

Biodiversity Enhancement Management Plan

WC-431.2a

Upper Holme House Farm, Hirst Lane,
Cumberworth, HD8 8GA



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1. Introduction

1.1. Scope of Report

- 1.1.1. Woodsage Consulting Ltd have been instructed by Mr & Mrs Portman, to provide a Biodiversity Enhancement Management Plan (BEMP) in relation to a permitted development (Application number: 2025/62/92605/E) at Upper Holme House Farm, Hirst Lane, Cumberworth, HD8 8GA.
- 1.1.2. The purpose of the report is to provide sufficient details to discharge Condition 9 on the planning permission for a BEMP and provide a framework for the delivery of habitat enhancement on the site.
- 1.1.3. Condition 9 states:

No works shall take place until a Biodiversity Enhancement Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan must include the following:

- *1no bird boxes*
- *An increase in deadwood which will provide opportunities for a higher diversity of invertebrates. Small holes within fences (and other mechanisms) for hedgehogs' mobility.*
- *A planting scheme should be implemented within the scheme to create a trees and hedgerows. Plantings should comprise native species of high biodiversity value.*

1.2. Site Details

- 1.2.1. Upper Holme House Farm - hereafter referred to as 'the site' and shown in **Fig. 2.1**, below - is located approximately 2.3km to the west of Shepley and is centred on OS Grid Reference SE 17711 08118.



Figure 2.1: Aerial imagery showing the approximate boundaries of the site, outlined in red.

- 1.2.2. The site covers approximately 0.48 ha and comprises Upper Holme House Farm, the private access track, adjacent stables, parking, a small woodland and horse grazed paddock.
- 1.2.3. The site is bound by the adjoining residential property to the west, agricultural farmland to the north, horse grazed paddocks to the east and a woodland to the south.

1.3. Development Proposals

- 1.3.1.** The planning permission is to demolish two of the existing stable blocks and replace with a larger stable building and create a menage within the existing paddock.

1.4. Previous Survey and Report Details

- 1.4.1.** An ecological site survey was carried out on Sunday the 2nd of August 2025 followed by an Arboricultural site survey on Wednesday the 4th of February 2026, both of which have informed the content of the BEMP.
- 1.4.2.** The BEMP has also been informed by the following documents which were submitted as part of the planning application:
- WC-431.1b Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment¹
 - Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation
 - WC-431.4a Arboricultural Method Statement²

1.5. Report Personnel

- 1.5.1.** The survey was carried out by Amy Reddick. Amy is an Associate Member of CIEEM (Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management), and has worked in the ecology sector for over 9 years. Amy holds an MSc in Wildlife Conservation and has experience in conducting botanical surveys including UK Hab Surveys and Protected Species surveys (holding a Level 2 Class Licence to survey bats and relevant experience conducting great crested newt surveys).
- 1.5.2.** Amy is experienced in undertaking and reviewing Biodiversity Net Gain Metrics and Habitat Condition Assessments from both a consultancy and public sector perspective.
- 1.5.3.** The Arboricultural survey was carried out by Jack Delaney. Jack is a Chartered Arboriculturalist (Member of the Institute of Chartered Foresters), and has worked in the arboricultural sector for over 15 years. Jack holds an FdSc in Arboriculture with distinction, and is a Professional Member of the Arboricultural Association. Jack is also a LANTRA qualified Professional Tree Inspector, and is a trained and registered user of Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA).

1.6. Legislation and Policy

- 1.6.1.** This report has been prepared in accordance with relevant UK environmental planning policy and wildlife legislation that affords protection to habitats, species and statutory designated sites. The report also takes account of both national and local planning policy where relevant.
- 1.6.2.** This report is produced in accordance with the British Standard 42020:2013 Biodiversity. Code of practice for planning and development.

¹ Woodsage Consulting Ltd (2025). *Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment: Upper Holme House Farm, Hirst Lane, Cumberworth, HD8 8GA*. Report ref. WC-431.1b. September 2025.

² Woodsage Consulting Ltd (2026). *Arboricultural Method Statement: Upper Holme House Farm, Hirst Lane, Cumberworth, HD8 8GA*. Report ref. WC-431.4a. 12th March 2026.

