ALCA ecology

Land at Lindridge Lane, Desford

Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Statement

January 2026

This report contains sensitive ecological information. It is the responsibility of the Local Planning Authority to determine whether it should be made publicly available.

The advice within this document has been produced in accordance with guidance from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

Revision	Prepared by	Date	Reviewed by
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A – Removed erroneous mention of separate bat report	Bill Jeffreys BSc (Hons) MSc	16.01.26	BRJ / 16.01.26

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1.0 Executive Summary

Background
Alca Ecology were commissioned to undertake an Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment at a site located at Lindridge Lane, Desford. A walkover and desk study were undertaken to assess the potential of the site to support protected or notable species. A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) and subsequent nocturnal emergence survey were also undertaken.
Findings
One statutory designated site and one non-statutory designated site were recorded within the search area. No designated sites are expected to be affected by development due to the small-scale nature of proposals. The site consists of modified grassland, tall forbs, ruderal / ephemeral habitats and individual trees. GCN are not considered to pose a constraint to development. No further surveys are recommended. No bat roosts were recorded. Foraging / commuting / roosting bats are not considered to pose a constraint to development. Reptiles are not considered to pose a constraint to development. Badgers are not considered to pose a constraint to development. The BNG assessment for the site shows a loss of 0.42 (-33.3%) habitat units. Off-site BNG units will need to be purchased to ensure the proposed development achieves an overall 10% gain.
Recommendations / Enhancements
It is recommended that a range of bat and bird boxes are used within the site. A pre-commencement survey for badgers is recommended. Precautionary working methods are recommended with regard to badgers and reptiles.

2.0 Introduction

Background / Site Context

2.1 Alca Ecology Ltd were commissioned to undertake an Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment at a site located at Lindridge Lane, Desford, Leicestershire (central grid ref SK 47696 03818), hereafter referred to as 'the site'.

2.2 A desk study and site walkover were undertaken to categorise present habitats and to determine any potential constraints to development. A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats and single nocturnal emergence survey were undertaken on the single on-site building. Recommendations for potential enhancements to improve biodiversity within the development are provided.

2.3 The site, approximately 0.46 hectares in size, lies on the northeastern extent of the village of Desford, Leicestershire. The site consists of a single building, large grass lawn with associated garden planting and small area of ruderal / ephemeral habitat. The site is bound by residential development to the south and north, and a mix of grassland and farmland to the east and west.

2.4 Proposals for the site include the demolition of the single building and construction of four residential units, with associated access, gardens and green infrastructure.

3.0 Methods

Desk Study

3.1 A consultation exercise was undertaken whereby baseline ecological information from the last 20 years was collected and analysed. Details of statutory and non-statutory designated sites, granted European Protected Species (EPS) licences and nearby records of protected species were collected from the local ecological records centre (Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre) and Natural England (via the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website[1]).

3.2 The search radius for designated sites was related to the type of site and any potential zones of influence. The following search areas were used:

- 10km from the application area for sites of International Importance (e.g. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Ramsar sites);
- 2km from the application area for sites of National or Regional Importance (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserves (NNR)) and bat records; and

[1] https://magic.defra.gov.uk/

- 1km from the application area for statutory sites of Local Importance (e.g. Local Nature Reserves (LNR)), non-statutory sites of County or Local Importance (e.g., Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)) and species records (e.g. legally protected or otherwise notable species).

3.3 OS Maps and Google Earth were also used to assess the context of the local area and to determine any features of potential ecological significance, such as ponds. The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan[2] (LBAP) was also consulted.

Habitat Survey

3.4 A walkover of the site was undertaken on the 2nd October 2025 by an experienced ecologist / botanist with a Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC) level 4, GCN CL08 Licence (ref 2018-38299-CLS-CLS) and Water Vole CL31 Displacement Licence (ref 2023-90007-CL31-WVO).

3.5 Survey methods broadly followed the UKHab survey methodology. The purpose of the walkover was to classify present habitats and identify any Habitats of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity as listed within Section 41 (S41) of Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006[3]. The abundance of species was quantified using the DAFOR scale, ranging from Dominant (>75%), through Abundant (75-51%), Frequent (50-26%) and Occasional (25-11%) to Rare (10-1%).

Protected Species Assessment

3.6 During the walkover on the 2nd October 2025, a thorough search of the site was carried out for signs of protected species in accordance with the following Acts / Regulations:

- Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)[4];
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992[5];
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)[6]; and
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 S41 Species of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity.

3.7 Particular consideration was given to the potential presence of birds, bats, badgers *Meles meles* and amphibians. Where possible, evidence of badger was sought within 30m of the site boundary.

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[2] Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2026, 2nd edition: December 2016. Available at: https://www.lrwt.org.uk/about-us/caring-wild-places/biodiversity-action-plan

[3] *The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.* [Online]. London: HMSO Available at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents

[4] *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (*as amended*). [Online]. London: HMSO Available from http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69

[5] *The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (as amended).* [Online]. London: HMSO Available from: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/51/contents

[6] *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 – Statutory Instrument 2017 No.1012.* [Online]. London: HMSO. Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1012/contents/made

3.8 Furthermore, the site was assessed for the potential use by other fauna listed, in accordance with the following (collectively referred to herein as 'notable species'):

- Species of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England listed in S41 of the NERC Act 2006;
- Red Data Book (RDB) and Red List species;
- Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC);
- Species listed on any Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) initiatives; and
- Nationally scarce/notable invertebrate species.

Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA)

3.9 A Preliminary Roost Assessment was undertaken on the on-site building on the 7th July 2025 by a licenced bat worker (Natural England Class Licence Registration Number: CL18 Bat Survey Level 2 - 2024-12130-CL18-BAT). This involved an internal and external assessment of all potential roost features and their suitability to support bats. A search was also carried out for any evidence of roosting bats. The buildings suitability to support roosting bats was then classified as either negligible, low, moderate or high potential. The PRA was carried out based on most recent BCT[7] and JNCC[8] guidance, as well as statutory guidance[9].

