



GOPSALL HOUSE FARM, TWYXCROSS.

OS REF: SK 34663 05649.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT.

Ref No: 260340 / Rev 2.

Date: 9th September 2026.

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. A planning application is being submitted for Gopsall House Farm, 15 Bilstone Road in Twycross. The proposals include the replacement of a conservatory and solid rear courtyard infill, erection of a side extension, reinstatement of the access track to historic front entrance and internal and external alterations to historic and non-historic fabric. The red line can be found in Appendix I.

1.2. The following has been received by the LPA:

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

The statutory framework for BNG has been designed as a post-permission matter to ensure that the biodiversity gain objective of achieving at least a 10% gain in biodiversity value will be met for development granted planning permission. Once planning permission has been granted, a 'Biodiversity Gain Plan' must be submitted and approved prior to commencement of the development. However, the PPG is clear that BNG is no just a post permission matter, that it is a material consideration and that when determining a planning application LPA's need to consider whether the BNG condition is capable of being discharged successfully through the imposition of conditions and/or a legal agreement.

The application will be subject to mandatory biodiversity net gain. It is recommended that the proposals are designed to minimise the loss of habitats and looks to retain habitats where possible (specifically here, the linear features/hedgerows/trees present) as this approach looks to follow the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy. The information provided for the planning application should look to confirm whether mandatory biodiversity net gain can be achieved on site or whether off-site offsetting will be required.

No ecology report has been submitted at this stage. Given the scale of the proposals and the likely ecological impact, the following information will be required should a formal application be submitted:

- *Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) - This needs to include a UKHabs survey, protected species survey, as well as an assessment of impacts and*

proposed mitigation and enhancement measures. Any recommendations will need to be incorporated into the submitted plans; and

- *Biodiversity net gain calculations in the Metric need to be provided in excel format as well as accompanying habitat plans.*

1.3. Therefore, Whitcher Wildlife Ltd was commissioned to carry out a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment of the site to ensure that the site meets the statutory BNG requirements. This survey was carried out on the 7th April 2026.

1.4. This report outlines the pre-development information and provides further recommendations.

1.5. The report was updated in August 2026 to reflect changes in the red line and to finalise the Biodiversity Net Gain calculations as landscaping plans have been finalised.

1.6. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been provided by the client which has been reviewed although it should be noted these are standalone assessments.

2. METHODOLOGY.

2.1. All surveys were carried out in line with the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM) survey standards and advice.

2.2. This document is prepared in line with The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This sets out the government policy on biodiversity and nature conservation and places a duty on Planning Authorities to give material consideration to the effect of a development on legally protected species when considering planning applications. The NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance on “Natural Environment” also promote sustainable development by ensuring that developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity and that it is conserved and enhanced within the development.

2.3. This report is prepared in line with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act that came into force on 1st Oct 2006. Section 41 (S41) of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.

2.4. All habitats within and immediately around the survey area were documented and the dominant species within that habitat listed in line with the UK Habitat Classification methodology to identify the primary habitat types throughout the survey area. Where necessary, primary habitats are accompanied by secondary codes which are used to add further specific details.

2.5. The survey was carried out by Alexandra White BSc (Hons) MSc ACIEEM MIEnvSc CEnv. Alex has worked as a consultant since 2013 carrying out array of different habitat and species surveys. Alex holds Natural England Survey Licences for Great Crested Newts, Bats, Hazel Dormice, White Clawed Crayfish and Barn Owls. She also holds Scottish Natural Heritage Licences for bats and great crested newts and Natural Resources Wales Licence for Great Crested Newts, Bats and Hazel Dormice. She holds an undergraduate honours degree in Zoology and a Masters degree in Environmental Management (Landscape and Wildlife Conservation). Alex is a full member of CIEEM and IES and a Chartered Environmentalist.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION.

