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BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN - BIODIVERSITY STATEMENT

At

Blackmoss Farm – Phase 3

Elmridge Lane
Chipping
Preston
Lancashire
PR3 2NY

NGR: SD 60054 40317

Prepared for:	Richard Keeling, FI Construction Ltd.
Written by:	Tom Kenwright, UES Senior Ecologist
Approved by:	Toby Hart, UES Managing Director



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Author and qualifications

This report is compiled and written by Tom Kenwright BSc MSc ACIEEM, UES Senior Ecologist. Tom holds a level 5 Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland (BSBI) Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC), which certifies him as competent to undertake phase 1 habitat surveys and national vegetation classification (NVC) surveys.

This report has been verified by Toby Hart BSc MCIEEM PIEMA, UES Managing Director. Toby holds a level 6 BSBI FISC. Level 6 is only awarded in exceptional circumstances where the surveyor is a very competent professional field botanist and is of national status.

1.2 Proposed development

The proposed development is for the construction of numerous agricultural buildings and associated areas of hardstanding, including calving sheds, midden, wash bay, office / welfare building, milking sheds and silos. The proposals include offsite native species hedgerow and tree planting within adjacent areas of the wider farm. A pond is also due to be created within a clearing in an area of offsite woodland within the wider farm.

1.3 Survey objectives

This biodiversity statement has been produced for the proposed development hereby referred to as Phase 3, at Blackmoss Farm, Chipping, Preston. UES was commissioned in 2024 to prepare the Biodiversity Statement as part of a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment of the proposed development. This was completed in order to:

- Establish the baseline value of the site by calculating the number of habitat, hedgerow and watercourse units at the site of the proposed development.
- If detailed or indicative plans are available, establish the post development value of the development by calculating the number of habitat, hedgerow and watercourse units which will be created, retained and / or enhanced as part of the proposals.
- Provide guidance on habitat retention, creation and enhancement measures to inform proposed site layout and landscaping proposals and to maximize potential gains in biodiversity.
- Provide details of how offsite compensation will be used when a 10% biodiversity net gain cannot be achieved on site.



2 PLANNING POLICY

Paragraphs 180(d), 185(b) and 186(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) set out requirements for the delivery of BNG. In England, BNG is mandatory under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).

Under the statutory framework, subject to some exceptions, every grant of planning permission is granted subject to the condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met ("the biodiversity gain condition"). This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitats.

Mandatory BNG only applies for planning permission applications made on or after 12th February 2024. Permissions granted for applications made before this date are not subject to BNG. A temporary exclusion applies for non-major developments whereby mandatory BNG only applies for planning permission applications made on or after 2nd April 2024.

The Environment Act 2021 sets out the following key components to mandatory BNG:

- Minimum 10% gain required calculated using DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric & approval of net gain plan
- Habitat secured for at least 30 years via obligations / conservation covenant
- Habitat can be delivered on-site, off-site or via statutory biodiversity credits
- There is a national register for net gain delivery sites
- The mitigation hierarchy still applies of avoidance, mitigation and compensation for biodiversity loss
- Also applies to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs)
- Does not apply to marine development
- Does not change existing legal environmental and wildlife protections

3 METHODOLOGY

The BNG assessment has been undertaken using the DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric. The metric was used to calculate baseline habitat, hedgerow and watercourse units. An extended Phase 1 Habitat survey was undertaken as part of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the site, undertaken by UES on the 7th August 2024. Surveyors present included:

- Mark Halliwell MBiol, UES Senior Ecologist. Mark holds a level 4 BSBI FISC, which certifies him as competent to undertake phase 1 habitat surveys, UKHab and NVC surveys.
- Ysobella Cox BSc MBiol, UES Graduate Ecologist. Ysobella holds a level 3 BSBI FISC, which certifies her as competent to undertake phase 1 habitat surveys.

Habitats recorded within the proposed development site during the walkover survey have been mapped on a phase 1 habitat plan, provided at Appendix 1. Full details of each habitat recorded onsite are provided within the PEA report (reference UES03941/12), which has been submitted as part of this planning application.

