

Willow Tree Farm

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Prepared on behalf of Mark Small

January 2026

Willow Tree Farm

Ecology 9033

Version 01

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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Pro Vision Ecology were commissioned in December 2025 to carry out a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment at Willow Tree Farm, Ford, Salisbury, SP4 6DJ. The aim of the assessment was to establish how a 10% net gain within the development would be achieved.
- 1.2 The site comprises short sward, heavily poached modified grassland that forms the existing paddock. A single ash tree is located just inside the northwestern site boundary. The site is surrounded by post and rail and close board fences on all elevations.
- 1.3 The proposed development will include the construction of an agricultural building/stable. Proposals will retain as much of the modified grassland habitat as possible alongside the retention of the medium tree. Enhancements will be provided by planting four small native trees.
- 1.4 The current scheme results in a gain of 0.03 habitat units (11.26%) therefore providing the required net gains in biodiversity in line with the Environment Act 2021.

2.0 Introduction

Project Background

- 2.1 Pro Vision Ecology were commissioned in December 2025 to carry out a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment of a field at Willow Tree Farm, Ford, Salisbury, SP4 6DJ. This report will contribute to a planning application to be submitted by the Client to Wiltshire Council for planning consent to construct an agricultural building/stable. Proposals are provided in **Appendix A**.
- 2.2 This report provides the details for the BNG assessment and should be read alongside the submitted Statutory Biodiversity Metric and condition assessment sheets.

Brief

- 2.3 To carry out a BNG assessment of the site to determine the strategy for achieving a 10% net gain for habitat and hedgerow units.

Relevant Legislation and Planning Policy

- 2.4 The key legislative provisions of relevance to this report with respect to the development proposals and their potential effects on ecological features are listed below:
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
 - The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
 - The Protection of Badgers Act (1992)
 - The Environment Act (2021)
- 2.5 The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was the Governments response to the 1992 Convention on Biodiversity (The Rio Convention), with the aim of halting the loss of biodiversity in the UK. The new UK post-2010 Biodiversity Framework replaced the previous BAP and is the government's response to the new strategic plan on the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Although the UK post-2010 Biodiversity Framework supersedes the UK BAP, the UK BAP lists of priority species and habitats still remain an important reference source for identifying habitats and species of principal importance within the UK. Within England, Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) lists species and habitats of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity.
- 2.6 The Government has set out its policies for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity through the planning system in the National Planning Policy Framework Section 15 (NPPF, 2024).
- 2.7 The Environment Act 2021 includes the requirement for developments to provide 10% biodiversity net gain, to be evidenced with the use of the statutory metric. Developments are exempt if they are self-build comprising less than nine dwellings on an area less than 0.5 hectares, householder applications or developments below the threshold of impacts to habitats.
- 2.8 The field at Willow Tree Farm is located within the planning authority of Wiltshire Council. The Wiltshire Core Strategy (2012 – 2026), adopted January 2015, includes the Core Policy 50 relating to biodiversity and geodiversity:

Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Protection

Development proposals must demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of the design rationale. There is an expectation that such features shall be retained, buffered, and managed favourably in order to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term. Where it has been demonstrated that such features cannot be retained, removal or damage shall only be acceptable in circumstances where the anticipated ecological impacts have been mitigated as far as possible and appropriate compensatory measures can be secured to ensure no net loss of the local biodiversity resource and secure the integrity of local ecological networks and provision of ecosystem services.

All development proposals shall incorporate appropriate measures to avoid and reduce disturbance of sensitive wildlife species and habitats throughout the lifetime of the development.

Any development potentially affecting a Natura 2000 site must provide avoidance measures in accordance with the strategic plans or guidance set out in paragraphs 6.75-6.77 above where possible, otherwise bespoke measures must be provided to demonstrate that the proposals would have no adverse effect upon the Natura 2000 network. Any development that would have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European nature conservation site will not be in accordance with the Core Strategy.

Biodiversity Enhancement

All development should seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity. Major development in particular must include measures to deliver biodiversity gains through opportunities to restore, enhance and create valuable habitats, ecological networks and ecosystem services. Such enhancement measures will contribute to the objectives and targets of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) or River Basin/ Catchment Management Plan, particularly through landscape scale projects, and be relevant to the local landscape character.

Local Sites

Sustainable development will avoid direct and indirect impacts upon local sites through sensitive site location and layout, and by maintaining sufficient buffers and ecological connectivity with the wider environment. Damage or disturbance to local sites will generally be unacceptable, other than in exceptional circumstances where it has been demonstrated that such impacts:

- i. cannot reasonably be avoided*
- ii. are reduced as far as possible*
- iii. are outweighed by other planning considerations in the public interest*
- iv. where appropriate compensation measures can be secured through planning obligations or agreements.*

Development proposals affecting local sites must make a reasonable contribution to their favourable management in the long-term.

3.0 Methodologies

Strategic Significance

- 3.1 The Wiltshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy was consulted to establish the strategic significance of the site and to inform any potential habitat creation measures.

