



ARBOR VITAE

ECOLOGY • FORESTRY • LAND USE



PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL & BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

Project name: Ivy House Farm, Bilstone Rd, Congerstone, Nuneaton, CV13
6LW

Grid reference: SK36820488

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Requested by: The Rural Planning Company

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO DEVELOPMENT

Planning permission will be sought for the construction of a storage facility at Ivy House Farm.

Arbor Vitae were commissioned by The Rural Planning Company to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment, to include Biodiversity Net Gain, in order to assess the impact of the development on habitats and protected species.

1.2 SCOPE OF SURVEY

The survey is primarily designed to:

- Identify and record habitats and important ecological features on site;
- Evaluate the potential of the proposed development site to provide opportunities for protected species;
- Determine any likely impact which the development and landscape proposals may have on these.
- Assess baseline habitats on site at the time of the survey,
- Provide relative condition assessment of each habitat parcel present,
- Provide an accurate habitat map of the site,
- Complete Biodiversity Net Gain Metric baseline and, where possible, 'habitat creation' for areas, hedges and rivers (where applicable).

1.3 KEY PRINCIPLES

All ecological surveys conducted by Arbor Vitae Environment Ltd are underpinned by the following key principles, as outlined by CIEEM (2018):

Avoidance - Seek options that avoid harm to ecological features (for example, by locating on an alternative site).

Mitigation - Adverse effects should be avoided or minimized through mitigation measures, either through the design of the project or subsequent measures that can be guaranteed – for example, through a condition or planning obligation.

Compensation - Where there are significant residual adverse ecological effects despite the mitigation proposed, these should be offset by appropriate compensatory measures.

Enhancements - Seek to provide net benefits for biodiversity over and above requirements for avoidance, mitigation or compensation.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 LOCATION, LANDSCAPE, AND BACKGROUND

Ivy House Farm is located on the southern border of the village Congerstone in Leicestershire, in between Tamworth and Leicester. The farm can be accessed via an access track that leads south off Bilstone Road and the nearest major road is located approximately 2 miles south-west (A444).

The surrounding landscape consists of arable fields that are lined with hedgerows in addition to the buildings at Ivy House Farm, which consist of modern agricultural barns, a concrete yard area and a residential property.

The proposed storage compound will be located east of the Ivy Farm House buildings on an arable field, where there is currently an existing storage compound.

3 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

3.1 DESK STUDY

An initial desk study was composed to gain background information regarding any protected species or designations within the area. The main sources of information were MagicMap and NBN Atlas.

3.2 SITE SURVEY

A site visit was made on 19/11/2024. The survey was carried out in accordance with CIEEM (2017) best practice guidelines. The objective of the survey was to find and record any signs of use by protected species and to note the habitat features present.

An assessment of the available habitats both on and adjacent to the site led to consideration of the potential of the site for the following protected species:

- Badger
- Bats
- Breeding birds
- Great Crested Newt
- Otter

The survey methodology was tailored to evaluate the area for these species in the following ways:

Badger

An area within 50 metres of the site was closely searched for the following signs of badger activity:

- Setts,
- Tracks and footprints,
- Latrines,
- Snuffle holes.

Bats

The site was assessed in terms of its suitability to support bat species. Hedgerow habitat and nearby potential habitat were assessed and recorded and potential impacts from the proposals considered.

Breeding birds

The site was assessed in terms of its suitability to support breeding bird populations. Hedgerow habitat and nearby potential habitat were assessed and recorded.

Great crested newt

A desk study and a ground search were conducted to search for any areas of open water within 250 metres. Waterbodies were then assessed based on the Habitat Suitability Index for great crested newts (Oldham et al., 2000 and ARG UK, 2010).

Otter

Any water courses within the area and appropriate terrestrial land were searched for the following field signs:

- Spraint,
- Footprints,
- Feeding remains.

3.3 PERSONNEL

Natural England bat Level 1 licence number: 2021-52205-CLS-CLS, GCN Level 1 licence number: 2019-42631-CLS-CLS, hazel dormouse Level 1 licence number: 2023-11248-CL10A-DOR.

