



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL (DBW) AT 104 READING ROAD FINCHAMPSTEAD



**Prepared for:
Mr D Tottle & Ms C Port
104 Reading Road
Finchampstead
RG40 4RA**

23 June 2025

Ref: SPH/NP/PEA-25/10.05



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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 D Tottle & Ms C Port to conduct a preliminary ecological appraisal (daytime bat walkover [DBW]) of 104 Reading Road, Finchampstead, RG40 4RA. This is to support a forthcoming planning application to Wokingham Borough Council.

The site visit was carried out on Tuesday 10 June 2025 at 12 noon, 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 that two statutory designated sites are located within, and one current European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) for bats has been granted within 2km of the proposed development site. The immediate surroundings provide suitable habitat for roosting, commuting or foraging bats with tree and hedge lined agricultural land, woodland, copses and a river 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 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 front dormer and/or hanging tiles/roof over the front porch 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 D Tottle & Ms C Port to conduct a DBW of 104 Reading Road, Finchampstead, RG40 4RA 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/two storey rear extension following demolition of the rear conservatory and convert the integral garage into habitable accommodation, 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 SU76916308, see Figure 1 below. An overview of the immediate area is shown on Figure 2, courtesy of Bing Maps.

Figure 1. 104 Reading Road, Finchampstead, highlighted.

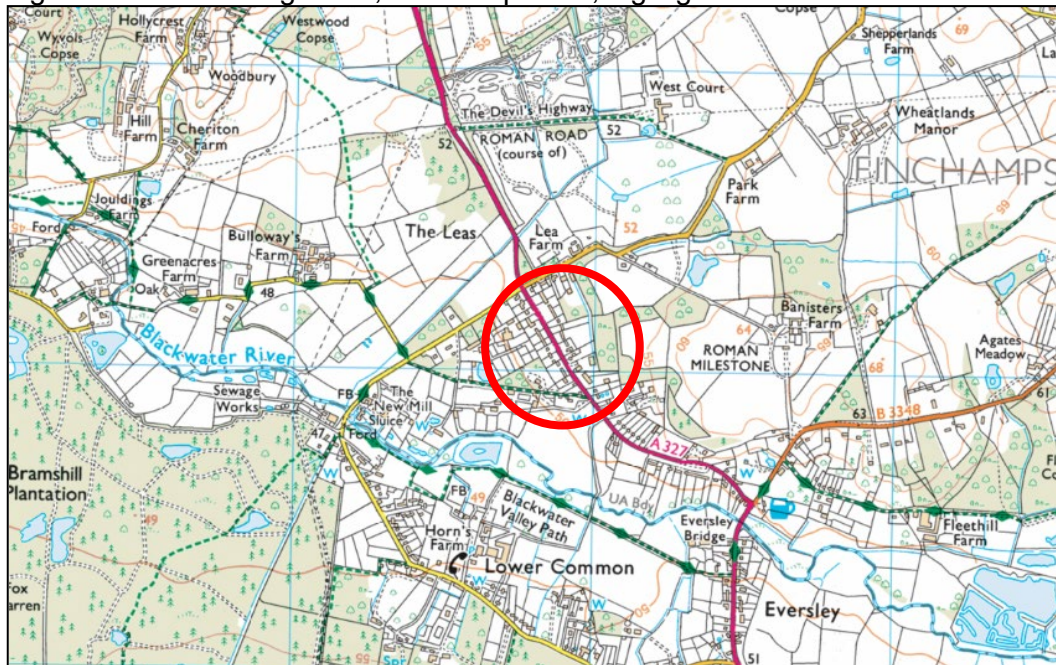
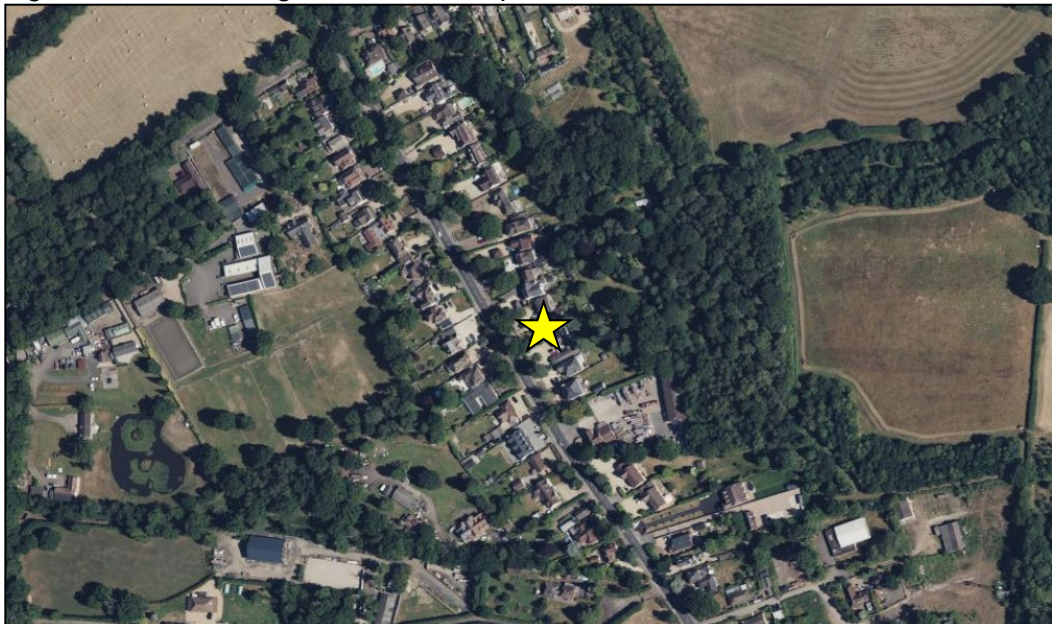


