



Twin Oaks, Uplowman

Ecological Appraisal

(Bats and Birds)

Reference Number: 23/4380.01

Client: Group Emmett Design Architects

Date:01/01/2024

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Executive Summary

Devon Wildlife Consultants (DWC) was commissioned by Group Emmett Design Architects to undertake an Ecological Appraisal (Bats & Birds) of a building known as the Garage attached to a residential property known as Twin Oaks, located to the east of Tiverton, Devon.

The building is currently utilised as a garage. It is understood that it is proposed to obtain planning permission to extend the existing garage and convert it into a residential dwelling.

The report comprises a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal which assesses the potential of the building to support roosting bats and nesting birds. No evidence of roosting bats was identified within the building and it is considered unlikely that bats would roost within the structure.

No evidence of nesting birds was noted within the building and no evidence of roosting or nesting barn owl activity was noted.

In light of the survey results, the following construction compliance recommendations are provided:

- No evidence of roosting bats currently using the building was identified however if bats were discovered during the proposed works, then any sheltering materials should be replaced around the bat and works within the immediate vicinity ceased until advice can be sought from Natural England or Devon Wildlife Consultants.

Recommendations to enhance the site post development are also provided to take into account the national biodiversity strategy detailed in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to preserve, restore and re-create priority habitats, ecological networks and to ensure the protection and recovery of priority species populations, linked to national and local targets.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Description of Site

The site comprises a building known as the Garage, attached to a residential property known as Twin Oaks, located to the east of Tiverton, Devon at National Grid Reference ST 016152.

1.2 Purpose of Assessment

DWC was commissioned by Group Emmett Design Architects to undertake an Ecological Appraisal (Bats & Birds) of the site. The purpose of the appraisal is to use the results of field surveys to describe and evaluate the ecological resources present within the site. The appraisal includes an assessment of the potential ecological constraints and opportunities which are likely to result from the development. Mitigation and enhancement proposals are included together with construction compliance recommendations to ensure the development conforms with relevant policy and legislation. The appraisal follows the steps set out by the mitigation hierarchy: avoid, minimise, restore and compensate.

1.3 Scope of Works

The building present within the site was subject to a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal to assess its potential to support roosting bats and nesting birds.

1.4 Development Proposals

It is understood that it is proposed to obtain planning permission to extend the existing garage and convert it into a residential dwelling. The proposed extension will result in the loss of approximately 135m² of vegetated garden and hardstanding. This assessment is based on Drawing No: 2024_01 Site Location and Floor Plans provided by the client and presented in Appendix 1.

2 Survey Methodology

2.1 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Bats & Birds)

A visual inspection of the building was undertaken utilising binoculars, an endoscope, a ladder and a torch to assess for evidence of bat activity such as droppings, insect prey remains, urine staining and/or actual bats. The building was also inspected for the presence of nesting birds, including barn owls *Tyto alba*, or their field signs such as whitewash, droppings, pellets and/or nest debris. Legislation relating to these species is provided in Appendix 2.

Following the Bat Survey Guidelines (BCT, 2023), the building was assigned a value of high/moderate/low/negligible/none:

- **High:** One or more potential roost sites suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a regular basis.
- **Moderate:** One or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats, but unlikely to support a roost type of high conservation status.
- **Low:** One or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats on an opportunistic basis.
- **Negligible:** No obvious features suitable for roosting bats; however a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can occasionally use small and apparently unsuitable features.
- **None:** No features likely to be utilised by roosting bats at any time of year.

These categories are used irrespective of the presence of a roost. If a roost is confirmed to be present this categorisation still stands but 'confirmed roost' will be added e.g. low – confirmed roost; moderate – confirmed roost; high – confirmed roost.

The site was surveyed on 17th January 2024 by Kitty Straghan BSc. MCIEEM, a Natural England licensed bat surveyor (Natural England Class Bat Licence Registration Number 2017-27979-CLS-CLS) and accredited agent under Barn Owl Licence Registration Number CL29/00350.

