

Old Manor Farm, Wedhampton

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Prepared on behalf of M G Ellis & Son

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Old Manor Farm
Ecology 8853
Version 01

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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Pro Vision Ecology were commissioned in May 2025 to carry out a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment of the site at Old Manor Farm, Wedhampton. The aim of the assessment was to establish how a 10% net gain within the development could be achieved.
- 1.2 The site comprises a yard with eight outbuildings used as varying storage for the farm. Habitats within the site included parcels of modified grassland on the western and eastern areas, with the rest of the site comprising hardstanding. There was one non-native hedgerow present within the site boundary and a scattered trees on the western boundary.
- 1.3 The proposed development will comprise the demolition of two of the barns and the subsequent conversions of the remaining barns into residential units with associated urban habitats and landscaping. The development will include the creation of developed land sealed surface, small areas of modified grassland and vegetated garden.
- 1.4 The development includes the replacement of developed land; sealed surface with vegetated garden. Four of the existing trees will also be retained following the proposals, one medium cypress tree will be removed as part of the works. New native hedgerows are also proposed in the scheme.
- 1.5 The proposed development will result in a net loss of 0.07 habitat units (-5.14%) and a net gain in 0.02 hedgerow units (144.47%). An off-site solution will be required to provide the required net gains in habitat units.

2.0 Introduction

Project Background

- 2.1 Pro Vision Ecology were commissioned in May 2025 to carry out a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment of the site at Old Manor Farm, Wedhampton. Plans for the site include the demolition of two of the barns and the subsequent conversions of the remaining barns into residential dwellings with associated urban habitats and landscaping. Proposed plans are shown in **Appendix A**.
- 2.2 This report provides the details for the BNG assessment for the proposed development.

Brief

- 2.3 To carry out a BNG assessment of the site to determine the opportunities for net gain for the future design of the development.

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 Government's 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.
- 2.9 The site at Old Manor Farm is located within Wiltshire Council, The Wiltshire Core Strategy – Wiltshire Local Development Framework (Adopted January 2015). Development Plan Document (adopted 2012) includes Core Policy 50 related to Biodiversity and Geodiversity, which states:

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 resources 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.

Baseline Assessment

- 3.2 A site visit was undertaken on the 9th June 2025 by experienced ecologist Louisa Standbrook-Jones MCIEEM in slightly overcast weather conditions, still and dry and an ambient temperature of 11°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.

Biodiversity Net Gain Hierarchy

- 3.5 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

- 3.6 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
- 3.7 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

3.8 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.
- 4.2 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

- 4.3 The Wiltshire Local Nature recovery Strategy was consulted to establish any targeted habitat creation measures on the site. The site falls outside of any areas of strategic significance, and all habitat creation measures fall outside the strategy.

Habitats

Surrounding habitat

- 4.4 The site at Old Manor Farm is located within the village of Wedhampton, approximately six kilometres southeast of the town of Devizes. The site is immediately surrounded by residential properties on all aspects. The wider landscape comprises a large expanse of arable fields. Pockets of woodland were present in the wider landscape on the eastern boundary.

Developed land; sealed surface

- 4.5 The majority of the site boundary is comprised of developed land; sealed surface in the form of a concrete farmyard and track allowing access to the paddock and multiple buildings present on site.

Modified grassland

- 4.6 The site comprised a number of areas of modified grassland which were all seen to be in the same condition. These were located on the central western area, the eastern area and a small patch bordering barn 7 and barn 2 (**Figure 1 and 2**). All areas of grassland were well managed and of a short sward nature with patches of bare ground interspersed throughout due to being well utilised. Species present within the grassland comprised perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), greater plantain (*Plantago major*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), cock's-foot grass (*Dactylis glomerata*), common daisy (*Bellis perennis*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) and creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*).



Figure 1 and 2: Small areas of modified grassland

- 4.7 The grassland on the site was assessed as being in a poor condition due to the low species diversity present within the sward.

Hedgerows

- 4.8 There was only one hedgerow located within the site boundary (**Figure 3**). This was a non-native and ornamental hedgerow which was solely comprised of leylandii (*Cupressus × leylandii*). The hedge was located on the southeastern aspect, fragmenting the site from the neighbouring road.



