

Biodiversity Net Gain Report

LOCATION

Cold Harbour, Great Hinton,
Trowbridge

REPORT REFERENCE

251003-C31-1-2

REVISION

A

DATE

10-12-2025



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If the site areas or proposed habitats differ to those detailed in this report, written confirmation from Avon Ecology Limited is required to confirm the ecological impact assessment remains valid. Further surveys may be required subject to any change in scope of the proposed works.

In accordance with CIEEM's advice note¹ this report is valid for 18 months from the date of issue, further surveys will likely be required after this timeframe.

ISSUE REGISTER

Revision	Date	Author	Description
A	10 December 2025	MH	First Issue

¹ <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Advice-Note.pdf> [Last accessed 19/11/2025]



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SUMMARY

Avon Ecology Limited has been commissioned by Mr. S Noad to produce a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report for the proposed works at Cold Harbour, Great Hinton, Trowbridge, BA14 6EA under planning application PL/2025/05597²

The proposed development is not exempt from mandatory BNG under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).

This report seeks to address the deliverables required in to favourably conclude the application in the context of mandatory BNG. A separate Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) and statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool (hereafter referred to as the “metric”) are submitted separately to this document.

A desk study and daytime survey undertaken on 15 October 2025, confirmed the surveyed area to have the following habitats:

- Developed land - sealed surface;
- Artificial unvegetated - unsealed surface; and
- Modified grassland.

There is no irreplaceable habitat or evidence of habitat degradation on or immediately adjacent to the site.

The proposed development will create the following habitats:

- Developed land - sealed surface;
- Artificial unvegetated - unsealed surface; and
- Individual trees – Rural tree (30 in total).

The modified grassland under the proposed trees will be retained.

The Metric reports:

- A baseline of 0.61 habitat units; and
- The proposed development will result in a net gain of 0.71 habitat units (15.26%) with all the trading rules satisfied.

Section 5 of this report summaries the post-application determination process and further information requirements to discharge the mandatory BNG condition. The Biodiversity Gain Plan is a key document required to discharge the mandatory BNG condition. Anyone undertaking this development should be aware that no work can commence prior to Wiltshire Council’s approval of the Biodiversity Gain Plan.

² <https://development.wiltshire.gov.uk/pr/s/planning-application/a0iQ300000FAK1d/pl202505597>
[last accessed 18/11/2025]

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Description

For the purposes of this report, the site is the land within the red line boundary shown in drawing Figure 1 and is hereafter referred to as 'the Site'. The surveyed area is shown by the white line.

The Site address is Willow House, Cold Harbour, Great Hinton, Trowbridge, BA14 6EA with a central grid reference of ST 89597 58552.

The Site is currently used as pasture.

Figure 1: Red line boundary of the Site along with the surveyed area shown in white



Image source: Getmapping_Aerial_Photography_12.5cm_1062645_1339119

The Site is located in pasture within a rural setting. Common Hill road and the A350 are on the east and west side respectively with a connecting road along the north. There southern hedgerow and ditch is considered to be a potentially significant biodiversity corridor that directly connect the local biodiversity to the wider environment.

1.2 Proposed Works

The proposed development plans are shown in Appendix A and include the construction of new steel framed and metal clad Agricultural Storage and Livestock Barn with an area of 620m².



2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk Study

The following sources were consulted to inform the desk-based assessment:

- Multi Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website³;
- Wiltshire Council's Wiltshire Planning Explorer⁴;
- Wiltshire Council's neighbourhood planning⁵;
- Trowbridge and Westbury Bat Mitigation Strategy (TBMS)⁶;
- Natural England's Open Data Geoportal⁷; and
- National Biodiversity Networks (NBN) Atlas⁸, not including data with a CC-BY-NC licence.

Biological records from the local Biological Records Centre were not requested since this is considered to be too onerous given the information provided from the above sources, the nature and scale of the proposed development and the existing land use.

2.2 Daytime Walkover

A daytime survey was completed on 15 October 2025 by Max Hemmings.

