

Lindenwood
Chineham Business Park
Crockford Lane
Basingstoke
Hampshire
RG24 8QY

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

Report prepared by Jake Morgan; reviewed by Sarah Foot

Ref: R3319/a

December 2022

 JOHNWENMAN
ecological consultancy

1 Diesel House, Honey Hill, Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 3BL
Telephone: 0118 3271810 Mobile: 07979 403099 E-mail: info@wenman-ecology.co.uk
www.wenman-ecology.co.uk

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Registered office: 100 New Wokingham Road, Crowthorne, Berkshire RG45 6JP where you may look at a list of members' names.

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Zane-Pierre Antoine on behalf of Frasers Property to undertake a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment for the seven commercial buildings at Lindenwood in Chineham Business Park, Basingstoke (OS Grid Reference: SU 65014 55585). The assessment was commissioned in connection with an application to be lodged with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council for the demolition of the commercial buildings.
- 1.1.2** All British bat species are fully protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('Habitat Regulations') (as amended). A survey of the interior and exterior of the buildings was undertaken on the 28th November 2022 by an ecologist registered under the Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL18 and an assistant ecologist.
- 1.1.3** All commercial buildings on site showed no evidence of the presence of roosting bats internally and externally. Whilst the southeast building (Building 1) had slate roof tiles which were occasionally raised or missing, an underlying metal plate meant that the resulting gaps were superficial. Furthermore, open gaps within the damaged timber soffit around the southeast building (Building 1) and central northern building (Building 4) were closely inspected with a high-powered torch and provided no sheltered crevices for bats. As such it is considered unlikely that the plans will have any impact on bats or their roosts. A European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) would not be required to allow the works to go ahead lawfully.
- 1.1.4** In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during the construction work, the work must stop immediately, and a licensed ecologist should be called to site to attend to the bat(s) and provide further advice on how to proceed; work must continue only once further written advice has been received. At this point, an EPSML may be required to permit the work to continue lawfully.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Zane-Pierre Antoine on behalf of Frasers Property to undertake a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment for the seven commercial buildings at Lindenwood in Chineham Business Park, Basingstoke (OS Grid Reference: SU 65014 55585).
- 2.1.2** The assessment was commissioned in connection with an application to be lodged with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council for the demolition of the building.

2.2 Legislative Background

- 2.2.1** All British bat species are fully protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('Habitat Regulations') (as amended). In summary, the legislation combined makes it an offence to:
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a structure or place used for shelter by a bat;
 - Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb bats; in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair the ability of bats to survive, breed or reproduce or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migrating bats, to hibernate or migrate; or to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species;
 - Deliberately kill, injure or take any bat.
- 2.2.2** The government's statutory conservation advisory organisation, Natural England, is responsible for issuing European Protected Species licences that would permit activities that would otherwise lead to an infringement of the Habitat Regulations. A licence can be issued if the following three tests have been met:
- **Regulation 55(9)(a)** - there is "no satisfactory alternative" to the derogation, and;
 - **Regulation 55(9)(b)** - the derogation "will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a

- favourable conservation status in their natural range” and;
- **Regulation 55(2)(e)** - the derogation is for the purposes of “preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment”.
- 2.2.3** Local authorities have a statutory duty under Regulation 7(3e) of the Habitat Regulations to have regard to requirements of the Habitats Directive in the exercise of their functions. They must therefore consider and determine whether these three tests are likely to be satisfied by planning proposals affecting European Protected Species before granting planning permission.
- 2.2.4** If a European Protected Species mitigation licence is necessary, a licence can be sought once all the necessary planning consents have been granted. Natural England aims to issue a decision on licence applications within 30 working days of submission.
- 2.2.5** Licensable projects affecting small numbers of seven commonly occurring species occupying roosts of low conservation importance may fall under the remit of the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (Low Impact) (WML-CL21), which would enable consultants registered by Natural England, or accredited agents appointed by them, to carry licensable work under the Class Licence once sites have been registered in advance with Natural England. Registration forms must be submitted at least three weeks before work is due to start, and if acceptable, Natural England aims to register sites within two weeks.
- 2.2.6** Survey data supporting EPS mitigation licence applications or the registration of the site under the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (WML-CL21) must be up to date i.e. have been conducted within the current or most recent optimal survey season i.e. May to August. Therefore, if surveys show bats are present and licensable work is delayed until during or after the next survey season, updated surveys will be required to support an application or site registration.