Since the PEA survey in August 2024, the redline boundary has been altered to include additional areas that are to be used for landscaping and drainage requirements. These areas could be viewed as part of the PEA but were not subject to detailed updated condition assessments. This is not considered to be a significant limitation as all of these areas were subject to a detailed PEA walkover survey and BNG condition assessment by UES in April and May 2023. These areas were observed to be in a very similar condition in 2024 as they were in 2023 and the condition assessments considered to still be valid.

As some parts of the site have inadvertently been degraded through adjacent construction works, the baseline value and condition of the habitats on site has been input into the metric as what was present prior to the degradation works. This has been informed by studying historic aerial imagery, comparing adjacent intact habitats and from the results of the previous habitat mapping and condition assessment exercise undertaken by UES in April & May 2023, the purpose of which was to inform the potential for use of the wider farm for BNG offsetting purposes. Recent changes in habitats as a result of the implementation of ongoing farming activities and approved planning permissions have not been accounted for given that they are legitimate activities. As such, the baseline value of these areas has been input as the habitats and condition recorded at the time of the walkover survey. A phase 1 habitat plan showing the habitats recorded on site is provided at Appendix 1 and a phase 1 habitat plan showing the baseline habitats used for the purposes of this BNG assessment is provided at Appendix 2.

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric utilises habitats classified under the UK Habitats Classification methodology (UKHAB). As such the 'Phase 1 Translation Tool' within the metric, in addition to surveyor knowledge and experience, was used to translate phase 1 habitats into UKHAB codes provided within the metric.



4 RESULTS

4.1 Baseline assessment

The proposed development site has an area of approximately 7.6ha and comprises parts of improved grassland and arable fields, in addition to ponds, scrub, semi-improved grassland, and part of a farm complex of hardstanding and buildings. Two sections of species-poor hedgerow are present on site and a further section of species-poor hedgerow has recently been removed but has been included within the baseline value.

The baseline value of the site has been calculated as 14.12 habitat units, 2.11 hedgerow units and 0 watercourse units using DEFRA's Statutory Biodiversity Metric.

The DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric used to calculate the baseline value of the site has been submitted with this report and provides full details of the calculations.

4.2 Post-development assessment

Detailed landscaping plans are not available at this stage, however indicative landscape plans are available, upon which the post development value of the site has been calculated (see Barnes Walker Landscape Layout reference M3758-PP-01-V2).

The proposals include the planting of hedgerow and scattered trees spaced 20m apart and hence not input as a line of trees) and the enhancement of an existing hedgerow into a hedgerow with trees.

Based on the site layout and landscaping plans available, the habitat units onsite will decrease to 11.16 units (a loss of 2.95 units and a loss of 20.92%), hedgerow units will increase to 4.63 units (a gain of 2.52 units and a loss of 119.33%), whilst watercourse units remain unchanged at 0 units.

A proposed pond is also due to be created within area of woodland in the wider farm. This pond will be created within an existing clearing within the woodland and will not result in the loss of any canopy trees. As such, whilst it will create structural and botanical diversity and will constitute an ecological enhancement, it cannot be included within the metric calculation as it will not replace the woodland habitat, and its enhancement of the woodland is not measurable within the confines of the metric.

The DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric used to calculate the post-development value of the site has been submitted with this report and provides full details of the calculations.

5 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Biodiversity net gain requirements

The baseline value of the site has been calculated as 14.12 habitat units and 2.11 hedgerow units.

In order to achieve a 10% net gain in biodiversity, the post development value would need to be 15.532 habitat units, and 2.321 hedgerow units, no gain in watercourse units is required due to the baseline value of 0.

In addition to providing the 10% net gain in habitat and hedgerow units required to adhere to national planning policy, the metric's trading rules must also be met to provide an acceptable net gain. This is a function of the metric that has been designed to ensure habitats are compensated for sufficiently.