The weather conditions for the survey were optimal and are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Weather conditions for the daytime walkover

Temperature (°C)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (Beaufort Scale)	Precipitation
12	100	1	None

2.3 Personnel Competency

Max Hemmings MCIEEM has over nine years' experience as a professional ecologist with six years in a large multi-disciplinary consultancy and two with the development management team of a local planning authority. Max holds the following Natural England survey licences; GCN Level 1, hazel dormice Level 1 and bats Level 2.

³ [Magic Map Application](#) [last accessed 18/11/2025]

⁴ [Planning Experience App](#) [last accessed 18/11/2025]

⁵ <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-neighbourhood> [last accessed 18/11/2025]

⁶ [TWBMS_v4_Final_July_2025.PDF](#) [last accessed 18/11/2025]

⁷ [Natural England Open Data Geoportal \(arcgis.com\)](#) [last accessed 18/11/2025]

⁸ <https://nbnatlas.org/> [last accessed 18/11/2025]



3 LIMITATIONS

Limitation	Assessment	Significance
A site visit can only provide an insight into the ecological function of the Site within a limited timeframe and cannot provide a holistic overview across all seasons.	The visit was completed in suitable weather conditions by a suitably qualified ecologist. The survey was outside of the optimal season for botanical surveys however, a vegetative survey gave reasonable certainty on the likely importance of the Site's habitats.	Low
Ecological information obtained from third parties and presented in the desk study does not represent a full and complete species & habitat list for the area. They are mostly given by individuals on an ad hoc basis, often meaning there are areas of deficiency in the data.	The site survey alleviates any deficiency in the desk study data. The precautionary principle is applied, and potential presence is assumed where the Site has reasonable habitat to support protected / notable species or habitats.	Negligible



4 RESULTS & ASSESSMENT

4.1 BNG Baseline

The habitats on Site include:

- Developed land - sealed surface;
- Artificial unvegetated - unsealed surface; and
- Modified grassland.

Figure 2 to Figure 7 show pictures of the Site's habitats.

The metric details the size of each habitat's area as shown in drawing *Baseline Habitats, No: 251003-C31-1-3, Rev: A, Date: 20/11/2025 by Avon Ecology Limited*, see Appendix B of this report.

The metric reports the Site to have a baseline score of 0.61 habitat units.

The DAFOR scale has been used to indicate the relative coverage of each species:

- D = Dominant (> 75%);
- A = Abundant (50-75%);
- F = Frequent (25-50%);
- O = Occasional (10-25%); and
- R = Rare (<10%).

4.1.1 Developed Land - Sealed Surface and Artificial unvegetated - Unsealed Surface

- *Poa annua* – R;
- *Bromus sterilis* – R;
- *Taxacarum sp.* – R;
- *Rumex obtusifolius* – R;
- *Clover sp.* – R;
- *Helminthotheca echioides* – R;
- *Capsella bursa-pastoris* – R;
- *Geranium molle* – R; and
- *Dactylis glomerata* – R.

The condition score for both of these habitats can only be “N/A – Other”.

4.1.2 Modified Grassland

- *Taxacarum sp.* – R;
- *Rumex obtusifolius* – R;
- *Clover sp.* – R;



- *Geranium molle* – R;
- *Rubus fruticosus* – R;
- *Phleum pratense* – R;
- *Dactylis glomerata* – A;
- *Agrostis stolonifera* – A; and
- *Lolium perenne* – F.

The species assemblage per m² was highest near the hedgerows and ditch which are not within the development's redline boundary. The species assemblage within the Site was no higher than five species per m².

Condition Assessment Criteria: Modified Grassland		Criterion passed (Y or N)
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² present, including at least two forbs (Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition.)	N
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	N
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Y
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	N
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas.	Y
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Y
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA).	Y
Essential criterion achieved		N
Number of criteria passed		4
"Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4 - 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)"		POOR



Figure 2: A view facing south of the proposed access which will use the existing entrance to the field



Figure 3: A view facing west at the existing entrance



Figure 4: A view facing west from the north-east corner of the field with the access and log pile on the right



Figure 5: A view facing south from the north-east corner of the field



Figure 6: A view facing north from the south side of the field near the ditch



Figure 7: A view facing west of the ditch with individual trees





4.2 Proposed Habitats and BNG Results

The metric reports the proposed development will result in a net gain of 0.71 habitat units (15.26%) with all the trading rules satisfied.