2.2 Limitations

The results of the survey will depend on signs of bat activity being identified, as it is unlikely that bats will be visible. A number of bat species roost in very small crevices, consequently it is possible that individuals may be missed during the survey as not every crevice or void can be fully inspected. In addition, it is possible that bird nests may be situated in concealed locations which may not be visible to the surveyor.

3 Results

3.1 Site Location

The landscape surrounding the site comprises grazing pasture with the village of Uplowman to the south. A single building known as the Garage was subject to assessment. Weather conditions recorded during the survey are presented in Appendix 3. The results of the survey are described below and photographs of the building are presented in Appendix 4.

3.2 The Garage

3.2.1 Building Description

Walls	Single skinned blockwork.
Roof structure	Pitched tiled roof. Underlined with plasterboard.
Potential access points for bats & birds	None.
Potential roosting features	None.

Table 3.1 The Garage Description

3.2.2 Roosting Bats

The building is in good condition with no visible gaps or crevices in the roof, soffits or walls. Furthermore the gable ends and ridge line are tightly sealed with no cracked or missing mortar.

No droppings were identified either within the roof space or on the exterior of the building.

Overall the suitability of the building for roosting bats is considered to be **negligible**.

3.2.3 Nesting Birds

No evidence of nesting activity was identified either within or on the exterior of the building and as there was a lack of access points into the interior of the building, it is unlikely that crevice-nesting bird species such as house sparrow *Passer domesticus* would utilise the structure.

There are no suitably sized access points to enable barn owls to roost/nest within the building.

Overall the suitability of the building for nesting birds is considered to be **negligible**.

3.3 Additional Considerations

The footprint of the proposed extension will result in the loss of approximately 135m² of vegetated garden and hardstanding. The site is exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain calculations which are required by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021 as it is considered a householder application. A householder application is an application that alters or enlarges a single house, including works within the garden.

4 Impacts and Recommendations

This section details design and construction compliance requirements, based on current UK and EU wildlife legislation and national and local planning policy. These recommendations must be followed to ensure the legislation is not contravened by the proposed development, including any site investigation or vegetation clearance works.

4.1 Construction Compliance

4.1.1 Roosting Bats

No evidence of roosting bats currently using the building was identified and therefore there are no perceived legal implications for the proposed development regarding bat species.

It is important to note that although no evidence of roosting bats was present at the time of the survey, bats may use a variety of roost sites throughout the year and may on occasion roost under tiles, under beams and joists and/or on wall tops. If bats were discovered during the proposed works, then any sheltering materials should be replaced around the bat and works within the immediate vicinity ceased until advice can be sought from Natural England or Devon Wildlife Consultants.

4.1.2 Nesting Birds

Based on the survey results there are no identified nesting bird or barn owl related constraints.

4.2 Mitigation and Enhancement

Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021 will require a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain as a condition of planning permission in England. The site is exempt from biodiversity net gain calculations as it is considered a householder application. However, net biodiversity gain is currently required under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

All mitigation and enhancement measures will need to be incorporated into scheme design and plans for the site. Provisions required for the scheme include:

- Incorporation of two house martin *Delichon urbicum* cups onto the converted garage.
- Incorporation of one bat roosting tube into the converted garage.
- Installation of 2 bird boxes onto mature trees within the site.

References

Bat Conservation Trust (2023). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines* (4th edition). Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Conservation of Habitats and Species Amendment (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. HMSO.

Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000). HMSO.

Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (2023). *National Planning Policy Framework* [National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/national-planning-policy-framework) [accessed on 17/01/2024].

Environment Act (2021 c.30). HMSO.

MAGIC. <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/> [accessed on 17/01/2024].

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006). HMSO.

Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981), as amended. HMSO.



