



Ecological Appraisal

Gopsall Hall Farm,
CV9 3QJ

October 2024

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Executive Summary

Learn Ecology Ltd was instructed by Mr. Michael Lain of Gopsall Ltd to undertake an Ecological Appraisal in respect of the proposed redevelopment at Gopsall Hall Farm, Gopsall, Atherstone, CV9 3QJ.

The site is currently made up of an L-shaped parcel comprising two sections of agriculturally designated grassland with associated boundaries to the north, and an arable field to the south.

The proposals include the erection of 10 new timber framed and clad glamping pods with associated landscaping and permeable-surfaced track for access, as well as the restoration/creation of a historic pond and vegetated access path.

The site was subject to survey work in August 2024 by Learn Ecology Ltd which determined the site is of local ecological importance, supporting low habitat value for roosting bats, and moderate value for foraging/commuting bats, nesting birds and other faunal species, due to the presence of suitable undisturbed habitats onsite.

One designated site, a SSSI, was identified within 2km of the site: A SSSI approximately 1.2km away, for which the site falls in the Impact Risk Zone. Completion of the Natural England Risk Assessment shows that the scale and nature of the proposals are such that there is unlikely to be a harmful effect, so Natural England do not need to be consulted prior to development.

The small outbuilding, trees and hedges on site provide some potential for breeding birds and roosting bats but current proposals do not directly affect any of these features. However, appropriate mitigation is required to protect against disturbance to these species during the development works. Should the proposals change, such that these features will be further affected, further survey work will be required to determine presence/absence of roosting bats.

Due to its rural location and good ecological connectivity, the site is likely to be used by foraging and commuting bats, so provision has been made in Section 4 to enhance the site for bats.

The scrub and grassland found on site provide moderate potential for commuting and foraging reptiles, such that their presence cannot be ruled out. No reptiles were identified on site and therefore no impacts to reptiles are anticipated. However, as the species is transient in nature a precautionary method of works is recommended, as outlined in Section 4 of this report (further details to be included in the CEMP).

The arable field that dominates the southern portion of the site is intensively managed and therefore has negligible habitat value.

A BNG assessment was undertaken of the existing site and proposals which revealed a baseline habitat unit value of 3.17 habitat units and 0.6 hedgerow units, with a proposed outcome of 4.91 habitat units and 1.07 hedgerow units, representing a net change of 55.07% and 78.25%, respectively. As such, the proposed development is considered to provide the necessary net gain for biodiversity, whilst further enhancements to local wildlife will be provided through the implementation of faunal enhancement measures as indicated in Section 4.

No significant ecological constraints regarding protected and Priority species that could not be sufficiently mitigated were identified within the site or surroundings. Subject to the implementation of mitigation and enhancement measures, and appropriate implementation and management of the new habitat within the site, the proposed development is considered to meet all national and local policy requirements.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background and Proposals

Learn Ecology Ltd was instructed by Mr. Michael Lain of Gopsall Ltd to undertake an Ecological Appraisal in respect of the proposed development at Gopsall Hall Farm, Gopsall, Atherstone, CV9 3QJ (hereafter referred to as 'the site'), centred at grid reference SK 35378 06402.

The site is located to the east of the A444 in the village of Gopsall. It is situated on Gopsall Hall Farm campsite – a camping, glamping and events venue. The site is an L-shaped parcel comprising two sections of agriculturally designated grassland with associated boundaries to the north, and an arable field to the south.

The wider context of Gopsall Hall Farm & Campsite includes a working farm, campsite comprising a camping field, several tipis and a number of glamping pods with associated landscaping. There is also a large caravan storage facility to the west of the site.

Planning permission is being sought for the erection of 10 new timber framed and clad glamping pods with associated landscaping and permeable-surfaced track for access, as well as the restoration/creation of a historic pond and vegetated access path.

1.2. Report Aims

This report documents the methods and results of the ecological survey work undertaken at the site to establish the existing ecological interest of the site, as well as the appraisal of the likely ecological constraints and opportunities associated with the proposed development. The relative importance of the habitats present is evaluated in respect of local, regional, and national scales. Where required, avoidance, mitigation, and enhancement measures are detailed to ensure that any significant ecological interest within the site and immediate surrounds is fully safeguarded under the proposals, in line with national conservation legislation and local Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs).

2. Methodology

2.1. Desktop Study

A desk study was undertaken comprising a review of statutory designated sites, granted European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs), and notable habitats within a 2km radius of the site boundary utilising the MAGIC database¹ and Google Earth Pro².

A biological data search in respect of the site was not obtained from the local biodiversity records centre, as the scale and impact of the proposed development does not justify it. It is considered that the receipt of such information is unlikely to significantly alter the resulting recommendations of the report, and the evaluation and recommendations held herein are considered to be substantial and appropriate.