Figure 3: Hedgerow located within the boundary

Individual trees

- 4.9 There were four individual trees present within the site boundary (**Figure 4**). There was a large ash on the western boundary with the neighbouring property, this was mature and in good condition. The eastern boundary contained a silver birch tree (*Betula pendula*) which was mature and over sailed the boundary wall. There is also a medium sized sycamore and a small ash on the western boundary. One medium cypress tree is located within the non-native and ornamental hedgerow on the eastern boundary. This will be lost as part of the proposals and therefore is included within the baseline.



Figure 4: Mature ash located within the site boundary

Artificial unsealed unvegetated surface

- 4.10 There were three patches of artificial unsealed unvegetated surface which were comprised of gravel. These were seen bordering building five and the modified grassland present at the entrance of the site. There was very little vegetation encroachment within this area.

Baseline summary

- 4.11 The current BNG baseline is provided below in **Table 1**. The site has a baseline of 1.40 habitat units and 0.02 hedgerow units.

Table 1: Statutory Biodiversity Metric Baseline.

Habitat baseline					
Habitat	Biodiversity Units	Area (ha)	Condition	Distinctiveness	Suggested action
Modified grassland	0.16	0.0808	Poor	Low	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required
Artificial unvegetated unsealed surface	0.00	0.0283	N/A	V.Low	No compensation required
Developed land; Sealed surface	0.00	0.1836	N/A other	V.Low	No compensation required
Individual tree	1.08	0.0896	Good	Medium	Same broad habitat or higher distinctiveness habitat required
Individual tree	0.16	0.0204	Moderate	Medium	Same broad habitat or higher distinctiveness habitat required
Hedgerow Baseline					

Habitat baseline					
Habitat	Biodiversity Units	Area (ha)	Condition	Distinctiveness	Suggested action
Non Native and Ornamental Hedgerow	0.02	0.015	Poor	V.Low	Same distinctiveness band or better

5.0 Proposed Habitats

- 5.1 The development includes the conversion of areas of developed land, sealed surface and artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface into areas of vegetated garden.
- 5.2 The four trees within the site boundary are due to be retained as part of the works One medium cypress tree located within the non-native hedgerow will be lost as part of the works. There is limited scope in the scheme to provide enhancements due to large areas being within residential curtilages.
- 5.3 A summary is provided below to outline targeted habitats and conditions and shown in **Appendix C**.

Creation of habitats on site

Modified grassland

- 5.4 An area of modified grassland will be retained near the retained dwelling adjacent to the site and approximately 0.007 hectares of modified grassland will be created within the proposals. Due to being within a residential setting, the grassland will achieve a poor condition score.

Native hedgerows

- 5.5 A total of 0.019 kilometres of native hedgerow will be planted around the retained area of modified grassland on the northern boundary of the site. Due to the location of the hedgerow they have been shown as reaching a poor condition within the BNG assessment, but it would be hoped a higher condition can be achieved.

6.0 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

- 6.1 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric was run based on the measures outlined in **Section 5.0** and shown in **Appendix C**. The assessment results in a net loss of 0.07 habitat units (-5.14%) and a net gain of 0.02 hedgerow units (144.47%) (**Table 2**).

Table 2: Statutory Biodiversity Metric results

On-site baseline	Habitat units	1.40
	Hedgerow units	0.02
On-site post intervention	Habitat units	1.33
	Hedgerow units	0.04
Total net unit change	Habitat units	-0.07 (-5.14%)
	Hedgerow units	0.02 (144.47%)
Trading Rules Satisfied	No	

- 6.2 With these measures in place the development achieves the required 10% net gains for hedgerow units on site.
- 6.3 The development has been designed to maximise areas to provide enhancements, but it is not possible to achieve a 10% net gain in habitats on the site and provide a viable development. The scheme has a unit deficit of 0.21 habitat units. Therefore, the scheme will require the purchase of these from an offsite provider to reach 10% net gain. There is the following unit deficit:
- Individual trees – 0.20
 - Additional units for 10% net gain - 0.01
- 6.4 The development will need to look at off-site solutions and will either need an alternative off-site location to secure the additional habitat units or units will need to be purchased from a habitat bank. These units should be purchased from a habitat bank within the same LPA (Wiltshire Council) or the same National Character Area (Berkshire and Marlborough Downs). Habitat units purchased from outside the Local Planning Authority or National Character Area would also be acceptable, however the units required will differ from those outlined above.
- 6.5 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, it is considered this condition can be discharged based on an off-site solution.

