



# Replacement Manor Farm

**INVISIBLE  
STUDIO**

Design and Access Statement

March 2023





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Images

Left: Aerial view of the site





Image  
Approach to Manor Farm, Yarlinton

## 01 - Introduction



01 Introduction

Background and Project Brief

Introduction

This document has been prepared on behalf of Emily Estate (UK) Ltd to support a pre-application enquiry, for the proposed replacement of the existing farm complex known as Manor Farm, Yarlington

The proposed pre-application consists of the:

- + Replacement of Manor Farm through the construction of new agricultural buildings, yard areas and associated landscape and infrastructure works
- + Demolition of existing Manor Farm agricultural buildings and slurry pit, and restoration of landscape to pre-development form and the re development of the old farm complex

The development proposals create the unique opportunity to take the existing Manor Farm, a collection of prominent, unsightly farm buildings which are in a state of deterioration and poor functional value, and replace it with a new high quality farmstead, positioned more centrally to the land it serves far from neighbouring dwellings, sensitively integrated into the supplemented landscape.

This relocation will extinguish the to and fro of large elements of farm machinery through the village of Yarlington as farm traffic will use a newly constructed ‘inner’ estate road.

The removal of the farm use further enables a redevelopment of the existing manor farm into residential accommodation of a scale and design in keeping with the village.  
Please refer to the Document :  
**2201-Yarlington-PreApplication Report - Stonewood Design.**

Background

Manor Farm was acquired by the Emily Estate in 2022 as an expansion to their existing neighbouring farm operations, with a view to providing a modern and efficient base for supporting livestock rearing and associated activities.

Manor Farm is a mix of steel framed agricultural buildings, yards and slurry tanks, currently providing overwintering for cattle with associated ancillary buildings. Under previous ownership the farm carried out various intensive agricultural processes.

The farm has evolved over time, in a piecemeal fashion with the current state of buildings being in poor condition and state of repair.

The existing modern agricultural buildings have no aesthetic value,either as individual elements or as a group.

Project Aims

The existing farm, its layout and the existing buildings and yard are of a very poor standard;

- the position on the periphery of the farmland it serves it necessitates inefficient vehicle and animal movements, particularly for dairy where animals must come to the parlour twice a day. All these movements currently move through the village, narrow lanes.
- th topography of the existing sloping farm makes it impossible to create a compact efficient and easily maintainable livestock yard.
- currently public footpaths are laid through the middle of the farm creating a safety and security risk

The Replacement Farm should

- + create larger more easily accessible buildings with covered silage clamps and feed stores
- + be more centrally positioned to the grazing land and be accessible from within the estate to reduce traffic movements on public roads
- + Be far from neighbouring dwellings
- + Be set low within the landscape and use landscape forms and planting to enhance the natural biodiversity and visual setting. It should reinforce the existing fieldwork pattern, using native hedgerows, trees and underplanting
- + Create an agricultural asset commensurate with efficient, sustainable farming enabling excellent quality produce to be created and provide the highest standards of animal welfare.
- + Introduce a range of sustainable and environmental enhancements including recycling water for irrigation and generating on-site renewable energy.

Project Brief

To achieve these project aims The Newt in Somerset have proposed a purpose built farm located on land to the north west of the existing farm in Yarlington village, positioned below the escarpment to the north east. The proposed farm will include the following:

- + State of the art roundhouses for milking and overwintering cattle, providing an improved environment for livestock as well as improving efficiency and ease of handling
- + Grain storage, to improve the estates ability to extend their range of products from grains harvested on the estate to the production of bread.
- + Office facilities for farm staff, improving security and aiding management of the farm
- + Ancillary buildings including storage of straw, silage and machinery.

Once the replacement farm is complete the vast majority of the existing farm buildings and yards at Manor Farm will be demolished and re-landscaped, enabling the retained core areas and buildings of the farm to be put to new positive uses (see separate pre-application documents).

Supporting Documentation

A number of reports have supported the design proposals and are included within this application, as set out below:  
+ Landscape and Visual Technical Note (LVTN) by Nicholas Pearson Associates

- + Agricultural Need Statement by Earthcare Technical
- + Flood Risk Assessment Plan by Simon Bastone Associates
- + Protected Species Survey and Assessment by Greena Ecological Consultancy
- + Planning Statement prepared by AZ Urban Studio - (incorporated as a chapter in this report)

These reports are summarised in further detail within the Planning Statement





## 02 - The Site



## 02 The Site

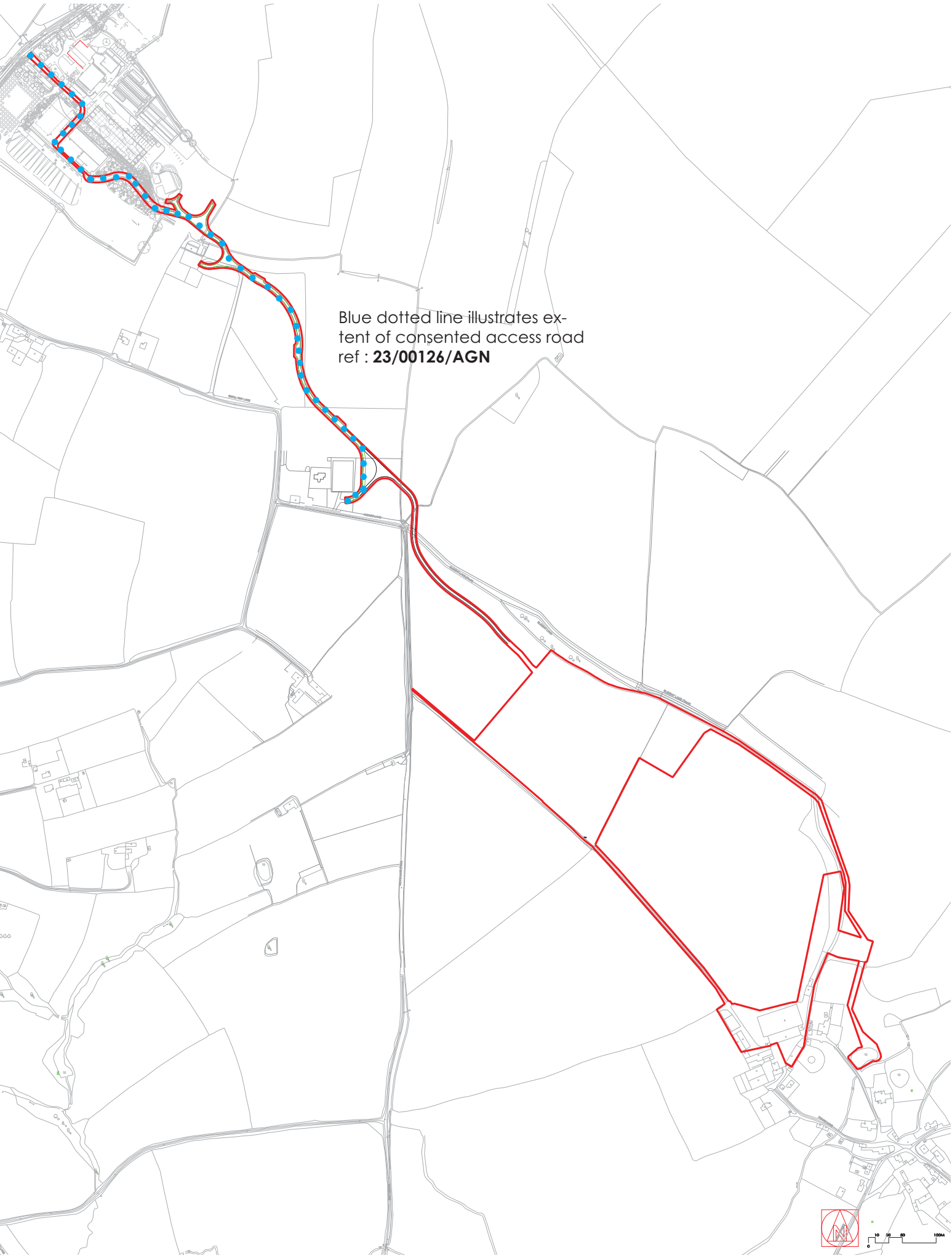
### Site Overview

The existing farmyard complex is approximately 2.5ha in area and is located within Yarlinton village. Principle access is off the 4 way junction at the centre of the village via Pound Lane. The A359 is located approximately 2 KM to the west of the site. The A371 is located approximately 1.5 KM to the north east off Shatwell Lane.

The farm was acquired by the Emily Estate in 2022 and is currently used for housing for overwintering livestock, silage and machinery storage. The previous use of the farm included a number of operations, reflected in the building types and facilities that are still in place, although not currently in use; a dairy unit of approximately 300 cows, and a slurry pit to the north east of the site.

The existing farm layout has developed in a piecemeal fashion, resulting in an inefficient layout, with the majority of the site developed over a period from the 1960s to late 1970s. The buildings have been poorly maintained and are in poor condition.

Two public footpaths run through the site as indicated on the site analysis layout, existing and proposed site layout plans. One of the public footpaths is routed through the centre of Manor Farm, which is not ideal when considering the impact of a working farm with public safety. The location of the proposed Replacement Manor Farm is within existing pastureland, to the north east of Manor Farm.