2.2. Phase 1 Habitat Survey

The site was subject to a survey in August 2024 by Josh Courtley BSc (Hons) MSc, Director and Senior Ecologist at Learn Ecology Ltd (Natural England bat licence reference number: 2021-55141-CLS-CLS; Natural England GCN reference number: 2019-42061-CLS-CLS) and Emma Jewkes BSc (Hons) PGCE, Student Ecologist at Learn Ecology Ltd to evaluate the ecological value of the site, and to identify the habitats and ecological features present. The survey was undertaken based on standard UK Habitat Classification Directive (v2.0)³ methodology, whereby the habitats present are identified and mapped, and the species composition of each habitat is noted. The technique provides the opportunity to denote habitats within the site which may be of elevated ecological significance, whilst highlighting the requirement for further detailed survey work, as required.

2.3. Faunal Opportunities Survey

Faunal activity was recorded during the survey, such as incidental observations of birds, mammals, invertebrates, and reptiles. In addition, the suitability of any habitats or features present within the site to support protected, rare, or notable faunal species was also noted. Specific considerations in respect of bats and badgers were also given, as described below.

Bats

British bats are classified as European Protected Species (EPS) under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (amendment) (EU Exit) 2019) and are also listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Additionally, many bat species are listed as Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. As such, bats as well as their resting and breeding places (roosts), receive full protection under UK legislation.

Preliminary Roost Assessment Survey

All trees and the small building on site are due to be retained under the current proposals and, as such, were not inspected.

Badger

Badgers receive legislative protection under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, such that the presence of badgers within a proposed development site is considered an important ecological feature. The legislation aims

¹ DEFRA (2022). *MAGIC map application*. Online. Available at: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>. [Last accessed on 1st September 2024].

² Google (2022). *Google Earth Pro v 7.3.4.8642*. Online. Available at: <https://earth.google.com/web/@0,0,0a,22251752.77375655d,35y,0h,0t,0r> [last accessed 1st September 2024].

³ UKHab Ltd (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* (at <https://www.ukhab.org>)

to protect badgers from persecution, intentional, or reckless harm, whilst the species remains common throughout much of the UK.

A detailed survey for evidence of badger⁴ was undertaken during the site visit in August 2024, comprising a search for any badger setts within or immediately surrounding the site, and the search for any signs of badger, such as push-throughs, hair, footprints, latrines, and foraging signs.

Any setts or evidence of badger identified were recorded and, where applicable, the number of entrances, evidence of recent activity, and location of badger activity 'hot-spots' within the surrounding landscape was detailed. Information gathered was used to categorise the type and activity level of any setts present, as well as highlighting frequently used dispersal corridors and foraging habitat for the species within the site and surrounds.

Birds

A general assessment of the suitability of the habitats and features present to support nesting and foraging birds was undertaken. Additionally, evidence of active nests and/or nesting birds was sought during the survey visit, including the identification of nesting signs and behaviours such as repeated visits by birds to a probably nest site, nest building activities, recently fledged young, nests with eggs present, or nests with young chicks within.

Other Species

Incidental evidence or suitability for the site to support other rare, notable, or protected faunal species, such as hazel dormouse, water vole, otter, amphibians, reptiles, and invertebrates were also noted and mapped, where appropriate. General assessments were made regarding the suitability of the site to support such species and, where evidence or suitability was identified, this is noted in Section 3.3 below.

2.4. Limitations

It is often not possible to ensure any and all flora and fauna present within a site, or any faunal species that may use a site occasionally, are observed during the survey visit. The habitat survey was undertaken within the optimal period, such that the assessment of habitats and botanical interest are considered to be robust. Furthermore, the suitability of the site to support protected, rare, or notable faunal species is considered to be sufficient to inform any mitigation measures outlined in Section 4 below.

Consideration was given to the presence of any invasive species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) however the identifiable presence of such species varies depending on season, management practices for the site, and weather conditions. As such, the absence of records for such species within the site should not be considered absolute, and precautions undertaken to prevent the reckless spread of such species during future development works.

⁴ Based on: Mammal Society (1989) '*Occasional Publication No. 9 – Surveying Badgers*'

3. Results & Evaluation

3.1. Desk Study

Statutory Designations

There is one statutory designated site within 2km of the site: the SSSI Ashby Canal – a site of Biological interest located approximately 1.2km away. Ecological connectivity between the SSSI and the site is limited due to sparse or absent hedgerows which likely limits the use of the site by species inhabiting the SSSI.

The site is located within the risk zone of the same SSSI. Completion of the Natural England Risk assessment for this risk zone shows that the proposals are unlikely to have a harmful effect on the SSSI and, as such, Natural England do not need to be consulted prior to development.