External Building Assessment

3.10 The exterior of the building was visually assessed for potential access points and evidence of bat activity. Features such as small gaps under barge / soffit / fascia boards, raised or missing ridge tiles and gaps at gable ends were sought, as these have potential to be used as access points,. In addition, structural features were noted that could provide suitable hibernation potential. Evidence that bats actively used potential access points includes staining within gaps and bat droppings or urine staining under gaps. A note was made wherever these were present. Where they could be safely accessed, crevices were inspected for the presence of bats or their signs using torches, mirrors and endoscopes.

Internal Assessment

3.11 The interior of the building, including all accessible roof voids, were also visually assessed with the aid of an endoscope, mirrors and torches to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting places and for evidence of current or past bat roosts. Definitive evidence of a bat roost was determined by the presence of:

- Dead or live bat(s); and/or

[7] Collins, J. (ed.), 2023. *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, Good Practice Guidelines* (4th Edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London
[8] JNCC, 1999. Mitchell-Jones, A.J, & McLeish, A.P. Ed. *Bat Workers Manual.*
[9] Mitchell-Jones, A.J., 2004. *Bat Mitigation Guidelines.* English Nature, Peterborough.

- Droppings.

3.12 Other less definitive signs were also sought as indicators of potential roosting bats, these included:

- Urine staining;
- Fur-oil staining;
- Feeding remains such as moth wing fragments;
- Audible calls;
- Bat-fly (Nycteribiid) pupal cases; or
- Odour.

3.13 The absence of any of the above evidence was not considered to be definitive evidence that no roosts were present as bats may leave no visible sign of their presence particularly where they occupy inaccessible or hidden spaces within a building.

3.14 Subsequently, the building(s) (or where relevant, sections of) were categorised according to their suitability to support roosting bats and whether they provide classic or non-classic hibernation potential or not. These were classified according to the features present within the buildings (see Table 1).

Potential Bat Roosting Suitability

3.15 Following the internal and external assessment, the building was assigned a category according to its roosting suitability which is based on Tables 4.1 and 7.1 of the BCT Guidelines. This potential suitability is used to indicate the likely requirements for any further surveys to determine the presence or absence of roosting bats.

Table 1: Building Bat Roost Habitat Classifications (Based on Tables 4.1 And 7.1 BCT Guidelines)

Roost Suitability	**Description of Roosting Habitats**	**Further Survey Requirements to Provide Confidence in the Likely Absence of Roosting Bats Within a Structure**
None	No habitat features on site that are likely to be used by bats at any time of the year.	No further surveys or consideration of roosting bats is required.
Negligible	No obvious habitat features are present that are likely to be used by roosting bats, but features may be present where a bat could theoretically roost but it is considered very unlikely.	No further surveys are required, but some vigilance may be required if the feature is impacted.
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 classic hibernation roost).	Up to one single dusk emergence survey undertaken between May and August. (requirement is based on professional judgment). Precautionary method statement if works are to be undertaken during the winter period (where non-classic hibernation potential exits).

Roost Suitability	Description of Roosting Habitats	Further Survey Requirements to Provide Confidence in the Likely Absence of Roosting Bats Within a Structure
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 (with respect to roost type only the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Two separate dusk emergence surveys undertaken between May and September and at least one between May and August and spread at least 3 weeks apart. Precautionary method statement if works are to be undertaken during the winter period (where non classic hibernation potential exits).
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. These structures have the potential to support High conservation status roosts such as those used for maternity or hibernation (classic site).	Three separate dusk emergence surveys undertaken between May and September and at least two between May and August and spread at least 3 weeks apart. Where classic hibernation potential is present hibernation surveys should be undertaken during the winter period.
A classic hibernation site is considered to provide stable climatic conditions including temperature humidity, and light level such as, but not exclusively limited to underground structures which are subject to low levels of disturbance or species specific habitual requirements such as where brown long-eared bats often use a the same roosts for maternity and hibernation purposes. A non-classic hibernation site is a location which does conform to the criteria above but could be used by individual hibernating bats. It usually not possible to identify non-classic hibernation sites through surveys work.		

Ground Level Tree Assessment

3.16 During the PRA, a Gound Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) was also undertaken on all trees, based on most recent guidance[8]. Trees were examined with binoculars, making note of any potential roost features (PRFs) that may provide entry/exit points for bats. Any PRFs found were categorised based on their suitability and size, using the following terms:

- NONE: No features present or likely to be present.
- FAR: Further assessment is required to establish whether PRFs are present.
- PRF-I: The PRF is suitable for individual or small numbers of bats.
- PRF-M: The PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may be used by a maternity colony.

Nocturnal Bat Emergence Surveys

3.17 A single dusk emergence survey was conducted on building B1 on the 11th of August 2025. During the survey, ecologists were positioned so that all aspects of the buildings with potential to support roosting bats were visible. The survey began 15 minutes prior to sunset and ran until 90 minutes after sunset.

3.18 Any bat behaviour was recorded, including the species and location. Surveys were undertaken using Echo Meter Touch® bat detectors in conjunction with the Echo Meter Touch® app and Samsung® phones. Pixfra® ARC A613 thermal imaging cameras were used. Surveys were

undertaken in appropriate conditions, i.e., ambient temperatures above 10˚C and with little wind and no rain. Survey dates and conditions are provided below in Table 2. Photos of the darkest point of the survey are shown in Appendix 1 and Figure 7 shows the surveyor locations.

Table 2: Nocturnal Bat Survey Details

Survey date	Time (sunset/ sunrise)	Temperature	Cloud cover %	Rain (0-10)	Wind (0-10)
11th August 2025 Dusk emergence	20:15 to 22:00 (sunset 20:30)	20-18 °C	60	0	1

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment

3.19 A BNG assessment was undertaken based on the most up-to-date proposals (drawing ref 25.330.02, R3Design Developments). The UKHab data was analysed using GIS software, and the current Statutory Metric[10] was used to calculate the change in biodiversity unit value between the baseline habitats and proposed habitats. The assessment was undertaken in accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide[11].

Limitations

3.20 Several adjacent residential gardens could not be fully searched for badger evidence. A visual inspection using binoculars was undertaken where possible.

3.21 The UKHab walkover was undertaken just outside the optimal survey period, however due to the presence of mostly low distinctiveness habtiats it was still possible to obtain a sufficient level of species data to determine habitat types accurately.