Appendices

Appendix 1: Site Plan

Appendix 2: Legislation

Appendix 3: Weather Conditions

Appendix 4: Site Photographs

Appendix 1 – Site Plan



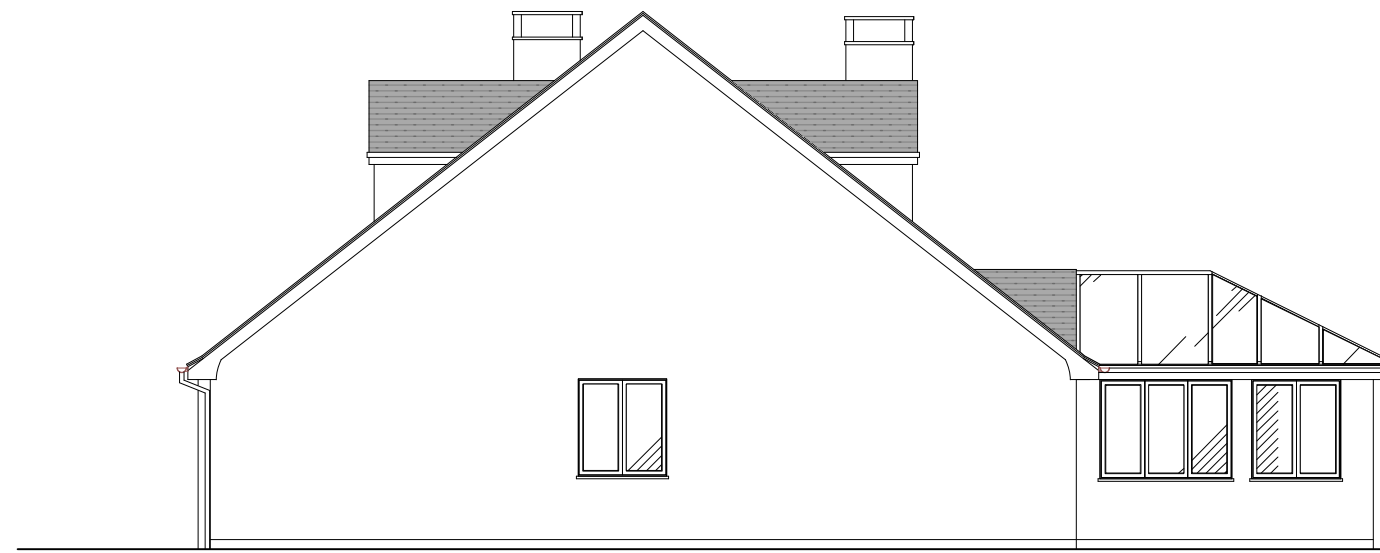
North West Elevation (as existing)
 1:100 @ A1