2.3 Site Description, Location and Context

- 2.3.1** The commercial buildings at Lindenwood are situated on the northwest side of Chineham Business Park on Crockford Land in Basingstoke (OS Grid Reference: SU 65014 55585).
- 2.3.2** The commercial site primarily consisted of hard-standing car parks with industrial buildings, scattered trees and road islands with introduced shrubs. The commercial buildings were surrounded by similar hardstanding sites to the east and south along Crockford Lane. The western boundary directly bordered approximately 140ha of mixed woodland with a further 1ha woodland corridor along the northern boundary. In addition, approximately 410m to the southeast, a railway line bisects the land from southwest to northeast and could be an important commuting route by bats depending on the quality of the bordering habitats and intensity of artificial lighting. Further surroundings are primarily industrial with commercial buildings to the north, east and south.
- 2.3.3** The woodland habitat bordering the site provides important roosting and foraging habitat for bats and nesting and foraging habitat for birds adapted to urban areas.

3 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

3.1 Building Inspection

- 3.1.1** A survey of the exterior and interior of the seven commercial buildings was undertaken on the 28th November 2022 by Vicky Potts - an ecologist registered under Natural England bat survey Class Licence CL18 (Registration no. CL18 2016-27162-CLS-CLS) - and Jake Morgan - an assistant ecologist.
- 3.1.2** The survey was undertaken with the aid of binoculars, a high power (1 million candle power) torch and looked for features that could offer potential roosting sites following standard survey guidelines (Collins 2016; Mitchell-Jones 2004; Mitchell-Jones & McLeish 2004).
- 3.1.3** The following may indicate the presence of a bat roost within a building:
- Bat droppings (these can be found externally, especially in sheltered areas such as window sills, underneath roost entrances or internally within a roof space);
 - Piles of insect remains e.g. moth wings (these may be indicative of regular feeding sites used by species such as brown long eared bat);
 - Staining at roost entrances or within the roost (urine and oil from fur can leave stains on timbers when bats are gathered for long periods);
 - Bats (live or dead).
- 3.1.4** Commercial buildings may offer potential roosting sites for bats, with favoured locations include:
- Under tiles, especially when loose or lifted tiles are present, or sections of mortar are missing;
 - Under sections of raised lead flashing or barge boards;
 - Gaps in brickwork;
 - At the eaves – gaining access via gaps between the fascia or soffit and wall.

3.2 Survey constraints

- 3.2.1** Whilst full external access was available for all commercial buildings on site, building 3 was inaccessible for an internal inspection. With that said, buildings 2 – 7 were very similar in design and so it is likely that building 3 shared the same features as seen within the other commercial buildings. As such the survey had no significant constraints. It must be noted that due to the roosting behaviour of crevice-dwelling bats in particular, it is possible that evidence of roosting bats may not be visible during the survey and could be hidden in crevices such as wall cavities and in the space between roof coverings and lining; an absence of evidence does not necessarily equate to an absence of roosting bats.

4 SURVEY FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1** Photographs of the commercial buildings are presented in **Appendix 1** and a plan of the external and internal survey findings with associated target notes is shown in **Appendix 2**. The survey findings from the exteriors and interiors of the commercial buildings are described as follows

4.2 External Survey – Building 1

- 4.2.1** The southeast commercial building was primarily used as an office space with blockwork walls, large windows on the second storey, a hipped roof, and a flat roof within the centre (**Photographs 1 & 2**).
- 4.2.2** The hipped roof was covered with flat slate tiles which were occasionally missing on the northern side elevation; however, the resulting gaps were superficial (**Photograph 3; Target note 1**). Furthermore, whilst hip tiles were occasionally missing or had slipped on the western side elevation, underlying lead flashing meant that no crevices were available (**Photograph 4; Target notes 2 & 3**). The lead flashing that joined the hipped section to the metal flat roof was tight along the roof tiles and around the southern flue pipes (**Photographs 5 & 6; Target notes 4 & 5**). In addition, the edge of the roof was capped off with metal underneath the roof tiles which was sealed tightly against the timber soffit (**Photograph 7; Target note 6**). The timber soffit that ran around the entirety of the building was mostly intact and tight to the wall, however, an open gap was situated within the soffit on the western side elevation which was closely inspected with a high-powered torch and showed no signs of use by bats (**Photograph 8; Target notes 7 & 8**).
- 4.2.3** No evidence of bats was visible on the exterior of the commercial building at the time of the survey.