[10] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides
[11] Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, 2024. *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide.*

4.0 Results

Desk Study

4.1 One statutory designated site and one non-statutory designated site were recorded within the search area. The site also lies within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone (IRZ).

4.2 Other Priority Habitats / Habitats of Principal Importance nearby include:

- Three areas of Ancient Woodland, which include several parcels of Priority Habitat Inventory (PHI) Deciduous Woodland (the nearest of which is approximately 100m north);
- One area of PHI Traditional Orchard (approximately 400m northwest)

4.3 The locations of statutory and non-statutory designated sites and Priority Habitats are shown in Figure 1. Table 3 below provides details of the statutory and non-statutory designated sites recorded within the search area.

Table 3: Designated Sites Recorded Within the Search Area

Site Name / Designation	Approx. Distance from Proposed Site	Summary
Botcheston Bog SSSI	1.04km NE	One of the best remaining examples of marshy grassland in Leicestershire and representative of grazed marsh communities on peaty soils
Charity Fields LWS	0.93km E	Mesotrophic grassland

Protected Species

4.4 One European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) was recorded approximately 950m northeast of the site. This was for the destruction of a brown long eared bat Plecotus auritus resting place, issued in 2010.

4.5 A total of 161 records of protected and notable species were returned from the local records centre. A summary of these is provided in Table 4 and records are shown in Figure 1.

Table 4: Species Records Returned from Within the Search Area.

Species	No. of Records	Approx. Location of Closest Record / Most Recent Year	Description
Brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*	18	600m E	Several roost records and detector passes
Plecotus sp.	1	1,360m NE	Roost record
Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	63	340m S	Several roost records, mostly detector passes
Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*	15	450m S	Detector passes
Nathusius's pipistrelle	3	765m SW	Detector passes

Species	No. of Records	Approx. Location of Closest Record / Most Recent Year	Description
Pipistrellus nathusii			
Pipistrellus sp.	2	765m SW	Detector passes
Natterer's bat *Myotis natteri*	1	600m E	Roost record
Myotis sp.	10	765m SW	Detector passes
Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*	11	500m S	Detector passes
Nyctalus sp.	2	765m SW	Detector passes
Badger *Meles meles*	7	445m W	Sett records
Smooth newt *Lissotriton vulgaris*	2	900m S	-
Common frog *Rana temporaria*	2	685m SW	-
Barn owl *Tyto alba*	1	360m S	-
Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*	2	360m S	-
Hobby *Falco subbuteo*	1	360m S	-
Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*	1	360m S	-
Red kite *Milvus milvus*	1	360m S	-
Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*	6	360m S	-
Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*	1	360m S	-
Redwing *Turdus iliacus*	7	360m S	-
White-letter hairstreak *Satyrium w-album*	1	840m E	Field observation

Field Study

Habitats

4.6 The site consisted mostly of a grassland lawn, with small areas of bramble scrub, ruderal / ephemeral habitat and tall forbs. Two buildings are also present, as well as a small summer house. Six individual trees are also present within the site.

Modified Grassland

4.7 The site consists mostly of modified grassland, which appears to be used as a lawn / garden area. The entire area was evidently regularly mown with a low, more or less uniform sward, approximately 10cm high.

4.8 This area was dominated by perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, with abundant instances of cock's foot *Dactylis glomerata*, frequent to occasional instances of creeping buttercup

Ranunculus repens, locally frequent instances of creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera* and white clover *Trifolium repens* and rare instances of greater plantain *Plantago major*, smooth sow thistle *Sonchus oleraceus*, dock *Rumex* sp., spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, selfheal *Prunella vulgaris*, common sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, ragwort *Jacobea vulgaris* and dandelion *Taraxacum* agg.

4.9 This area failed Criteria A of the condition assessment and was therefore considered to be in poor condition.

Ruderal / Ephemeral

4.10 One driveway leads from the adjacent road, to one of the existing buildings. This was formed of aggregate / stone waste, with grass and forbs growing through it. Species present here include great willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum*, creeping bent, dock, common fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica*, greater plantain, red fescue *Festuca rubra*, red campion *Silene dioica*, wood avens *Geum urbanum*, spear thistle, dandelion and white clover.

4.11 Some rubbish / rubble piles were present in this area.

4.12 The area of ruderal / ephemeral habitat was assessed as being in poor condition.

Tall Forbs

4.13 A soil bund runs along the northern boundary of the site which had tall forb vegetation growing there, including mostly fat hen *Chenopodium album*, common nettle *Urtica dioica* and dock.

4.14 The area of tall forbs was assessed as being in moderate condition.

Bramble Scrub

4.15 One small patch of bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. was present towards the south of the site.

4.16 The condition assessment for this habitat type is set at N/A.

Individual Trees

4.17 Seven trees were present within the site boundary. These are detailed in Table 5 and shown in Figure 2.

Table 5: Baseline Trees

Tree Ref	Species	Size / Condition
T1	Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*	Medium / Good
T2	Apple *Malus x domestica*	Small / Moderate
T3	Field maple *Acer campestre*	Small / Good
T4	*Picea* sp.	Small / Moderate
T5	Leyland cypress *Cupressus* x *leylandii*	Small / Moderate
T6	Leyland cypress *Cupressus* x *leylandii*	Small / Moderate

Urban Habitats

4.18 The proposed access road for the site falls within the footprint of an adjacent development which is currently under construction. This area is currently classed as artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface.

Protected Species

Bats – Buildings / Trees

4.19 126 bat records were returned from within 2km of the site.

4.20 During the GLTA, no trees were found to contain any PRFs and were therefore assessed as NONE. No further assessment of trees with relation to bats is therefore required.

4.21 The site contains two small buildings (B1 and B2) which were assessed as being of low and negligible potential to support roosting bats, respectively. One nocturnal emergence survey was therefore undertaken on building B1 on the 11th August 2025, during which no bat roosts were recorded.

4.22 Building B1 was a single-story brick built stable building with rendered walls and a pitched composite interlocking tiled roof. The building featured soffit boxes and barge boards.

4.23 Other structural features of note include two large stable doors and two windows on the western aspect. A solar powered security light was also present on this aspect.