Notable Habitats

Several notable habitats were recorded within 2km of the site boundary within the MAGIC database, as detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Priority habitats recorded within 2km of the site boundary (from MAGIC.gov.uk).

Habitat Type	Approximate Distance from Site
(Coastal and) Floodplain Grazing Marsh	1.6km south-west
Ancient Woodland	1.5km west
Deciduous Woodland (many areas)	Nearest within 100m

The desk study revealed that the priority habitat ‘Deciduous Woodland’ was found within 100m of the site. The proximity of this priority habitat will be taken into account in the mitigation measures discussed in Section 4 of this report.

All other priority habitats identified on MAGIC are physically well-separated from the site by both distance and built features such as roads and agricultural land, such that no significant adverse effects are likely to occur as a result of the proposed development. Furthermore, the scale and nature of the proposed development further reduces the risk of impacts on such habitats.

No ponds were identified either on site or within 250m of the site so amphibians can be scoped out of consideration.

Three European Protected Species Licences were identified among the MAGIC database within 2km of the site. They all pertain to bats and the details of each can be found in Table 2 below.

Table 1: European Protected Species Licences recorded within 2km of the site boundary (from MAGIC.gov.uk).

Case Reference Number	Bat Species	Licence start date	Licence end date	Impact on breeding site	Damage of breeding site	Damage of resting place	Destruction of resting place
EPSM2013-6587	C-PIP, BLE	7/11/2013	31/03/2014	N	N	Y	Y
2018-37653-EPS-MIT	BLE, C-PIP, NATT, S-PIP	28/11/2018	22/11/2028	N	N	Y	Y
2014-669-EPS-MIT	BLE, C-PIP	21/05/2014	21/12/2014	N	N	Y	Y

3.2. Habitats & Ecological Features

The habitats and features within the site were evaluated in respect of the type of habitat, species composition, and relative ecological value. The condition and status of the habitats and features present were also considered, and any protected, rare, notable, or invasive non-native species were identified and mapped, where possible. An assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed development on the habitats and species identified was then undertaken. The potential for the habitats and features present to support faunal species is provided in Section 3.3.

The following habitats and ecological features were recorded within or immediately surrounding the site:

- **g3c** – Other neutral grassland
- **h2a** – Hedgerow
- **h3d** – Bramble scrub
- **c1d17** – ruderal boundary of arable field
- **c1d8** – other non-cereal crops
- **u1b5** – Building

An illustration of the location of the habitats present is provided at Plan 2 and described in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Habitats and features within and immediately surrounding the site.

Habitat / Feature	Habitat / Feature Description	Photograph
g3c – other neutral grassland	The majority of the site comprises Yorkshire fog dominated grassland of sward height 1-1.5m. Other grass species present include Cock's foot, Tufted hair grass, Meadow Foxtail, Red Fescue. Herb species include Curled dock, Cow parsley, Creeping buttercup, Spear thistle, White & field clovers and Common nettle. The area has been previously mown but untouched in 2024. Track marks through the sward show ongoing access and impacts via compaction.	 Figure 1: track marks through the sward to eastern side  Figure 2: view of sward from north-east corner of site showing sward height

		 <u>Figure 3:</u> view of sward from south-western corner of the site showing sward height  <u>Figure 4.</u> Representative sward to south of the site
h2a – hedgerow	Defunct hedgerow with trees forming the eastern boundary of the site. Tree species majority native: Oak, Hawthorn & Beech	 <u>Figure 5:</u> Oak tree within defunct hedgerow  <u>Figure 6:</u> Oak and field maple in north-east corner of site

		 <u>Figure 7:</u> Beech trees in defunct hedgerow
h3d – Bramble scrub	Associated with the defunct hedgerow to the eastern boundary, comprising unmanaged bramble with large stands of common nettle.	 <u>Figure 8:</u> Bramble scrub understorey to defunct hedge  <u>Figure 9:</u> Tall forbs of associated with defunct hedge  <u>Figure 10:</u> Bramble scrub with Creeping thistle and Common hogweed within defunct hedge

c1d17 –ruderal boundary of arable field	South-western boundary of site, where grassland meets arable field, comprising tall ruderal mainly Common nettle giving way to grassland	 <u>Figure 11:</u> Stands of Common nettle between arable field (off-site) and grassland (on-site)
c1d8 – other non-cereal crops	Intensively managed arable field planted with young crop at time of survey	 <u>Figure 12:</u> arable field planted with non-cereal crop
g3c11 - other neutral grassland with scattered trees	Southern section of site comprises grassland of same species composition as eastern section but with scattered semi-mature and mature trees	 <u>Figure 13:</u> Scattered trees located west of the proposed development area.
u1b5 - Building	Small brick-built outbuilding. Not surveyed as access impassable.	 <u>Figure 14:</u> Small brick shed located outside of the development boundary.

