



The Spinneys, Tropical Birdland, Lindridge Lane, Desford

Bat and Bird Report

Document Control

Client:	Tropical Birdland
Project Title:	The Spinneys, Tropical Birdland, Lindridge Lane, Desford
Report Title:	Bat and Bird Report
Report Ref.:	P3003/1_01
Version:	V1
Status:	Final
Revision Comments:	Updated to include nocturnal emergence survey results.
Principal Author:	V0: CJM BSc (Hons), MSc V1: TLW BA (Hons), MSc
Technical Review:	V0: PMH BSc (Hons), MSc, ACIEEM V1: EAM BSc (Hons), MSc
Issued to Client:	26 June 2026

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1. Summary

Table 1: Summary

Report Purpose	With reference to the development proposals and the applicable planning policy & legislation, the purpose and scope of the present report is to: • Identify potential ecological constraints relating to bats and nesting birds. • Outline mitigation measures likely to be required in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy. • Identify any additional surveys that may be required to inform the above. • Outline any opportunities to deliver ecological enhancement via the project
Methodology	A desk study was carried out including a study of the UK Government MAGIC¹ website for designated sites of nature conservation, granted European Protected Species applications for bats, and the site in the context of habitat connectivity to the surrounding landscape. Field survey was carried out as follows; • The field survey included a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) & Nesting Bird Survey. • One nocturnal emergence survey was carried out on the 3rd June 2026. • The surveys were led by a suitably experienced ecologist with reference to best practice guidelines (Collins, 2023).
Key Notes and Conclusions	<i>Bats</i> The PRA assessed the building B1 to have low suitability for roosting bats. With reference to best practice guidelines (Collins, 2023), one emergence survey was carried out, during which no emerging bats were recorded. The likely absence of roosting bats within the building B1 can be assumed. <i>Nesting Birds</i> No evidence of nesting birds was recorded during the survey. No evidence of barn owl was recorded during the survey. <i>Enhancements</i> Biodiversity enhancement opportunities will be recommended following the further surveys.

¹ Multi-agency Geographic Information for the Countryside: www.magic.gov.uk.

2. Introduction

Background

- 2.1. Elton Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Tropical Birdland to conduct a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) & Nesting Bird Survey of building(s) at the site known as The Spinneys, Tropical Birdland, Lindridge Lane, Desford.

Relevant Documents

- 2.2. Relevant documents used to inform the assessment include:
- Site Location Plan & Existing Site Plan (Drawing reference: A2132.1 P001) (Astill Planning, October 2025)
 - Proposed Site Plan (Drawing reference: A2132.1 P003) (Astill Planning, October 2025)
 - Existing Plans & Elevations (Drawing reference: A2132.1 P002) (Astill Planning, August 2025)
 - Proposed Plans & Elevations (Drawing reference: A2132.1 P004) (Astill Planning, September 2025)

Site Description

- 2.3. The site comprises a series of buildings and hardstanding in a suburban setting. The site is located at The Spinneys, Tropical Birdland, Lindridge Lane, Desford (Figure 1: Site Location & Building Plan) (central OS grid reference: SK 47613 03875).

Surrounding Landscape

- 2.4. The surrounding landscape is rural to the north and urban to the south of the site (Figure 2: Surrounding Landscape Plan).
- 2.5. Suitable bat commuting and foraging habitat in the wider landscape include arable and pasture grazed fields and blocks of woodland connected via hedgerows and treelines. A treelined watercourse was present approximately 6m north of the site.
- 2.6. Factors which may limit bat commuting and foraging within the local landscape include the artificial lighting and disturbance associated with the residential setting of Desford.

Development Proposals

- 2.7. The development proposals include the extension and conversion of the building on site.

Report Purpose and Scope

- 2.8. With reference to the Development Proposals, the purpose and scope of the present report is to:
- Identify key ecological constraints relating to bats and nesting birds.
 - Identify avoidance, mitigation or compensation measures likely to be required in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy.
 - Identify any additional surveys that may be required to inform the above.

- Identify likely opportunities to deliver ecological enhancement via the project.

Planning Policy and Legislation

- 2.9. A summary of biodiversity planning policies and wildlife legislation relevant to the site is provided in Appendix 1: Planning Policy and Legislation Summary. The relevant planning policy and legislation includes:
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024.
 - Government Circular ODPM 06/05 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.
 - The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
 - Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 – Habitats and species of principal importance.
 - The Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 (as amended).