2. Delivery

2.1. Period of the Plan

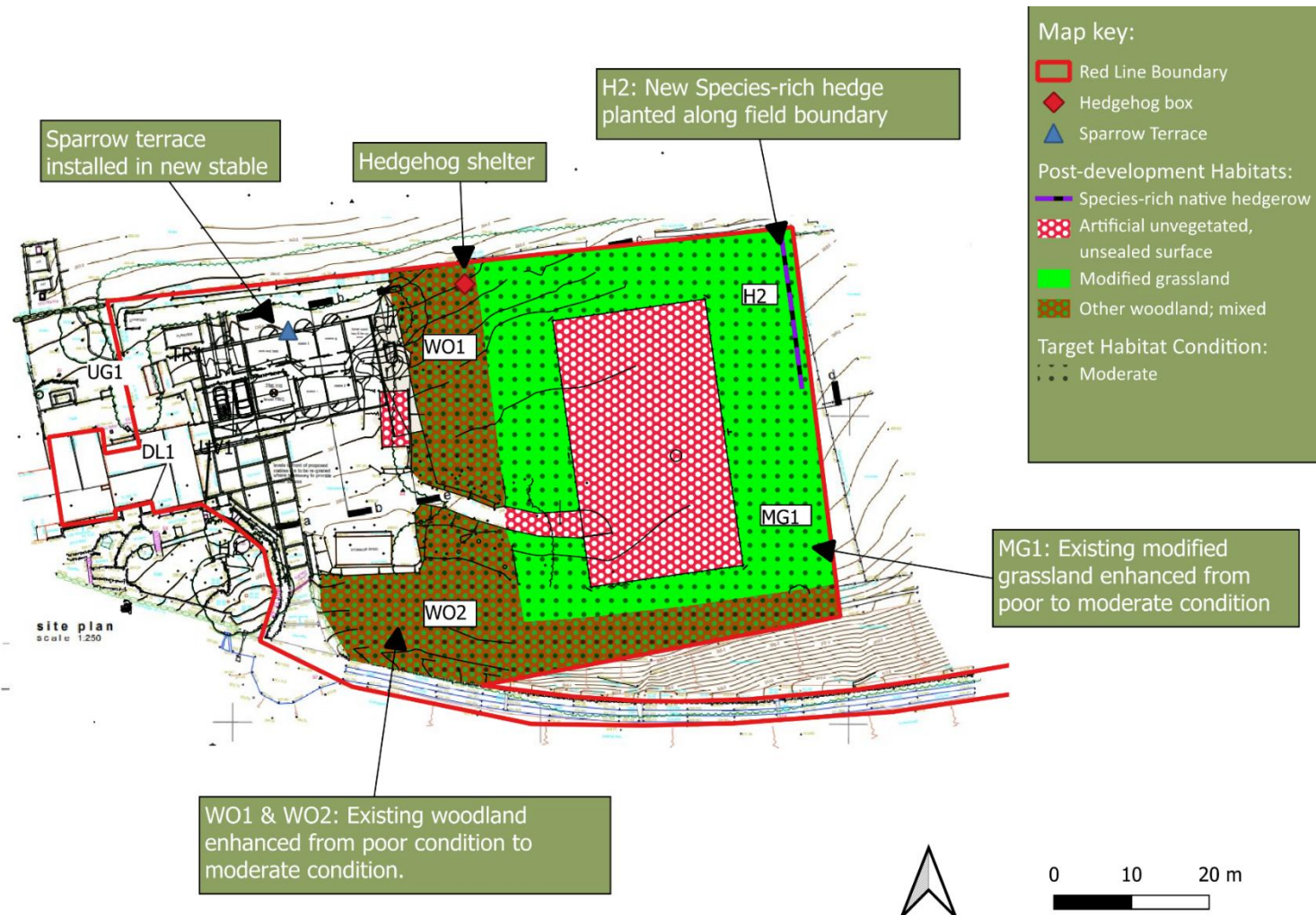
- 2.1.1.** This plan covers a period of five years from initial enhancement to general management of the habitats and includes a schedule of annual management actions which may be undertaken on a rolling 5-year basis.
- 2.1.2.** Habitats will be retained hereafter, however as the Local Planning Authority does not consider the enhancements to be Significant On-site Gains there is no requirement for a 30-year management or monitoring plan.