Figure 2. 104 Reading Road, Finchampstead, overview of the immediate area.





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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 gravelled front garden/parking area with shrubs/mature trees on the boundaries (see cover photograph), and a rear garden which is mainly laid to lawn, with patio area and occasional shrubs, see Figure 3 below. The site itself offers some foraging and commuting habitat for bats and there is good ecological connectivity to bat foraging and commuting habitat in the wider landscape.

Figure 3. Rear garden. 104 Reading Road, Finchampstead. 10.06.25



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 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 semi-rural area to the west of Finchampstead village with properties and gardens of differing sizes and styles to the north and south. The back garden connects directly to Poor's Copse and thereafter tree and hedge lined agricultural fields. To the south is a large, freshwater lake, the Long River and more tree/hedge lined agricultural fields. All of these areas are likely to provide good habitat to support roosting, commuting and foraging bats and are directly connected to the site.



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Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) and Bramshill Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lie within 2km of the proposed development site and there is ecological connectivity from the site to these designated sites. A search of the Magic interactive website revealed one current EPSLs 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
2015-7589-EPS-AD1-2	08/2025	Common and soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, serotine and natterer's bat

4.2 Daylight Survey

The DBW of 104 Reading Road, Finchampstead, RG40 4RA was carried out by Nick Powell on Tuesday 10 June 2025 at 12 noon. The weather conditions for the survey were dry and bright with a temperature of 22.8 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. This includes the wooden garden room in the rear garden as it will not be affected by the proposed works.

4.3 Constraints

Full access to the site during the visit was made possible by the client and there were no constraints 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, brick-built, rendered and painted building that is in a good condition externally. The double pitched roof with rear, catslide section (see Figure 4 below) is covered in well-fitted composite tiles, none of which are missing or broken, see Figure 5 on page 9. The ridge tiles are all tightly sealed and had no gaps in which crevice dwelling bats could utilise for roosting, see Figure 6 on page 9. The verges are all well cemented with no gaps which roosting bats could exploit (see Figure 7 on page 10) and all lead flashing around the chimney stack, Velux window and affixing the subservient pitched roof section to the main building is flush fitted, see Figure 8 on page 10. 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 9 on page 11. On the rear elevation is a uPVC and glass conservatory on dwarf wall (see Figure 10 on page 11), which due to the construction material and light ingress offers no roosting potential. There is a dormer window on the front elevation of the property, the roof of which is covered in well fitted tiles and there is no missing mortar from the ridge/hip tiles, the sides are covered in hanging tiles some of which have moved leaving gaps (see Figure 11 on page 12) however, this section of the building is not being affected by the proposed works. There is also a section of hanging tiles on the front elevation, bat droppings similar to those of *pipistrelle sp.* bats were observed on the porch tiles below the hanging tiles on middle section, see Figure 12 on page 12. Again, this section of the property is not being affected by the proposed works.

