



SHAW &  
JAGGER  
ARCHITECTS

---

PROPOSED PRIVATE DWELLING

Land Adjacent to Woodfold Park,  
Blackburn

Repairing the Landscape - Analysis  
December 2022

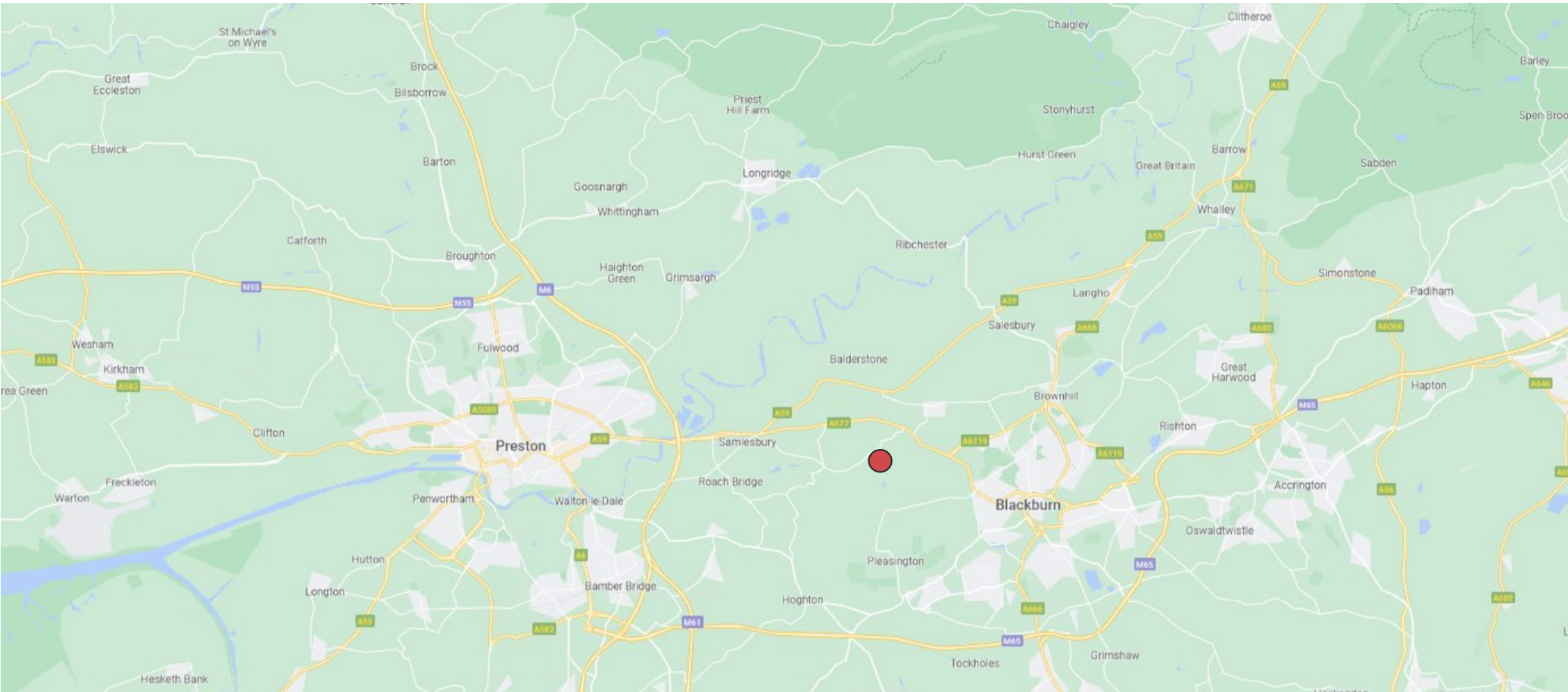
---

## CONTENTS

- 1 - Site Location
- 2 - Repairing the Landscape
- 3 - Existing Site Plan
- 4 - Existing Site Photographs
- 5 - Proposed Demolition Plan
- 6 - Proposed Landscaping Plan



Site Location



- Site Location
- Application Boundary

The site lies within the administrative jurisdiction of Ribble Valley Borough Council, which in turn lies within the County of Lancashire. Ribble Valley Borough Council is the relevant Local Planning Authority for the purposes of an application for planning permission for a new dwelling in this area.

The site is located approximately 1.6km southwest of Mellor and 3.9 km northwest of Blackburn. Woodfold Hall is located to the south of the proposed site. The approximate grid reference is: E363684, N429657.

The site lies within open countryside comprising an approximate area of 14.03 acres (5.68 hectares) of undeveloped land situated adjacent to the dwellings known as ‘Woodfold Park Farm’ and ‘Huntsmans Cottages’ to the south of Further Lane. There is an existing drive to the east of the proposed site accessing residential properties off Further Lane which is a minor road that spurs off the A677 accessing Nabs Head and Samlesby Bottoms to the south west.

The site itself is shaped as an irregular rectangle, aligned to the road and adjacent access road. There is an existing field gates access to the north west off Further Lane.

The site is bounded by a mix of mature and semi mature trees, hedgerows and post and rail fence. There are two trees within the site which are the subject of a tree preservation (TPO) along with the trees along the eastern boundary. These are highlighted on the topographical survey and within the landscape visual assesment that accompany this document.





# Repairing The Landscape

## The Site and Surroundings

The application site is located on the south side of Further Lane and incorporates a series of paddocks and a manège, along with buildings in equestrian use to the south west and stables to the north east.

Further Lane forms the northern boundary to the site where a hedgerow follows the length of the site along the road into which the two access points are set. The south western boundary is defined by a post and rail fence beyond which is woodland. The southern boundary to the site is formed by a post and rail fence that separates the pastureland from the properties at Woodfold Hall and a driveway serving two residential properties set within the walled garden to Woodfold Hall to the south west of the application site. To the east is a belt of tree planting beyond which is a driveway serving Huntsman's Cottages, Woodfold Park Farm and Woodfold Hall.

Access into the site is currently provided from two access points off Further Lane. The first access is through a recently constructed field gate, which is intended to provide access to the proposed dwelling. The second access serves the equestrian development to the south of the site through a gateway constructed of stone that includes a secure electronic gate.

This application also involves the demolition of stables. The demolition of further equestrian buildings, along with the removal of the manège is to form part of the application as well. An existing access onto Further Lane to the south west of the site is also to be closed off. The area of land currently occupied by the equestrian related development is simply to become part of the wider landscaping to the proposed dwelling.

## Sensitive to the Defining Characteristics of the Local Area

Woodfold Park is understood to have been subject to extensive redevelopment of its various buildings over the last twenty years, including through both conversion and new build development. Recent redevelopment of Woodfold Park is considered to have caused visual intrusions within the landscape and presence of development that is out of character to the original parkland. Namely, Woodfold Park Farm, Woodfold Park Stud and The Walled Garden where these low-quality properties have clearly been designed in recent years and are visible from both short and long distance vantage points.