2.2. Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.2.1.** The landowners (Mr & Mrs Portman) are responsible for the delivery of all the habitat enhancement and faunal enhancements detailed in within the BEMP; however, it is noted where additional expertise is required to oversee works.

3. Site Proposals Overview

Figure 3.1 Site proposals plan of new and enhanced habitats on-site



4. Woodland Enhancement

4.1. Baseline habitat and condition

W1h5 Other woodland -mixed – mainly broadleaved (Habitat Parcels: WO 1 & WO 2)

- 4.1.1.** Two woodland parcels are situated in the centre of the site, broken by the existing access track into the paddock. To the north the woodland merges into the line of trees (LT1). The woodland to the north is on predominantly even ground, whereas to the south it begins to slope steeply up to the banking which forms the main access track to the site. Both woodlands are relatively immature with a mix of broadleaved and coniferous species. The ground flora was extremely sparse with frequent bare ground, which may be due to shading by the dense canopy. Tree and shrub species consist of wild cherry *Prunus avium*, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, elder *Sambucus nigra*, horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum*, Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris*, hazel *Corylus Avellana*, field maple *Acer campestre*, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, European beech *Fagus sylvatica*, common ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, silver birch *Betula pendula*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and cider gum *Eucalyptus gunnii*. Ground flora includes common bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., common nettle, cleavers *Galium aparine*, wood avens *Geum urbanum* and common ivy *Hedera helix*.
- 4.1.2.** The woodlands are both considered to be in poor condition, scoring 25 out of 39 in the habitat condition assessment.



Figure 4.1 Photograph of the typical interior of woodland parcels WO1 and WO2

4.2. Target condition and objectives

4.2.1. The woodland will be enhanced from poor to moderate condition by targeting criteria A (Age distribution of trees), E (Cover of native trees and shrub species) and L (amount of deadwood). This will require thinning the dense canopy of the woodland by the strategic removal of non-native trees. Standing deadwood and large branches from these will be left to increase the amount of deadwood in the woodland. The enhancement approach and specific management interventions are detailed below in **Table 4.1** and **Sections 4.3** and **4.4**.

Table 4.1. Target habitat and condition for woodlands criteria and proposed enhancement approach

Target Habitat			W1h5 Other woodland -mixed – mainly broadleaved		
Target Condition			Poor to Moderate (overall score from 25 to 29)		
Target Condition Assessment Criteria (only those targeted are included)			Baseline score	Target Score	Enhancement Approach
A	Age distribution of trees	Three age classes present	1	2	Targeted thinning of trees to create canopy gaps which will help promote natural regeneration of trees and restore young seedlings and saplings to the woodland.
		Two age classes present			
		One age class present			
E	Cover of native tree and shrub species	>80% of canopy trees and >80% of understorey shrubs are native	2	3	Thinning will focus on removal of non-native species currently within the woodland, predominantly the larch and sycamore, to increase the percentage cover of native trees to over 80%.
		50 – 80% of canopy trees and 50-80% of understorey shrubs are native			
		<50% of canopy trees and <50% understorey shrubs are native			
G	Woodland regeneration	All three classes present in woodland; trees 4-7cm Diameter at Breast Height (DBH), saplings and seedlings or advanced coppice regrowth	1	2	Targeted thinning of trees to create canopy gaps which will help promote natural regeneration of trees and restore young seedlings and saplings to the woodland.
		One or two classes only present in woodland			

		No classes or coppice regrowth present in woodland			
L	Amount of deadwood	50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing deadwood, large dead branches and or stems and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities. Between 25% and 50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities. Less than 25% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities.	1	2	A number of mature trees, to be removed during thinning, will be retained in situ as standing deadwood. In addition, a proportion of removed material including larger branches/trunks and brash will be left on the woodland floor and used to create habitat piles to increase the amount of deadwood in both parcels.

4.3. Ecological constraints

- 4.3.1. The woodland provides suitable habitat for a variety of nesting bird species and therefore any works to remove trees and understory shrubs has potential to disturb nesting birds if appropriate mitigation is not applied.
- 4.3.2. To prevent disturbance or harm to nesting birds, no removal of shrubs or trees will be undertaken during nesting bird season (1st March – 31st August). All works to thin the woodland will be undertaken outside of this period as illustrated within the Work Schedule provided in **Appendix 1**.