To adhere to the metric's trading rules, losses must be replaced by habitat, hedgerow and watercourse units of the same broad habitat type and distinctiveness, or by units from any habitat with a higher distinctiveness regardless of the broad habitat type. Based on the details provided to UES at this stage, details of additional units required to meet the trading rules are provided in the table below.

Baseline habitat distinctiveness	Habitat units	Hedgerow units	Watercourse units
Very high	Not applicable to this site.	Not applicable to this site.	Not applicable to this site.
High	Not applicable to this site.	Not applicable to this site.	Not applicable to this site.
Medium	Not applicable to this site.	Not applicable to this site.	Not applicable to this site.
Low	2.95 habitat units are required to satisfy the trading rules. Losses must be replaced with habitat units of the same or higher distinctiveness band, regardless of broad habitat type.	Not applicable to this site.	Not applicable to this site.
Very low	Not applicable to this site.	Not applicable to this site.	Not applicable to this site.

In summary, a further 4.372 habitat units of any distinctiveness or broad habitat type are required to provide the required 10% net gain and adhere to the trading rules.



5.2 Recommendations

Where possible, onsite habitat creation and enhancement will be prioritised to maximise net gain within the proposed development site. However sufficient onsite habitat creation and / or enhancement may not be feasible whilst facilitating the proposed development. As such, any deficit in units will be provided through offsite compensation. The surrounding farm lies within the developer's ownership and the small number of additional habitat units could easily be achieved through offsite habitat creation or enhancement measures within the wider farm.

All compensatory offsite habitat units secured will need to be registered on the Biodiversity Gain Site Register.

The information contained within this Biodiversity Statement is considered to be sufficient to allow the local planning authority to grant planning permission, with regards to statutory biodiversity net gain requirements. Following approval of planning permission, the biodiversity gain condition will be applied to the permission, which must be discharged prior to the commencement of works.

A Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) must be prepared to discharge this condition. The BGP must include baseline and post-development Statutory Metric calculations based on the finalised site layout and landscaping proposals. It must also contain full details of secured offsite compensation (where necessary) and a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP), detailing the proposed establishment, management and monitoring of all offsite compensation and any significant enhancements onsite.

All retained, creation or enhanced habitats that constitute offsite compensation or onsite significant enhancements will need to be managed and monitored for a period of at least 30 years. This can be secured through a section 106 agreement or a conservation covenant.

Following submission of the Biodiversity Gain Plan, the local planning authority will have up to eight weeks to discharge the biodiversity gain condition.



6 CONCLUSION

The proposed development site has an area of approximately 7.6ha and comprises parts of improved grassland and arable fields, in addition to ponds, scrub, semi-improved grassland, and part of a farm complex of hardstanding and buildings. Two sections of species-poor hedgerow are present on site and a further section of species-poor hedgerow has recently been removed but has been included within the baseline value.

The baseline value of the site has been calculated as 14.12 habitat units and 2.11 hedgerow units. In order to achieve a 10% net gain in biodiversity, the post development value would need to be 15.532 habitat units, and 2.321 hedgerow units, no gain in watercourse units is required due to the baseline value of 0.

To satisfy the trading rules within the metric, any habitats that are to be lost as part of the proposed development must be compensated for with habitats of the same distinctiveness and same broad habitat type, or any habitat of higher distinctiveness.

