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- Protected species survey & licensing
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Client: BD Structures Limited

Date: 30th September 2025

Dear Mr & Mrs Heys,

CC: Henry Cahill (Stanton Andrews)

Re: BNG Scoping: Lower Reaps Farm, Whinney Lane, Mellor, BB2 7EL

PENNINE ecological have been commissioned to assesses the site in relation to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and provide a reasoned statement as to why this site is exempt from BNG.

The site is Lower Reaps Farm, Whinney Lane, Mellor, BB2 7EL and grid reference is SD 86636 08481. An aerial image of the site is shown below;


Figure 1 Aerial Image of Lower Reaps Farm, Mellor



Site Baseline

The site is a former farm yard. The areas affected by the proposals are the existing farm curtilage which includes the buildings and the surrounding hard standing within the yard. The site comprises u1b6 other developed land, u1c artificial unvegetated; unsealed surfaces and u1f sparsely vegetated urban land. Sporadic areas of tall forbs are growing around the perimeter of the site and / or around old farm machinery; however the total area of vegetative cover is approximately 20% and therefore categorised within the u1c and u1f habitat (refer to UKHabs, 2023 definition below).

Figure 2: UKHabs, 2023 definition



Code and Name
u1c Artificial unvegetated – unsealed surface


Category Type
Primary Level 4

Spatial Feature Type
Area Line Point

Definition
Land that has no or very low (<10%) cover of vegetation through direct or indirect human activity, and the soil surface is not sealed with impervious materials.

Inclusions
Unsealed surfaces with vegetation cover <10%.
Tracks (see 839) that are mappable as area features with vegetation cover <10%.

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Code and Name
u1f Sparsely vegetated urban land

Category Type
Primary Level 4

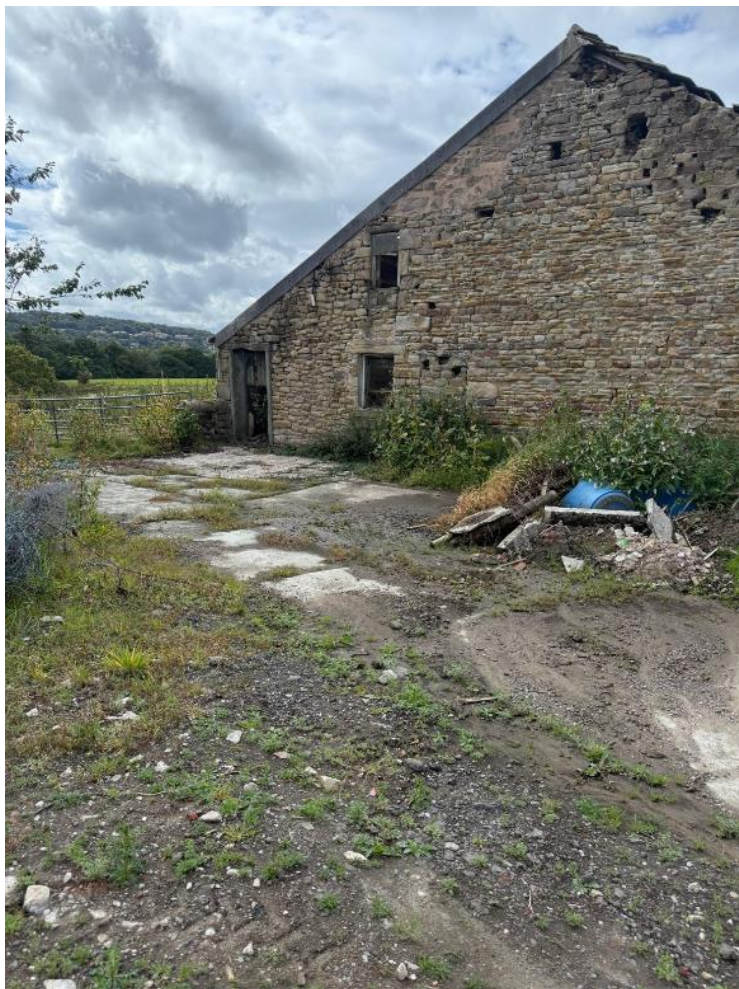
Spatial Feature Type
Area Line

Definition
Urban land with vegetation cover 10–50%.

Inclusions
Abandoned or derelict land, usually constructed permeable but can be impermeable where succession is taking place.
Open Mosaic Habitats of Previously Developed Land (see 80) will normally have some areas of this habitat.

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Photographs of the site are provided below.



Photograph 1: u1b6 concrete and u1c artificial substrate surrounding the building affected by the proposals.



Photograph 2: Areas of u1b6 (concrete) and u1c artificial substrate around existing farm buildings. Localised areas of grass and forb coverage establishing on u1c substrate but vegetation coverage is ~20% of the overall u1c area.



Photograph 3: Example of substrate where the machinery has tracked and exposing the u1c artificial substrate. The development area will be confined to the already developed farm yard.



