Pre-development and Post-development Habitat Survey Report for Calculation of Biodiversity Net Gain

For

Mereside Drove, Ramsey Mereside

August 2025

Status: For planning

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Quality Standards

This report is certified BS 42020:2013 'Biodiversity – code of practice for planning and development' compliant and has been prepared in accordance with The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) Technical Guidance Series '*Ecological Report Writing*' and Code of Professional Conduct.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Commission

1.1.1 The Landscape Partnership was commissioned by Robinson & Hall on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council to assess whether a proposed development at Mereside Drove, Ramsey Mereside would provide a biodiversity net gain. This was calculated using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric.

1.2 Legislation and policy background

1.2.1 There is a range of protection given to sites and species. Sites may be designated for local, national, European or global importance for nature conservation. Species may be protected by European-scale legislation or varying levels of national regulation. Further information is given in Appendix 1.

1.2.2 The Local Planning Authority has a policy to protect features of nature conservation value within its Local Plan. Other regulators have policies relating to the consents issued by them.

1.2.3 Biodiversity Net Gain is required for most developments under The Environment Act 2021. A minimum of 10% net gain needs to be achieved under The Environment Act 2021.

1.3 Site location and context

1.3.1 The site is located approximately 3km east of Ramsey Mereside village, in Cambridgeshire, and approximately 5.5km northeast of Ramsey.

1.3.2 The site comprised a residential dwelling with a front and rear vegetated garden consisting of grassland with scattered trees, scrub and introduced shrubs at the site boundaries. Outbuildings were located within the site boundary and included an annex, summer house with decking, and chicken coop. The site constitutes the residential areas of the adjacent farm.

1.3.3 The site boundary was not clearly demarcated on the ground, but Mereside Drove road lies to the south, shrubs and the remaining residential garden to the west,, an arable field to the north, and the remainder of the farm to the east.

1.3.4 The wider landscape consists of the Cambridgeshire fenlands with arable fields and deep ditches. The River Nene is located approximately 160m southeast of the site.

1.3.5 The Ordnance Survey Grid Reference for the approximate centre of the proposed development site is TL 3102 9072. The location of the site is shown in Appendix 2.

1.4 Description of the project

1.4.1 The proposal is for the demolition of the existing primary dwelling and the erection of a replacement dwelling in a different location to the north.

1.4.2 The proposed landscaping includes the retention of boundary habitats, creation of vegetated garden, and off-site tree planting along the northern boundary. Tree 1 (shown in Figure 01) and areas of vegetated garden are proposed for removal.

1.4.3 The proposed landscaping plan is shown in Appendix 3.

1.5 Objectives of this report

1.5.1 The objectives of the biodiversity calculations are:

- Calculate the existing biodiversity units, prior to the development being implemented.
- Calculate the proposed biodiversity units according to the proposals provided at the time of the planning application.
- Assess the net change in biodiversity units resulting from the development.

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2 Methodology

2.1 UK Habitat Classification survey methodology

Pre-development

UK Habitat Classification

2.1.1 The standardised UK Habitat Classification and mapping methodology[1] was followed. All habitats present and areas or features of ecological interest within such habitats were recorded and mapped. The survey methodology facilitates a rapid assessment of habitats and it is not necessary to identify every plant species on site. Where given, scientific names of plant species follow Stace ed. 4[2]. The DAFOR scale was applied to each plant species found within the site and in each habitat type, as follows:

- **D**: Dominant - a percentage cover of greater than 75%
- **A**: Abundant – a percentage cover of 51-75%
- **F**: Frequent – a percentage cover of 26-50%
- **O**: Occasional – a percentage cover of 11-25%
- **R**: Rare - a percentage cover of 1-10%

2.1.2 The survey was undertaken on 19th February 2025 by Emily Costello (FISC Level 3) and Ellen Campbell, and the weather conditions were dry and overcast (100% cloud cover), with a light breeze (Beaufort 2), and a temperature of 2°C.

Pre-development measurement methodology

2.1.3 The areas of existing on-site habitats were calculated in QGIS using the habitat map (Figure 01) produced by The Landscape Partnership.

Limitations to UK Habitat Classification Survey

2.1.4 The UK Habitat Classification survey was undertaken outside the main flowering season for many species, including grassland flora, as well as being outside the seasons in which some invasive species would be visible, for example those that are annual, or which die back in winter. This was not considered to be a significant limitation given the habitat types found within the site.

Post-development

UK Habitat Classification

2.1.5 The retained baseline habitats and proposed habitats are shown on the proposed landscaping plan by Robinson & Hall (drawing no: A 60482 5D). These habitats were converted to the UK Habitat Classification[1] system and mapped in QGIS (Figure 02). Each proposed habitat was assigned a UK Habitat Classification that best fit with reasonable assumptions made about proposed habitats.

Post-development measurement methodology

2.1.6 The areas of proposed habitats and lengths of proposed linear features were calculated in QGIS using the proposed landscaping plan by Robinson & Hall (drawing no: A 60482 5D).

Limitations to UK Habitat Classification Survey

2.1.7 The proposed habitats are based on the proposed landscaping plan which do not provide long-term management information. This is not considered a significant limitation as there is sufficient information to classify the habitats.

[1] UKHab Ltd (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (at https://www.ukhab.org)*
[2] Stace, C (2019) *New Flora of the British Isles*. C&M Floristics. 4th Edition.

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2.2 Habitat Condition Assessment methodology

2.2.1 Habitat condition assessments are a measure of the state of a habitat and are used to measure variation between parcels of the same habitat type. Condition of habitats is often linked to past and present management and land use.

2.2.2 Condition assessments of all pre- and post-development habitats and linear features were undertaken as stated within The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide[3]. The condition of the habitats was assessed using The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment spreadsheets.

2.2.3 Condition assessments of all pre-development habitats and linear features were undertaken on-site during the UK Habitat Classification survey. Condition assessments of all post-development habitats and linear features was a desk-based exercise using the information provided in the site proposals and assessing likely condition at the indicated 'Time to Target Condition' within the metric spreadsheet.

Limitations to Habitat Condition Assessment

2.2.4 The proposed habitats and linear features are based on the proposed landscaping plan which does not provide detailed long-term management information. This is not considered a significant limitation as there is sufficient information to estimate their condition.

2.3 Biodiversity Net Gain methodology

Calculation methodology

2.3.1 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric tool (metric version date: 3rd July 2025) and Statutory Biodiversity Metric condition assessment tables were downloaded from the gov.uk website[4] on 7th August 2025. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide was followed[3].

2.4 Strategic Significance methodology

2.4.1 The strategic significance of habitats was assessed by reviewing the local plan for any mention of the existing and proposed habitats and linear features.

2.4.2 At the time of writing the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)[5] has not been published.

[3] Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide. Published February 2024. Updated July 2024
[4] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides
[5] https://naturalcambridgeshire.org.uk/lnrs/ [Date accessed 8th August 2025]

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3 UK Habitat Classification survey results

3.1 Pre-development

3.1.1 The UK Habitat types identified during the survey are shown on Figure 01 and each habitat is described below. Primary habitat codes (levels 2-5) are listed below in bold. Secondary habitat codes (essential and additional) are unbolded.

Heathland and shrub - Mixed scrub h3h *Vegetated garden 828*

3.1.2 An area of scrub was located in the southeastern corner of the site, with abundant occurrences of elder, holly *Ilex aquifolium* and cotoneaster. The ground flora was mostly bare ground, with rare occurrences of daffodil *Narcissus sp.* and red dead nettle. This habitat has been included in the metric as mixed scrub rather than vegetated garden so as not to undervalue the habitats present on-site. This area of scrub is proposed for retention.