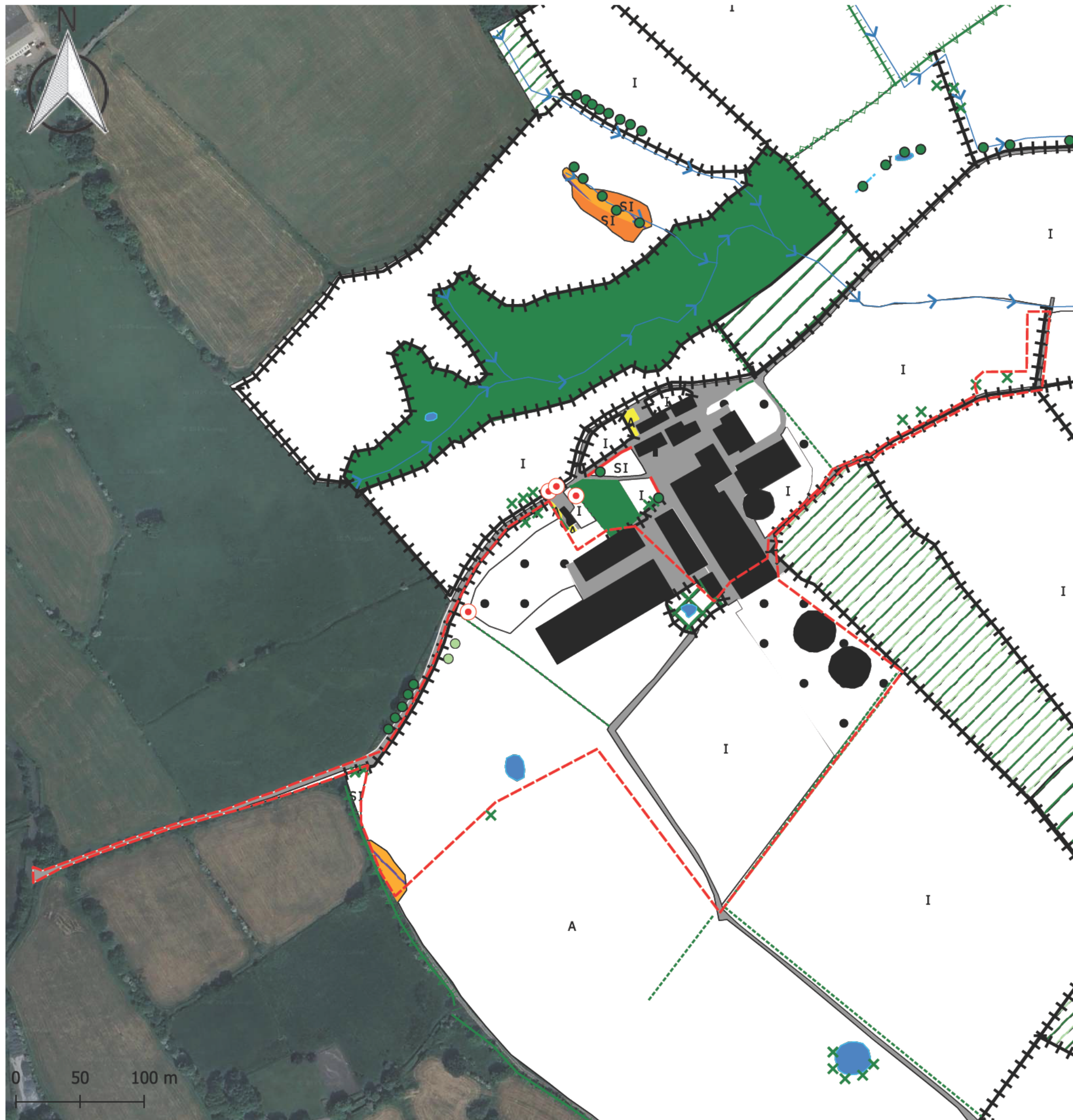
In summary, a further 4.372 habitat units of any distinctiveness or broad habitat type are required to provide the required 10% net gain and adhere to the trading rules.

Where possible, onsite habitat creation and enhancement will be prioritised to maximise net gain within the proposed development site. Sufficient onsite habitat retention, creation and / or enhancement may not be feasible whilst facilitating the proposed development. As such, any deficit in units will be provided through offsite compensation within adjacent land in the developer's ownership.



APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Phase 1 habitat plan



Phase 1 Habitat Plan

Site: Plackmoss Farm - Phase 3
 NGR: SD 60054 40317
 Author: Tom Kenwright
 Date: 23/10/2025



KEY:

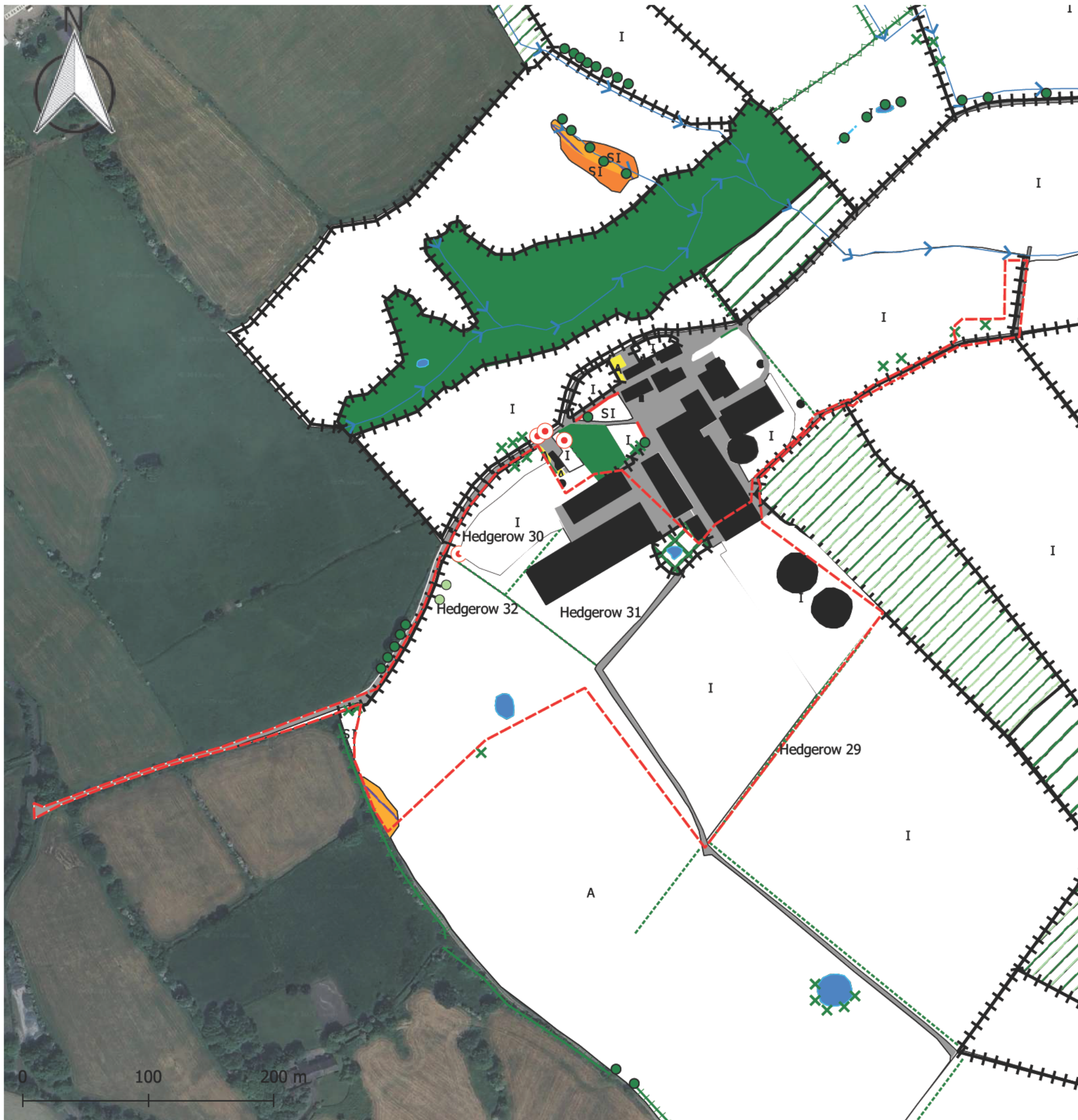
A1.1.1 - Broadleaved woodland - semi-natural	J1.1 - Arable
A1.3.2 - Mixed woodland - plantation	J1.2 - Amenity grassland
A2.1 - Dense scrub	J1.4 - Introduced shrub
A2.2 - Scrub - scattered	J2.2.2 - Defunct hedge - species-poor
A3.1 - Broadleaved scattered trees	J2.3.1 - Hedge with trees - native species-rich
A3.2 - Coniferous scattered trees	J2.4 - Fence
B4 - Improved grassland	J2.5 - Wall
B5 - Marsh/marshy grassland	J3.6 - Buildings
B6 - Poor semi-improved grassland	J4 - Bare ground
G1 - Standing water	J5 - Hardstanding
G2 - Running water	Development boundary