Photograph 4: Existing hard standing around the site. The areas of tall forbs growing along the edge of the building have established on artificial substrate. The coverage of tall forbs accounts for approximately 20% of the overall developed area and therefore categorised as u1c and u1f (as per UKHabs definitions).

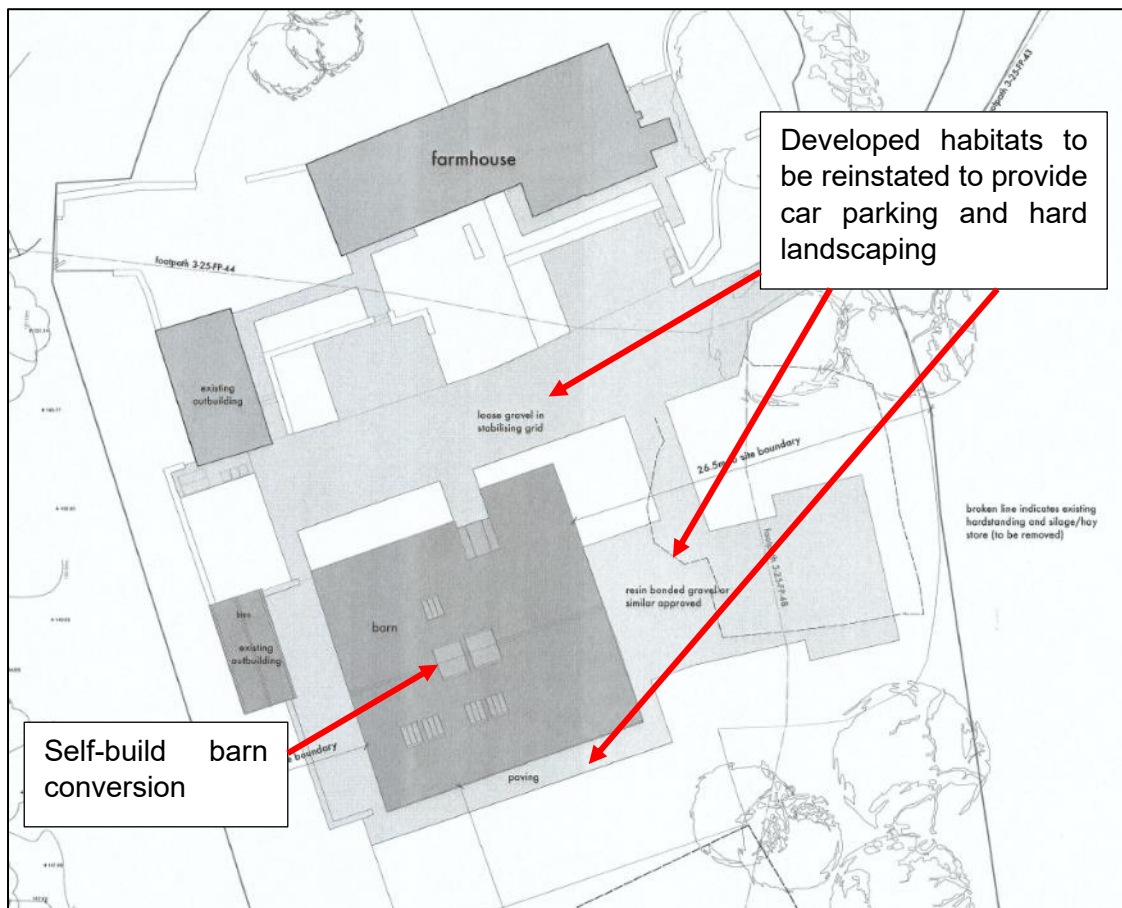


Photograph 5: Developed land with localised ruderal and forbs growing around piles of farm debris and machinery.

Proposals

This will be a self-build application. The proposals include the conversion of the existing barn to a dwelling. There will be some reinstatement of the existing concrete and gravel to create an area of car parking. The only habitats affected will be u1b5 (building), u1b6 (other developed land), u1c (artificial substrate) and u1f sparsely vegetated developed land (u1f). Refer to the proposal plan below.

Figure 3: Site Proposals



Recommendations: Biodiversity Net Gain

As per the exemptions set out in 'paragraph 17 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990' and the 'Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024', the application would be exempt on the following grounds:

- **Development subject to the de minimis exemption.** Development that does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than 25 square metres (e.g. 5m by 5m) of onsite habitat, or 5 metres of linear habitats such as hedgerows

Irrespective of this, the application will be a self-build application and therefore exempt under the **self-build and custom build applications exemption**.

The proposal meets the definition outlined in 'section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015' and also meets the following BNG exemption requirements:

Self-build and custom build applications

You must meet all of the following conditions to qualify for an exemption as a self-build or custom build.

The development must:

- consist of no more than 9 dwellings
- be on a site that has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares
- consist exclusively of dwellings that are self-build or custom housebuilding as defined in [section 1\(A1\) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015](#)

There are no further surveys or assessments required in relation to BNG.

If you require clarification on any issue, please contact me at the above address.

Yours faithfully

Patrick Leatham

Patrick Leatham BSc (Hons), MCIEEM

