



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL (DBW) AT 101 BELMONT ROAD READING



**Prepared for:
Ms S Brar
101 Belmont Road
Reading
RG30 2UY**

26 June 2026

Ref: SPH/NP/PEA-26/16.06



Urban Tree Experts

BS5837 – Tree Surveys – Ecological Consulting

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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 Ms S Brar to conduct a preliminary ecological appraisal (daytime bat walkover [DBW]) of 101 Belmont Road, Reading, RG30 2UY. This is to support a forthcoming planning application to Reading Borough Council.

The site visit was carried out on Tuesday 16 June 2026 commencing at 11am, 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 that three statutory designated sites are located within, and no current European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) for bats have been granted within 2km of the proposed development site. The immediate surrounding habitat does not provide suitable habitat for roosting, commuting or foraging bats, due to the high-density housing however, via back gardens there is ecological connectivity to Prospect Park which provides suitable habitat for roosting, commuting or foraging bats.

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 properties' suitability to support roosting bats was assessed and no potential roost features were identified during the preliminary inspection. When combined, this lack of features, along with the data from the desk top study, results in the property being characterised as having a negligible potential¹ to support roosting bats.

In line with best practice guidelines², no further survey effort is 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 Ms S Brar to conduct a DBW of 101 Belmont Road, Reading, RG30 2UY. This is to support a forthcoming planning application to Reading 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 Reading Borough Council that will seek to construct a part two storey, part single storey rear extension and convert the loft into habitable accommodation, see plans 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 SU69787327, see Figure 1 below. An overview of the immediate area is shown on Figure 2, courtesy of Bing Maps.

Figure 1. 101 Belmont Road, Reading, highlighted.

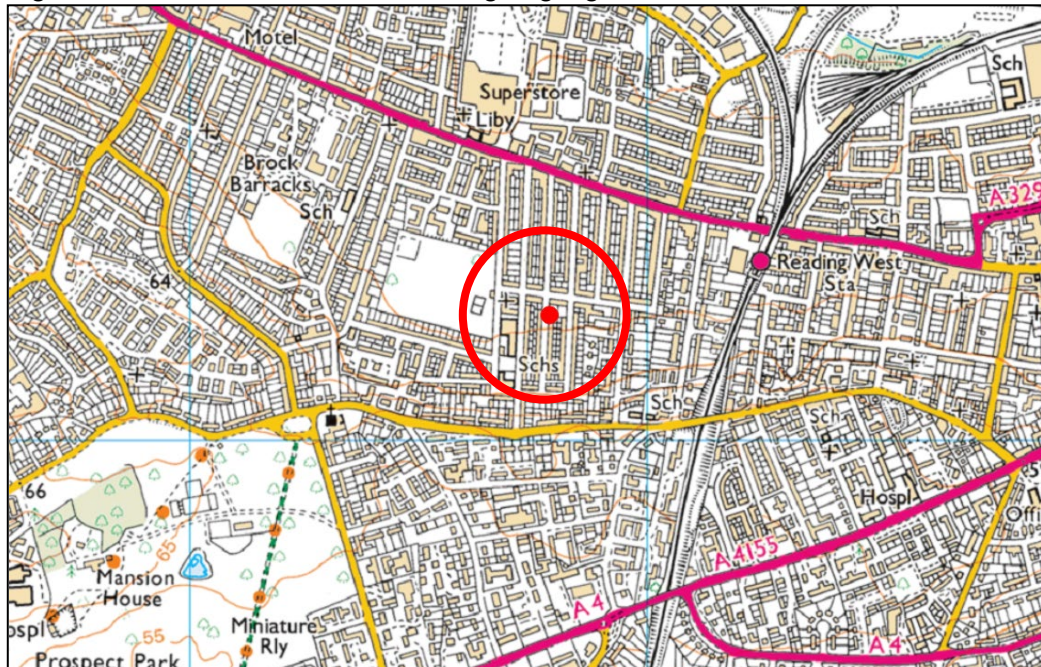


Figure 2. 101 Belmont Road, Reading, overview of the immediate area.





