PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT.

FOR

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR CLASS Q (b) PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT FOR PRIOR APPROVAL FOR PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE OF AGRICULTURAL BARN TO ONE DWELLING HOUSE (class 3) AND ASSOCIATED WORKS.

AT

BLUERIDGE FARM, 34 HAWKERIDGE, WESTBURY, WILTSHIRE. BA13 4LA



Peter Grist, Teal Hatch, Mill Street, Heytesbury, Wiltshire. October 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application for the conversion of a redundant farm building into residential accommodation has been prepared on behalf of the applicants, Mr. and Mrs. P. Vowles, for themselves to live in.

1.2 This statement will provide details of the application site, existing building, history and site access to show compliance with the General Permitted Development Order.

1.3 This application is made under Class Q (b) for the change of use of the existing barn together with associated works required to as reasonably necessary to facilitate the conversion.

1.4 The whole of the steel framed structure will be retained with existing openings utilised and new openings formed as permitted under the order and detailed further in this report. These works will constitute a conversion to residential accommodation as one single unit.

1.5 A structural report has been prepared by M2 Civil and Structural Consulting Engineers and is attached in appendix 1. The report does conclude that the existing structure is in good condition and suitable for conversion. The formation of new openings will not compromise the overall stability of the building.

1.6 An Ecological Appraisal has been carried out on the building and its environs by Environmental Gain Ltd of Unit 8 Westway Farm, Bishop Sutton, Bristol and is attached in appendix 2. The report does conclude that the proposals will have no direct impacts upon wildlife.

1.7 An Environment Agency Flood Map is attached in appendix 3. It shows that part of the site is in flood zone 3 but the barn is in flood zone 1.

1.8 A recent Class Q approval was granted on Appeal at Curnicks Lane, Sells Green, Seend for a very similarly constructed and sized steel framed barn with striking similarities. Planning reference 20/04042/PNCOU refused but allowed on Appeal reference APP/Y3940/W/20/3259321

2. SUMMARY OF SMALL HOLDING BUSINESS

2.1 The land to the rear of Blueridge Farm was purchased in June 2010 with plans to set up a small holding focusing on rare breeds. Following the registration of the business and land (CPH 45/318/0040) rare breed pigs, chicken and cattle were purchased.

2.2 In 2013 a Planning Application was submitted to Wiltshire Council for the erection of a 60 foot x 40 foot barn to house the animals and store farming supplies and machinery. Planning Consent was granted on 23rd August 2013 under reference 13/01385/FUL. Construction work started soon after the decision and the building was completed by early November 2013.

2.3 Between 2013 and 2016 the business continued to grow concentrating on the production of quality produce selling to the local community and restaurants. In 2015 a rare breeds sheep flock was also started.

2.4 The farm was then registered in 2017 as a food business operator with Wiltshire Council and started selling produce at Wiltshire and Somerset farmers markets.

2.5 In 2019 the business was struggling during TB and Avian Flu restrictions followed by the Covid Pandemic in 2020. Also competition from other traders increased at the farmers markets.

2.6 In 2020, due to ill health, a decision was made to reduce the workload and in particular the farmers markets, re-homing the livestock during 2021/2022 then closing the business in September 2022.

2.7 In April 2022 the farm was put up for sale but feedback from prospective purchasers felt that the house was lovely but it had too much land or that the land, at 6 acres, was too small for either arable or livestock production to make a viable business.

2.8 Blueridge Farm was subsequently taken off the market while the applicants investigated alternative solutions.

3 EXISTING STRUCTURE

3.1 The building was erected in 2013

3.2 The structure comprises of five steel portal frames with timber purlins supporting cement fibre big 6 roof sheeting. The floor is 150mm thick fibre strengthened concrete throughout with 150mm thick concrete block walls up to 1500mm high built off traditional concrete foundations. Wall finished with timber bearers and yorkshire boarding.

