

Preliminary Roost Assessment

Jalens, Nine Mile Ride, Wokingham, RG40 3LU

Survey conducted 27th November 2024

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	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Prepared by:	Lisha Price	Senior Ecologist		04/12/24
Checked by:	Nick Kirke	Ecologist		05/12/24

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SUMMARY

An internal and external daytime inspection for evidence of bats and bat roosting potential was conducted by ecologist Lisha Price of Plan Ecology at Jalens, Nine Mile Ride, Wokingham on the 20th of November 2024.

The proposed works seek to replace the single storey extension on the side of the house with a double storey extension.

The Site consist of a brick-built, detached house with a rear garden and is located on a residential street on Nine Mile Ride, Wokingham. The surrounding area comprises other residences and Bramshill Forest which is a nature reserve and sits directly behind the property. There are several bodies of water near the site, two of which are situated to the west of the property, approximately 400 metres away, and Heath Lake which is just under a kilometre east of the house.

The building could be fully inspected and was assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential. The roof tiles are in good condition and have no lifts or gaps and the soffits are UPVC well maintained and have no gaps or warping.

No bats or evidence of bats was found during the internal inspection.

As no potential bat roosting features were identified, no further surveys are recommended at this time.

Should materials need to be stored in the back garden it is recommended that they be covered overnight, and no open holes be left uncovered to avoid any fauna falling in and unable to escape.

It is also recommended that works only take place in the daytime to avoid any light or noise disturbance to bats or birds which may be nesting or foraging nearby.

The result of a survey can never completely rule out the presence of bats at a building as use may be obscure or occasional. If bats or evidence of bats such as bat droppings are discovered, the works must be paused, and you should seek advice from Plan Ecology or Natural England via the Bat Conservation Trust bat helpline Tel 0345 1300 228.

Biodiversity enhancements including bat and bird bricks have been recommended.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Description

The Site consist of a brick-built, detached house with a rear garden and is located on a residential street on Nine Mile Ride, Wokingham. The surrounding area comprises other residences and Bramshill Forest which is a nature reserve and sits directly behind the property. There are several bodies of water near the site, two of which are situated to the west of the property, approximately 400 metres away, and Heath Lake which is just under a kilometre east of the house.

See Appendix 1 for Site Location

1.2 Proposed Works

The proposed works seek to replace the single storey extension on the side of the house with a double storey extension.

1.3 Aims of the Survey

A Preliminary Roost Assessment was carried out with the aim to look for evidence of bats roosting and for the presence of structures within the buildings which hold bat roosting potential.

1.4 General Information about Bats and Buildings

Loft spaces can potentially be utilised by bat species such as e.g. Brown Long-eared bats or Serotine bats which are known to commonly roost inside loft spaces. This can generally be discovered via droppings inside the loft as the droppings will stay protected from weather elements.

External features of the building can potentially be used as roosting sites by e.g. Pipistrelle bat species (*Pipistrellus* spp). Pipistrelle bats are the most common bats out of the British species, and they are known to roost inside buildings utilising areas such as cavity walls, soffits and fascia boards, and between tiles and roofing felt. It is not practical to carry out a full physical examination of such building features, which is why activity surveys have to be done during summer months (May-September) when the bats are fully active.

Access points of 1-2 centimetres only are used by bats to enter and exit their roosting sites. Most buildings will have gaps of such size in roof areas, as ventilation of the roof void would otherwise not be possible.

3. METHODOLOGY

The surveys were undertaken in accordance with the methods described in the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn), Bat Conservation Trust (BCT).

External and internal inspection – Preliminary Roost Assessment

The building was surveyed during the daytime on the 20th of November 2024 by Lisha Price (Natural England bat licence No. 11503-CLS). Lisha holds a class 2 bat licence and has over 20 years of experience carrying out bat surveys.

The buildings were inspected for evidence of bats in the form of live or dead bats, droppings, urine staining and insect feeding remains such as moth and butterfly wings. A careful visual search using a Clulite torch was conducted in the loft space. An endoscope (Ridgid) was used for spot checks of internal and external gaps. The exterior of the building was surveyed for droppings on walls and window ledges.