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3.2 Site Description

The application site comprises an end of terrace two-storey, brick-built property with rear single storey extension. The property abuts Belmont Road with space for the refuse bins. The small rear garden is approached via a concrete walkway and contains a small area of grass with shrubs in the neighbouring gardens, see Figure 3 below. The site itself offers no foraging and commuting habitat for bats and there is limited ecological connectivity to Prospect Park.

Figure 3. Walkway and rear garden. 101 Belmont Road, Reading. 16.06.26



4. Survey Methodology

4.1 Pre-Survey Data Search

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 suburban area, 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 residential area to the west of Rading town centre and is surrounded by similar properties and gardens. Further afield to the east is a main railway line, to the west Kensington Park and to the southwest Prospect Park which is known to provide good habitat for bats. Further to the west is Lousehill Copse Local Nature Reserve (LNR). The wider landscape provides areas of woodland, farmland, parkland and the River Thames, all of which provide good habitat for bats although there are no ecological corridors connecting the site to these areas.

Lousehill LNR, Round Copse LNR and McIlroy Park LNR lie within 2km of the site, although there is no ecological connectivity from these designated sites to the site. A search of the Magic interactive website revealed no current EPSL for bats has been granted within 2km of the site however there are three expired ones.



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4.2 Daylight Survey

The DBW of 101 Belmont Road, Reading, RG30 2UY was carried out by Nick Powell on Tuesday 16 June 2026 commencing at 11am. The weather conditions for the survey were dry and bright with a temperature of 19.7 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 was carried out to identify any signs of occupation by bats and features that could offer potential roosting sites following standard survey guidelines. Features investigated included:

- Construction of the building – soffits, loft space, tiles/slates, lead flashings etc.
- Building condition – structure of roof and walls.
- Internal conditions – microclimate stability, draughts etc.
- Access points – potential entry and exit points for bats.
- Roosting points – cracks and crevices, between underlay and roofing tiles/slates.

Field signs that would indicate the presence of bats were searched for. These included:

- Bat droppings on the floor and walls of the building.
- Feeding remains (particularly butterfly and moth wings).
- Evidence of urine and/or oily staining around possible roost entrances.
- Presence of areas cleared of cobwebs.
- Where a breathable roofing membrane has been fitted staining on the membrane may suggest use by bats.
- Odour can sometimes suggest the present of bats.
- Squeaking and chattering can reveal bats roosting between the tiles and roofing underlay.

Buildings or structures that were not to be affected by the current proposals or with no bat roosting potential were not inspected.

4.3 Constraints

Access to the site during the visit was made possible by the client. There was no access to the loft void in the rear double storey section of the property but given the condition of the roof externally this was not considered a significant constraint to the survey.

5. Survey Findings

5.1 External Inspection

The external features of the property were examined for signs described in section 4.2. Windowsills, exposed features around the windows, fascias and walls were inspected for any evidence of bat droppings or staining.

The property is a Victorian end of terrace, two-storey, brick-built building with single storey rear extension (see Figure 4 on page 8), all of which is in a fair to good condition externally. The cross-pitched roof is covered in slate tiles, none of which were broken or missing (see Figure 5 on page 8), and there are no gaps in the ridge tiles suitable for crevice dwelling bat species to utilise for roosting, see Figure 6 on page 9. The verges offer no roosting potential (see Figure 7 on page 9) and the valleys are sealed. The soffits and fascias are tight to the wall plate with no splits or gaps, see Figure 8 on page 10.



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The roof of the rear, single storey extension is covered in well fitted bitumen felt with no rips or tears suitable for roosting and it is firmly affixed to the main dwelling (see Figure 9 on page 10), and the fascias are tightly fitting.

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the external inspection of the property and there were no visible roosting opportunities for bats or access into the building for roosting bats.