02 The Site  
Site Analysis

Topography

The site slopes gently towards the eastern boundary - with approximately 2 meters difference across the site

Site Access

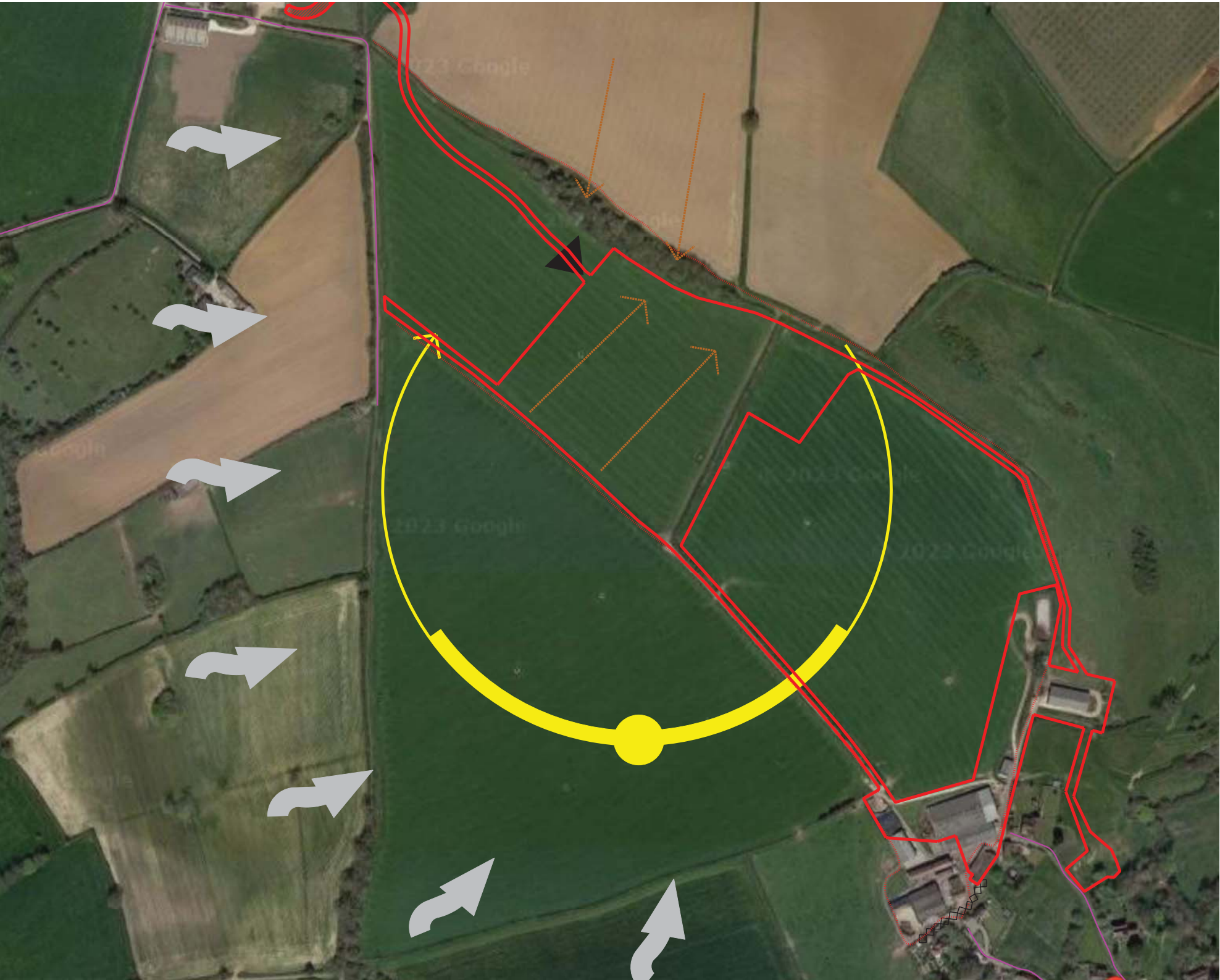
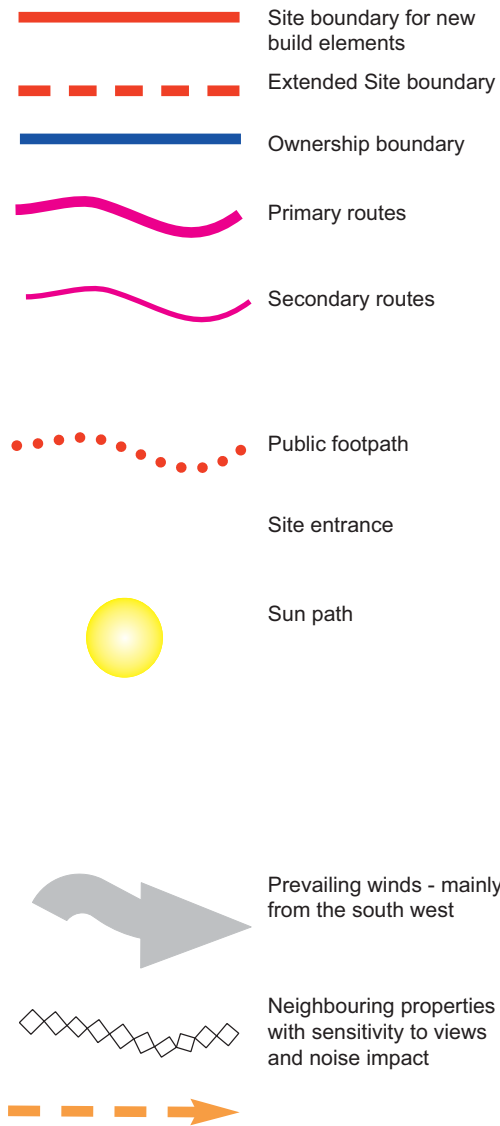
Vehicular to the site will be via a new 'internal' estate road linking the replacement farm with Avalon farm.

Pedestrian Routes

Public footpaths run along the north eastern and south western boundaries, & currently cross through the existing farmyard

Landscape

The site is predominantly open pastureland with hedgerows, but is bounded on the north east side by a deeper hedgerow with groups of trees, typical of the local character.