4.24 Potential bat access points comprised gaps in the soffits between the wall and the soffit boxes, in particular above the windows on the western aspect but also on the edges near the gutter. Gaps around the doors were also potential access points on this aspect. Further access points were noted underneath the southern and northern barge boards, although trees cluttered the access to the northern aspect of the structure. Access points were also noted underneath the tiles on the eaves on the western aspect. Missing mortar on the western side of a couple of the central ridge tiles was missing provided a further potential access point.

4.25 Internally the building was divided into two equal sized rooms, each with a window and a door. The tiles were backed with felt which was damaged in some places and there were no voids. It was relatively light inside.

4.26 Potential roost features for bats comprised the soffit boxes on the western aspect, underneath the barge boards on the southern aspect, underneath the tiles (with access noted on the western aspect) and underneath the ridge tiles in the centre. Gaps were also present around the door frames inside the building offering roost potential.

4.27 Building B2 was a small, single-storey wooden summerhouse with windows in three of the walls. The single skin roof is formed of plywood which has deteriorated causing several gaps, including one along the ridge. No roof void is present.

4.28 No soffits or barge boards are present. The building is very light inside due to the windows. No evidence of bats was recorded inside the building.

4.29 Building B2 was considered to be of negligible potential to support roosting bats.

4.30 During the nocturnal emergence survey of building B1, no evidence of bat roosts were recorded, and relatively little bat activity was noted, with sporadic foraging activity throughout the survey. The first contact was at 20:40 of a common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*. Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaues* were also recorded.

Bats – Foraging / Commuting Habitat

4.31 The habitats present within the site provided some foraging / commuting habitat, however the suitability is generally low due to the abundance of short sward, regularly mown grassland.

Great Crested Newt (GCN) Triturus cristatus

4.32 No records of GCN were recorded within 1km.

4.33 Two ponds were recorded within 250m of the site. One of these was approximately 120m north of the site, within Tropical Birdland. Photos of this pond available online show that it is stocked with fish and captive waterfowl. This pond is therefore considered highly unlikely to support GCN and is not assessed further. Pictures of ponds are provided in Appendix 1.

4.34 The other pond was 240m west of the site and was separated from the site by residential development and Lindridge Lane, which is partially curbed. These are considered to be significant obstacles for GCN dispersal.

4.35 The site generally contains unsuitable habitat for foraging / hibernating GCN, in the form of low sward, regularly mown grassland, though these areas may provide some commuting potential. Some small areas do provide some potential commuting / hibernating habitat, in the form of the bramble scrub and tall forbs habitats.

Badger

4.36 Seven badger records were returned, the closest of which was a sett approximately 450m away.

4.37 No badger setts or other badger evidence was recorded during the survey within, or adjacent to the site. The site provides suitable badger foraging habitat.

Reptiles

4.38 No reptile records were returned from within 1km of the site.

4.39 The habitats present provide some suitability for reptiles in the form of the rubble piles, bramble scrub and tall forbs habitat, however the majority of the site is considered broadly unsuitable for reptiles due to the abundance of short sward, regularly mown grassland.

Birds

4.40 The dense vegetation (bramble scrub) and trees provide suitable nesting habitat for birds.

4.41 The existing buildings were not accessible for species such as barn owl *Tyto alba*. No evidence of barn owl was recorded during the PRA, nocturnal emergence surveys or habitat walkover.

Water Vole / Otter

4.42 No suitable riparian mammal habitat lies within the site or close to the site. Riparian mammals are therefore not assessed further.

Other Species

4.43 The site likely provides foraging potential for hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*. Invertebrate usage of the site overall is considered to be non-significant.

5.0 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Statement

5.1 A BNG assessment using the Statutory Metric was undertaken based on most recent proposals (drawing ref 25.330.BP02, R3Design Developments). All habitats, except for four of the six trees, will be lost to facilitate development. Proposed habitats include vegetated garden, mixed scrub in poor condition, modified grassland in poor condition, 25 small individual trees in moderate condition and other urban habitats (developed land; sealed surface and unvegetated garden). Details of baseline and proposed habitats are provided in Tables 5 and 6, respectively. Figures 2 and 3 show the baseline habitats and their condition / distinctiveness, and Figures 5 and 6 show the proposed habitats and their condition / distinctiveness. Figure 4 shows habitat retention.

5.2 During the desk study, no designated sites were recorded adjacent to the site. The habitats present are not considered Priority Habitats within Leicestershire.

5.3 As a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) has been published for Leicestershire, in accordance with Statutory Guidance all baseline habitats were assigned low strategic significance ('Area/compensation not in local strategy/no local strategy').

5.4 Proposed habitats include only urban type habitats (vegetated garden, unvegetated garden and developed land; sealed surface). The site is not within an Area that Could Become of Importance for Biodiversity (ACB). Therefore, the proposed habitats were assigned low strategic significance.

5.5 No irreplaceable habitats are present within the site, and no significant habitat degradation appears to have been carried out.

Table 5: Baseline Habitat Value

Habitat Type	Area (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Baseline Habitat Score
Artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface	0.0684	Very low	N/A	0
Bramble scrub	0.0047	Medium	N/A	0.2
Developed land; sealed surface	0.014	Very low	N/A	0
Modified grassland	0.3184	Low	Poor	0.64
Ruderal / ephemeral	0.0361	Low	Poor	0.07
Tall forbs	0.0171	Low	Moderate	0.07
Urban tree	0.0285 (of which 0.0122 retained)	Medium	Moderate	0.23 (of which 0.1 retained)
Urban tree	0.0204 (of which 0.0041 retained)	Medium	Good	0.24 (of which 0.05 retained)
Total	**0.46**			**1.27 (of which 0.15 retained)**

Table 6: Proposed Habitat Value

Habitat Type	Area (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Proposed Habitat Score
Developed land; sealed surface	0.251	Very low	N/A	0
Mixed scrub	0.0114	Medium	Poor	0.04
Modified grassland	0.0317	Low	Poor	0.06
Unvegetated garden	0.0186	Very low	N/A	0
Vegetated garden	0.146	Low	N/A	0.28
Urban tree	0.1018	Medium	Moderate	0.31
Total	**0.46**			**0.7**

5.6 The assessment shows an overall loss of 0.42 habitat units (-33.3%) with trading rules not satisfied. An off-site unit purchase will therefore be required. It is estimated that 0.55 habitat units will need to be sourced from an off-site unit provider in order for the development to achieve an overall 10% gain in units. Headline results from the site's metric are shown in Appendix 3.