Baseline Assessment

- 3.2 A site visit was carried out on 23rd December 2025 by ecologist Alex Hannam MCIEEM in overcast weather, a light breeze and ambient temperature of 8°C. The survey employed techniques based on the UK Habitat Classification System.
- 3.3 The collection of botanical information focused on the dominant and/or key indicator species for each habitat, to allow allocation of habitats to hierarchy levels 3 and/or 4 and where relevant to identify any priority habitats which are present on site.
- 3.4 The conditions of the habitats on the site were assessed in line with the condition sheets supplied alongside the Statutory Biodiversity Metric.

Survey Limitations

- 3.5 The botanical assessment was undertaken in December when all flowering grassland species may not be present, however due to the management of the site it is considered sufficient information could be obtained to accurately assess the habitats present and conditions of these habitats.

Biodiversity Net Gain Hierarchy

- 3.6 The scheme has been designed in line with the BNG hierarchy:
- Enhance and restore biodiversity on-site (within the red line boundary of a development site).
 - If developers can only achieve part of their BNG on-site, they can deliver through a mixture of on-site and off-site. Developers can either make off-site biodiversity gains on their own land outside the development site or buy off-site biodiversity units on the market.
 - If developers cannot achieve on-site or off-site BNG, they must buy statutory biodiversity credits from the government. This must be a last resort. The government will use the revenue to invest in habitat creation in England.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 3.7 On completion of the fieldwork the habitat information was mapped using Biodiversity Metric QGIS template and areas were imported into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool using the GIS Import tool. The metric calculates the baseline biodiversity units for the site based on the following factors:-
- Area
 - Habitat distinctiveness
 - Habitat condition
 - Strategic significance
- 3.8 The proposed habitat creation measures were selected in line with the site conditions and the surrounding habitats. Once inputted the metric provides biodiversity units for the proposed habitats based on the following factors:-
- Area
 - Habitat distinctiveness
 - Habitat condition
 - Strategic significance
 - Time habitat is created
 - Time to target condition
 - Difficulty of creation
- 3.9 The difference between the baseline units and proposed units is then used as a measure of change and is used to assess the number of biodiversity units achieved. Habitats, hedgerows and rivers are inputted as separate factors, with each requiring net gains, where present on a site.

4.0 Baseline Conditions

- 4.1 The results of the baseline survey are presented below. A habitat survey map is shown in **Appendix B**. The map illustrates the location and extent of the site surveyed, along with additional notable features. Full condition assessments have been provided alongside this report. There is no evidence of any deliberate habitat degradation works on the site since January 2020 and full condition assessments have been completed. There are no irreplaceable habitats on the site.

Strategic significance

- 4.2 The site is located within a Local Nature Recovery Strategy Area which has been identified as suitable to maintain, enhance and create chalk streams. None of the primary priority habitats listed in the LNRS are present on site. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development is located in an area with no local strategy.

On-site Habitats

Modified grassland

- 4.3 The site comprises short sward, heavily poached modified grassland that forms the existing paddock. The site is surrounded by post and rail and close board fences on all elevations (**Figures 1 and 2**).



Figures 1 and 2: Views of site, facing northwest and southwest, respectively.

- 4.4 The modified grassland is dominated by perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*) with ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), common daisy (*Bellis perennis*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and fescue (*Festuca spp.*), with locally abundant common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*) and bitter dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*) around the peripheries. The average sward height is approximately one centimetre.
- 4.5 This grassland is considered to be in **poor condition** due to the low species diversity, uniform short sward height, physical damage and high levels of bare ground. While the survey was completed in the winter months due to the current management of the land it is considered unlikely that a survey in the summer would record a higher species count in the sward.

Individual tree

- 4.6 A medium sized ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) lies just inside the northwestern site boundary. This tree is considered to be in moderate condition as it has been damaged by grazing livestock and no natural ecological niches are present.



Figures 3: Ash tree

Baseline summary

- 4.7 The current BNG baseline is provided below in **Table 2**. The site has a baseline of 0.23 habitat units and no hedgerow units.

Table 2: Statutory Biodiversity Metric Baseline.

Habitat baseline					
Habitat	Biodiversity Units	Area (ha)	Condition	Distinctiveness	Suggested action
Modified Grassland	0.10	0.0477	Poor	Low	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required
Individual tree	0.13	0.0163	Moderate	Medium	Same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat required ($\geq$)

5.0 Proposed Habitats

- 5.1 The proposed plans have been designed to retain as much of the existing grassland as possible alongside the retention of the tree. Due to the current management regime and existing land use it is considered unfeasible to increase the condition of the grassland or create habitats which contribute to the LNRS.
- 5.2 The development includes the planting of four native trees.
- 5.3 A summary of proposed habitats is provided below to outline targeted habitats and conditions and shown in **Appendix C**.

Creation of New Habitats

Trees

- 5.4 The scheme includes planting four native trees within the retained grassland. For the purpose of the metric it has been assumed that these will reach poor condition, however it is anticipated that a higher condition could be achieved following successful establishment.

6.0 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

- 6.1 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric was run based on the measures outlined in **Section 5.0** and is shown in **Table 3**. The assessment results in a gain of 0.03 habitat units (11.26%).

Table 3: Statutory Biodiversity Metric results.

