DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

PROPOSED ALLOTMENTS, STORM OVERFLOW BASIN & WILDLIFE ZONE AT DESFORD LANE, RATBY, LEICS. LE6 0LN

FOR CAWREY LTD.



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   (i) ***Environmental* Assessment and Landscaping Report, October 2009**
   – Greg Thurlow

   (ii) **Support Statement**
   – Dr Andrew Simmonds, Ratby Allotment Association

1. Background

Cawrey Ltd. acquired this land together with the rest of Pear Tree Farm when the Ball Brothers, who had farmed the land for 50 years, retired in 1996. Being primarily a locally based house-building company, Cawrey Ltd. has renovated and extended the existing farmhouse, completed 2 award-winning barn conversions with 1 new home in the lower farmyard off Main Street.

It is intended that this site, which is to be gifted to Ratby Parish Council, links to the 106 agreement for open space contribution to the recent approval for 50 dwellings at Fielding Lane, off Ferndale Drive, Ratby (Planning approval ref: 09/00211/FUL).

Earlier this year, planning permission was obtained to demolish farm buildings to the north-east of the site and construct 9 small Business Units for Offices and Light Industry (08/01123/FUL). The scheme required a new access road from Desford Lane to be constructed, with the possibility of siting allotment land to the west of the new road.

It is proposed that the Southern side of the subject site is excavated to create a shallow storm water overflow basin as part of the SUDS drainage system serving the Business Unit Development. This basin will rarely hold water, except in times of heavy & prolonged rainfall, but will provide a semi-wetland habitat linked to the Wildlife Zone.

2. The Site & Context

The application site of 0.2ha is roughly triangular in shape. The western boundary is currently defined by an overhead power line. Negotiations are underway with the Regional Electricity Company to divert this line to an underground route. It is proposed to erect a post and rail fence 5 metres inside this line. Agricultural land is to the north and west. The eastern boundary is defined by the new access road, and fencing will be erected clear of the adopted Highway.

To the south of the application site is more agricultural land in separate ownership and defined by the existing post and wire fence and the track serving Holywell Farmhouse.

The site is currently mainly grassland, grazed by beef cattle. It is gently sloping from north to south with 2 long sections of ridge and furrow to the western side. To the south-east is a line of semi-mature hedgerow trees. At present, the site has limited ecological value, but will be enhanced with planting. See Environmental Assessment and Landscaping Report.

3. Planning Policy

National, regional and local policy documents promote the use of land for allotment use and provide powers to protect it from other forms of development.

Two sites for allotments were identified in the draft Hinckley & Bosworth Allocations Development Plan Document, one off Markfield Road and one at the end of Stamford Street. It should be noted that the proposed site off Desford Lane is preferred by Ratby Allotment Association to that on Markfield Road, due to it's more accessible location.

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council support community projects linked to allotments including locally grown produce, tackling obesity and the composting initiative to reduce waste.

4. The Design

The major part of the gently sloping site is proposed for allotment use to be sub-divided into plots by the Allotment Association. The site is to be fenced to provide a reasonable degree of security, but avoid the appearance of a 'fortress'.

2 car off-street parking spaces are to be provided at the head of the access road. Access to the allotments would be gained by a pair of 1500mm high gates within a 1500mm high green weld mesh perimeter fence. The western boundary is defined by a recently erected 1200mm high post and rail stock fence, 5 metres clear of the 11kV overhead powerlines.

A tapering strip of land along the southern boundary is to be planted to form a 'Wildlife Zone'. See 'Environmental Assessment and Landscaping Report'.
The south-east corner of the site is to be excavated to form a shallow storm water overflow basin, reinstated with a grassland and wild flower mix.

5. Access & Parking

It is envisaged that the majority of the allotment holders will access the site by foot, so that only 2 off-street car parking spaces have been provided. Occasionally, heavy items may need to be delivered or collected from the site, prompting the need for loading space.

The site is located centrally within the village, and within 10 minutes walking distance of most resident's homes.