The building was examined internally and externally to identify structural features that hold bat roosting potential.

The bat roosting potential was assessed according to the scale negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed:

Negligible: Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats. For example; a simple wooden garden shed, a corrugated iron barn or precast concrete modular garage may fit this category.

Low: A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost Sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/ or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation).

Moderate: A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.

High: A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.

Confirmed: This category is used where evidence of bats such as live or dead bats or bat droppings are present, or where there are records of a bat roost in the building.

Foraging and Commuting

Habitats were assessed for their suitability for foraging or commuting bats and categorised in accordance with table 1. Foraging areas of high suitability vary between species, but generally include sheltered areas and habitats which support invertebrate prey such as woodland, scrub, hedges, watercourses, ponds, lakes, arable land with cattle manure and more species-rich or rough grassland. For commuting, well-connected hedgerows, woodland edge, watercourses and other linear features are generally considered to be of high suitability.

Table 1: Categorisation, foraging & Commuting habitats (adapted from Collins, 2023)

Category	Description
None	No habitat features on the site likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats at any time of year.
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flightpaths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream but isolated i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be regularly used by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

4. RESULTS

External and internal inspection results – Preliminary Roost Assessment

The house is a brick built detached house with a single storey garage on the side. The roof is interlocking tiles. The soffits and trimming is all UPVC. The house is in a good state of repair. The extension is single story with a flat roof which could be seen fully from the windows of the house. There are no bat roost potential features on the current extension.

Bat roosting potential:

The building could be fully inspected and was assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential. The roof tiles are in good condition and have no lifts or gaps and the UPVC soffits are well maintained and have no warping.

The loft could be fully inspected and no bats or evidence of bats was found.

5. ASSESSMENT

Constraints on study information

All accessible areas of the building could be surveyed without restrictions.

A biological record data search was not conducted as the results of a data search is not likely to impact on the decision-making process at this stage.

Bat survey results are generally considered to be valid within a year of the survey date or until the next active bat season of May-September. The County Council Ecologists and/or Natural England may ask for updated surveys if the reports are older than one year.

Potential impacts on bat foraging and commuting habitat.

The works are small and localised and will not be detrimental to foraging or commuting bats.

Legislation and policy guidance

As population numbers have fallen, all bats and their roosts are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Under this legislation it is an offence to:

- deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat;
- intentionally, recklessly or deliberately disturb a bat (in relation to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) the offence applies whilst the species is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; in relation to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 it applies anywhere);
- damage or destroy the breeding or resting place (roost) of a bat;
- possess a bat (alive or dead), or any part of a bat;
- intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost;
- sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (alive or dead), or parts of bats.

Please refer to the original legislation for the definitive interpretation.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion of results

The building could be fully inspected and was assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential. The roof tiles are in good condition and have no lifts or gaps and the soffits are well maintained and have no warping.

No bats or evidence of bats was found during the internal inspection.

As no potential bat roosting features were identified, no further surveys are recommended at this time.

It is also recommended that works only take place in the daytime to avoid any light or noise disturbance to bats or birds which may be nesting or foraging nearby.

Biodiversity enhancements including a bat brick have been recommended.

Further Survey Effort

No further surveys are recommended for bats at this time.

The result of a survey can never completely rule out the presence of bats at a building as use may be obscure or occasional. If bats or evidence of bats such as bat droppings are discovered, the works must be paused, and you should seek advice from Plan Ecology or Natural England via the Bat Conservation Trust bat helpline Tel 0345 1300 228.

Ecological Enhancement Opportunities

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), issued in March 2012 (Updated 2021), states that 'development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.'

Proposed ecological enhancement are provided below....

- Minimising light and noise pollution on the site. In particular minimising the hours the construction site is lit.
- Placing an integrated bat brick within the new extension brickwork have been recommended which would provide potential roost features for bats. The brick should be placed away from light sources.