On-site baseline	Habitat units	0.23
On-site post intervention	Habitat units	0.25
Total net unit change	Habitat units	0.03* (11.26%)
Trading Rules Satisfied	Yes	

*This is the value provided within the metric

- 6.2 With these measures in place the development exceeds the required 10% net gains for habitat units on the site.
- 6.3 The development will be subject to the Biodiversity Gain condition under paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The condition is deemed to apply to every planning permission granted for the development of land in England (unless exemptions or transitional provisions apply). Once planning is approved the final details for the discharge of this condition will be required within a Biodiversity Gain Plan which will be submitted to the LPA.

7.0 References and Bibliography

CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA (2019) *Biodiversity Net Gain. Good practice principles for development. A practical guide*. CIRIA C776a. London, 2019.

Defra (2025) *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric– Habitat Condition Assessment Sheets with Instructions*.

Defra (2025) *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric - auditing and accounting for biodiversity calculation tool*.

Defra (2025) *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric - GIS Import Tool*.

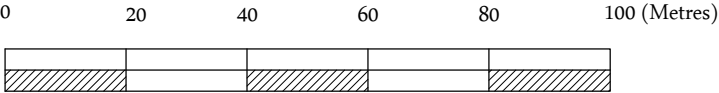
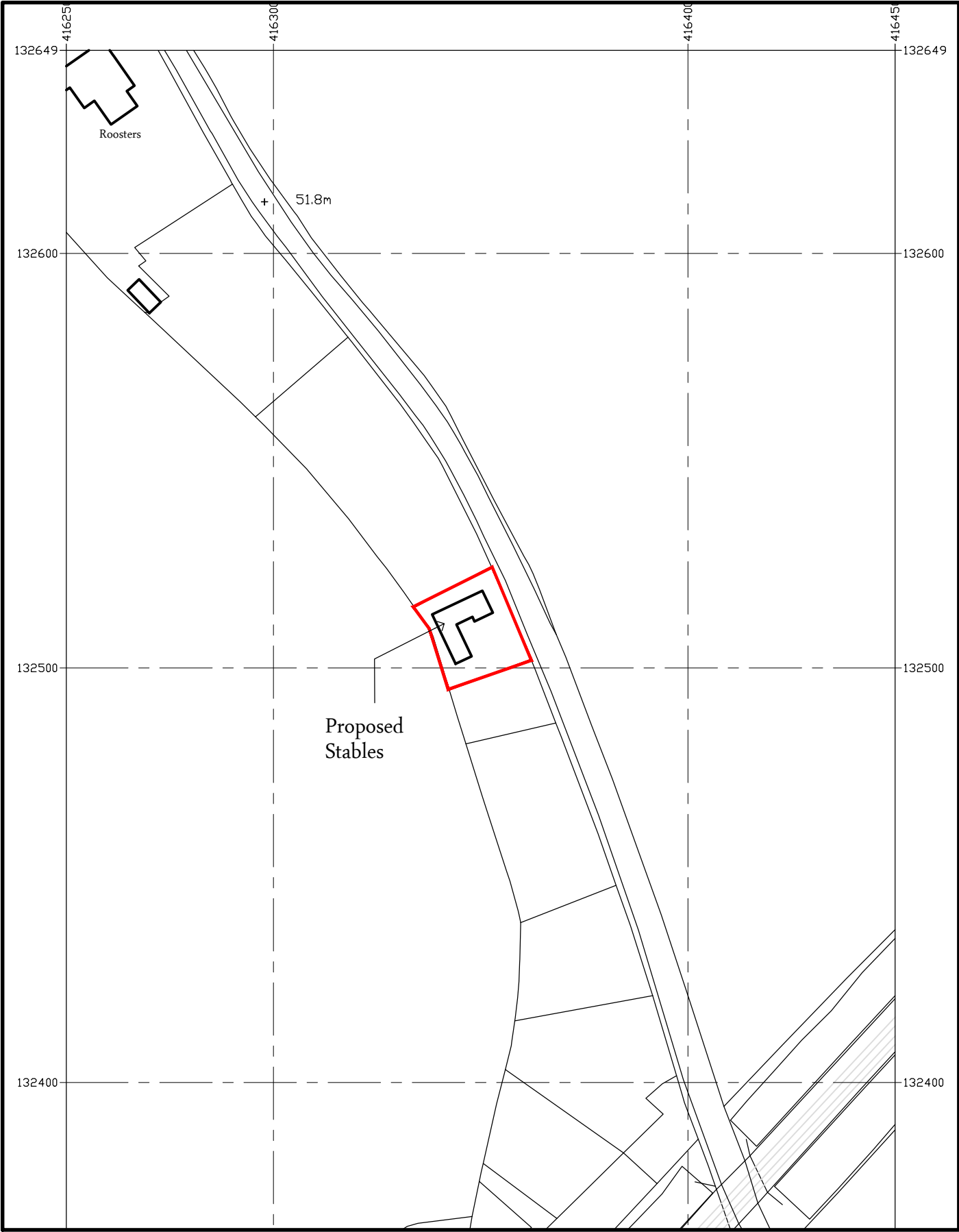
National Planning Policy Framework (2024). *National Planning Policy Framework*. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, London.

UKHab Ltd (2023) *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0*.