4.4. Selective thinning works

- 4.4.1. Selective thinning of the canopy will be carried out at a rate of 30%, and will target primarily non-native species, such as European larch, Scots pine, cedar gum, sycamore, and European beech.
- 4.4.2. Transportation of felled sections of defoliated larch (*Larix* sp.) increases the risk of material infected with *Phytophthora ramorum* circumventing biosecurity measures, and facilitating its spread. Inspections for the presence of *P. ramorum* should therefore be carried out upon larch during the growing season, prior to the commencement of thinning operations.
- 4.4.3. To reduce the immediate impacts of the proposed thinning, work will be carried out late-summer (September-October), when the soils are likely to be drier and the impacts of soil erosion and compaction will be reduced, and the likelihood of nesting birds is reduced.
- 4.4.4. All thinning works will be carried out using motor manual methods and low impact agricultural units.
- 4.4.5. Increasing light levels may encourage the growth of bramble, along with opportunistic tree species, such as sycamore and European beech. These will need to be monitored and controlled as necessary, to maximise the benefits of the thinning and to achieve the desired outcomes of the BEMP.
- 4.4.6. The Project Arboriculturalist will mark up trees to be felled prior to work commencing however, to reduce the occurrence of windthrow following thinning, established trees around the margins of the woodland (which are more likely to boast extensive rooting patterns and wind-resistant crowns) should be maintained to provide windfirm edges. See **Figure 4.2** for indicative thinning areas.

4.5. Increase in deadwood

- 4.5.1. A small number of mature trees will be ring-barked during thinning works to leave standing deadwood. The most appropriate specimens for this will be selected by the Project Arboriculturalist during thinning works.
- 4.5.2. At least half of the material removed will be used to increase the proportion of deadwood in both woodland parcels with a focus on larger logs and branches over 20cm in diameter and over 50cm in length. Smaller branches and brash will also be used to create habitat piles within the woodlands for hibernating mammals such as hedgehogs and amphibians.

Figure 4.2 Indicative thinning areas within WO1 and WO2



5. Grassland Enhancement

5.1. Baseline habitat and condition

G4 Modified Grassland (Habitat Parcel: MG1)

Secondary codes: 103 – Horse grazed, 510 – Bare ground

- 5.1.1.** The horse grazed paddock (MG1) is to the east of the site. The paddock is heavily horse grazed with evidence of soil compaction and poaching throughout. The sward is extremely short in most areas with large patches of bare ground or undesirable species (such as common knotweed *Polygonum aviculare* and broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*). Species present include Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* (O), Perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne* (O), annual meadowgrass *Poa annua* (O), Meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis* (O), marsh foxtail *Alopecurus geniculatus* (R), wavy hair grass *Avenella flexuosa* (R), knotgrass (F), broadleaved dock (F), common chickweed *Stellaria media* (F), ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata* (O), white clover *Trifolium repens* (F), American willowherb *Epilobium ciliatum* (O), broadleaf plantain *Plantago major* (O), pineappleweed *Matricaria discoidea* (O), creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens* (F), common sorrel *Rumex acetosa* (R), creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense* (R), common nettle (O), common ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris* (R), changing forget me not *Myosotis discolor* (R), wavy bittercress *Cardamine flexuosa* (R), nipplewort *Lapsana communis* (R) and foxglove *Digitalis purpurea* (R).
- 5.1.2.** As the species present are not characteristic of a medium or higher distinctiveness grassland the paddock is classified as modified grassland in poor condition due to failing essential criterion A and criterion B, D and E.



Figure 5.1 Photograph of the existing MG1

5.2. Target condition and objectives

5.2.1. The retained area of grassland parcel MG1, outside of the newly created menage, will be enhanced to moderate condition by targeting criteria A (Average species per m²), D (amount of physical damage) and E (amount of bare ground). A seed mix containing a mixture of native wildflower and grass species will be sown to increase the number of species present. The removal of regular grazing in this area once the menage is present will reduce the physical damage and bare ground present. A limited grazing regime or mowing will be required to maintain species diversity.