And Charlotte Skinner MSc: Assistant Ecologist.

3.4 CONSTRAINTS

Breeding birds are unlikely to have been present but previous nesting and appropriate nesting sites would have been apparent.

4 SURVEY RESULTS

4.1 DESK STUDY

The desk study found that within 1km of the site there were the following designations:

Name	Designation	Distance from site
Ashby Canal	Site of Special Scientific Interest	360m
The search included Ramsar, SSSI, SAC, SPA, LWS, NNR and LNR. ¹		

Results from the desk study revealed that within a 1km radius of the proposed development site the following protected species have been recorded:

Species	Distance	Protection
Mammals		
Common pipistrelle Soprano pipistrelle Natterer's	0.2-0.8km	European Protected Species, Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
Birds		
Fieldfare Hoopoe Kestrel Kingfisher Redwing	0.2-1km	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
Reptiles		
Grass snake	0.2km	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

4.2 HABITATS ON SITE

All habitats are classified using broad UKHab definitions.

Temporary grassland

¹ SSSI: Site of Special Scientific Interest, SAC: Special Area of Conservation, SPA: Special Protection Area, LWS: Local Wildlife Site NNR: National Nature Reserve, LNR: Local Nature Reserve.

The proposed storage compound will be situated on a temporary grassland field where perennial rye, white clover and annual meadow grass was identified. Within the field was a large spoil heap which will be removed to facilitate the compound.

Developed land; sealed surface

The proposed access to the site will run over an existing tarmac road and yard. This feature has not been included in the habitat map as there is no value to the area.

4.3 ADJACENT HABITATS

Developed land/sealed surface

Immediately north of the proposed site is an existing storage compound. To the west of the site is a concrete yard area with modern agricultural buildings.

Native hedgerow

H1: A native hedgerow on the western border of the grassland field and to the west of the existing and proposed compound, where the following species was identified: Hawthorn, dogrose, ivy, bramble and elder.

H2: A newly planted hedgerow on the eastern border of existing compound, with dogrose and hawthorn.

H3: A hedgerow on the southern boundary of the field, where the following species were identified: Hawthorn, dogrose, ivy, bramble, elder and holly. An empty drainage ditch was also identified running along the hedgerow.

Individual trees

T1: Medium sized field maple,

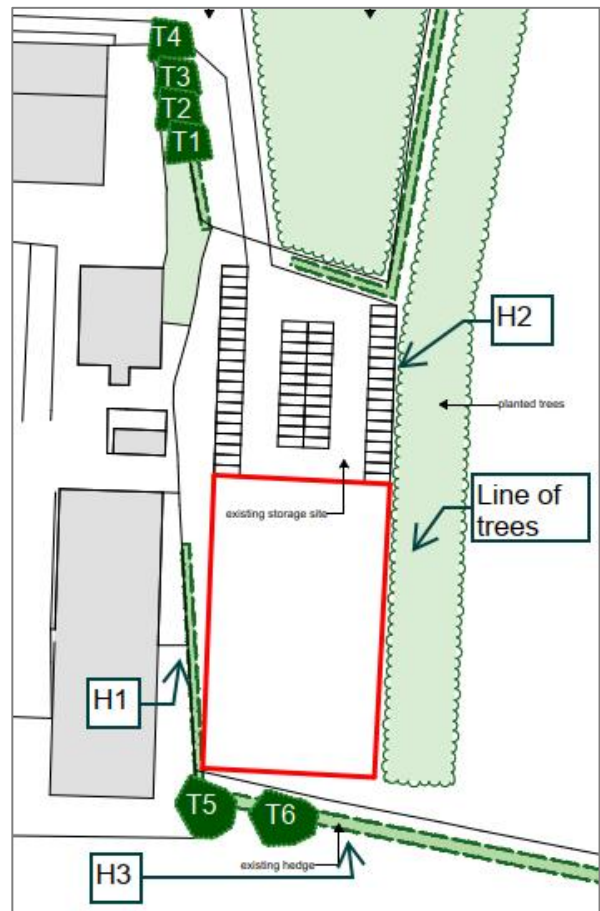
T2: Medium sized field maple,

T3: Medium sized field maple,

T4: Small ash,

T5: Medium sized ash,

T6: Medium sized Oak.