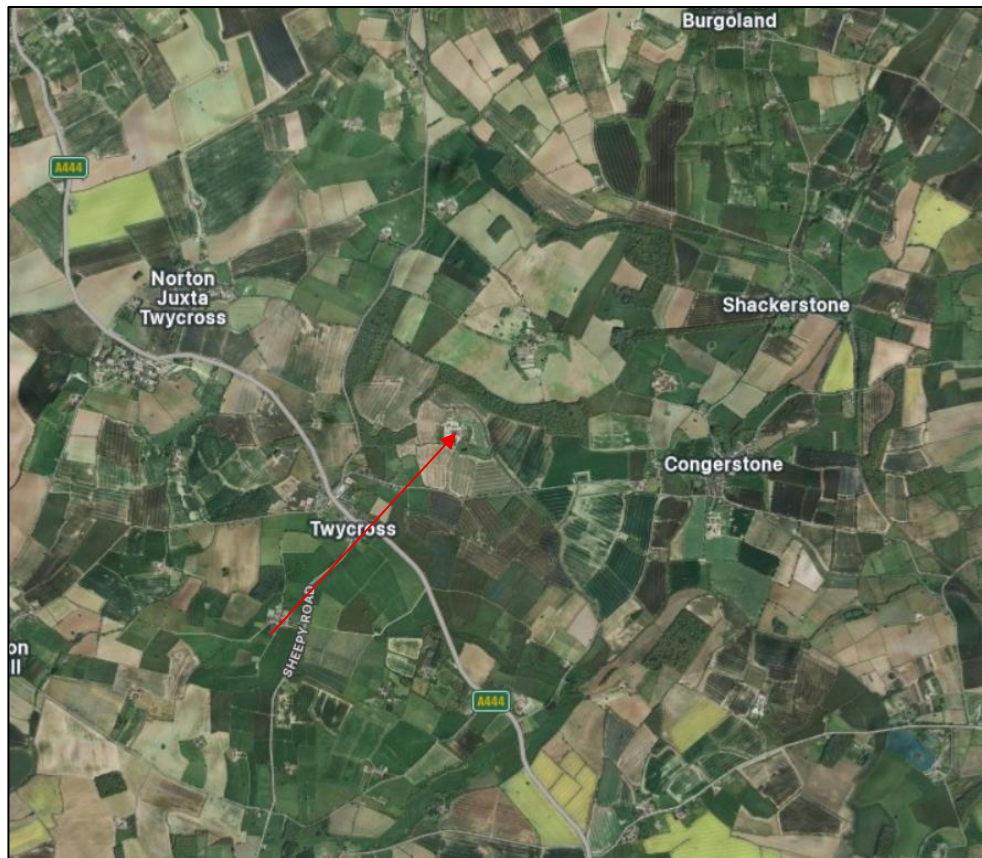
3.1. The Survey Area.

3.1.1. The survey area comprised Gopsall House Farm. The approximate survey area is shown in red below. A preliminary red line, provided by the client, has been attached in Appendix I.



3.1.2. The survey area is predominantly Gopsall House Farm, gardens, amenity grassland and old access track which comes through arable land which has associated hedgerows, scattered trees and a drain.

3.1.3. The aerial map below shows the survey area and the wider surroundings.



3.2. Description of Habitats.

3.2.1. Appendix I of this report contains an annotated map showing each primary habitat, marked up with secondary codes where applicable. The habitats identified on and adjacent to the site included:

- u1b5 – Buildings
- u1b – Developed Land; Sealed Surface
- g3c – Other Neutral Grassland
- g4 – Modified Grassland
- u1 – Built-up Areas and Gardens
- u1c – Artificial Unvegetated, Unsealed Surface
- u1f – Sparsely Vegetated Land
- c1 – Arable
- h2a – Hedgerow (Priority Habitat)
- h2b – Other Hedgerow
- r1e – Ditch
- u1e – Built Linear Feature

3.2.2. u1b5 – Buildings.

There were various buildings on site which included Gopsall House and small outbuilding. There was also a small greenhouse and brick outbuilding adjacent to the main house. The buildings were predominantly brick with tiled roofs.



3.2.3. u1b – Developed Land; Sealed Surface.

The courtyard and current access track are hardstanding.



