Date
A	Clients updates added	26-06-2025
B	Clients updates & Shower Room added	07-07-2025

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Planning, Building Regulations & Structural Design

7 Greenside
Crowthorne

Proposed Plans & Elevations

SCALE 1:50 1:100 DATE June 2025 DRAWING No. 02 B



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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.