Line of trees

Immediately to the east of the existing compound and to the proposed are multiple rows of recently planted trees, acting as a landscaping feature.

4.4 PROTECTED SPECIES

Badgers

There were no signs of badgers within the site boundary or within the surrounding area. In addition, there are no historical records of badgers within 1km of the site, therefore, no further survey work is required.

Bats

The site does not offer any suitable potential roosting features for bat species and the adjacent buildings were not suitable for bats.

Breeding birds

At the time of the survey the site did not offer any suitable nesting opportunities for breeding birds. The hedgerows surrounding the site do provide suitable opportunities for generalist bird species.

Great Crested Newt

There are no ponds present within 250m of the site and therefore no further survey work with regard to GCN was carried out.

Otters

The River Sence runs approximately 370m from the site. No signs of otters were identified along the River course, in addition no historical records of otter were identified within 1km of the site.

5 POTENTIAL ECOLOGICAL IMPACT

5.1 HABITAT ASSESSMENT

The proposed storage compound will result in the loss of 2,940m² of temporary grassland. This type of habitat is of limited ecological significance and a Biodiversity Net Gain Metric has been completed to account for the loss.

The Ashby Canal is located 360m east of the site where the section that runs from Carlton Bridge 44 to Snarestone is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its natural heritage.

The habitats found within this SSSI and immediately surrounding do not reflect the habitats found on site at Ivy House Farm, where the current site is of little ecological significance. The proposed development will have no impact on this designated site.

5.2 PROTECTED SPECIES ASSESSMENT

Badgers

There were no signs of badger within the site area or the surrounding landscape, therefore, no mitigation is required.

Bats

There are no habitats within the red line boundary which provide suitable roosting sites for bat species. Due to the vicinity of the line of recently planted trees, which will become a very suitable foraging/commuting habitat for bat species, a Wildlife Sensitive Lighting Scheme will be included within the lighting plans of the development.

Breeding birds

The proposals are unlikely to have any impact upon breeding birds as the development will not include the removal of any existing hedgerow, tree line or vegetation.

Great crested newt

There are no records of GCN within 1km nor suitable ponds within 250m of the site. The proposals will have no impact upon this species.

Otters

There are no signs of otter along the water course in addition to surrounding the site. There are also no historical records of otter within 1km of the site. No further mitigation is required.

6 AVOIDANCE, MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT

6.1 HABITAT MITIGATION

The baseline habitat units provided at the site is 0.671, including the area of temporary grassland. The post-intervention habitat units provided is 0.7411, which equates to a 10.45% net gain.

A net gain will be achieved in the following way:

- 48 x native trees to be planted. These can be planted on the eastern boundary of the proposed compound.
- 415m2 of modified grassland to be seeded as an area to plant the trees.

There are no hedgerow units of watercourse units within the site.

Headline Results		
Headline		BNG Targets Met ✓
Trading Rules		Trading Rules Satisfied ✓
Next steps		Check for input errors/rule breaks present in the metric ⚠
Baseline Units	Habitat units	0.6710
	Hedgerow units	Zero Units Baseline
	Watercourse units	Zero Units Baseline
Post-development Units	Habitat units	0.7411
	Hedgerow units	0.0000
	Watercourse units	0.0000
Total net unit change	Habitat units	0.0701 ✓
	Hedgerow units	0.0000
	Watercourse units	0.0000
Total net % change	Habitat units	10.45% ✓
	Hedgerow units	% target not appropriate
	Watercourse units	% target not appropriate
Habitats units required to meet target		0.0000
Hedgerow units required to meet target		0.0000
Watercourse units required to meet target		0.0000

6.2 PROTECTED SPECIES MITIGATION

Wildlife Sensitive Lighting Scheme

- Hedgerows and key habitat features including mature trees on the site will not be illuminated in order to retain dark movement corridors for nocturnal wildlife.
- Any exterior security or decorative lights to be installed on the development site will be less than 3 m from the ground and fitted with hoods to direct the light below the horizontal plane, at an angle of less than seventy degrees from vertical, and shall not be fixed to, or directed at, bat boxes or gables or eaves.
- Security lighting will be set on motion sensors with short timers (<1 minute) and will be LED with a passive infrared trigger.