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the external inspection of the sections of the property to be affected by the proposed works 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. Rear view of property. 104 Reading Road, Finchampstead. 10.06.25





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Figure 5. Example of roof tiles. 104 Reading Road, Finchampstead. 10.06.25



Figure 6. Example sealed ridge tiles. 104 Reading Road, Finchampstead. 10.06.25





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Figure 7. Example of sealed verges. 104 Reading Road, Finchampstead. 10.06.25



Figure 8. Example well fitted lead flashing. 104 Reading Road, Finchampstead. 10.06.25





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Figure 9. Example sealed soffits/fascias. 104 Reading Road, Finchampstead. 10.06.25



Figure 10. Rear conservatory. 104 Reading Road, Finchampstead. 10.06.25





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Figure 11. Dormer on front elevation. 104 Reading Road, Finchampstead. 10.06.25



Figure 12. Bat droppings on front elevation. 104 Reading Road, Finchampstead. 10.06.25





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 lit, partially 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. 104 Reading Road, Finchampstead. 10.06.25



Figure 14. Example of membrane lining. 104 Reading Road, Finchampstead. 10.06.25





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.

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



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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.

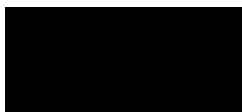
Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004). Bat Workers' Manual (3rd Edition). Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

9. Queries

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

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

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Bramley House
Newnham Bridge
Tenbury Wells
WR15 8NX



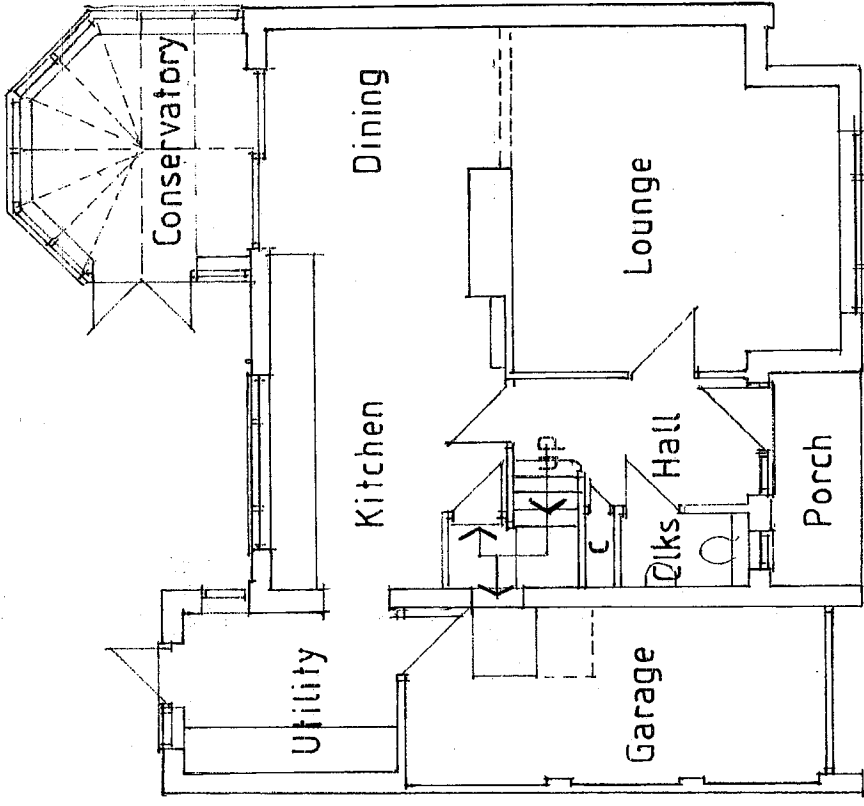
Simon Holmes MSc. CEnv.
Consultant, Urban Tree Experts
Natural England Licence CLS-CLS-17637, CLS-CLS-17638