The proposed development will create the following habitats:

- Developed land - sealed surface;
- Artificial unvegetated - unsealed surface; and
- Individual trees – Rural tree (30 in total).

Drawing *Ecological Mitigation Plan, No: 251003-C31-1-4, Rev: A, Date: 20/11/2025 by Avon Ecology Limited* (see Appendix C) shows the proposed layout of the development.

The modified grassland under the proposed trees will be retained. A temporary fence will be installed to protect the newly planted trees from livestock. The fence will be removed when the trees are of a sufficient size to withstand potential livestock damage. During the period before the fence removal, the grassland will be infrequently managed which will create a temporary diversity in vegetation height and will pass condition criteria B. However, the species diversity isn't considered likely to increase due to the nutrient load and so the condition assessment will ultimately remain as "Poor". This area of grassland will revert to its previous use as pasture hence why it is assigned to be "retained".

4.2.1 Individual Trees – Rural Tree

Thirty small native trees will be planted prior to the first operational use of the proposed development, or during the first suitable planting season thereafter.

The selected native tree species will be tolerant of wetter soils and will include but not be limited to:

- Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*);
- Willow (*Salix spp.*);
- Birch (*Betula spp.*); and
- Poplar (*Populus spp.*).

Condition Assessment Criteria: Individual Trees – Rural Tree

		Criterion passed (Yes or No)
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	Y
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).	Y



C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).	Y*
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.	Y*
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	Y*
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Y
Number of criteria passed		6
Condition Assessment		Good*

* The proposed management will seek to achieve these criteria but they cannot be guaranteed over a 30-year period. Consequently, a precautionary moderate condition assessment score is assigned. At least three of the criteria must be delivered for the proposed rural trees to achieve moderate condition.

Creation

The trees must have a diameter at breast height (DBH) of between 7-29cm when planted and sourced from a local tree nursery that can certify disease-free stock.

The trees will be planted at least 9m apart from each other.

A 2m² planting area for each tree will be cleared of vegetation before planting in October to April. Suitable soil preparation, tree guards, and support will be used to aid establishment.

A temporary fence will be installed on the northern side of the newly planted trees to prevent potential damage from livestock.

No herbicide or fertilizer will be used to deliver the habitat objectives.

Management

Watering of the existing and newly planted trees will be undertaken during dry spells, especially whilst they establish. An area of 2m² around each tree will be kept free of competition vegetation by cutting to ground and using woodchip to suppress weed growth.

The guards and supports of the newly planted trees will be checked annually. After 5-10 years or when the trees are established, the tree guards and supports will be removed.

Any failed newly planted trees will be replaced like-for-like within the next suitable planting season.



The management will ensure at least three of the condition assessment criteria are met.

4.3 Mitigation Hierarchy / Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy

The highest distinctiveness/score from the baseline habitats on Site is Low/2 being the modified grassland. It is not possible to retain all of this habitat as part of the proposed development.

Whilst the area of modified grassland proposed to be lost holds ecological value, the habitat is common and widespread and can be readily mitigated/compensated by on-site planting. The proposed trees have a distinctiveness/score of Medium/4.

The proposed impact to habitats with a distinctiveness score of two is considered to be suitably justified in accordance with the NPPF's Mitigation Hierarchy and the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy.

4.1 Strategic Significance

The desk study confirmed the Site is within or an area of high strategic significance, being the yellow zone of the Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy (TBMS).

Therefore, the baseline habitats are assigned as *High – Formally identified in local strategy*.

The Strategic Significance for proposed tree planting also assigned as *High – Formally identified in local strategy* whilst the proposed urban habitats are assigned as *Low - Area / compensation not in local strategy*.



5 POST-APPLICATION DETERMINATION

If the planning application is approved no work can commence prior to Wiltshire Council's approval of the Biodiversity Gain Plan.

The Biodiversity Gain Plan should be:

- Submitted to planning, following planning permission being granted; and
- Completed and submitted alongside all the supporting information as referenced within the plan.