Habitat Evaluation Summary

A mixture of habitats was identified to be present on site. The northern portion is predominantly poor quality other neutral grassland with a number of semi-mature and mature trees, scrub, and a small outbuilding (not surveyed). The grassland and hedgerow could support a number of invertebrates, reptiles, breeding birds, hedgehogs and other small mammals. The hedgerow could also provide commuting opportunities for bats.

The southern portion is an intensively managed arable field, planted with a young non-cereal crop at the time of survey which has negligible habitat value.

Most of the habitats recorded during the survey work undertaken were considered to be of low to moderate local ecological value, whilst the trees associated with the site provide negligible to low potential bat roost features and ecological value. The site is likely to provide foraging habitat for a range of insects and small animals. Furthermore, no invasive non-native plant species were identified during the survey.

A BNG assessment was undertaken of the existing site and proposals which revealed a baseline habitat unit value of 3.17 habitat units and 0.6 hedgerow units, with a proposed outcome of 4.91 habitat units and 1.07 hedgerow units, representing a net change of 55.07% and 78.25%, respectively. As such, the proposed development is considered to provide the necessary net gain for biodiversity, whilst further enhancements to local wildlife will be provided through the implementation of faunal enhancement measures as indicated in Section 4 below.

3.3. Faunal Opportunities

Observations regarding the presence of, or opportunities for, any other protected, rare, or notable faunal species were made during the site visit. Details are provided in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Assessment of suitability for the site to support protected species.

Species	Description	Assessment of Ecological Value
Roosting bats	The site itself was noted to be absent of features suitable to support roosting bats, albeit several large trees and a small brick building were noted nearby. No trees were found to support features likely to host roosting bats. The building could not be access for survey due to the location it within densely scrubbed terrain.	The small outbuilding was not surveyed but could have potential to support bats. However, it is due to be retained under the plans so specific survey work will not need to be undertaken as the building is unaffected by the proposals. No impacts are expected on roosting bats as a result of the proposed development.
Foraging and Commuting Bats	The scrub, scattered trees, boundaries and grassland habitats present would likely provide conditions suitable to support a moderate assemblage of common invertebrates, the primary food source for UK bats. The surrounds of the site support further pasture and arable land with woodland blocks and hedgerow networks throughout.	The site is considered to be of moderate value to foraging and commuting bats due to the presence of well-established woody boundaries and semi-mature scattered trees, as well as being well-connected to other suitable habitat within the local landscape. The majority of the suitability is located at the boundary to the eastern portion of the site, which is to be retained under current plans. Subject to the implementation of precautionary mitigation measures and enhancements, foraging and commuting bats are not considered to form a constraint to the proposals.
Badger	No evidence of badger within the site. The site supports grassland, scrub, and wooded vegetation that could support badger foraging and dispersal and is moderately well-connected to other habitat surrounding the site through the local hedgerow network.	The site is considered to be of low ecological value to badger due to the presence of habitats suitable to support light foraging by an individual and presence of further suitable habitat in the wider landscape. As no evidence of badger was identified, it is considered that the site is not of significant ecological value to badger, albeit precautionary safeguards will be implemented to ensure the ongoing conservation of local badger populations, if present.
Reptiles and Amphibians	There are no ponds present on site or within 250m of the site, albeit a single large waterbody was identified approximately 400m to the east of the proposed development area. The site provided some suitability for reptiles due to the tall sward height of the grassland. Additionally, the habitats present within the site may provide opportunities for foraging and commuting within scrub and grassland. No evidence of reptiles or amphibians, including GCN, was identified during the survey work undertaken.	A single, large waterbody was noted within 500m of the site, with further lakes present just outside of this area. Whilst the nearby lakes could not be surveyed, the size is such that they are likely to support a considerable population of wading birds and fish, dramatically reducing suitability for amphibians including GCN. The terrestrial habitats within the site are of moderate value to terrestrial amphibians and reptiles due to the sward height but previously managed nature of the grassland. Furthermore, the terrestrial habitat is separated from waterbodies by active arable land which is likely to act as a barrier for amphibian dispersal. Nevertheless, to ensure the conservation value of these species in the unlikely event that they are present, precautionary measures will be implemented to safeguard such species from harm in the unlikely event that they are present.

Birds	The scattered individual trees and lines of trees associated with the development boundary were considered to provide suitable nesting and foraging opportunities for birds. The small outbuilding may also provide some opportunities for common species of nesting and roosting birds, albeit no evidence of nesting birds was recorded during the site visit.	Due to the suitability of habitats within the site to support nesting of common species, safeguarding measures will be implemented to ensure the safety of breeding birds within the site throughout the development works.
Other	Other faunal species were also considered during the site visit, such as hedgehog and dormouse. The site provided some suitability for hedgehog due to the hedgerows. As a working farm, the wider site provides numerous debris piles which may provide sheltering opportunities. The connectivity of the site to the wider rural landscape provides connectivity for such species. There was no evidence of dormouse during the survey. The habitats within the site are common and widespread and are not considered likely to be of particularly elevated value to such species.	The habitats within the site suggest that hedgehogs are likely to be present in the local area and may utilise the site for sheltering and foraging. Whilst hedgehog remain widespread in England, they are listed on Section 41 (S41) of the NERC Act 2006, such that precautionary safeguarding measures are set out in Section 4 below to ensure the species is protected throughout development works and beyond.