Due to the harm that has succumbed Woodfold Park, the LVA concludes the location of the site on the edge of Woodfold Park provides an opportunity to improve damage to the heritage asset. In particular, development of the proposal site creates an opportunity to establish new tree planting to screen some of the recent redevelopments across Woodfold Park from public vantage points. This includes, introducing planting along the southern boundary of the proposal site to screen the redevelopment of Woodfold Hall and the associated domestic paraphernalia from Further Lane and other public vantage points to the north of the parkland.

Given the significance of Woodfold Park to the context of the proposal site and its influence on the appearance of the wider landscape, a Character Study was undertaken in addition to an LVA. The purpose of the Character Study was intended to understand the history to the design of the landscape and its significance on the character of the area today. If development is to be located within the setting of Woodfold Park, which is a recognised heritage asset, then the historic value provides an important perspective and influence on the design of the proposal.

The Character Study outlines how the landscape of Woodfold Park is by Charles McNiven in the style of Humphrey Repton. Woodfold Hall is understood to have been designed by James Wyatt, along with Sir Geoffrey Wyatville his nephew.



Historic maps of the site and its surroundings reveal the way in which the landscape matured as development progressed in the form of scattered farmsteads and the implementation of the vision for Woodfold Park. The available historic maps for the area also suggest that the original vision for Woodfold Park was not ultimately realised, which can be discerned from a series of physical changes within the landscape notations. It also appears that the vision involved wider changes whereby the original Shorrock Green Hall was demolished and the avenue of trees that led to the building (and originally crossed the application site) were removed to make way for Huntsman's Cottage and the creation of Further Lane. Overlaying an existing landscape with a new landscape meant that the application site has a different character to the wider parkland.

Also, the wall surrounding the extent of the Estate is incomplete, as there is no wall defining the northern boundary to the parkland, particularly in proximity to the proposal site. It appears changes of landownership may have influenced the development of the Estate and explain why the wall is incomplete, in disrepair and early landscape features changed. Especially, as the proposal site appears to have originally formed part of the extent of the Estate, but later became detached through a change of ownership.

The Character Study concludes that the proposal site provides the opportunity to repair some of the harm caused to Woodfold Park and also further explain the significance of the heritage asset. In particular, the relationship of the proposal site with Woodfold Park could be reinstated with appropriate development and landscaping.

Having reviewed the various assessments of the historic and landscape context for the application site, and gained an understanding of how historic events have led to the current equestrian use of the site, it would appear that the appearance of the site detracts from the setting of Woodfold Park. If history had played out as first planned, then the application site would have been maintained as part of the setting to Woodfold Hall, either through subsequent phases of development or simply being used in a more sympathetic manner. However, the sale of the land and its subsequent subdivision and strengthening of character for equestrian use serves to visually sever the land from Woodfold Park and cause further harm to the setting of the heritage assets. Coupled with the harm caused to the historic significance of the Hall and Walled Garden through redevelopment, including the subdivision of the immediate grounds into gardens and introduction of extensions then we believe the situation creates opportunities to address the harm by altering the layout, introducing landscaping and reinstating the relationship between the application site and Woodfold Park.

### **Significantly Enhance its Immediate Setting**

In this instance, the site forms a series of paddocks that are currently within equestrian use and used for the grazing of horses. As such, the paddocks are identified within the ecology report and LVA to be neutral grasslands with no UK priority habitats recorded. The site also contains a number of buildings and structures, including a manège associated with the equestrian use of the land. The location of the application site adjacent to Woodfold Park means that it forms part of the setting to various heritage assets.

Whilst the reinstatement of meadowland, with the reinforcement of the boundary tree planting and new lengths of new hedge planting will enhance the ecological value of the site, it will also serve to repair the setting of the Woodfold Park so the relationship of the site with the parkland and Hall would be reinstated through a change in character to the site. This is on the basis that equestrian development currently serves as a visual detractor to Woodfold Park because the various equestrian buildings and structures, plus the subdivision of the application site into smaller paddocks have appeared in recent times and are also not typically found on the edge of historic parkland. It also needs to be kept in mind that there are further applications that have been granted for additional development associated with Woodfold Stud Farm. The proposal will therefore prevent those permissions from being implemented that would only serve to cause further harm. The proposal therefore intends to secure the replacement of the currently unsympathetic use of the land and to prevent further harm with more appropriate development to the setting of the heritage assets.

Of particular interest is how the landscaping will create a continuous flow of planting across the entire site, whilst also extending the screening to some of the more undesirable aspects of the recent redevelopment of Woodfold Hall when viewed from Further Lane. The result will be that the application site will appear to be a component part of Woodfold Park, thereby restoring the historic association of the site with the wider park so it once again appears to form part of the same landownership.

The proposal also provides the opportunity to enhance the visual quality of the boundary of the site by reinforcing and repairing the existing hedgerow following removal of current disruptions in its length. Along Further Lane, there is a second existing access that currently serves the equestrian use of the western portion of the application site, which is known as Woodfold Park Stud. This access is to be removed and a new fence coupled with hedgerow planting is to be introduced in order to fill the resulting

gap. Removing the existing access is considered to provide a visual improvement to Further Lane, due to the current ‘urban’ appearance of the gate posts and sliding gate that are alien to the rural character of the area. The gates also currently detract from the setting to Woodfold Hall, which can be viewed within the same vista from Further Lane.

### **Raise Standards of Design More Generally in Rural Areas**

Having reviewed the landscape and heritage setting for the site, it is apparent that the heavily visible influence of purposeful landscaping and buildings placement has had on the character of the surrounding landscape provides an important influential role. The landscape associated with Woodfold Park was purposefully designed on the basis of principles defined by Repton, who was a notable landscape architect of his time. The historic association of the proposal site with Woodfold Park and the proximity of the proposal site to the historic country house and parklands would therefore suggest it is appropriate to adopt traditional techniques in the design of the recreational landscapes associated with country houses for the development of the proposal site. The proposal site feels to be an appropriate opportunity to celebrate traditional architectural design and landscape design principles.

In terms of raising the quality of design within rural areas generally, the proposed dwelling and landscaping scheme are based on design principles from one of the key influential periods in landscape history. Without doubt, the proposal clearly improves upon the visual quality of the site as existing and therefore the contribution the site makes to the wider landscape. Removing equestrian development to make way for classical design will, quite simply, improve the appearance of the area.

### **Exceptional Quality**

Overall, it is believed the proposal site offers a unique opportunity to repair harm and enhance the setting of various heritage assets found across Woodfold Park by employing classical architectural design techniques in terms of both the design of the house and also its grounds.

Given the original vision for Woodfold Park failed to be realised, the proposal site offers an opportunity to seek to complete the vision and bring the application site back into the Estate, as originally envisaged. This includes through extensions to the parkland through new landscaping, which would secure visual improvements to the site by removing the current equestrian development, and also enhancing the ecological value of the otherwise single species grassland.

### **Impact on Significance of Heritage Assets**

Consequently, the proposal is considered to provide an opportunity to address the existing harm and also to better reveal the significance of the heritage asset. In respect of addressing harm, views of Woodfold Park from the application site and across it from Further Lane reveal the rear of Woodfold Hall. The view reveals the extent of recent extensions to the Hall, which enabled its conversion to a series of residential properties, as well as the new dwellings within the Walled Garden. The significance of the original Hall is simply not visible because the main elevation to Woodfold Hall faces southwards and in the opposite direction to the application site.