3. Methodology

Personnel

- 3.1. The PRA and Nesting Bird Survey was carried out by Ecologist EKJ BSc (Hons), accredited agent on Natural England Bat Licence Reference Number: 2018-33647-CLS-CLS. EKJ is a Qualifying member of CIEEM, has received formal training in bat ecology and surveying, and is experienced in undertaking ecology surveys, GIS mapping, and report writing.
- 3.2. The PRA and Nesting Bird Survey was assisted by Assistant Ecologist HIT BA (Hons), MSc. HIT is a Qualifying member of CIEEM and is experienced in assisting and undertaking ecology surveys, GIS mapping and report writing.
- 3.3. The PRA Report was written by Consultant Ecologist CJM BSc (Hons), MSc, accredited agent on Natural England Bat Licence Reference Number: 2018-33647-CLS-CLS. CJM is a Qualifying member of CIEEM and is experienced in undertaking ecology surveys, GIS mapping, and report writing.
- 3.4. V1 of the PRA Report has been prepared by Assistant Ecologist TLW BA (Hons), MSc. TLW holds a Natural England Level 1 Great Crested Newt Survey Licence (CL08) (reference number: 2025-13148-CL08-GCN). TLW is trained in UKHab and Biodiversity Net Gain and is experienced in assisting and undertaking ecology surveys, condition assessments, GIS mapping, and report writing.
- 3.5. Quality assurance for the present report was carried out by Consultant Ecologist EAM BSc (Hons), MSc. EAM is a Qualifying member of CIEEM, has attended formal training in UKHab survey and Biodiversity Net Gain, and is experienced in assisting and undertaking ecology surveys, GIS mapping, and report writing. EAM holds a Level 3 Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI) Field Identification Skills Certificate.

26/05/2026 Nocturnal Emergence Survey

- 3.6. The 03/06/2026 nocturnal emergence survey was led by Assistant Ecologist TLW. See above for relevant training and competencies.
- 3.7. The 03/06/2026 nocturnal emergence survey was assisted by Seasonal Ecologist AB BSc. AB is trained and experienced in assisting nocturnal emergence surveys.

Desk Study

- 3.8. The sources of information and study areas of the desk study data are provided in Table 3.

Table 2: Desk study sources and areas

Feature		Study Area	Data Source	Date of Search
Designated sites of nature conservation relating to bats	International (e.g. Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area, and Ramsar)	10 km radius of the site boundary	UK Government MAGIC ² website	02/03/2026
	National (e.g. Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), SSSI Impact Risk Zones (SSSI IRZ)), Local Nature Reserves, National Nature Reserves			

² Multi-agency Geographic Information for the Countryside: www.magic.gov.uk.

Feature	Study Area	Data Source	Date of Search
Granted Natural England Bat Mitigation Licences	2 km radius of the site boundary	UK Government MAGIC website	
The site in the context of habitat connectivity to the surrounding landscape	2 km radius of the site boundary	Satellite and OS map data	

Field Survey

Preliminary Roost Assessment

- 3.9. The PRA was carried out on the 3rd March 2026 with reference to best practice guidelines (Collins, 2023). Weather conditions were appropriate for field survey with temperatures of 10°C, no rain, and good visibility.
- 3.10. The survey involved a Natural England bat licenced surveyor making a detailed external and internal inspection of the building(s) on-site, compiling information on potential bat entry/exit points, roosting features, and any evidence of bats found (such as actual bat sightings, droppings, urine staining and fur-oil staining). The nomenclature used for bat species lists broadly follows that of Dietz and Kiefer (2018).
- 3.11. The PRA was aided as required by binoculars, a high-powered torch, and an endoscope to view features on the building and/ or search accessible cracks and crevices for the presence of bats where required.
- 3.12. The suitability of the building(s) for roosting bats was categorised with reference to best practice industry guidelines (Collins, 2023) (Table 3: Guidelines for Assessing the Potential Bat Roosting Suitability of Structures and Habitats) as either negligible, low, moderate, or high. Suitability grading of buildings requires consideration of the potential roosting features on the building within the context of the suitability of the surrounding landscape to support commuting and foraging bats.

Table 3: Guidelines for Assessing the Potential Bat Suitability of Structures and Habitats (Adapted from Collins, (2023))

Suitability	Description of Roosting Habitats	Commuting and Foraging Habitats
Negligible	Negligible features likely to be used by roosting bats. An absence of accessible voids, cracks and crevices.	Negligible features likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats. A lack of landscape habitat features.
Low	A structure or tree with a potential roost site which could be used by individual bats, which does not provide enough space, shelter, protection, or appropriate conditions (i.e. temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels, disturbance) or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis by larger numbers of bats.	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats such as a hedgerow with gaps or unvegetated stream, but isolated (i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by habitat). Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	A structure or tree with a potential roost site that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but is unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (such as a maternity colony).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by commuting bats such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.

Suitability	Description of Roosting Habitats	Commuting and Foraging Habitats
High	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are 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.	Continuous high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape likely to be used regularly by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees, and woodland edge. Continuous high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Sites which are close to and connected to known roosts.