Details of proposed biodiversity enhancement have been illustrated in Appendix 4.

7. REFERENCES

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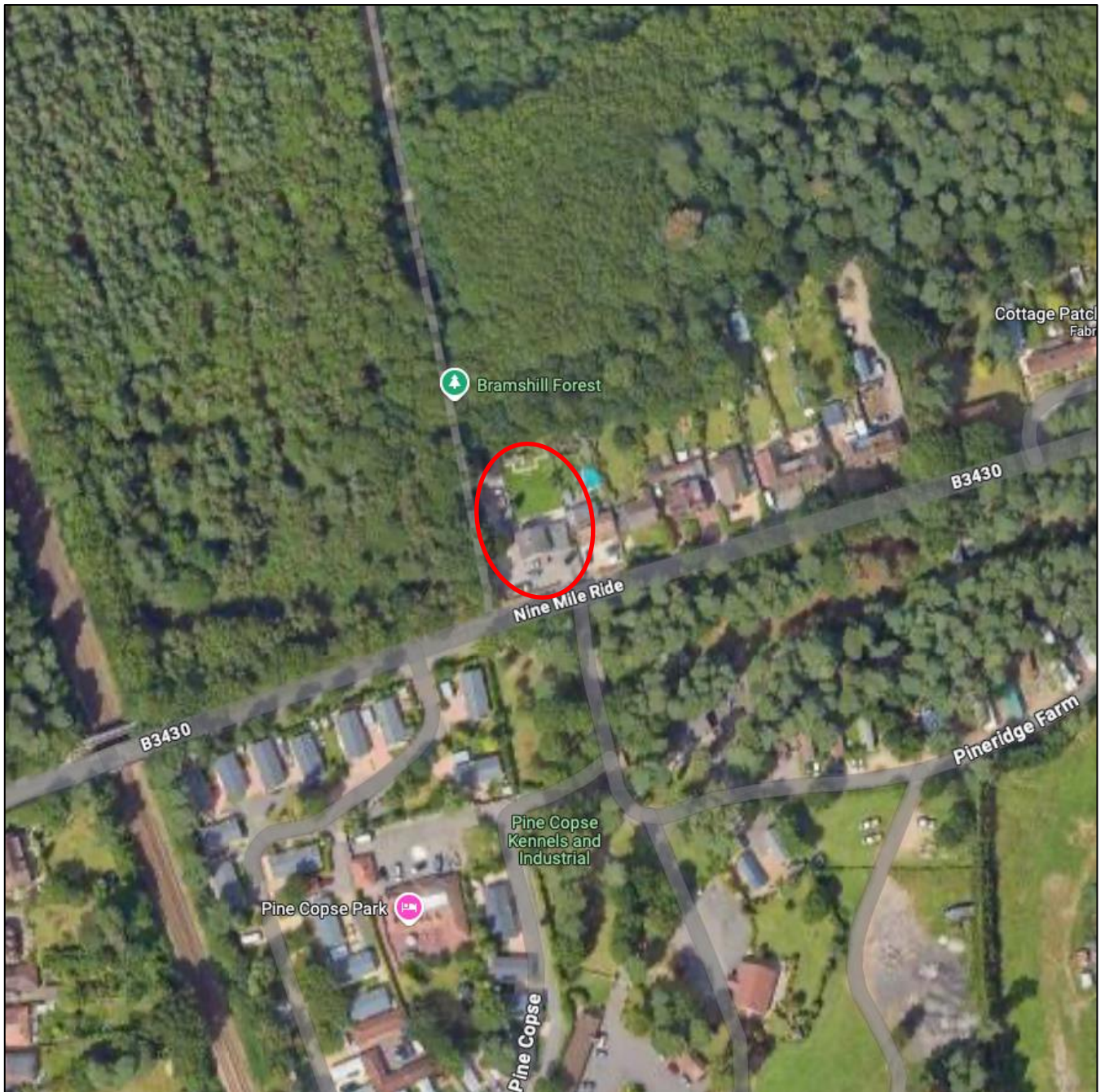
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APPENDIX 1: Site Location



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APPENDIX 2: Photographs



Photograph 1: Flat-roofed, single storey extension.