**02 The Site**  
*Photos - Replacement Farm Site mid distance views*



**01** View into site for south east corner



**02** Looking back toward the Site from NW footpath gate



**03** Looking northwards across the site



## 02 The Site

Photos - looking South & West from northern boundary



01 Looking southwards into the site from the restricted byway



01 Looking westwards back along restricted byway

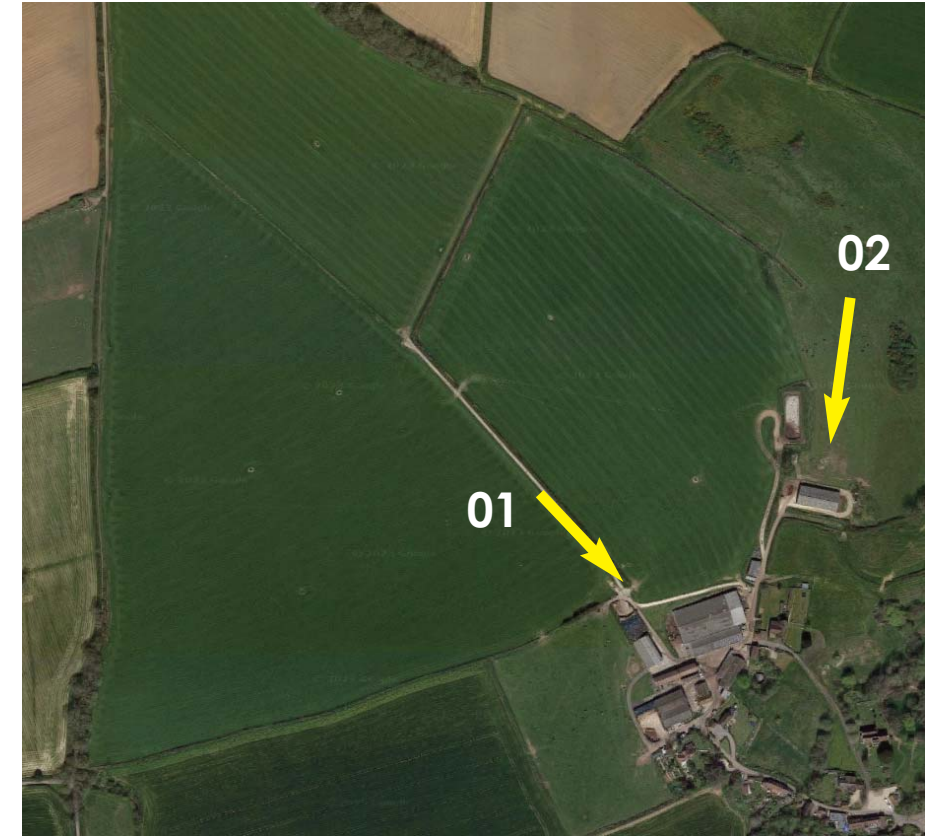


## 02 The Site

Photos - Existing Manor Farm approached - from the footpath & restricted byway



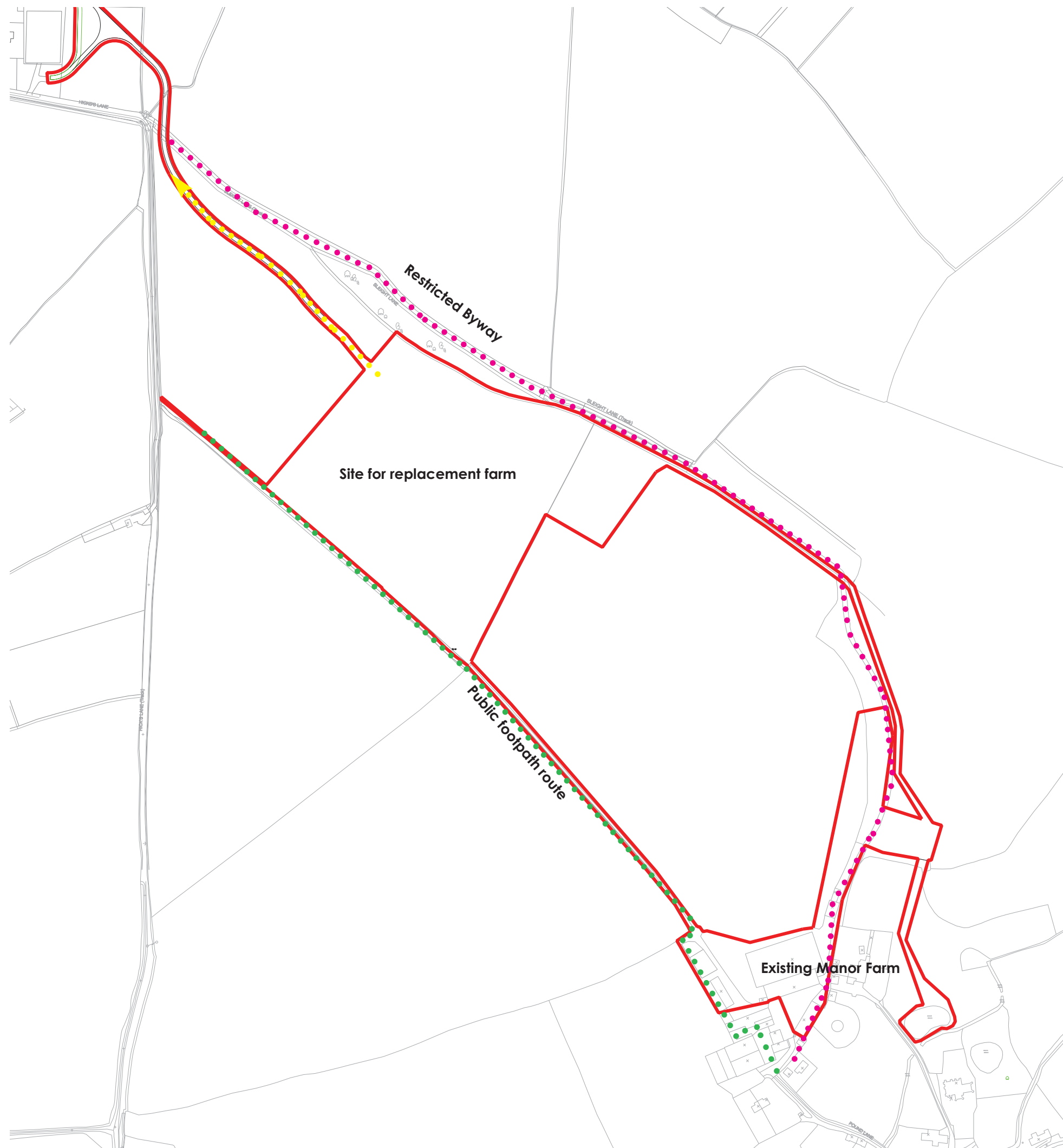
01 Looking to the existing farm from the footpath approach



02 The Existing Farm approach from the restricted byway



**02 The Site**  
*Current site layout*





## 03 Design Proposals

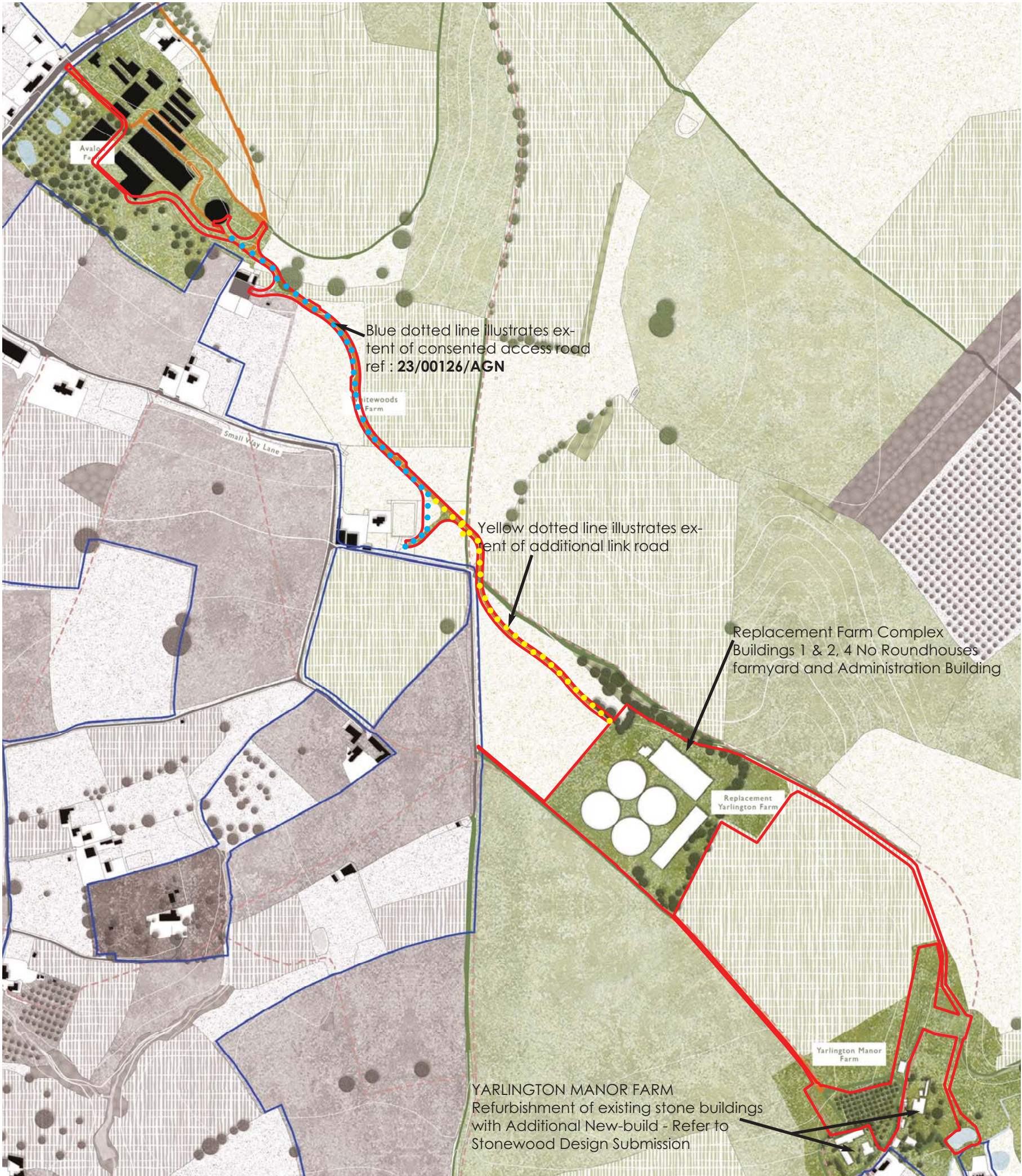


### 03 Design Proposals

#### Proposed Location Plan

The proposed development consists of four key elements;

- + Replacement Manor Farm:
  - Proposed new high quality agricultural buildings and yard located to the north west of the existing Manor Farm
- + Proposed link road with the estate linking the replacement farm to Avalon Farm to the north west
- + Removal of existing Manor Farm
  - Existing Manor Farm site redeveloped to provide residential units around landscaped courtyards
  - Surface water will be recycled and pumped to a nearby reservoir on the Avalon Farm site
- + Unified landscape strategy
  - Overall strategy to retain existing hedgerows and trees and enhance the existing field pattern
  - Enhance biodiversity and local character through use of proposed new native trees, hedgerow and planting species.
  - Use of planting to integrate proposals into landscape and minimise visual impacts through use of measures such as false horizons and additional planting.





03 Design Proposals

Scope of works

The proposed project requirements of Replacement Manor Farm are housed within a group of agricultural buildings arranged along two sides of a farm yard with 4 no. proprietary roundhouses at the centre. Landscaping is used to reinforce the character of field boundary hedgerows, proposing an enhancement of the overall appearance and biodiversity value of the site.

Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal

The proposals have been informed by a landscape and visual appraisal process being undertaken by Nicholas Pearson Associates. This has considered the local landscape context and contributed to site layout and design considerations. A Landscape and Visual Technical Note (LVTN), as a separate document, has been submitted as part of this pre-application. The landscape and visual appraisal identified a number of design principles to provide embedded mitigation. These have sought to minimise adverse landscape and/ or visual effect and maximise opportunities to integrate the proposals into the landscape. These principles include:

- Existing Manor Farm:
  - Removal of all recent/ 20th century agricultural sheds/ buildings and related hardstanding.
  - Opportunities for sensitive refurbishment/ redevelopment of retained ('original') farm buildings (Note – preliminary proposals for this element prepared by Stonewood Design
- Landscape restoration.
- Replacement Manor Farm:
  - Site layout to avoid impacts on adjacent trees/ woodland.
  - Access road and drainage infrastructure to minimise impact on hedgerows.
  - Location of new buildings on lower lying ground and careful use of landform to assist with landscape integration.
  - High quality building design with minimised height, scale and massing and use of material colours to minimise visual impact.
  - Planting proposals of woodland blocks, trees and hedgerows to reinforce local character and, with maturity, integrate development into context.

