

Kingsman Homes
c/o Emma Hanks
14 Bank Lane,
Burnlee,
Holmfirth,
HD9 2TX

Project Ref: BG22.227

REV1 Friday, 20 September 2024

REV1 Details – reference to ecological data records search which has been included within original PEA

Dear Emma,

RE: Updated Preliminary Appraisal at Royd Moor Farm, Thurlston, Sheffield

Brindle and Green Ltd were commissioned to undertake an updated Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, incorporating Phase 1 habitat survey at the site known as Royd Moor Farm, Thurlston, Sheffield.

The redline boundary pertains to an area approximately 0.6ha in size, reduced from the previous 1.1 ha site. The site comprises a farmstead including 14 buildings bound by a tree line on the northern boundary. The site is located approximately 1km west of the rural village of Thurlstone and is bordered by extensive agricultural land with Royd Moor Road running along the northern boundary. The site is the subject of a planning application for site clearance and demolition of the existing buildings to facilitate the development of up to eight residential dwellings.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was undertaken in August 2022 by Brindle and Green Ltd (BG22.227, January 2023). Since the onset of mandatory net gain an updated ecological walkover survey was undertaken on the 30th May 2024 by Emily Murchison BSc (Hons) MSc, Assistant Ecologist. The purpose of this survey was to ascertain an up to date baseline assessment of the site to inform a biodiversity impact assessment. The survey was overseen by Lucinda Sweet PhD, MCIEEM, Natural England Bat Licence Class 2 (2019-39122-CLS-CLS), Great Crested Newt licence (2016-22852-CLS-CLS), Director. A phase 1 habitat plan of the development site is provided in Appendix 1. A Desk Study from the Local Ecological Records Centre (Barnsley Biological Records Centre) which has been included within the original PEA (BG22.227 Royd Moor Farm – PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL - REV1 September 2024)

Background

The application site can be found at SE 22135 04084, accessed off Royd Moor Road which borders the north of the site. The site is dominated by agricultural buildings, their associated hardstanding and boundary features with an area of semi-improved grassland to the south. The site is located 1km west of the rural village of Thurlstone, South Yorkshire, the areas surrounding the site are dominated by extensive arable and pastoral land supporting mainly dry-stone walls with occasional hedgerows and trees. Beyond Royd Moor Road, approximately 500m north of the site is Royd Moor Reservoir supporting associated woodland, no direct linear connectivity was noted between the site and this habitat.

The site has been the subject of a barn owl survey and suite of bat surveys undertaken by Brindle and Green and reported on separately. Reports BG22.227 – Royd Moor Farm Bat Roost Characterisation Report and BG22.227 Royd Moor Farm – Barn Owl Report should be viewed in conjunction with this report. No evidence of breeding barn owl was recorded during the subsequent barn owl survey within the buildings surveyed (3, 4, 12 and 13). However the bat surveys identified a common pipistrelle and brown long-eared day roost within buildings 3 and 4. Update surveys are currently ongoing within the 2024 bat survey season.

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Habitats

The application site was dominated by buildings and hardstanding with areas of poor semi-improved grassland located to the northern and western extent of the site with a patch of tall ruderals recorded north of building 3. A line of trees was also recorded on the northern and western boundaries. Habitats recorded onsite and their respective species composition are detailed in Table 1 below. Overall, the site was deemed to hold 'Site' value in a local context, with habitats recorded being of low value, and locally frequent in the surrounding landscape. No recordings of invasive weed species were found within the application area.

Table 1: JNCC Habitat Types found on site and inclusion within UK BAP/ HPI Habitats.

Habitat Type	N HPI	L HPI	N/A
Buildings and hardstanding The site was dominated by 14 buildings et upon hardstanding. The hardstanding within the site comprised concrete and ranged from good to moderate condition, with colonising vegetation such as dandelion and broadleaf plantain (<i>Plantago major</i>) present at the periphery and within cracks.			✓
Species poor Semi-improved grassland Patches of species poor semi improved grassland were recorded to the northern and western extent of the site. The species composition was dominated by, cocks-foot (<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>), with abundant perennial rye grass (<i>Lolium perenne</i>) and Yorkshire fog (<i>Holcus lanatus</i>). Occasional herb species such as dandelion (<i>Taraxacum officinale agg.</i>), creeping buttercup (<i>Ranunculus repens</i>), common daisy (<i>Bellis perennis</i>) were also recorded.			✓
Tall Ruderal Herbs A small area of unmanaged tall ruderal herbs was recorded to the north of building 3. The species composition was dominated by American willowherb (<i>Epilobium ciliatum</i>), with occasional cleavers (<i>Galium aparine</i>), common nettle (<i>Urtica dioica</i>), spear thistle (<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>) and broad-leaved dock (<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>).			✓
Scattered trees The north-western boundary supported a line of trees approximately 90m in length. The species composition was dominated by two species, field maple (<i>Acer campestre</i>) and Leyland cypress (<i>Cupressus × leylandii</i>).			✓