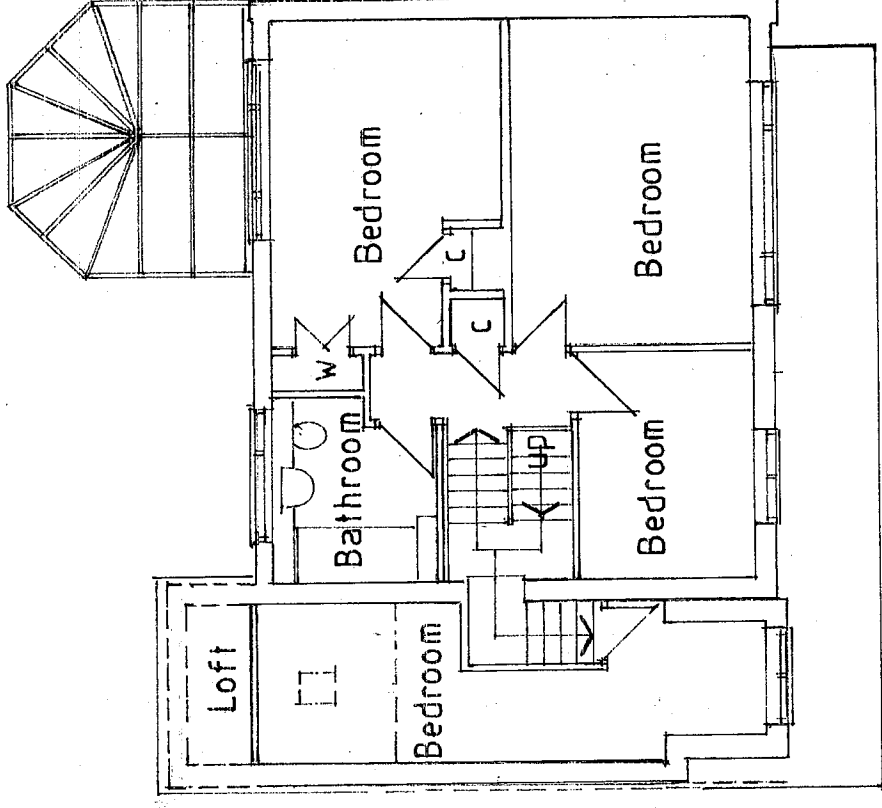
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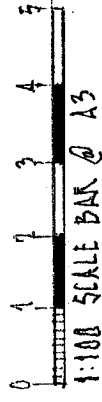
APPENDIX 1



Existing Ground Floor Plan



Existing First Floor Plan



Rev. A Revch deleted title block
17.6.15

Proposed Single Storey/Two Storey Rear Extension
and Internal Alterations following Demolition of
Conservatory at 104 Reading Road, Finchampstead

Client
Mr D. Tottle and Ms C. Port
104, Reading Road
Finchampstead
Berkshire
RG40 4RA