Allotments provide physical exercise for the able bodied and disabled, in addition to the recreational benefits described in Dr Simmonds' Statement.
A series of level, connecting pathways will provide access to meet DDA requirements.

6. Ownership & Future Maintenance

The land is currently owned by Cawrey Ltd.
It is intended to transfer the freehold to Ratby Parish Council for use as allotments in perpetuity. The Council can let the land for allotment use through the Allotment Association. The wildlife area and basin will require minimal maintenance and could be managed by the Allotment holders.

7. Conclusion

There is clearly an increased demand for allotments within the village. The remaining churchyard site is likely to be lost in the next few years, resulting in an increased waiting list. The only allotments available at the moment, apart from the Church, are on Taverner Drive, off Station Road. The site is eminently suited for the purpose and has the backing of the Parish Council and Ratby Allotment Association.

It is difficult to envisage a use for this site that would be more worthwhile and of benefit to the local community.



View of the proposed allotment site looking towards the south-east.



View of the proposed allotment site with overhead power lines looking towards the west boundary.



View of proposed Wildlife Area looking towards the south boundary.



View of existing site entrance looking south.

8. **Appendices**

(i) **Environmental Assessment and Landscaping Report, October 2009**
– Greg Thurlow

Pear Tree Farm, Ratby

Access Road

Balancing Pond;

Environmental Assessment and Landscaping Report

October 2009

Environmental Survey Report

12 October 2009

1 Grassland verge; 1-3 m wide slope. Predominantly Common Bent, Crested Dog's-tail, Perennial Rye-grass; frequent-abundant Bird's-foot Trefoil, frequent Red Clover abundant centrally. Rare-occasional Creeping Thistle, Cat's-ear, rare-locally abundant Ribwort Plantain.

Invading Blackthorn suckers from planting above. Large open flat area, between two planting blocks, dominated by Stinging Nettles. Creeping Bent along stony track edge.

Spear Thistle, Cock's-foot, Ash seedlings, Yorkshire Fog, Hard Rush, Black Medick, Ribbed Melilot, Creeping Buttercup, Bramble, Broad leaved Dock, Ragwort, Dandelion, Hop Trefoil, Lesser Trefoil, Common Vetch.

2 Grassland verge; 1-3 m wide slope. Dominated by Common Bent, abundant Creeping Bent in open bare earth areas of sward. Crested Dog's-tail, Frequent-abundant Red Clover, occasional-frequent Bird's-foot Trefoil, occasional Creeping Thistle, rare-locally abundant Cat's-ear, Ribwort Plantain.

Narrow top edge, from planting block 3, dominated by False Oat-grass, abundant Stinging Nettles, locally abundant Upright-parsley. Large open flat area dominated by Couch and Stinging Nettle, occasional Creeping Thistle.

Hairy Sedge, Common Mouse-ear, Spear Thistle, Cock's-foot, Ash seedlings, Hogweed, Yorkshire Fog, Nipplewort, Perennial Rye-grass, Silverweed, Ribwort Plantain, Timothy, Creeping Buttercup, Bramble, Common Sorrel, Broad leaved Dock, Ragwort, Dandelion, Hop Trefoil, Common Vetch.

3 Broadleaved planting, triangular block. Dwarf shrubs along the edge: Dogwood, Hawthorn, Blackthorn and Dog Rose. Taller trees of Rowan, Ash with Hawthorn growing below. Smaller central species of Cherry Laurel, Scot's Pine and Oak; stunted Holly bushes. Field Maple trees facing onto old hedge-line. Bare earth as dense canopy above.

In south-west corner Blackthorn thicket over dense Ivy carpet.

Area inspected for hibernating amphibians – none discovered

4 Earth bank, below planting. Hollow dominated by Stinging Nettles up to hedge bank. Ground Ivy dominates bank with Wood Avens.

