



rural property specialists

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PLANNING JUSTIFICATION REPORT

for

PROPOSED DWELLING ADJACENT TO 1 WINDMILL COTTAGE

BCM Ref: 503-9097

April 2021



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APPENDICES

1. Site Plan
2. Ecological Improvement Plan

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 We have been asked to provide a report outlining the additional environmental benefits that will be provided should the application for a new, single dwelling be granted on the land at 1 Windmill Cottage.
- 1.2 This report outlines the various benefits that will be provided along with a plan showing the extent of these across Windmill Farm.
- 1.3 A plan showing the site can be found at Appendix 1.

2.0 THE HOLDING

- 2.1 Windmill Farm extends to approximately 200 acres and is predominantly down to chalk grassland, having been reverted from an arable rotation by the current owner, Ms Remony Moser. The land is grazed by a neighbouring farmer who runs sheep across the holding.
- 2.2 The land has been in an Environmental Stewardship Scheme since 1989 and was admitted to Higher Level Stewardship in 2009. The scheme prohibits the use of artificial fertilisers or sprays and the grass leys comprise indigenous chalkland grass mixes in keeping with the character and ecology of the South Downs. The reduced fertility intends to encourage wildflowers.
- 2.3 A range of new hedgerows have been planted on the holding over recent years and woodland improvements and extensions have taken place. An ancient bluebell wood is also cared for by Ms Moser.

3.0 THE SITE & PROPOSED DWELLING

- 3.1 The site adjacent to 1 Windmill Cottage is currently overgrown and provides little ecological benefit. The proposed application to create a modest, single dwelling on site also provides for ecologically beneficial planting and landscaping.
- 3.2 The design includes planting of indigenous shrubs, local wild hedgerow species and trees. The inclusion of wildflower planting provides food and habitat for a range of insects and butterflies.
- 3.3 The land within the curtilage of the dwelling will also include a pond, allowing another ecosystem to develop on the site.
- 3.4 The dwelling is intended for Ms Moser to occupy in the near future. She currently resides in a house in Colemore but a smaller, single storey dwelling would allow her to future-proof her living requirements. The site in question provides an ideal opportunity for this along with allowing her to continue and build upon the excellent work in creating an ecologically rich agricultural holding.

4.0 ECOLOGICAL IMPROVEMENTS

- 4.1 Should permission be granted for the proposed dwelling Ms Moser is able to provide a range of additional environmental benefits to the surrounding holding beyond those already complete. These are detailed below and a corresponding plan is attached at Appendix 2.
- 4.2 *Wildflower Meadows* - areas shown purple on the attached plan are wildflower meadows and given the amount of time that has been put into caring for them and the length of time they have been established they boast a range of wild flowers including cowslips, harebells, birds-foot trefoil and orchids. Extensive grazing methods have been employed to ensure their improvement and maintenance over the years. Should the planning for a new dwelling be granted these meadows will be maintained for years to come.
- 4.3 *New Woodland Planting* - areas show dotted green on the attached plan are proposed for new woodland planting or planting underway. Copses are being planted with hardwood, native species and will provide another habitat for native bird species and a range of mammals. Endangered species including woodlarks, lapwings and owls are being targeted by this new planting and the range of other measures in place for wild birds. An ancient bluebell wood is also on the property in the area known as Windmill Copse, this is carefully maintained by Ms Moser.
- 4.4 *Wild Bird Food Strips* - areas shown pale yellow on the attached plan are wild bird food strips specifically planted to provide food for wild birds. Ms Moser also supplements these strips with additional seed mixes and has erected owl, kite and bat nesting boxes over the farm. Regular wild bird surveys have been undertaken along with surveys of the nesting boxes. Permission for the new dwelling will allow Ms Moser to continue planting the strips and providing supplementary food to wild birds. Furthermore, the plan for the curtilage of the dwelling includes new shrub and tree planting that will provide food and shelter for species mentioned above.
- 4.5 *Coppiced Hedgerows* - areas cross-hatched green on the attached plan are newly coppiced hedgerows. These hedgerows are coppiced using traditional, rural skills and provide environmental benefits in providing continuous, wildlife corridors across the countryside. In addition to the environmental benefits this work also enables the use of a traditional skills and the upkeep of the rural heritage of the South Downs.
- 4.6 *Apple Orchard* - the area dotted orange on the plan is a traditional apple orchard. It provides another, traditional eco-system with fruit trees providing food and shelter for a range of bird and insect species.
- 4.7 *New Hedgerow Planting* - five new hedges have been or are due to be planted on the farm and are marked with green stripes on the attached plan. The hedgerows all comprise native species allowing food and shelter for a wide range of birds, insects and mammals. The new hedgerows also act as wildlife corridors linking the wild bird food strips and woodland areas on the farm. The new dwelling adjacent to Windmill Cottage will allow Ms Moser to continue the hedge planting and connectivity of the eco-systems across Windmill Farm. In addition, the curtilage of the new house will include hedge planting and gapping up.