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*.

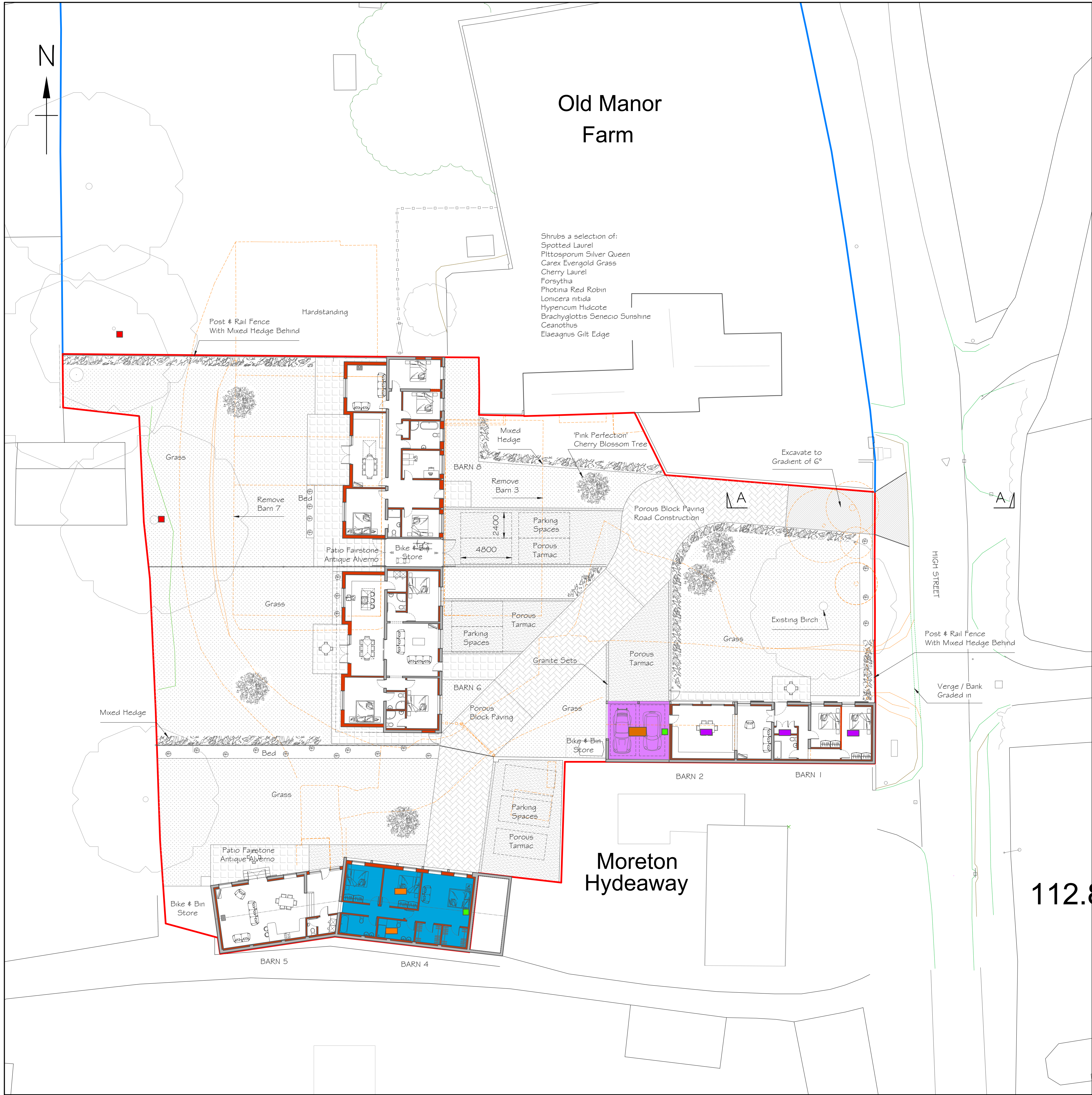
National Planning Policy Framework (2024). *National Planning Policy Framework*. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, London.