Emergence Survey

- 3.13. The surveys were carried out with reference to best practice guidelines (Collins, 2023). The surveyors were positioned to view the potential bat exit/ entry points on the building, with an objective to identify any bats emerging from/ re-entering the building. Surveyor locations are presented on Figure 3: Emergence Survey Surveyor Location Plan.
- 3.14. Night vision aids (NVAs) were used during the surveys. The emergence surveys were aided by a Nightfox Nova and Nightfox Whiskers or Nightfox Swift 2 Pro's professional video cameras in Infrared Mode, supplemented by external Infra-Red lighting including Nightfox XB5 850nm infrared LED flashlight and Nightfox XB5 850nm infrared LED flashlights as required (Figure 3: Emergence Survey Surveyor Location Plan). Video footage was recorded to an SD card, which was later subject to desktop analysis. All ecologists using NVAs were trained and competent to do so.
- 3.15. Surveyors noted bats seen and/or echolocation heard recording the time, location, number of bats, behaviour, flight path, and species (where possible). Each surveyor was assisted with a Wildlife Acoustics Echo Meter Touch 2 bat detector, recording bat echolocation calls which were later subject to desktop analysis via the Kaleidoscope analysis software.
- 3.16. One bat registration is defined as an echolocating bat triggering one up to 15 second recording event by the detector, which generates a single file output. Bat registrations are an indicator of bat activity and not a measure of the number of individual bats present. For example, 10 separate bat registrations may be ten individual bats passing the detector, or one bat passing the detector ten times, or a mixture of both scenarios.
- 3.17. The nocturnal bat survey timings and weather conditions are presented in Tables 4 & 5.

Table 4: Nocturnal Bat Survey Occasions Summary

Date	Building	Dusk/ Dawn	Sunrise/ Sunset	Start Time	End Time
03/06/2026	B1	Dusk	21:21	21:06	23:21

Table 5: Nocturnal Bat Survey Weather Conditions

Date	Building	Dusk/ Dawn	Air Temperature (°C) (Start/ End)	Cloud Cover (%) (Start/ End)	Wind (Beaufort) (Start/ End)	Rain (Start/ End)
03/06/2026	B1	Dusk	15/13	20/30	2/1	N/N

Nesting Birds

- 3.18. An assessment of the building to support nesting birds, including barn owl, was made, and the site was searched where accessible for active or historical bird nests. Any sightings of bird nesting behaviour associated with the building was also noted.

Limitations

- 3.19. It must be noted that survey effort has been made to provide detailed descriptions of the site within the context of potential usage by protected species, however a fully comprehensive assessment and prediction of natural factors cannot be made. The protected species assessment provides a professional view of the likelihood of such species being present and cannot be taken as a definitive presence or absence of the same. Systematic presence/ likely absence surveys for such species, which typically require multiple survey visits, have not been undertaken but are recommended in the present report if considered proportionate to the potential ecological impacts of the development proposals.
- 3.20. A full search of crevices and cavities on buildings typically cannot be made without specialist access equipment and in most cases intrusive works, and therefore accessible areas only have been searched for evidence of protected species and a negative result of evidence does not conclusively equate to absence of such species which may occupy inaccessible crevices on the building. However, provided any recommended nocturnal emergence/ re-entry bat survey(s) are undertaken, this is not considered a significant limitation to assessing the presence/ likely absence of roosting bats at the site.
- 3.21. Where bat calls were recorded, bat calls were where possible identified to species level with reference to guidance texts and bat call libraries (Russ, 2012), (Barataud, 2015), however due to overlapping characteristics in echolocation between species in some instances identification was possible to genus level only (e.g., *Myotis*, *Plecotus*, *Nyctalus*, *Pipistrellus*). Furthermore, in some cases, calls may only be placed into a group of genera (e.g., *Nyctalus*/ *Eptesicus* species).
- 3.22. Third party desk study data is not exhaustive, and an absence or a negative result of a species does not indicate the absence of protected species from the site/ search area.
- 3.23. All dimensions, locations and distances provided are approximate.

4. Results

Desk Study - Statutory Designated Sites

- 4.1. The site does not form part of an international or national designated site for nature conservation designated due to bat interest.
- 4.2. No internationally or nationally designated sites within the desk study search radius were designated due to bat interest.
- 4.3. The site lies within a Site of Special Scientific Interest Impact Risk Zone (SSSI IRZ), requiring the Local Planning Authority to consult with Natural England on any risks which may affect the SSSI sites as a result of certain development types. However, the current development type is not listed in the SSSI IRZ citation as requiring consultation.

Desk Study - Statutory Designated Sites

- 4.4. Records of previously granted Natural England Bat Mitigation Licences were recorded within a 2km radius of the site, summarised in Table 6.

Table 6: Summary of Granted EPS Licence Applications within a 2km radius of the site.