4.3 Internal Survey – Building 1

- 4.3.1** The commercial building consisted of a false ceiling which was occasionally damaged to allow partial access to the void which covered the footprint of the building (**Photograph 9; Target note 9**).

4.3.2 The hipped section of the roof was lined with foil-covered insulation boards which were tight to the central metal flat roof and timbers (**Photograph 10; Target note 10**).

4.3.3 Whilst access to the void was limited, no signs of roosting bats were found during the internal inspection through damaged sections of the false ceiling.

4.4 External Survey – Buildings 2-7

4.4.1 The southwest, west, and northern commercial buildings were all very similar in design with the same features observed during the external survey. All buildings were primarily used as office spaces with modern cavity walls, large windows on both storeys and hipped roofs (**Photograph 11**). The three buildings in the northeast were attached (**Photograph 12**).

4.4.2 The hipped roofs on all buildings were covered with flat slate tiles which were tight and covered in moss on all elevations (**Photograph 13; Target note 11**). Furthermore, the ridge and hip tiles were also all in place and tight to the flat slate tiles (**Photograph 14; Target note 12**). A timber soffit ran around all buildings with a black mesh material between the soffit and the wall (**Photographs 15 & 16; Target notes 13**). With that said, an open gap was situated within the soffit on the northern building (Building 4) which was closely inspected with a high-powered torch and seen to be unsuitable for use and access by bats (**Photograph 17; Target note 14**). Bird droppings were commonly observed on the second storey windowsills on all buildings (**Target note 15**).

4.4.3 No evidence of bats was visible on the exterior of the commercial buildings at the time of the survey.

4.5 Internal Survey – Buildings 2-7

4.5.1 Whilst the western commercial building (Building 3) was inaccessible during the internal survey, all other buildings consisted of false ceilings which were occasionally damaged to allow partial access into the void (**Target note 16**). The voids were lined with foil-covered insulation boards which were tight to the visible timbers (**Photograph 18; Target note 17**).

4.5.2 Whilst access to the void was limited within all commercial buildings, no signs of roosting bats were found during the internal inspection through damaged sections of the false ceiling.

5 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Assessment of Bat Roost Potential / Status

- 5.1.1** Whilst access was limited due to all buildings having false ceilings, no evidence of roosting bats was found within the sections of the roof void that were visible and so it is highly unlikely that the void supports primarily void-dwelling bat species such as the long-eared bats (*Plecotus* spp.).
- 5.1.2** The commercial buildings also lacked potential roost features suitable for use by crevice-dwelling bat species, such as the pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus* spp.) and/or small *Myotis* species. Whilst there were sections of the timber soffit that were damaged on the southeast and northern buildings (Buildings 1 & 4), the open gaps were closely inspected with a high-powered torch and shown to be unsuitable for use and access by bats.

5.2 Impact of Proposals and Recommendations

- 5.2.1** The proposed works includes the demolition of the existing commercial buildings on site. There are no potential roost features which will be impacted by these proposals and there were no signs of the presence of bats during the preliminary bat roost assessment. Therefore, it is considered highly unlikely that the proposed works will have any impact on bats or their roosts.
- 5.2.2** In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during the demolition, the work must stop immediately, and a licensed ecologist should be called to site to attend to the bat and provide advice on how to proceed; work should not continue until further written advice has been received. At this point, a European Protected Species mitigation licence may be required to permit the work to continue lawfully.