1.2 Protected Species and Designated Site Assessment

The ecological receptors considered for the site were designated sites, habitats, breeding birds, roosting bats, foraging and commuting bats, great crested newts, reptiles, badgers, and other mammal species of principal importance (MSPI). The observations made during the 2024 update assessment were used in combination with the conclusions made in the previous ecological appraisal and subsequent bat and barn owl surveys. Suitability assessment and recommendations relating to protected species and invasive plant species are summarised Table 2 below.

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Table 2. Summary of habitat suitability and recommendations for each species group.

Ecological Receptor	Site Suitability	Evaluation and Recommendations
Designated Sites	<p>No statutory designated sites were recorded within the site boundary or immediately adjacent to it. The site is 0.37km North of Small Shaw and High Bank LWS and 0.7km southwest of Royd Moor Reservoir LWS, with no direct connectivity via linear features to these sites. Furthermore, Small Shaw and High Bank LWS is designated for its habitats rather than faunal assemblage.</p>	<p>Impacts to statutory designated sites are not anticipated as the proposed development will not impact any connectivity to the surrounding area, as the proposed plans show the development will be retained within the red-line boundary with limited removal of boundary features.</p> <p>As such, impacts to designated sites are not considered to be an ecological constraint to this development.</p>
Habitats	<p>The habitats within the redline boundary are considered to be of 'Site' value within a local context.</p> <p>During the 2024 update assessment, no notable or rare species were recorded.</p> <p>No priority habitats were recorded within or immediately adjacent to the application site.</p>	<p>A biodiversity impact assessment is to be undertaken and reported on to guide proposals to achieve a mandatory 10% net gain to biodiversity.</p>
Nesting Birds	<p>The habitats (buildings, trees, ruderals and grassland) within the redline boundary were considered suitable to support nesting birds.</p>	<p>All wild birds, their eggs and nests are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure, or take any wild bird whilst nesting, or take, damage, or destroy the nest of any such bird while in use or being built.</p> <p>Given their protection, development must be sympathetic to the value of this habitat and potential impacts on breeding birds, their eggs, nests and young. The breeding bird season is generally accepted as being between March and September. Consideration and implementation must be given to the following options most appropriate to the scheme.</p> <p>Undertake clearance between the months of October and February where possible. Clearance between the months of March and September should be subjected to a search for active birds' nests 24 hours prior to commencement of works.</p> <p>During construction, WoodStone Sparrow Nest boxes or similar approved should be incorporated into the north/north-eastern elevation of 25% of new buildings, positioned at least 3 metres from the ground.</p>

