Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.

WELLS STREET, CUDWORTH.

OS MAP REF: SE 38645 08661.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN REPORT.

Ref No: **260643 / REV1.**

Date: **5th September 2026.**

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. A planning application is to be submitted for the creation of five residential properties on an area of land off Wells Street in Cudworth (Application No. 2025 / 1076). A proposed development plan can be found in Appendix II.

1.2. There was a previous Biodiversity Net Gain report prepared by Liz Ecology and submitted to support the planning application.

1.3. In response to the BNG assessment, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council have made the following comments which require addressing:

'I have the following comments in relation to the information submitted which should be addressed:

-Paragraph 2.3 states that condition assessment sheets supplied alongside DEFRA metric 4.0 were used. Can the ecologist confirm if the Statutory Biodiversity Metric condition assessment sheets were used? It would also be useful if the completed condition assessment sheets were submitted, as detailed further below.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are nationally important designated sites, rather than internationally designated. The report should be amended accordingly.

The species list provided for the modified grassland habitat doesn't particularly align with the definition that is set out in the UK Habitat Classification guidelines. The ecologist should check this and provide more robust justification as to why the grassland is modified grassland or amend the grassland type to that which is more appropriate.

-Paragraph 3.20 of the BNG assessment report states that the area of trees comprises a range of species of which less than 70% are native. From the photograph provided most of the trees appear to be birch trees, therefore native species. The ecologist should consider this further and amend the condition assessment or provide robust justification as to why this criterion has been failed.

It doesn't appear as though all the condition assessment criterion for a number of habitat types have been considered. Ideally condition assessment sheets should be submitted showing where each of the relevant criteria have been passed/failed.

The proposals site is located with the Dearne Valley Green Heart Nature Improvement Area. Habitats should therefore be input into the metric as being of high strategic significance, with reference made to the Statutory Metric Guidance where a Local Nature Recovery Strategy has yet to be published.

It is noted within the metric that some baseline habitats will be retained as part of the proposals, including tall forbs and urban trees. Where these habitats fall within proposed vegetated gardens these habitats need to be recorded as lost and then recorded as created in a lower condition with the 'habitat created in advance' function set to 30 plus years. This is set out within the habitat retention section of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Guidance, where the condition of a retained habitat cannot be maintained or enhanced over the project timeframe on the basis that it is situated within a private garden.

Photographs and the baseline habitat map included within the report show stables on site. It is considered likely that the structures have a negligible potential for roosting bats; however, this should be confirmed within the report with robust justification provided, along with detail on whether the structures have potential to support nesting birds or if signs of nesting birds were recorded. Furthermore, the report should set out precautionary working methods to avoid any other potential impact on protected species, such as nesting birds during vegetation clearance works. When referring to the CIEEM publication Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain in England: A Guide (2024) it states that within the planning submission stage details of any impacted protected species should be detailed. The report should be amended accordingly.'

1.5. Unfortunately, the client has tried on numerous occasions to reach this ecologist in order to obtain the necessary information / commission the amendments.

1.6. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd was therefore commissioned to undertake a biodiversity net gain assessment of the site to satisfy the above comments made by the council. As Whitcher Wildlife ltd did not have the information required to address the concerns raised by the LPA, a new Biodiversity Net Gain assessment was undertaken which has altered the baseline information. This has been undertaken using the Statutory Metric calculation tool.

1.7. A site visit was carried out on 19th June 2026 to gather all relevant baseline information.

1.8. Comments received back from the council in August 2026 stated the following:

'The baseline habitat plan should include the building which has been demolished. When checking aerial photographs, the structure was in place until at least 2023, so should therefore be included within the baseline as per degradation rules: Where unauthorised degradation of the onsite habitat has taken place on the land between 30 January 2020 and the date of relevant date (the date of the application), the biodiversity pre-development value of the onsite habitat should be calculated as the biodiversity value of the habitat on the date immediately before the carrying out of these degradation activities. The relevant date should therefore be set as a date immediately before these activities. Unauthorised degradation of onsite habitat is any degradation which is not in accordance with a previous planning permission. An updated baseline will indicate a reduced loss in habitat units. It is disappointing that the building was no subject to assessment for protected species prior to being removed. Recommendations for the incorporation of bat and bird boxes, as mentioned above should therefore be incorporated within the proposals site as possible mitigation.'