6 REFERENCES

- Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines 3rd Edition*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- Mitchell-Jones, A. J. (2004). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.
- Mitchell-Jones, A. J. & McLeish, A. P. (2004). *Bat Workers' Manual (3RD Edition)*. JNCC, Peterborough.
- Richardson, P. (2000). *Distribution Atlas of Bats in Britain and Ireland 1980 – 1999*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

APPENDIX 1 – SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



1. Front of commercial Building 1, viewed from the northeast.



2. Rear of commercial Building 1, viewed from the west.



3. Occasionally missing slate roof tiles on Building 1 with superficial crevices, viewed from the north.



4. Lead flashing under missing hip tiles on Building 1, viewed from the west.



5. Lead flashing between hipped roof and flat roof tight to the slate tiles on Building 1, viewed from the north.



6. Tight lead flashing under flue pipes on Building 1, viewed from the north.



7. Edge of the roof capped off with an underlying metal plate on Building 1, viewed from the southwest.



8. Open gap within the timber soffit on Building 1, viewed from the west.



9. Damaged section within the false ceiling of Building 1, allowing partial access to the void above.



10. Hipped section of Building 1 lined with foil-covered insulation boards.



11. Front of the attached northeast buildings (Buildings 5, 6 & 7), viewed from the southeast.



12. Rear of the attached northeast buildings (Buildings 5, 6 & 7), viewed from the west.



13. Flat slate roof tiles sealed to the roof on Building 4, viewed from the east.



14. Ridge and hip tiles tight to the adjoining slate roof tiles, viewed on Building 3 from the east.



15. Black mesh material between the timber soffit and the wall, viewed on Building 4 from the north.



16. Black mesh material between the timber soffit and the wall, viewed on Building 4 from the north.



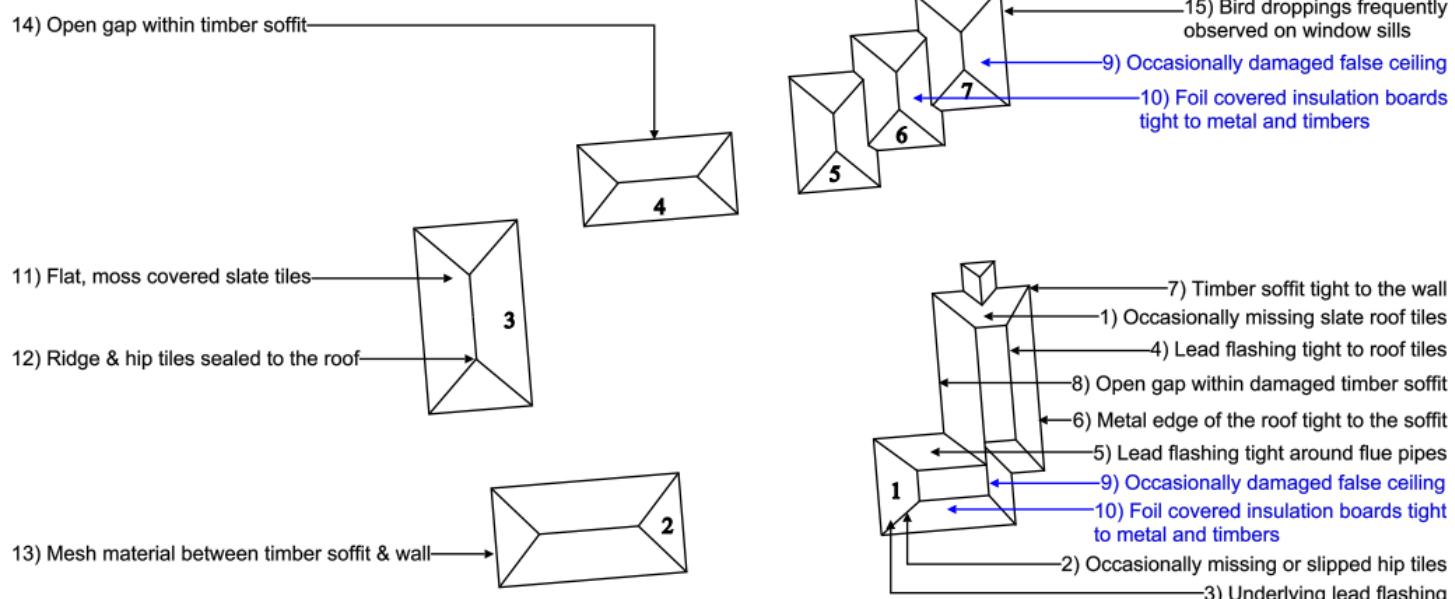
17. Open gap within the timber soffit of Building 4, viewed from the north.