At the same time, the equestrian use of the site bears no relation to the adjacent parkland. It also acts to sever the parkland from the wider agricultural use of surrounding land that was originally the context for parkland and formed part of the original use of the wider Estate. Recent planning permission allows for the erection of further equestrian development, including a temporary new dwelling. The development associated with Woodfold Stud Farm and the use of the land therefore have the potential to cause additional visual harm as a result of intensification of the equestrian use of the land.

It is therefore considered that the proposal, which includes a new dwelling and landscaping of the land between the parkland and Further Lane will act to remedy some of the harm created by previous changes and recent development. This is in so far as the landscaping and proposed dwelling will act as a signpost to the heritage assets and offer a more appropriate context to the historic parkland through the creation of a landscape based on principles of traditional parkland landscaping.



## **Trees**

The proposal includes the planting of trees, as both specimens within and to create new belts of woodland planting. Additionally, new lengths of hedgerow are to be planted along sections of the site boundary.

The planting is intended to provide an appropriate response to the findings of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and LVA that accompanies the application. This is in terms of enhancing the ecological value of the site, increasing the visual interest and to provide screening.

The proposal therefore offers an opportunity to provide additional woodland planting along the existing lengths of woodland that will act to reinforce the presence of planting for the future. The additional depth to the planting will also reinforce the visual screening role of the woodland, as well as enhance the foraging and breeding function of the woodland planting by extending the habitat.

## **Ecology**

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal found that the site is itself of poor ecological value due to the lack of biodiversity, but that a number of opportunities exist to enhance the biodiversity value of the site in support of the wider ecological value of the area. In particular, there are a number of protected species within the area where the application site could assist with extending existing habitats or creating new habitats to support the protected species.

The landscaping proposal for the site consequently offers opportunities to enhance the biodiversity with a view to supporting the local populations of protected species. As such, the landscaping proposal includes extensive tree and hedgerow planting to extend and reinforce corridors that will create new foraging and breeding areas for bats and birds. The tree planting to the east and south is intended to deepen the existing tree planting in order to reinforce the presence of a dark corridor for bats.

A wildlife lake (including an isolated island for breeding birds) is proposed to extend the existing network of ponds in support of the wider great crested newt population that will also increase the biodiversity value of the site. Planting of a wider range of grasses, shrubs and flowers will also make a positive contribution to the biodiversity of the site by introducing new habitats.

## **Green Belt**

The Proposals Map shows the application site to be located within the general extent of the green belt. In this instance, the potential harm to the green belt is in respect of building a new dwelling within open countryside, where new dwellings are generally considered inappropriate. This is because the physical presence of a new structure will create a physical interruption in otherwise open land. As such, the impact on openness is a consideration in respect of determining whether the potential for harm to openness is outweighed by other considerations. This is why this matter has been left until last, as it requires an overall assessment of the impacts of the proposal.

In terms of spatial considerations in respect of openness, there is already sporadic development present within the same vista, where the presence of existing buildings lends itself to part of the character of the area. The area, is therefore, not completely open and there are views of different built forms within both short and long-distance views. Spatially, development therefore has a role to play within the character of the landscape. The introduction of a further dwelling will not detract from the general character given the scale is not sufficient to conflict with the purposes of green belt policy, as listed under paragraph 138 of the NPPF.

At the same time as a dwelling is proposed, the proposal also incorporates the demolition of several largescale buildings to the west of the application site. The proposal will also prevent a temporary new dwelling from being erected that was granted under reference 3/2020/0011. It can, therefore, be argued that the proposal will actually result in a reduction of built form within the green belt. As such, the proposal will secure a greater degree of spatial openness given the reduction in footprint and scale of buildings

within the green belt.

Public views of the site are generally short in nature due to topography and the presence of existing land features, such as woodland. The proposal will, therefore, have limited opportunity to impact on openness in respect of visual impacts. This means that the potential visual impact of the dwelling on the wider character of the area is restricted to Further Lane, which lies immediately adjacent to the site. Any visual impacts on the openness of the green belt will, therefore be limited in terms of significance by virtue of the existing land features that already determine the potential to gain views of the application site.

Of particular significance is the fact that the proposed dwelling is to be located against a backdrop of mature woodland planting, which already interrupt views beyond. The presence of existing trees and the intension to extend the woodland planting will further limit views and increasingly restrict the potential impact of the dwelling on the openness of the countryside.

In this instance, the exceptional quality of the proposal and the removal of harm to the heritage asset is of sufficient weight to outweigh any potential harm to the green belt. Especially when coupled with the tangible benefits of the proposal in respect of ecological and landscape enhancements, removing the current equestrian development and as all other technical matters can be dealt with satisfactorily.

## **Conclusion**

The proposal is located within the setting of a heritage asset, which includes listed buildings and a registered park and garden. The heritage assets have been harmed following a number of alterations and extensions, which means that their significance has been undermined. The proposal will act to repair some of the harm and secure a number of enhancements by establishing a new dwelling as part of the collection hierarchy of dwellings and buildings that constitute Woodfold Park. Additionally, the proposed landscaping will serve to reinforce the historic woodland planting and secure succession planting for the future.

The proposal is expected to deliver a number of tangible benefits in favour of the proposal. Of particular significance is the landscaping scheme, which will secure both visual improvements and ecological enhancements to the site. The site is currently of low ecological value, so the introduction of additional tree and hedgerow planting, along with flowers and shrubs, and the introduction of a pond will introduce new and extended habitats. In turn, the ecological value of the site will be raised in support of a number of protected species.

The additional tree planting will also serve to visually reinforce existing woodland planting around the site, and secure succession planting. Visually, the proposal will also secure improvements in respect of the removal of the equestrian character of the land, which is considered to be harmful to the heritage setting to Woodfold Park. Removing the modern residential styled gates and the various equestrian related buildings and structures will allow the application site to be landscaped in a manner that is sympathetic to the setting of Woodfold Park.

Overall, the proposal represents exceptional quality and is considered to constitute sustainable development by virtue of enhancing the natural and built environment, and offering social and economic benefits. There are no identifiable harms that significantly and demonstrably outweigh the identified benefits and for these reasons it is clear that planning permission should be granted. As such, the significant weight to be given to the proposal constitutes very special circumstances in support of the granting of planning permission.



There are several key drivers that the design team have sought to deliver in order to present a strong case for an outstanding design within the greenbelt;

- Clearing up the site of built form (de-cluttering of the site with a landscape based approach)
- Reduction in hard standing within the green belt
- Reducing the visual impact within the landscape and addressing visual openness
- Improving the landscape design of the site
- High quality architecture
- Increasing the sustainable credentials of the site
- Increasing biodiversity within the site

## **Key Elements of Improving the Setting**

### **1. Removal of Existing Stables & Equestrian Paraphernalia**

The west of the application site currently holds a modern stable block and its associated paraphernalia such as menage, paddocks, hardstanding and access gates and walls. This application proposes to remove these elements from the landscape and use the spaces within the proposed landscaping scheme therefore improving the setting. These poor quality existing elements within this landscape undermine the significance of the green belt and also the interpretation of the landscape as an estate setting. They also have a negative effect on the original or genuine field layout and historic parkland. Removal of these elements will also remove the intensification of use of this land.