Individual trees – Rural trees u1 *Scattered trees 32*

3.1.3 There were two scattered apple trees *Malus sp.*, located in the fore and back gardens. Tree locations are depicted on Figure 01.

3.1.4 The size class of the trees was determined by their current stem diameter as recommended in the table below taken from the Statutory Metric User Guide[3].

Size class	Diameter at breast height (DBH) (cm)
Small	Greater than 7.5cm and less than or equal to 30cm
Medium	Greater than 30cm and less than or equal to 60cm
Large	Greater than 60cm and less than or equal to 90cm
Very large	Greater than 90cm

3.1.5 Details of the tree sizes and those which will be retained or removed is summarised in the table below. The loss of T1 has been included in the metric, despite being a small tree, so as not to undervalue the habitats present on-site prior to development.

Size class	Tree No.	Total trees	No. of trees retained	No. of trees removed
Small	T1	1	**0 total**	**1 total** T1
Medium	T2	1	**1 total** T2	**0 total**

3.1.6 Three trees located adjacent to the northern boundary have not been included in the metric as these were newly planted and had a DBH of less than 7.5cm. These trees are therefore classified as scattered scrub rather than individual trees, as per the Statutory Metric User Guide.

Urban - Vegetated garden u1 *Scattered scrub 10 Scattered trees 32 Grazed 100 Vegetated garden 828 Introduced shrub 847*

3.1.7 The majority of the site consisted of vegetated garden, surrounding the main dwelling (Building 1). This grassland was comprised of mown grassland, introduced shrubs, scattered trees, and scattered scrub.

3.1.8 The grassland appeared to be in frequent use by geese, as indicated by their presence at the time of survey. The sward height was short and uniform, between 5-10cm, and is likely maintained at this short height by geese grazing and occasional mowing. The grass was dominated by perennial rye grass *Lolium perenne* with frequent occurrences of cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata* and rare occurrences of false oat grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*. Broadleaved herbs and forbs were more frequently located towards the edges of the grass and consisted of rare occurrences of common ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*, red dead nettle *Lamium purpureum*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg., groundsel *Senecio vulgaris*, dove's-foot cranesbill *Geranium molle*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, cleavers *Galium aparine*, and creeping cinquefoil

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Potentilla reptans. Scattered scrub present included one dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*, one cotoneaster *Cotoneaster sp.*, and buddleia *Buddleja davidii*.

3.1.9 Small areas of introduced shrub were present within the site and situated in close proximity to the site boundaries. Within and around the chicken run adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site lay an area of introduced shrub consisting of garden privet *Ligustrum ovalifolium* and Californian lilac *Ceanothus sp..* The ground was bare, with no flora, likely on account of the presence of chickens.

3.1.10 Some areas of vegetated garden will be lost to facilitate the erection of the new dwelling. All remaining areas will be retained.

Other standing water r1g *Ditch 50 (off-site)*

3.1.11 An off-site ditch was located in close proximity to the western boundary of the site. The riparian zone for ditches is calculated at 5m from the top of each bank, in accordance with BNG guidance. As the ditch lay more than 5m from the site boundary and the riparian zone did not extend into the site boundary, this ditch has been scoped out of the statutory metric assessment. Location of the ditch is depicted in Figure 01.

Urban - Developed land – sealed surface u1b

3.1.12 All areas of hardstanding and buildings have been included under this habitat in the metric.

3.1.13 A concrete pad was adjacent to the eastern elevation of Building 1 (Main dwelling).

3.1.14 Three buildings were present on site, including the main dwelling proposed for removal and two outbuildings associated within the dwelling and adjacent farm. Only a small part of Building 3 was included in the red line boundary. Full building descriptions can be found within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal[6].

Urban - Bare ground u1c *Bare ground 510 Unvegetated garden 829*

3.1.15 The driveway and majority of the southeastern part of the site consisted of bare ground covered with gravel. Some emerging vegetation was present towards the site boundaries in the southeast including rare occurrences of daffodils and nettle. This area is expected to be retained.

3.2 Post-development

3.2.1 The UK Habitat types that were identified from the development proposals are shown on Figure 02.

On-site

Urban – Vegetated garden u1 828 (Proposed garden)

3.2.2 All areas of vegetated garden not impacted by the relocation of the dwelling will be retained.

3.2.3 The area of the removed dwelling will be replaced by new grassland seeding or turf. A seed mix/turf for this grassland has not been provided, but it has been assumed that an amenity grassland turf / seed mix will be used.

3.2.4 All proposed vegetation located on-site has been classified as vegetated garden due to its location within a dwelling's private curtilage. This includes grassland, hedgerow and tree planting located on-site.

Urban - Developed land – sealed surface u1b (Proposed hardstanding and buildings)

3.2.5 A path to the front entrance of the proposed building is proposed to be created and will extend to the west of the existing concrete.

3.2.6 Building 1 is proposed for removal under the current plans, to be replaced with a new dwelling in a different location to the north.

[6] The Landscape Partnership (April 2025) Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for Mereside Drove, Ramsey Mereside

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Off-site

Individual trees – Rural trees c1** Scattered trees 32 **(Proposed trees)

3.2.7 Eight trees are proposed to be planted within the northern area of modified grassland, adjacent to the proposed hedgerow on the northern and eastern boundaries. Tree species proposed include three field maples *Acer campestre*, three crab apples *Malus sylvestris*, and two silver birches *Betula pendula*. These proposed trees are located off-site on the edge of the adjacent arable field and outside of the private curtilage of the dwelling.

3.2.8 Any on-site tree planting has been included in the metric under the Vegetated Garden habitat, rather than Individual Trees habitat.

3.2.9 The proposed trees have been classified as Rural Trees as they will be located within a rural setting. All trees at planting will have a stem diameter that is less than 30cm and therefore all proposed trees have been classed as small sized trees. The size class of the trees is determined by the proposed stem diameter as recommended in the table below, taken form the Statutory Metric User Guide**Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

Size class	Diameter at breast height (DBH) (cm)
Small	Greater than 7.5cm and less than or equal to 30cm
Medium	Greater than 30cm and less than or equal to 60cm
Large	Greater than 60cm and less than or equal to 90cm
Very large	Greater than 90cm

3.3 Habitat condition assessment results

3.3.1 The habitat condition assessment spreadsheets for existing and proposed habitats can be found in Appendix 4. A summary of the results can be found in the table below.

Existing habitats

Habitat/Linear Feature	Condition
Heathland and shrub – Mixed scrub h3h 828	Poor
Individual trees – Rural trees u1 32	Moderate
Urban - Vegetated garden u1 10 32 100 828 847	Condition Assessment N/A
Urban – Developed land; sealed surface u1b	N/A - Other
Urban – Bare ground u1c 510 829	Poor

Proposed habitats/linear features

Habitat/Linear Feature	Condition
On-site	
Urban – Vegetated garden u1 10 32 100 828 847 (Proposed garden)	Condition Assessment N/A
Urban – Developed land; sealed surface u1b (Proposed hardstanding and buildings)	N/A - Other
Off-site	
Individual trees – Rural trees c1 22 (Proposed trees)	Moderate

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3.4 Biodiversity impact calculation results

3.4.1 The existing site value was calculated at 0.45 Habitat Units before development. There are no Hedgerow Units or Watercourse Units before development.