The supporting documents and data, such as BNG report, Metric, Mapping and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP), should be the final versions and reflect the information within the submitted Biodiversity Gain Plan.

These documents will be used to support the delivery and monitoring of biodiversity for a minimum of 30 years until the Metric's reported habitat unit gains have been achieved.

The responsibility of submitting the mandatory BNG condition's deliverables to Wiltshire Council's lies with the landowner(s).



APPENDIX A PROPOSED PLANS

Drawing: Proposed Site Plan, No: 2504-03, Rev: B by Hodges Associates

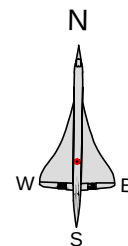
CHARTERED ARCHITECTS

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This is a CAD drawing and should not be altered manually.
Do not scale from this drawing, work to figured dimensions.
Any discrepancies should be reported immediately.
This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all other
relevant documentation.
All dimensions to be checked on site.

Revisions

Iss.	Description	Date
A	SECOND FIELD ACCESS GATE REMOVED	12.08.25
B	SITE INFO ADJUSTED	29.11.25



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Project:

PROPOSED BARN
COLD HARBOUR
STEEPLE ASHTON
TROWBRIDGE
WILTSHIRE
BA14 6EA

Drawing Title

PROPOSED SITE PLAN

Drawn by
BH

Date
10.06.2025

Checked by
rbh

Scale
1:1000 at A3

Drg. No.

