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GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STATEMENT

At

Lower Park Farm – Phase 2
Parkside
Rossett
Wrexham
LL12 0BN

NGR: SJ 38841 55091

Prepared for:	Rossett Park Farming c/o Hourigan Planning Ltd.
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	[redacted]
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Author and qualifications

This report is compiled and written by Daniel Smith BSc MRes, Ecologist at United Environmental Services (UES) Ltd. Daniel holds a level 3 Botanical Society for Britain and Ireland (BSBI) field identification skills certificate (FISC), which certifies him as competent to undertake UKHab surveys. Daniel is licensed by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to disturb, take and handle all species other than greater or lesser horseshoe under licence number S095430/1. Daniel is licensed by Natural Resources Wales to disturb, take and handle great crested newts (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* under licence number S093616/1.

This report has been verified by Kathryn James BSc MRes MCIEEM, UES Senior Project Manager. Kathryn holds a level 4 FISC, which certifies her as competent to undertake phase 1 habitat surveys, UKHab and national vegetation classification (NVC) surveys. Kathryn is licensed by NRW to disturb, take and handle all species of bats, other than greater or lesser horseshoe, under licence number S091413/1. Kathryn is also licensed by NRW to disturb, take and handle GCN under licence number S094739/1.

1.2 Proposed development

This report supports a planning application for an extension to an existing car park, installation of a farm shop within a converted shipping container, outdoor seating area and landscaping.

The following ecological surveys and assessments have been undertaken by UES in order to inform the planning application:

- June 2025 preliminary ecological appraisal (report reference UES04733/04)
- June 2025 great crested newt impact assessment (report reference UES04733/05)

1.3 Survey objectives

UES was commissioned by Rossett Park Farming to prepare a green infrastructure statement in support of a planning application. This was completed in order to:

- Identify where existing green infrastructure can be found pre-development and where there may be opportunities for improvement, such as through the provision of new green infrastructure, or the enhancement of existing green infrastructure.

- Consider what improvements can be made to biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, as well as consider the needs of local communities and society as a whole and how these can be met through green infrastructure.

- Demonstrate how the stepwise approach has been applied throughout development design.

2 LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY

In February 2024 the Welsh Government published Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 to address the nature emergency which contains a revised Chapter 6 'Distinctive and Natural Placemaking and Well-Being'.

One key change is the requirement for all planning applications to be submitted with a 'green infrastructure statement'. In Planning Policy Wales paragraph 6.2.1., green infrastructure is defined as '*the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect places. Component elements of green infrastructure can function at different scales and some components, such as trees and woodland, are often universally present and function at all levels. At the landscape scale green infrastructure can comprise entire ecosystems such as wetlands, waterways, peatlands and mountain ranges or be connected networks of mosaic habitats, including grasslands. At a local scale, it might comprise parks, fields, ponds, natural green spaces, public rights of way, allotments, cemeteries and gardens or may be designed or managed features such as sustainable drainage systems. At smaller scales, individual urban interventions such as street trees, hedgerows, roadside verges, and green roofs/walls can all contribute to green infrastructure networks.'*

Paragraph 6.2.12 states that '*a green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications. This will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal. In the case of minor development this will be a short description and should not be an onerous requirement for applicants. The green infrastructure statement will be an effective way of demonstrating positive multi-functional outcomes which are appropriate to the site in question and must be used for demonstrating how the stepwise approach (Paragraph 6.4.15) has been applied.'*

The stepwise approach, as outlined below, demonstrates the sequential approach that must be adopted as part of a development to maintain and enhance biodiversity, build resilient ecological networks and deliver net benefits for biodiversity by ensuring that any adverse environmental effects are firstly avoided, then minimised, mitigated, and as a last resort compensated for. Enhancement must be secured by delivering a biodiversity benefit primarily on site or immediately adjacent to the site, over and above that required to mitigate or compensate for any negative impact

1. Avoid
2. Minimise
3. Mitigate / restore
4. Compensate onsite
5. Compensate offsite
6. Refuse planning permission

3 BASELINE DATA

3.1 Preliminary ecological appraisal

A desk study and preliminary ecological appraisal survey were undertaken by UES on 30th October 2024, including searches using the Multi Agency Geographic Information Centre (MAGIC).

The development site is 0.12ha in size and is predominantly improved grassland with a small area of hardstanding along the eastern boundary, which will form the access point from the existing car park. A native hedgerow with mature trees runs along the northern boundary (outside of the development boundary). The following principal habitat types were characterised on site:

- Artificial unvegetated - unsealed surface
- Built linear features
- Modified grassland

The preliminary ecological appraisal has highlighted potential issues with the following ecological receptors on or adjacent to site: amphibians, bats, birds and hedgerows.