5.0 OTHER BENEFITS

- 5.1 The new dwelling adjacent to Windmill Farm will provide benefits beyond those environmental benefits listed above. These are listed below:
- 5.2 Not only does Windmill Farm provide an excellent environment for wildlife but it also affords many social benefits too. The areas marked blue on the attached plan are all used for rural education. A large converted barn provides a Rural Study Centre where many schools, disabled groups, youth offender groups and adults are given the opportunity to learn about the environment, agriculture and rural life.
- 5.2 Bushcraft and camping activities are provided in the copse along with environmental study activities across the farm. These studies are possible due to the excellent environmental standards Ms Moser holds across the farm and her passion for delivering knowledge to the various groups. The new dwelling will allow her to continue the provision of such a vital service to the various groups that visit Windmill Farm and the social benefits they provide.
- 5.3 The social benefit of Windmill Farm also extends to historical activities. The Liss Archaeological Group attend the site twice a year for two, six monthly periods to excavate a large Roman settlement. Not only does this allow research into the settlement by archaeologists but they also allow the site to be opened to the various school groups each Friday for immersive, historical learning opportunities.
- 5.4 Windmill Farm is also the location for a number of important activities in preserving traditional, rural life. Hedge laying competitions are held regularly offering not only the environmental benefits of laid hedging but also the opportunity for a traditional craft to be practiced. The South of England Sheep Dog Trails are held at Windmill Farm twice yearly and have been for approximately thirty years. Again, this provides a valuable opportunity for a traditional rural skill to be demonstrated and practiced in the beautiful South Downs.
- 5.5 All of the above hugely beneficial activities are only possible due to the dedication and commitment of Ms Moser. The provision of a modest dwelling on Windmill Farm will allow her to continue these activities into the future whilst also providing for her changing needs as time goes on.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The works and activities ongoing at Windmill Farm provide a huge range of environmental and social benefits to the local environment and community and are largely due to the work of Ms Moser. We hope the planning department will see the value of these activities and how the ability for Ms Moser to live on Windmill Farm in a purpose-built property designed for her changing needs going forward will safeguard their continuation.

- 6.2 We would welcome the opportunity to discuss how the works undertaken and planned for coming years could be better undertaken with the proposed dwelling located at Windmill Farm. In conclusion we believe these benefits can be best provided through the grant of permission for the dwelling and would be delighted to discuss this at greater length if required.