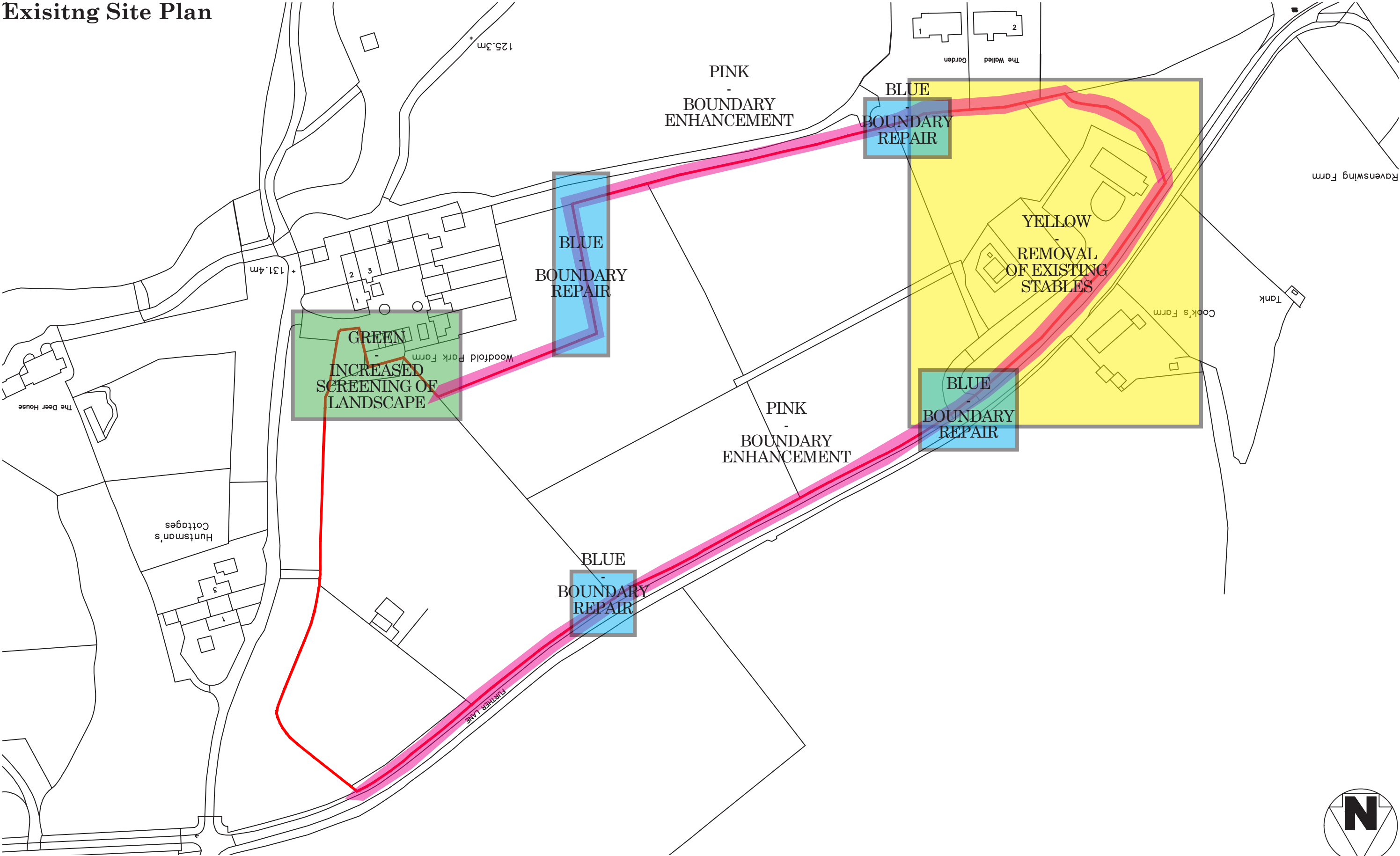
### **2. Screening of Landscape**

The proposed landscaping scheme enhances the existing tree belt in order to screen poor quality, modern buildings that are visible beyond the site.

### **3. Boundary Repair**

Proposals include strengthening existing hedgerows along the site boundary as well as repairing the drystone wall where it has collapsed. The existing access, gate posts and walls serving the stables will be removed and replaced with the continued boundary hedgerow.