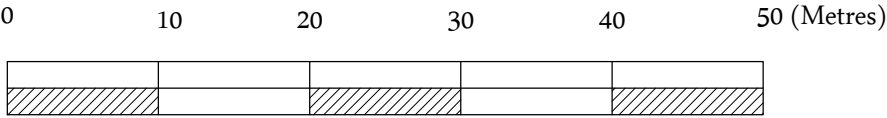
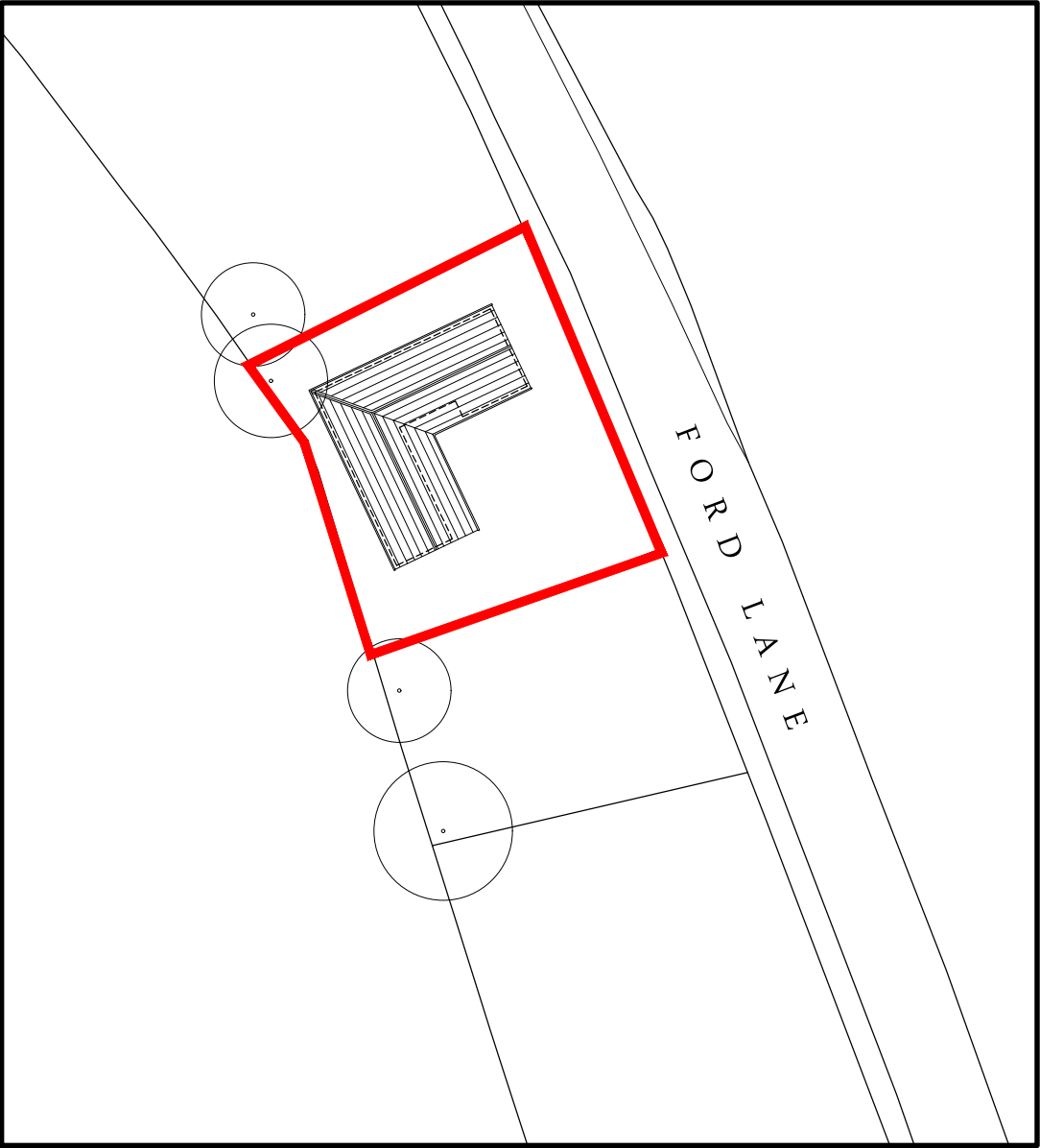
Wiltshire Council (2015) *Wiltshire Core Strategy (2012 – 2026), adopted January 2015*.