6.0 Discussion / Recommendations

6.1 The following provides an appraisal of impacts on the site based on proposals and provides recommendations for further survey where necessary.

Designated Sites

6.2 One statutory designated site and one non-statutory designated site was recorded within the search area, including one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and one Local Wildlife Site (LWS).

6.3 Due to the relatively small scale of the proposals and the distance between the application site and the designated sites, no adverse impacts are expected upon these areas.

6.4 The site lies within a SSSI IRZ, however residential development of less than 100 units is not listed as a potential impact and therefore consultation with Natural England is not required.

Habitats

6.5 Proposals for the site include the construction of four residential units with associated gardens, parking, access and planting. The development will result in the loss of all the modified grassland, bramble scrub, tall forbs and ruderal / ephemeral habitat and two of the six individual trees.

6.6 Due to the site's small scale and overall low value of habitats, the loss of these habitats is not considered to result in a significant impact on biodiversity on a local scale.

6.7 Proposed habitats include areas of poor condition modified grassland and 25 small native trees.

Protected Species

Bats

6.8 Two buildings are present within the site, one of which was assessed as being low potential, the other was assessed as being negligible potential to support roosting bats. A single nocturnal emergence survey was carried out on the low potential building, during which no evidence of bat roosts was recorded.

6.9 Habitats within the site are considered to provide low foraging / commuting habitat for bats. Due to the small size of the site, it is considered highly unlikely to provide habitat for a significant assemblage of bats. Furthermore, the inclusion of vegetated gardens, retention of trees and extent of tree planting will mean the site continues to provide a foraging / commuting resource post-development. Therefore, the overall change in the foraging / commuting potential of the site is likely to be negligible or possibly slightly beneficial due to the number of trees proposed.

6.10 No further bat surveys are recommended, and bats are not considered to pose a constraint to development.

6.11 The use of outdoor lighting should be avoided where possible. Any outdoor lighting that is required should be designed to be sensitive to bats, and should not light adjacent boundary habitats, i.e. native hedgerows, or planted individual trees.

6.12 Ecological enhancements in the form of bat boxes are proposed (details provided below).

Great Crested Newts (GCN)

6.13 No GCN records were returned from the search area. Of the two ponds recorded within 250m of the site, one was within Tropical Birdland and was stocked with fish and waterfowl, and so is considered highly unlikely to contain GCN. The other pond is considered to be separated from the site by significant barriers to dispersal due to the presence of residential development and Lindridge Lane, which is partially curbed.

6.14 The habitats within the site are considered to be of overall low potential to support GCN.

6.15 Due to the reasoning mentioned above, GCN are not considered a constraint to development and no further surveys are recommended.

Badgers

6.16 Seven badger records were returned, the closest of which was approximately 450m from the site.

6.17 No badger setts were recorded within the site or in its immediate vicinity, however the site does provide foraging potential for badger.

6.18 It is recommended that a pre-commencement survey be undertaken in the 30 days prior to when the construction is due to start.

6.19 If any signs of badger (i.e. droppings, fresh digging) are observed during the construction phase, it is recommended that an update survey by a suitably experienced ecologist be carried out.

6.20 As the site contains suitable badger foraging habitat, the following precautionary working methods should be followed during the construction phase:

- To prevent badgers being trapped, all pipes that have the potential to allow badger ingress (i.e. 15cm or greater in diameter) shall be capped when not in use;
- Hazardous chemicals such as diesel / oil to be stored in a fenced / locked COSHH store;
- Any excavations / pits will be covered overnight, and a plank or board ramp be left within the hole to allow the escape of any badger (or other animal);
- Off-site areas shall not be lit overnight; and
- Any piles of soil shall either be covered or compacted to prevent badgers from digging in and creating setts.

Birds

6.21 When nesting, all wild birds are protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This includes the intentional or reckless destruction of nests from the nest-building phase through to when all chicks have fully fledged the nest. This also includes any disturbance that leads to nest desertion. Bird breeding habitat is present in the form of the trees, bramble scrub, and potentially the tall forbs.

6.22 The removal of these habitats should take place outside of the peak bird breeding season (i.e. avoiding the period March to September, inclusive). If this is not possible, any habitat clearance must be preceded by a nesting bird survey, conducted by a suitably experienced ecologist. If any active nests are found to be present, the nest will have to be buffered and left until all chicks have fledged.

Reptiles

6.23 No reptile records were returned from the search area.

6.24 While the site offers some potential for reptiles, it is considered highly unlikely that a medium or high reptile population would be present within the site.

6.25 In light of the above, reptile surveys are not recommended, and reptiles are not considered a statutory constraint to development.

6.26 However, it is recommended that precautionary working methods be followed in relation to the rubble piles. This includes ecological supervision when removing these features, as they can form basking locations for reptiles.

Other Species

6.27 No significant adverse impacts are anticipated on other species such as hedgehog, invertebrates or fish.

Enhancements

6.28 Integrated bat and bird boxes will be used the proposed buildings. This will improve the biodiversity value of the site overall by providing roosting habitat for bats and breeding habitat for birds. Examples are shown below. Locations of bat / bird boxes are shown in Sheet 2 of 6 of the Planning Drawings (drawing ref 25.330.02, R3Design Developments).

6.29 Swift *Apus apus* bricks should be placed as high as possible (at least 5m high), tightly against the eaves, orientated somewhere between north and east. Bat bricks should also be placed as high as possible in a location that gets sun for part of the day (somewhere between southeast and southwest).