Photograph 2: Loft space.



Photograph 3: Loft space.



Photograph 4: Loft space.



Photograph 5: Rear elevation.



Photograph 6: Rear elevation.



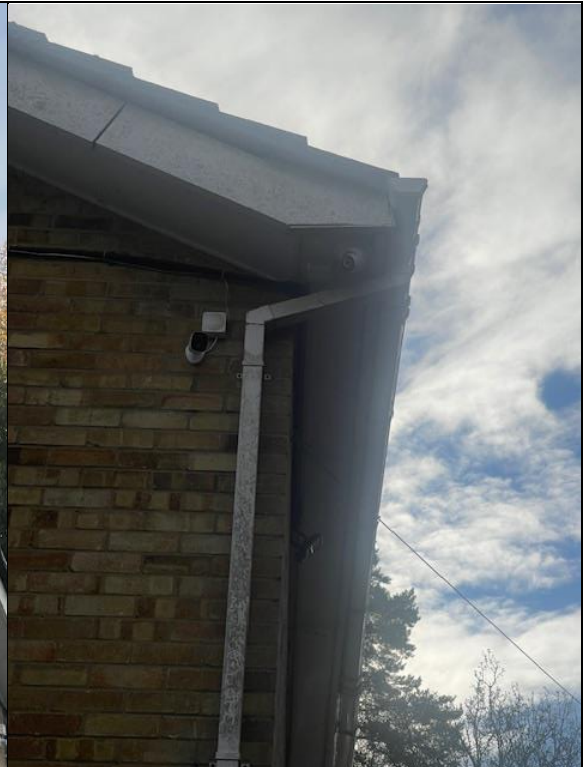
Photograph 7: Soffits in good condition.



Photograph 8: Front elevation.



Photograph 9: Rear elevation.



Photograph 10: Barge boards and soffits in good condition.



Photograph 11: Rear elevations.



Photograph 12: Single-storey section of house.



Photograph 13: uPVC guttering.



Photograph 14: Front elevation.



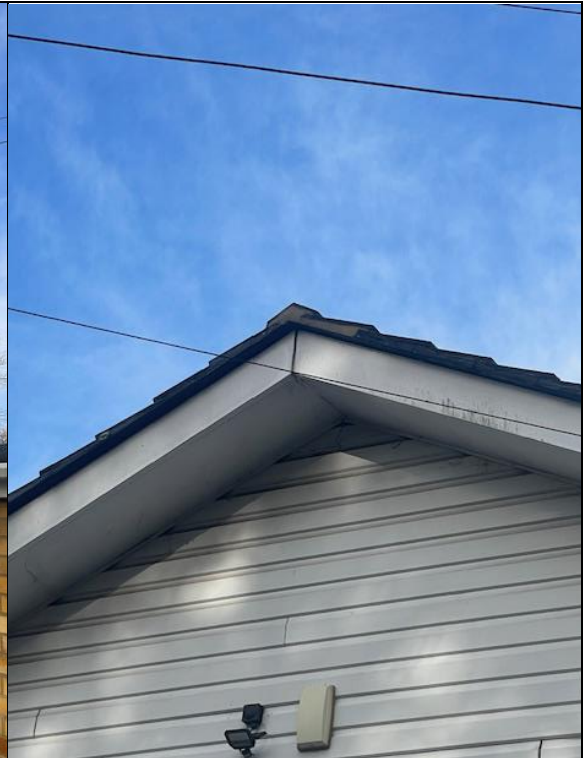
Photograph 15: Side of flat-roofed section of house.



Photograph 16: Front and side elevation.



Photograph 17: Front elevation.



Photograph 18: Front elevation.



Photograph 19: Soffits in good condition.