18. Damaged section within the false ceiling of Building 6 allowing partial access to the void above where foil-covered insulation boards are tight to the timbers.

APPENDIX 2 – PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

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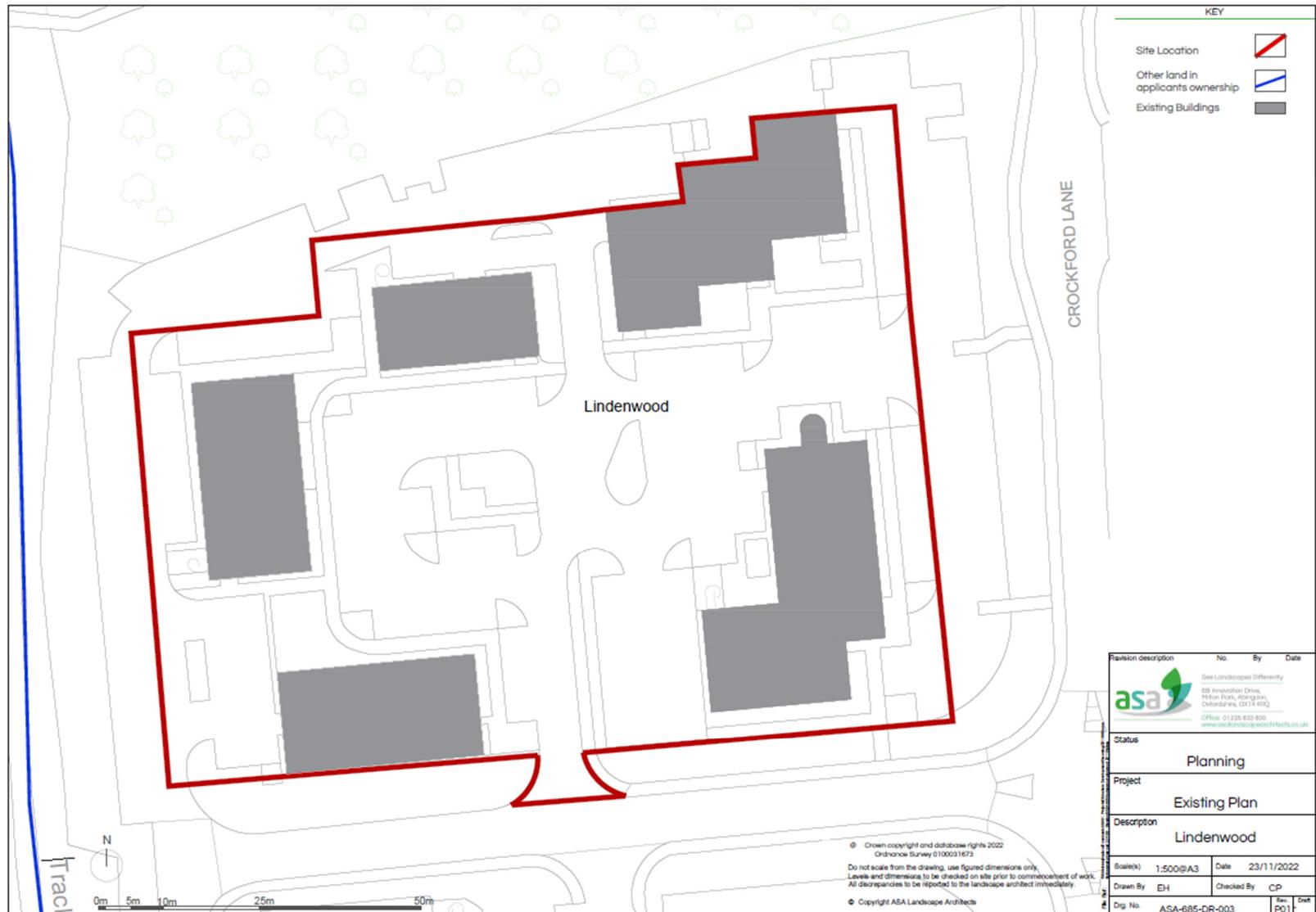
External Target Note