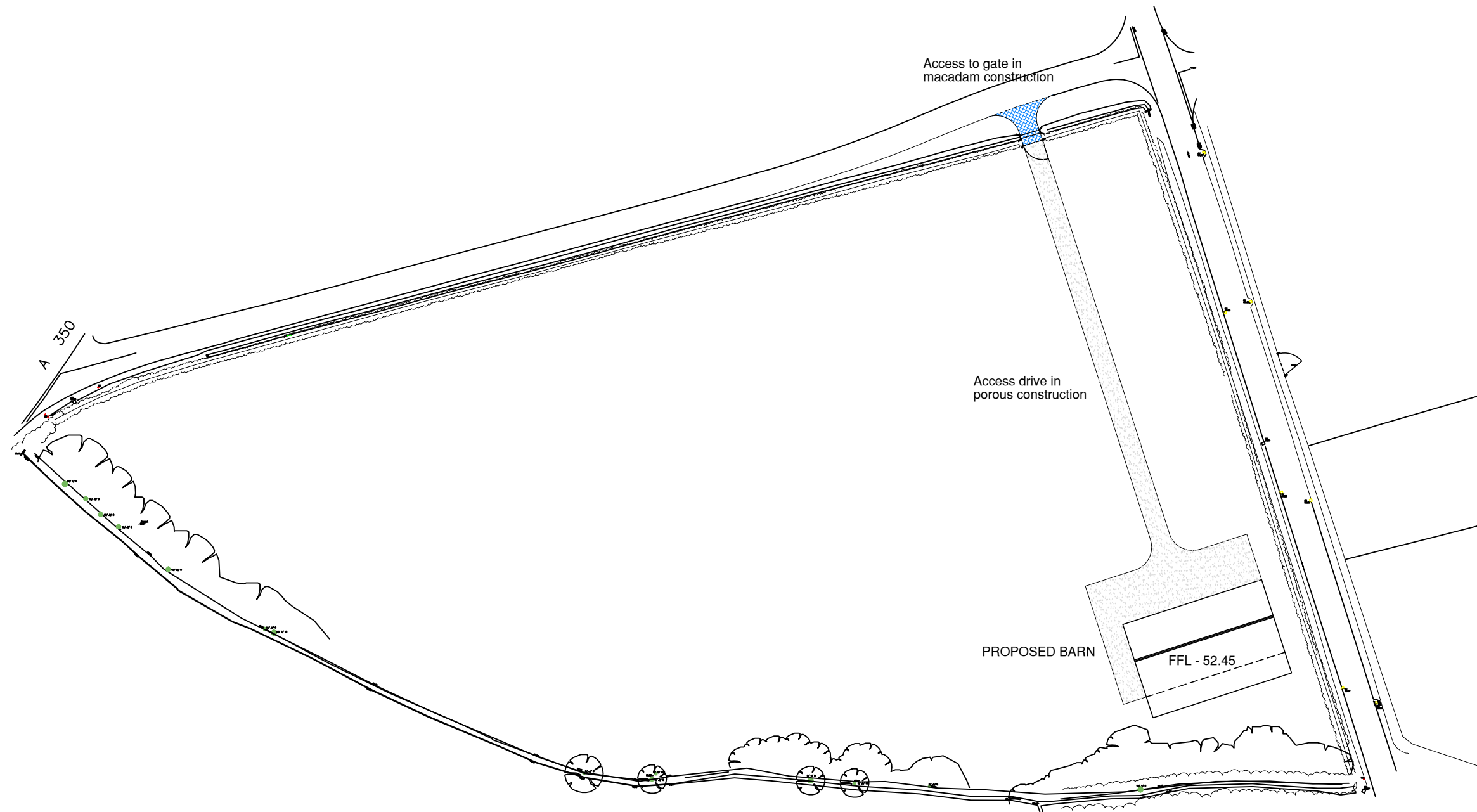
2504-03

Rev.

B

Paper Size.

