

# Court Park Farm Shop proposals, Thurlestone

## 1. Welcome

Hello everyone! Our names are Ellie and Eric Stidston. We are a sibling partnership and part of a 4th generation farming family, originating from Court Park Farm, here in Thurlestone. Our farming heritage began at Court Park Farm in 1887, when Edward Stidston came over the River Avon from Kingston and started farming the land at Court Park. Since then, four generations have been custodians of the land and had the privilege of calling Thurlestone their home. As siblings, we both adored growing up in the village and attended All Saints School before moving onto secondary education. The Parish of Thurlestone will always hold a very special place in our hearts and we wish to continue being part of this community for the foreseeable future.

### INTRODUCTION

The farm is a mixed entity, consisting of an arable and a livestock enterprise operating across four neighbouring parishes. The cropping rotation consists of wheat, milling grade oats, and oil seed rape which fulfills a variety of uses ranging from breakfast cereal through to local animal feed for poultry, sheep, pigs and cattle. We will also be looking to put a block of land back into vegetable production, something that we used to do heavily back in the 1980's and early 90's in the village.

Our livestock enterprise uses native South Devon cattle, which we cross with Charolais and Aberdeen Angus on a grass-based system to create some of the very best quality beef, supplying a handful of local butchers and restaurants across the South Hams. We are also in the process of setting up a small free range pig herd focusing on rare breeds. All progeny from our farm are home reared and are processed within one hours drive of Thurlestone. We are passionate about the whole process, firmly believing in core principles of exceptional animal welfare. This underpins everything we do and helps us to create ethically bred, reared and processed meat with a keen focus on keeping it local.

We firmly believe our community should have better access to locally produced food and we want to play a pivotal role in this for the Parish. The farm has also been heavily involved in higher level environmental stewardship over the last decade, focusing on habitat development for endangered species and species of special interest. We are committed to this ethos and wholeheartedly believe we have a duty of care to the local landscape and the native species within our farming area.

### THE CONCEPT

Historically, we have been dictated to by large supermarkets on supply, making it increasingly difficult to maintain commercial viability, whilst supplying a faceless population. Our aim is to restore a natural cycle to supplying seasonally relevant produce to our local community, whilst providing a beautiful space for people to connect with the landscape.

The Thurlestone neighbourhood plan was adopted in July 2018 giving our community direct power to document a shared vision, shaping the development and growth of our local area. When consulted, 82% of respondents supported the idea of a farm shop in Thurlestone. This has essentially been the starting point of our journey so far. It sparked a concept which we have worked very hard on over the last 5 years, looking in detail to strike the right balance of provision, sensitivity and sustainability. As a local farming family, we have a responsibility to look ahead to see what the future may bring.

Food security and the Covid pandemic are just two examples of why locally produced food is so vital to meet community needs. Empty supermarket shelves during the pandemic demonstrated how vulnerable consumers are when it comes to the provision of daily essential food items. The creation of a local food hub for local people in the village not only addresses this but allows the opportunity for other local producers within the area to showcase their produce, increasing choice and availability of amazing local food for local residents.

We hope to provide a space which adds value to the community and to the landscape, improving local biodiversity, and inspiring an enhanced attitude to locally sourced food. That being said, we both understand the importance of blending sensitive diversification with the core principles of farming sustainably.

It's simple really, we want to create a legacy we are proud of, and we want the village to be proud of it too. We are both entrepreneurial by spirit and excited to imagine a business model which positively connects local people with local food and we are both very excited to share with you our ideas going forward.

Ellie and Eric Stidston



Various photos from Court Park Farm



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## 2. Planning

### THE NEED FOR FARM DIVERSIFICATION

The proposals being presented by our clients are brought forward as a part of essential farm diversification plans to help ensure the farming business can adapt to changing markets and remains resilient in the longer term. The need for farm diversification is something which is well recognised by the Government in legislation and policy.

Driving the need for diversification is the fact that agricultural production is vulnerable to natural disaster, such as bad weather and pests, as well as to policy changes and international incidents. Further to this the inelastic nature of demand and supply of the market, particularly in the short term, means that a large change in prices is required to balance supply and demand after any shock. Compounding the impact of price changes is the lag in the supply response to price changes as the agricultural sector requires a considerable time to make changes to production, which add an extra degree of volatility to the markets.