Green Infrastructure

The proposals have been informed by ecology, arboricultural and landscape appraisals, as well as consideration of drainage requirements. The existing Manor Farm is located at the edge of the settlement on sloping ground. The ad hoc development of the farm over the years has resulted in the creation of a series of terraces stepping up the slope with a number of additional sheds/ barns. This resulted in the removal of various field boundaries and the present collection of various built forms and elements. The proposals for the existing farm comprise the removal of the poorer quality buildings and landscape restoration. This includes opportunities to reinstate previously removed landscape elements eg. boundary hedgerows and tree planting.

The proposed site for the location of the Replacement Manor Farm is pasture with existing field boundary hedgerows to the west, north and east. A copse/ woodland belt is located to the north of the Site on a sloping bank. The proposed scheme proposes the planting (using native species) of trees and hedgerows reflective of the existing landscape character. This will assist with landscape integration and provide biodiversity enhancements.

The surface water drainage strategy includes for water storage and recycling (eg. irrigation use elsewhere on the estate). Excess water flows will be controlled through sustainable drainage features which have been sensitively designed to minimise impacts to the landscape and provide for biodiversity enhancements. Full details with respect to drainage will be provided as part of the development.

Movement on site

Vehicle access will be provided to the Replacement Manor Farm via a proposed new link road on The Newt in Somerset land extending the existing road to the replacement farm yard. The site will be fenced off to prevent livestock escaping and for general public safety. A proposed bridge link to Avalon Farm over the A359, which forms part of a separate planning pre-application, will further improve internal connectivity across Emily Estate. However, the proposals for Manor Farm are not reliant on the bridge as a means of access.

Proposed buildings and facilities

The proposed buildings and accommodation consist of:

- + 4 No. Roundhouses for approximately 600 adult cattle, calves, youngstock and fat stock
- + Roundhouse for use as a milking parlour
- + Isolation pens for 10 cattle
- + Machinery and Equipment storage building
- + Grain store and drying facilities to provide storage for a variety of grains including heritage grains largely grown on the Emily Estate for human and animal consumption.
- + Covered silage clamps for approx 5,500 tons of silage
- + Fully secure straw storage
- + Covered manure storage area
- + Farm Staff building / welfare facilities / administration building

Yard/ Drainage Facilities:

- + Below ground covered storage for dirty water storage from inside cattle buildings, for irrigation onto land.
- + A wash bay for tractors and plant with silt trap and oil interceptor.

Other:

- + The lighting strategy will need to provide minimum light levels of 80 lux for 16 hours per day with 8 hours of darkness for cattle. External lighting will be controlled on PIRs to reduce any light pollution especially with the site's prominent position in the landscape.

Appearance

The proposed buildings have the appearance of modern farm buildings of steel portal frame construction, with a series of curved roofs. A palette of materials consisting of local stone and olive green cladding will be used to reflect the materials used on the agricultural buildings used on the wider Emily Estate. State of the art roundhouses are proposed for livestock housing and the milking parlour which will consist of a steel frame with a tensile fabric roof, and generally be open sided - excepting the milking parlour which will have some enclosure. These provide a modern and efficient method of handling and raising livestock. The farm yard is proposed to have a brushed concrete finish. The existing inefficient and outdated Manor Farm agricultural buildings will be removed, liberating the site for small scale residential development proposals. Landscaping forms a key element within the design proposals, reinforcing the local rural character of the site and providing an opportunity for biodiversity enhancement. The existing field pattern will be reinforced with use of hedges, clumps of trees and native planting, in addition to sheltering the site from prevailing winds with its exposed location.

Massing/ Scale

The proposed farm buildings are grouped to form an enclosure with two wings, one to the north and one to the eastern side of the site. These are set into the natural slope of the land in order to reduce the height and impact from the surrounding, view points. The two wings form a simple enclosure to the farm 'courtyard'. The roundhouses are arranged in a symmetrical pattern with the 'milking parlour' use nearest the site access point and staff building.



Sustainability

The Emily Estate encompass sustainable principles throughout many of their operational impacts and their approach to new development. These cover a number of positive sustainable aspects, including;

- + Supporting the local economy
- + Using renewable sources for energy production
- + Growing and producing a large proportion of their own high quality fruit, vegetables and meat to support their operations
- + Organic management principles to food production and land management, although not currently certified organic status
- + Using a palette of locally sourced, natural materials for new development
- + Integrating positive biodiversity measures within landscaping schemes
- + Recycling water for irrigation
- + Minimising waste impacts through organised recycling system

Low energy strategy

A low energy strategy will be central to the proposed development with methods used to minimise energy use in the first instance and generation of renewable energy to offset usage.

A staged approach will be used of:

- + Be Lean: Use less energy
- + Be Clean: Supply energy efficiently
- + Be Green: Use renewable energy

As part of the first stage to use less energy, passive design measures will be integrated, where possible to reduce the energy impact of the buildings and operational energy, as follows:

- + Robust thermal envelope to relevant buildings, with U values beyond the minimal building control requirements
- + Considered use of windows and rooflights to create good daylighting levels to enhance wellbeing while minimising energy use

Efficient service systems further reduce energy use as follows:

- + Use of heat recovery where mechanical ventilation is used to minimise heat loss
- + Use of heat pumps such as air source heat pumps to improve energy efficiency
- + Selection of all-electric systems such as heat pumps in preference to fossil fuel systems
- + LED lighting with controls throughout
- + External light fittings to prevent light pollution in line with Ecologist's and LVIA recommendations
- + Effective metering and controls

Low and zero carbon technologies will be investigated to offset energy use and carbon emissions to move towards a zero carbon performance, including the following:

- + Roof mounted solar photovoltaic panels with battery storage

Adopting passive design principles is also important for providing a comfortable, well daylit environment for building users. Health and wellbeing will be an important aspect of the approach to sustainability to create a good working environment for staff.

Green infrastructure

The current site for the proposed location of Replacement Manor Farm is pasture with existing hedgerows and a small copse on the steeply sloping bank to the northern perimeter.

The existing surrounding area to Manor Farm is relatively open and denuded of trees as the farming operation has expanded organically over the years on this awkward sloping site.

Once the existing farm is demolished the area will be reinstated to a landscaping scheme described later in this document.

The proposed scheme proposes use of soft landscaping to soften and redefine the character of an enhanced agricultural field structure. This will be defined through use of a broad range of trees, hedges and planting to provide a rich diversity of largely native species, supporting habitat and providing food sources for insects, birds and mammals.

Refer to the Landscape report, Landscape and Visual Technical Note and Ecology Report for further details.

Surface water drainage is proposed to be recycled and used for irrigation elsewhere on the estate. Further details are set out within the Simon Bastone Associates Flood Risk information.

Transport

Due to the rural location and the nature of the site, options for use of public transport will be limited although measures to reduce the impact of single car use will be explored.

The new reservoir at the road linked Avalon farm site can receive pumped water from the replacement farm, the supply will be attenuated using the indicated swales in the north east corner of the adjacent field with an outflow link to the stream near the existing farm.

A number of new hedgerows will be reinstated to historic boundary/ hedgerow locations, these are predominantly to the south and west of the proposed Replacement Manor Farm location.

Electric vehicles from the Avalon Site, will form one of the main methods of transport across the site, with charging facilities on site.

Resource efficiency

The proposed development has a simple material palette, largely based on the range of materials used within Avalon Farm and around the Emily Estate, including;

- + Use of local stone from a nearby quarry of Blue Lias stone base with Cary stone up to around 1200mm - a low embodied carbon material, supporting the local economy
- + Green powder coated steel cladding for longevity

Waste impacts during construction will be minimised due to the use of standard sized components with minimal offcuts on site.

The Emily Estate has an organised waste management system. Waste types will be segregated on the estate, with use of compactors and extensive recycling.

Low water use sanitaryware and fittings will be used, where feasible, to minimise potable water use.



03 Design Proposals

The replacement farm proposals are a key part of the Newt in Somersets desire to improve the facilities on the Estate for their livestock and arable farming long into the future. To further bolster the intentions toward, sustainable farming, and attaining excellent quality produce as well as the highest standards of animal welfare.

The layout is compact and efficient encapsulating all the constituent elements that the existing farm, due to its topography and layout is unable to provide.