3.4.2 Based on the landscape proposals drawing that includes retained and created on-site vegetation, the proposed value is 0.40 Habitat Units. This represents a net loss of -0.04 Habitat Units in the 'Headline Results' tab of the metric. The net percentage change for on-site habitats was calculated at a net loss of -9.71% for Habitat Units.

3.4.3 Offsite opportunities outside of the private curtilage of the dwelling have been explored and include:

- Eight offsite native trees being planted.

3.4.4 The proposed off-site value with the planting of eight trees was calculated at 0.10 Habitat Units. The net Habitat Unit change, combining on-site and off-site proposals was calculated at a net gain of 0.06 Habitat Units, which represents a percentage net gain of 12.68%. The provision of offsite habitats also ensures that the trading rules have been satisfied.

3.4.5 Further details can be found within the metric spreadsheet. The results of the metric can be found in a separate document.

3.5 Significance results

3.5.1 None of the existing or created habitats or linear features are mentioned within the current local plan. They have all been set to the default 'Area/compensation not in local strategy/no local strategy'.

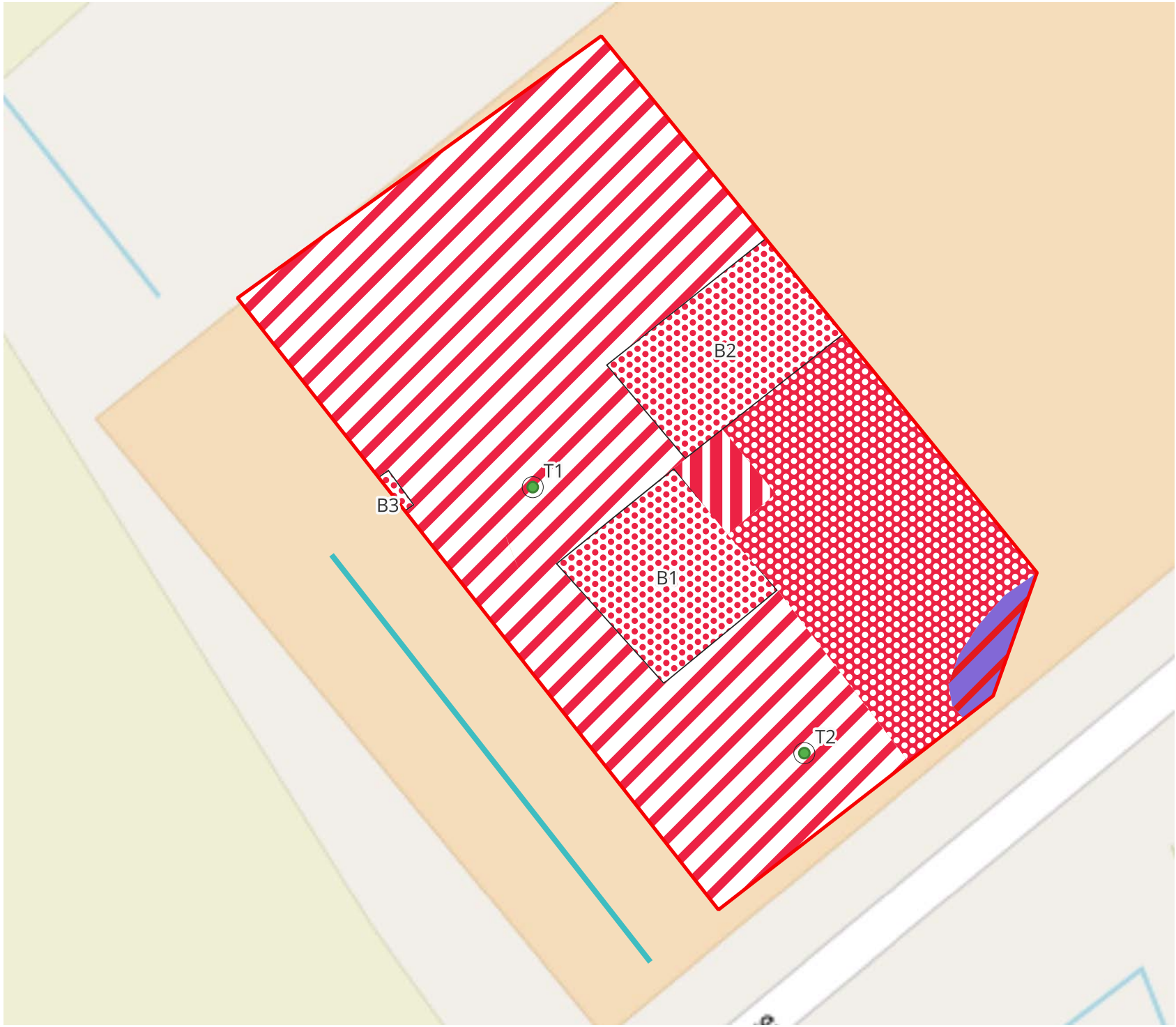
4 Conclusions

4.1.1 The development with the provision of off-site planting will currently achieve a net gain of 12.68% in Habitat Units. The trading rules have been met for habitats.

4.1.2 This meets the requirements set by The Environment Act 2021 as achieving at least 10% net gain and satisfying trading rules for Habitats and Hedgerows.

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Figures



Key

- Red line boundary
- Scattered trees u1 32
- Mixed scrub h3h 828
- Vegetated garden u1 10 32 100 828 847
- Developed land; sealed surface u1b
- Buildings u1b5
- Bare ground u1c 510 829
- Ditch r1g 50 (off-site)

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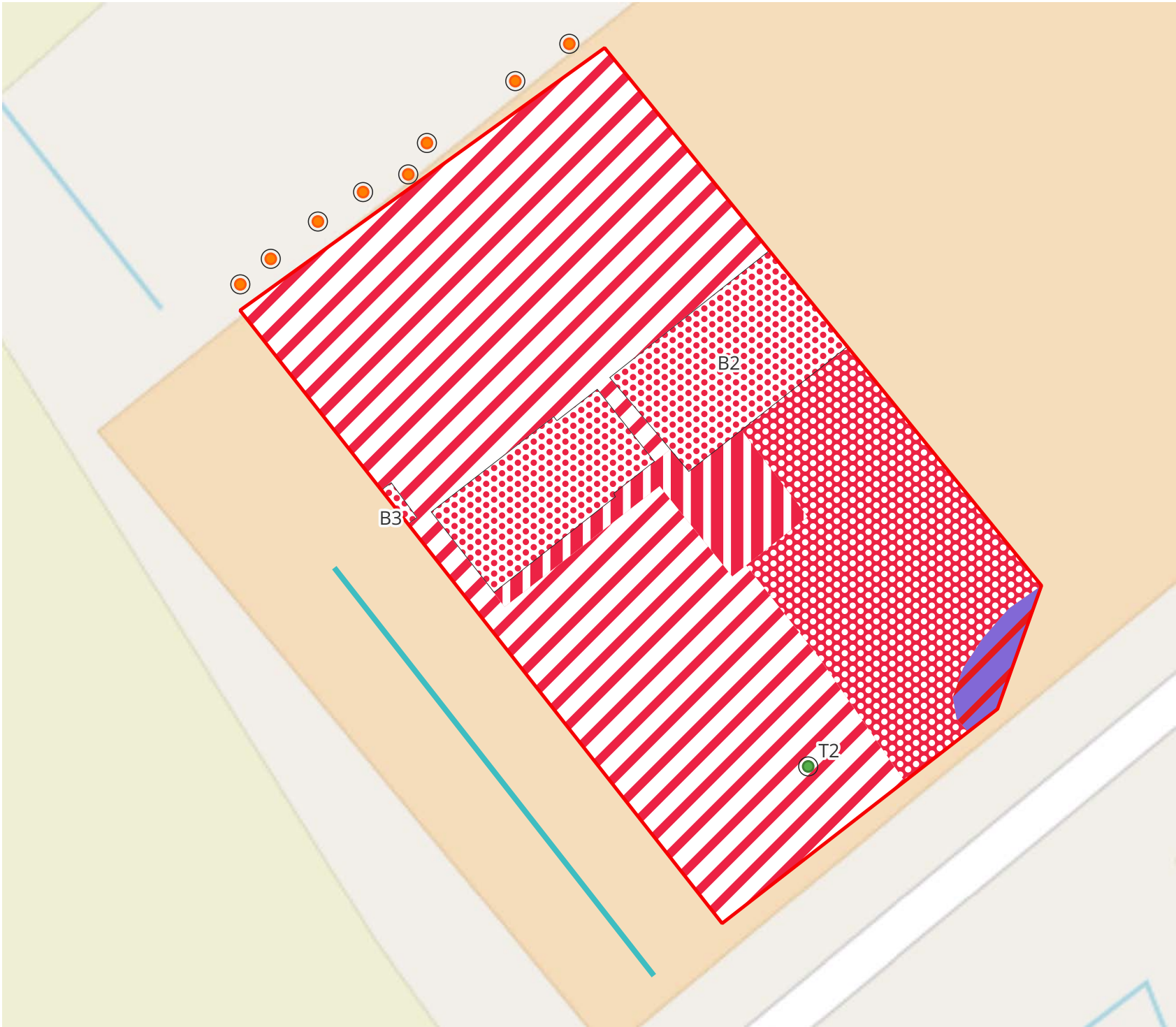
UK Habitat Classification Survey