Ecological Receptor	Site Suitability	Evaluation and Recommendations
Barn Owl	Buildings 3, 4, 12 and 13 offer potential breeding habitat for barn owl. Nearest ecological record found to be 1.5km from the site.	<p>Woodstone swallow nest bowls and Vivara Pro Woodstone House Martin Nests (or similar approved) should be installed post-construction under sheltered eaves of 25% of the new dwellings on an north/north-eastern elevation.</p> <p>Barn owl is protected under Schedule 1 the Wildlife and countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to kill, injure, capture or possess a barn owl, take or destroy their eggs, nest sites and to disturb the dependent young.</p> <p>A pre works check is required on all buildings no more than three months prior to development works to the buildings.</p> <p>Should any evidence of barn owl be uncovered during works then works should cease and the advice of an ecologist sought.</p> <p>A barn owl box is recommended to be installed within a retained building post development, the box should be positioned on an internal wall of an open-faced barn to provide access, at a height of at least 5m with an unobstructed flight path. If this is not possible a suitable tree mounted box should be provided.</p>
Roosting Bats	<p>Buildings 3 and Building 4 to correspond with clients building plans) offered 'Moderate' suitability to support roosting bats as well as suitability to support hibernating bats. Building 26 offered 'Low' suitability to support roosting bats.</p> <p>The surveys identified the following roosts within Building 3 and 4, and a likely absence of bats within Building 26.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roost 1 – Common pipistrelle day roost (max 2 bats) within the ground floor interior of Building 3, recorded flying out of the open side on the northern elevation. • Roost 2 – Brown long eared day roost (max 1 bat) within the ground floor interior of Building 4. <p>No hibernating bats were recorded during subsequent hibernation surveys. All other buildings assessed to have 'Negligible' suitability to support roosting bats.</p>	<p>All bats in the United Kingdom and their habitats are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).</p> <p>Works will require an EPSDL Licence as such update survey works required to inform the license. The surveys are currently being undertaken in active 2024 bat survey season. mitigation and enhancements to be guided during compilation of licence documents.</p>
Foraging and commuting bats	The site supported vegetative features such as linear trees on the northern boundary considered suitable to support commuting and foraging bats. The	The bat surveys identified habitats to the north and south of Building 3 and 4 were used by locally frequent bat species.

Ecological Receptor	Site Suitability	Evaluation and Recommendations
	<p>grassland within the site boundary also provide foraging opportunities for bats. However, the linear tree line is considered fragmented from the wider environment and no connectivity was noted to any core habitat for bats. The site is considered to provide low suitability habitat for foraging and commuting bats, with linear features onsite connecting the site to the agricultural landscape beyond.</p>	<p>The extent of disturbance to foraging and commuting bats within the area should be reduced where possible by employing a sensitive lighting scheme during construction works, and artificial security lighting should not be installed post construction in a way which directs lighting towards boundary vegetative features in the surroundings and away from any compensatory roosting habitat.</p> <p>If lighting is required, a scheme should be devised and positioned to have minimal disturbance following the guidance of an ecologist. Any lighting used during the development should be directed away from the north-western boundary with overspill less than 1lux (ideally 0) onto suitable habitats.</p>
<p>Badgers (<i>Meles meles</i>)</p>	<p>No evidence of badger setts, or activity such as mammal runs, snuffle holes and latrines were found during the ecological appraisal of the site. However, the site supported habitat features such as grassland and scattered trees which were considered conducive to supporting foraging badger. The extent of the site, and the location within an agricultural dominated landscape suggest that this transient species could forage or commute within the surrounding environment, but are not likely dependant on habitats within the redline boundary. Nearest ecological record found to be</p>	<p>Under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, in England and Wales it is an offence to wilfully kill, injure, disturb or take any badger, or intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, or obstruct access to any part of a badger sett. No direct evidence of badgers was recorded; however, this highly mobile species could reside in the surrounding environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A walkover survey should be conducted within the zone of influence (the site and 30 metres perimeter of boundary) prior to the commencement of works to identify if badgers have become active within the proposed development. The following appropriate precautions should also be employed during construction works to prevent harm to this protected species. • Any exposed excavations to be left overnight are to be covered at the end of each working day or include a means of escape for any fallen animals (e.g., a scaffolding plank). • Any temporarily exposed open pipes are to be capped to prevent badgers gaining access. • Should badgers or any evidence of badgers be encountered during the construction phase, all works should cease, and the advice of a suitably qualified ecologist should be sought