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

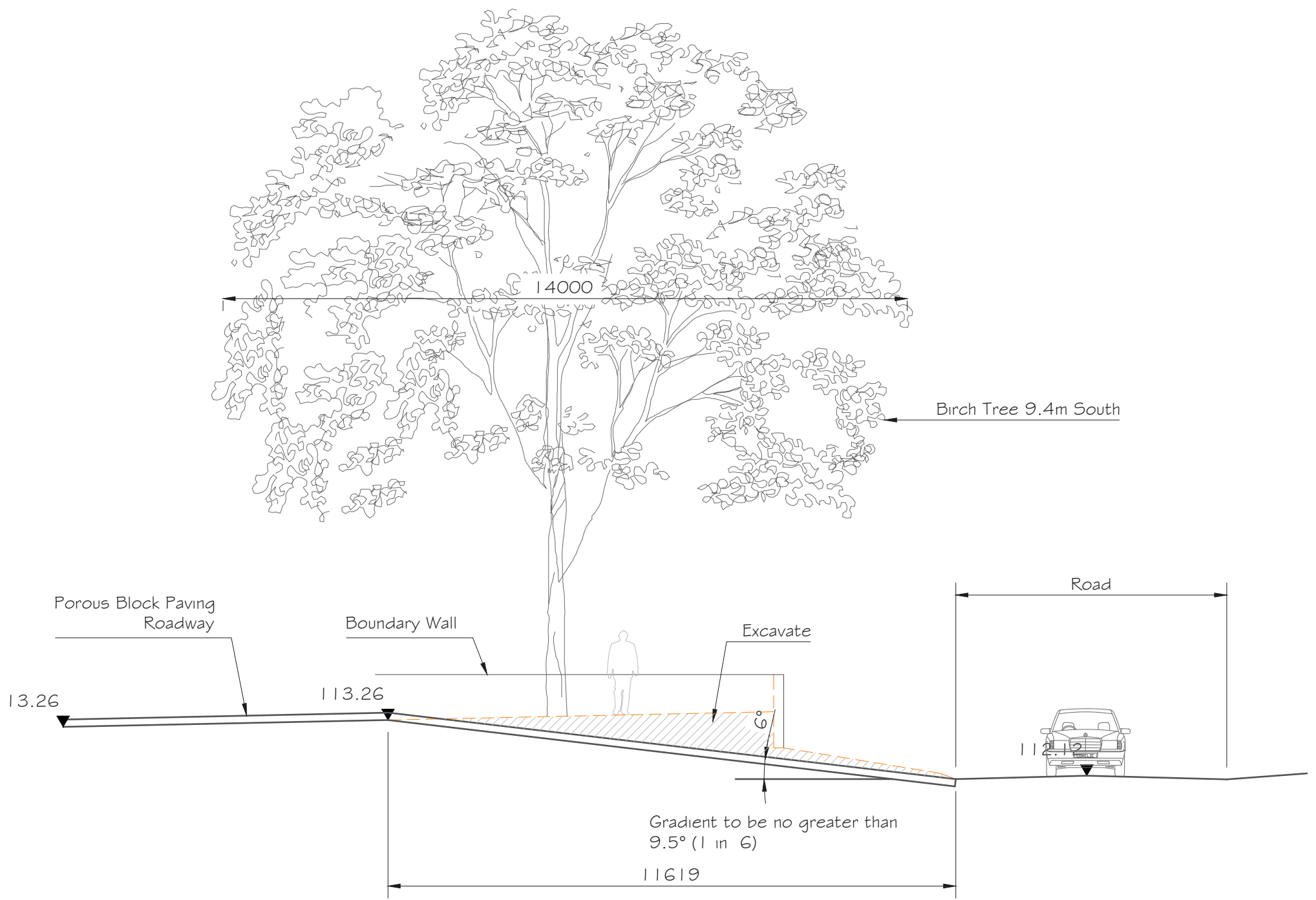
Wiltshire Core Strategy – Wiltshire Local Development Framework (Adopted January 2015))
Development Plan Document (adopted 2012)