Exisitng Site Plan



Site Location Plan - NTS





Exisitng Site Photographs



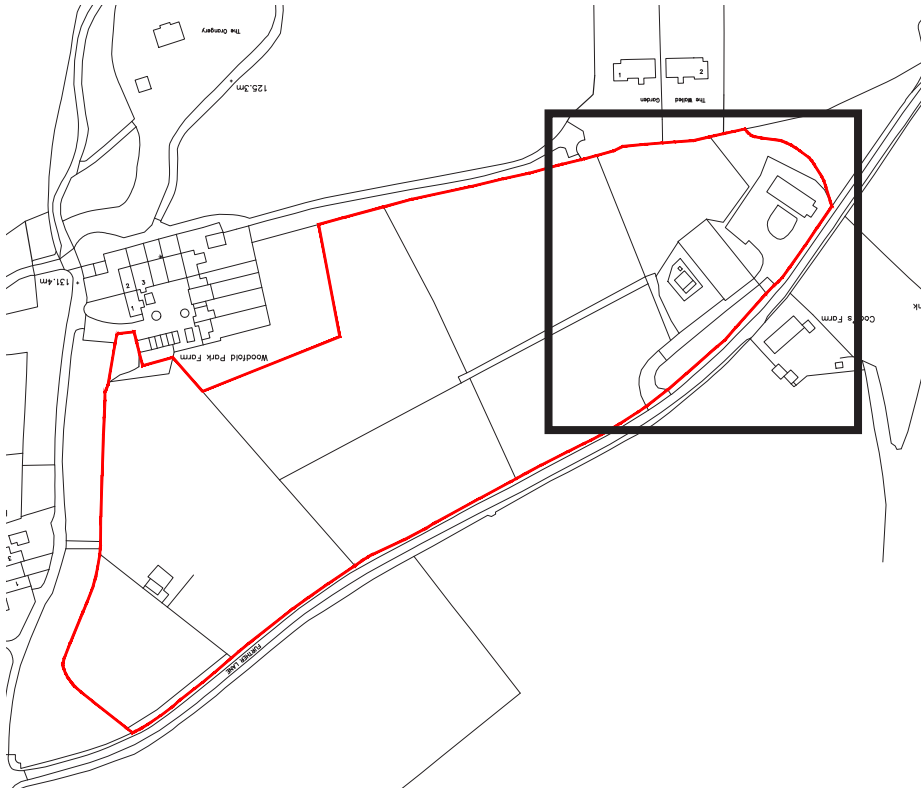
A1



A2



A3



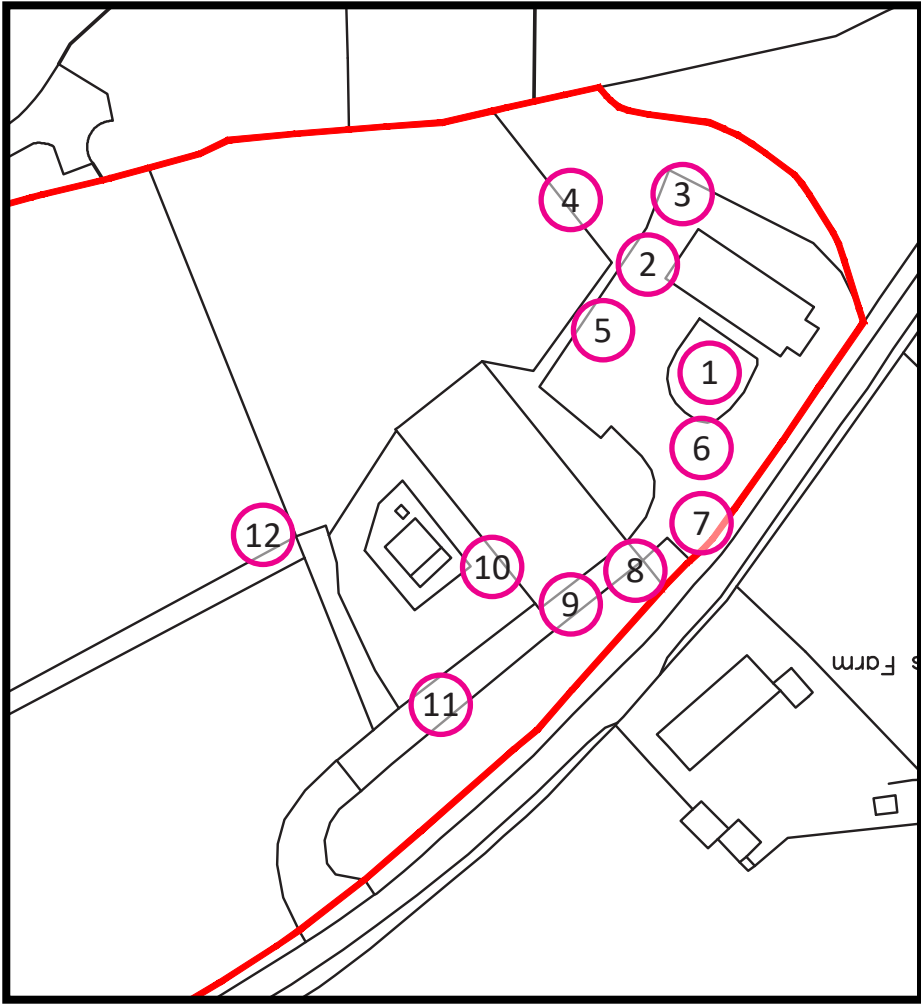
A4



A5



A6



A7



A8



A9



A10



A11



A12

SET - A: Showing exisitng stables and paraphernalia proposed for removal