Figure 4. Rear view of property. 101 Belmont Road, Reading. 16.06.26



Figure 5. Example slate covering on roof. 101 Belmont Road, Reading. 16.06.26





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Figure 6. Example sealed ridge tiles. 101 Belmont Road, Reading. 16.06.26



Figure 7. Example verges. 101 Belmont Road, Reading. 16.06.26





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Figure 8. Example well fitted soffits and fascias. 101 Belmont Road, Reading. 16.06.26



Figure 9. Bitumen covering rear extension and flush fascias. 101 Belmont Road, Reading. 16.06.26





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5.2 Internal Inspection

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

The main loft space of the property was accessed via small hatch in a cupboard. The loft space is in a fair condition internally. The loft is not lit, partially boarded and insulated, see Figure 10 below. The roof tiles were lined with bitumen felt, all of which is in a good condition with no rips or tears, see Figure 10 below.

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the internal inspection of the loft space and internally there appeared to be no roosting opportunities for bats within this space.

Figure 10. Example loft space and bitumen felt lining to tiles. 101 Belmont Road, Reading. 16.06.26





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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 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 building which could be utilised by roosting bats or in which bats could access the building to roost.

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 property. Based on recommendations in the Bat Workers Manual and the Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines, no further survey effort is required.

7.2 Contingency Plan

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



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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



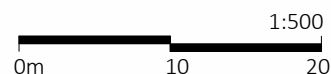
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APPENDIX 1



PROPOSED BLOCK PLAN



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STATUS:

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BERKSHIRE, RG30 2UY**

TITLE:

PROPOSED BLOCK PLAN

SCALE: @A4 DATE: DRAWN BY: CHECKED BY:

1 : 500

17/03/26

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PROJECT NO:

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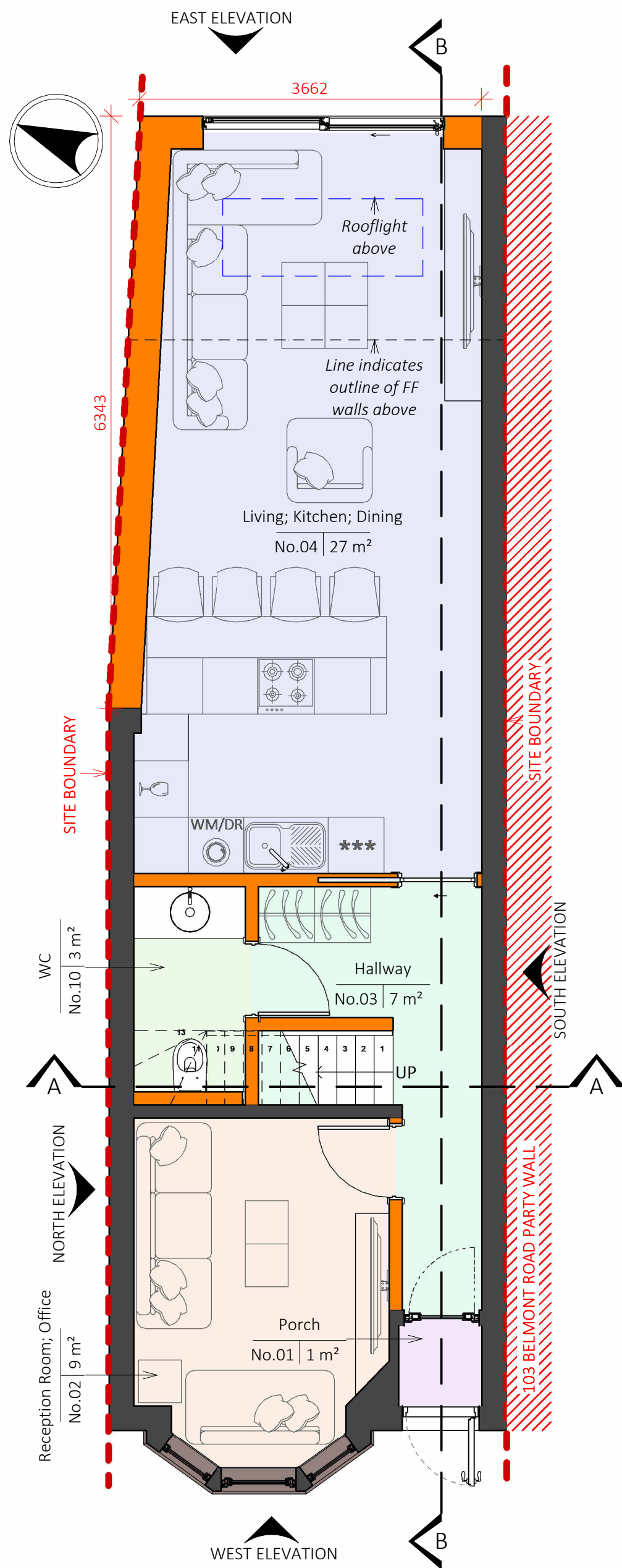