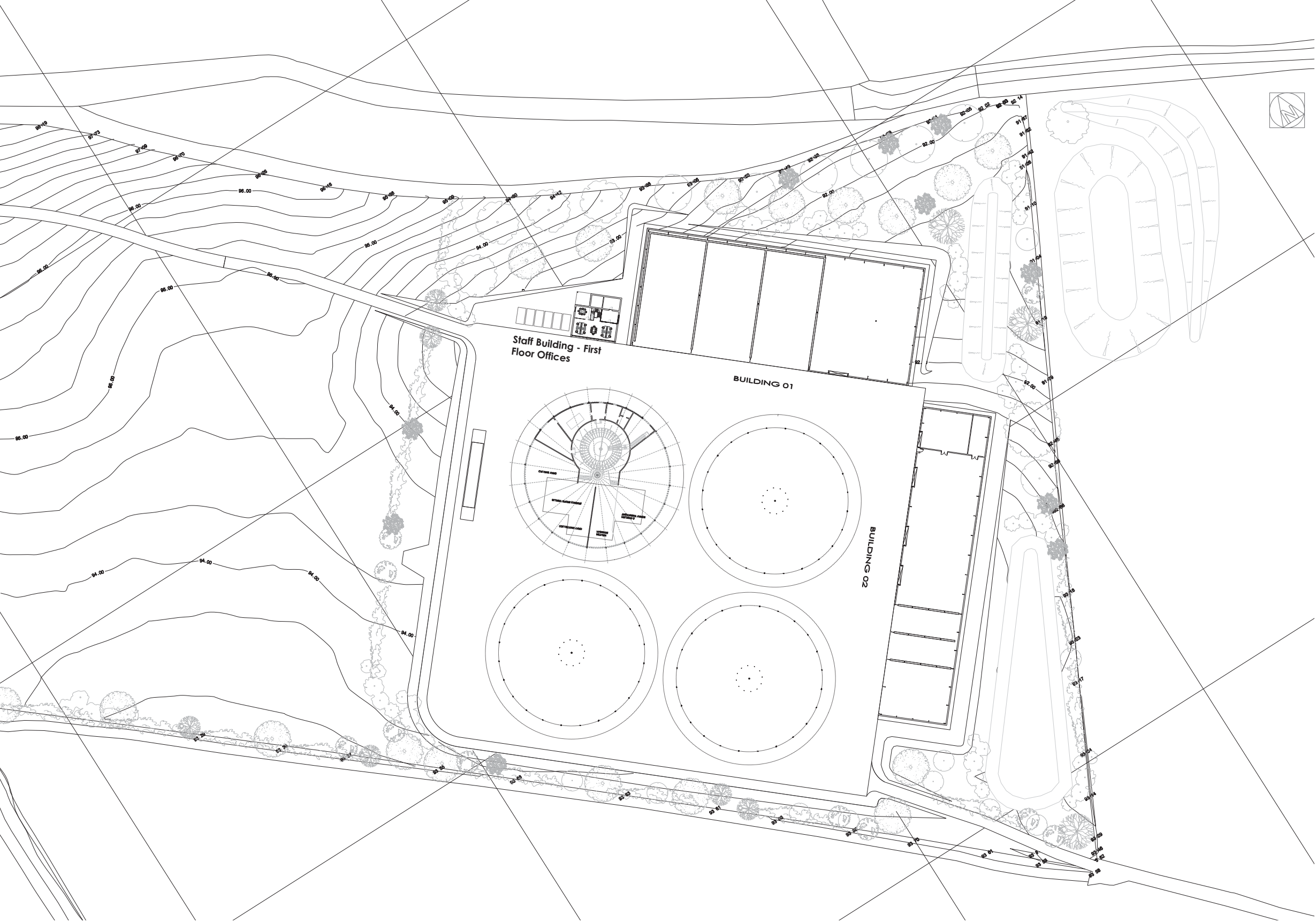
**03 Design Proposals**  
*Ground Floor and Yard Layout*





03 Design Proposals

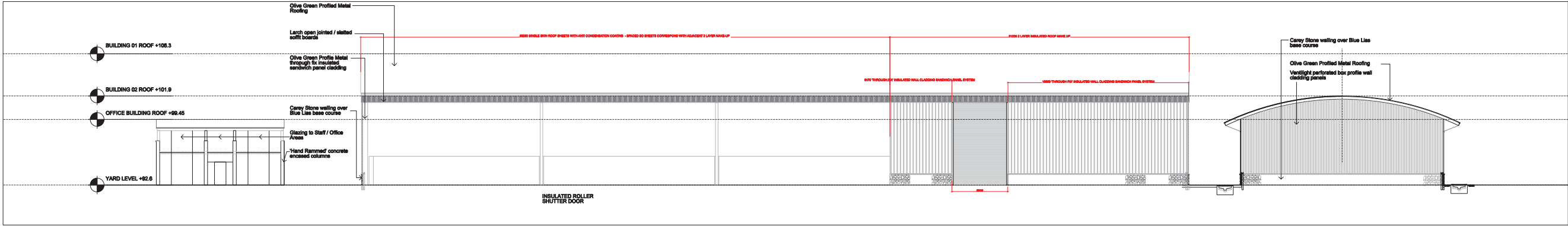
Upper Floor Layout



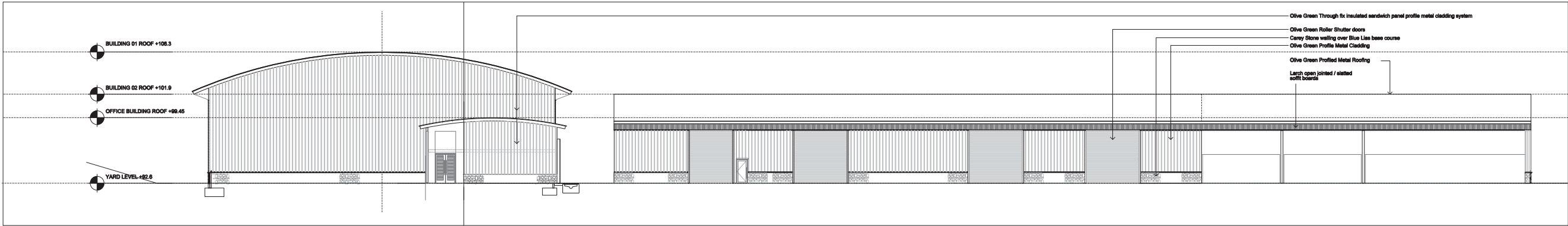


03 Design Proposals

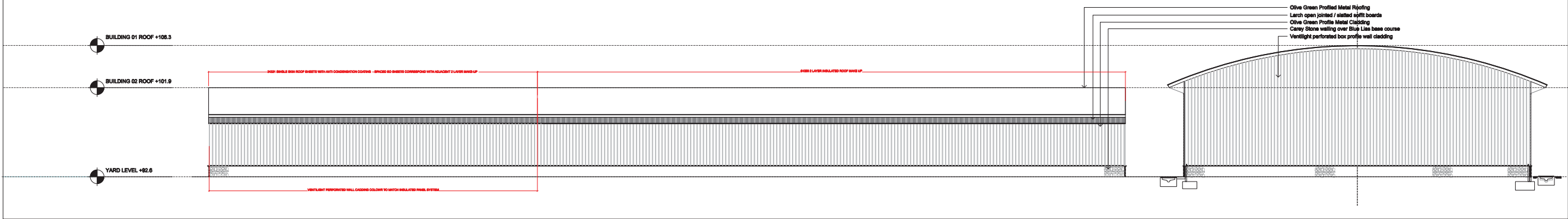
Sections and Elevations



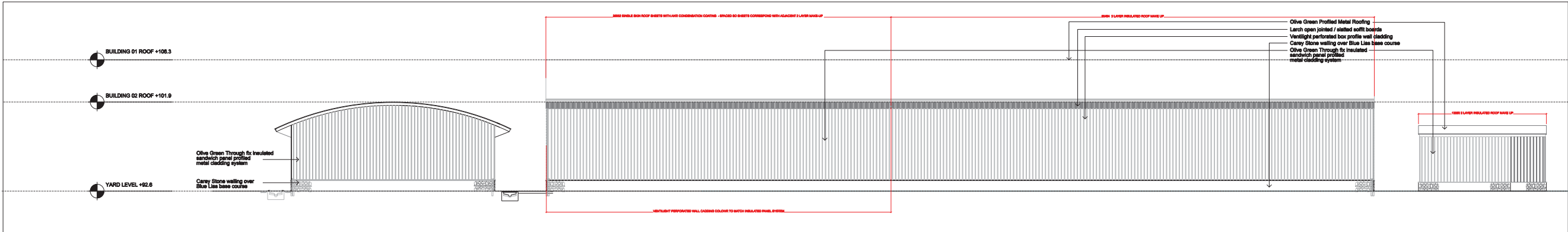
01 SECTION / ELEVATION TO THE SOUTH / WEST



01a ELEVATION TO THE NORTH WEST



02 ELEVATION TO THE SOUTH-EAST



03 ELEVATION TO THE NORTH-EAST



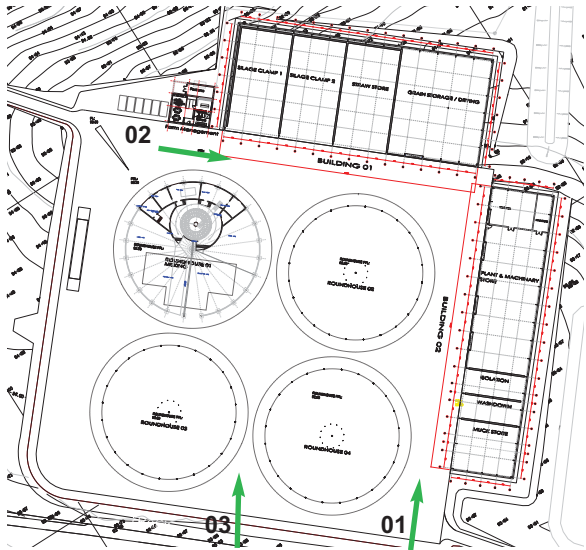
**03 Design Proposals**  
*Sections and Elevations*



View 01 looking North



View 02 looking East



View 03 looking North



### 03 Design Proposals

#### *Sections and Elevations*

##### **Proposed Materials**

The proposed materiality references the existing cladding materials utilised on Avalon Farm and around the wider Emily Estate.