5 Ash tree, mature specimen in short section of remnant hedge. Covered in dense Ivy outgrowths into higher crown. Major bough on north side overhanging planting block with dead wood branches on western side.

6 Ash trees, two separate specimens, growing on raised hedge bank. Western tree much more established than the other. Tree surgery, crown / limb reduction, undertaken two years ago.

7 Improved grassland, sloping field with 2 long ridges of ridge and furrow in upper north western corner. Lower flat ground with rising slope along southern hedge-line. Dominated by Crested Dog's-tail, Perennial Rye-grass; frequent-abundant White Clover, occasional-frequent Creeping Buttercup. Occasional Creeping and Spear Thistles; latter species becoming more frequent-abundant on the upper slope of the field.

Common Mouse-ear, Meadow Buttercup, Common Sorrel, Dandelion.

Greg Thurlow

Ecological Assessment

1	Grassland verge	Re-seeded grassland, some species diversity.
2	Grassland verge	Re-seeded grassland, some species diversity.
3	Broadleaved planting	Young scrub planting; no Newts found.
4	Earth bank	General note of feature.
5	Ash tree	Mature specimen
6	Ash trees	Mature specimen, recent tree surgery. Spotted Woodpecker nest site, check for Bat roost.
7	Improved grassland	Limited ecological value

As the first three are of recent (+/- 10 years) man-made origin they can be readily re-created again.

The mature hedgerow Ash trees are valuable as both a significant landscape feature and provide a micro-habitat in their own right. Mature hedgerow trees locally are small in number and the presence Woodpeckers are a good indicator for the newly created plantations of The National Forest as they become more established. Standing dead wood is a vital source for invertebrates too. The former nest sites and structural defects in these mature trees can also provide breeding and roost sites for bats.

Recommendations

1 Where possible all mature hedgerow trees should be retained.

2 Before commencement of work Ash tree 5 would require some minor dead wood removal, and the large overhanging branch should be cut back to the main trunk.

3 If any of the hedgerow trees are to be felled it would be highly recommended that a full aerial inspection is undertaken to determine the presence / absence of Bats – legal requirement.

4 All retained trees should be protected by barrier fencing to prevent damage to their main trunk and to their root system. No spoil should be dumped on top of them either.

5 An alternative planting should be implemented to provide a wider habitat to the west of the pond basin. The screen would consist of smaller, non-thorny, berry-bearing shrubs to the south to allow for the management of the recently planted hedgerow whips. Taller trees to be planted amongst the other shrubs. Hazel bushes included so that they can be coppiced for the Allotment holders to utilize for Pea sticks and Bean poles.

6 The pond basin and grassland verge to be re-established with a low maintenance grassland mix with a small wild flower component.

Tree planting specification

Species	Ash	Oak	Alder	Field Maple	Crab Apple	Hazel	Dogwood	Guelder rose
No.	5	5	15	10	5	15	10	10
Size	6-8 HS	6-8 HS	1.5 FW	1.5 FW	1.5 FW	60/80 W	60/80 W	60/80 W

6-8 cm girth Half standard staked and tied with spiral guard

1.2-1.5 m tall Feathered whip with spiral guard

60-80 cm tall whip in shrub guard

Grassland specification

Low maintenance / poor soils / embankment grassland mix:

Slender Creeping Red Fescue, Strong Creeping Red Fescue, Hard Fescue, Sheeps Fescue, Crested Dog's-tail, Browntop Bent with Bird's-foot Trefoil, Selfheal, Lady's Bedstraw, Common Vetch, Meadow Buttercup.