3.3 Refer to structural report in appendix 1.

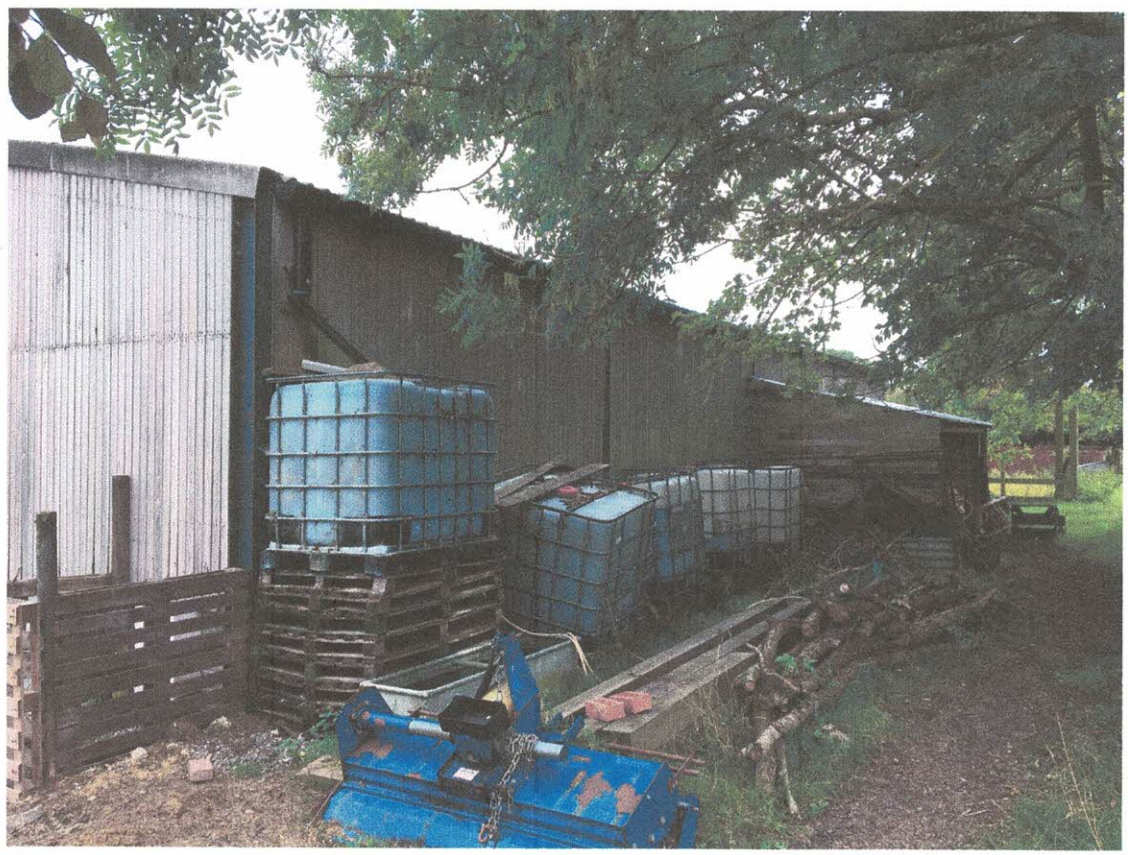
3.4 There is currently a timber clad lean to log and machinery store which will be permanently removed.

3.5 There are currently 3m x 3.6m openings at either end of the barn which will be retained.

3.6 The barn is accessed via a track with access to the North of the farm house and then runs South East into the field. This access does cross the public footpath HEYW1 which is shown on the attached map in appendix 4.

3.7 The existing mixture of sycamore, hawthorn and walnut trees adjacent to the South West boundary will be retained to preserve the current visual screening.









4. CLASS Q – 1

4.1 Criteria A has been met. The barn has been used for agricultural purposes since its construction in 2013.

4.2 The building has been used for the rearing of livestock including pigs, chicken and cattle and also for the storage of food and fodder for the holding. The small holding business commenced in 2010 and continued through to its cessation in 2021.

4.3 Criteria B,C and D are met. The building has an internal floor area of 208 square metres and will create a ground floor area of 208 and a mezzanine level of 45 square metres equating to a larger dwellinghouse. No other Class Q development has been carried out on the holding.

4.4 Criteria E and F is met. The land and building is not occupied under an agricultural tenancy nor was it subject to an agricultural tenancy within the last year.

4.5 Criteria G is satisfied. No development under Class A (a) or Class b (a) of Part 6 has occurred upon the holding since 20th March 2013.

4.6 Criteria H is met. The external foot print will not be increased in size.

4.7 Criteria I – A high proportion of the building will be retained so as to constitute the conversion to residential except for the inclusion of powder coated aluminium windows and doors for compliance with current Building Regulations. The block walls will be retained and rendered to provide an external weather proof layer. The yorkshire boarding will be retained and improved to provide a weather tight layer.

The roof covering and steel structure will be 100% retained. (the translucent roof lights will be replaced with matching cement fibre sheeting)
The concrete floor will be 100% retained.
The North West and South East walls will be 96% retained.
The South West and North East walls will be 76% retained.

The internal structure will be formed using a free standing, non structural timber stud wall providing adequate insulation to walls and ceiling to comply with Building Regulations. The floor will be covered with a damp proof membrane, insulation and screed. Refer to sections shown on dwg. no. BRF/04
The intention is to incorporate sustainable elements within the conversion to include heating and hot water provision with an air source heat pump supported by photovoltaic roof panels supplying electric back up.

Criteria J is met. The building is not on Article 2 (3) land.

Criteria K and L is met. There are no special protection areas, Listed Buildings or Scheduled Monuments.

5 CLASS Q. - 2

Paragraph Q2 of Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) order 2015 states that the conversion of an agricultural building to residential is considered permitted development subject to the condition that before beginning the development, the

developer shall apply to the Local Planning Authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the Authority will be required regarding :-

a) transport and highways impact.
b) noise impacts.
c) contamination risk.
d) flood risk
e) whether the location or siting of the building makes it otherwise impractical or undesirable for the building to change to residential use.
f) design and appearance.

We believe that the proposed development meets all the criteria indicated above for the following reasons :-

a) The site is not in a remote location as it is served by local bus routes and public footpaths. The site provides adequate space for parking and turning of vehicles to ensure the site can be entered and egressed in a forward gear. The site can still be accessed for agricultural reasons.

b) No noise resulting from the development is likely to adversely impact upon others due to the existing use of the site and the distance of separation from neighbouring properties.

c) A visual inspection of the building and surrounding land does not reveal any potential concerns in relation to contamination. The application site has ample space to ensure adequate provision for a private sewage treatment plant.

d) The Environment Agency flood map in attachment 3 clearly shows the existing barn to be located within flood zone 1 while the land to the North East is within flood zone 3. Surface water run off from the site will not increase as a result of the proposed development due to there being no increase in roofs or hard standings.

e) The barn is located very close to and within the village of Hawkeridge and will therefore be acceptable in terms of location and siting.

f) The existing design of the barn is retained in size and form with the inclusion of suitable windows to facilitate its conversion to residential. This is already accepted within the current landscape. The building is capable of functioning as a dwelling.

g) As the submitted drawings indicate, all habitable rooms will be provided with suitable and adequate means of light and ventilation according to para. X of the GPDO.
Para. X also states that the curtilage of the building is either the piece of land immediately beside or around the building , closely associated with and serving the purposes of the building. Land to be no larger than the area of land occupied by the agricultural building.
We confirm that the curtilage of the barn, including demolished log store, is 233 square metres and the curtilage area will be the same.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 As the information provided shows, this application, together with the appendicies, submitted aligns with the criteria required within the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 schedule 2 Part 3 Clas Q as amended by the Order in 2020.