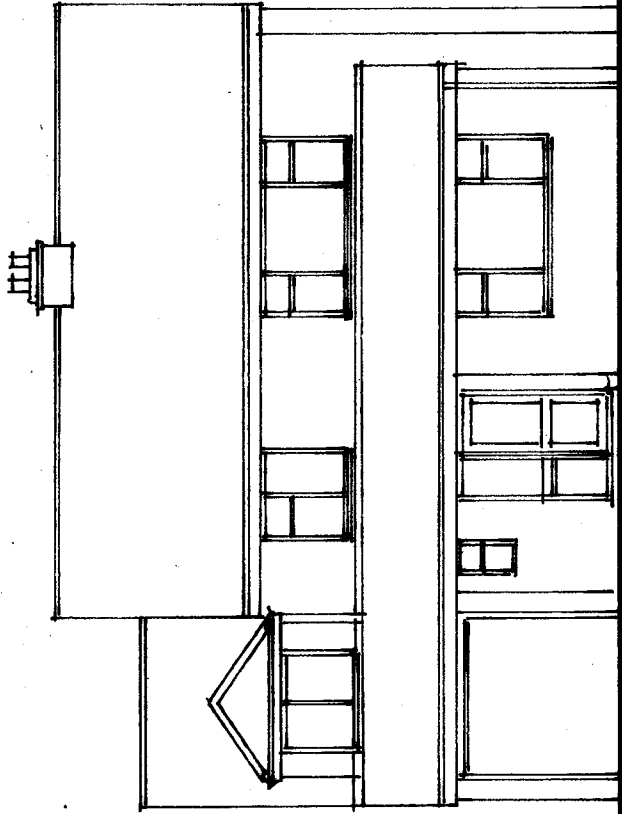
Description

Existing Floor Plans

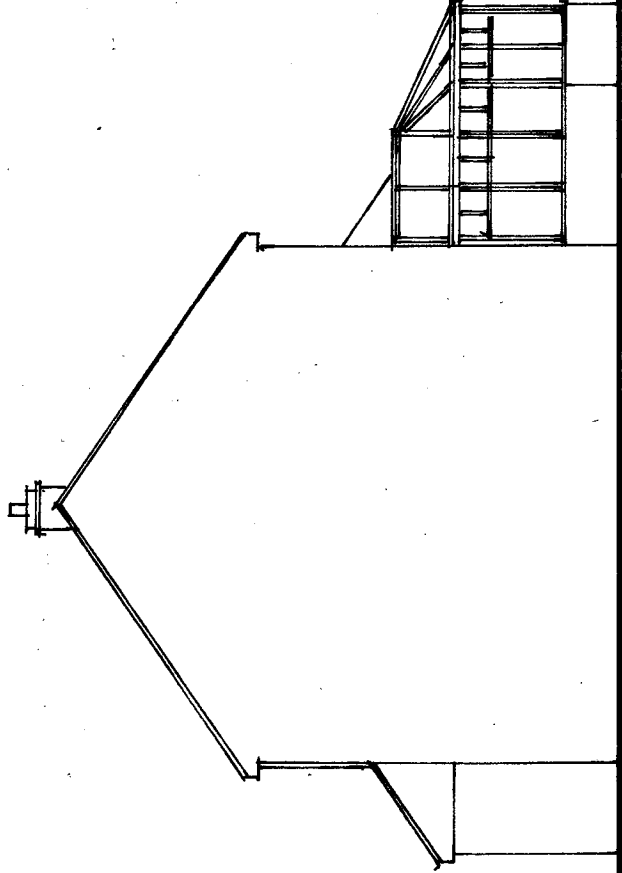
All dimensions to be checked on site. Any discrepancy between this drawing and other information is to be referred to the Planning Consultant. This drawing is copyright.

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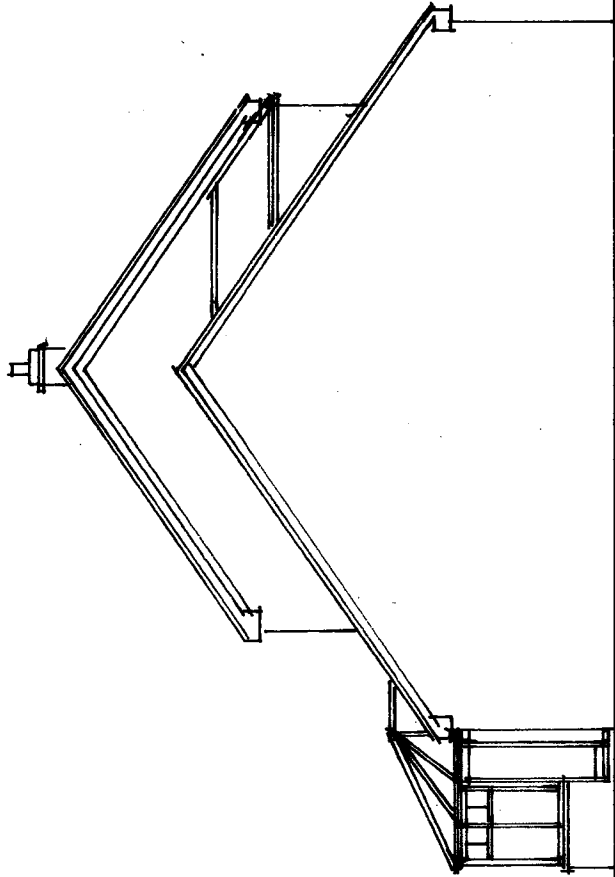
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28 Broad Street Wokingham Berkshire RG40 1AB Tel/Fax: 0118 989 0990	1:100	22505-3	01	A



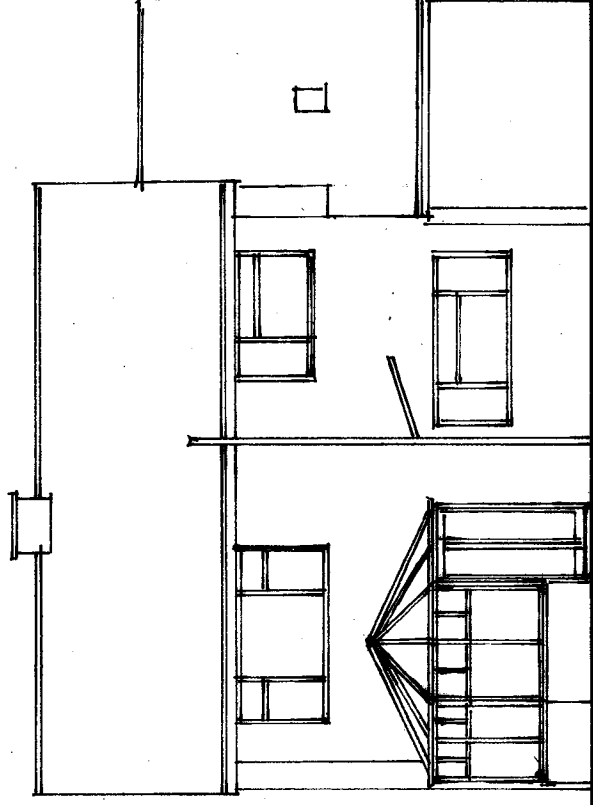
South West Elevation (Existing)