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Appendix 2 – Phase 1 habitat plan of habitats used to inform baseline BNG assessment



Phase 1 Habitat Plan (used to inform baseline assessment)

Site: Plackmoss Farm - Phase 3
NGR: SD 60054 40317
Author: Tom Kenwright
Date: 23/01/2025

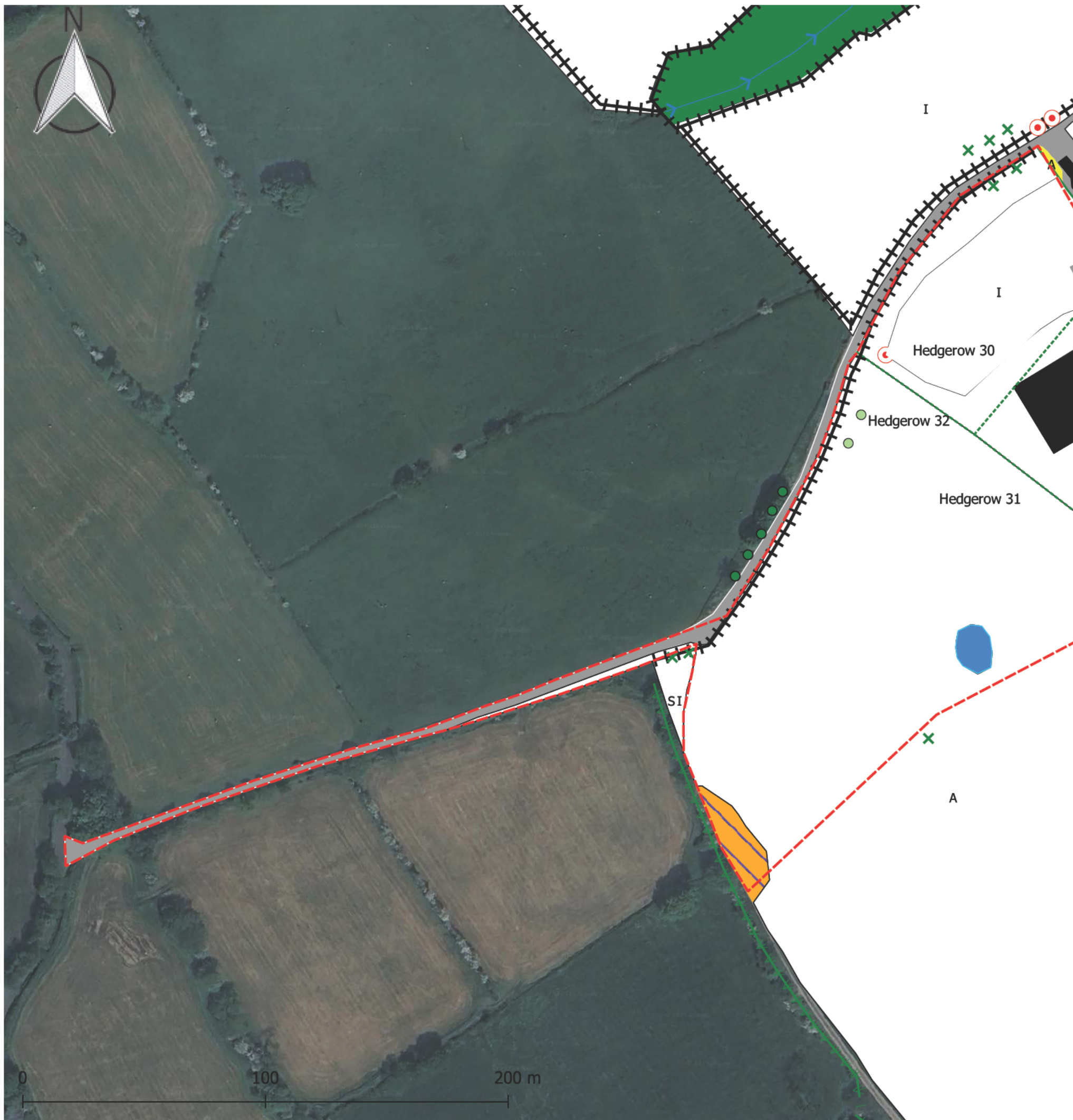