APPENDIX 1

CIVIL & STRUCTURAL CONSULTING ENGINEERS

Structural Survey Report for Application for Class Q Permitted Development

Blueridge Farm

For

Mr P. Vowles

Document Version: 01

30/03/2023

Project Reference: M2-2609

Document Reference: R-01-P2

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Document Issue History and Status

	Prepared By		Checked By		Approved By	
Revision	Name	Date	Name	Date	Name	Date
P1	Max Day	30.03.23	Matthieu Crosnier	30.03.23	Max Day	30.03.23
P2	Max Day	30.03.23	Matthieu Crosnier	30.03.23	Max Day	30.03.23

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Contents

1.0 Introduction 1

2.0 General 1

3.0 Structural Observations 1

4.0 Proposals 2

5.0 Conclusions 2

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1.0 Introduction

M^2 Civil and Structural Limited were commissioned to inspect and report on the existing structure to assess the suitability for conversion under Class Q permitted development, agricultural to residential.

The survey was carried out by Max Day on 28th March 2023 at 10:30am. The weather was overcast and wet.

2.0 General

The building is located in the grounds of 34 Hawkeridge, Westbury, BA13 4LA. The existing building is a portal frame with 4bays, 5 frames. There is a masonry wall to circa 150mm above FFL. Above this timber cladding is supported by timber side rails. The roof is a corrugated metal sheet supported by timber purlins. There are 2 large framed openings at either end of the building in the gable walls.

3.0 Structural Observations

The portal frames are at circa. 4.46m centres, spanning approximately 11.65m. The height to eaves is around 3.5m.

The portal frames are formed of 203x133x25 UB columns and 178x102x19 UB rafters, with haunch connections at the eaves and apex. The portal frames appear to be suitably sized and are in good condition with no visible signs of degradation.

Wind bracing is provided by the timber side rails and dense concrete blockwork walls. The lateral stability systems appear to be working as intended as all frames are vertical and there are no signs of permanent movement.

The floor is a reinforced concrete slab, which has been laid in recent years. The slab is in a good condition and would be suitable to over lay with insulation and screed for residential conversion.

The foundations are reinforced concrete pad foundations. These were not inspected, however, are evidently suitably sized to support the loadings applied.

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4.0 Proposals

The proposals are to convert the existing agricultural building into a three-bedroom dwelling. All of the existing primary structure would be retained.

The portal frames and lateral stability systems would be unaffected by the addition of drylining for insulation purposes. Windows could be installed with minimal effect on the structure and could be suitably trimmed to avoid compromising the structural capacity.

Dividing walls would need to be installed to separate individual rooms. It is proposed that a half mezzanine be installed. This could be constructed in timber joists supported on structural stud walls. The existing slab will be sufficient to support the loads imposed by this lightweight structure.

As the proposed dwelling will be single storey for much of it with a lightweight mezzanine there would be no real additional load to the portal frames, with the exception of insulation, which is considered to be negligible. Therefore both the portal frames and foundations are considered suitable for reuse.

The existing floor slab could be reused and would only require insulation and screed to meet current regulations, no structural works would be required.

5.0 Conclusions

- The existing structure is in a good condition and suitable for conversion.
- The proposal is to convert to a single storey dwelling, with a lightweight mezzanine, this means that no additional loads will be applied to either the frame of foundations, removing the need for any structural work.
- Windows and doors could be easily formed in the existing structure without compromising the overall stability of the building.