Figure 01

Scale: NTS
August 2025

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Key

- Red Line boundary
- Scattered trees u1 32 (retained)
- Scattered trees c1 32 (proposed)
- Mixed scrub h3h 828
- Vegetated garden u1 10 32 100 828 847
- Developed land; sealed surface u1b
- Buildings u1b5
- Bare ground u1c 510 829
- Ditch r1g 50 (off-site)

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Post-development UK Habitat Classification Survey

Figure 02

Scale: NTS
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Appendix 1

Legislative and policy context

There is a number of pieces of legislation, regulations and policies specific to ecology which underpin this assessment. These may be applicable at a European, National or Local level. References to legislation are given as a summary for information and should not be construed as legal advice.

Birds Directive

The European Community Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC), normally known as the Birds Directive, sets out general rules for the conservation of all naturally occurring wild birds, their nests, eggs and habitats. It was superseded by the 'new' Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) which generally updated the previous directive.

These requirements are interpreted into English law by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) with regard to protection of birds, and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 with regard to the registration and regulation of Special Protection Areas.

Habitats Directive

The European Community Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats of Wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/EEC), normally known as the Habitats Directive, aims to protect the European Union's biodiversity. It requires member states to provide strict protection for specified flora and fauna (i.e. European Protected Species) and the registration and regulation of Special Areas of Conservation.

These requirements are interpreted into English law by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 with regard to European Protected Species and the registration and regulation of Special Areas of Conservation.

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 interpret the Birds Directive and Habitats Directive into English and Welsh law. For clarity, the following paragraphs consider the case in England only, with Natural England given as the appropriate nature conservation body. In Wales, the Countryside Council for Wales is the appropriate nature conservation body.

Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation are defined in the regulations as 'European sites'. The Regulations regulate the management of land within European sites, requiring land managers to have the consent of Natural England before carrying out management. Byelaws may also be made to prevent damaging activities and if necessary land can be compulsorily purchased to achieve satisfactory management.

The Regulations define competent authorities as public bodies or statutory undertakers. Competent authorities are required to make an appropriate assessment of any plan or project they intend to permit or carry out, if the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect upon a European site. The permission may only be given if the plan or project is ascertained to have no adverse effect upon the integrity of the European site. If the competent authority wishes to permit a plan or project despite a negative assessment, imperative reasons of over-riding public interest must be demonstrated, and there should be no alternative to the scheme. The permissions process would involve the Secretary of State and the option of consulting the European Commission. In practice, there will be very few cases where a plan or project is permitted despite a negative assessment. This means that a planning application has to be assessed by the Local Planning Authority, based on information provided by the applicant, and the assessment must either decide that it is likely to have no significant effect on a European site or ascertain that there is no adverse effect upon the integrity of the European site.

Government policy is for Ramsar sites (wetlands of global importance) to be treated as if they were European sites within the planning process.

Appropriate Assessment

Appropriate Assessment is required in certain instances under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Regulation 63 says that:

> *63.— (1) A competent authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for, a plan or project which-*
>
> *(a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site*

(either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and

(b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site,

must make an appropriate assessment of the implications for that site in view of that site's conservation objectives.

(2) A person applying for any such consent, permission or other authorisation shall provide such information as the competent authority may reasonably require for the purposes of the assessment or to enable them to determine whether an appropriate assessment is required.

(3) The competent authority shall for the purposes of the assessment consult the appropriate nature conservation body and have regard to any representations made by that body within such reasonable time as the authority may specify.

(4) They must also, if they consider it appropriate, take the opinion of the general public, and if they do so, they must take such steps for that purpose as they consider appropriate.

(5) In the light of the conclusions of the assessment, and subject to regulation 64 (considerations of overriding public interest), the competent authority shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site or the European offshore marine site (as the case may be).

(6) In considering whether a plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of the site, the authority must have regard to the manner in which it is proposed to be carried out or to any conditions or restrictions subject to which they propose that the consent, permission or other authorisation should be given.

The competent authority is typically the local planning authority. The appropriate assessment contains the information the council requires for the purposes of its assessment under the Habitat Regulations.

The Habitat Regulations also are applicable to local authority land use plans and policies. If a policy or plan is likely to have a significant effect upon a European site, the permission may only be given if the policy or plan is ascertained to have no adverse effect upon the integrity of the European site. This approach gives rise to a hierarchy of plans each with related appropriate assessments. For example, the appropriate assessment of a Regional Spatial Strategy will affect policies within a Core Strategy, which will then need its own appropriate assessment, and so on.

European Protected Species

European Protected Species of animals are given protection from deliberate capture, injury, killing, disturbance or egg taking/capture. Their breeding sites or resting places are also protected from damage or destruction, which does not have to be deliberate. A number of species are listed as European Protected Species, with those most likely to be considered in planning applications being bats, dormouse, great crested newt and otter. Natural England may give a licence for actions that are otherwise illegal, subject to them being satisfied on the three tests of no alternative, over-riding public interest, and maintenance of the species in favourable condition.

European Protected Species of plant are also listed and given protection. These species are generally very rare and unlikely to be present in proposed development sites.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 has been amended many times, including by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. It contains provisions for the notification and regulation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and for protected species.

The Regulations regulate the management of land within Sites of Special Scientific Interest, requiring land managers to have the consent of Natural England before carrying out management.

All public bodies are defined as 'S28G' bodies, which have a duty to further the nature conservation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the undertaking of their functions. In practice, this prevents planning applications being permitted if they would harm Sites of Special Scientific Interest, as it would be a breach of that duty.

The Act makes it an offence intentionally to kill, injure, or take any wild bird, take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird, while that nest is in use or being built, or take or destroy an egg of any wild bird. Special penalties are available for offences related to birds listed on Schedule 1, for which there are additional offences of disturbing these birds at their nests, or their dependent young.