3.2 Great crested newt impact assessment

A GCN impact assessment was undertaken by UES on 30th October 2024. The objectives of the survey were to establish the suitability of the development site for GCNs, and to provide an assessment of the impacts of the development and required compensation.

The development site has limited potential to support GCNs; there are no aquatic habitats onsite, and the terrestrial habitats onsite are broadly unsuitable for GCNs. Two ponds are located within 250m of the proposed development site, which were assessed for their suitability to support GCNs using the habitat suitability index (HSI):

- Pond 1 achieved a score of 0.75 and is of good suitability for GCNs
- Pond 2 achieved a score of 0.55 and is of below average suitability for GCNs

Although Pond 1 has potential to support GCN, the habitats on site are of very low suitability to support amphibians as the site is dominated by species-poor modified grassland with a short sward. Given the small scale of the proposed works, type of habitat due to be impacted and the proposed construction techniques, it is considered unlikely GCN will be directly impacted by the development works.

Although no compensatory planting is required as part of phase 2, native hedgerow planting will be undertaken along the western development boundary and a wildflower grassland will be created to the south of site to provide an enhancement in habitats available to wildlife locally.

4 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

4.1 Retained habitats

The majority of the development site comprises intensely managed modified grassland and hardstanding, which is of limited value to wildlife, and as such has been prioritised for development. Whereas higher quality habitats, such as hedgerows and trees, are prioritised for retention and have been excluded from the development boundary. This accords with the stepwise approach to avoid impacts in the first instance.

No excavation works will be undertaken during the development; however, construction activities too close to the root protection area of the hedgerow along the northern development boundary could cause permanent damage through soil compaction. A BS5837 arboricultural survey should be undertaken of the hedgerow near to the development site. Any works close to the hedgerow should be mindful of its root protection area (RPA).

4.2 Landscaping and habitat enhancement

To increase biodiversity on site the proposed development has been designed to incorporate the following landscaping proposals: native hedgerow planting and wildflower meadows.

4.2.1 Native hedgerow planting

26.54m of compensatory hedgerow planting is due to be undertaken onsite in accordance with planning permission P/2024/1167. This hedgerow planting was originally due to be undertaken along the eastern development boundary. However, given that the planting works have not yet been undertaken (due to seasonal constraints) this hedgerow will instead be delivered along the western development boundary.

Although no compensatory hedgerow planting is required as part of the proposed development, a further 8.46m of native hedgerow planting will be undertaken to create a 35m hedgerow in total along the western development boundary. Hedgerow planting will be undertaken in winter 2025 / 2026. The species and composition of the newly planted hedgerow includes:

- Up to 85% blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* combined with hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*.
- 5-15% hazel *Corylus avellana* and/or field maple *Acer campestre*.
- 0-5% of holly *Ilex aquifolium*, field rose *Rosa arvensis*, gooseberry *Ribes uva-crispa*, bird cherry *Prunus padus* and dog rose *Rosa canina*.

Native hedgerow planting will provide foraging opportunities for invertebrates including larval stages, adult herbivorous species and pollinators. Providing a range of planted species will support a greater diversity of invertebrate species, which will in turn benefit other faunal species that will predate these invertebrates, such as bats and birds. In addition, the hedgerows will provide increased nesting opportunities for birds and sheltered commuting opportunities for amphibians and mammals.

In addition, the planting of trees onsite will ensure the proposed development is climate resilient by incorporating mitigation and adaptations that respond to the impacts of climate change; tree planting will provide shading, sequester carbon, improve air quality and reduce flood risk, as well as provide habitats for wildlife.

4.2.2 Species-rich grassland and wildflower meadows

The development will result in the loss of approximately 0.116ha of grazed pasture, which is of low ecological value and has limited potential to support wildlife. Whilst it has not been possible to avoid the loss of this habitat, it will be compensated for by creating 0.12ha of wildflower grassland directly south of the car park. The grassland will be seeded with a wildflower mix suitable for use in an improved field with nutrient rich clay soils and will be fenced off from the pasture fields in order to prevent grazing. This accords with the stepwise approach to minimise impacts and mitigate any direct impacts.

Species-rich grassland and wildflower meadows will provide immediate benefits for wildlife in the form of foraging, breeding and sheltering opportunities. In the longer term, the grassland will also be colonised naturally by additional native plant species.

4.3 Protected species

The preliminary ecological appraisal has highlighted potential issues with the following ecological receptors on or adjacent to site: amphibians, bats and birds.