South East Elevation (Existing)



North West Elevation (Existing)



North East Elevation (Existing)



Rev A 17.6.95
Porch deleted off Title Block

Proposed Single Storey/Two Storey Rear Extension
and Internal Alterations following Demolition of
Conservatory at 104 Reading Road, Finchampstead

Client Description

Mr D. Tottle and Ms C. Port Existing Elevations

104 Reading Road
Finchampstead

Berkshire
RG40 4RA

All dimensions to be checked on site. Any discrepancy between this drawing and other information is to be referred to the Planning Consultant. This drawing is copyright.

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28 Broad Street

Wokingham

Berkshire

RG40 1AB

Tel/Fax: 0118 989 0990

date 21/05/25

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Scale 1:100

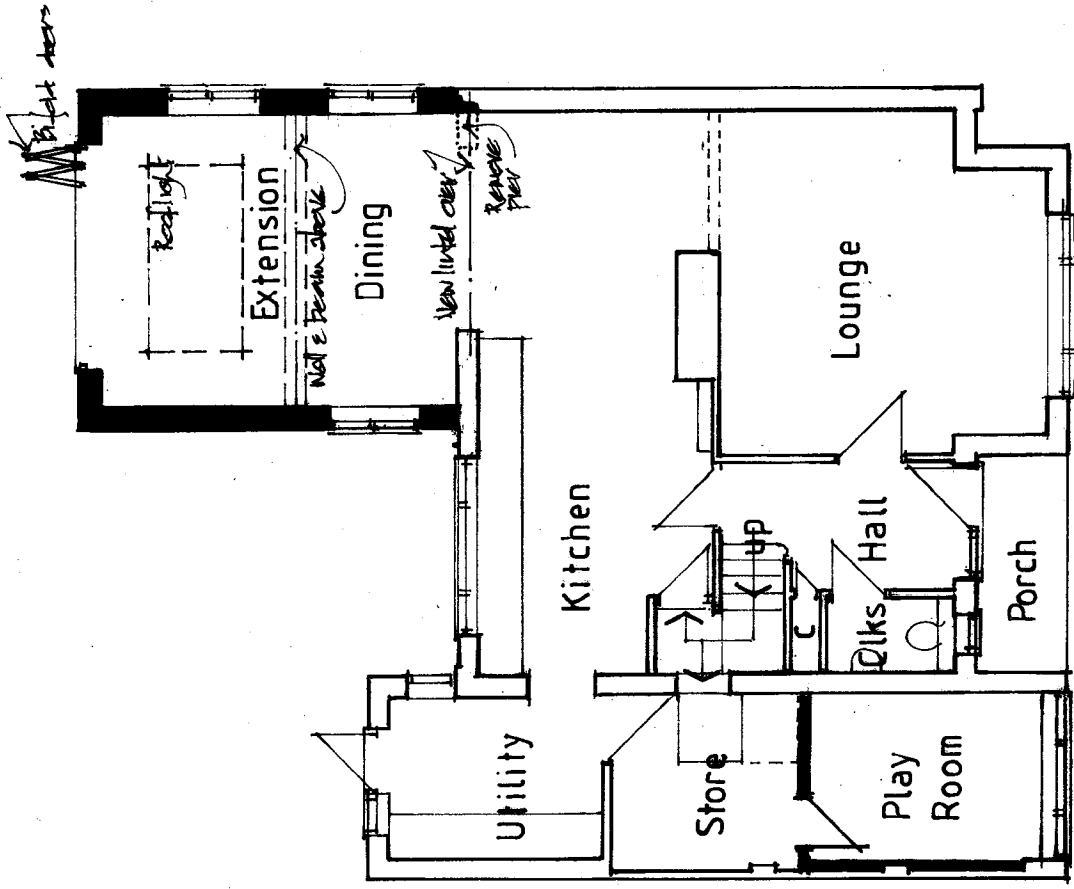
Project 22505-3

drawing

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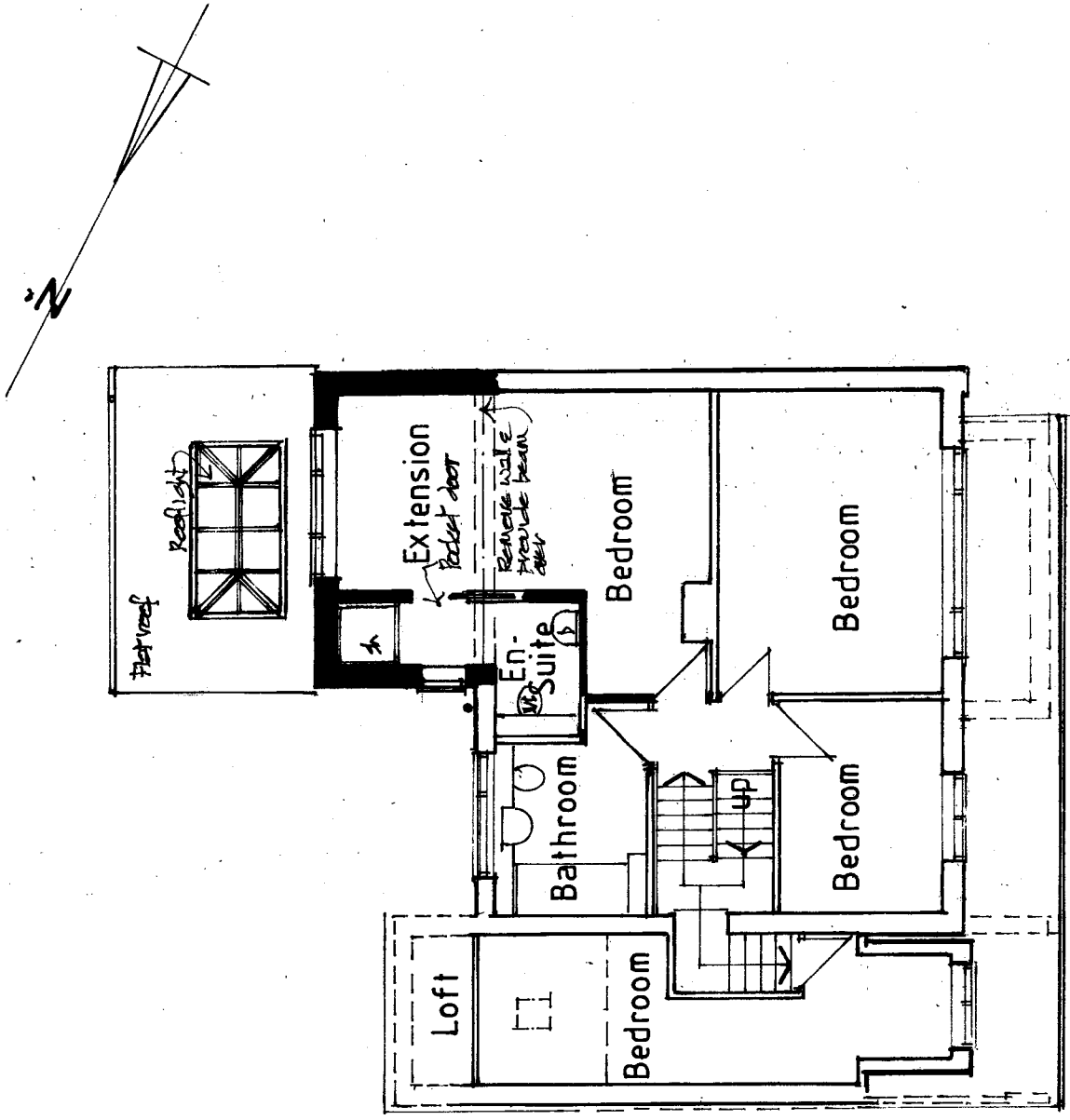
A



Proposed Ground Floor Plan



REV A Porch removed as agreed with client
17.6.25



Proposed First Floor Plan

Proposed Single Storey/Two Storey Rear Extension
and Internal Alterations following Demolition of
Conservatory at 104 Reading Road, Finchampstead