The Act makes it an offence intentionally to kill, injure or take any wild animal listed on Schedule 5, and prohibits interference with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturbing animals occupying such places. Some species have lesser protection under this Act, for example white-clawed crayfish, common frog and toads are only protected from sale, and reptile species, other than smooth snake and sand lizard, are protected from intentional killing or injury, but they are not protected from disturbance and their habitat is not protected. It is also an offence intentionally to pick, uproot or destroy any wild plant listed in Schedule 8.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) dated December 2024 provides Government Policy in relation to nature conservation and planning as well as other matters.

Chapter 15 paragraph 187(d) of the NPPF says that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.

Paragraphs 188 and 189 relate to policy for designated sites of biodiversity or landscape importance. Local Plan policies should distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites and allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value and maintain and enhance networks of habitats and green infrastructure. Further policy is within paragraph 185, where Local Planning Authorities should to protect and enhance biodiversity within their Local Plans by:

- Identifying, mapping and safeguarding components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- Promoting the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

When determining planning applications Local Planning Authorities should apply the following principles (paragraph 193):

- If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused,
- development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

Paragraph 194 adds protection to candidate sites of European or International importance (Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Ramsar sites) and also to those sites identified or required as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential SPA, possible SAC listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

Paragraph 195 clarifies that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a 'habitats' site, i.e. a European site, (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.

Government circular 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impact Within the Planning System' referenced ODPM 06/2005 has not been replaced and remains valid. It sets out the legislation regarding designated and undesignated sites and protected species and describes how the planning system should take account of that legislation. It does however pre-date the NERC Act 2006 (see below), which includes a level of protection for a further list of habitats and species regardless of whether they are on designated sites or elsewhere.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

This Act includes a list of habitats and species of principal importance in England. Local Authorities are required to consider the needs of these habitats and species when making decisions, such as on planning application.

Local Planning Authority's planning policy

The Local Planning Authority will have policies relating to biodiversity conservation.

Species Legislation

The following table provides an overview of legislation with regard to species.

Protected Species	Legislation			
	Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981	**The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017**	**Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006**	**Protection of Badgers Act, 1992**
Plants (certain 'rare' species)	✓	✓[7]	✓	
Invertebrates (certain 'rare' species)	✓	✓[8]	✓	
White-clawed crayfish	✓		✓	
Great crested newt, natterjack toad, pool frog	✓	✓	✓	
Other amphibians	✓[9]		✓	
Sand lizard, smooth snake	✓	✓[10]	✓	
Other reptiles	✓[11]		✓	
Breeding birds	✓	✓	✓	
Wintering birds (certain 'rare' species)	✓	✓	✓	
Bats	✓	✓	✓	
Dormouse	✓	✓	✓	
Water vole	✓		✓	
Otter	✓	✓	✓	
Badger				✓

[7] Nine species present in the UK, with very specialised habitat requirements, are European Protected Species.

[8] Fisher's estuarine moth, large blue butterfly and lesser whirlpool ram's-horn snail are European Protected Species.

[9] The four other native amphibian species (smooth and palmate newts, common frog and common toad) are only protected against trade under this act.

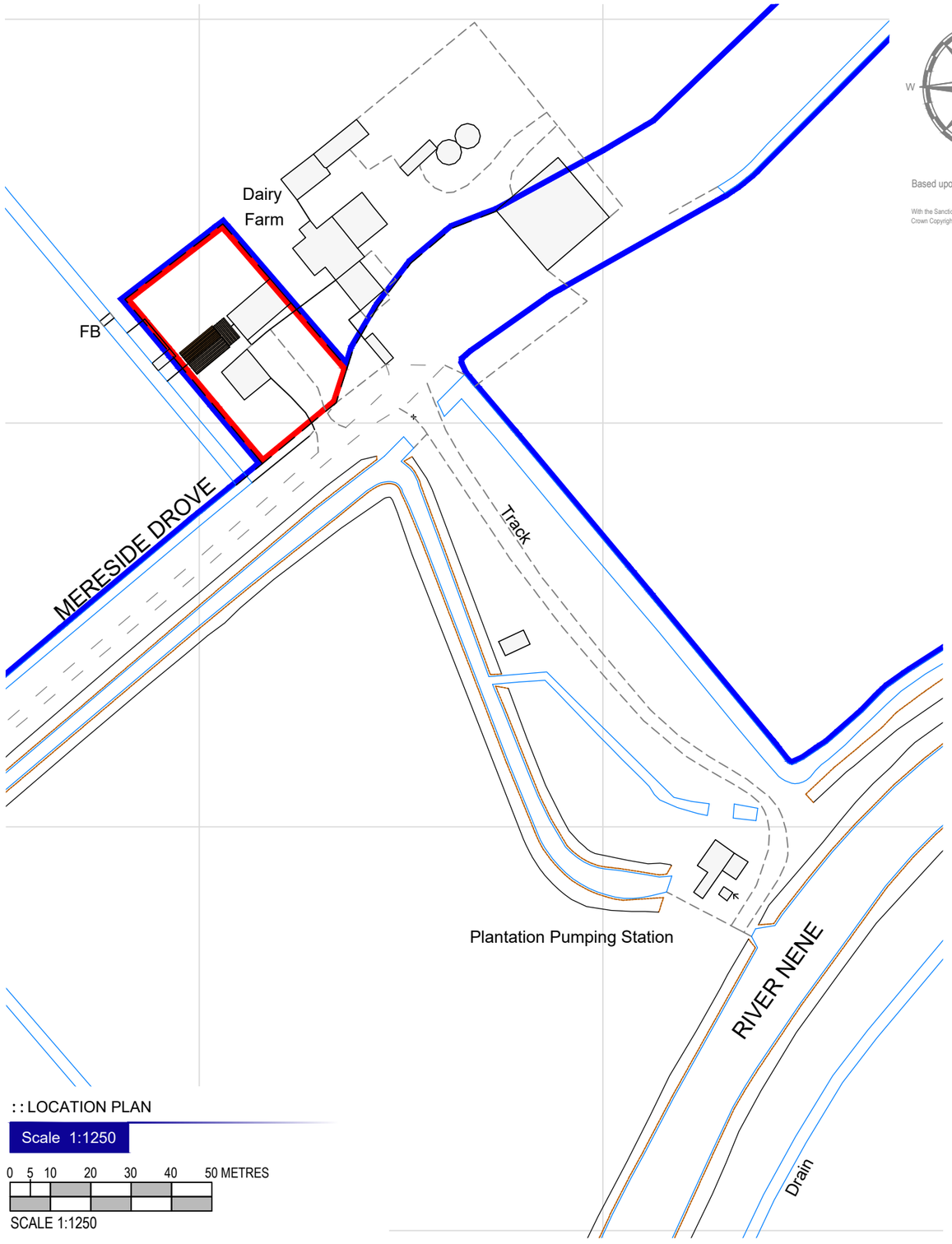
[10] Smooth snake and sand lizard are European Protected Species.

[11] The four other native reptile species (common lizard, slow worm, grass snake and adder) are protected against intentional killing, injury and trade under this act.