Exisitng Site Photographs



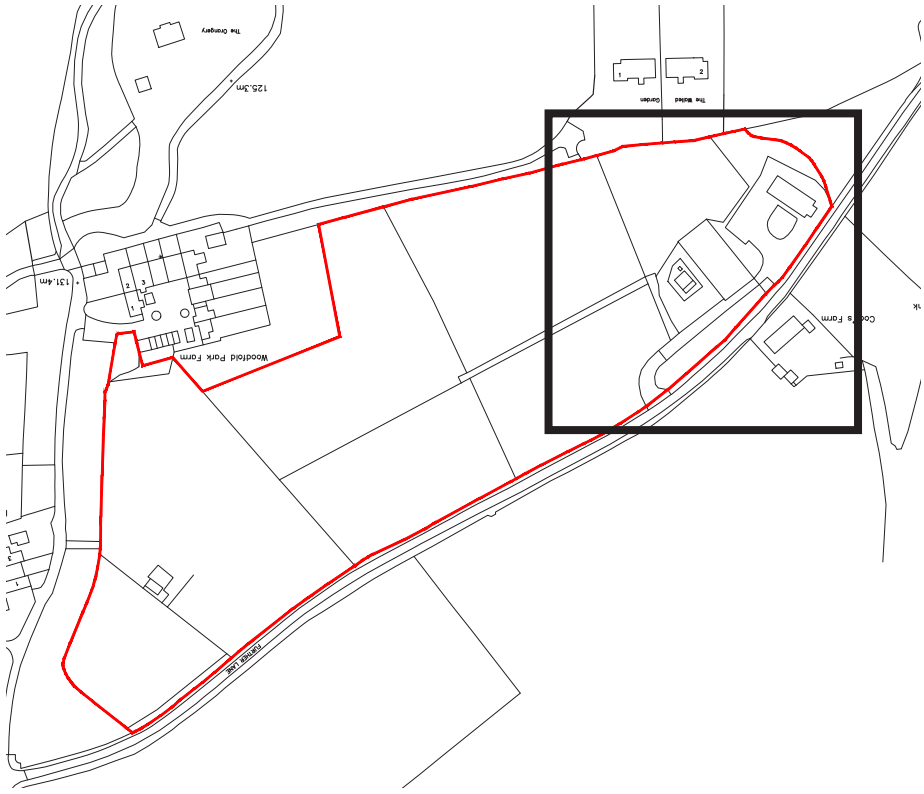
B1



B2



B3



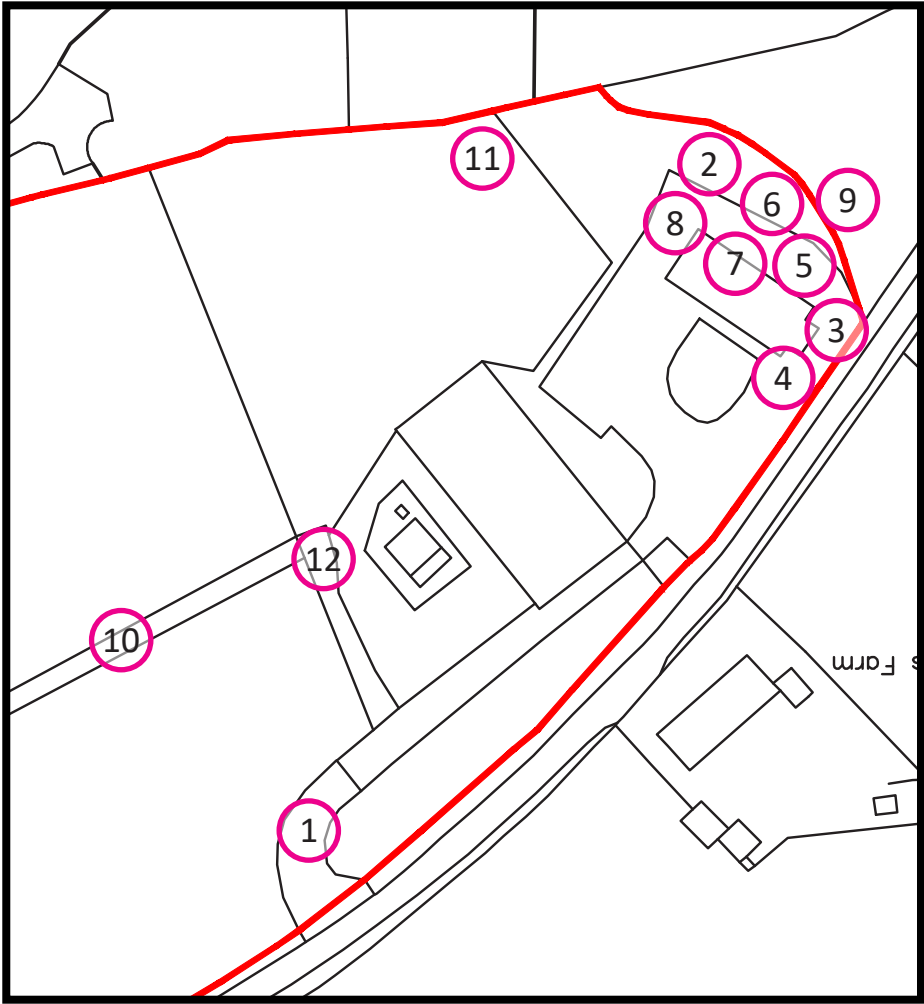
B4



B5



B6



B7



B8



B9



B10



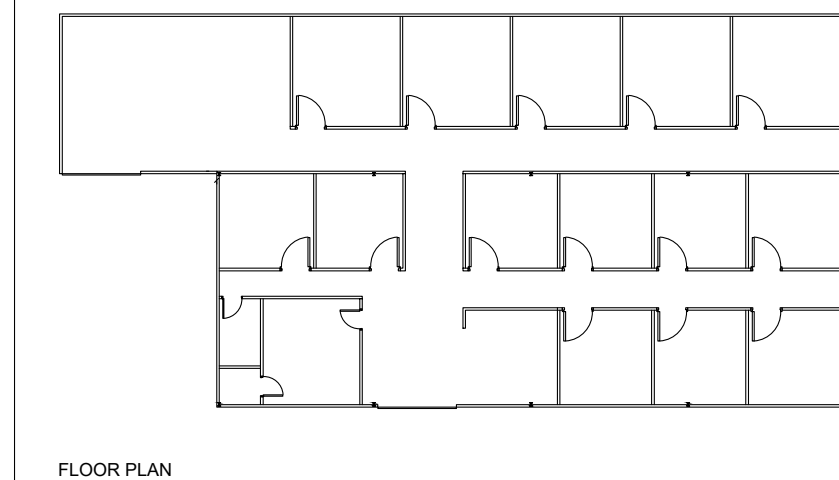
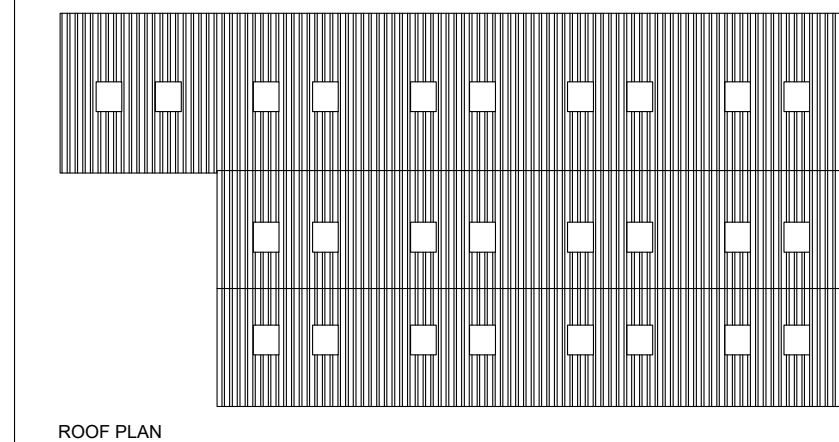
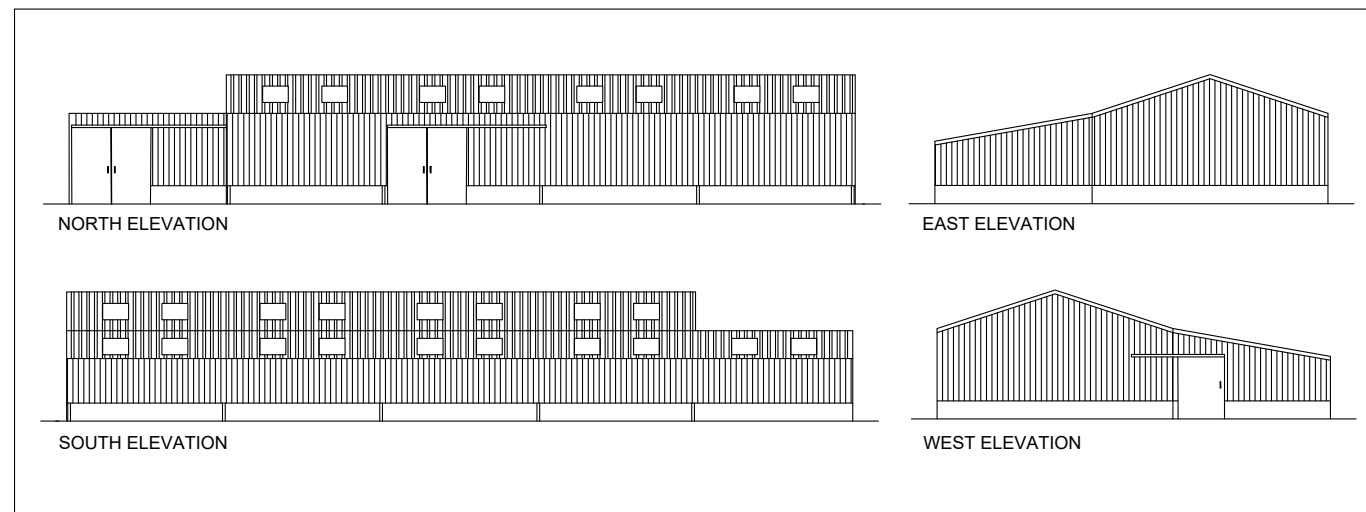
B11