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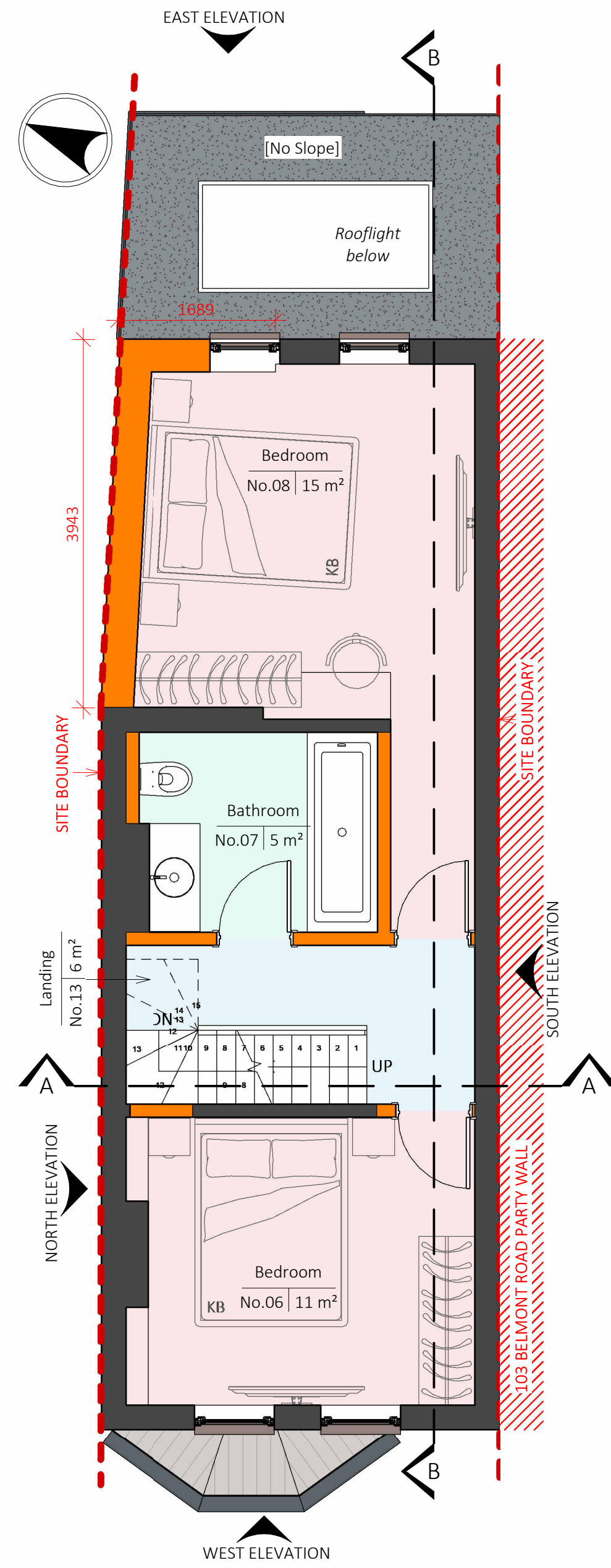
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