Appendix 2

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Based upon the Ordnance Survey sheet
No. TL 3190

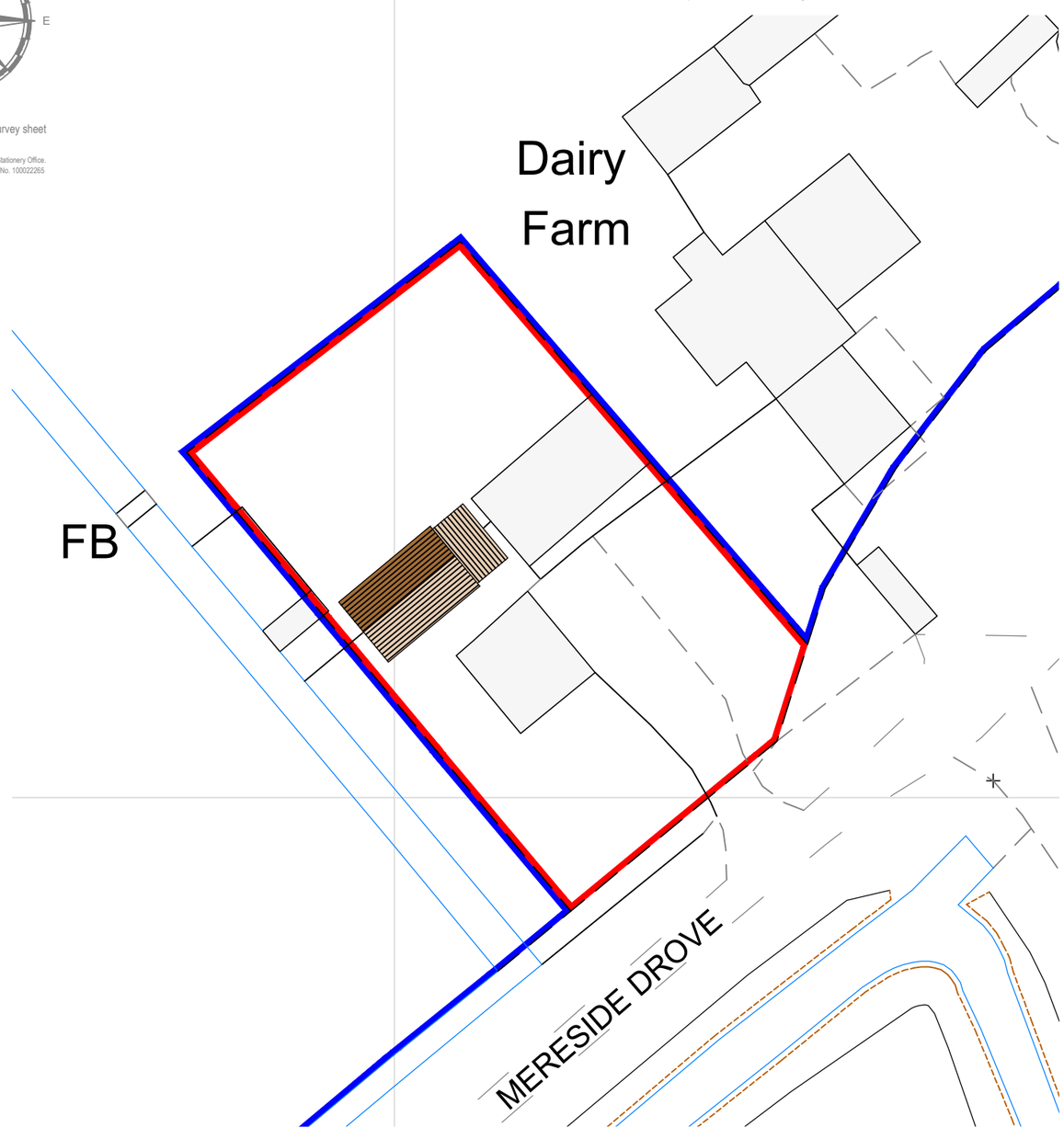
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: : LOCATION PLAN

Scale 1:1250

0 5 10 20 30 40 50 METRES

SCALE 1:1250



: : SITE PLAN

Scale 1:500

0 5 10 20 30 40 50 METRES

SCALE 1:500

SITE AREA	1607m²
	0.40Ac

A3 | PROPOSED SITE AND LOCATION PLAN - SCALE 1:500 @ A3 | DRAWING | A | 60482 | 2B

Revisions : A - BUILDING ORIENTATION AMENDED, RA, 29/01/2025
B - RED LINE AMENDED, RA, 28/03/2025

Drawn : RA
Checked : DJS
Date : JANUARY 2025

Project : DAIRY FARM
MERESIDE DROVE
RAMSEY
PE26 2UE

Land & Property Professionals
Bedford Buckingham
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Appendix 3

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Based upon the Ordnance Survey sheet No. TL 3190

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Wildflower meadow

Proposed native mixed species hedge

Proposed trees

Native Species Hedge

New native species hedges to consist of
50% Blackthorn
10% Hawthorn
10% Wild Cherry
10% Field Maple
10% Alder
10% Dogwood