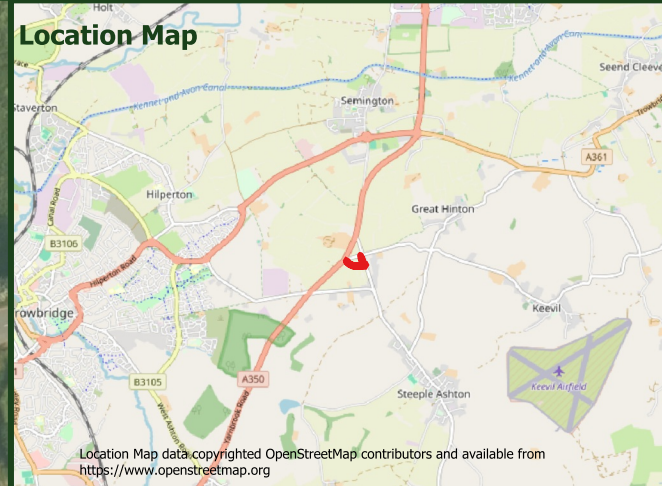
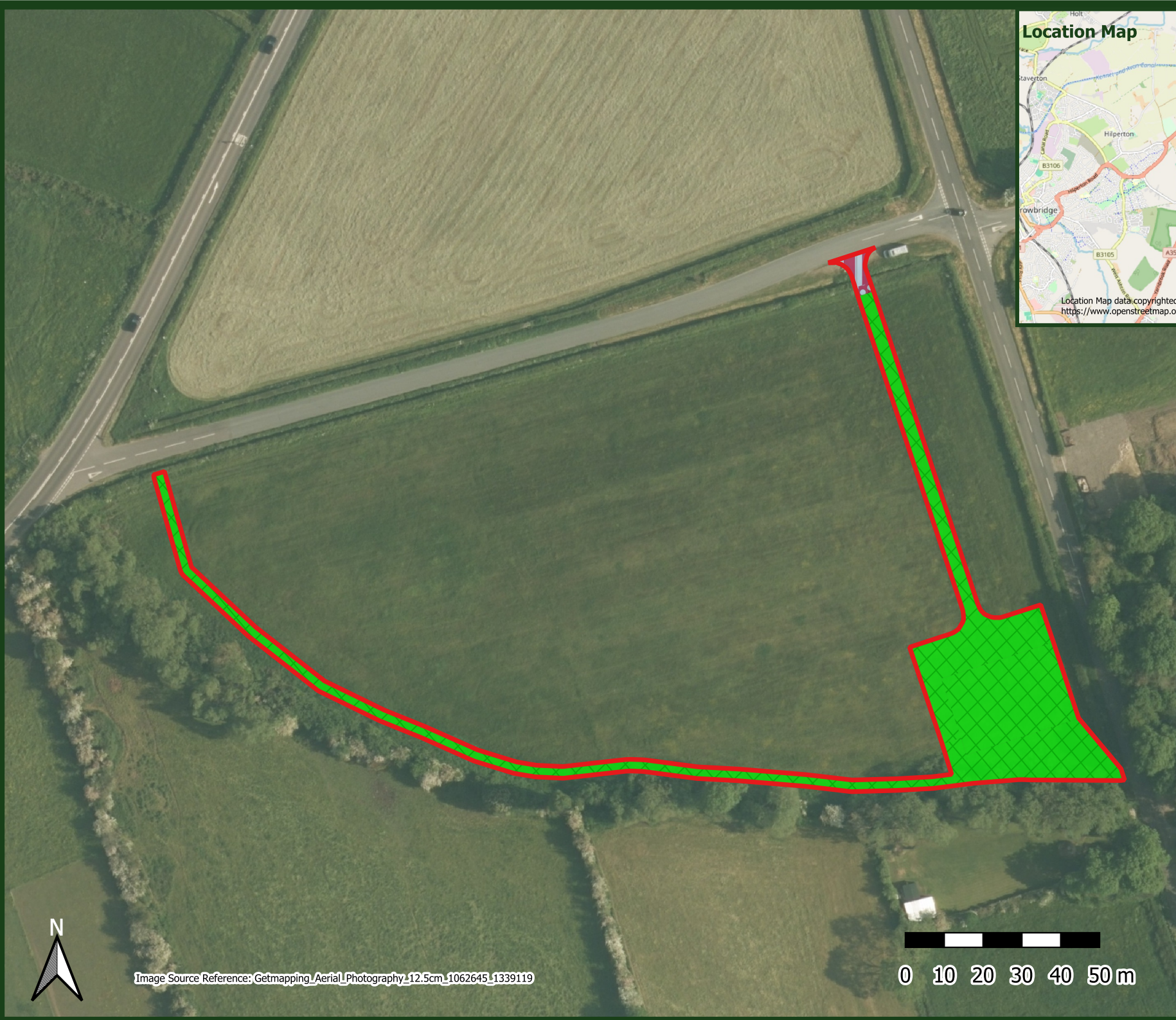
A3