Species List

Flowering Plants

Common Mouse-ear	Cerastium fontanum
Creeping Thistle	Cirsium arvense
Spear Thistle	C. vulgare
Wood Avens	Geum urbanum
Ground Ivy	Glechoma hederacea
Hogweed	Heracleum sphondylium
Cat's-ear	Hypochoeris radicata
Nipplewort	Lapsana communis
Bird's-foot Trefoil	Lotus corniculatus
Black Medick	Medicago lupulina
Ribbed Melilot	Melilotus officinale
Ribwort Plantain	Plantago lanceolata
Silverweed	Potentilla anserina
Meadow Buttercup	Ranunculus acris
Creeping Buttercup	R. repens
Bramble	Rubus fruticosus
Common Sorrel	Rumex acetosa
Broad leaved Dock	R. obtusifolius
Ragwort	Senecio jacobaea
Dandelion	Taraxacum officinale
Upright Hedge-parsley	Torilis japonica
Hop Trefoil	Trifolium campestre
Lesser Trefoil	T. dubium
Red Clover	T. pratense
White Clover	T. repens
Stinging Nettle	Urtica dioica
Common Vetch	Vicia sativa

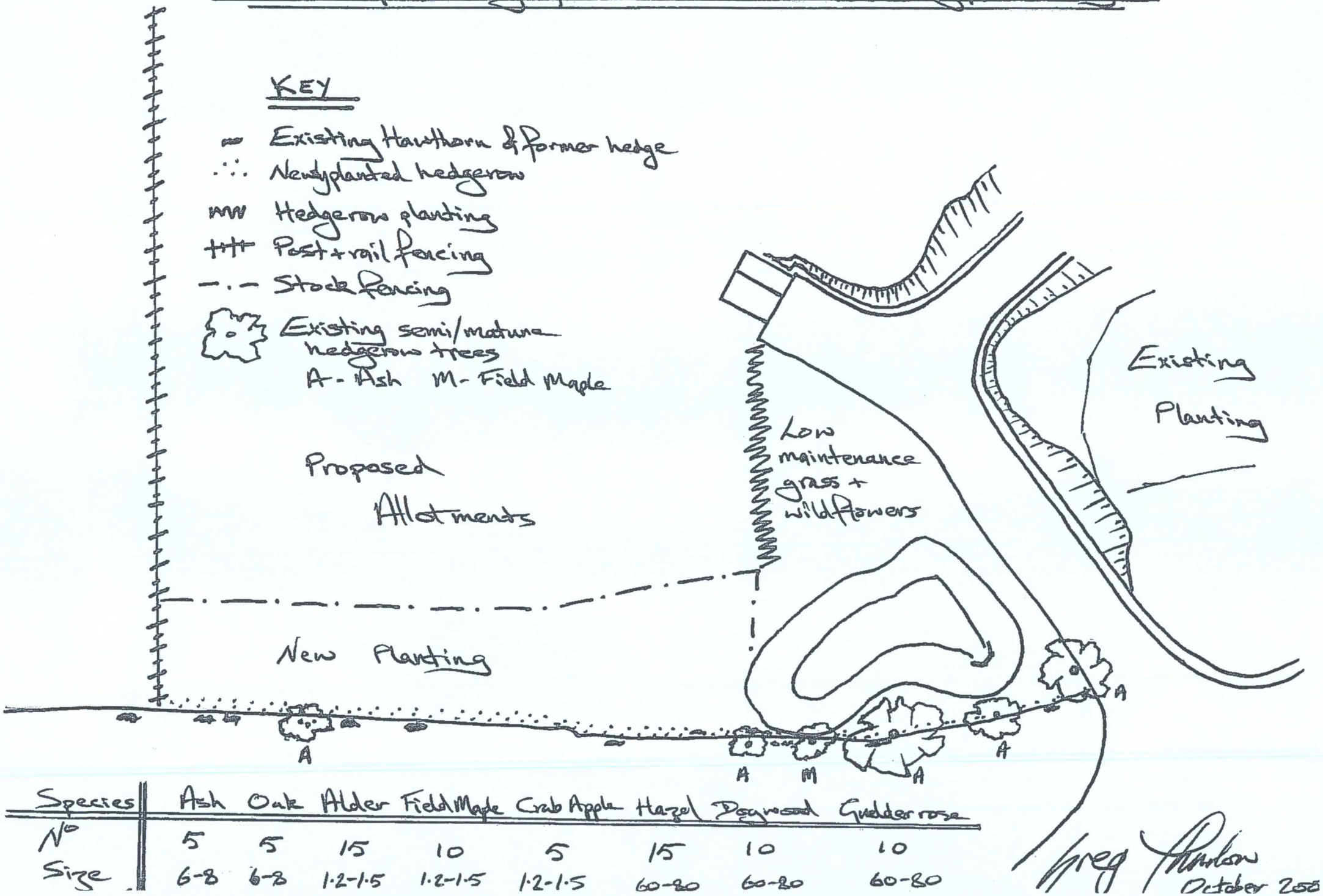