1.9. Therefore, the baseline mapping and Biodiversity Net Gain assessment have been updated to reflect this minor change.

****

2. SURVEY 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. A baseline survey was carried out of the site to establish the baseline biodiversity value of the area. Prior to visiting the site, the survey area was cross referenced to maps and aerial photographs to give a general idea of the habitats and potential issues within the area and to identify potential access and walking routes.

2.3. The survey area was walked where access was agreed. 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. All primary habitats are accompanied by secondary codes which are used to add further specific details where necessary. Each primary habitat and unique set off secondary codes will be shown individually in the appended annotated map.

2.4. The survey was carried out by Alexandrea White BSc (Hons) MSc MCIEEM 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. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. The Survey Area.

3.1.1. The survey area included an area of land off Wells Street in Cudworth. The aerial photograph below shows the location of the survey area in red.



3.1.2. The survey area was surrounded by residential properties on all aspects. The aerial photograph below highlights the survey area within the wider landscape.



3.2. Survey Limitations.

There were no significant limitations during the survey.

3.3. Description of Habitats.

3.3.1. Appendix I of this report contains an annotated map marked up with the varying baseline habitats of the site. These habitats are: -

- u1f- Sparsely Vegetated Land
- g4 – Modified Grassland
- u1b5 – Buildings
- u1b – Developed Land; Sealed Surface
- u1e – Built Linear Feature

3.3.2. u1f – Sparsely Vegetated Land

Secondary code: 10 Scattered Scrub, 32 Scattered Tree.

3.3.2.1. The majority of the survey area was sparsely vegetated land which supported the following species: perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, timothy *Phleum pratense*, false oat grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, cleavers *Galium aparine*, prickly sowthisle *Sonchus asper*, common poppy *Papaver rhoeas*, herb Robert *Geranium robertianium*, common fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica*, common nettle *Urtica dioica*, narrow leaved ragwort *Senecio inaequidens*, pineappleweed *Matricaria discoidea*, American willowherb *Epilobium ciliatum*, hoary willowherb *Epilobium parviflorum*, birds foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* and cat's-ear *Hypochaeris radicata*.




3.3.2.2. Along the top of the bank was a large area of ruderal and ephemerals with occasional scrub species. The species present included; Jack-by-the-hedge *Alliaria petiolata*, cleavers *Galium aparine*, nipplewort *Lapsana communis*, white valerian *Centranthus ruber alba*, red valerian *Centranthus ruber*, great lettuce *Lactuca virosa*, smooth sowthistle *Sonchus oleraceus*, prickly sowthistle *Sonchus asper*, bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*, false oat grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus* and common lilac *Syringa vulgaris*.




3.3.2.3. The condition assessment for this habitat was ‘good’ for both parcels of land.

3.3.2.4. There were also scattered trees along the top of the bank. The species included: sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, cherry *Prunus avium*, silver birch *Betula pendula*, goat willow *Salix caprea* and white poplar *Populus alba*.




3.3.2.5. The condition of these scattered trees was assessed as being ‘moderate’.

3.3.3. g4 – Modified Grassland

Secondary Code: 81 Ruderal or Ephemeral.

3.3.3.1. The area to the south was less disturbed and more grassland species (typical of pasture) with smaller areas of bare ground and therefore this was assessed as modified grassland. The species included: timothy *Phleum pratense*, perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, false oat grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, hedgerow cranesbill *Geranium pyrenaicum*, hairy tare *Vicia hirsuta*, common ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, greater plantain *Plantago major*, bird’s foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, common nettle *Urtica dioica* and field bindweed *Convolvulus arvensis.*




3.3.3.2. This was assessed as being ‘modified’ grassland as it is dominated by rye grasses and timothy. This grassland from aerials was typically well managed and over grazed with a high grass cover.