Ecological Receptor	Site Suitability	Evaluation and Recommendations
<p>Great Crested Newt (<i>Triturus cristatus</i>)</p>	<p>Nearest ecological record located 518m north-east of the site.</p> <p>The site supported a mixture of hard standing and semi-improved grassland which are considered sub optimal to support the terrestrial phase for this species, restricting suitability to isolated patches of ruderals. There were no ponds within or adjoining the application boundary, however, three ponds were within 500metres of the site (Figures 7) all located to the north-east, with the closest 185m to the northeast. It is considered unlikely GCN would be found on site due to the sub-optimal habitats found and the site is not positioned centrally within a network of ponds, therefore it is unlikely GCN would commute to the site from the ponds to the north-east.</p>	<p>Great crested newts and their eggs, breeding sites and resting places are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).</p> <p>The following reasonable avoidance measures should be followed during the construction phase to minimise risk to individual amphibians:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearance work should be conducted outside of hibernation period (October to February). • Prework clearance of log and rubble piles should be conducted by hand to facilitate the escape of GCN from the area. • All materials to be stored off the ground (for example on pallets) to minimise the likelihood of GCN accessing them for refugia. • All spoil/waste materials to be removed from site at the end of each working day (or stored in a skip). <p>If any evidence of GCN presence is uncovered during development works, then works should cease immediately and the advice of an ecologist sought as a European Protected Species License would be required to continue works.</p>
<p>Reptiles</p>	<p>No reptile records were returned within the data search. No evidence of reptiles was recorded during the survey. Limited suitable habitat was located within the northern area of the site where the grassland vegetation provided a variable structure and suitable basking spots on rubble heaps for reptiles, with connective linear features to the surrounding landscape. However the overall suitability of the site was considered unlikely to support a core population.</p>	<p>Reptiles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) making it illegal to intentionally kill or injure reptiles. The site is considered to provide sub-optimal opportunities for reptiles; however, reptiles that commute through the site may be injured during the construction phase of the development.</p> <p>The site holds suitability for the species with, semi-improved grassland present. it is also possible that small numbers could traverse through the site to more optimal habitats present to the wider landscape. Therefore, reptiles could be impacted by the development during the construction phase. Works should seek to follow Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) during the active season (April to October) for reptiles such as;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetation removal should be completed directionally, if cut within the active season for reptiles. i.e., working from one side of the site to the other cut the vegetation in lengths down to 150mm until completed across the site. Once complete over the whole site to 150mm, vegetation can be cut to ground level, again directionally to

Ecological Receptor	Site Suitability	Evaluation and Recommendations
		<p>facilitate the escape of reptile species form the working area. Once completed the area should be maintained until works commence on the site, to maintain unsuitability for reptiles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If clearance works can be completed within the inactive season (November to March) then no reasonable avoidance measures are required to be followed for reptile species, as the site is unlikely to support species within hibernation period.
<p>Mammal Species of Principle Importance (MSPI)</p>	<p>The site supported suitable commuting and foraging habitat for western European hedgehog (<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>) and brown hare (<i>Lepus europaeus</i>).</p>	<p>Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) highlights several mammal species of principle importance in England. The site was considered conducive of hedgehog. There is a risk of harm to individuals of these species that may be using the site, during site clearance.</p> <p>The recommended reasonable avoidance measures should be followed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Any temporarily exposed open pipes are to be capped to prevent hedgehogs or brown hare gaining access. Undertake works during daylight hours. The vegetation should be checked prior to removal. Search areas of deadwood, brash, and discarded items by hand before removing. If burning any cleared vegetation, carry out immediately after piling to prevent hedgehogs moving in prior to burning. Any exposed excavations to be left overnight are to be covered at the end of each working day or include a means of escape for any fallen animals (e.g., a scaffolding plank).

Conclusion

The updated assessment completed in 2024 indicates the site has not undergone significant ecological change in the time since the initial survey detailed in the initial preliminary ecological appraisal (BG22.227, January 2023). Update survey work in relation to roosting bats in being undertaken in the active season of 2024 required to inform a European Protected Species Licence.