Species	Start / End Date	Roost Impacted Types	Distance & Direction from Site
Brown long-eared bat <i>Plecotus auritus</i>	12/02/2010 / 01/10/2011	Destruction of a breeding site and resting place	0.7km NE
Brown long-eared bat & common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	07/03/2017 / 28/02/2022	Destruction of a non-breeding resting place	1.9km NE

Field Survey

Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA)

- 4.5. For the purpose of this report, the buildings on site have been referenced building B1 as shown on Figure 1: Site Location Plan. Two other buildings referenced buildings B2-B3 were present on site but will not be impacted under the current development proposals and therefore were not assessed further.
- 4.6. The results of the PRA are presented in Table 7 overleaf.

Table 7: PRA Results

Building Ref	Building Description	Potential Bat Access Points & Potential Roosting Locations	Evidence of Bats Recorded	Suitability Grading	Photographs
B1	The building B1 related to the single-storey residential dwelling in the east of the site and was approximately 11m in length, 6m in width, and 3.5m in height. The building comprised brick-built walls sealed with render and a pitched roof of concrete pantiles. Skylights were present on the southern section of the roof on the western elevation. Internally, a loft void of approximately 1.5m in height was present in the southern half of the building and the building was open to the roof pitch in the northern half of the building. The roof structure comprised timber rafters and ridge beam with bitumen felt lining.	Potential bat access points included under the gaps between the tiles and the eaves on the west elevation. Potential roosting locations included between the roof tiles and the internal lining at the west elevation.	No evidence observed.	Low	

Nesting Birds

- 4.7. No evidence of nesting birds was recorded during the survey.
- 4.8. No evidence of barn owl was recorded during the survey.

Emergence Survey

4.9. The results of the emergence surveys are presented in Table 8, overleaf.

Table 8: Emergence survey results

Building Ref	Date	Sunset time	Emerging/ Re-Entering Bats Recorded	Other Bat Activity Summary	NVA Photographs
B1	03/06/2026	21:21	No Emerging/ Re-entering Bats Recorded.	The first bat recorded was a common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> at 21:48, 27 minutes after sunset. The bat was heard but not seen via a surveyor or NVA and assumed to be commuting in the wider area. Other bat activity included frequent passes of common pipistrelle, occasional passes of noctule <i>Nyctalus noctule</i>, and a single pass of soprano pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>, <i>Myotis Myotinae</i> sp., brown long-eared <i>Plecotus auritus</i> and unidentified pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus</i> sp. which were heard but not seen and therefore not assumed to be related to building B1. Occasional sightings of pipistrelle species were observed throughout the survey and included two single passes of Soprano pipistrelles commuting north over the building B1 at 21:56 and west at 22:35, and two single passes of common pipistrelle observed flying north over the building B1 at 22:11 and west at 22:22. The activity of common pipistrelle was indicative of foraging behaviour and therefore not assumed to be related to the building B1.	 

5. Discussion & Recommendations

- 5.1. The ecological constraints and opportunities, and recommendations for avoidance, mitigation, or further survey (where required) are provided in Table 9 overleaf.

Table 9: Ecological Constraints and Opportunities

	Relevant Legislation	Potential Ecological Impact	Further Survey Required	Potential Avoidance, Mitigation and/or Compensation Measures
Bats	Bats are protected as a European Protected Species under The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and are protected under domestic legislation via the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The term 'European Protected Species' (EPS) is used to describe species listed on Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, which make guilty of an offence a person who: • “Deliberately captures, injures or kills any wild animal of a European protected species; • Deliberately disturbs wild animals of any such species; • Deliberately takes or destroys the eggs of such an animal, or; • Damages or destroys a breeding site or resting place of such an animal [...].” A person guilty of an offence under Regulation 43 is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or to a fine, or to both. As a protected species, bats are a material consideration for planning applications with reference to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) and the British Standard BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity Code of practice for planning and development. The BS 42020:2013 clause 9.2.4 details that: <i>“The presence or absence of protected species, and the extent to which they could be affected by the proposed development, should be established before planning permission is granted; otherwise all material considerations might not have been considered in making the decision. The use of planning conditions to secure ecological surveys after planning permission has been granted should therefore only be applied in exceptional circumstances[...].”</i>	The development proposals include the extension and conversion of the building B1 on site which may result in harm or disturbance caused to any bats or bat roosts which may be present on site. The building B1 was assessed as having low suitability for roosting bats, with reference to best practice survey guidelines (Collins, 2023), one nocturnal emergence survey was carried out during which no emerging/re-entering bats were observed. The likely absence of roosting bats within the building B1 can be assumed.	No further surveys required.	Due to the presence of bats in the wider landscape, as highlighted in the desk study the impacts from external artificial lighting at the site on adjacent habitats should be avoided. Where lighting is required, this should be sympathetic to wildlife through the design of lighting observing the principles set out in guidelines from the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) & Institution of Lighting Professionals (BCT & ILP, 2023). In the unlikely event that a bat is encountered during works, works should cease immediately, and the advice of a suitably experienced ecologist sought.
Nesting Birds (Including Barn Owls)	Nesting birds are afforded legal protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), whereby all wild nesting birds are protected under the Act, making it an offence to:	No evidence of nesting birds was recorded during the survey. However, the building offers suitability for nesting birds and their presence cannot be fully discounted.	Works affecting nesting bird habitat at the site should avoid the nesting bird season of March to August (inclusive), and September in mild years. Where this is not possible, the habitat to be subject to works should be surveyed for nesting birds immediately prior to removal by a suitably experienced ecologist. If nesting birds are recorded, a suitable buffer zone should be defined by the	In the unlikely event that nesting birds are present at the time of works, works should cease immediately, and the advice of a suitably qualified ecologist sought.