- External lights will be hooded and directed toward the ground to reduce upward light spill.
- A warm white spectrum will be adopted throughout the scheme to reduce blue light component (<2700Kelvin).
- Internal luminaires will be recessed where installed in proximity to windows to reduce glare and light spill. LED luminaires will be used internally where possible due to their sharp cut-off, lower intensity, and dimming capability.
- Luminaires will always be mounted horizontally with an upward light ratio of 0%.

General Avoidance Measures

The following measures will be implemented to decrease the likelihood of killing/injuring small animals that are present locally:

- If piles of rubble, logs, bricks, other loose materials or other potential refuges are to be disturbed, this will be done by hand and carried out during the active season (March to October) when the weather is warm to allow animals to disperse naturally.
- The grassland areas will be kept short prior to and during construction to avoid creating attractive habitats for wildlife.
- All building materials, rubble, bricks and soil must be stored on raised platform (e.g. wooden pallets) to prevent their use as refuges by wildlife.
- Where possible, trenches will be opened and closed in the same day to prevent any wildlife becoming trapped. If it is necessary to leave a trench open overnight then it will be provided with a means of escape in the form of a shallow ramp.
- Any open pipework will be capped overnight. All open trenches and pipework should be inspected at the start of each working day to ensure no animal is trapped.
- Any common reptiles or amphibians discovered will be allowed to naturally disperse. Advice should be sought from an appropriately qualified and experienced ecologist if large numbers of common reptiles or amphibians are present.

6.3 ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT

A net gain will be achieved in the following way:

- 48 x native trees to be planted. These can be planted on the eastern boundary of the proposed compound.
- 415m² of modified grassland to be seeded as an area to plant the trees.

7 SUMMARY

Planning permission will be sought for the construction of a storage facility at Ivy House Farm. Arbor Vitae were commissioned by The Rural Planning Company to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment, to include Biodiversity Net Gain, in order to assess the impact of the development on habitats and protected species.

The proposed storage compound will result in the loss of 2,940m² of temporary grassland. This type of habitat is of limited ecological significance and a Biodiversity Net Gain Metric has been completed to account for the loss.

There were no signs of badger within the site area or the surrounding landscape, therefore, no mitigation is required.

There are no habitats within the red line boundary which provide suitable roosting sites for bat species. Due to the vicinity of the line of recently planted trees, which will become a very suitable foraging/commuting habitat for bat species, a Wildlife Sensitive Lighting Scheme will be included within the lighting plans of the development.

The proposals are unlikely to have any impact upon breeding birds as the development will not include the removal of any existing hedgerow, tree line or vegetation.

There are no records of GCN within 1km nor suitable ponds within 250m of the site. The proposals will have no impact upon this species.

There are no signs of otter along the water course in addition to surrounding the site. There are also no historical records of otter within 1km of the site. No further mitigation is required.

A net gain will be achieved in the following way:

- 48 x native trees to be planted. These can be planted on the eastern boundary of the proposed compound.
- 415m² of modified grassland to be seeded as an area to plant the trees.