Appendices

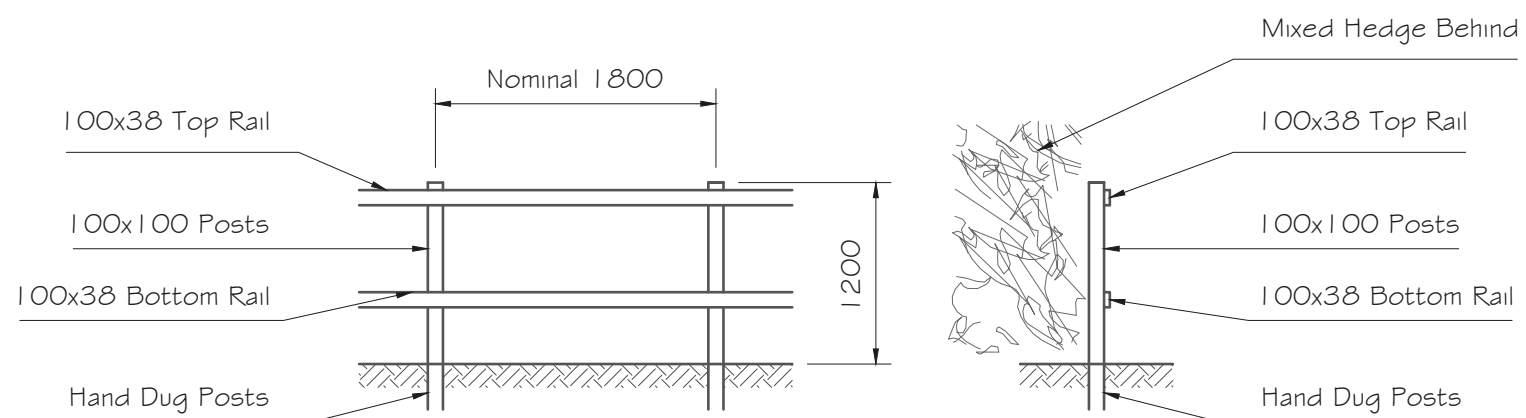
Appendix A: Proposed Plans



SITE PLAN
Scale 1:200

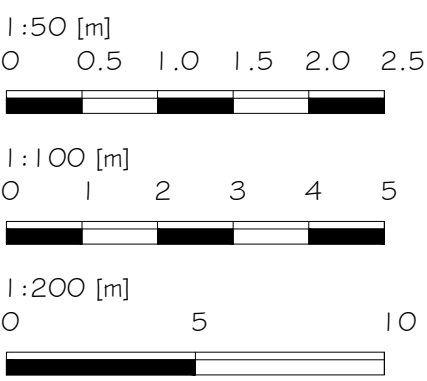


SECTION A-A
Scale 1:100



(EAST) (SOUTH)
FENCING ACROSS EXISTING ACCESS
Scale 1:50

LEGEND	
	To Be Removed
	Internal Bat Box
	Temporary Roosting Provision
	Ridge Access Tile
	Bat Access Tile Into Void
	Lesser horseshoe hot box mitigation roost
	Brown long-eared and serotine mitigation roost
	Natteries and brown long eared mitigation roost in car port



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Client
RAW PLANNING

Job Title
CONVERSIONS AT:
WEDHAMPTON

Drawing Title
PROPOSED SITE PLAN

Scale
A5 SHOWN

Date 01/12/2025 Drawn AD

Drawing No.	Rev
1560-09	E

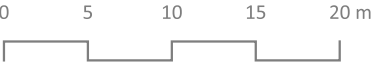
Appendix B: Baseline Habitats

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 Large Urban Tree
- Existing Medium Urban Tree
- Existing Small Urban Tree
- Non-native and Ornamental Hedgerow
- Artificial Unvegetated, Unsealed Surface
- Developed Land; Sealed Surface
- Modified Grassland



ISSUE	DATE	DESCRIPTION	DRAWN	CHECKED
v1	10.12.25	Map Created	MC	U

CLIENT:	M G Ellis & Son		
PROJECT:	Old Manor Farm		
DRAWING:	Habitat Map	1:450	
NUMBER:	8853-XX-E0-02	A4	
ISSUE:	v1	10.12.25	