Grasses, Rushes and Sedges

Common Bent	Agrostis capillaris
Creeping Bent	A. stolonifera
False Oat-grass	Arrhenatherum elatius
Hairy Sedge	Carex hirta
Crested Dog's-tail	Cynosurus cristatus
Cock's-foot	Dactylis glomerata
Couch	Elymus repens
Yorkshire Fog	Holcus lanatus
Hard Rush	Juncus inflexus
Perennial Rye-grass	Lolium perenne
Timothy	Phleum pratense

Trees and Shrubs

Field Maple	Acer campestre
Dogwood	Cornus sanginea
Hazel	Corylus avellana
Hawthorn	Crataegus monogyna
Ash	Fraxinus excelsior
Holly	Ilex aquifolium
Scot's Pine	Pinus sylvestris
Cherry Laurel	Prunus laurocerasus
Blackthorn	P. spinosa
Oak	Quercus robur
Dog Rose	Rosa canina
Rowan	Sorbus aucuparia

Landscape Design for Tear Tree farm balancing pond, Kathy



Species	Ash	Oak	Alder	Field Maple	Crab Apple	Hazel	Dogwood	Guelder rose
No	5	5	15	10	5	15	10	10
Size	6-8	6-8	1·2-1·5	1·2-1·5	1·2-1·5	60-80	60-80	60-80