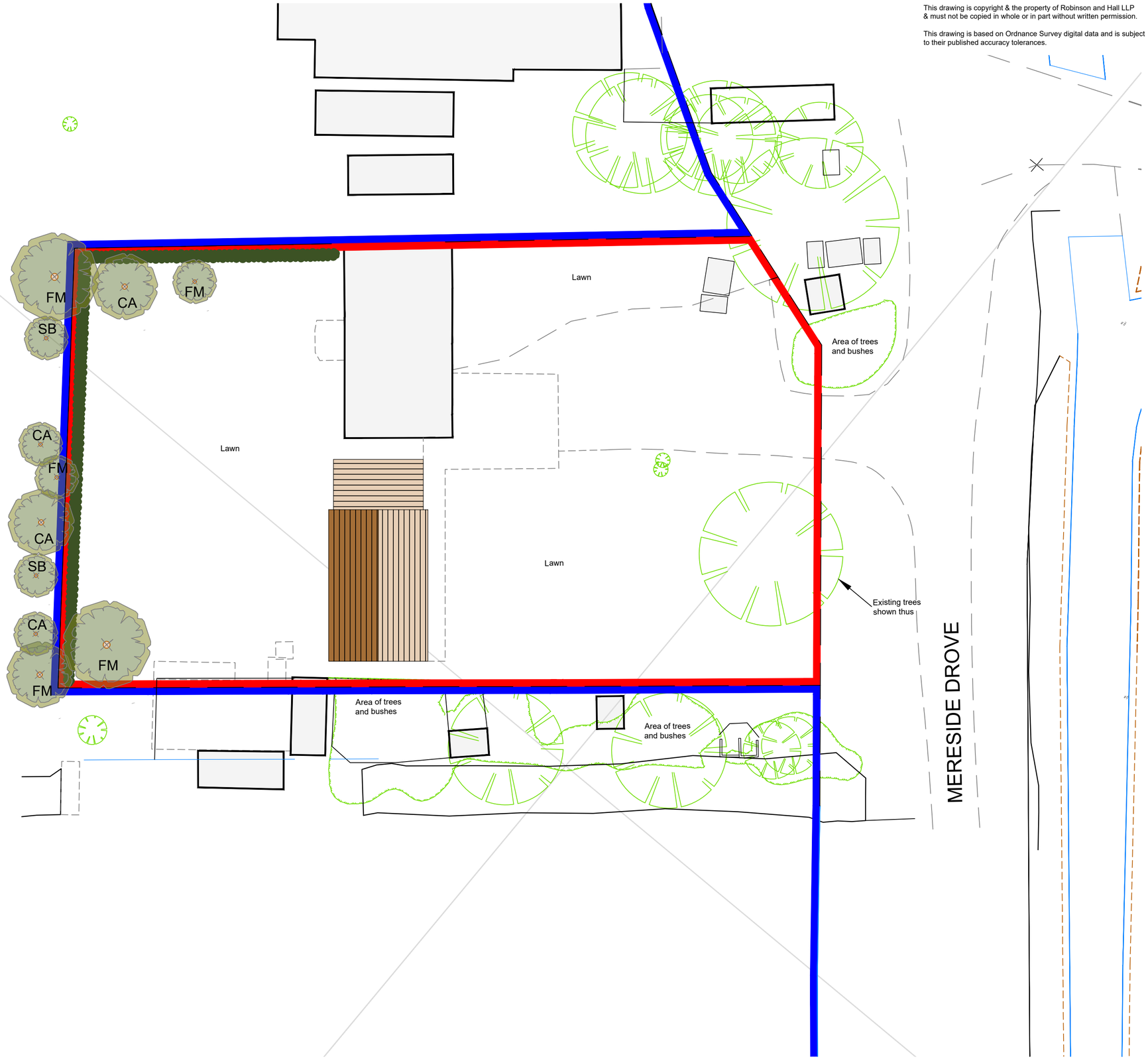
Tree Planting

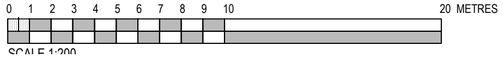
SB = Silver Birch
CA = Crab Apple
FM = Field Maple

Wildflower Meadow

New wildflower meadow to consist of 10% Wild flowers (Yarrow, common Knapweed, Oxeye Daisy, Musk Mallow, Ribwort Plantain, Salad Burnet, Meadow Buttercup, Yellow Rattle, Wild Carrot)

90% Grasses (Common Bent, Crested Dogstail, Red Fescue, Smaller Cat's-tail, Smooth-stalked Meadow-grass)





A2 | PROPOSED LANDSCAPING PLAN - SCALE 1:200 @ A2 | DRAWING | A | 60482 | 5D

Revisions :
A - HEDGE SPECIFICATION AMENDED, RA, 19/03/2025
B - RED LINE AMENDED, RA, 28/03/2025
C - BNG AMENDED, RA, 05/08/2025
D - AMENDMENTS FOLLOWING COMMENTS, RA, 07/08/2025

Drawn : RA
Checked : DJS
Date : JANUARY 2025

Project : DAIRY FARM
MERESIDE DROVE
RAMSEY
PE26 2UE

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Appendix 4

Survey Cover Sheet			
Survey date/s	Pre-development: 19th February 2025. Post-development: 8th August 2025	**Site name or location**	Mereside Drove, Ramsey Mereside
Weather conditions	Dry, overcast (100% cloud cover), light breeze (Beaufort 2), and 2 °C.	**Project or development name**	Mereside Drove, Ramsey Mereside
Surveyor name	Emily Costello and Ellen Campbell	**On-site or off-site**	On-site & off-site
Survey reference	B25003	**Reason for assessment (if not baseline condition survey)**	
Notes			

Condition Sheet: INDIVIDUAL TREES Habitat Type

Habitat Types

Individual trees – Urban trees
Individual trees – Rural trees
Complete a condition sheet for each tree or block of trees.

Please see the separate Line of trees condition sheet for a line of rural trees. You should only use the Line of trees condition assessment and record that habitat type in rural locations.

Habitat Description

Individual trees - Rural trees. Existing trees: 2 apple trees Malus sp.

Individual trees (description applied to the urban or rural environment):
Young trees over 7.5 cm in diameter at breast height whose canopies are not touching.

Urban Perimeter / Linear Blocks and Groups (description applied to the urban environment only):
Groups or stands of trees (size requirement as defined above) within and around the perimeter of urban land. This includes those along urban streets, highways, railways and canals, and also former field boundary trees incorporated into developments. Canopies should predominantly overlap continuously. Groups of urban trees that don't match the descriptions for woodland may be assessed within this category.

On-site or off-site, site name and location	On-site, Mereside Drove, Ramsey Mereside	**Survey date and Surveyor name**	19/02/2025 Emily Costello and Ellen Campbell
Limitations (if applicable)	Survey undertaken outside the main flowering season. Not considered to be a significant limitation given the habitat types found.	**Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)**	B25003
Grid reference	TL 3101 9072, TL 3102 9070	**Habitat parcel reference**	

	Condition Assessment Criteria	**Criterion passed (Yes or No)**	**Notes (such as justification)**
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	No	Two apple trees.
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).	Yes	Individual trees automatically pass this criterion.
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature)[1].	No	50% (1/2) of trees were mature at the time of survey.
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.	Yes	No physical damage noted.
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	Yes	Some knot holes with small cavities were present on both trees.
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Yes	Both trees had more than 20% tree canopy oversailing grassland.
	Number of criteria passed	4	

Condition Assessment Result (out of 6 criteria)	**Condition Assessment Score**	**Score Achieved ×/✓**
Passes 5 or 6 criteria	Good (3)	
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)	x
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)	
Note that 'Fairly Good and Fairly Poor' condition categories are not available for this broad habitat type.		

Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score[2]

Condition Sheet: SCRUB Habitat Type			
Habitat Types			
Heathland and shrub - Blackthorn scrub **Heathland and shrub - Gorse scrub** **Heathland and shrub - Hawthorn scrub** **Heathland and shrub - Hazel scrub** **Heathland and shrub - Mixed scrub** **Heathland and shrub - Dunes with sea buckthorn (H2160)** **Heathland and shrub - Willow scrub**			
Habitat Description			
Existing mixed scrub. See accompanying report.			
For Dunes with sea buckthorn see:	Dunes with sea-buckthorn (Dunes with Hippophae rhamnoides) - Special Areas of Conservation (jncc.gov.uk)		
For other scrub types see:	ukhab – UK Habitat Classification		
On-site or off-site, site name and location	On-site, Mereside Drove, Ramsey Mereside	**Survey date and Surveyor name**	19/02/2025 Emily Costello and Ellen Campbell
Limitations (if applicable)	Survey undertaken outside the main flowering season. Not considered to be a significant limitation given the habitat types found.	**Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)**	B25003
Grid reference	TL 3101 9070, TL 3104 9071	**Habitat parcel reference**	

	Condition Assessment Criteria	Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A	The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type - the appearance and composition of the vegetation closely matches its UKHab description (where in its natural range).[1] - At least 80% of scrub is native, - There are at least three native woody species[2], - No single species comprises more than 75% of the cover (except hazel *Corylus avellana* , common juniper *Juniperus communis* , sea buckthorn *Hippophae rhamnoides* (only in its restricted native range), or box *Buxus sempervirens* , which can be up to 100% cover).	No	Species present include elder, cotoneaster, nettle, and holly. Less than 3 native woody species. Presence of cotoneaster results in less than 80% of scrub being native.
B	Seedlings, saplings, young shrubs and mature (or ancient or veteran[3]) shrubs are all present.	No	No, all scrub appeared to be of the same age class.
C	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species[4] (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA[5]) and species indicative of suboptimal condition[6] make up less than 5% of ground cover.	No	Presence of Cotoneaster species, most likely Cotoneaster simonsii which is invasive.
D	The scrub has a well-developed edge with scattered scrub and tall grassland and or forbs present between the scrub and adjacent habitat.	No	Scrub lay adjacent to modified grassland and bare ground.