Example 1: Vivara Pro UK Build-in WoodStone Bat Box, potential integrated bat box. Courtesy of nhbs.com

Example 2: PRO UK Rendered Build-in Swift Box, potential integrated bird box. Courtesy of nhbs.com

Appendix 1: Site Photos

Photo 1: Modified grassland, building B2, individual trees T1 and T2

Photo 2: Modified grassland and building B1

Photo 3: Rubble / rubbish piles and tree T4

Photo 4: Ruderal / ephemeral habitats and tall forbs

Photo 5: Ruderal / ephemeral habitat and view of the majority of the site

Photo 6: Building B2 interior

Photo 7: Building B2 exterior

Photo 8: Building B1 exterior

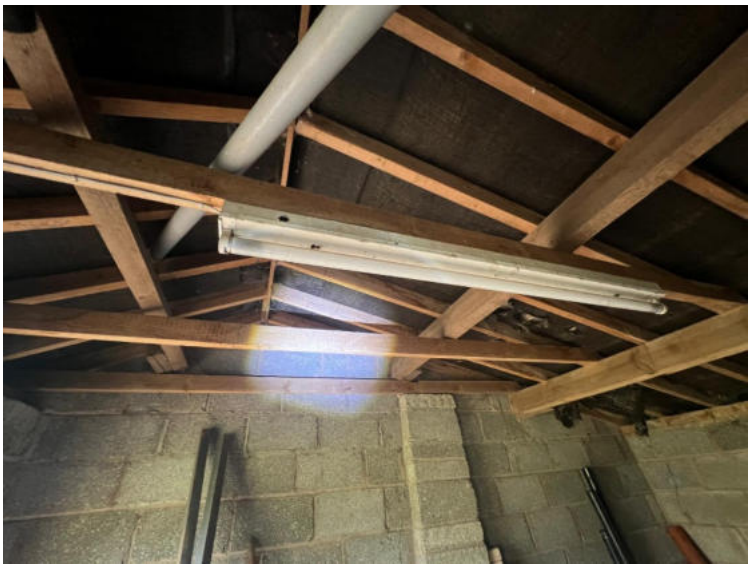


Photo 9: Building B1 interior

Photo 10: Gaps in building B1 barge boards

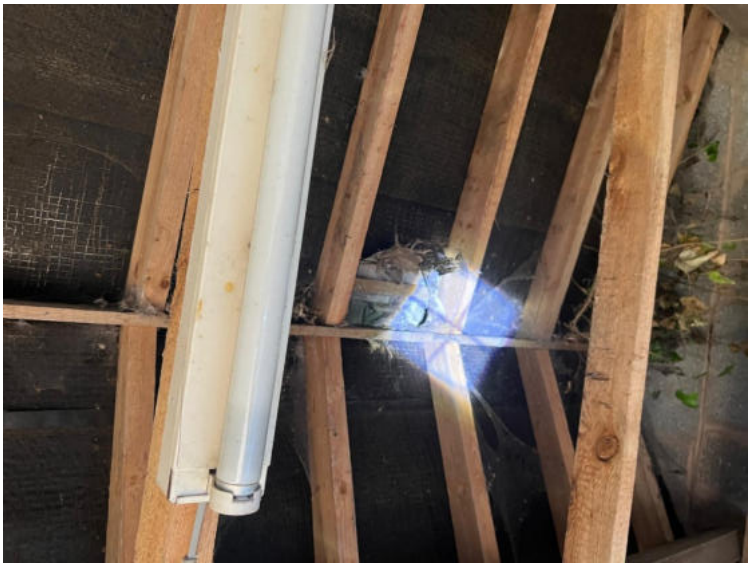


Photo 11: Building B1 interior

Photo 12: Building B1 interior

Photo 13: Photo showing waterfowl within the pond at Tropical Birdland. Image taken from Google.

Photo 14: Photo showing fish in pond at Tropical Birdland. Image taken from Google.

Photo 15: Nocturnal emergence survey darkest point – northern surveyor location

Photo 16: Nocturnal emergence survey darkest point – southern surveyor location

Appendix 2: BNG Condition Assessments

Modified Grassland

Criteria		Pass/Fail	Justification
A	6-8 species per m^2	Fail	Less than 6 species present per m^2.
B	Varied sward height	Fail	Uniformly low sward.
C	Scrub cover less than 20%	Pass	No scrub present.
D	Physical damage in less than 5% of area	Pass	-
E	Cover of bare ground between 1% and 10%	Fail	No bare ground present.
F	Cover of bracken less than 20%	Pass	No bracken.
G	Absence of invasive non-native species	Pass	No invasive non-native species.
Total passes		**4 passes**	**Poor condition**

6-7 passes and passes Criterion A: Good condition; 4-5 passes and passes Criterion A: Moderate condition; 3 passes or fewer OR passes 4-6 criteria but fails Criterion A

Individual Trees

Criteria		Tree Ref					
		T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6
		Pass / Fail					
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Fail	Fail
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Fail	Fail
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Pass	Pass	Pass	Fail	Fail	Fail
Total passes		**6**	**4**	**6**	**3**	**3**	**3**

5-6 passes: Good condition; 3-4 passes: Moderate Condition; 1-2 passes: Poor condition

Tall Forbs

Criteria		Pass/Fail	Justification
A	Vegetation structure is varied, providing opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live, eat and breed. A single structural habitat component or vegetation type does not account for more than 80% of the total habitat area.	Pass	-
B	The habitat parcel contains different plant species that are beneficial for wildlife, for example flowering species providing nectar sources for a range of invertebrates at different times of year.	Fail	Mainly nettles.
C	Invasive non-native plant species (listed on Schedule 9 of WCA[1]) and others which are to the detriment of native wildlife (using professional judgement)[2] cover less than 5% of the total vegetated area[3].	Pass	-
Total Passes		**2**	

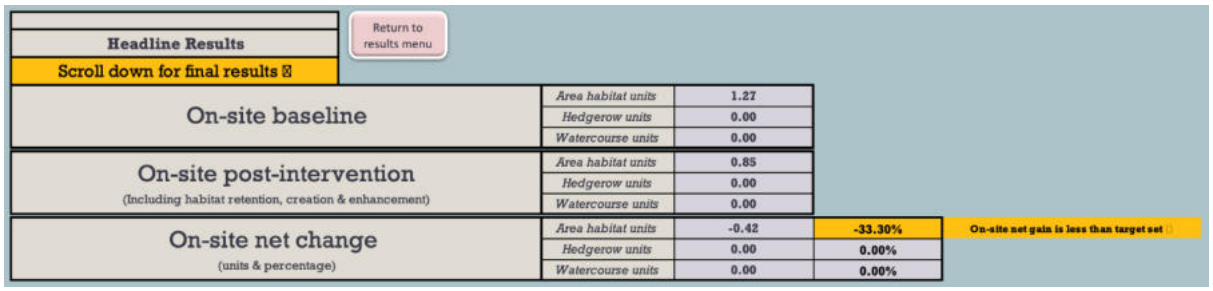
3 passes: Good condition; 2 passes: Moderate condition; 1 pass: Poor condition