3.3.3.3. The condition assessment for this habitat was ‘poor’ condition.

3.3.4. u1b5 – Buildings

3.3.4.1. The only building on site was a timber stable block.



3.3.4.2. There was a previous building on site from a review of aerials and the biodiversity net gain report although this is now demolished and a brick rubble pile is left, as shown below. This has now been included in the baseline mapping, to reflect the comments made by the council, with the area of the previous building being shown on historic imagery.



3.3.5. u1b – Developed land, sealed surface.

3.3.5.1. The tarmacked road off Wells Street allows for access into the site.

3.3.5.2. There is no condition assessment for this habitat.

3.3.6. u1e – Built Linear Feature

Secondary Code; 612 Fence, 853 Mortared Wall.

There were a mixture of stone walls and fencing around the boundaries of the site. There was also a retaining wall separating the development area of the site from the bank featuring the scattered trees.

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4. OTHER ECOLOGICAL ISSUES.

4.1. The stable was assessed as providing negligible potential for roosting bats as there were no opportunities for roosting bats within the building. The climatic conditions are also expected to varying and not remain stable. The internals of the stables are light and airy. The photographs below highlight two rooms.




4.2. No comment can be made regarding the suitability of the other buildings on site for their potential for roosting bats as these have been demolished since the original BNG report was produced.

4.3. Within the stable were numerous swallow nests and eleven were counted in one stable and seven in the other. The photographs below highlight a number of these nests.




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5. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT.

5.1. Baseline Biodiversity Value.

The below tables demonstrate the baseline area units within the red line development area using the Statutory Metric calculation tool. It should be noted this has been placed as 'formally identified in local strategy' which has 'high strategic significance' within the metric; as requested by BMBC.

Area habitats:

Habitat Type	Area in ha	Distinctiveness	Condition	Biodiversity units
Sparsely Vegetated Land – Tall Forbs	0.072	Low	Good	0.50
Sparsely Vegetated Land – Ruderal / Ephemeral	0.084	Low	Good	0.58
Grassland – Modified Grassland	0.0297	Low	Poor	0.07
Developed Land; Sealed Surface	0.013	V. Low	N/A	0
Urban Tree	0.0814	Medium	Moderate	0.75
Urban Tree	0.0489	Medium	Moderate	0.45
Total	**0.2 (Excl. Trees)**			**2.34**

5.2. Post Development Habitat Creation.

5.2.1. The below table demonstrates the post development area biodiversity units within the red line development area using the Statutory Metric calculation tool.

Area habitats:

Habitat Type	Area in ha	Distinctiveness	Condition	Biodiversity units
Retained:				
Urban Tree	0.0529	Medium	Moderate	0.49
Created:				
Developed Land; Sealed Surface	0.1163	V. Low	N/A	0
Vegetated Garden	0.0825	Low	N/A	0.18
Total	**0.2 (Excl. Trees)**			**0.58**

5.2.2. Whilst the trees are retained, these have been entered into the metric as lost and then created with the 'habitat created in advance' tab set to 30+ years; this is in line with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Guidance on retention of habitats. The condition is still set to moderate as that is the current and expected condition.

5.3. Overall Biodiversity Net Gain.

5.3.1. There are 2.34BU of area habitat present on the site pre-development. Post development there are 0.67BU of area habitat and no hedgerow habitat. This represents a loss of 71.42% of on-site area biodiversity.

FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	-1.67
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	-71.42%
	Hedgerow units	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	No - Check Trading Summaries ▲	

5.3.2. The development is exempt from the statutory 10% biodiversity net gain requirement as they are classed as self builds.

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5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. Given the survey area and building is suitable for nesting birds, the works should be timed to avoid the nesting bird season (March to August). If this is not possible, it is recommended a nesting bird survey is carried out by a suitably experienced surveyor in advance of the works.

5.2. It will be necessary to incorporate biodiversity enhancements in the new dwellings on the site in line with the NPPF.

5.2.1. To achieve this, two bat roosting opportunities should be provided in the form of integrated bat bricks, which should be provided in the gable ends of the houses.

5.2.2. Mitigation for swallows will be included within the plans. A purpose-made, covered nest box structure will be installed at the ridge of a gable wall or at the eaves of one of the buildings.

5.2.3. All fences between the gardens should be furnished with hedgehog access openings 130mm by 130mm and labelled as such to enable hedgehogs to move freely across the site.