On the basis of the above, the site is considered to be of generally low to moderate ecological value to faunal species, with some limited opportunities present for foraging and commuting bats, badger, hedgehog, common reptiles, and birds. As such, several mitigation and enhancement measures are set out in Section 4 below to ensure the ongoing conservation value of these species during and following the construction phase of the proposed development.

4. Mitigation & Enhancement Measures

Several mitigation and enhancement measures are detailed in Table 5 below to ensure that any habitats, features, and species within or immediately surrounding the site are safeguarded throughout the proposed work, and to promote a net gain for local biodiversity as a result of the development.

Table 5: Recommended mitigation and enhancement measures to facilitate the proposed development.

Feature	Recommendation
Mitigation	
<u>Habitats and Vegetation</u>	MIT1 – Pollution Prevention Measures. Due to the proximity of habitats of significant ecological interest in the vicinity of the site, the following pollution prevention measures are required to be implemented throughout the demolition and construction phases to ensure the surrounding habitats are protected from direct and indirect impacts from pollution: <u>Dust:</u> • Transport entering the site will be sheeted to avoid dust escape, and containers with materials of risk, such as concrete, shall not enter the site uncovered. • Dust extraction and/or water suppression will be used during processes such as drilling or grinding to avoid dust generation, where possible. • During and following periods of excessively dry weather, spoil and debris will be periodically dampened to avoid dust generation, and the materials will be held in an enclosed, covered space to further mitigate dust spread. • No waste material will be burnt within the site to prevent particulate spread. <u>Noise:</u> • Best practice will be followed throughout demolition and construction in accordance with the Control of Pollution Act 1974 to avoid excessive levels of noise and vibration from site activities, including agreed working hours and use of equipment with lowest auditory impact. <u>Lighting:</u> • Throughout development and construction, lighting required to facilitate the work will be directed away from marginal vegetation. • Night work will be avoided where reasonably practicable. <u>Trees</u> • Works undertaken within proximity of any existing, retained trees within the site boundary shall be done in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012⁸.

<u>Roosting and Commuting Bats</u> Development activity IS <u>unlikely</u> to result in an offence under the relevant legislation.	MIT2 – Retention of small outbuilding. The building was not surveyed as it will be retained under current plans and is sufficiently removed from the proposed building works that it will not be affected. If the proposals change to involve demolition of the building, it will need to be surveyed <u>prior to commencement of any works</u> to it. MIT3 – Sensitive Lighting Strategy. A sensitive lighting strategy will be implemented throughout and following construction within the site in accordance with best practice guidelines⁵ to reduce potential impacts on light-sensitive species, including bats and other nocturnal fauna: • Lighting should lack UV elements and metal halide, and LED luminaires with a warm white spectrum (< 27,000K) used where possible to reduce blue light emission. • Any new ornamental shrub planting associated with the proposed development should be placed in positions to reduce light spill on to existing woody features, such as linear treelines, which might be utilised by commuting bats. • Light levels should be kept as low as possible, including the exclusion of light entirely where safe to do so, to reduce the overall spread of light within the site. • Lights should be directed only where necessary, toward the horizontal wherever possible, to avoid sky glow or unnecessary environmental illumination. Details regarding light specification and precise location will subject to review by a suitably experienced ecologist prior to installation.
<u>Amphibians, Reptiles, & Other Species</u>	MIT4 – Destructive Search. To minimise the risk of harm to amphibians, reptiles and other terrestrial species, the vegetation and features within the site suitable to support such species, including any brash, log, or debris piles, will be subject to a destructive search under a watching brief. An initial inspection of the affected habitat will be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist. The destructive search should be undertaken during the active season (March-October inclusive; April-September optimally), where reasonably practicable, avoiding periods of extreme weather (rain, heat, etc.). Furthermore, features within the working area which might provide refuge opportunities for reptiles including piled debris and materials will be dismantled by hand outside of the hibernation period (considered November to March depending on weather conditions) allowing the animals present to escape or to be moved carefully by hand to suitable vegetation to the north.
<u>Nesting Birds</u>	MIT5 – Timing. Where possible, works required to facilitate the development which may impact on suitable nesting habitat for bird species, such as the temporary buildings and structures or suitable vegetation, shall be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (May-August inclusive). Where this cannot be avoided, any suitable habitat to be impacted should first be subject to a detailed inspection by a suitably qualified ecologist to determine the presence / absence of any active bird nests. Should a nest be identified, this shall be retained and safeguarded within a buffer no less than 5m from the nest in every direction until such a time as the young have fledged.