Greg Thurlow
October 200

Ecological Survey of Pear Tree Farm balancing pond, Rothy

KEY

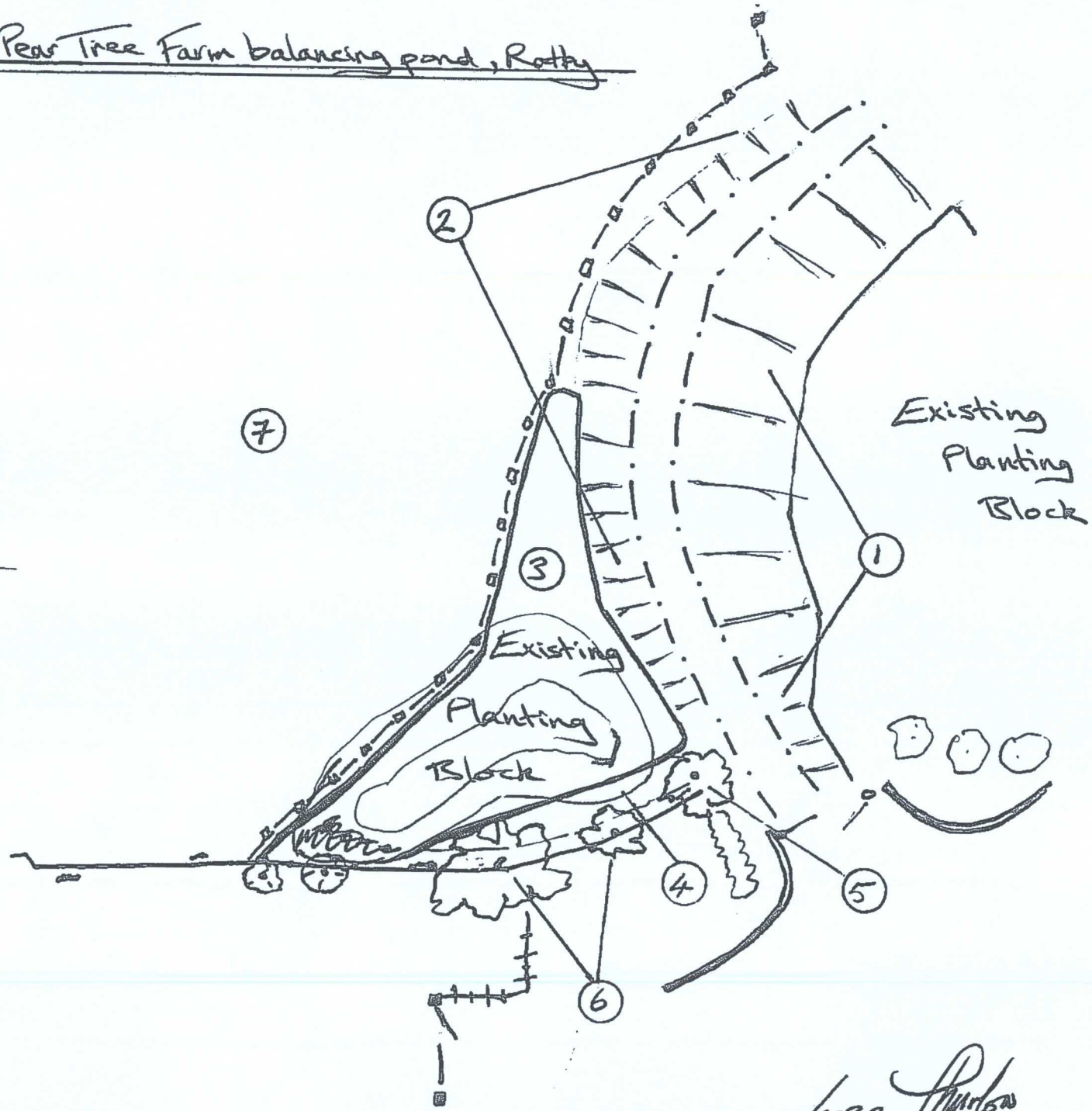
(1-7) Survey notes

—o— Stock netting

+++++ Post + rail

—/ Double field gate

Existing semi/mature hedgerow trees



Greg Thurlow
October 2009

(ii) **Support Statement**
– Dr Andrew Simmonds, Ratby Allotment Association

PROPOSED ALLOTMENT SITE OFF DESFORD LANE, RATBY

EVIDENCE TO DEMONSTRATE THE NEED FOR ALLOTMENTS IN RATBY.

1. Ratby is very short of allotments, with just two small sites, one statutory site at Long Meadow, and one on the churchyard, which will eventually be taken over for burial purposes.
2. Demand for allotments is rising nationally, and the Ratby Parish Plan found that 101 residents would want an allotment if one was available. There is a growing waiting list for allotments in Ratby, currently 24, but the evidence from the Parish Plan suggests the latent demand is much higher. Neighbouring Groby has a large number of allotments, and a waiting list.
3. Two sites for allotments were allocated in the draft Hinckley and Bosworth Allocations Development Plan Document, one off Markfield Road, and one at the end of Stamford Street. It is suggested that the proposed site off Desford Lane would be a more suitable alternative to that on Markfield Road, as the latter is further from most of the village and is not easily accessible by foot.
4. Allotments have a number of benefits:
    - They promote physical exercise;
    - They can have mental health benefits, reducing the risk of dementia;
    - Allotments provide a more secure food source;
    - Food grown on allotments has a lower carbon footprint than bought food;
    - For people on lower incomes, allotments provides cheaper, healthier food;
    - Gardening helps develop life skills, and is an empowering experience that builds self-esteem and reduces stress;
    - Allotments facilitate social interaction between individual and family plot-holders, promoting social wellbeing and cohesive communities, as people can lean from the experience of others.

Dr Andrew Simmonds

Chair, Ratby Allotment Association

7 October 2009