3.2.4. g3c – Other Neutral Grassland ***Secondary Code: 200 Scattered Trees.***

3.2.4.1. The proposed access track is a strip of grassland, adjacent to the arable fields, used for farm access and dominated by other neutral grassland. The species within this

habitat included: Cock's foot *Dactylis glomerata*, false oat grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, timothy *Phleum pratense*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*, common hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*, common nettle *Urtica dioica*, lords and ladies *Arum maculatum*, Jack by the hedge *Alliaria petiolata*, herb Robert *Geranium robertianum*, pineappleweed *Matricaria discoidea*, black medic *Medicago lupulina*, bush vetch *Vicia sepium*, cinquefoil *Potentilla reptans*, white clover *Trifolium repens*, lesser celandine *Ficaria verna*, wood avens *Geum urbanum*, broadleaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*, curled dock *Rumex crispus*, germander speedwell *Veronica chamaedrys*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, ivy *Hedera helix*, red dead nettle *Lamium purpureum*, spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, field mallow *Malva sylvestris*, nipplewort *Lapsana communis*, yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, cutleaved cranesbill *Geranium dissectum*, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, common vetch *Vicia sativa* and hairy bittercress *Cardamine hirsuta*.



3.2.4.2. This habitat was assessed as having a 'moderate' condition.

3.2.4.3. There were scattered trees within this habitat which included two willow *Salix* sp. and a pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* tree. Their conditions were 'moderate' and 'good'.



3.4.5. g4 – *Modified Grassland*

3.4.5.1. The gardens to the front and grass verge areas are dominated by modified grassland which is well maintained. The species included: perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, annual meadowgrass *Poa annua*, fescue *Festuca* sp., creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*, common daisy *Bellis perennis*, common nettle *Urtica dioica*, spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, white clover *Trifolium repens*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, greater plantain *Plantago major* and common vetch *Vicia sativa*.



3.4.5.2. This habitat was assessed as having a ‘Poor’ condition as it did not pass the essential criteria.

3.4.6. u1 – Built-up Areas and Gardens

Secondary Code: 524 Invasive Non-Native Species, 200 Scattered Tree, 206 Felled, 847 Introduced Shrubs.

3.4.6.1. There were gardens associated with Gopsall House Farm and there were established introduced shrubs within the beds. The species present included: juniper *Juniperus communis*, rose *Rosa* sp., wall cotoneaster *Cotoneaster horizontalis*, daffodil *Narcissus* sp., Leyland cypress *Cupressus x leylandii*, male fern *Dryopteris filix-mas*, buddleia *Buddleja davidii*, mahonia *Mahonia japonica*, peony *Paeonia* sp., Japanese meadowsweet *Spiraea japonica*, tutsan *Hypericum androsaemum*, yew *Taxus baccata*, olive *Olea europaea*, evergreen oak *Quercus ilex*, wisteria *Wisteria* sp., Spanish bluebell *Hyacinthoides hispanica*, tulip *Tulipa* sp., lavender *Lavandula* sp. and clematis *clematis* sp.. A number of wildflower species were also found in these flower beds which included cleavers *Galium aparine*, groundsel *Senecio vulgaris*, common nettle *Urtica dioica*, red dead nettle *Lamium purpureum*, common sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, Jack by the hedge *Alliaria petiolata* and greater burdock *Arctium lappa*.



3.4.6.2. Wall cotoneaster, an invasive, non-native plant species listed on schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) was identified within this habitat, as shown in the photograph below.



3.4.6.3. There were various scattered trees which included an oak *Quercus* sp, crab apple *Malus sylvestris*, two ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and three Leyland cypress *Cupressus x leylandii*.



3.4.6.4. All of these scattered trees were assessed as having a ‘moderate’ condition except the oak which was assessed as having a ‘good’ condition.

3.4.6.5. There were also a number of felled trees in one of the flower beds. Their likely size has been estimated from the stumps present and all have been placed as ‘Good’ condition as it is not known whether they would pass these criteria. Whilst these have not been lost in relation to the proposals, the removal has occurred post 2020 and will therefore, need to be considered within the metric.