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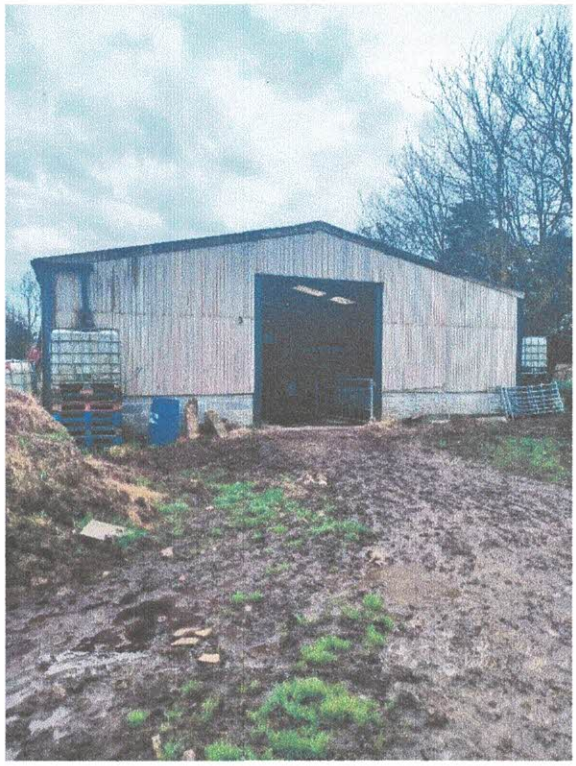
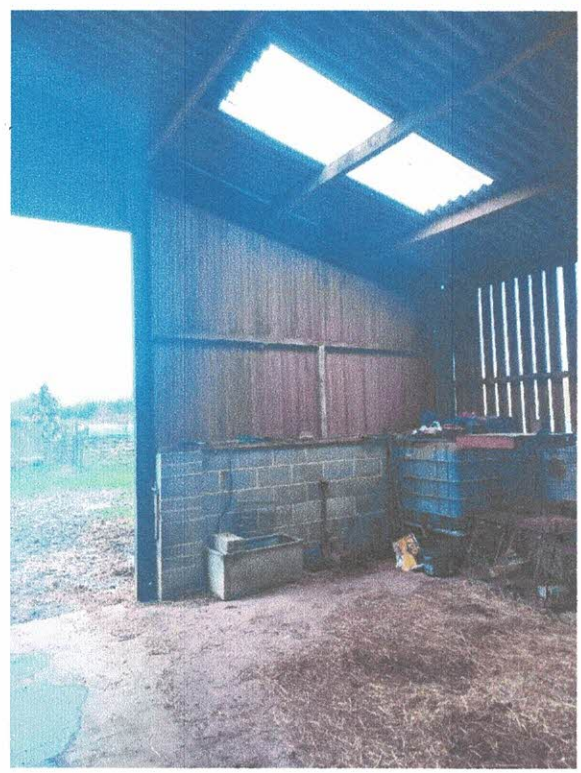
Appendix A – Photographs

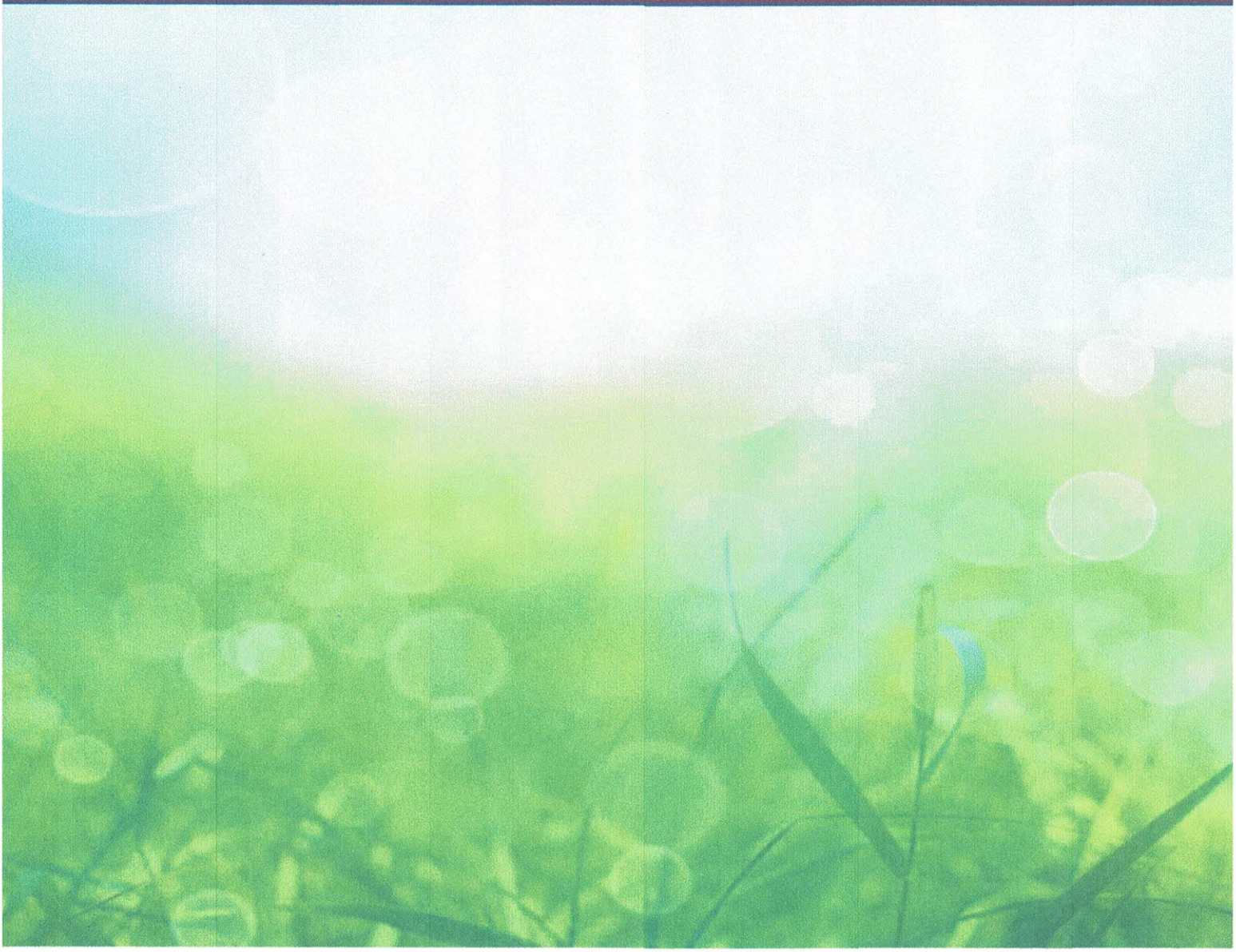








APPENDIX 2



BLUERIDGE FARM BARN, HAWKERIDGE CLASS Q PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT

Ecological Appraisal Report

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4 September 2023

REVISION HISTORY

Document history and status

Rev.	Date	Purpose/ Status	File Ref	Author	Check	Review
REV01	04/09/23	Issue	eg230152	MD	SR	SR

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1
1. INTRODUCTION 2
2. LEGISLATION AND POLICY 1
Relevant Legislation 1
Relevant Policy 2
3. METHODS 3
Desk Study 3
Assessment for Habitats and Protected Species 3
Evaluation 3
4. RESULTS 5
Desk Study 5
Habitats and Protected Species 5
5. IMPACT AVOIDANCE, MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT 8
Avoidance and Mitigation 8
Enhancement 8
REFERENCES 9

LIST OF IMAGES

Figure 1, "Site Location Plan" 1
Figure 2, "Site Plan" 5
Figure 3, "Photograph of the Barn" 6

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Engain was commissioned to provide ecological advice in relation to the conversion of an agricultural building into a dwellinghouse. The barn is not used by roosting bats and the habitats within the site are of negligible value for wildlife. The proposals would not have any direct impacts on wildlife.

There is a line of trees adjacent to the site's boundary. Excessive artificial lighting could therefore deter bats from using the trees, and the building design should avoid illumination of this boundary.

The development proposal can enhance the site for wildlife by including nesting and roosting features for birds and bats. Subject to the implementation of these recommendations, the conversion of the barn to residential use would be in accordance with the relevant legislation and policy requirements.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This report provides an ecological appraisal in connection with the conversion of an agricultural barn to a dwellinghouse under Class Q permitted development. The barn is located in Hawkeridge, to the south of Trowbridge in Wiltshire (**Figure 1**).

1.2. The scope of this assessment is based on the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK, published in 2017 and 2018 receptively by Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Managers (CIEEM).

1.3. It is supported by an ecological data search, a desk study to identify notable or protected sites, habitats or species on or near to the site, a field survey to map and describe the habitats of the site, a review of existing ecological data and field surveys for protected species.

1.4. The purpose of the Ecological Appraisal is to:

- Identify important ecological features within the Zone of Influence (ZoI).
- Assess the impacts from the Development and any resulting significant effects.
- Set out measures to avoid or mitigate negative impacts.
- Assess the residual effects after the incorporation of avoidance or mitigation measures.
- Set out measures to ensure the development provides a measurable net gain for biodiversity.

Figure 1, "Site Location Plan"



2. LEGISLATION AND POLICY

2.1. Wildlife in the UK is protected through European Directives, which are transposed into national legislation, supported by a range of national and local policy and guidance. Recent changes in planning policy and legislation have gone beyond site and species-specific protection to set broader goals for the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment and halting the continued loss of biodiversity in the UK.

2.2. Development can contribute to these goals through, for example, protecting the best features of a site and making them a valued part of the site's new use, and by incorporating enhancements to improve the site's value for wildlife.

2.3. The sections below provide a brief guide to the principal legislation and policy that sets the terms of reference for ecological appraisals in the UK. This is not intended to be a full description of all the obligations enacted by the various referenced documents, which should be referred to in their original form for the full details.

2.4. It is the responsibility of those involved with the development works to ensure that wildlife protection and nature conservation legislation is complied with at every stage of the project. Such legislation applies even in the absence of related planning conditions.

Relevant Legislation

2.5. The principal pieces of legislation relating to wildlife that are of relevance to this report are:

- *The Environment Act 2021*;
- *EU Habitats Directive (1992)*;
- *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2017*;
- *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA)*;
- *The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006*;

2.6. The presence of species and habitats on a site which are protected under UK and European legislation is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal. Ecological assessments and protected species surveys are therefore designed to provide local planning authorities with the baseline information they require in order fully consider the potential ecological effects of a planning application.

2.7. Furthermore, *The Environment Act 2021* introduces a clearer responsibility for development to provide measurable net gains for biodiversity following good practice guidelines that are secured in the long term.

Relevant Policy

2.8. Regional and local planning authorities are obliged to follow key principles to ensure that the potential impacts of planning decisions on biodiversity conservation are fully considered. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's policies for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity through the town and country planning system. This encourages the contribution to, and enhancement of, natural and local environments through minimising the impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible.

2.9. Planning authorities are required to follow key principles in their consideration of potential impacts of planning decisions on biodiversity conservation. Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation provides guidance on the application of the law relating to planning and nature conservation and complements the National Planning Policy Framework.

2.10. The presence of species protected under UK and European legislation are 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. Ecological appraisals and protected species surveys are therefore designed to provide local planning authorities with the baseline information they require in order fully consider the potential ecological effects of a planning application.

2.11. Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services, provides the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and country level biodiversity strategies for England, based on the list of habitats and species listed under *The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*.

2.12. The Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) is the relevant Local Plan for this project, and Core Policy 50 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) provides guidelines for the protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

3. METHODS

Desk Study

3.1. Online resources were also used, including the UK government's online resource for geographic information about the natural environment (MAGIC Map). This and other resources were used to scope the habitat survey at an appropriate scale and level of detail. MAGIC maps and the reports from ecology surveys previously carried out at the site were checked to identify if there were any known or possible locations of rare and/or habitats of high nature conservation priority, including sites of European importance within 10km and National importance within 5km.