Table 5.1. Target habitat and condition for grasslands criteria and proposed enhancement approach

Target habitat:		MG1 Modified Grassland	
Target condition:		Poor to Moderate	
Condition Assessment Criteria (only those targeted are included)		Targeted	Enhancement Approach
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² present, including at least 2 forbs.	Yes	A seed mix containing a mixture of native wildflower and grass species will be sown, these should be acid tolerant species to reflect the surrounding landscape and the remnant presence of acid grassland species or shade tolerant to reflect the surrounding tree cover.
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present).	Yes	Currently met but will be maintained via cutting and grazing to prevent any subsequent colonisation by bramble.
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	Yes	Removal of high intensity grazing by horses to reduce poaching of the land – particularly over winter/in wet conditions.
E	Cover of bare ground between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens.)	Yes	Removal of high intensity grazing by horses to reduce poaching of the land – particularly over winter/in wet conditions and over seeding with new wildflower seed mixture to reduce extent of bare ground.

5.3. Preparation and seeding

- 5.3.1.** Once the new menage has been constructed, and all ground works are complete, the grassland can be seeded. It is anticipated that there will be soil movement required to establish the new menage, therefore 50mm of topsoil should be removed from the existing grassland around the menage and the less nutrient rich subsoils used to level the area. This should be tilled to a fine tilth prior to seeding.
- 5.3.2.** Seeding will be carried out in early Spring (April-May) or Late summer (September) dependent on when the landscaping is complete. If there has been a delay between this and the seeding of the grassland, any competitive weeds (including broad-leaved dock, common nettle, ragwort, creeping thistle or spear thistle) should be hand pulled first.
- 5.3.3.** An acid tolerant species mix will be sown to reflect the surrounding landscape and the remnant presence of acid grassland species or shade tolerant to reflect the surrounding tree cover. Examples of suitable mixtures include Boston Seeds BS11M 80/20 or Naturescape N12. These will be sown at a rate of 5g/m². Seed may be bulked up with sand or sawdust to ensure an even distribution. The seed must be surface sown and then firmed into the soil with a roll or treading in.

5.4. Cutting and grazing

- 5.4.1.** The grassland will be cut once in the late summer (mid-August) each year. After this the grass will be maintained at a short sward (5-10cm) throughout autumn and winter. This may be either via cutting or horse grazing, however if grazing the horses must be removed if there is any sign of poaching and always before April to allow the grass to grow and set seed.
- 5.4.2.** Competitive weed species (broad-leaved dock, common nettle, ragwort, creeping thistle or spear thistle) will be regularly managed via topping or hand digging, particularly in the first three years.

6. Species-Rich Hedgerow Planting

6.1. Target condition and objectives

- 6.1.1.** A 17m species rich hedgerow will be planted along the northeast boundary of the existing paddock.
- 6.1.2.** As the hedge is targeted to be poor condition the hedge does not need to pass any specific condition, however it is anticipated that by implementing the establishment and management interventions outlined in **Sections 6.2** and **6.3** that the hedgerow will still pass a number of the habitat condition criteria.

6.2. Tree planting and Establishment

- 6.2.1.** The species are to be planted at the recommended percentages and planting style as outlined in **Table 6.1** below.

Table 6.1 Species to be planted, the recommended percentage, stock type and planting style

Common name	Latin	Percentage	Stock	Planting style
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	55%	Bare root whip	Double staggered row
Field Maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>	15%	Bare root whip	Double staggered row
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	10%	Bare root whip	Double staggered row
Dog rose	<i>Rosa canina</i>	10%	Bare root whip	Double staggered row
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	5%	Bare root whip	Scattered
Crab apple	<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	5%	Bare root whip	Scattered
Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	<5%	Bare root whip	Scattered
Sessile oak	<i>Quercus petraea</i>	<5%	1ltr pot	One specimen

- 6.2.2.** A trench approximately 50cm wide and 45cm deep will be prepared and backfilled with a multipurpose compost where the hedge is to be planted.
- 6.2.3.** Trees and shrubs are to be planted between November and March, avoiding planting during frost or when the ground is waterlogged.
- 6.2.4.** Specimens are to be planted in groups of the same species at a density of around 3-5 per metre in a staggered double row around 20-30cm apart, with the indicated species above scattered randomly throughout the hedge.
- 6.2.5.** A stake and spiral root guard is to be used to protect the newly planted shrubs and trees from grazing and high winds.