⁵ Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals (2018). *Guidance Note 08/18: Bats and artificial lighting in the UK*. Stone, E.L. (2013). *Bats and lighting: Overview of current evidence and mitigation guidance*. ILP (2011). *Guidance notes for the reduction of obtrusive light*. Institution of Lighting Professionals. GN01-2011.

Enhancement	
<u>Roosting Bats</u>	ENH1 – Additional Roosting Provision. Where possible, new bat roosting provision in the form of independent bat boxes should be provided within or surrounding the development site on suitable, retained trees. Boxes should comprise Vivara Pro Woodstone Bat Box (Figure 14), or a suitable available alternative, and be positioned 3m above ground-level, with clear paths immediately surrounding and below to facilitate colonisation by bats.  <u>Figure 15:</u> Vivara Pro Woodstone Bat Box
<u>Nesting Birds</u>	ENH2 – Bird Boxes. Several bird nesting boxes are recommended to be installed within the development site to increase nesting opportunities. These shall comprise boxes suitable to support common bird species such as great tits, blue tits, and house sparrows, such as Woodstone Seville Nest Box 32mm, alongside suitable swift nest boxes. The number and location(s) of the boxes should be determined by a suitably qualified ecologist following the completion of the final block and landscaping plans.  <u>Figure 16:</u> Woodstone Seville Nest Box 32mm (left) and Vivara Pro Swift Box (right).

Subject to the implementation of the recommended mitigation and enhancement measures detailed above, it is considered that the habitats, features, and species present within and surrounding the site will be fully safeguarded under the proposals.

5. Conclusion

Learn Ecology Ltd was instructed by Mr. Michael Lain of Gopsall Ltd to undertake an Ecological Appraisal in respect of the proposed development at Gopsall Hall Farm, Gopsall, Atherstone, CV9 3QJ.

The site is currently made up of an L-shaped parcel comprising two sections of agriculturally designated grassland with associated boundaries to the north, and an arable field to the south.

The proposals include the erection of 10 new timber framed and clad glamping pods with associated landscaping and permeable-surfaced track for access. The site currently comprises an L-shaped parcel of two sections of agriculturally designated grassland with associated boundaries.

The site was subject to survey work in August 2024 by Learn Ecology Ltd which determined it to be of local ecological importance, supporting low habitat value for roosting bats, and moderate value for foraging/commuting bats, nesting birds, and other faunal species.

One designated site was identified within 2km of the site boundary: Ashby Canal – an SSSI designated for 'Biological' interest. However, the site is sufficiently geographically separated from the SSSI and the scale of the proposals such that it is very unlikely to be affected by the development.

The buildings, trees and hedges identified within and immediately surrounding the site provide good opportunities for breeding birds. No evidence of breeding birds was found on site during the survey, but this does not prove their absence. Current proposals do not affect any of these features. However, appropriate mitigation is required to protect against disturbance to breeding birds during the development works. If the proposals change such that these structures will be further affected by the development work, further surveys will be required before the works commence. Both the small outbuilding and the scattered trees on site were not surveyed for potential for roosting bats due to the fact that they are planned to be retained under current proposals. If the proposals change such that these structures will be affected by the development work, further surveys will be required before the works commence.

No ponds were identified within 250m of the site, with the nearest waterbody identified approximately 400m to the east of the site, separated by expansive areas of active arable land. Whilst suitable terrestrial habitat was noted within the site, the absence of any suitable, connected waterbodies are such that GCN are not considered to form a constraint to the proposals. Furthermore, the scrub and grassland found on site provide moderate potential for commuting and foraging amphibians and reptiles. The lack of nearby standing water means that amphibians are unlikely to be present, but reptiles cannot be discounted. The mitigation strategies found in Section 4 of this report should be followed to minimise the risk of harm to reptiles during the construction process.