	Relevant Legislation	Potential Ecological Impact	Further Survey Required	Potential Avoidance, Mitigation and/or Compensation Measures
	- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird; and - Take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or eggs of any wild bird.		ecologist and implemented until the ecologist confirms the chicks have fledged. If species identification is possible, this can be used to inform the typical egg incubation and fledging period, giving an indication of an appropriate time for re-survey to confirm fledging.	

6. Conclusions and Biodiversity Enhancements

Further Surveys

- 6.1. No further surveys are required.

Biodiversity Enhancements

- 6.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) sets out that:

'Development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.'

- The installation of one integrated bat box on the new extension, for example the 'Ibstock Free Access Bat Box (A)', or the 'Ibstock Enclosed Bat Box 'B' or 'C''. Bat boxes should be sited at a height of between 3m and 7m, on a southwest or southeast aspect, away from artificial light sources, and in proximity to suitable bat commuting habitat such as linked back gardens or trees. Potential perches (such as aerials) for predators should not be fitted in close proximity to the roosting brick entrance hole.

7. References

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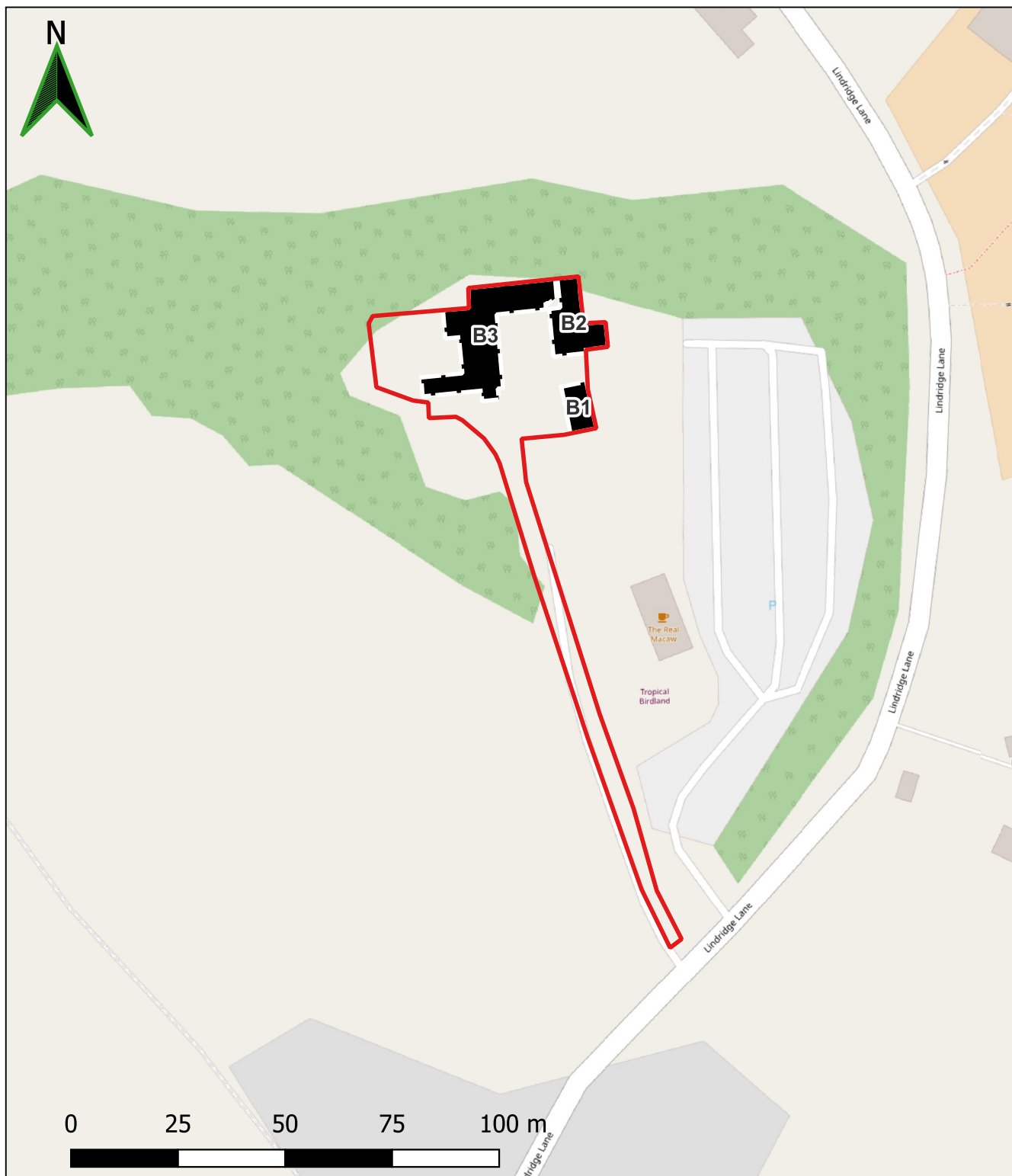
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8. Figures