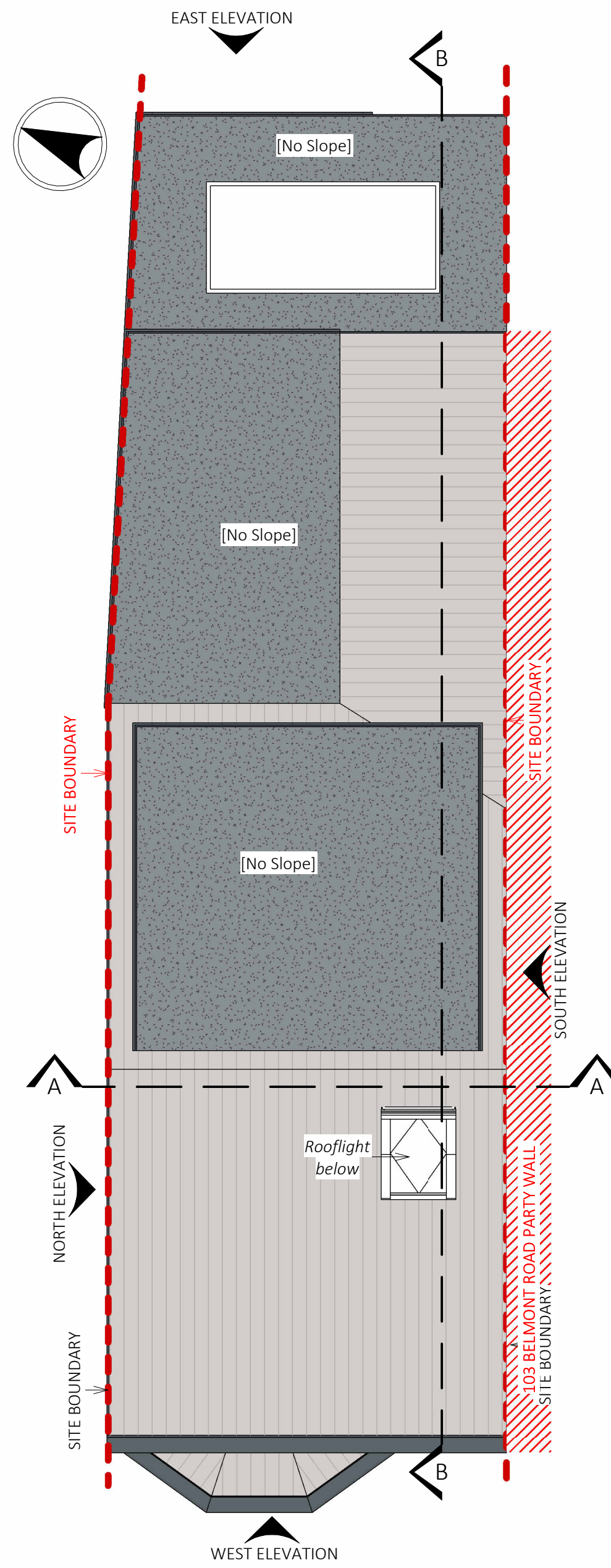
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PROPOSED GROUND
FLOOR PLAN