4.3.1 Amphibians

The terrestrial habitats within the development footprint are broadly unsuitable for GCNs and it is considered highly unlikely that GCN will be impacted as a result of the proposed development. However, works onsite will be completed under reasonable avoidance measures in order to safeguard common amphibians which may be present on site (see GCN impact assessment for further information).

The site layout and landscape design include the retention of linear green corridors around site and native hedgerow planting and wildflower meadows, which will provide commuting, foraging, and sheltering opportunities for amphibians. These habitats will be subject to ongoing management as part of the operational phase of the development, and as such, will secure suitable habitat for amphibians onsite in the long term.

4.3.2 Bats

The habitats onsite have limited potential to support foraging and commuting bats, and there are no buildings or trees onsite suitable for use by roosting bats. However, there is potential for works onsite to disturb bats utilising the hedgerow along the northern site boundary. The root protection area to be implemented onsite will minimise works within close proximity of the hedgerow, subsequently ensuring potential impacts on roosting bats (if present) are minimised.

The site layout and landscape design include the retention of linear green corridors around site and native hedgerow planting and wildflower meadows, which will provide commuting and foraging opportunities for bats. These habitats will be subject to ongoing management as part of the operational phase of the development, and as such, will secure suitable habitat for bats onsite in the long term.

Connectivity between the site and offsite habitats will be maintained as part of the proposed development. There will be no fragmentation or isolation as a result of the proposed development, and the adjacent (offsite) linear features will continue to provide ecological linkages for bats (as well as other species) commuting between the site and offsite habitats within the wider landscape, maintaining ecosystem resilience. A wildlife friendly external

lighting scheme will be designed to avoid overspill onto the ecological corridors at the site boundaries.

4.3.3 Breeding birds

The habitats onsite have limited potential to support foraging and breeding birds; however, there is potential for works onsite to disturb breeding birds utilising the hedgerow along the northern site boundary. The root protection area to be implemented onsite will minimise works within close proximity of the hedgerow, subsequently ensuring potential impacts on nesting birds (if present) are minimised.

The site layout and landscape design include the retention of linear green corridors around site and native hedgerow planting and wildflower meadows, which will provide foraging and nesting opportunities for birds. These habitats will be subject to ongoing management as part of the operational phase of the development, and as such, will secure suitable habitat for breeding birds onsite in the long term.

4.3.4 Other species

Once the compensation has been implemented, the landscaping and habitat enhancements will provide a biologically diverse landscape. The bottom-up approach to improving the biodiversity on site will ensure that the habitats on site can support a range of invertebrate species and provide other food sources, which will then in turn benefit fauna further up the food chain. No fragmentation of habitats or severance of commuting corridors will occur as a result of the proposed development.