3.4.6.7. These trees were assessed as having a ‘moderate’ condition.

3.4.7. u1c – Artificial Unvegetated, Unsealed Surface

An area to the north of the workshops was bare ground due to consistent disturbance and use in this area. A number of vehicles and materials were being stored at this location.



3.4.8. u1f Sparsely Vegetated Land

3.4.8.1. An area of grassland which was heavily used has been recorded as sparsely vegetated due to the limited species growing at this location. This habitat was dominated by common nettle *Urtica dioica*, greater plantain *Plantago major*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*, pineappleweed

Matricaria discoidea, annual meadowgrass *Poa annua* and creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*.



3.4.8.2. This habitat was assessed as having a ‘Moderate’ condition.

3.4.9. c1 – Arable

The proposed access track will cross a small section of arable field.



3.4.10. h2a – Hedgerow (Priority Habitat)

3.4.10.1. There were three lengths of hedgerow within the red line, one adjacent to the gardens, one along a current access track and a very small section where the proposed access location will be. The species included hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* with occasional blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and elder *Sambucus nigra*.

Hedgerow 1



Hedgerow 2



Hedgerow 3



3.4.10.2. All hedgerows were assessed as having a ‘Good’ condition.

3.4.10.3. Within H2 were two pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* trees and one sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* tree.



3.4.10.4. These three trees were assessed as having a ‘Good’ condition.

3.4.11. h2b – Other Hedgerow

3.4.11.1. There was one length of Leyland cypress *Cupressus x leylandii* hedgerow (H4)



3.4.11.2. This hedgerow was automatically assigned a ‘Poor’ condition within the metric as they are non native.

3.4.12. r1e – Ditch

3.4.12.1. There was a running ditch around the arable fields, a small length of which was present within the red line boundary.



3.4.12.2. The ditch was assessed as having a ‘Poor’ condition.

3.4.13. u1e – Built Linear Feature

Secondary Code: 612 Fence, 853 Mortared Wall.

There were lengths of fencing on the boundaries to fields, access tracks and the garden. There were also brick walls around the courtyard area.



4. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT.

4.1. Baseline Biodiversity Value.

4.1.1. Baseline biodiversity calculations have been carried out using the Statutory Metric, the current metric at the time of writing this report. The calculations have been completed for all area, hedgerow and watercourse habitats on the site. The condition assessments for each habitat, where applicable, are shown in the attached condition assessment document. The statutory metric calculation tool also provides the full BNG calculations, as well as being listed below. The totals are abstracted directly from the Statutory Metric tool and therefore, discrepancies may be due to rounding within the metric.

4.1.2. Area Habitats Pre-Development.

Habitat Type	Extent (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units
Developed Land; Sealed Surface	0.14	V. Low	N/A	0
Introduced Shrub	0.04	Low	N/A	0.08
Modified Grassland	0.067	Low	Poor	1.34
Other Neutral Grassland	0.455	Medium	Moderate	3.64
Sparsely Vegetated Land	0.128	Low	Moderate	0.51
Artificial Unvegetated, Unsealed Surface	0.217	V. Low	N/A	0
Arable Crop	0.369	Low	N/A	0.74
Individual Trees	0.0651	Medium	Moderate	0.52
Individual Trees	0.0855	Medium	Good	1.03
Individual Trees (Felled)	0.0651	Medium	Good	0.78
Total	2.02 (Exc. trees)			8.64

4.1.3. The area biodiversity value of the site prior to any works is 8.64 Bu.

4.1.4. Hedge Habitats Pre-Development

Habitat Type	Extent (km)	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units
Native Hedgerow – H1	0.041	Low	Good	0.25
Native Hedgerow – H2	0.252	Low	Good	1.51
Native Hedgerow – H3	0.01	Low	Good	0.06
Non-Native Hedgerow – H4	0.036	V. Low	Poor	0.04
Total	0.34			1.85

4.1.5. Watercourse Habitats Pre-Development

Habitat Type	Extent (km)	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units
Ditches	0.056	Medium	Poor	0.21
Culvert	0.018	Low	Poor	0.02
Total	0.07			0.24

4.2. Post-Development Biodiversity Value.

4.2.1. The landscaping plans have show a range of habitats including orchard, scattered trees and grassland areas with a small section of hedgerow being planted.