PROPOSED FIRST
FLOOR PLAN



PROPOSED
ROOF PLAN

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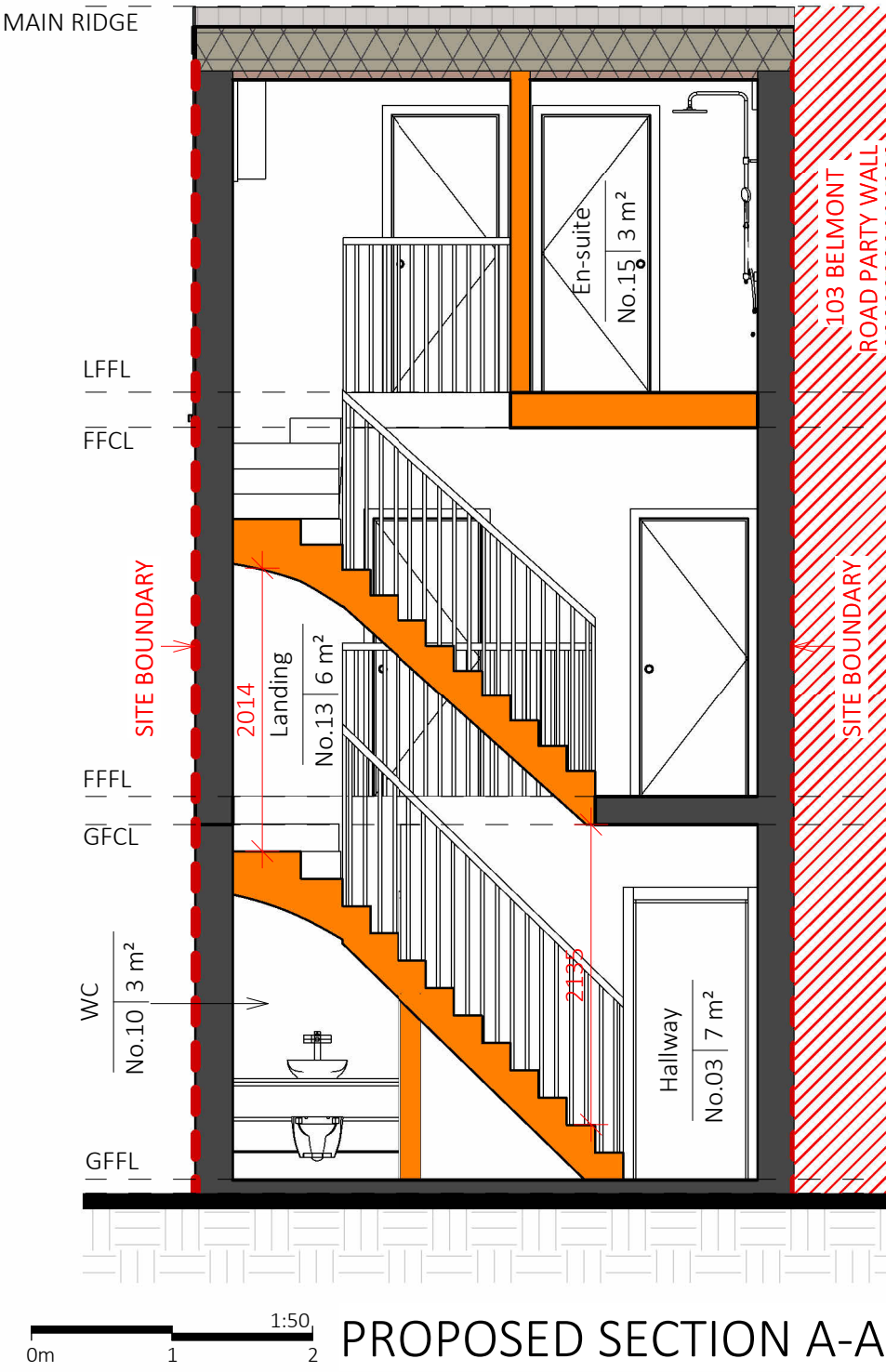
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TITLE:
PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS

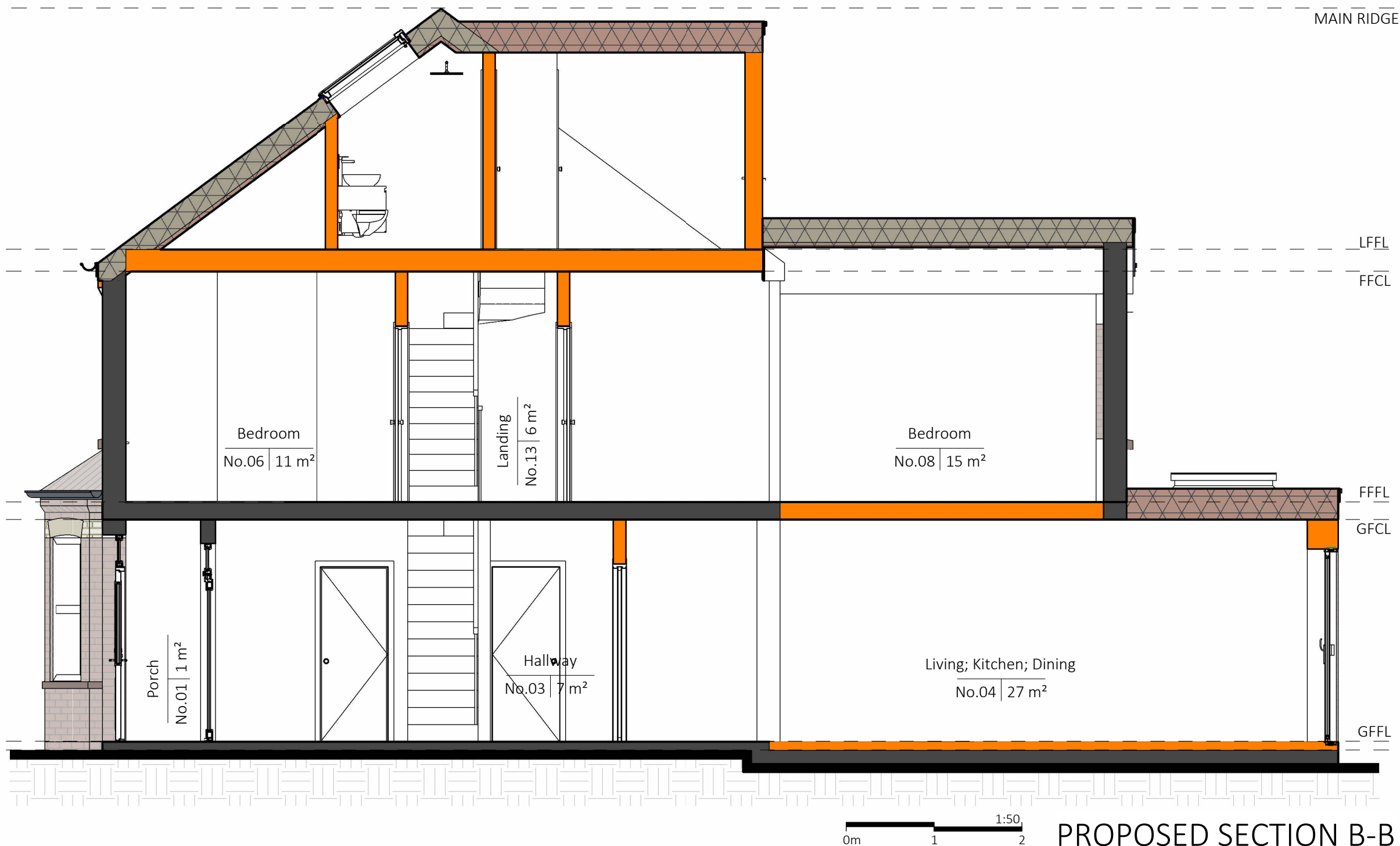
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101 BELMONT ROAD, READING, BERKSHIRE, RG30 2UY			
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PROPOSED SECTION B-B

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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 CS36 of the Reading Borough Core Strategy states *“Development should retain, protect and incorporate features of biodiversity or geological interest (including protected species and their habitats) found within the application site into their schemes. On sites with recognised biodiversity or geological value, development will not be permitted where there would be a direct or indirect adverse impact on the site, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that: -*

- i. The need for development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site; and*
- ii. Appropriate compensation, impact minimisation, mitigation and compensation 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.