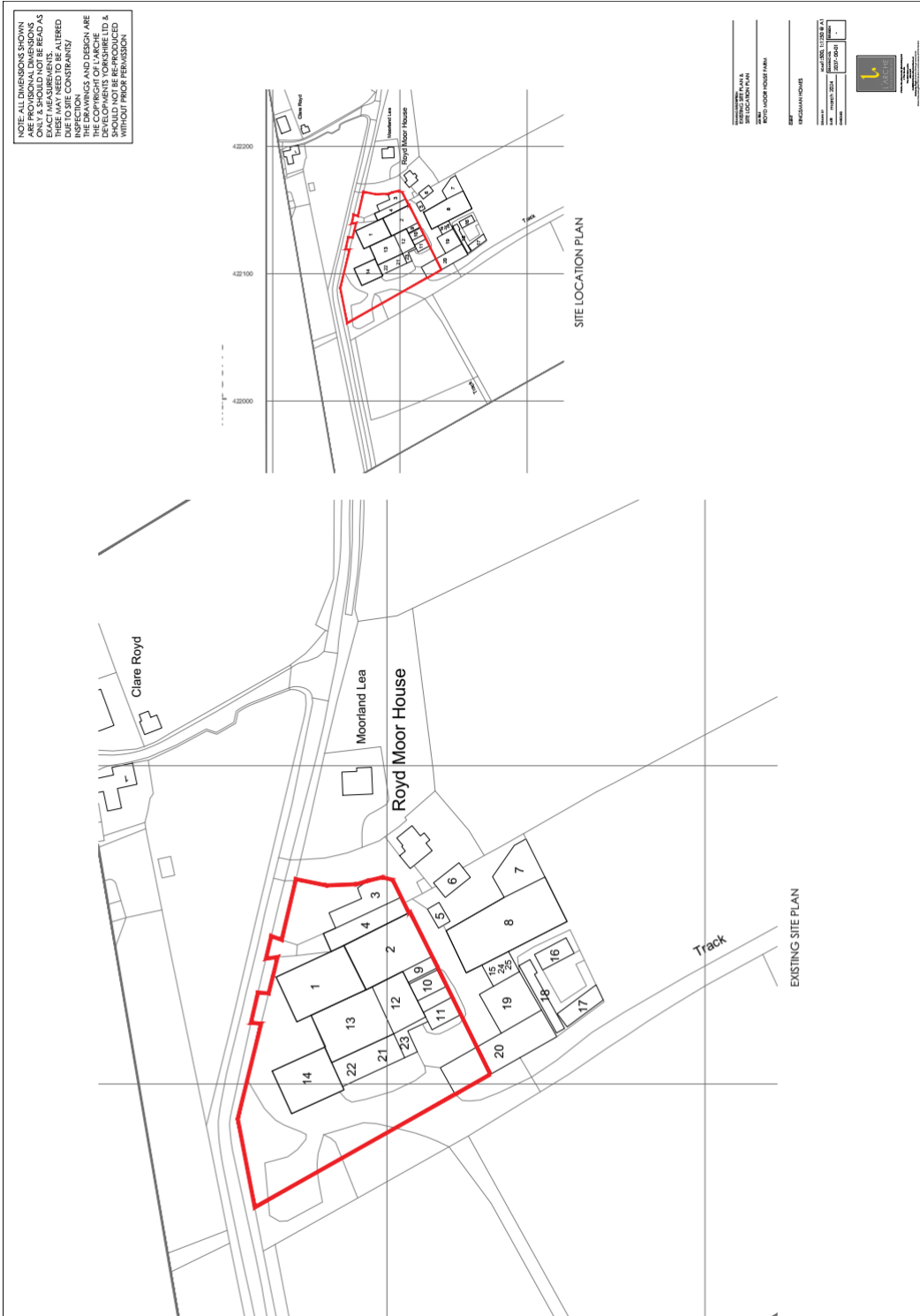
I trust this information is a satisfactory summary of work undertaken to date and the suitability of the site to support protected species, in order to inform the planning application.