8 REFERENCES

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FIGURE 1 LOCATION

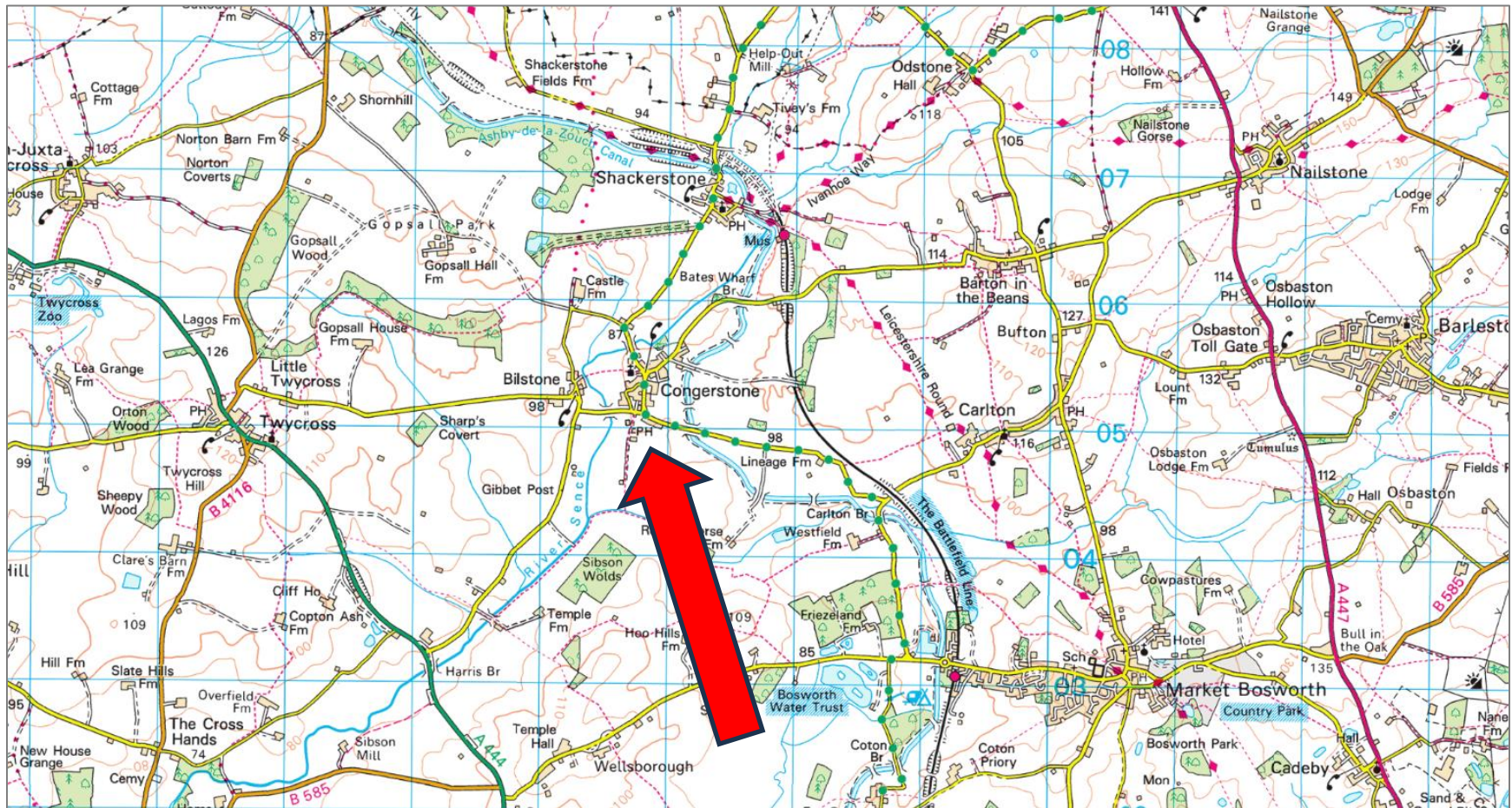


FIGURE 2 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH



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FIGURE 3 ON-SITE HABITAT BASELINE. EXISTING HARDSTANDING TRACK NOT MAPPED AS NO HABITAT VALUE.