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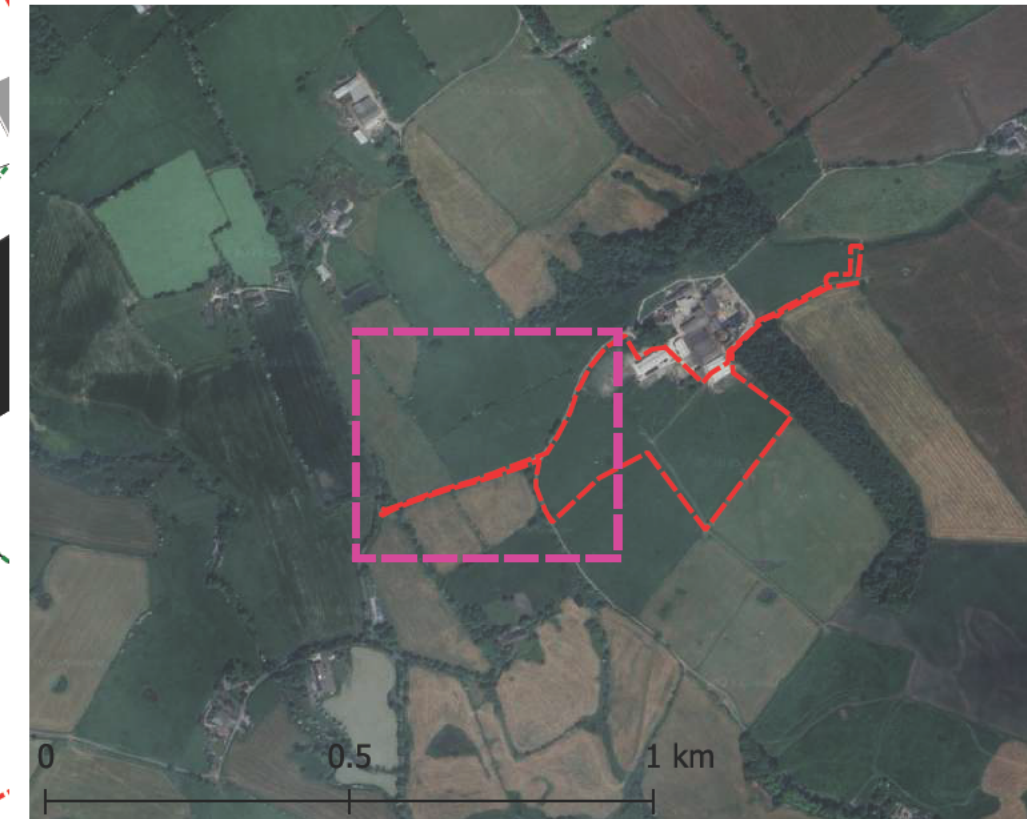
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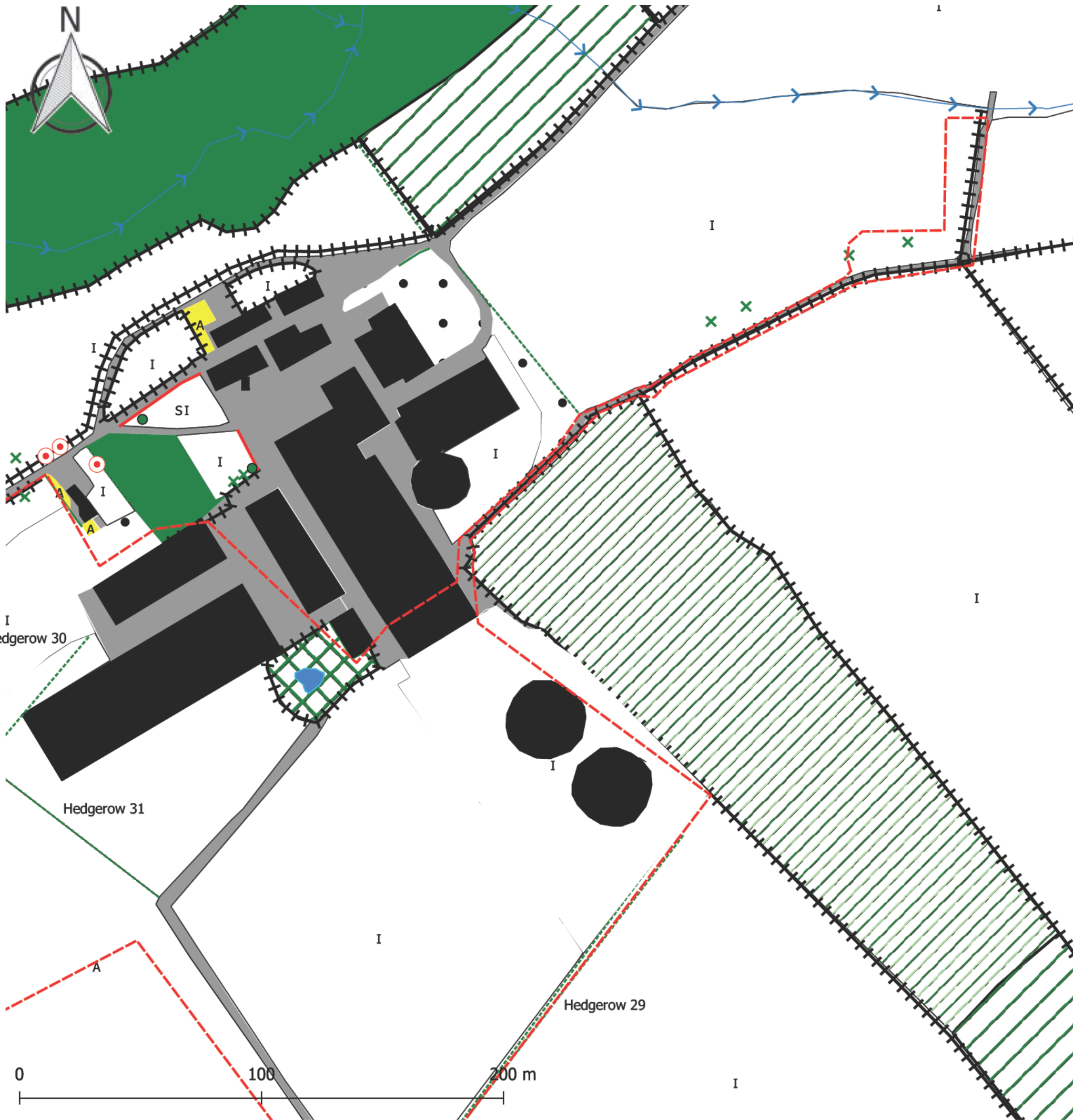


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Appendix 3 – Photographs



Photograph 1. Areas of recently formed bare ground on site.



Photograph 2. The recently constructed buildings and associated areas of bare ground on site.



Photograph 3. The arable field within the north-western section of the site, which has recently been cleared.



Photograph 4. Looking north across improved grassland fields within development boundary.



Photograph 5. Hedge 32.



Photograph 6. Hedge 29 located outside of the development boundary. The hedgerow will be enhanced through tree planting.