Assessment for Habitats and Protected Species

3.2. The barns were assessed for their potential to be used by roosting bats or nesting birds.

3.3. An assessment of habitat suitability for protected and notable species was based on knowledge and judgement of an experienced professional informed by sources of guidance on habitat suitability assessment for key animal groups including:

- Amphibians (Gent and Gibson, 2003);
- Badgers (Harris et al., 1991; and Roper, 2010);
- Bats (Collins, 2016; and Mitchell-Jones, 2004);
- Birds (wintering and breeding) (Gilbert et al., 1998; and Bibby et al., 2000);
- Dormice (Bright et al., 2006);
- Otters (Chanin, 2003; and Crawford, 2011);
- Water voles (Strachan et al., 2011);
- Reptiles (Gent and Gibson, 1998; and Froglife, 1999); and
- Terrestrial Invertebrates (Drake et al., 2007; and Kirby, 2001).

Evaluation

3.4. The habitats and species of principal importance for biodiversity in England are listed on *Section 41* of *The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*.

3.5. The assessment of the relative nature conservation value of the features at this site is also assessed against published criteria wherever possible. The value of habitats in the UK is covered in a wide variety of literature, including Usher (1986) and Ratcliffe (1977).

3.6. The main criteria against which the value of habitats is assessed are rarity, diversity, naturalness and extent. High importance is also attached to habitats that have not been subject to agricultural intensification, and which often depend on traditional forms of management, such as ancient semi-natural woodland, species-rich meadows and traditionally managed grasslands and moorlands.

4. RESULTS

Desk Study

4.1. There is one statutory designated site within 2km of the site: Picket and Clanger Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is approximately 850m east of the site. Picket and Clanger Woods is designated as a SSSI for its floristically rich ancient woodland, and also supports bats associated with the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation.

4.2. There are no European Protected Species licence applications registered on the site, the nearest application is a bat licence for a common pipistrelle roost on the edge of Hawkeridge. There are records of great crested newts from around Yarnbrook and the White Horse Business Park, approximately 1.5km to the north, but no DNA records from within 500m of the site.

Habitats and Protected Species

4.3. The site comprises an agricultural barn adjacent to a line of trees (**Figure 2**).

Figure 2, "Site Plan"



4.4. The barn has blockwork walls up to around 1.5m and timber cladding above this and is covered in cement fibre roof (**Figure 3**).

Figure 3, "Photograph of the Barn"



4.5. The barn is surrounded by unmanaged grassland and ruderal vegetation in the farmyard. The line of trees adjacent to the barn consists of planted specimens including purple beech (*Fagus sylvatica* ssp. *pupurea*), horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), and ash (*Faxinus excelsior*). The trees do not have any bat roosting potential, but they are suitable for foraging bats.

4.6. The barn has a large open door and skylights and is consequently well lit inside. The single-skinned roof and beams and the wooden cladding do not have any features suitable for roosting bats, and there are no signs of nesting birds inside the barn.

4.7. The vegetation surrounding the barn could be used for foraging by low numbers of common reptiles or amphibians such as slow-worms (*Anguis fragilis*), common toad (*Bufo bufo*) or common frogs (*Rana temporaria*).

5. IMPACT AVOIDANCE, MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT

Avoidance and Mitigation

5.1. The conversion of the barn would not have any direct impacts on important habitats or on protected or notable species.

5.2. To avoid any impacts during vegetation clearance a precautionary working method should be followed. The process will follow the below prescriptions:

- suitable habitat is only cleared in the season when reptiles are active (generally between April and October when daytime temperatures are above 10°C)
- Prior to any habitat clearance, vegetation is cut back to no less than 150mm high and the arisings removed.
- Following this first cut, the area is searched by an ecologist, and any features where reptiles could shelter are carefully lifted and removed.
- Once the ecologist has checked an area, the vegetation is strimmed back to ground level, and left for 24 hours
- Following the 24 hour period, the ground is made unsuitable by scraping back the topsoil with a toothed digger bucket.

5.3. The trees on the south-west side of the barn should be retained and protected. The design of the barn should seek to avoid artificial lighting falling onto these trees, so as to protect the quality of the habitat for foraging bats.

5.4. Any lighting installed as part of the project should to conform to the latest guidance (e.g., Guidance Note 08/18 produced by the ILP and BCT).

Enhancement

5.5. The proposed conversion of the barn could provide enhancements for wildlife by incorporating built-in nesting and roosting features. Features appropriate to the site and context include:

- A house sparrow nesting terrace installed under the eaves of the new dwellinghouse
- A bat roosting box such as a 1FQ Schwegler bat roost
- Swift nesting bricks installed under the eaves.