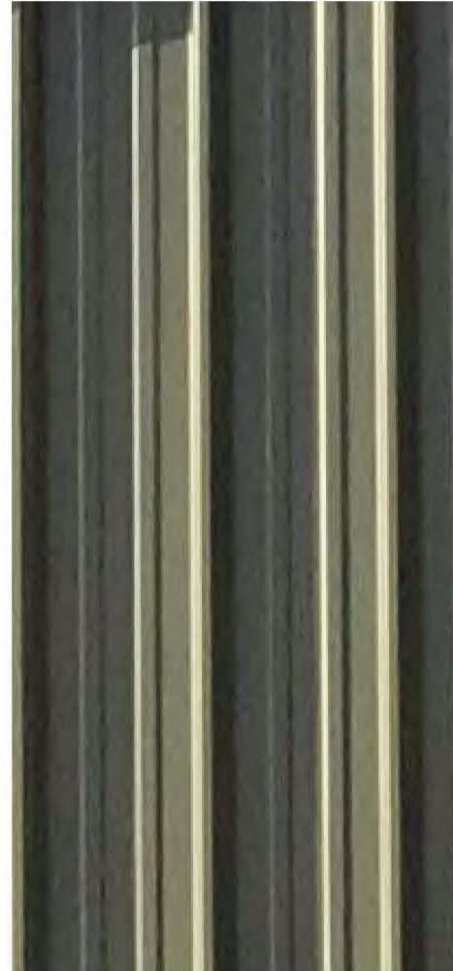
These materials are chiefly:

- + Olive green metal cladding
- + Blue Lias stone plinth
- + Cary stone above plinth

The proposed elevations will be developed looking at how the material treatment can be varied to break down the visual mass of the buildings when viewed from a distance, in line with the recommendations from the LVIA.

A band of local stone cladding is proposed to be used around the base of the buildings, to ensure that visually the areas of different cladding tie in together.

Glazing including use of rooflights, will be developed to provide good daylighting levels for an uplifting working environment.





03 Design Proposals

Area Schedule

Replacement Manor Farm			Areas
Area Schedule			
Proposed Replacement Manor Farm Buildings			
			SQM
BUILDING 01	MF 01	SILAGE CLAMP 01	605
	MF 02	SILAGE CLAMP 02	605
	MF 03	STRAW STORE	605
	MF 03	GRAIN STORAGE AND DRYING	1070
BUILDING 02	MF 04	MILLS STORAGE	185
	MF 05	MALT STORAGE	64
	MF 06	PLANT AND MACHINERY STORE	1000
	MF 07	ISOLATION	170
	MF 08	WASHDOWN BAY	170
	MF 09	MUCK STORAGE	355
ROUNDHOUSES	RH 45.1	MILKING PARLOUR	1590.43
	RH 45.2	CATTLE	1590.43
	RH 45.3	CATTLE	1590.43
	RH 45.4	CATTLE	1590.43
OFFICE BUILDING	OFF 01	STAFF CANTEEN	46
	OFF 02	CIRCULATION	28
	OFF 03	LOCKER ROOM / WC / SHOWER AREA	48
	OFF 04	OPEN PLAN OFFICE - ADMINISTRATION	72
	OFF 05	MEETING ROOM	18
	OFF 06	OFFICE	18
	OFF 07	STORAGE	18
	OFF 08	PLANT	32
		TOTAL BUILDING AREAS	11471
EXTERNAL AREA			
	MXF	YARD AREA AND PARKING (MINUS RH AREAS)	11344
	TOTAL	HARDSTANDING AND BUILT FOOTPRINT	22657



PROPOSED FARM FACILITY  
LANDSCAPE DESIGN AND PROPOSALS  
For D&AS  
Nicholas Pearson Associates

LANDSCAPE DESIGN AND PROPOSALS

For D&AS

Nicholas Pearson Associates





**04 Landscape Proposals**  
PROPOSED FARM FACILITY  
LANDSCAPE DESIGN AND PROPOSALS

Photo Montage views - Preliminary photomontages showing integration of proposed farm buildings into the landscape context



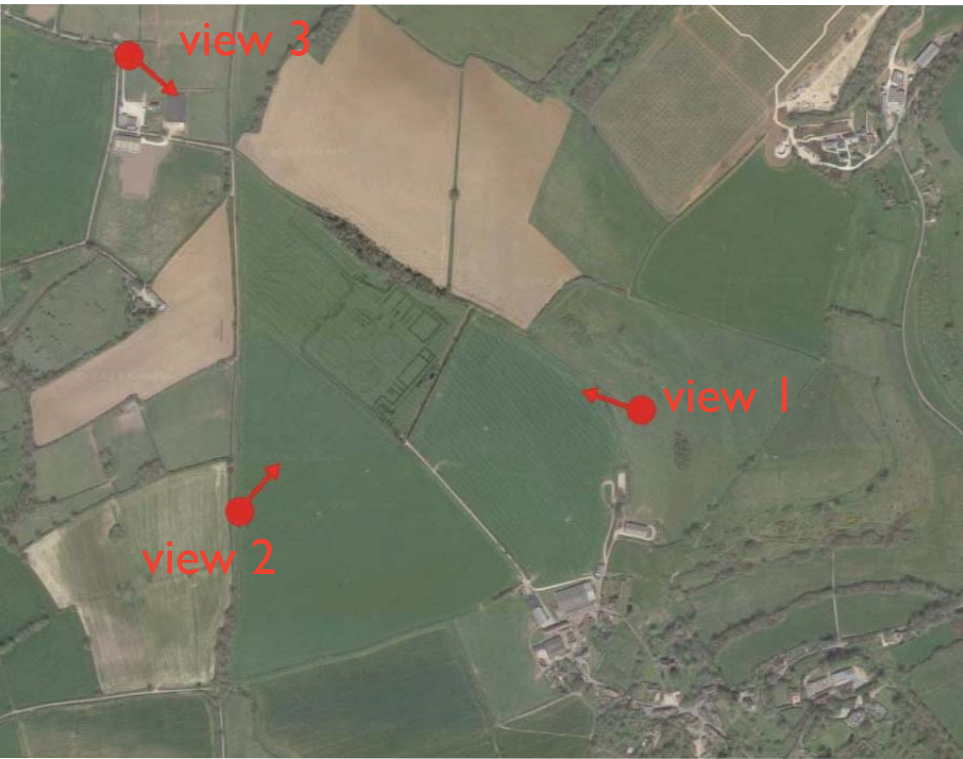
Viewpoint 01 As existing



Viewpoint 02 As existing



Viewpoint 03 As existing



**04 Landscape Proposals**  
Photo Montage View Locations



**04 Landscape Proposals**  
*PROPOSED FARM FACILITY*  
**LANDSCAPE DESIGN AND PROPOSALS**

*Photo Montage views - Preliminary photomontages showing integration of proposed farm buildings into the landscape context*



**Viewpoint 01 At Year 5**



**Viewpoint 01 At Year 10**



**Viewpoint 02 At year 5**



**Viewpoint 02 At Year 10**



**Viewpoint 03 At year 5**









**Viewpoint 03 At year 10**



NATIVE HEDGEROW MIX






Native tree and shrub species proposed for the hedgrows, as found in existing hedgrows on site.






Species	Common Name	Image
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field Maple	
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Dogwood	
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	

Species	Common Name	Image
<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	Privet	
<i>Rosa canina</i>	Dog Rose	
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder	



**NATIVE WOODLAND MIX***Native tree species proposed for the woodland shelter belt*

Species	Common Name	Image
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field Maple	
<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	Hornbeam	
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel	
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Beech	

Species	Common Name	Image
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	
<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	Crab Apple	
<i>Prunus padus</i>	Bird Cherry	
<i>Quercus robur</i>	English/Common Oak	
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	Rowan/Mountain Ash	



# 05 Planning Statement

AZ Urban Studio

## Introduction

This section of the pre-application report has been prepared by AZ Urban Studio, planning consultants for Emily Estate, and sets out an initial Planning Statement in relation to the proposed replacement and relocation of the existing Manor Farm, Yarlington. The Statement is provided to an appropriate level of detail for a pre-application enquiry, and sets out the key planning policy considerations that the Client and Consultant Team have identified as being relevant to the project, and how the proposals have been formulated to align with the objectives and requirements of those policies.

The Statement aims to not only explain how the proposals have been formulated to accord with the relevant policies, but also as a framework to structure engagement and discussion with the Council and other stakeholders regarding the proposals and their further development towards a full planning application.

## Principle of development

### Background

The proposed development involves the replacement and relocation of an existing and long-established complex of large modern farm buildings, yards, and associated agricultural infrastructure (slurry tank etc.), to provide a high-quality and efficient purpose-built farm at a site more centrally located within the associated grazing and forage crop agricultural lands of the agricultural unit. The type of livestock farming will also change from the long established high-yield dairy cattle unit at Manor Farm, to a mixed beef and dairy unit at the replacement farm. The farming of this land to the north-west of Yarlington has long been a key part of the character of the area, with Manor Farm being established in the early 19th century. The growth of the dairy farming enterprise, particularly in the 20th century, saw the expansion of the farm buildings and yards by the previous owners into the current sprawling complex that can be seen at the site today.

Emily Estate acquired Manor Farm Yarlington in 2021, and has continued livestock farming at the site. As set out earlier in this report, the general appearance and status of the farm buildings complex is poor, and the proximity to and sole point of access through the village of Yarlington has negative impacts upon amenity for the local community (as set out in paragraph 10.8 of the *North Cadbury & Yarlington Neighbourhood Plan*). The farm buildings are generally in a poor and unattractive state of repair, and the arrangement of buildings in relation to each other and site infrastructure is inefficient and poorly suited to livestock movements due to the sloping site. The proposals by Emily Estate to replace and relocate the farm are therefore driven by the following core objectives:

- Create a modern, efficient and sustainable farm complex located centrally within the associated agricultural holding;
- Reduce the negative impacts of farming (noise, odours, traffic movements, conflicts with rights of way) upon local communities;
- Establish high-quality and fit-for-purpose farming facilities that are well integrated into the local landscape, whilst remediating the existing farm complex site.

An earlier proposal for a replacement and relocated farm complex at another site to the north-west (the subject of a current planning application) was formulated prior to the Estate acquiring Manor Farm Yarlington, and that current planning application would not be pursued if the present proposals are successful.