Yours Sincerely,

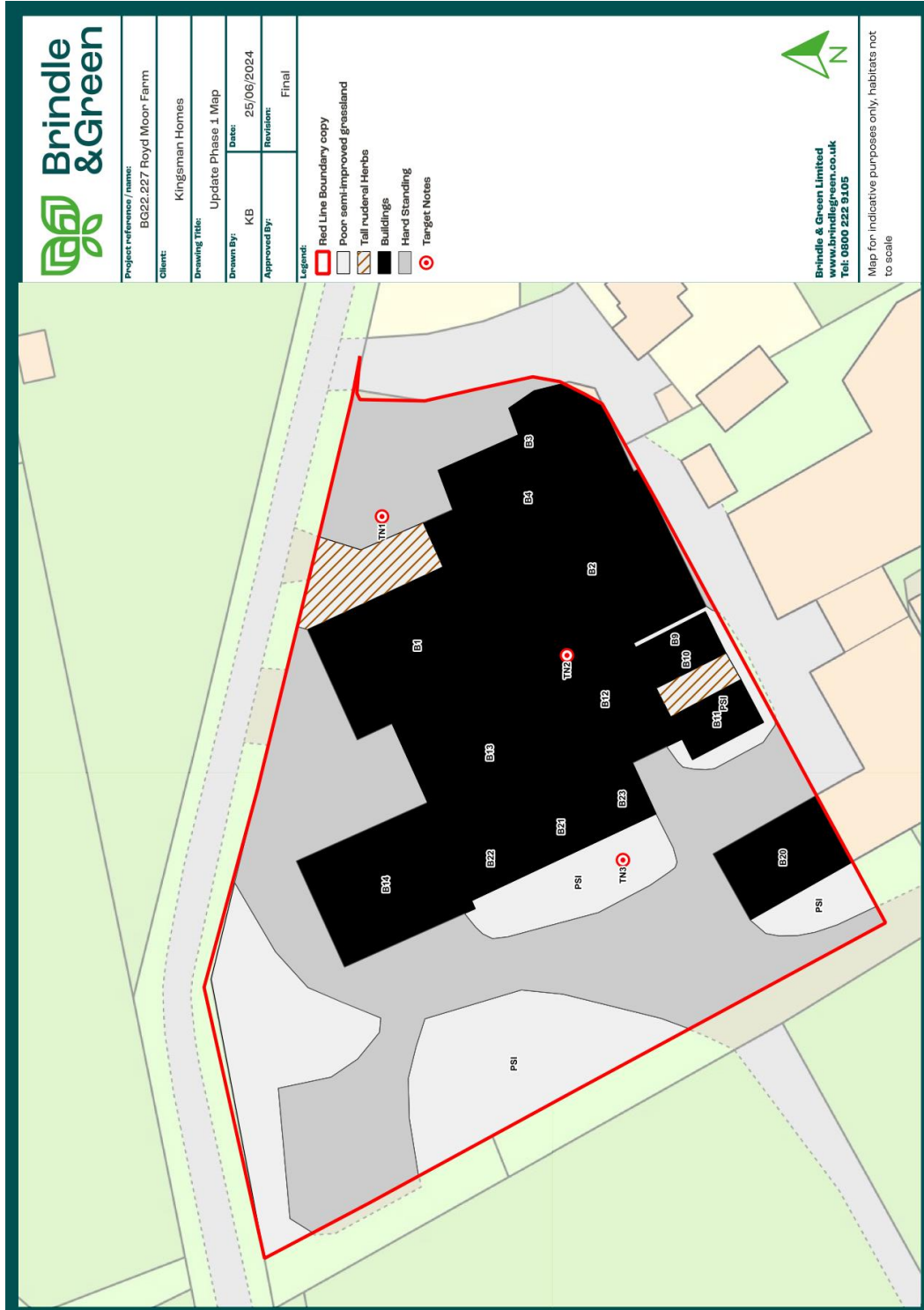
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'KB', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kerry Baker
Senior Ecologist
Brindle and Green Ltd

Appendix 1: Existing Site Location Plan



Appendix 2: Phase 1 Plan



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Target note number	Description
1	Tarmac spoil heap at grid reference SE 22153 04128
2	Hay bales stored at approx. SE 22132 04102
3	Stone spoil heap at SE 22105 04099

Scientific nomenclature follows Stace (2010) for vascular plant species and common names follow BSBI List of British & Irish Vascular Plants and Stoneworts.

Please note that this plant species list was generated as part of a Phase 1 Habitat survey and does not constitute a full botanical survey.

Abundance was estimated using the DAFOR scale as follows:

D = dominant, A = abundant, F = frequent, O = occasional, R = rare, LF = locally frequent

Common Name	Scientific Name	Estimated Abundance (DAFOR)
American Willowherb	<i>Epilobium ciliatum</i>	LF
Apple	<i>Malus</i> sp.	R
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	O
Broadleaved Dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	O
Broadleaved Plantain	<i>Plantago major</i>	F
Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>	A
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	D
Common Couch	<i>Elytrigia repens</i>	A
Common Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	O
Cow parsley	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	O
Creeping Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	O
Creeping Thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	O
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum</i>	O
False Oat-grass	<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	F
Field Maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>	D
Hogweed	<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	F
Leylandii	<i>Cupressus x leylandii</i>	A
Perennial Rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	A
Pineappleweed	<i>Matricaria discoidea</i>	F
Rosebay Willowherb	<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	O
Sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	O
Sow Thistle	<i>Sonchus</i>	O
Tufted Hair-grass	<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	A
White Clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	F
Yorkshire Fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	A

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Appendix 3: Development proposals




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Appendix 4. Site Photographs

Image	Description
	<p>Buildings 2 and 4</p>
	<p>Poor semi improved grassland and tree lines to the north-western corner of the site.</p>

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Image	Description
	Tall ruderal herb habitat adjacent to Building 3.

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