Ruderal / Ephemeral

Criteria		Pass/Fail	Justification
A	Vegetation structure is varied, providing opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live, eat and breed. A single structural habitat component or vegetation type does not account for more than 80% of the total habitat area.	Fail	Vegetation is very sparse, mostly gravel / bare ground.
B	The habitat parcel contains different plant species that are beneficial for wildlife, for example flowering species providing nectar sources for a range of invertebrates at different times of year.	Fail	Some grasses and a small number of flowering plants.
C	Invasive non-native plant species (listed on Schedule 9 of WCA[1]) and others which are to the detriment of native wildlife (using professional judgement)[2] cover less than 5% of the total vegetated area[3].	Pass	-
Total Passes		**1**	

3 passes: Good condition; 2 passes: Moderate condition; 1 pass: Poor condition

Appendix 3: BNG Metric Headline Results

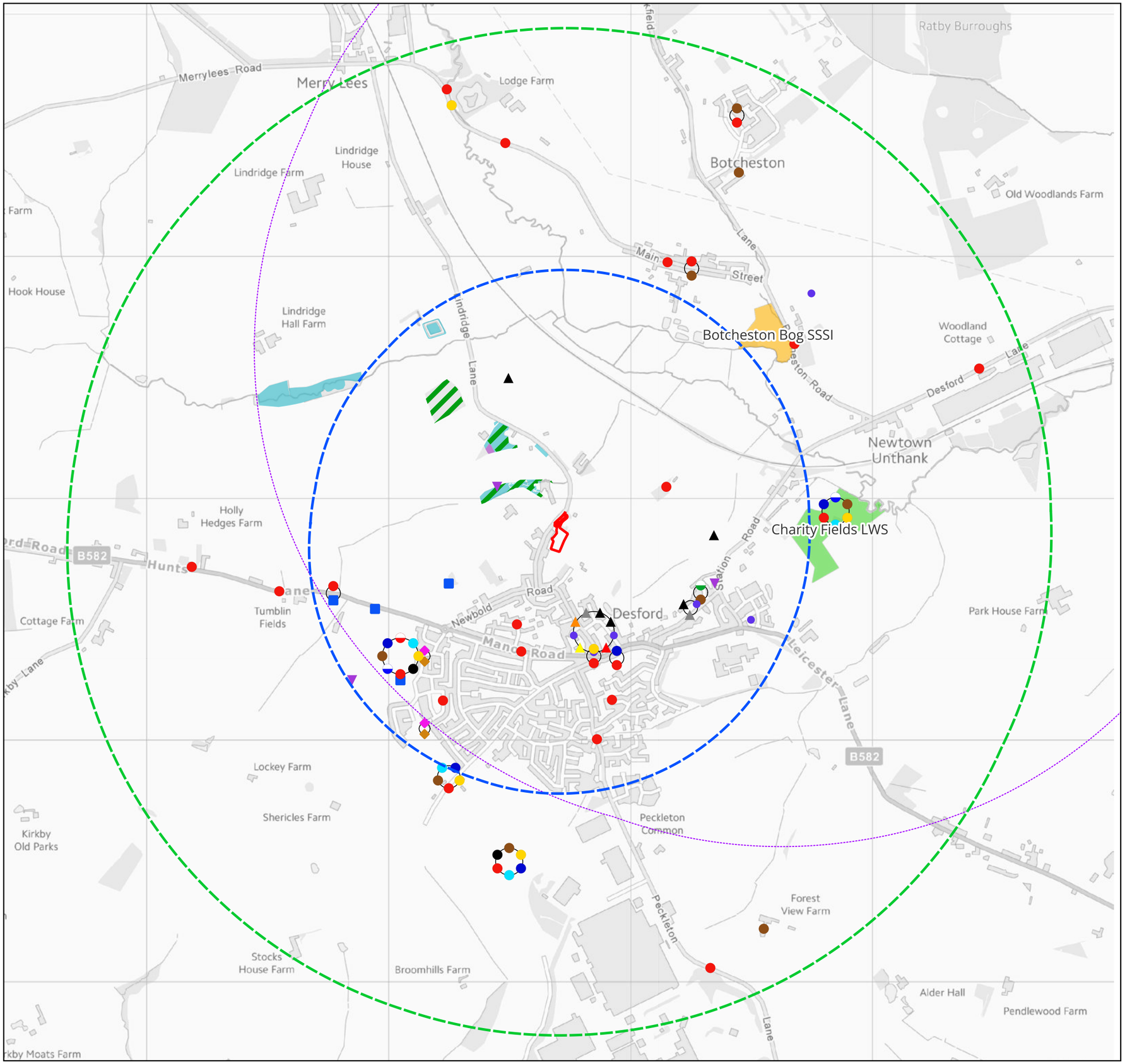


Headline Results

Return to results menu

Scroll down for final results

On-site baseline	*Area habitat units*	1.27		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	0.85		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
On-site net change (units & percentage)	*Area habitat units*	-0.42	-33.30%	On-site net gain is less than target set
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%	
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%	



Key

- Site Boundary
- 1km Buffer
- 2km Buffer
- Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- SSSI IRZ
- Ancient Woodland

Priority Habitat Inventory

- Deciduous woodland
- Traditional orchard

Protected Species

- Badger
- Barn Owl
- Bluebell
- Brown Long-eared Bat
- Common Frog
- Common Pipistrelle
- Myotis Bat species
- Noctule
- Peregrine
- Unidentified Pipistrelle Sp.
- Smooth Newt
- Soprano Pipistrelle
- Fieldfare
- Nathusius's Pipistrelle
- Red Kite
- Redwing
- Natterer's Bat
- Nyctalus Bat species

client
XL Designs Ltd

project name
Land at Lindridge Lane,
Desford

title
Consultation Plan

drawn by
BRJ

scale
1:16,000 @ A3

rev
-

title
FIGURE 1

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Key

- Site Boundary

Individual Tree Baseline

- Existing medium rural tree
- Existing small rural tree

Habitats Baseline

- Artificial unvegetated,unsealed surface
- Bramble scrub
- Developed land; sealed surface
- Modified grassland
- Ruderal/Ephemeral
- Tall forbs