## Policy

Planning policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) is relevant to consideration of the proposals.

The NPPF sets out at section 2 *Achieving sustainable development* how the central purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which has economic, social, and environmental objectives that should be delivered through the plan making and decision making processes. NPPF section 6 under the sub-heading *Supporting a prosperous rural economy* sets out how decision making should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings, and the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.

The Local Plan *Strategic Objectives and Vision* are derived from the *South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategies*, and it is notable that the *Vision for 2028* includes: “*South Somerset will have retained a viable agricultural base with high quality local food production reducing the need for imports and food miles. Commitment to reducing the impact of climate change will be demonstrated by achieving high quality design and by the wider application of reduced CO2 emission targets for new development.*”

Further into the Local Plan this Vision is expanded upon and it is noted that:

“*...farming and its associated businesses remain integral to the present and future of South Somerset. Food security, local produce and reducing 'food-miles' remain nationally important, and an increasing onus on a low carbon economy, will provide opportunities for key sectors such as land based industries and renewable energy. It is therefore important to establish policy, which supports a productive countryside and the transition from traditional to new rural enterprises.*” (para 9.46, Local Plan)

Local Plan policy EP4 *Expansion of existing buildings in the countryside* sets out how proposals for expansion of existing buildings in the countryside will be permitted, where key criteria including demonstrating need and managing impacts are satisfied. Policy EP5 *Farm diversification* is also relevant, as it seeks to ensure that established agricultural enterprises are supported through positive and appropriate future development, and contains key monitoring indicators of the number of farm holdings in the district, and the amount of land farmed across the district.

The North Cadbury and Yarlington Neighbourhood Plan (2022) (the “NC&Y NP”) does not include any specific policies relating to agricultural development, and the Examiner's Report at para 4.29 confirms that Policy 13 *Other Employment Opportunities* does not include agricultural development. As noted above, the NC&Y NP does make specific reference at para 10.8 to the problems experience by Yarlington residents associated with farm vehicle traffic.



The proposals set out in this pre-application enquiry relate to an area of approximately 4.9ha and will:

- i) Replace a poor quality farm complex with high quality new buildings and yard, in a more central location and to a scale / amount to meet the needs of the wider agricultural unit;
- ii) Improve the amenity of Yarlington residents, by removing the noise, odour and traffic associated with the farming operation, with the existing modern farm buildings demolished and re-landscaped;
- iii) Achieve significant sustainability and environmental enhancements to the operation of the farm, including water collection and storage for agricultural use, renewable energy generation on-site together with energy efficient buildings and processes, and best practice management of livestock effluent.

An *Agricultural Summary Report* prepared by specialist consultant Michael Goff is provided as part of this pre-application enquiry, and sets out how the proposed development is required as a core farm site to support the mixed livestock farming model followed by Emily Estate. Details are set out in that report upon the sizing of buildings in relation to the livestock numbers required, the provision of silage clamps, grain storage, facilities for staff welfare, farm offices, machinery workshops and storage. The report concludes that the replacement farm complex is essential to the efficient management of the Estate's farming enterprise and to provide satisfactory and compliant facilities.

The proposals represent significant investment in an established agricultural unit to meet needs and achieve a range of economic, social and environmental objectives. They are therefore inherently sustainable development that aligns with the NPPF and Local Plan. The development will ensure the continued productive agricultural use of the associated land, and will deliver upon the Vision set out in the Local Plan to bolster local food production and reduce carbon emissions, whilst supporting the local rural economy and achieving environmental enhancements.

Emily Estate are proud to promote high quality and sustainable local food production, and the proposals have been designed to facilitate visits to the site for those guests of the Estate that wish to view how the land is managed and food produced. This is a wholly ancillary aspect of the proposal, but will make an important contribution to understanding rural life and land management, and will also provide an opportunity for visitors to see the investment in high quality buildings and farm management.

In principle in terms of land use we therefore consider the proposals to align fully with the relevant planning policy in the NPPF and Local Plan. Further relevant considerations are examined below.

**Access**  
*Background*

Vehicle access to the existing Manor Farm Yarlington site is only available from the heart of the small village of Yarlington, which is characterised by narrow single-vehicle-width lanes. This existing situation has for many decades served the agricultural operation, with established vehicle movements comprising general farm / staff traffic, together with milk tanker and feed delivery lorry movements. The movement of tractors with trailers and other large agricultural vehicles to and from the site is often inconvenient – both for farm operatives and for local residents using the same roads, or living alongside them.

The public rights of way network in the area includes two public footpaths that pass enter the existing farm site from the north-west, before connecting within the farmyard itself. The presence of public rights of way through the heart of the farm complex poses a number of health and safety challenges for general day to day farming operations, and in particular for vehicle and livestock movements.

**Policy**

Paragraph 111 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. Local Plan policy TA5 *Transport Impact of New Development* of the Local Plan states that all new development shall be required to address its own transport implications and shall be designed to maximise the potential for sustainable transport.

Within the NC&Y NP, Project 2 *Public Rights of Way Network* sets out how the Parish Council will work with residents and landowners to achieve improvements where possible to the public rights of way network.

*Assessment*

The relocation of the farm to the north-west by some 0.5km enables a new access strategy to be adopted, whereby a connection is made to the existing farm access road at Whitewoods Farm (within the Applicant's ownership), which already connects through Avalon Farm directly to the A359. This is a significant access enhancement associated with proposals, and transforms agricultural vehicle movements associated with the farm unit from using narrow single-width country lanes to a direct and safe private access to the A359 to the north. Further details, including junction capacity and visibility assessment, are set out in the preliminary highways note by Pell Frischmann submitted as part of this pre-application enquiry.

It is anticipated that whilst the type of vehicles accessing the site will remain similar to the established situation (e.g. farm vehicles, large delivery vehicles, and staff vehicles) the number of movements will decrease due to the nature of the farming model proposed, and the bulk storage of feed and bedding straw etc on site.

In terms of public rights of way, the relocation of the farm will overall have significant benefits for users of the public footpath network in the area. Whilst the new farm access drive will cross over the Macmillan Way and the footpath heading south-east, there are a number of existing field access points that currently do the same to the north and south of the crossing point, and indeed parts of the Macmillan Way to the north and the footpath heading south-east pass along agricultural tracks shared with farm vehicles. Where the existing farm buildings and yards are to be removed and the landscape restored, there will be significant enhancement for the footpath users who will be able to pass through open land rather than the busy heart of a working livestock farm.

In summary, we consider that the proposals as set out in this pre-application enquiry will result in significant highways enhancements, directly addressing an identified existing problem for the residents of Yarlington. Whilst opportunities for use of public transport are not available given the location and use proposed, the development will result in direct enhancements to the public footpath network through the removal of poor quality buildings and yard area that the existing footpath passes through, and therefore align with Local Plan policy TA5.



**Landscape and Design**

Policy

Chapter 12 of the NPPF *Achieving well-designed places* states that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Para 130 sets out how developments should function well and add to the overall quality of the area, be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character and history, and optimise the potential of the site.

Policy EQ2: General Development of the South Somerset Local Plan requires new development to conserve and enhance the landscape character of the area, to reinforce local distinctiveness, and respect local context.

The NC&Y NP includes policies concerning the built and natural environment, including Policy 5 which sets out how development should respect and where practicable enhance local landscape character, and Policy 6 which requires development to retain the rural character of the lanes and tracks around the villages, and protect and enhance public rights of way.

*Assessment*

Nicholas Pearson Associates were engaged to advise upon Landscape and Visual considerations from the outset of the process, and their initial report (Landscape and Visual Tech Note or ‘LVTN’) upon the proposed development is included as part of the pre-application enquiry and summarised here.

The LVTN note identifies that in landscape terms the Site areas form part of the typical pastoral but generally well settled landscape character of the area. The existing farm buildings are an established feature of Yarlington, with some buildings a locally detracting element. The location for the replacement farm is set away from the existing village, in a more open landscape adjacent to the local landscape scarp feature of Yarlington Sleights. Landscape character sensitivities relate to the local landscape setting of Yarlington and the key landscape feature of Yarlington Sleights, together with existing woodland, trees and boundary hedgerows.

It goes on to report that the preliminary proposals have been informed by early landscape and visual appraisal and have iterated to seek to minimise adverse landscape and visual effects and maximise opportunities for enhancements. The proposals for the new farm buildings present a high quality design approach, with considerable opportunities to incorporate mitigation, including new woodland/ tree and hedgerow planting. In visual terms the context comprises the well settled and well vegetated agricultural landscape between Yarlington and its environs to the east and Galhampton to the west. Key views and sensitivities tend to relate to local views of the Site areas from the adjacent and nearby network of public rights of way. In such views the landscape/ land-form feature of Yarlington Sleights is a key element. Beyond these local visual receptor areas views tend to be limited/ restricted by intervening topography and/ or vegetation.

The preliminary proposals have been informed by early landscape and visual appraisal and have iterated to seek to minimise adverse landscape and visual effects and maximise opportunities for enhancements. The proposals present a high quality design approach, with opportunities to integrate the development in the local context including through new tree and hedgerow planting, and landscape restoration.

The LVTN concludes that, on the basis that design intent and opportunities for mitigation are progressed and delivered, adverse landscape and visual effects will be minimised, and elements of landscape enhancement provided.

This would accord with planning policies including those relevant to landscape and visual matters within the North Cadbury and Yarlington Neighbourhood Plan

**Ecology**

*Policy*

NPPF Section 15 *Conserving and enhancing the natural environment* sets out how development should minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

Policy EQ4: Biodiversity of the South Somerset Local Plan requires that development proposals demonstrate how they would not result in any adverse impact on biodiversity, and also seek to maximise opportunities for biodiversity gains.