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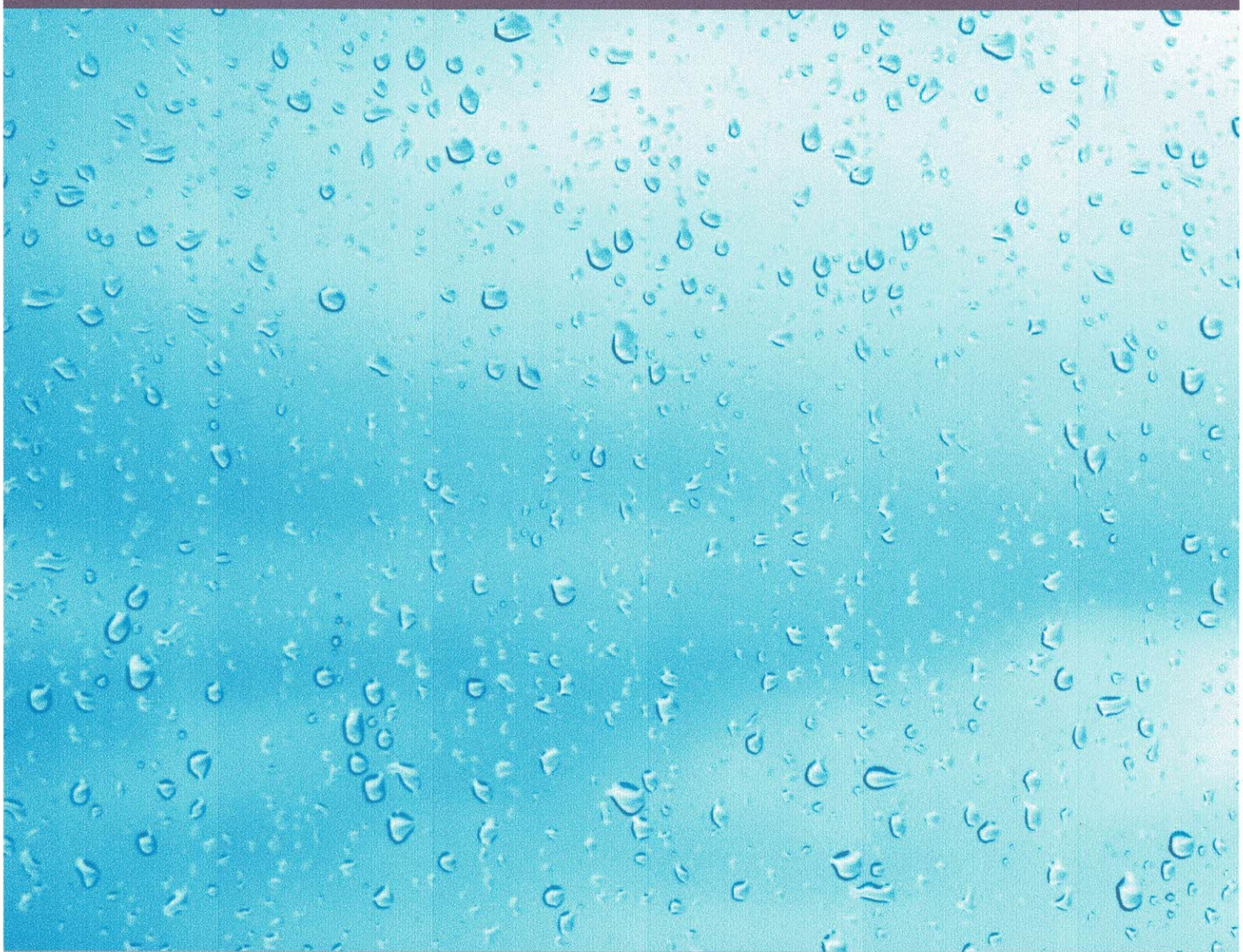

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APPENDIX 3

Environment Agency

Flood map for planning

Your reference	Location (easting/northing)	Created
BlueridgeFarm	**386445/153738**	**30 Oct 2023 9:24**

Your selected location is in flood zone 3, an area with a high probability of flooding.

This means:

- you must complete a flood risk assessment for development in this area
- you should follow the Environment Agency's standing advice for carrying out a flood risk assessment (see www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessment-standing-advice)

Notes

The flood map for planning shows river and sea flooding data only. It doesn't include other sources of flooding. It is for use in development planning and flood risk assessments.

This information relates to the selected location and is not specific to any property within it. The map is updated regularly and is correct at the time of printing.

Flood risk data is covered by the Open Government Licence which sets out the terms and conditions for using government data. https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/