Appendices

Appendix A: Proposed Plans

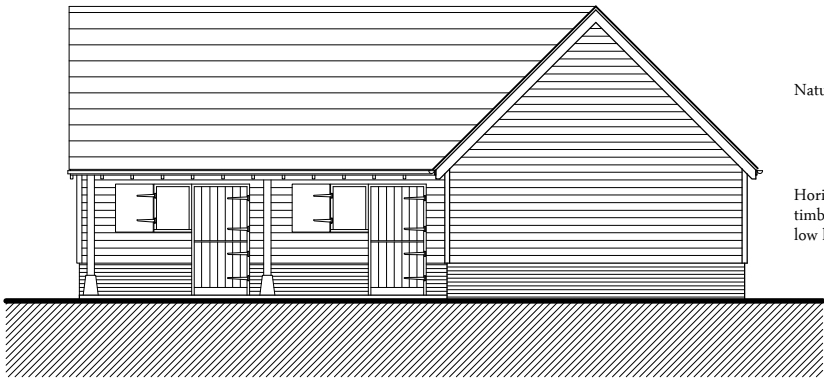
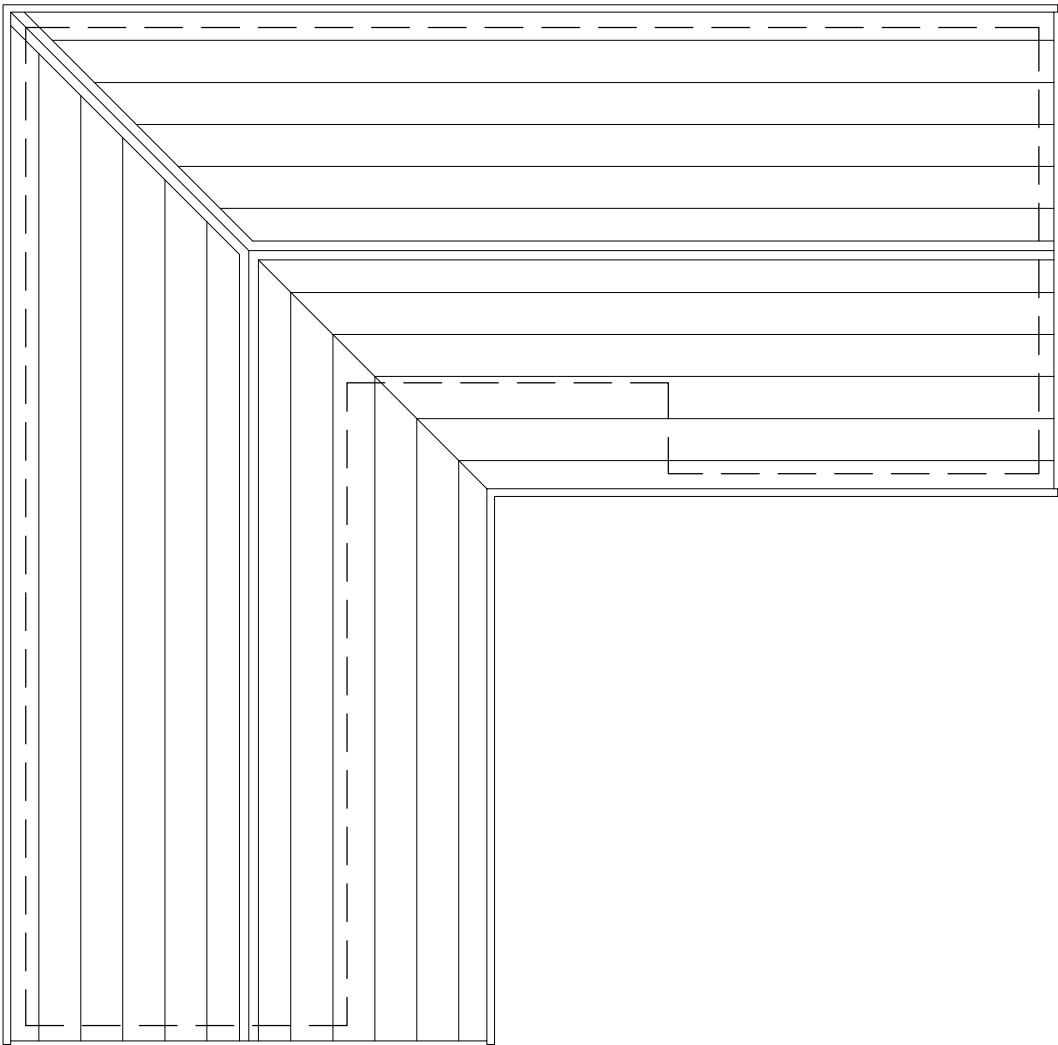
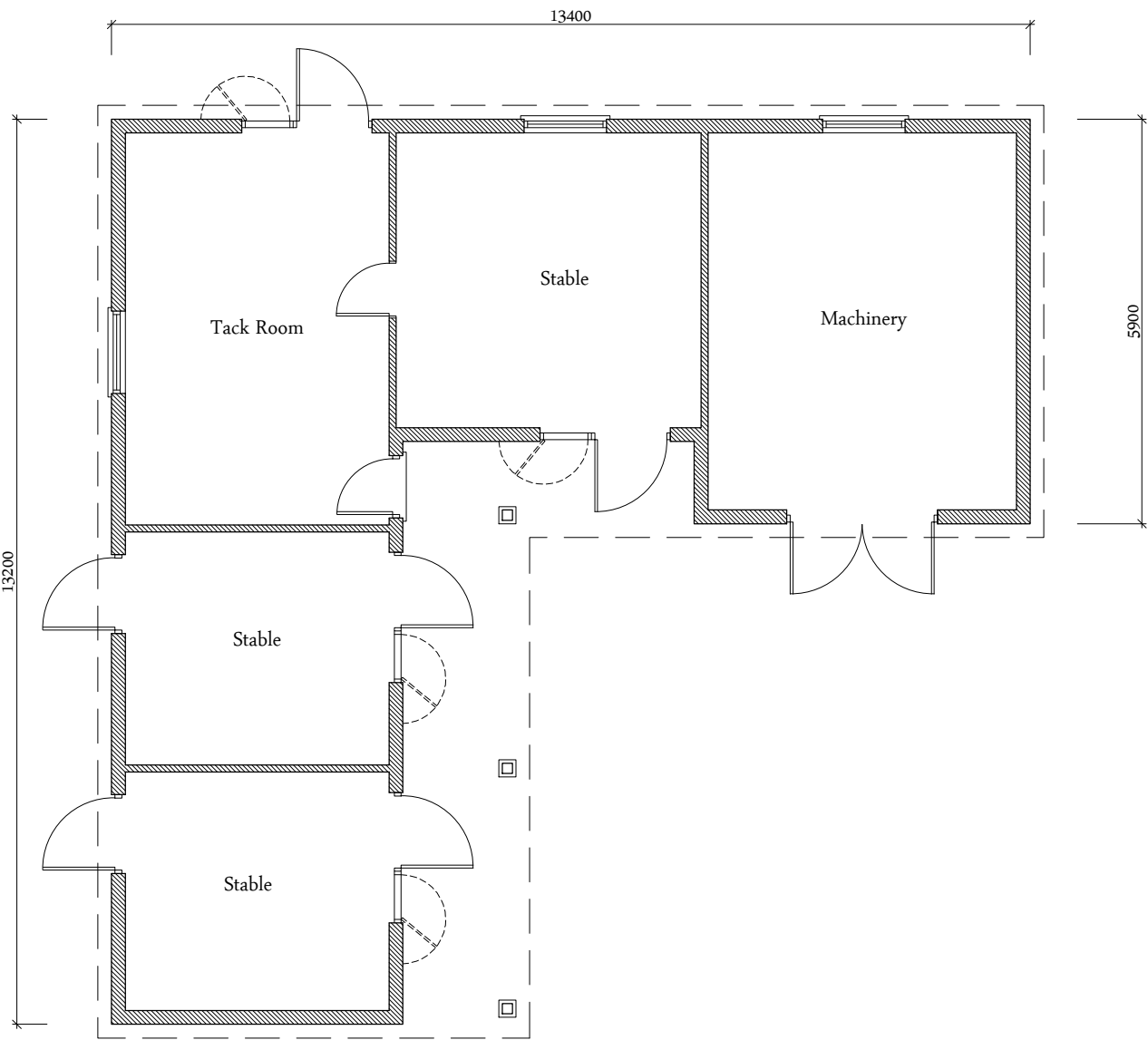