*Assessment*

The proposals for the site have been developed with guidance from Greena Ecological Consultancy, integrated with landscape design advice from Nicholas Pearson Associates. The key ecology considerations engaged by the proposals are assessment of the proposed re-location site, opportunities for biodiversity enhancement associated with the development of the site, and the demolition of the existing farm buildings and re-landscaping of the site. These matters are examined in the *Preliminary Ecological Investigation Report* by Greena Ecological Consultancy submitted as part of the pre-application enquiry.

The location for the replacement farm site is assessed as being rye dominated improved grassland that has previously been ploughed, and the route for the access road passes through fields of similar grassland. Two sections of hedgerow (hawthorn, blackthorn, elder mix) are proposed to be removed to facilitate access. Badger setts were identified to the north of the site (>30m from proposed works), and a subsequent Ground Penetrating Radar survey was carried out to ensure no badger tunnels are present under the northern edge of the site (see GPR Badger Report). Recommendations to avoid harm to particular species are provided along with recommendations to ensure that the development of the new farm delivers biodiversity enhancement, which include planting of native trees, bat boxes, bird boxes and insect bricks.

In terms of the existing farm buildings and yards to be demolished and re-landscaped, detailed examination of the interior and exteriors was undertaken by an experienced ecologist. The overall habitat was assessed as very high potential for foraging and commuting bats, with four of the buildings having moderate bat habitat potential and therefore requiring further survey. Six buildings had signs of bird nesting presence.

The further bat surveys are due to take place in May 2023 and will inform detailed mitigation planning. All recommendations in the Greena report will be delivered by the proposals, and in particular the extensive areas of new planting – including native tree planting and new native hedgerow – will ensure that biodiversity net gain is delivered. At this stage we are confident that the proposals will appropriately mitigate any impact upon protected species, and overall net gain in biodiversity can be achieved upon the site, meeting the NPPF and Local Plan policy EQ4 requirements.



Ecology cont

To address the specific requirement for consideration of impacts upon three nearby SSSI designated sites sensitive to ammonia and nitrogen (Sparkford Wood, Cogley Wood, Babcary Meadows) a SCAIL screening assessment has been undertaken by Earthcare Technical. The results of the assessment show the proposals to result in a significant reduction in impacts at all receptors. Full details are provided in the Earthcare Technical report submitted.

Heritage

Policy

Chapter 16 of the NPPF *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment* sets out how heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Para 197 sets out how, in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of putting heritage assets to viable uses consistent with their conservation, the positive contribution that heritage assets can make to sustainable communities, and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to character and distinctiveness. Para 200 sets out how any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.

Local Plan Policy EQ3 *Historic Environment* requires that heritage assets be conserved and where appropriate enhanced for their historic significance and important contribution to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place.

Assessment

Whilst there are no designated heritage assets within the site, the existing farm buildings are located within an 'Area of High Archaeological Potential' designated in the Local Plan, relating to the earliest settlement at Yarlinton. As the proposals within the designated area only relate to demolition of existing buildings and re-landscaping to restore the pre-development condition of the land, no harm to any archaeological remains or interest will occur. Further consultation with South West Heritage Trust to confirm this position will be undertaken.

There are a small number of designated and non-designated heritage assets located in the Yarlinton to the south and south-east of the site. The proposals for the replacement farm upon low ground between 0.75km-1.5km from these heritage assets is not considered to impact upon their setting. The removal of the extensive modern farm buildings located at Manor Farm and the re-landscaping of the site will have a positive impact on the setting of the nearest non-designated heritage assets and the Grade II\* Church of St Mary, enhancing their local townscape and landscape setting.



*Policy*

NPPF section 14 *Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change* sets out how major developments should incorporate sustainable drainage systems and where possible, provide multifunctional benefits. Local Plan Policy EQ1 *Addressing Climate Change in South Somerset* sets out how the Council will support proposals where they have demonstrated how climate change mitigation and adaption will be delivered, through the inclusion of various measures as appropriate. This includes reducing and managing the impact of flood risk by incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems.

*Assessment*

The site area of the proposed development is approximately 4.9ha, and includes an increase in the total amount of hardstanding from the existing. As such, careful consideration has been given from the outset to managing drainage at the site in a sustainable and integrated manner, ensuring that enhancements to the existing drainage arrangements can be achieved. Simon Baston Associates have advised upon flooding and drainage matters, and a *Flood Risk Assessment (including Drainage Strategy)* report is provided in support of the pre-application submission.

The FRA report sets out the following key considerations and attributes of the proposals in flood risk / drainage terms:

- The site is located within Flood Zone 1 (low flood risk)
- Increased rates of surface runoff are managed sustainably entirely within the site through attenuation and then controlled discharge to the River Cam
- Proposed attenuation pond has design capacity for the 100yr + climate change (45% increase) event, with 300mm design freeboard for tolerance and exceedance capacity
- Effluent, dirty water and foul water are managed entirely within the site using separate containment drainage systems and storage tanks, minimising any risks to groundwater
- Proposed drainage system, swale and attenuation basin all provide sufficient means of surface water treatment at source

The *FRA* concludes that the drainage strategy proposed will safely manage and account for additional surface water and runoff associated with the proposed development and will not increase flood risk elsewhere or downstream. Accordingly the relevant policies of the NPPF and Local Plan relating to flood risk and sustainable drainage are fully met.

In terms of current concerns regarding nutrients and the Somerset Levels SPA and the need for competent authorities to undertake a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) before determining a planning application that has potential impacts upon the protected site, a *Phosphate nutrient neutrality assessment* report by Earthcare Technical is provided.

The report provides a comparison of the quantity of excreted phosphate produced from livestock historically at Manor Farm when farmed with a high yield dairy herd (450 head) within the existing farm infrastructure, and the proposed development scenario of mixed beef and dairy cattle farming (660 head). The proposed replacement farm will be managed sustainably with manure collected as farm yard manure composted and applied to land to meet crop needs across the wider Emily Estate land holdings in the area.

The nutrient calculations show that the established Manor Farm high yield dairy cattle would give rise to 13,445kg of phosphate per year, whereas the proposed replacement Manor Farm with around 668 mixed cattle would give rise to 12,593kg of phosphate – a reduction of approximately 861kg of phosphate per annum, equating to 372kg of total phosphorus (P). This demonstrates that the proposed development will achieve betterment beyond neutrality with a reduction of 372kg total phosphorus per annum within the catchment, and is therefore deliverable in line with the requirements of the Habitats Regulations. This reduction in could be used to offset the impact of other new development needed in the area.

The team would welcome further discussion with Somerset Council and Natural England regarding the nutrient neutrality assessment to ensure that the methodology is agreed to meet the relevant requirements, to avoid subsequent delays at planning application stage.

**Sustainability**

Local Plan Policy EQ1 *Addressing Climate Change in South Somerset* sets out the Council will support proposals for new development where they have demonstrated how climate change mitigation and adaptation will be delivered, through inclusion of a range of measures, as appropriate.

Section 3 above of this pre-application report sets out how the proposed development will continue to evolve through design development to follow a staged approach of:

- Be Lean: Use less energy
- Be Clean: Supply energy efficiently
- Be Green: Use renewable energy

A range of design measures are identified that will be integrated where possible to achieve the first criterion, together with measures to supply energy efficiently and manage use. On site renewable energy technology in the form of roof mounted solar PV will be further investigated through design development.

As set out elsewhere in this Statement, it is important to note that this proposal forms a key component of a wider agricultural strategy for the agricultural unit, and represents a transformation at the site from an intensive previous model of dairy farming, to a low-intensity model of sustainable integrated land management and local food production.

Finally, as with all building projects by Emily Estate in the area, local building materials will be utilised where possible, including local stone sourced in the immediate area.



**Neighbouring Amenity**

NPPF para 185 sets out how planning decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects of pollution on health and living conditions. Policy EQ2 of the Local Plan requires, amongst other considerations, that development proposals protect the residential amenity of neighbouring properties.

The site is located in an area characterised by farming activity, and there are long established livestock farming operations at the existing buildings upon the site, and in neighbouring buildings upon adjacent land in the surrounding area.

Residential properties in the nearby area are located to the east, south-east and south, with the closest houses being immediately adjacent to the existing farm buildings, yard and slurry tanks.

The proposals will result in the livestock buildings being relocated significantly further away than existing from the nearby dwellings.

Given the existing established uses at the site we do not believe that the physical re-location of the farm buildings as proposed will result in any material adverse impact upon neighbouring residential amenity in terms of noise or odour.

Moreover, it is important to emphasise that the change in farming practice from the previous high—yield dairy herd to the now proposed low intensity mixed cattle, on straw bedded system, will result in reduced odours from the operation. The proposed farming practice will remove the need for slurry storage, and the existing slurry storage lagoon on site can be removed without need for replacement. Indeed, the SCAL assessment provided demonstrates that ammonia emissions – the most notable of farm odours to humans - will be reduced by 63% from existing by the proposals.

Accordingly there should be no unacceptable impacts upon residential amenity arising from the development, and with the change in farming practice likely to result in notable enhancements, meeting the NPPF and Local Plan policy requirements.

**Conclusion**

The above assessment demonstrates how the emerging proposals presented here have been shaped to accord with the objectives of planning policy at National and Local level, to deliver a high quality development that will result in economic, social, and environmental enhancements. The proposals are therefore considered to be sustainable development that will benefit the site and surrounding area.

The Applicant and consultant team would welcome a site visit with SSDC officers to present the proposals in detail and examine the site, and to address any immediate questions arising.