Client Description

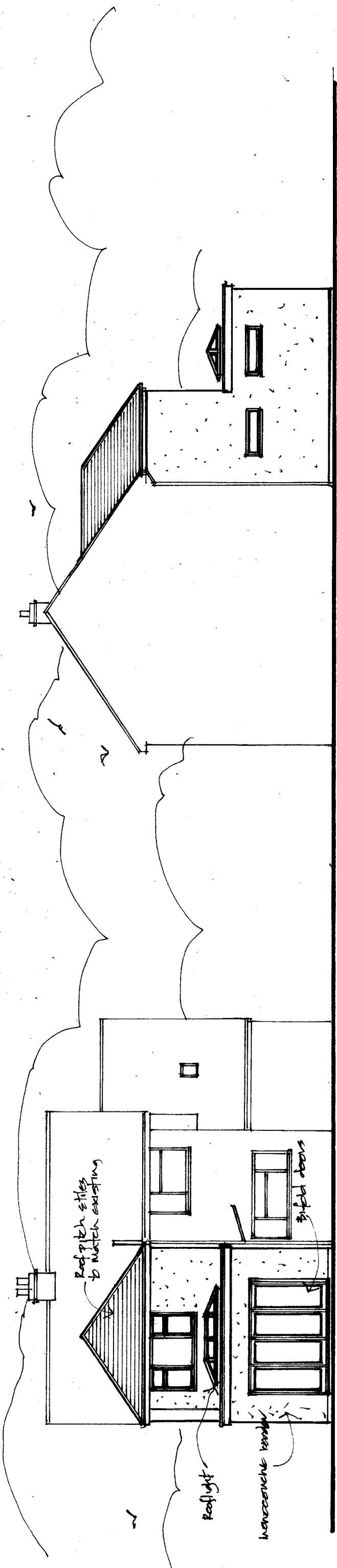
Mr D. Tottle and Ms C. Port Proposed Floor Plans

104 Reading Road
Finchampstead
Berkshire
RG40 4RA

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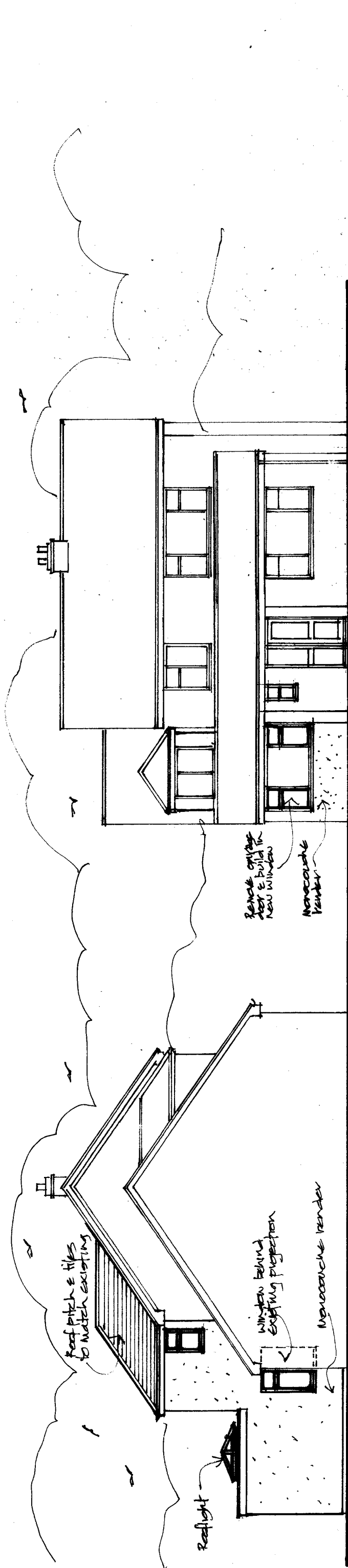
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Client	Project	Scale	date	Project	drawing	revision
28 Broad Street Wokingham Berkshire RG40 1AB Tel/Fax: 0118 989 0990	22505-3	1:100	21/05/25	22505-3	03	A



Proposed North East Elevation

Proposed North West Elevation



Proposed South East Elevation

Proposed South West Elevation

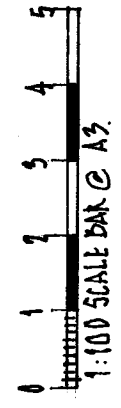
Proposed Single Storey/Two Storey Rear Extension
and Internal Alterations following Demolition of
Conservatory at 104 Reading Road, Finchampstead

Client: Mr D. Tottle and Ms C. Port
Description: Proposed Elevations
104 Reading Road
Finchampstead
Berkshire
RG40 4RA

All dimensions to be checked on site. Any discrepancy between this drawing and other information is to be referred to the Planning Consultant. This drawing is copyright.

MARTIN BUTLER PARTNERSHIP LIMITED		Scale	Project	drawing	revision
28 Broad Street	Wokingham	date 21/05/25	1:100	22505-3	04
Berkshire	RG40 1AB	drawn MB			A
Tel/Fax: 0118 989 0990					

Rev A Back deleted as agreed with client
17.6.25





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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.