APPENDIX B BNG BASELINE MAP

Drawing: *Baseline Habitats, No: 251003-C31-1-3, Rev: A, Date: 20/11/2025 by Avon Ecology Limited*



Legend

- Red Line Boundary
- Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface
- Developed land; sealed surface
- Modified grassland

Habitat Condition

- Poor
- N/A - Other

Project Title:
Great Hinton

Drawing Title:
Baseline Habitats

Drawing No:
251003-C31-1-3

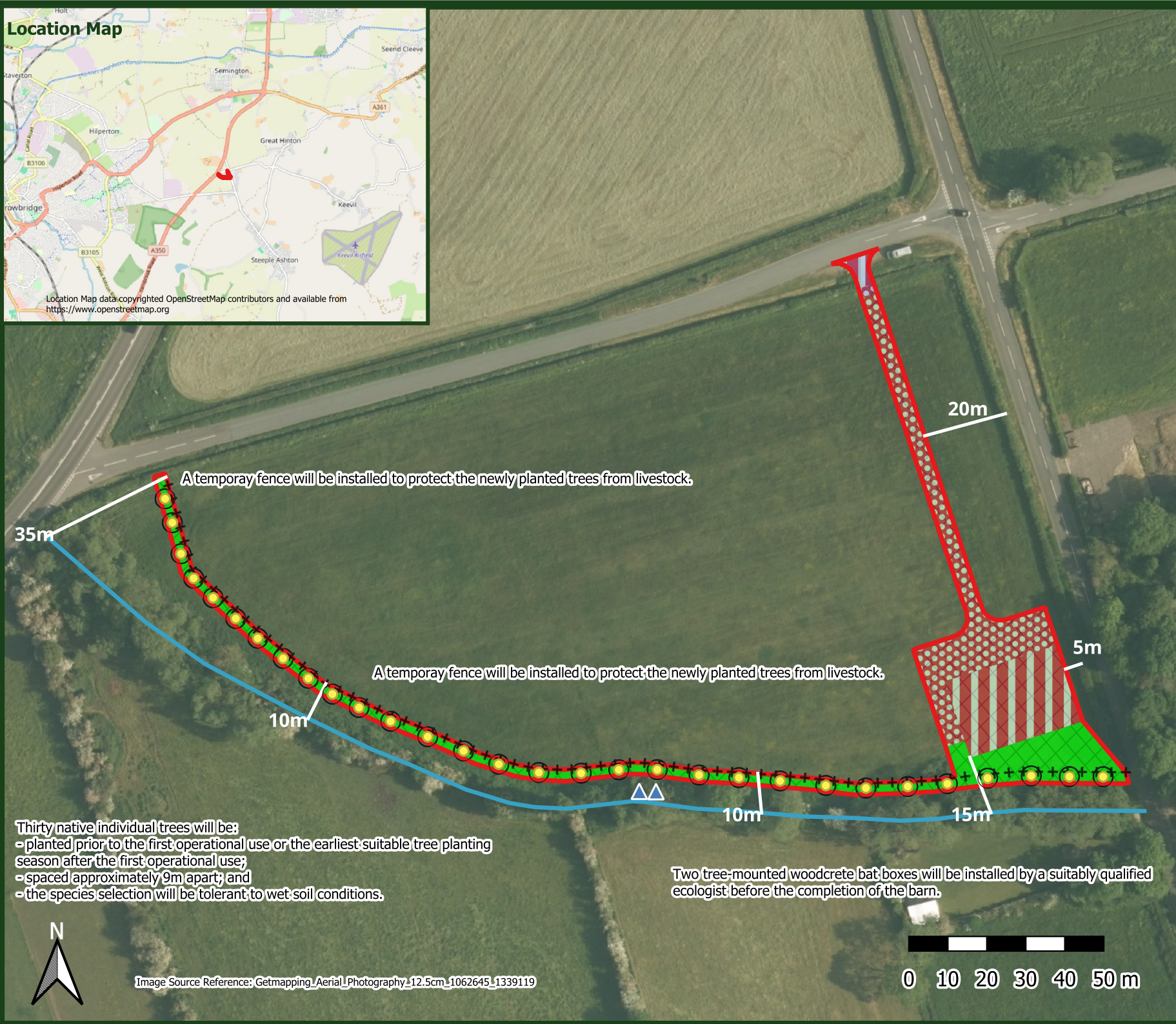
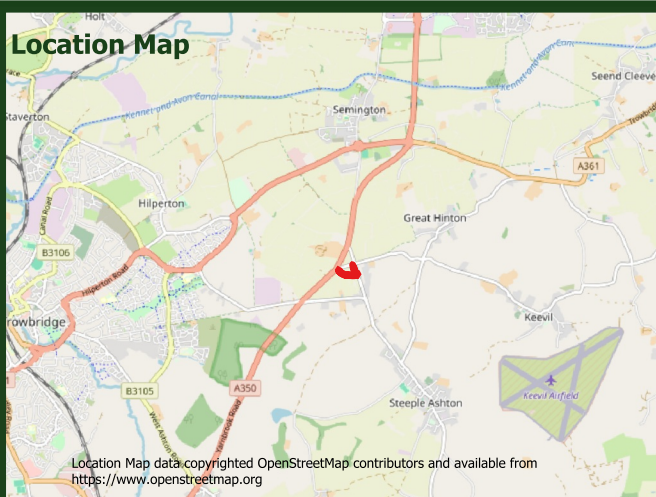
Revision & Date
A | 20/11/2025





APPENDIX C PROPOSED HABITAT MAPS

Drawing: *Ecological Mitigation Plan, No: 251003-C31-1-4, Rev: A, Date: 20/11/2025 by Avon Ecology Limited*



Legend

- Red Line Boundary
- Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface
- Developed land; sealed surface
- Modified grassland
- Habitat Condition**
 - Poor
 - N/A - Other
 - Small rural native tree Moderate condition
 - Bat box - indicative locations
- Temporary fence
- Ditch

Project Title:

Great Hinton

Drawing Title:

Ecological Mitigation Plan

Drawing No:

251003-C31-1-4

Revision & Date

A | 20/11/2025