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0 10 20 m

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Land at Lindridge Lane,
Desford

title
Baseline Habitat Plan

date
06/11/25

drawn by
BRJ

scale
1:750 @ A3

rev
-

title
FIGURE 2

Key

- Site Boundary

Baseline Individual Tree Condition

- Moderate
- Good

Baseline Individual Tree Distinctiveness

- Medium

Baseline Habitat Distinctiveness

- Medium
- Low
- V.Low

Baseline Habitat Condition

- Moderate
- Poor
- Condition Assessment N/A

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06/11/25

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title
Baseline Habitat Condition / Distinctiveness

scale
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-

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FIGURE 3

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0 10 20 m

Key

- Site Boundary

Habitat Retention

- Retained
- Lost

Individual tree Retention

- Created
- Retained
- Proposed Lost

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title
Retention Plan

title
FIGURE 4

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0 10 20 m

Key

- Site Boundary

Habitats Proposed

- Built linear features
- Developed land; sealed surface
- Mixed scrub
- Modified grassland
- Unvegetated garden
- Vegetated garden

Individual Tree Proposed

- Proposed small urban tree
- Retained small rural tree

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project name
Land at Lindridge Lane,

Desford

title
Proposed Habitats Plan

title
FIGURE 5

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06/11/25

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0 10 20 m

Key

- Site Boundary

Proposed Habitat Condition

- Poor
- Condition Assessment N/A

Proposed Habitat Distinctiveness

- Medium
- Low
- V.Low

Proposed Individual Tree Distinctiveness

- Medium

Proposed Individual Tree Condition

- Moderate
- Good

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0 10 20 m

client
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Land at Lindridge Lane,

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date
06/11/25

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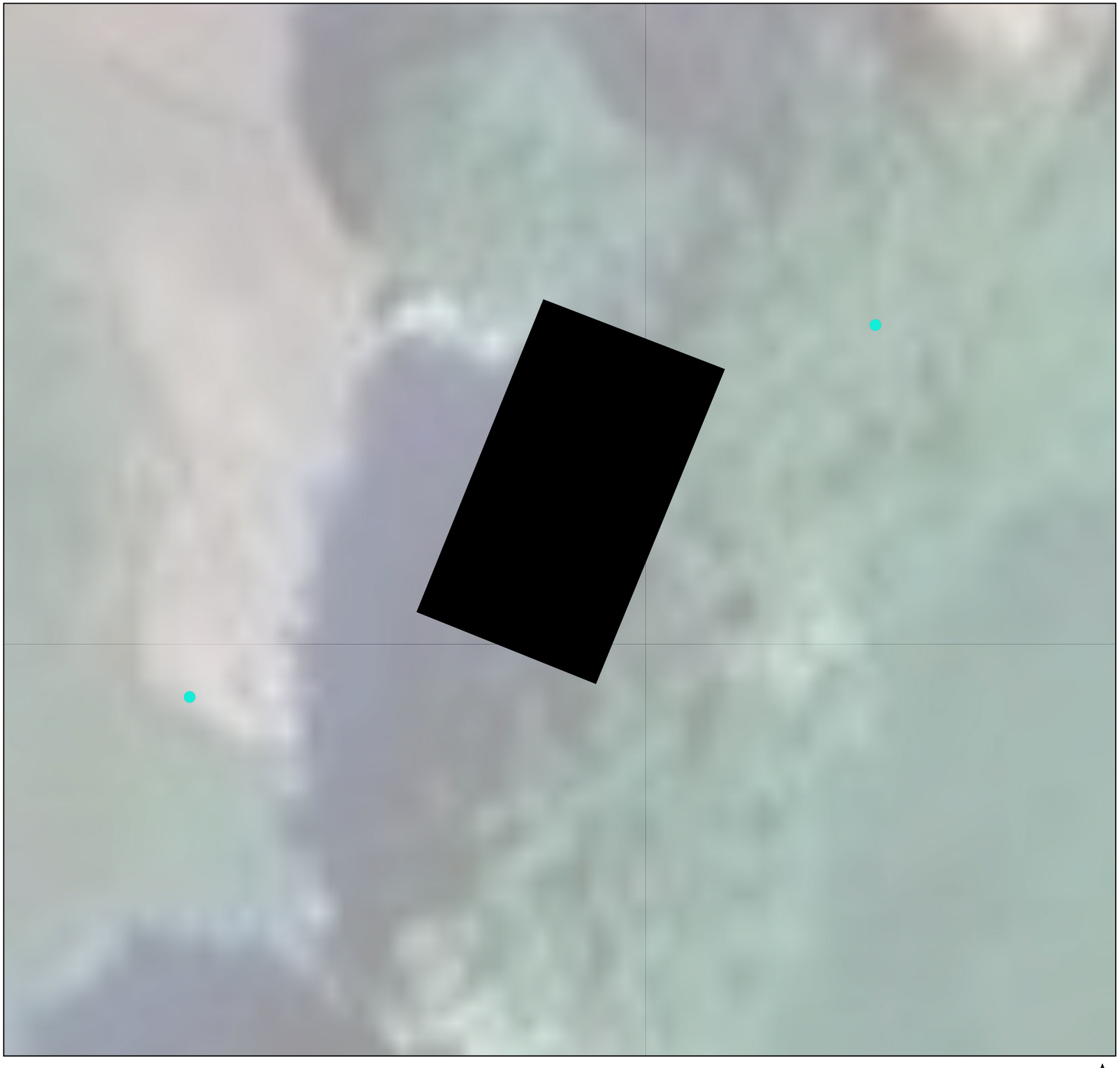
title
Proposed Habitats Condition Distinctiveness

scale
1:750 @ A3

rev
-

title
FIGURE 6



Key

- Building
- Surveyor Locations

client
XL Designs Ltd

project name
Land at Lindridge Lane,

Desford

title
Nocturnal Bat Survey Plan

title
FIGURE 7

date
08/11/25

drawn by
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scale
1:100 @ A3

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