5 CONCLUSION

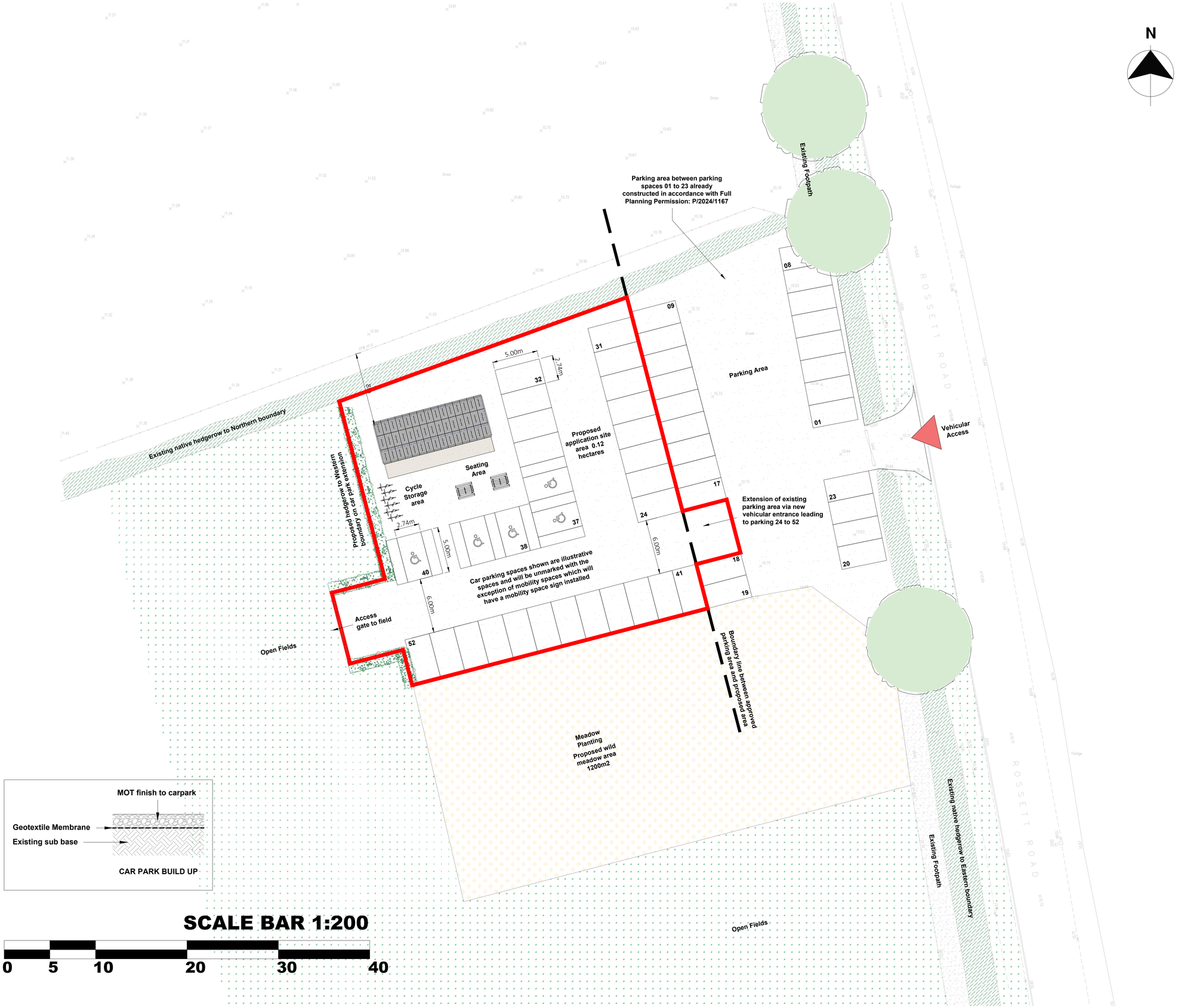
UES were instructed to identify the key ecological constraints onsite and ensure that the highest quality habitats are retained as part of the scheme design.

The proposed development layout has been designed to be ecologically sympathetic and ensures that the retained and proposed green infrastructure onsite creates effective links with existing ecological networks offsite. The landscaping proposals onsite look to retain and enhance the linear wildlife corridors throughout the site. The proposed green infrastructure will compensate for the loss of existing vegetation, ensuring that the ecological integrity of the site is maintained and enhanced. The retained and newly planted hedgerows and habitat connectivity features on site, particularly at the boundaries, coupled with the creation of ecologically valuable habitats around the site will contribute to the green infrastructure network onsite promoting the natural distribution of species.

The impact on habitats and species of principal importance has been minimised, as far as is practicable; the small areas that have been lost are to be compensated for through a substantial ecological enhancement scheme onsite which goes over and above what is required to mitigate or compensate for any negative impact. In addition, the provision of a mosaic of connected habitats along the site boundaries will contribute to the green infrastructure network onsite promoting the natural distribution of species. In summary, the development provides a net benefit for biodiversity ensuring that ecological resilience is maintained within the wider landscape.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Site plan



Notes

This drawing is not to be used on site unless issued for construction.

Do not scale, use figured dimensions only. All dimensions to be verified on site prior to the commencement of any work or the production of any fabrication drawings.

All setting out is to be checked and confirmed on site.

All levels are to be checked and confirmed on site.

All discrepancies to be reported to the Architect.

All building work is to comply with the full planning approval, including satisfaction of any stipulated conditions to the satisfaction of the Local Authority Planning Department.

This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all related Architect's and Engineer's drawings and any other relevant information.

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No.	Revision/Issue	Date:
P5	Additional turning area added, red edge revised, meadow plating revised to suit.	18.06.25
P4	Amendments made to drawing description.	27.05.25
P3	Amendments made to suit Marc H & Client's comments.	23.05.25
P2	Amendments made to suit Marc H & Client's comments.	22.05.25
P1	Amendments made to suit Marc H comments.	17.05.25
P0	Client Proposal.	17.05.25

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Project Details:

Extension to existing car park, installation of a farm shop within a converted shipping container, outdoor seating area, cycle parking, planting and landscaping

The Tail Trail, Rossett Road, Holt, Wrexham

Status: As Proposed	**Sheet No:** Planning Drawings 140525-002-P5
Date: May 2025	
Scale: 1:200 Site Plan @ A1	**Drawn By:** TW