6.3. Cutting and Management

- 6.3.1.** During the first-year regular maintenance will be needed to remove any weeds or tall grasses from around the base of the hedge and watering during prolonged dry spells. Any trees or shrubs which have failed in the first year will be replaced. Formative pruning will be required in the first year to encourage the hedge to put on new growth.
- 6.3.2.** Once established the hedge should be cut on a rotational basis biannually, outside of nesting bird season (1st March – 31st August inclusive), to allow flowering and fruiting of the shrubs.

7. Faunal Enhancement

7.1. Bird Boxes

- 7.1.1.** During construction of the external walls one sparrow terrace will be installed integral to the north aspect of the new stable. The box will be retained thereafter.
- 7.1.2.** The box will be constructed of long-lasting material (such as woodcrete). Suitable models include the 1SP Schwegler Sparrow Terrace or Vivara Pro WoodStone House Sparrow Nest Box. It will be situated over 2m above ground fixed into the wall of the stable below the eaves. The location of the bird box is indicated below in **Figure 7.1** and **Figure 3.1**.

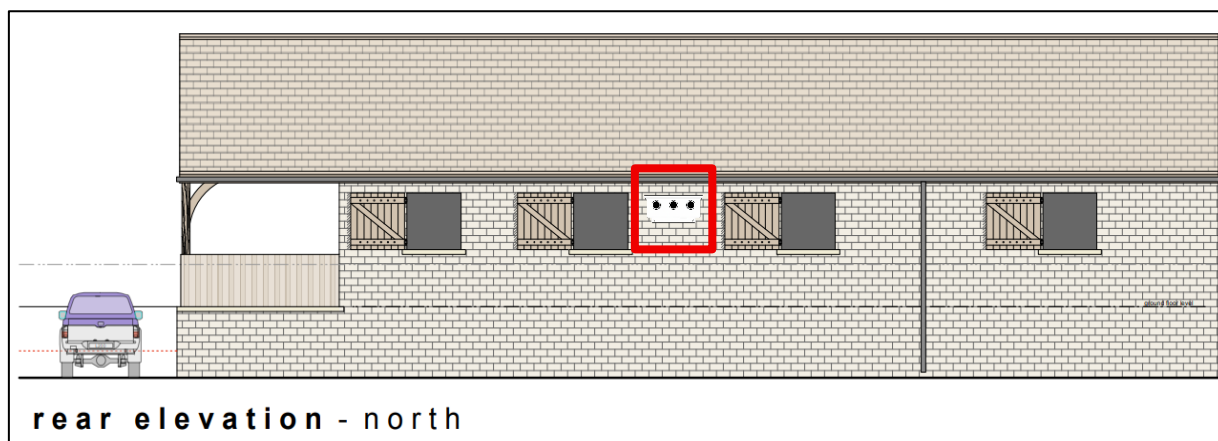


Figure 7.1 Location of the bird box (outlined in red) on the north elevation of the stable (Not to scale)

7.2. Hedgehog Enhancement

- 7.2.1.** No new fences are proposed as a result of the development, other than the fence around the new menage, and the existing boundary fences are stock fencing with a gap beneath the lowest wire, large enough for hedgehogs to commute through the site. Therefore, new hedgehog holes in fences are not considered to be an appropriate enhancement for the development.
- 7.2.2.** The new piles of deadwood in the woodland are expected to provide suitable hibernation opportunities for hedgehogs over time; however, a hedgehog nest box will also be installed within the woodland to provide immediate shelter. The location of the hedgehog nest box is indicated at **Figure 3.1**.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Works Schedule

Prescription	Y0	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5+
Woodland thinning	Between September - October under supervision of Arboricultural Consultant	-	-	-	-	Review whether further thinning required
Grassland seeding	April – May or September	-	-	-	-	-
Grassland cutting	-	Cut late summer and then maintained between 5-10cm until April	Cut late summer and then maintained between 5-10cm until April	Cut late summer and then maintained between 5-10cm until April	Cut late summer and then maintained between 5-10cm until April	Cut late summer and then maintained between 5-10cm until April
Weeding	Prior to seeding grassland if required					
Hedgerow planting	November - March	-	-	-	-	-
Hedgerow cutting	-	Once September - February	-	Once September - February	-	Once September – February biannually