Internal Target Note

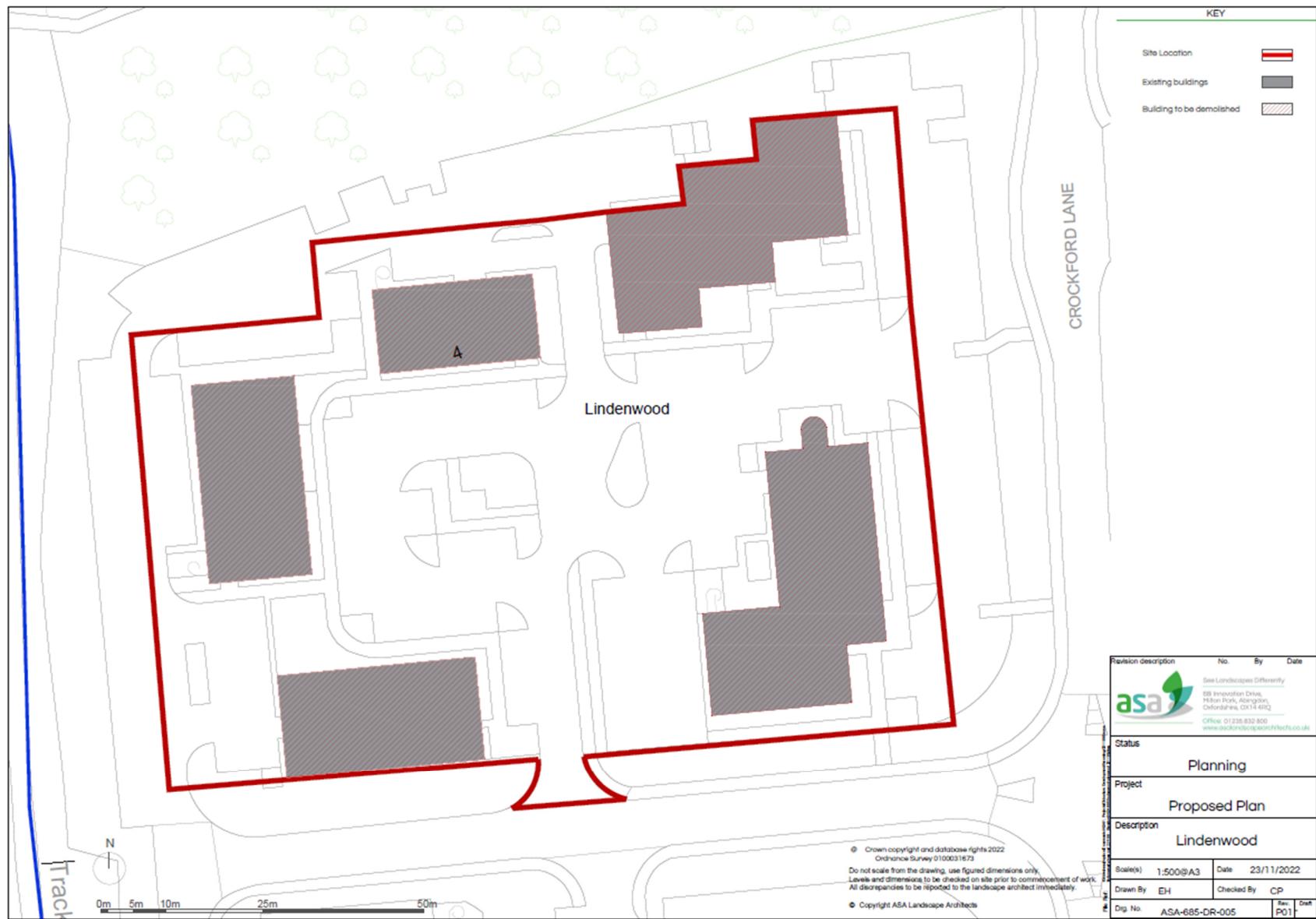
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APPENDIX 3 – EXISTING PLAN AND PROPOSED DEMOLITION PLAN



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