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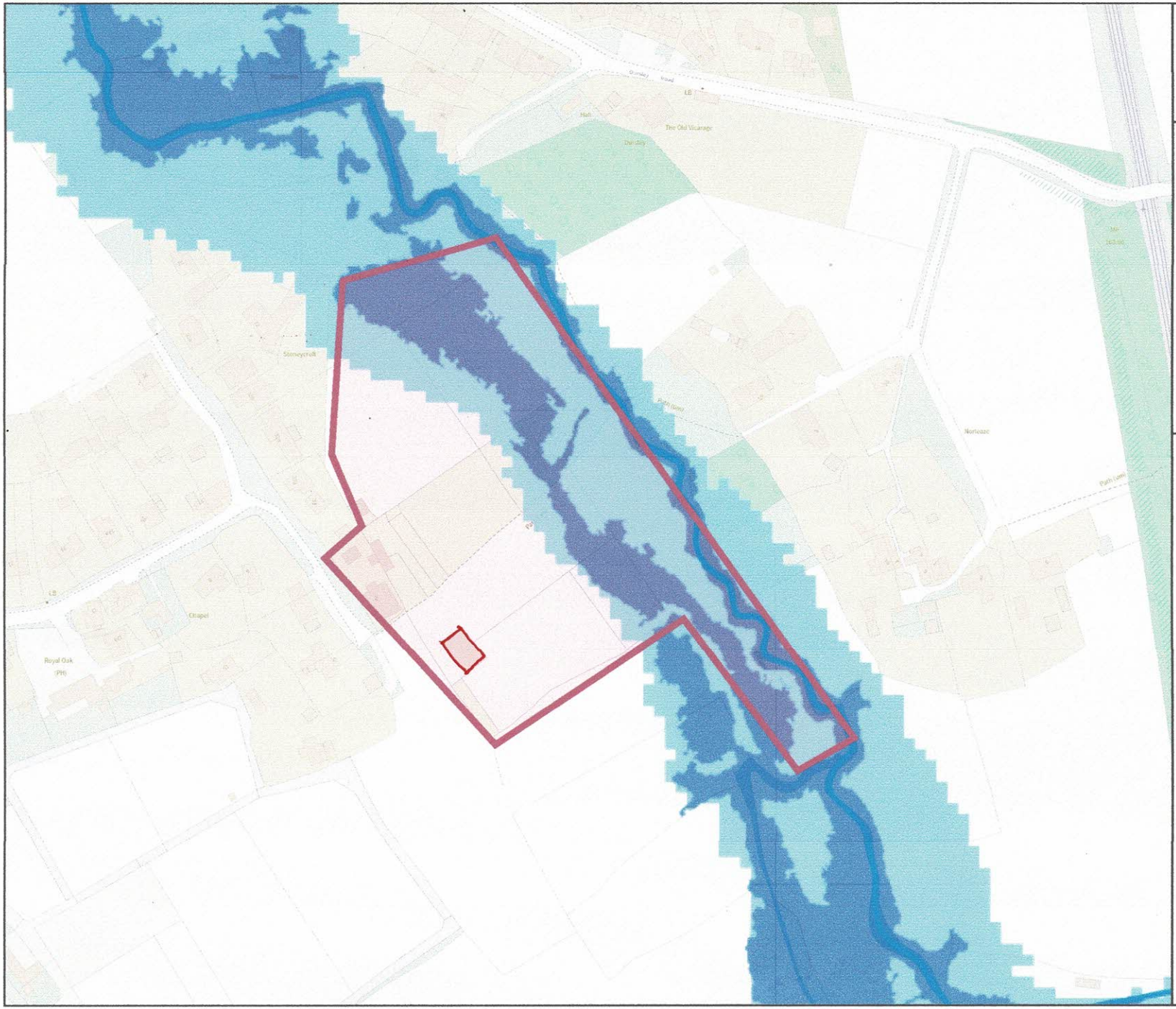

Environment Agency

Flood map for planning

Your reference
BlueridgeFarm

Location (easting/northing)
386445/153738

Scale
1:2500

Created
30 Oct 2023 9:24

- Selected area
- Flood zone 3
- Flood zone 2
- Flood zone 1
- Flood defence
- Main river
- Water storage area

0 20 40 60m

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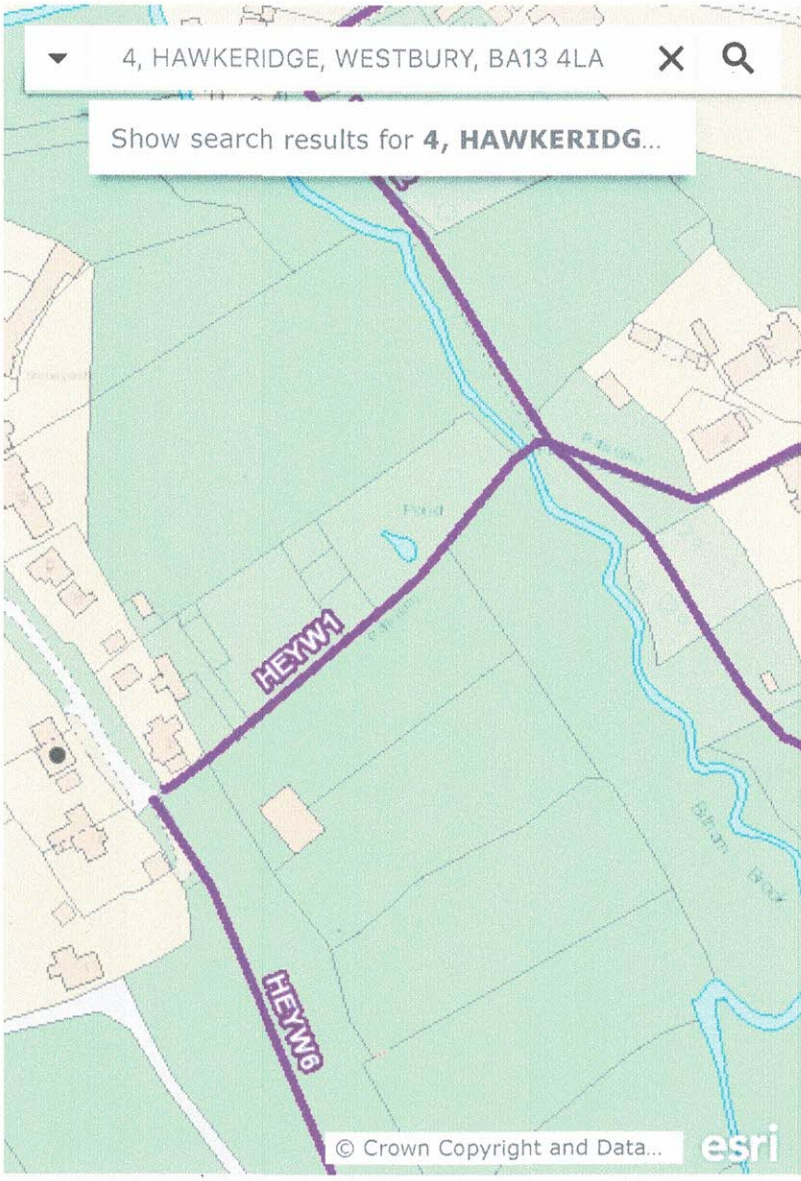
APPENDIX 4



60m
200ft

Layer List