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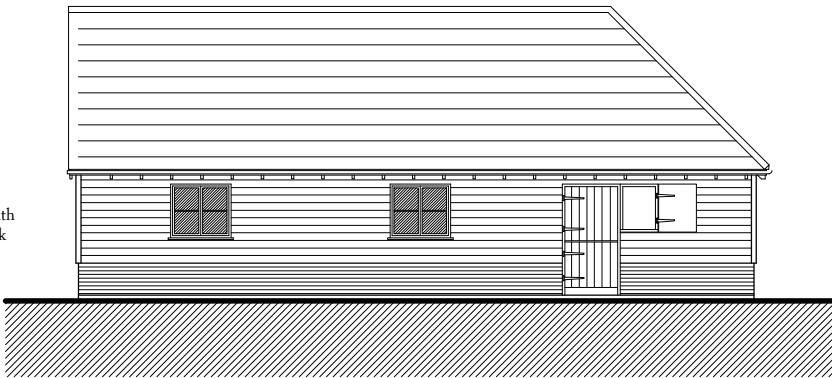


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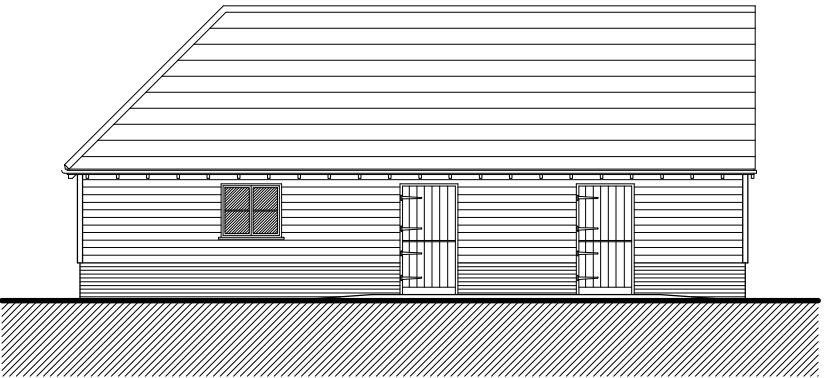
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N		
Rev	Amendment	Date
LARKHAM DESIGN LTD ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES Field View Barn, Longhedge, Salisbury, Wilts. SP4 6RS Tel: 01722 322193 info@larkhamdesign.co.uk www.larkhamdesign.co.uk		
Client & Project Address: Mr M Small Willow Tree Farm, Ford Lane, Salisbury, Wilts. SO51 6DQ		
Project Description: Proposed Stables		
Drawing Title: Existing Location & Site Plan		
Scale: 1:500 & 1:1250 at A3		
Drawing Ref: 1037/Ex/01		Rev:



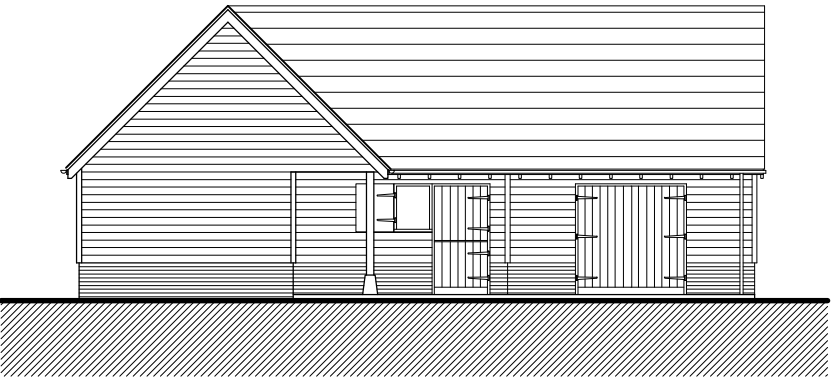
East Elevation



North Elevation



West Elevation



South Elevation

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Metres

0 1 2 3 4 5

Scale Bar (1:100 at A3)

Metres

0 1 2 3 4 5

Scale Bar (1:150 at A3)

Rev	Amendment	Date

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Ford Lane,
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SO51 6DQ

Project Description:

Proposed Stables

Drawing Title:

Proposed Plan &
Elevations

Scale:

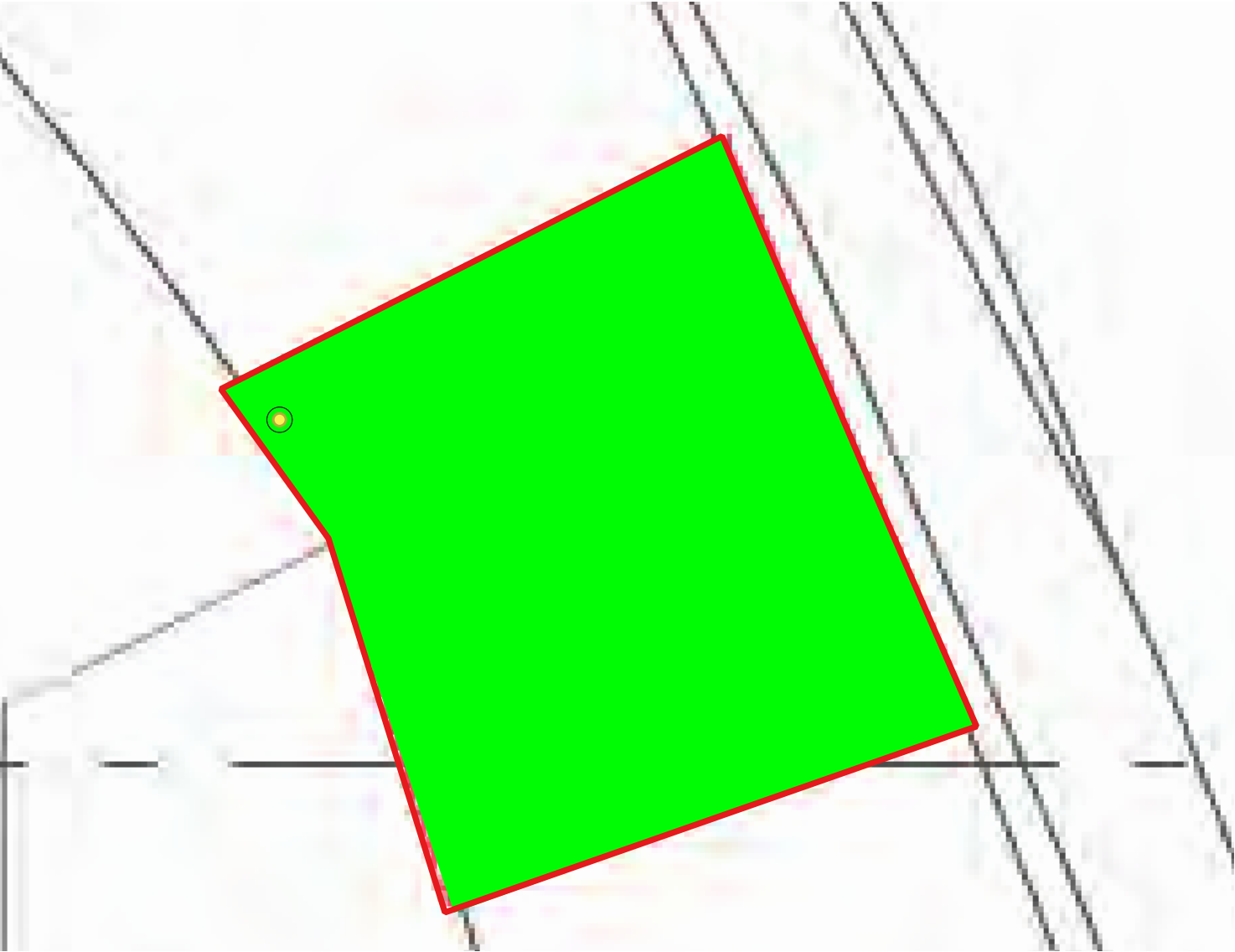
1:100 & 1:150 at A3

Drawing Ref:	Rev:
1037/Pr/01	

Appendix B: Baseline Habitats

The plan shown here is for the purpose of supporting a planning application only. Only scale from this drawing for the purposes of determining a planning application. Do not scale from this drawing for construction purposes.