4.2.2. Area Habitats Post-Development.

Habitat Type	Extent (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units
<i>Retained:</i>				
Individual Trees	0.0651	Medium	Moderate	0.52
Individual Trees	0.0855	Medium	Good	1.03
Retained Total	0.1506 (Excl. from overall area)			1.55

<i>Created:</i>				
Intensive Orchards	0.089	Low	N/A	0.17
Other Neutral Grassland	1.002	Medium	Moderate	6.71
Other Neutral Grassland	0.094	Medium	Moderate	0.63
Developed Land; Sealed Surface	0.122	V. Low	N/A	0
Vegetated Garden	0.255	Low	N/A	0.49
Artificial Unvegetated; Unsealed Surface	0.455	V. Low	N/A	0
Rural Tree	0.6677	Medium	Moderate	2.04
Created Total	2.02 (Excl. Trees)			10.04
Combined Total	2.02 (Excl. trees)			11.59

4.2.3. Regarding the hedgerow two of the native lengths will be retained and there will be the addition of native hedgerow planting close to the proposed access, around the orchard and house. There will also be one length of non native hedgerow along the access, leading to the house.

4.2.4. Hedge Habitats Post-Development

Habitat Type	Extent (km)	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units
Retained:				
Native Hedgerow – H2	0.252	Low	Good	1.51
Native Hedgerow – H3	0.01	Low	Good	0.06
Retained Total	0.26			1.57
Created:				
Native Hedgerow	0.009	Low	Moderate	0.03
Native Hedgerow	0.104	Low	Moderate	0.35

Non Native Hedgerow	0.041	V. Low	Poor	0.04
Native Hedgerow	0.023	Low	Moderate	0.08
Created Total	0.18			0.49
Combined Total	0.44			2.07

4.2.5. To achieve the 10% net gain in watercourse units, 0.02km length of the ditch will be planted with marginal vegetation along 75% of the fringe; this section of habitat would then achieve a moderate condition and would give a 15.81% increase in watercourse units.

4.2.6. Watercourse Habitats Post-Development

Habitat Type	Extent (km)	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units
<i>Retained:</i>				
Ditches	0.036	Medium	Poor	0.14
Culvert	0.018	Low	Poor	0.02
Retained Total	0.054			0.16
<i>Enhanced:</i>				
Ditches	0.02	Medium	Poor – Medium	0.11
Enhanced Total	0.02			0.11
Combined Total	0.074			0.27

4.3. The proposals show a 34.17% increase in area habitats units as the habitat units increase from 8.64Bu to 11.59Bu. This also meets the trading rules. There is a 11.48% increase in hedgerow units and 15.81% increase in watercourse units. The final results, taken from the metric, are shown below.

FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Area habitat units</i>	2.95
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.21
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.04
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Area habitat units</i>	34.17%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	11.48%
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	15.81%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. An assumption has been made that all works will remain 5m from the ditch and hedgerow alongside the proposed access track, as recommended within the initial Biodiversity Net Gain report. If this is not achievable, then this should be included within the baseline assessment which will alter the units required for the net gain.

5.1.1. It is strongly recommended the above is strictly adhered to given the alterations in the BNG baseline and subsequent habitat creations / enhancement that this would require.

5.2. Any habitats that are retained, enhanced or created for the purpose of the biodiversity net gain for the site, will be tied into to a thirty-year management and maintenance plan.

5.3. Any changes to the red line must be reflected within the BNG report and the metric should be updated accordingly.

5.4. Root protection zones should also be implemented for the works to avoid degrading mature and large trees immediately beyond the red line.