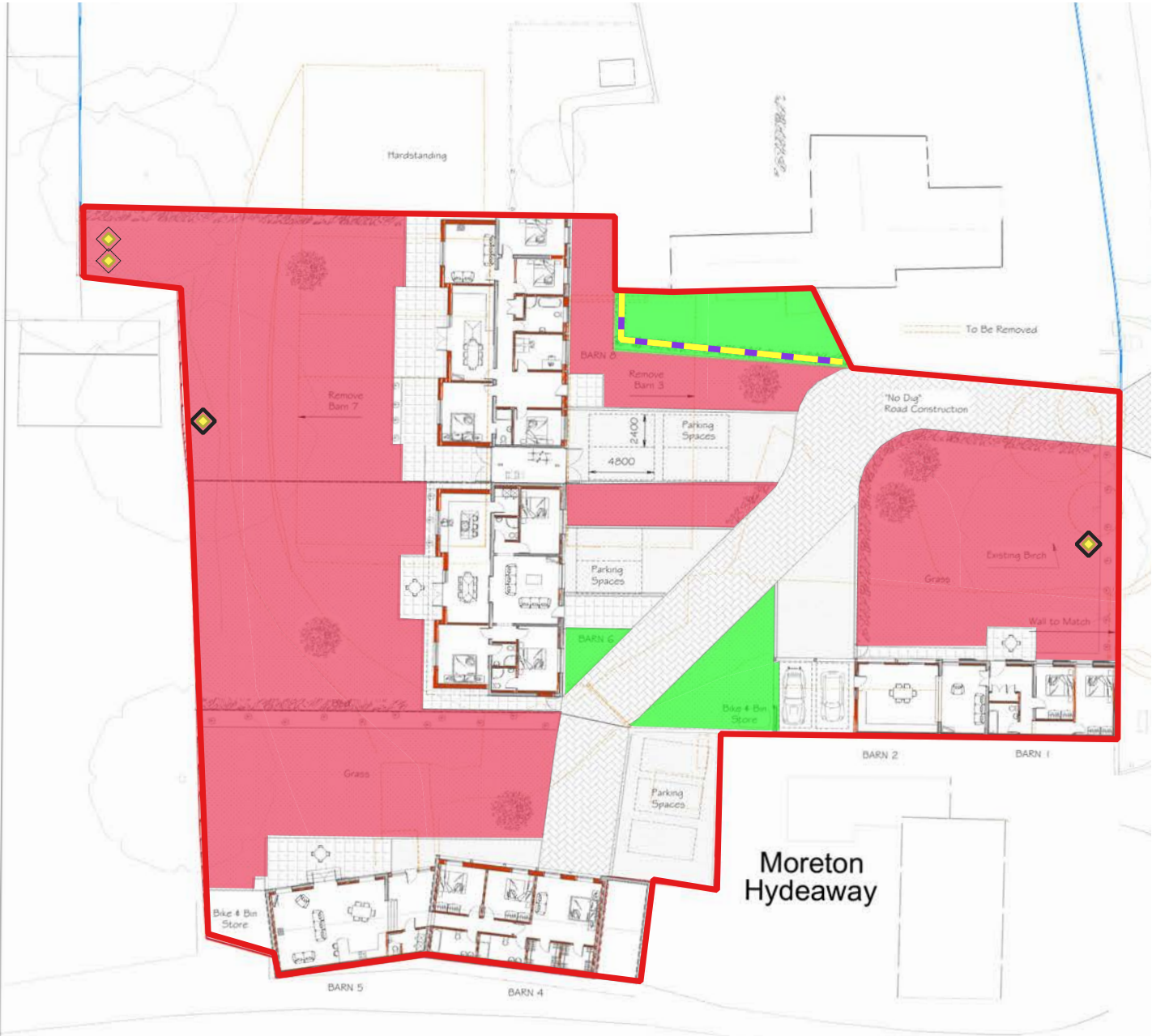
Appendix C: Proposed Habitats

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Legend

- Red Line Boundary
- Existing Large Urban Tree
- Existing Medium Urban Tree
- Existing Small Urban Tree
- Native hedgerow
- Modified grassland
- Vegetated garden



ISSUE	DATE	DESCRIPTION	DRAWN	CHECKED
v1	10.12.25	Map Created	MC	U

CLIENT:	M G Ellis & Son		
PROJECT:	Old Manor Farm		
DRAWING:	Proposed Habitats	1:450	
NUMBER:	8853-XX-E0-03	A4	
ISSUE:	v1	10.12.25	