The proposal presented here is subject to review by specialist consultants, and is to be read in conjunction with all relevant specialist's drawings and information where available. Any discrepancies between this and any other consultant's drawings and information should be reported to Pro Vision immediately.



Legend

-  Red Line Boundary
-  Existing Medium Rural Tree
-  Modified Grassland



ISSUE	DATE	DESCRIPTION	DRAWN	CHECKED
v1	21.01.26	First Issue - Mapping	JP	AH

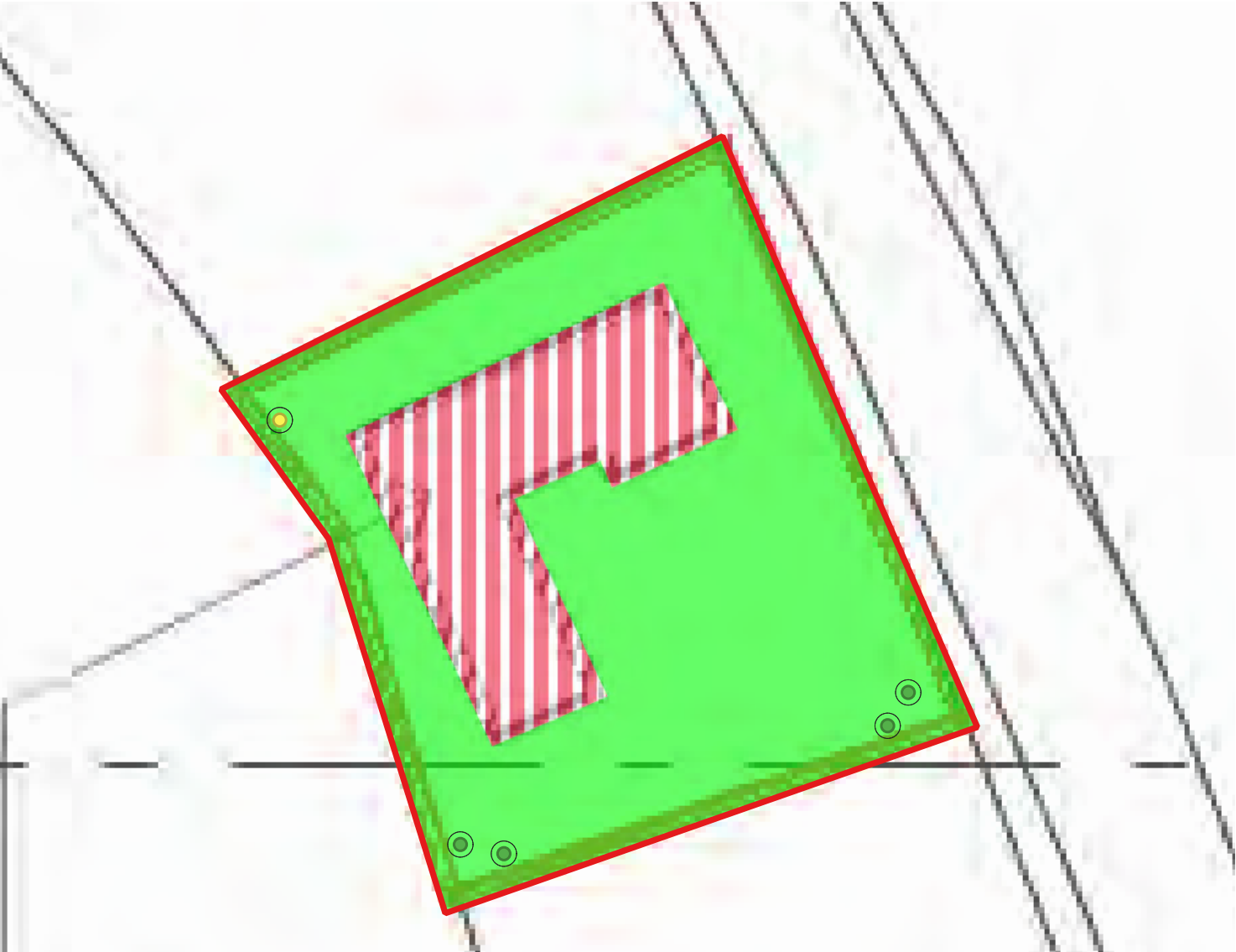
CLIENT:	Mark Small		
PROJECT:	Willow Tree Farm		
DRAWING:	Baseline Habitats	1:250	
NUMBER:	9033-XX-E0-01	A4	
ISSUE:	v1	21.01.26	



Appendix C: Proposed Habitats

The plan shown here is for the purpose of supporting a planning application only. Only scale from this drawing for the purposes of determining a planning application. Do not scale from this drawing for construction purposes.

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Legend

-  Red Line Boundary
-  Proposed Small Rural Tree
-  Retained Medium Rural Tree
-  Developed land; sealed surface
-  Modified grassland



ISSUE	DATE	DESCRIPTION	DRAWN	CHECKED
v1	21.01.26	First Issue - Mapping	JP	AH

CLIENT:	Mark Small		
PROJECT:	Willow Tree Farm		
DRAWING:	Proposed Habitats	1:250	
NUMBER:	9033-XX-E0-02	A4	
ISSUE:	v1	21.01.26	