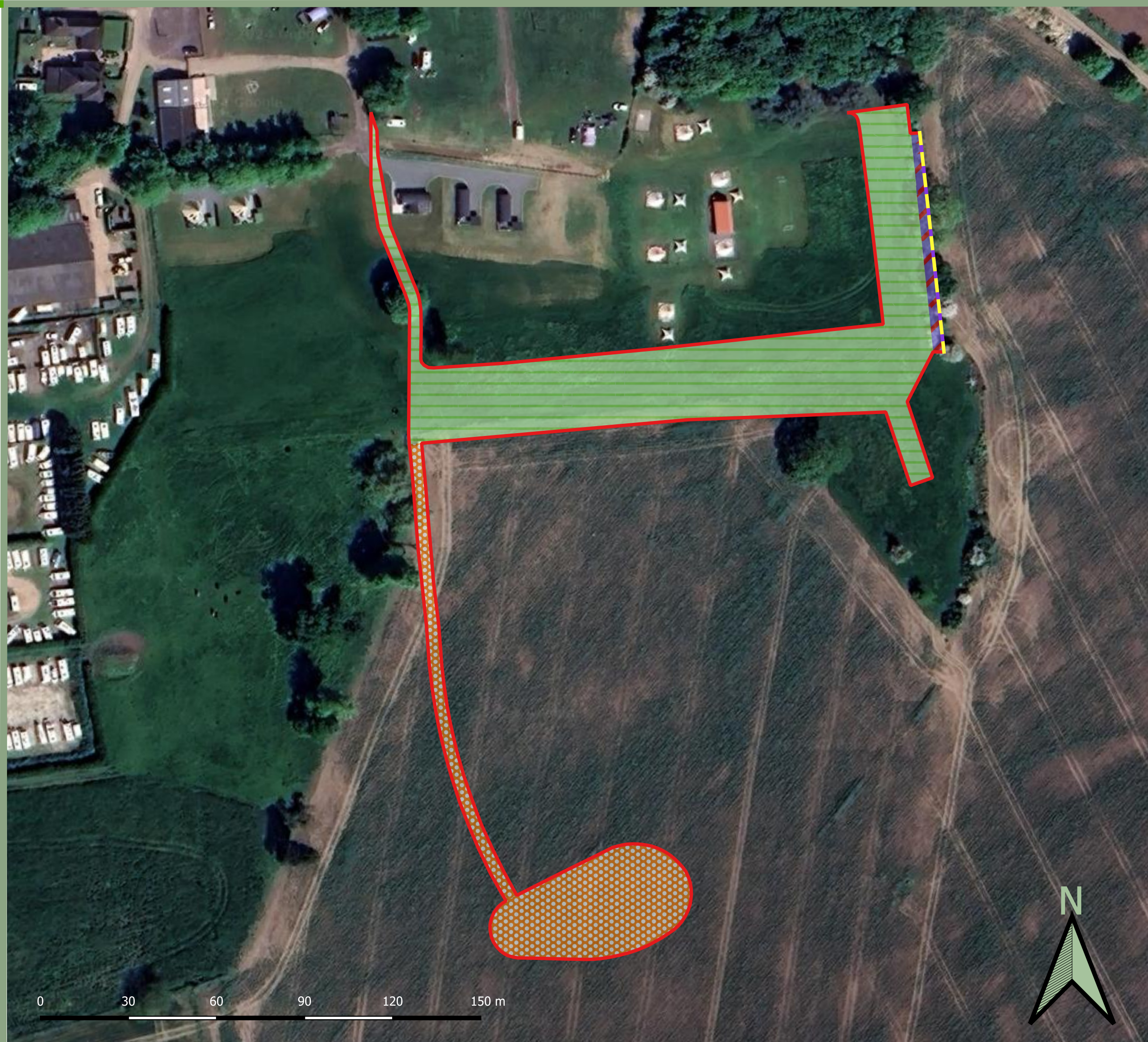
The site was determined to provide some opportunities for faunal species, such that some precautionary measures are proposed. Furthermore, several enhancement measures are recommended to be implemented to facilitate such species following the completion of the development, such that the proposed development is considered to provide an opportunity for an increase in biodiversity within and surrounding the site.

A BNG assessment was undertaken of the existing site and proposals which revealed a baseline habitat unit value of 3.17 habitat units and 0.6 hedgerow units, with a proposed outcome of 4.91 habitat units and 1.07 hedgerow units, representing a net change of 55.07% and 78.25%, respectively. As such, the proposed development is considered to provide the necessary net gain for biodiversity.

No significant ecological constraints regarding protected and Priority species that could not be sufficiently mitigated were identified within the site or surroundings. Subject to the implementation of mitigation and enhancement measures, and appropriate implementation and management of the new habitat within the site, the proposed development is considered to meet all national and local policy requirements.