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Prepared by:	
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Checked by:	
Ruth Georgiou BSc MCIEEM	Date: 22nd July 2026

6. REFERENCES.

CIEEM (2017) *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd edition*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

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Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (2024) *Statutory Net Biodiversity Metric User Guide*. Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/biodiversity-net-gain (Accessed: 15/04/2024).

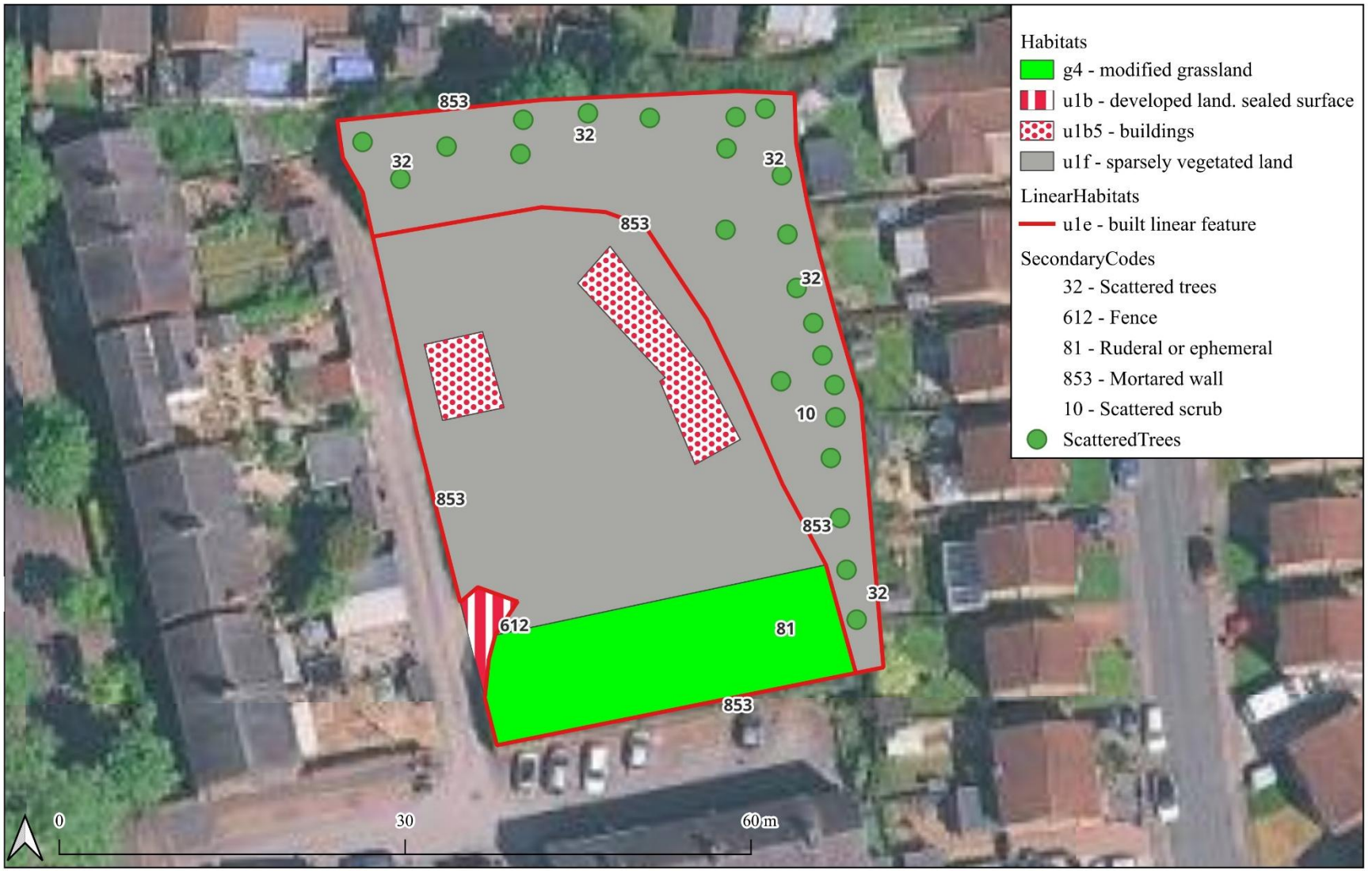
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The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69 (Accessed: 15/04/2024).