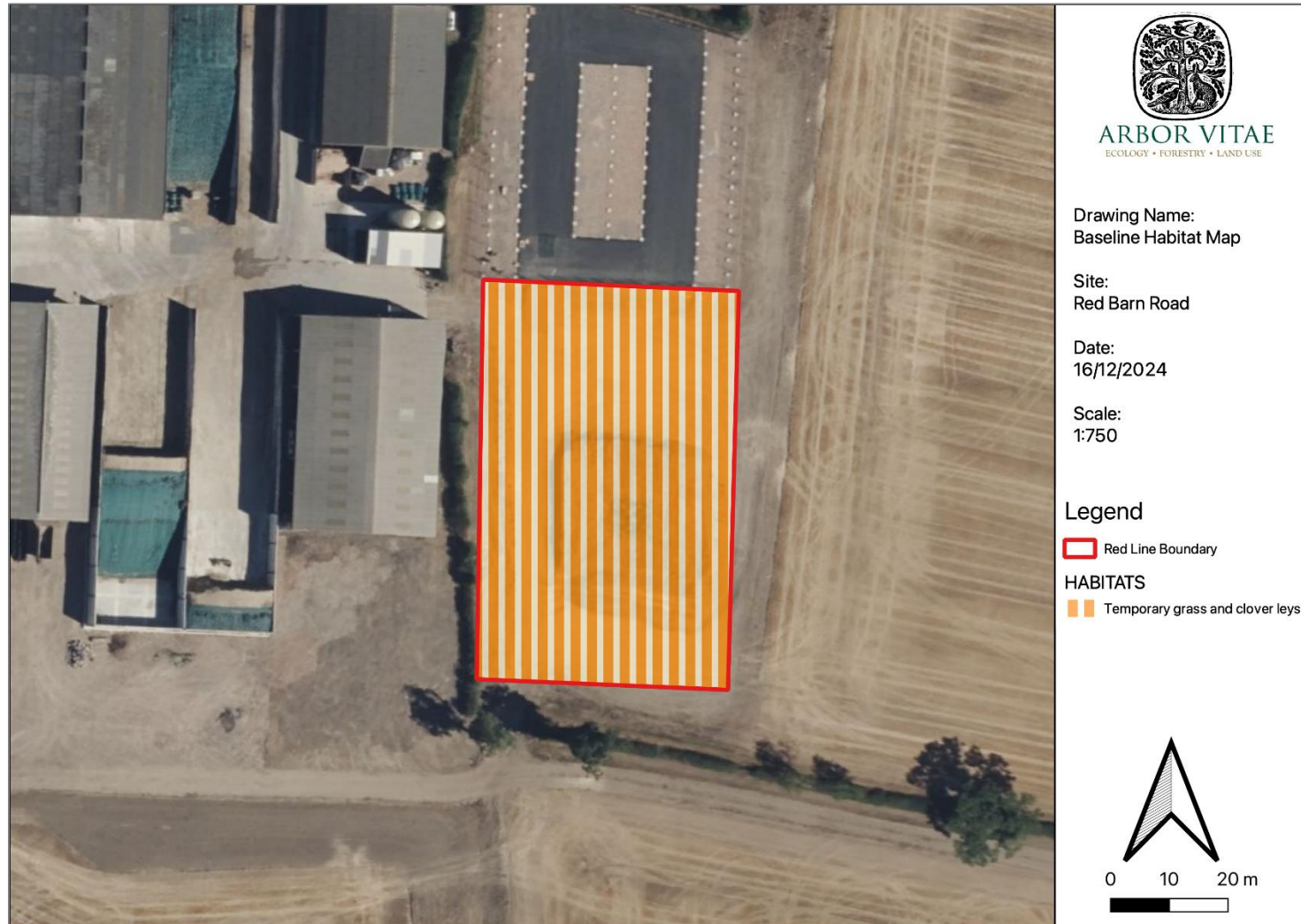
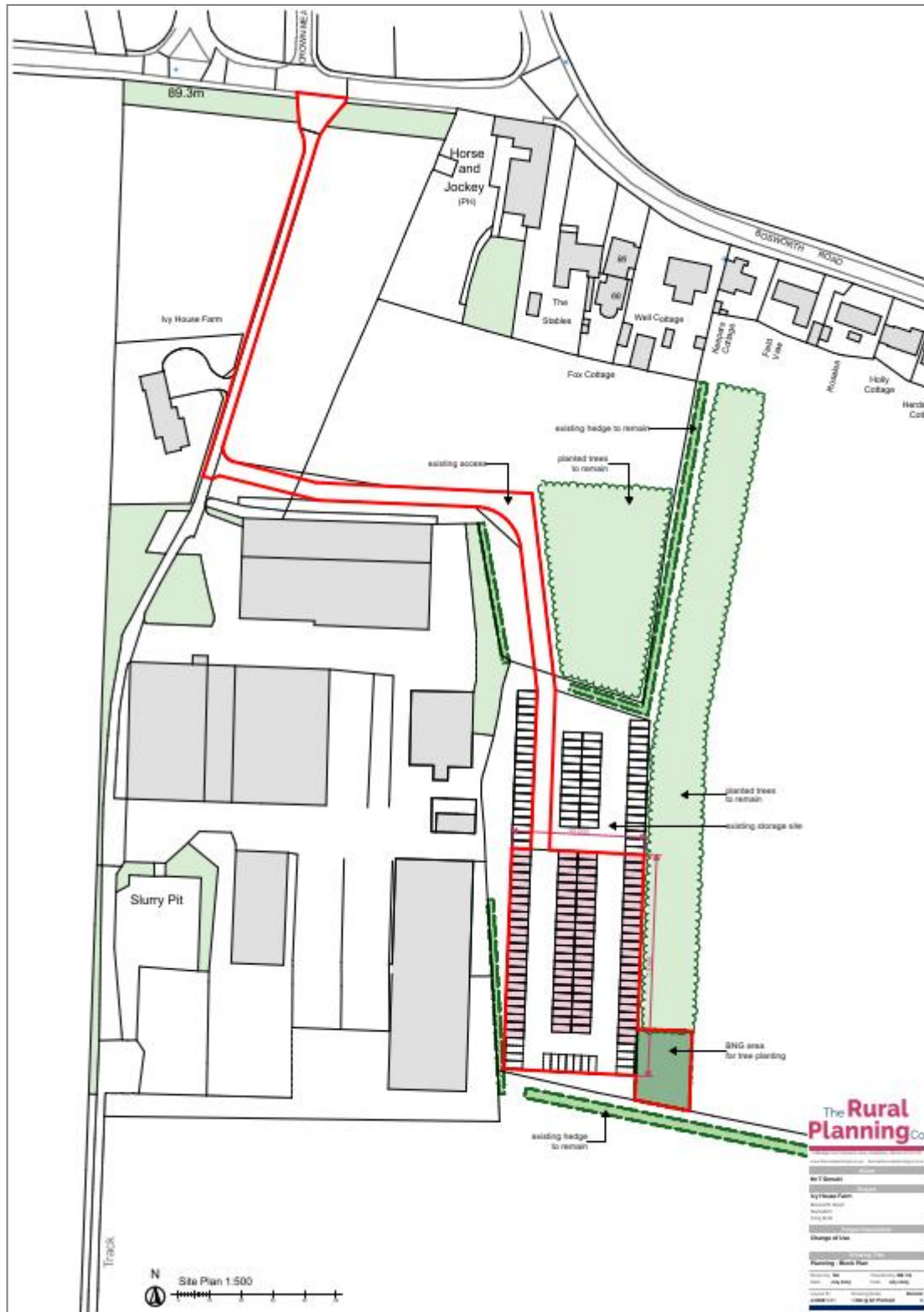


FIGURE 4 PROPOSED SITE PLAN FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY



APPENDIX 1 PHOTOGRAPHS



Existing compound and the lines of trees and H2.



Pile of spoil in the centre of the grassland.



Temporary grassland.



Adjacent building and H1.



H3 with dry ditch.



Existing access into existing compound, which will lead into the proposed compound.





River Sence.



Adjacent building and T5.