Figure 1: Site Location & Building Plan (Overleaf)

Figure 2: Surrounding Landscape Plan (Overleaf)

Figure 3: Emergence Survey Surveyor Location Plan (Overleaf)



Legend

-  Site Boundary
-  Building with Reference Number

Project:
**The Spinneys, Tropical Birdland,
Lindridge Ln, Desford**

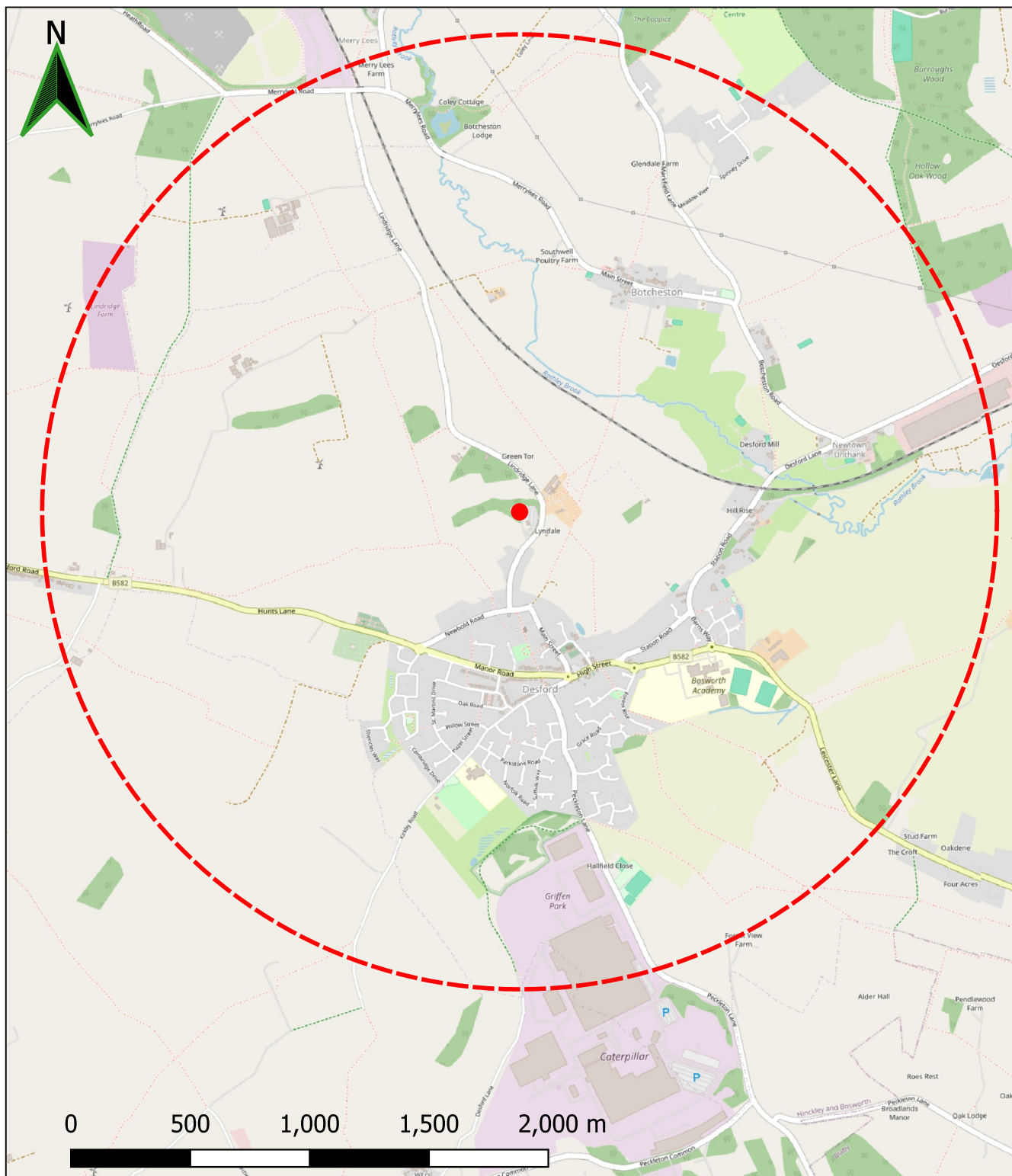
Drawing:
Figure 1: Site Location & Building Plan