UKHab Ltd (2023) UK Habitat classification Version 2.0 Available at https://www.ukhab.org. JNCC, Peterborough.

Appendix I. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA PRE DEVELOPMENT.



Site: Wells Street, Cudworth

Reference: 260643

Date: 04.09.2026

Produced by: Samuel Bentley

Appendix II. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

Drawing No.	Rev No.
MDW001 -001	



INDICATIVE ONLY

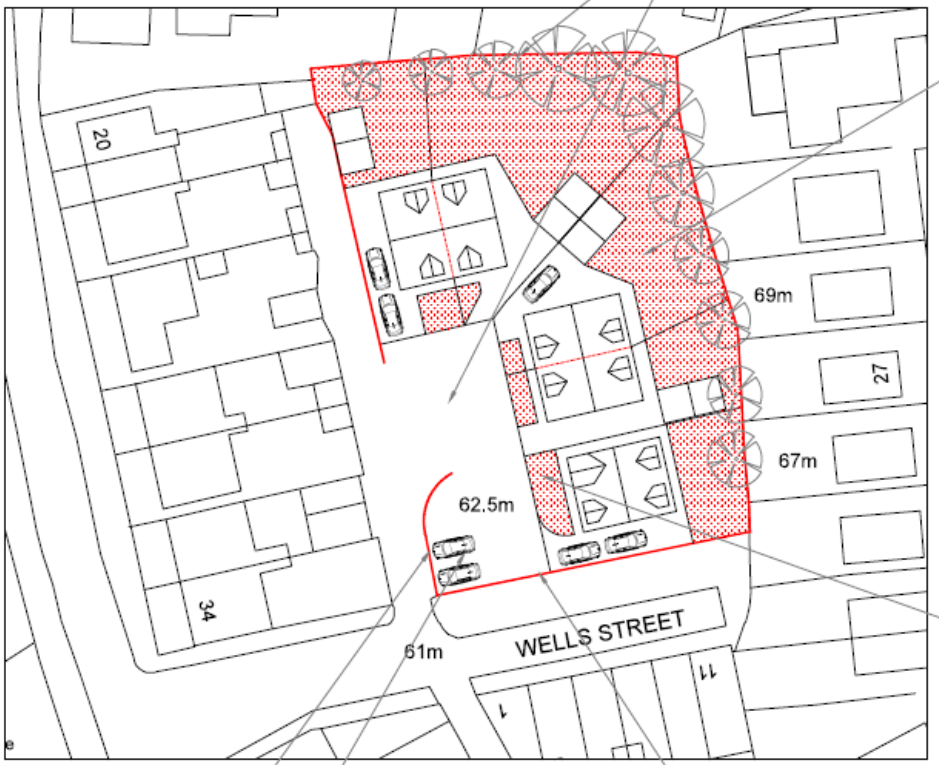
SCALE BARS

1:100 1 2 3 4 5

1:200 2 4 6 8 10

1:500 5 10 15 20 25

1:1250 25 50



BLOCK PLAN
SCALE 1:500 AT A3

DO NOT SCALE: Contractor to check all dimensions and report any omissions or errors

NOTES

Rev	Description	By	Chk	App	Date

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Drawing Title
SITE PLANS

Address
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Project Title
PROPOSED NEW DRWELLINGS

Purpose of Issue
PLANNING

Drawing Status
FIRST ISSUE

Scale at A3	Drawn By	Date
AS SHOWN	JRB	03/07/2025
Checked By	Date	Approved By	Date
	03/07/2025		03/07/2025
Project No.	Drawing No.	Revision
MDW001	001	-

APPROVAL ☐ INFORMATION ☐ TENDER ☐ CONTRACT ☐ CONSTRUCTION ☐

Appendix III. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA POST DEVELOPMENT.



Site: Wells Street, Cudworth

Reference: 260643

Date: 09.07.2026

Produced by: Samuel Bentley