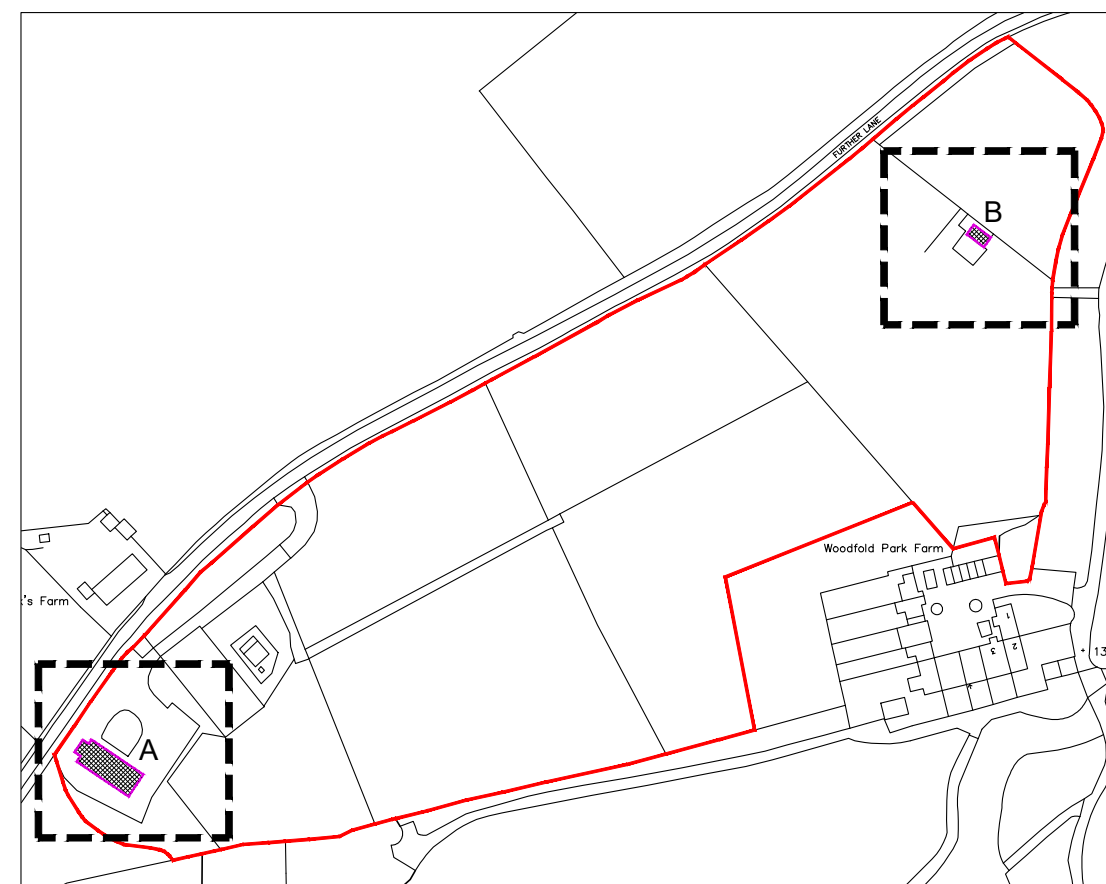
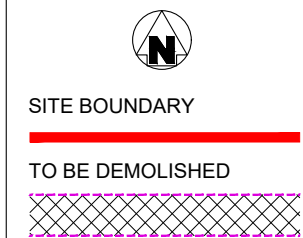
B12