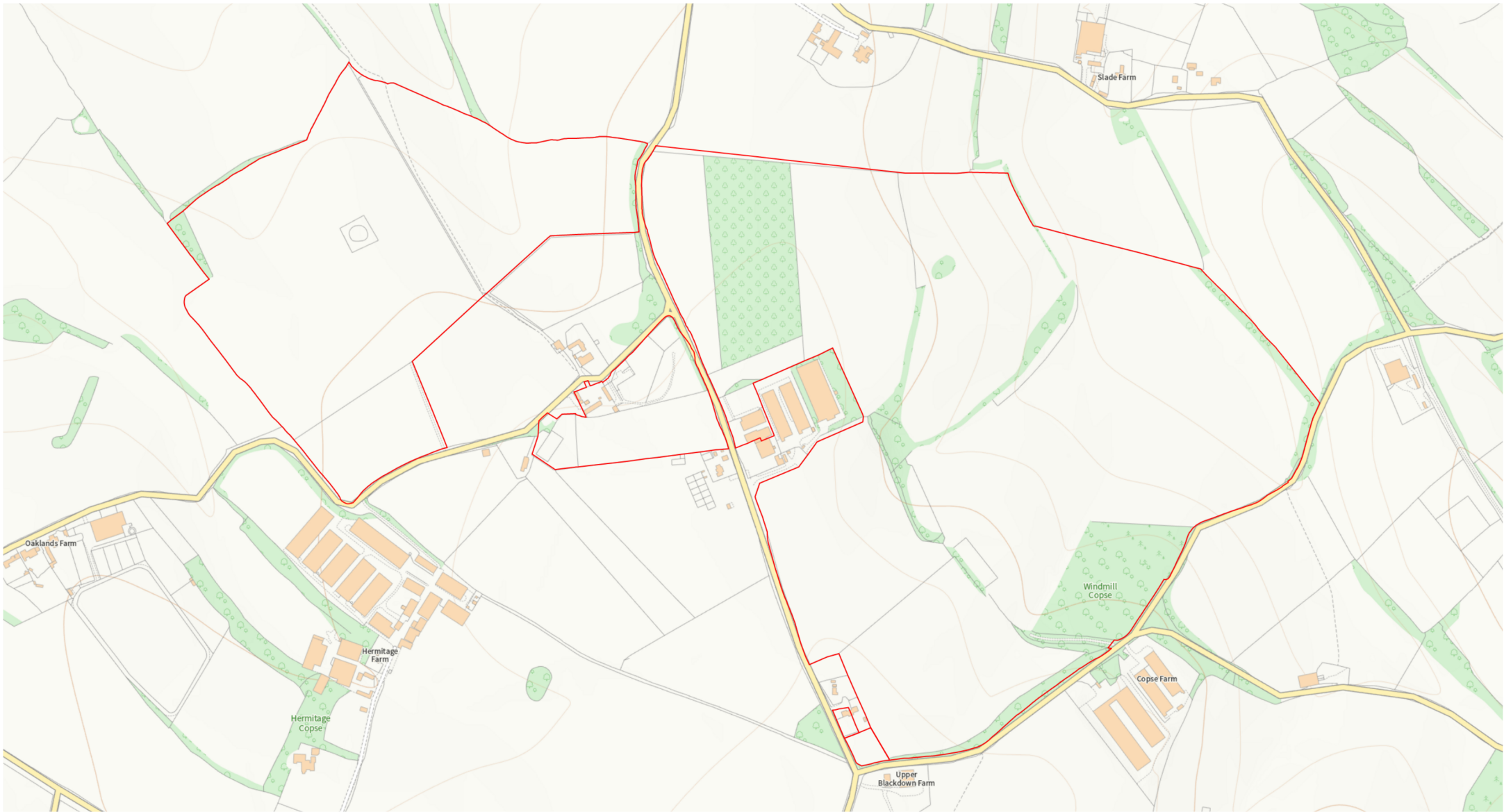
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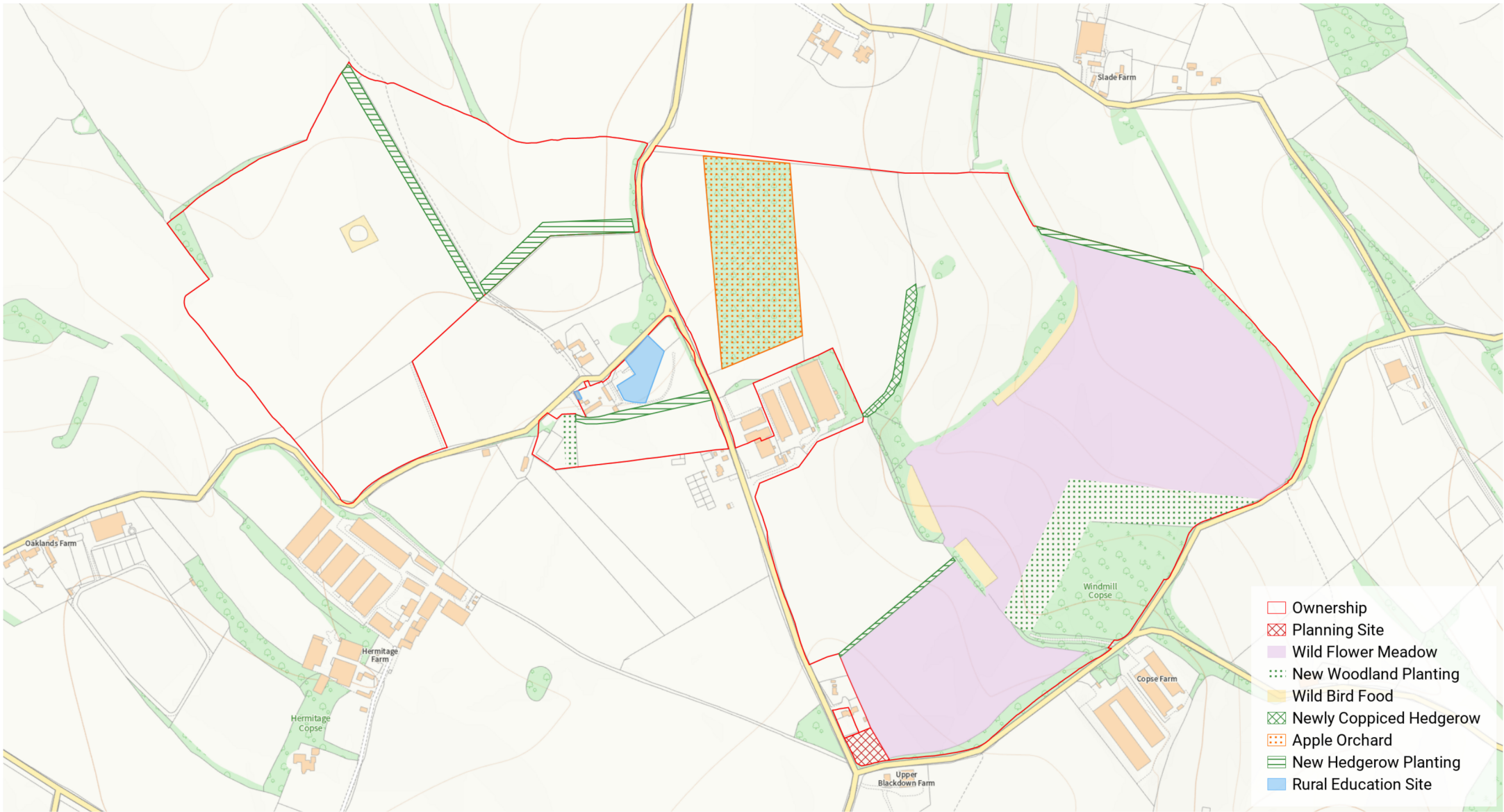
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Appendix 1
Site Plan



Appendix 2
Ecological Improvement Plan



- Ownership
- Planning Site
- Wild Flower Meadow
- New Woodland Planting
- Wild Bird Food
- Newly Coppiced Hedgerow
- Apple Orchard
- New Hedgerow Planting
- Rural Education Site