6. Appendices

Plan 1 – Habitats and Ecological Features



Existing Habitats & Ecological Features

 Survey Boundary

Baseline Habitats

-  u3d - Bramble scrub
-  c1d8 - Non-cereal crops
-  g3c - Other neutral grassland [poor]

Hedgerows

-  Native hedgerow with trees



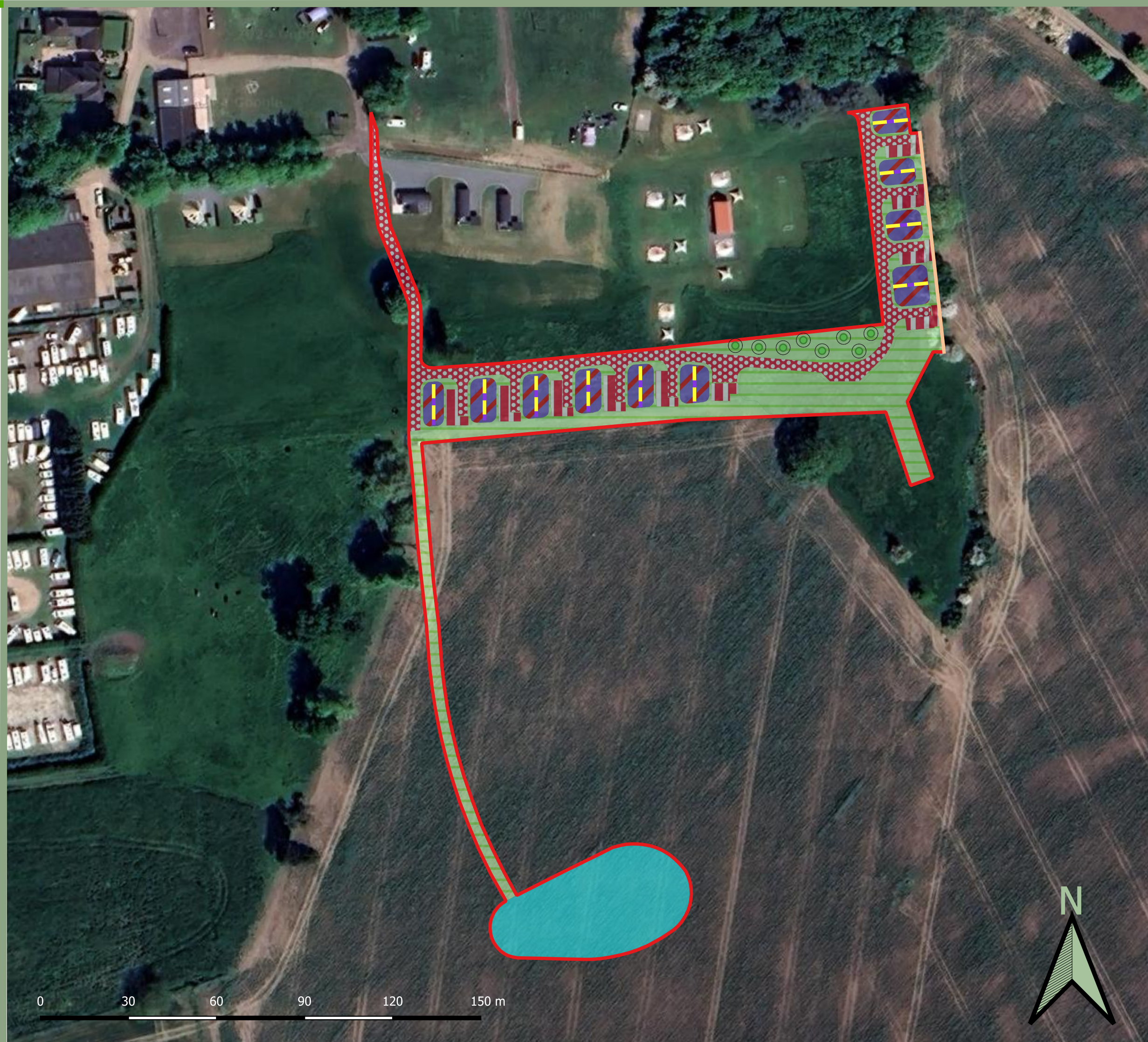
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Scale at A3

Reproduced from GoogleEarth 2018

Plan 2 – Proposed Habitats and Features



Proposed Habitats & Ecological Features

 Survey Boundary

Individual Trees

 Proposed Small Rural Tree

Hedgerows

 Native hedgerow

 Retained native hedgerow

Habitats

 Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface

 Developed land; sealed surface

 Mixed native scrub

 Other neutral grassland

 Ponds (priority habitat)



Produced on: 22-10-2024

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Scale at A3

Reproduced from GoogleEarth 2018

Appendix 1 – Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Headline Summary

Gopsall Hall Farm		Return to results menu	
Headline Results			
Scroll down for final results ▲			
On-site baseline	Habitat units	3.17	
	Hedgerow units	0.60	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	4.91	
	Hedgerow units	1.07	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	1.74	55.07%
	Hedgerow units	0.47	78.25%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%
Off-site baseline	Habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	0.00	0.00%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%
Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	1.74	
	Hedgerow units	0.47	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	Habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
FINAL RESULTS			
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	1.74	
	Hedgerow units	0.47	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	55.07%	
	Hedgerow units	78.25%	
	Watercourse units	0.00%	
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓		



End of Report