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Author: CJM Job No: P3003/1



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Legend

- Site Location
- 2km Buffer

Project:
**The Spinneys, Tropical Birdland,
Lindridge Ln, Desford**

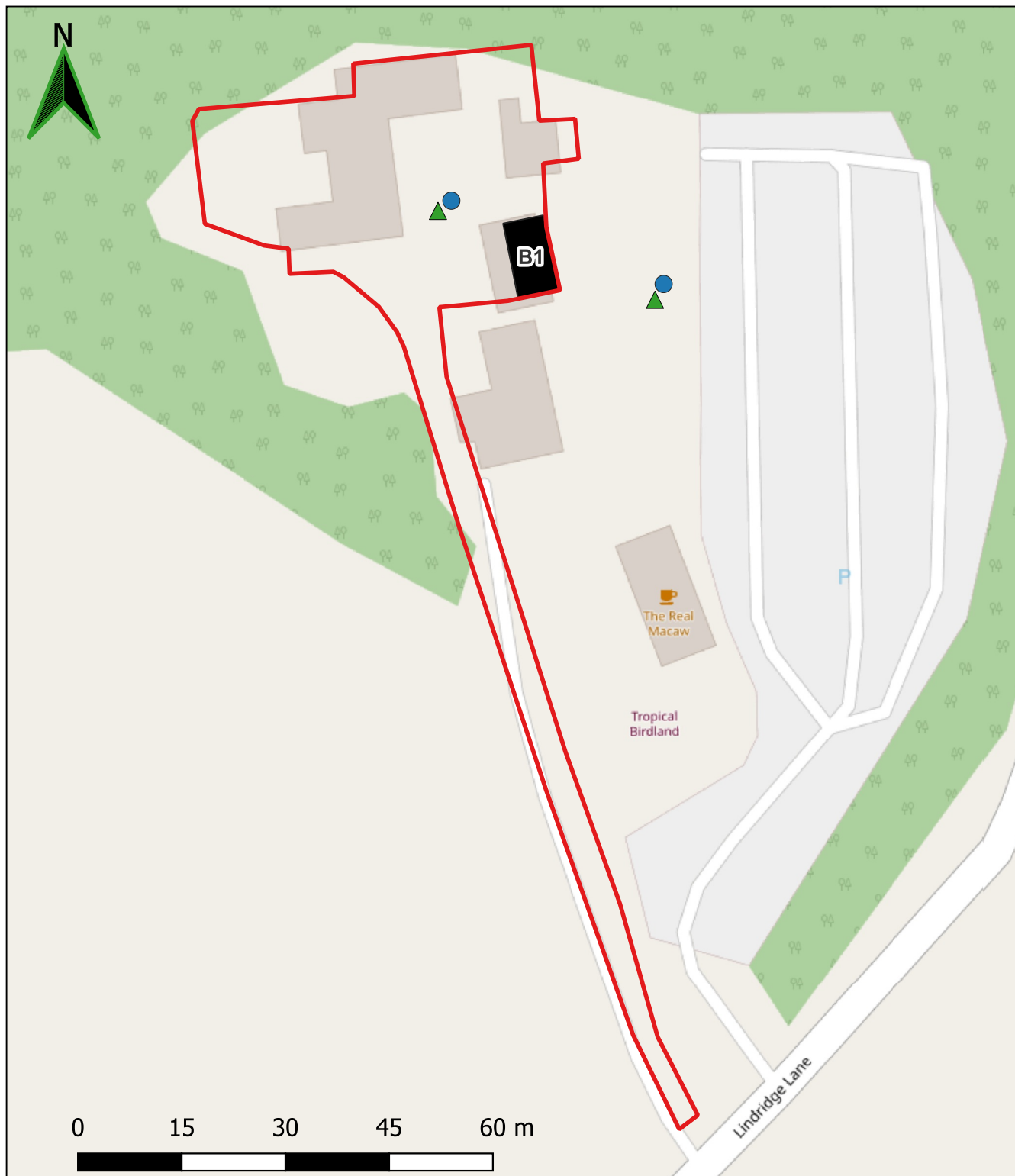
Drawing:
Figure 2: Surrounding Landscape Plan