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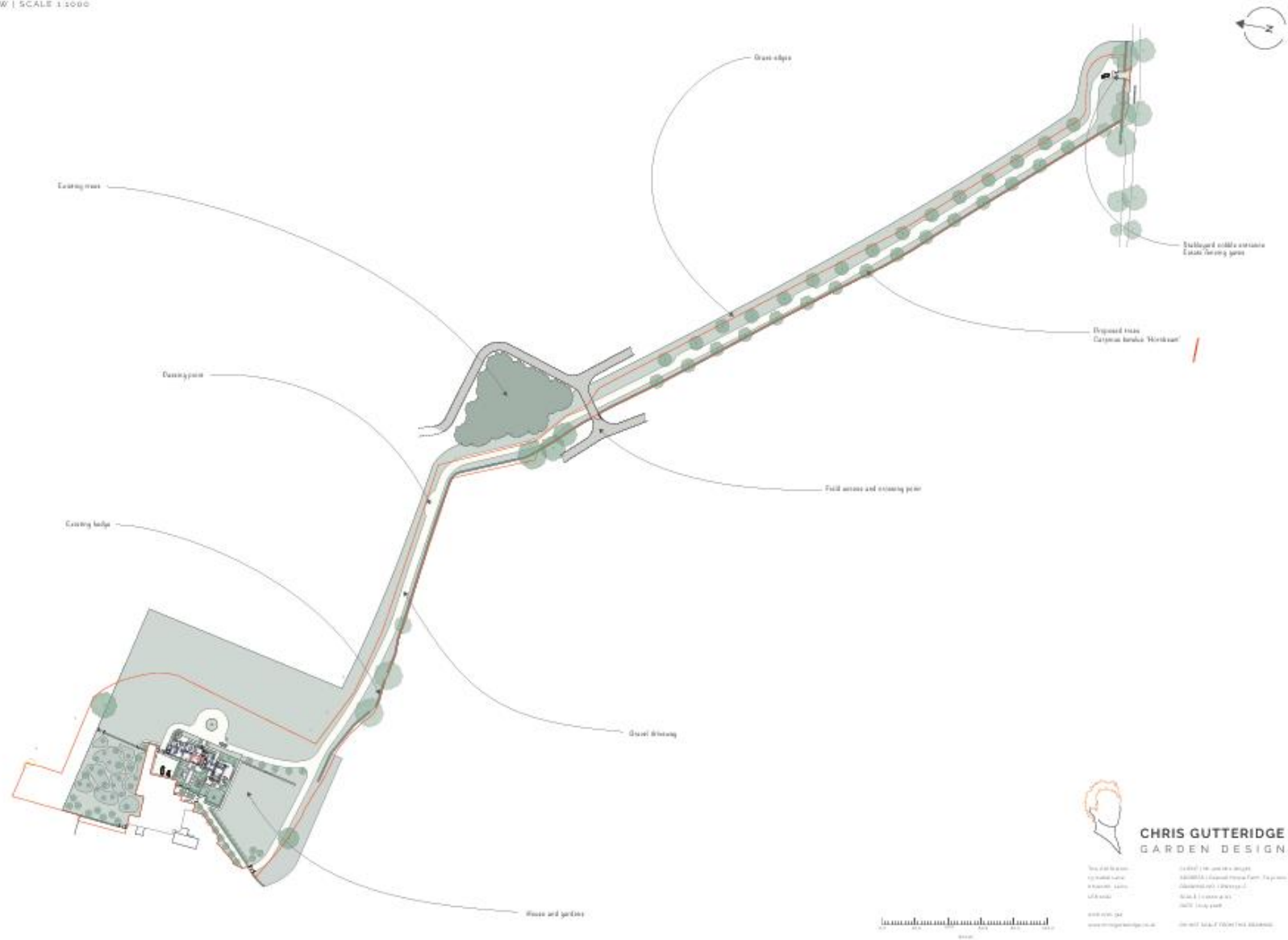
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Appendix I. RED LINE DRAWING.

PLAN VIEW | SCALE 1:1000



Appendix II. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA PRE-DEVELOPMENT



APPENDIX III. TARGET NOTES

T1. Location of wall cotoneaster.

Appendix IV. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA POST- DEVELOPMENT