E	There are clearings, glades or rides present within the scrub, providing sheltered edges.	No	No clearings, glades or rides noted
		Number of criteria passed	0

Condition Assessment Result (out of 5 criteria)	**Condition Assessment Score**	**Score Achieved ×/✓**
Passes 5 criteria	Good (3)	
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)	
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)	x

Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score

Condition Sheet: URBAN Habitat Type

Habitat Types

Sparsely vegetated land - Ruderal/Ephemeral
Sparsely vegetated land - Tall forbs
Urban - Allotments
Urban - Biodiverse green roof
Urban - Bioswale
Urban - Cemeteries and churchyards
Urban - Facade-bound green wall
Urban - Ground based green wall
Urban - Intensive green roof
Urban - Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land
Urban - Rain garden
Urban - Sustainable drainage system (SuDS)
Urban - Vacant or derelict land
Urban - Bare ground

Habitat Description

Urban - Bare ground (existing). - See accompanying report.

See the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide for green roofs and UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) for other habitats:			UKHab – UK Habitat Classification
On-site or off-site, site name and location	On-site, Mereside Drove, Ramsey Mereside	**Survey date and Surveyor name**	19/02/2025 Emily Costello and Ellen Campbell
Limitations (if applicable)	Survey undertaken outside the main flowering season. Not considered to be a significant limitation given the habitat	**Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)**	B25003
Grid reference	TL 3103 9071	**Habitat parcel reference**	

	Condition Assessment Criteria	**Criterion passed (Yes or No)**	**Notes (such as justification)**
Core Criteria - must be assessed for **all urban habitat types**:			
A	Vegetation structure is varied, providing opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live, eat and breed. A single structural habitat component or vegetation type does not account for more than 80% of the total habitat area.	No	Large pile of wood chippings present, and spread across bare ground. Vegetation structure was not varied.
B	The habitat parcel contains different plant species that are beneficial for wildlife, for example flowering species providing nectar sources for a range of invertebrates at different times of year.	No	A small amount of nettle and daffodils present towards habitat edge. Not enough diversity to provide nectar sources at different times of year.
C	Invasive non-native plant species (listed on Schedule 9 of WCA[1]) and others which are to the detriment of native wildlife (using professional judgement)[2] cover less than 5% of the total vegetated area[3]. **Note - to achieve Good condition, this criterion must be satisfied by a complete absence of invasive non-native species (rather than <5% cover).**	Yes	No invasive species noted.
Additional Criterion - must be assessed for **Open mosaic habitat on previously developed land** only:			
D	The parcel shows spatial variation and forms a mosaic of bare substrate PLUS: - At least four early successional communities (a) to (i); Communities: (a) annuals; (b) mosses/liverworts; (c) lichens; (d) ruderals; (e) inundation species; (f) open grassland; (g) flower-rich grassland; (h) heathland, (i) pools.		
Additional Criteria - must be assessed for **Bioswale and SuDS** habitat types only:			
E1	Plant species are mostly native. If non-native species are present, they should not be detrimental to the habitat or native wildlife[4].		
E2	The vegetation is comprised of plant species suited to wetland or riparian situations.		

Additional Criterion - must be assessed for **Intensive green roofs** only:			
F	The roof has a minimum of 50% native and non-native wildflowers. 70% of the roof area is soil and vegetation (including water features).		
Additional Criterion - must be assessed for **Biodiverse green roofs** only:			
G	The roof has a varied depth of 80 – 150 mm; at least 50% is at 150 mm and is planted and seeded with wildflowers and sedums or is pre-prepared with sedums and wildflowers. **Note – to achieve Good condition some additional habitat, such as sand piles, stones, logs etc. are present.**		
		Essential criteria relevant for habitat type achieved (Yes or No)	Yes
		Number of criteria passed	1

Condition Assessment Result	**Condition Assessment Score**	**Score Achieved ×/✓**
Results for habitats requiring assessment of **3 core criteria** only **(all listed urban habitats except Open mosaic habitat on previously developed land, Bioswale, SuDS and Green roofs)**:		
• Passes all 3 core criteria; AND • Meets the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.	Good (3)	
• Passes 2 of 3 core criteria; OR • Passes 3 of 3 core criteria but does not meet the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.	Moderate (2)	
• Passes 0 or 1 of 3 core criteria.	Poor (1)	x
Results for **Green roofs** and **Open mosaic habitat on previously developed land** (requiring assessment of **4 criteria** only - core criteria plus additional criterion specified for habitat type):		
• Passes all 3 core criteria; AND • Meets the requirements for Good condition within criterion C; AND • Passes additional criterion relevant to specific habitat type (D, F or G).	Good (3)	
• Passes 2 or 3 of 4 criteria; OR • Passes 4 of 4 criteria but does not meet the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.	Moderate (2)	
• Passes 0 or 1 of 4 criteria.	Poor (1)	
Results for **Bioswale or SuDS** (requiring assessment of **5 criteria** - core criteria plus additional criteria specified for habitat type):		
• Passes all 3 core criteria; AND • Meets the requirements for Good condition within criterion C; AND • Passes all additional criteria relevant to specific habitat type (Group E)	Good (3)	
• Passes 3 or 4 of 5 criteria; OR • Passes 5 of 5 criteria but does not meet the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.	Moderate (2)	
• Passes 2 or fewer of 5 criteria.	Poor (1)	

Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score

Footnotes

Condition Sheet: INDIVIDUAL TREES Habitat Type

Habitat Types

Individual trees – Urban trees
Individual trees – Rural trees
Complete a condition sheet for each tree or block of trees.

Please see the separate Line of trees condition sheet for a line of rural trees. You should only use the Line of trees condition assessment and record that habitat type in rural locations.

Habitat Description

Individual trees - Rural trees. Eight proposed off-site native trees. See accompanying report.

Individual trees (description applied to the urban or rural environment):
Young trees over 7.5 cm in diameter at breast height whose canopies are not touching.

Urban Perimeter / Linear Blocks and Groups (description applied to the urban environment only):
Groups or stands of trees (size requirement as defined above) within and around the perimeter of urban land. This includes those along urban streets, highways, railways and canals, and also former field boundary trees incorporated into developments. Canopies should predominantly overlap continuously. Groups of urban trees that don't match the descriptions for woodland may be assessed within this category.

On-site or off-site, site name and location	Off-site, Mereside Drove, Ramsey Mereside	**Survey date and Surveyor name**	08/08/2025 Ellen Campbell
Limitations (if applicable)	Assumptions made as information relies upon proposed landscaping plan.	**Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)**	B25003
Grid reference	TL 3099 9074	**Habitat parcel reference**	

	Condition Assessment Criteria	**Criterion passed (Yes or No)**	**Notes (such as justification)**
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	Yes	100% of proposed trees are native. Species proposed include field maple, silver birch, and crab apple.
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).	Yes	Individual trees automatically pass this criterion. Appropriate management should also ensure that canopy gaps will not be present.
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature)[1].	No	The trees are unlikely to be mature at 27 years old due to the species that are likely to be proposed
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.	Yes	There should be no evidence of adverse impacts on tree health by human activities. Appropriate management should ensure that tree health does not deteriorate over time.
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	No	It is unlikely that trees will develop small ecological niches over 27 years.
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Yes	Trees will be planted on the edge of an arable field. More than 20% of the tree canopy is likely to overhang adjacent grassland.
	Number of criteria passed	4	

Condition Assessment Result (out of 6 criteria)	**Condition Assessment Score**	**Score Achieved ×/✓**
Passes 5 or 6 criteria	Good (3)	
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)	x
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)	
Note that 'Fairly Good and Fairly Poor' condition categories are not available for this broad habitat type.		

Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score[2]