Date: 05-03-2026 Version: FINAL
Author: CJM Job No: P3003/1



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Legend

-  Site boundary
-  Building with reference number
-  Surveyor location
-  Camera location

Project:
**The Spinneys, Tropical Birdland,
Lindridge Lane, Desford**

Drawing:
**Figure 3: Emergence Survey Surveyor
Location Plan**

Date: 15-06-2026

Version: FINAL

Author: TLW

Job No: P3003



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Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation Summary

This appendix serves as a summary of relevant policy and legislation. It is not intended to supersede the policy or legislation documents to which it refers, and the relevant full documents should always be consulted prior to decision making.

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

Biodiversity is a material consideration under the National Planning Policy Framework (2024). Relevant text to biodiversity from the NPPF is described below.

In Section 2 of the NPPF 'Achieving sustainable development', paragraph 8(c), the NPPF sets an environmental objective:

- "to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."

In Section 15 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment', the NPPF states that:

"187. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; [...]
- minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures. [...]"

The NPPF, in paragraph 192 sets out that to protect and enhance biodiversity, plans should:

- "Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity⁶⁵; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity."

In determining planning applications, the NPPF paragraph 193 sets guidance that local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- "if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other

developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest [...];

- development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.”

Paragraph 194 states that the following sites should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

- “potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
- listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and
- sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.”

Paragraph 195 states that “The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or projects will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.”

Paragraph 198 states that planning policies and decisions should ensure new development is appropriate to its location and take into account likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:

- “Mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development [...]; [...] and
- limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.”

Government Circular ODPM 06/05 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

The government circular provides administrative guidance on the application of statutory obligation and legislation relating to planning and nature conservation in England. It complements the National Planning Policy Framework. The document includes guidance on designated sites (international and national), habitats, and protected species.

Relating to protected species and the requirement for their consideration in planning applications, the government circular, in paragraph 98 details that:

“The presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat. Local authorities should consult English Nature [now Natural England] before granting planning permission. They should consider attaching appropriate planning conditions or entering into planning obligations under which the developer would

take steps to secure the long-term protection of the species. They should also advise developers that they must comply with any statutory species' protection provisions affecting the site concerned."

Paragraph 99, relating to the requirement and timing of protected species survey and mitigation, the government circular states that:

"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. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted. However, bearing in mind the delay and cost that may be involved, developers should not be required to undertake surveys for protected species unless there is a reasonable likelihood of the species being present and affected by the development. Where this is the case, the survey should be completed and any necessary measures to protect the species should be in place, through conditions and/or planning obligations, before the permission is granted. In appropriate circumstances the permission may also impose a condition preventing the development from proceeding without the prior acquisition of a [Natural England] licence."

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

The term 'European Protected Species' (EPS) is used to describe species listed on Schedule 2 of the The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Regarding these species, Regulation 43 of the Regulations make guilty of an offence a person who:

- "Deliberately captures, injures or kills any wild animal of a European protected species;
- Deliberately disturbs wild animals of any such species;
- Deliberately takes or destroys the eggs of such an animal, or;
- Damages or destroys a breeding site or resting place of such an animal [...]"

Regulation 43 defines that the disturbance of animals includes any disturbance which is likely to:

- Impair their ability:
 - to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or
 - in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or
 - to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

A person guilty of an offence under Regulation 43 is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or to a fine, or to both.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (As Amended)

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) lists species on Schedule 5 for which the Act make it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take;

- Recklessly or intentionally damage or destroy, or obstruct access to any structure or place which any wild animal included uses for shelter or protection;
- Recklessly or intentionally disturb any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection.

Some species receive partial protection under the Act, which limits their protection under the Act to intentional killing or injury.

All wild nesting birds are protected under the Act, making it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird; and
- Take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or eggs of any wild bird.

Some bird species are afforded special protection via their inclusion in Schedule 1 of the Act, which makes an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb any schedule 1 bird building a nest or which is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; or to disturb dependent young of such a bird, or whilst such a bird 'leaks' (i.e. congregates for community courtship behaviour).

Schedule 9 of the Act makes it an offence to cause any plant listed to grow in the wild, unless all reasonable steps were taken to prevent an offence and due diligence was exercised.

The Act sets out provisions to protect Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

Section 40 of the Act places a legal duty on public authorities (including planning authorities) to have regard to biodiversity conservation in their normal functions (including planning applications).

Under Section 41 of the Act, lists of Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) and Species of Principal Importance (SPI), of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity, are produced which serve to guide public authorities in carrying out their functions with consideration for biodiversity conservation.

Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 (as amended)

The Act protects wild mammals against certain cruel acts, including intentional crushing, downing or asphyxiation.