South West Elevation (as existing)
 1:100 @ A1



South East Elevation (as existing)
 1:100 @ A1

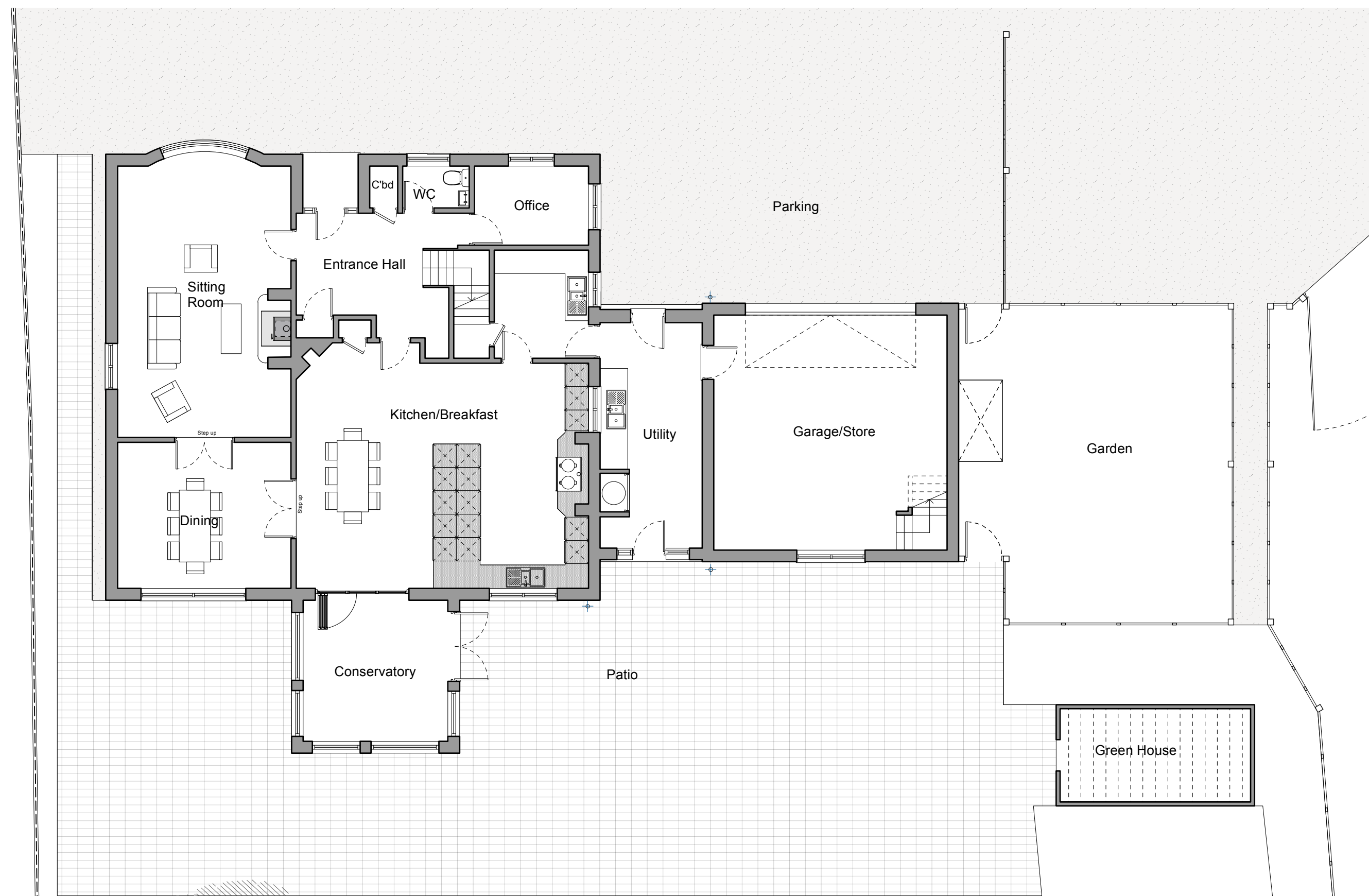


North East Elevation (as existing)
 1:100 @ A1

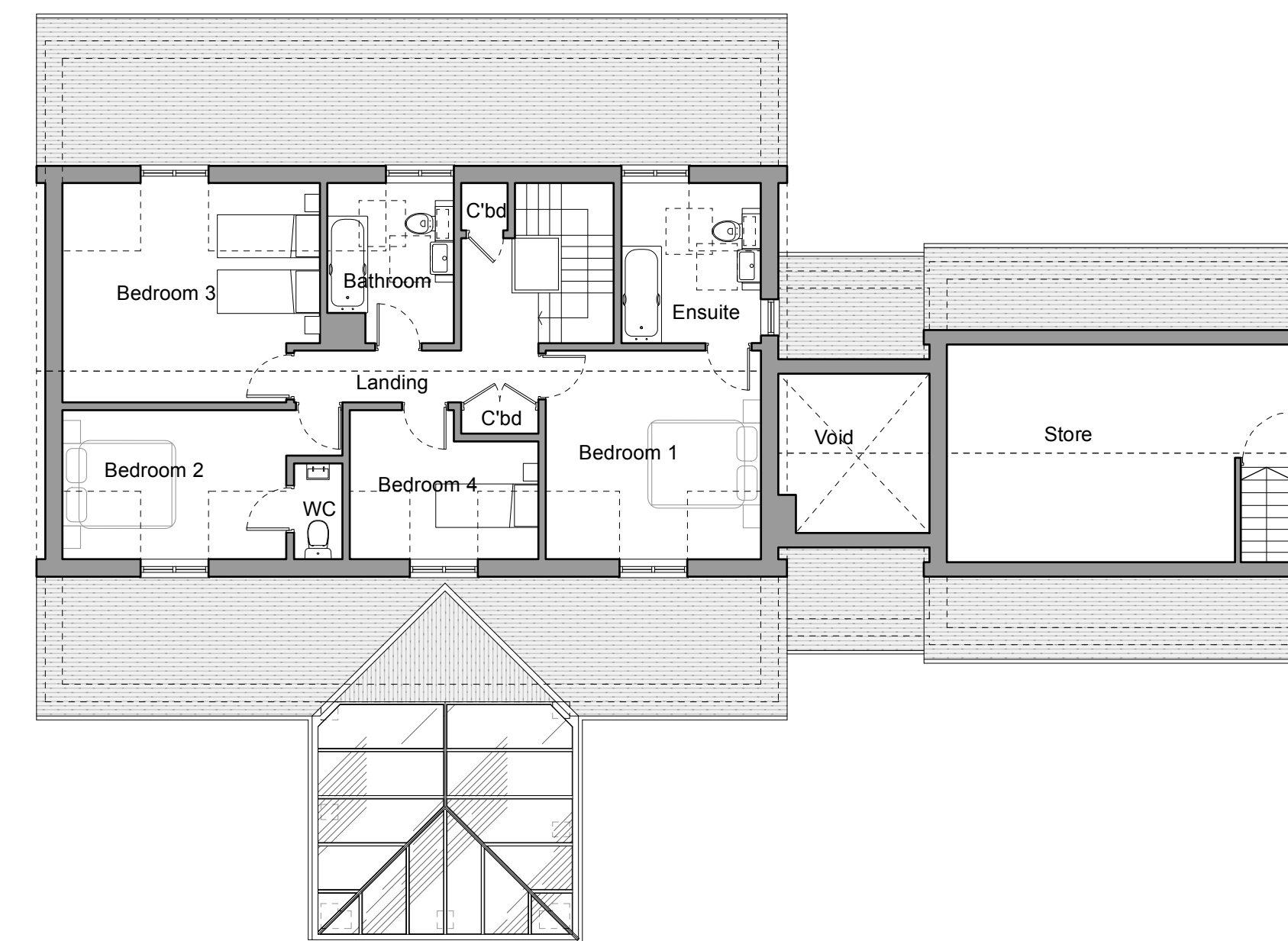


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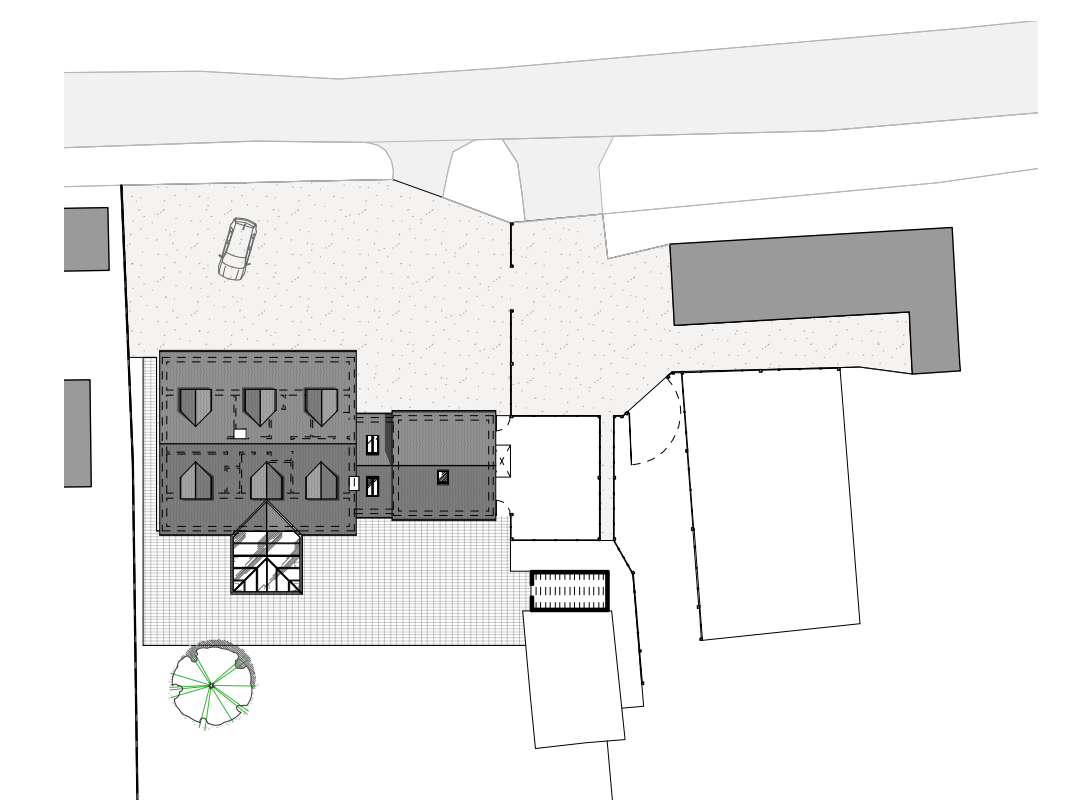
Site Location Plan (as existing)
 1:1250 @ A3



Ground Floor Plan (as existing)
 1:100 @ A1



First Floor Plan (as existing)
 1:100 @ A1



Site Plan (as existing)
 1:200 @ A1



Revision | by | date | suffix

Proposed Alterations to:
 Twin Oaks, Uplowman, Devon, EX16 7DP

Mr & Mrs T Hooper

Site Location & Floor Plans
 As Existing

Scale: 1:1250, 1:100 @ A1
 Date: January 2024

Drawing:
2024_01

GROUP EMMETT DESIGN ARCHITECTS



higher slade farm
 sheldon
 near honiton
 devon
 ex144qs

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Appendix 2 – Legislation

Bat Species

All British bats and their roosts are afforded strict protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), as well as the Conservation of Habitats and Species Amendment (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. In combination, these pieces of legislation give substantial protection to bats and their roost sites, and make it an offence for any person to carry out the following acts:

- Intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take a bat.
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection. This is taken to mean all bat roosts whether bats are present or not.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection.

In order to undertake actions that would result in damaging, destroying or obstructing access to a roost, or to disturb bats (whether in a roost or not), a licence is required from Natural England. In effect, this means that development activities that may disturb 'European protected species' are subject to such licensing, in order to remain within the law.

Nesting and Nest Building Birds

All birds, their nests and eggs are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Nesting is determined as being from when birds first initiate nest building up until the point when fledglings stop returning to the nest. It is an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird.
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird.
- Intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

Appendix 3 – Weather Conditions

Parameter	Condition
Temperature (°C)	2
Cloud cover (%)	20
Wind	F0
Precipitation	None

Table A3.1 Weather Conditions Recorded During the Survey

Appendix 4 – Site Photographs

	<p>Plate 1. Gable end of the garage and the vegetated garden.</p>
	<p>Plate 2. Roof space of the garage</p>

Table A4.1 Site Photographs