SET - B: Showing exisitng stables and paraphernalia proposed for removal





STRUCTURE A



SITE LOCATION



Exisitng Site Photographs



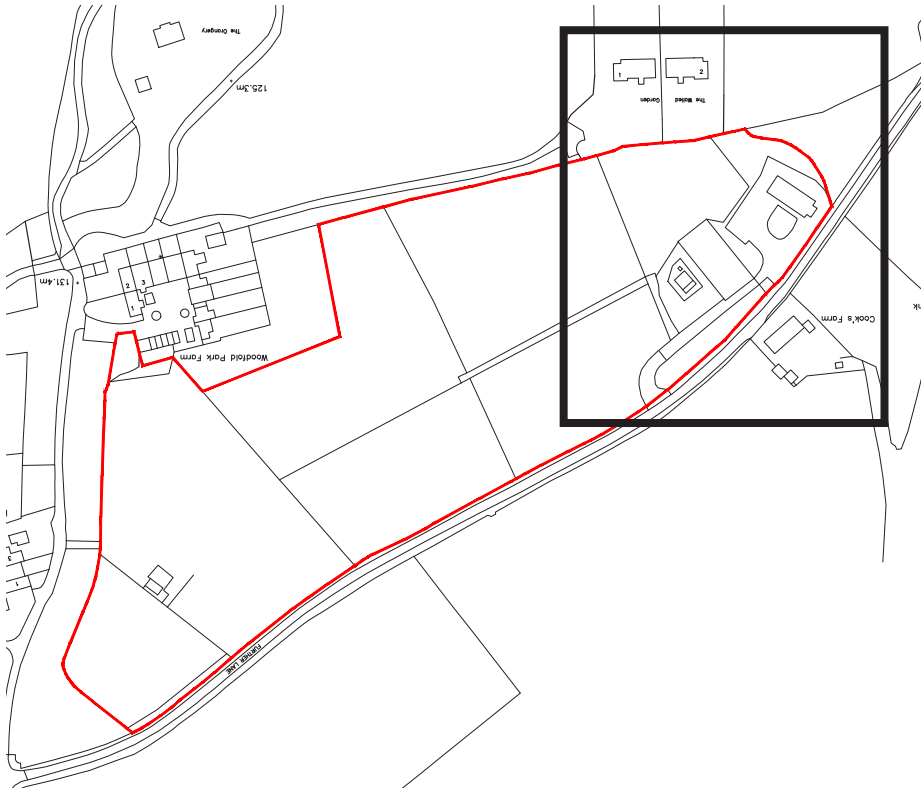
C1



C2



C3



C4



C5



C6



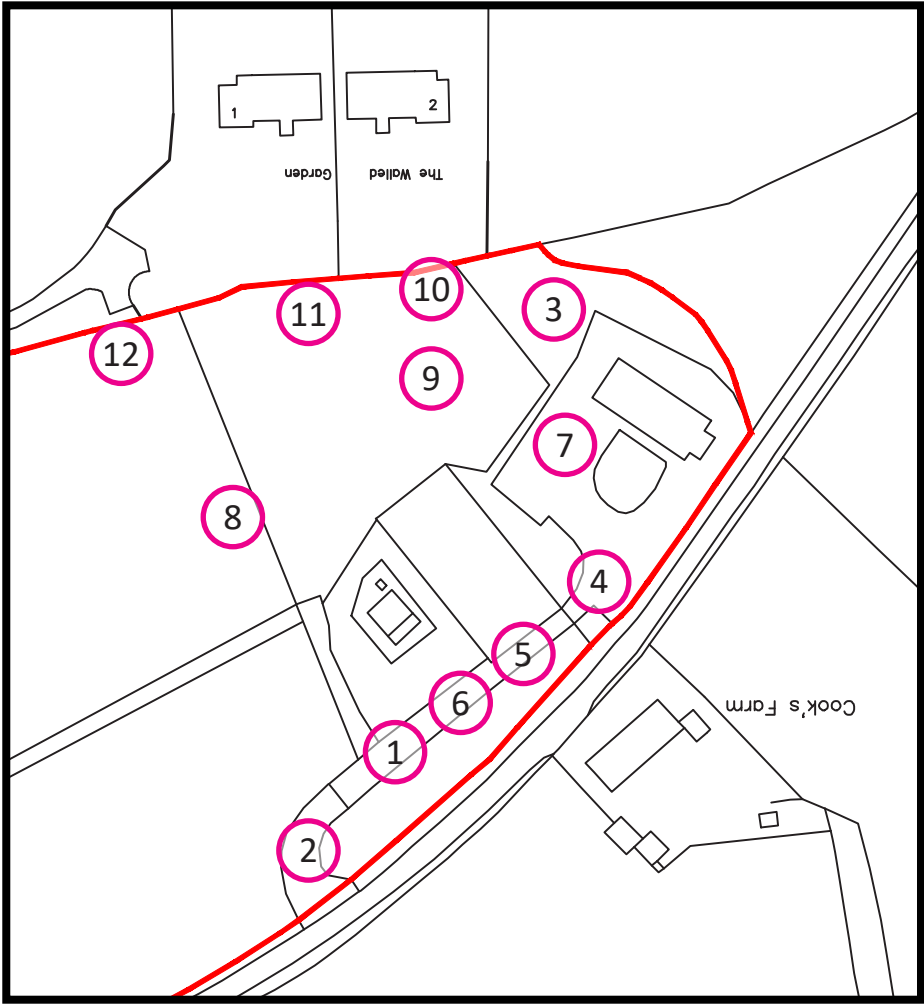
C7



C8



C9



C10



C11



C12

SET - C: Showing; neighbouring Cooks Farm which currently overlooks the equestrian area / modern 'Walled Garden' dwellings beside the site / modern access gates to be removed / areas of boundary wall & hedging to be extended.





Exisitng Site Photographs



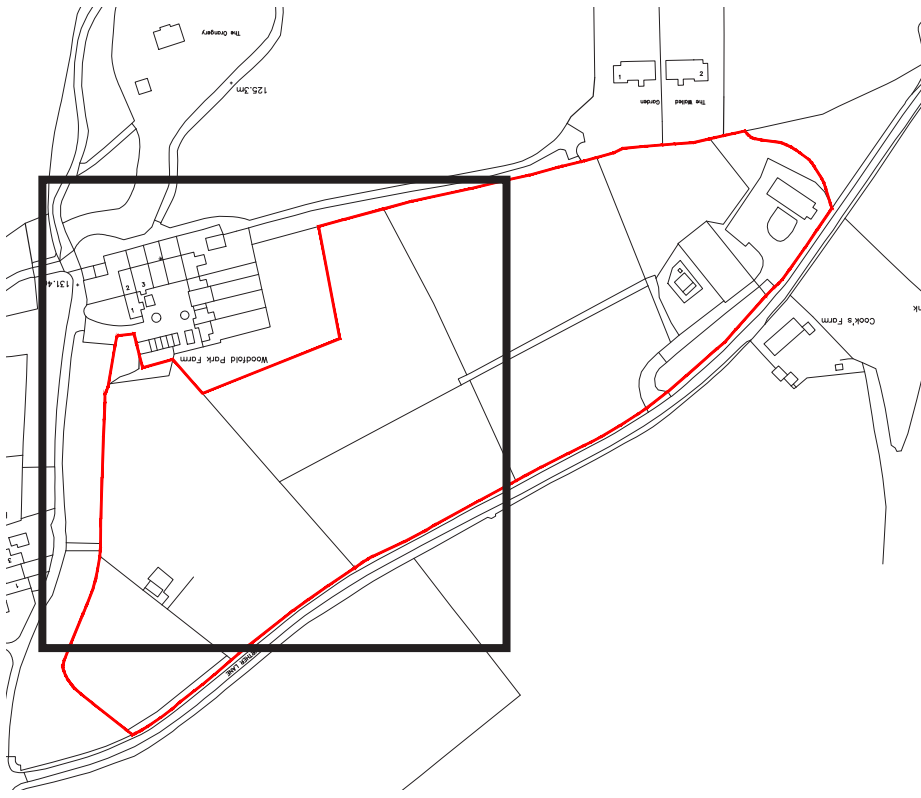
D1



D2



D3



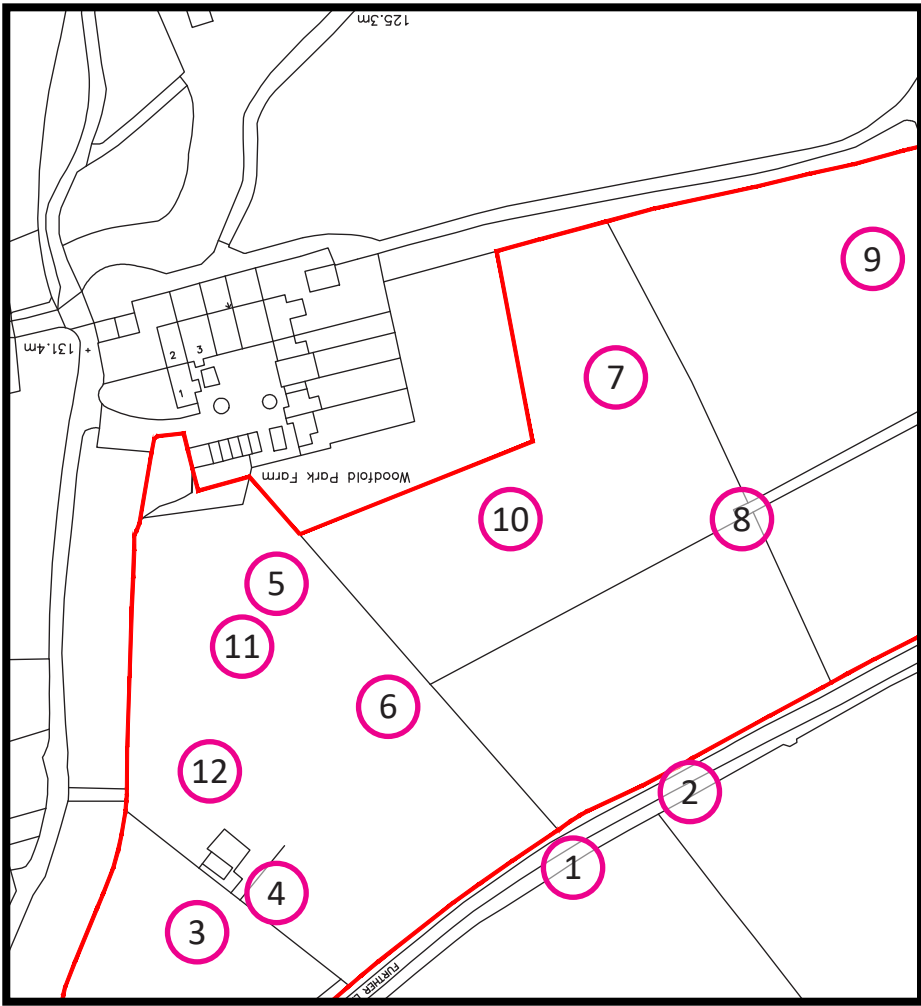
D4



D5



D6



D7



D8



D9



D10



D11



D12

SET - D: Showing the neighbouring and modern Woodfold Park Farm of which proposed tree belt screening would obscure



[illegible]

# WOODFOLD VILLA