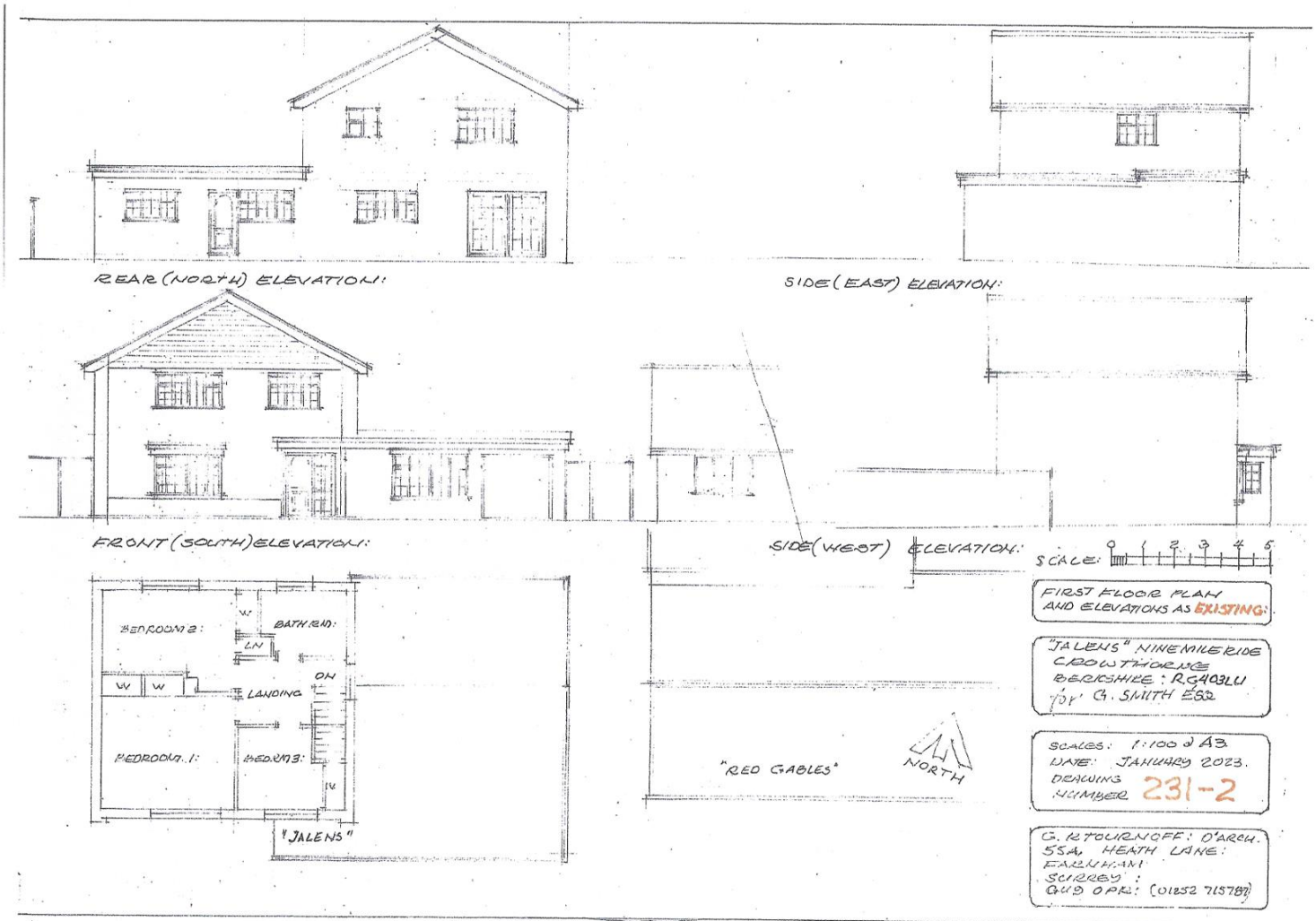


Photograph 20: Side elevation.



Photograph 21: Side elevation.

APPENDIX 3: Existing Elevations



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APPENDIX 4: Biodiversity Enhancements