### PLANNING POLICY

Any proposal submitted to the Council will be considered against planning policies set out in the adopted local plan 'Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan' (JLP) and the Thurlestone Neighbourhood Plan (NP).

### THE JOINT LOCAL PLAN

Policy DEV15 of the JLP gives support to proposals in suitable locations which seek to improve the balance of jobs within the rural area and diversify the rural economy. It is considered the proposals would align with these requirements, specifically Policy DEV15 supports the provision of farm shops stating within sub-criterion 5 that:

*'The creation of new, or extensions to existing, garden centres or farm shops in the open countryside and unrelated to a settlement will only be permitted if the proposed development is ancillary to, and on the site of, an existing horticultural business or existing farming operation, and provided that 75 per cent of the goods sold will be produced within the immediate and adjoining parishes.'*

### THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Furthermore NP policy TP10 also directly supports the provision of a farm shop in the parish of Thurlestone and states that any such provision should be *'appropriate and proportionate in scale and extent to the rural and coastal character of the locality; and located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of a village community and the parish as a whole.'* NP policy TP25 also supports the provision of a car park *'within or on agricultural or amenity land adjoining Thurlestone.'*

### THE PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The project team considers therefore the principle of development is fully supported and combining both a farm shop and the provision of car parking to serve the wider community on a site well located to the edge of village presents an excellent opportunity to meet local growth needs whilst minimising impacts. It is considered that the draft proposals advanced are indeed proportionate to the needs identified, whilst being of a sufficient scale to justify the investment required and to ensure the delivery of the car park alongside the revenue generating elements of the proposals.

### DETAILED DESIGN POLICIES

A range of other policies within the JLP also impose more detailed design related requirements and which the project team have considered and are being met through the design process, these will be fully addressed in the submission of the finalised application in due course. Potential planning impacts of the development are considered in more detail on the following panels.



Proposed site for the Farm Shop



Proposed site for the Farm Shop



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## 3. Masterplan



### KEY:

- 01 - Main site entrance
- 02 - Community parking
- 03 - Footpath links
- 04 - Farm Shop
- 05 - Farm Shop parking
- 06 - Screened delivery area
- 07 - New hedgerows
- 08 - New native woodland boundary planting
- 09 - New orchard
- 10 - Food growing area
- 11 - Natural play area
- 12 - Existing hedgerows
- Pedestrian links

Proposed masterplan



Longitudinal section through the whole site

### MASTERPLAN PRINCIPLES

A comprehensive masterplan has been designed to ensure that the development is as sensitive and discreet as possible. The proposals incorporate the following features:

- The development has been nestled into the natural sloping ground and surrounded by native hedgerows and woodland planting so that the proposed building is very discreet
- Access to the development via a convenient entrance for vehicles that is located just outside the village core, avoiding the need for deliveries and visitors from surrounding villages to drive beyond Kerse Cross where the lane narrows
- Community parking for All Saints Church of England Primary School provided on site in addition to the shop customer parking area. This extra parking will help to alleviate congestion around the school entrance at morning drop off and afternoon peak times
- Safe access from the community parking area provided at the bottom end of the site close to the school with a natural play area for parents with pre-school siblings waiting to pick up
- The community parking area will also provide overflow parking for village hall events when needed
- Convenient pedestrian access to the farm shop will be provided from surrounding residential areas
- The Farm Shop has been located well away from existing properties
- Extensive new planting and enhancements to existing landscape and hedgerows to provide significant biodiversity gain across the whole site
- Natural play areas for small children
- Creation of a sustainable food growing area



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## 4. Access and Connectivity

### VEHICULAR ACCESS

It is proposed that an existing field access will be upgraded to form the main vehicular access to the Shop, located approximately 50m to the east of Court Park on the edge of the village. Details of the access will be agreed with Devon County Council.

The access will allow easy access to the site for customer and delivery vehicles, while the location of the access will avoid the need for traffic to enter the village itself. The access will also allow continued use by the Devon Air Ambulance which uses the field when required. Visibility splays will be provided in accordance with observed vehicle speeds adjacent to the site.

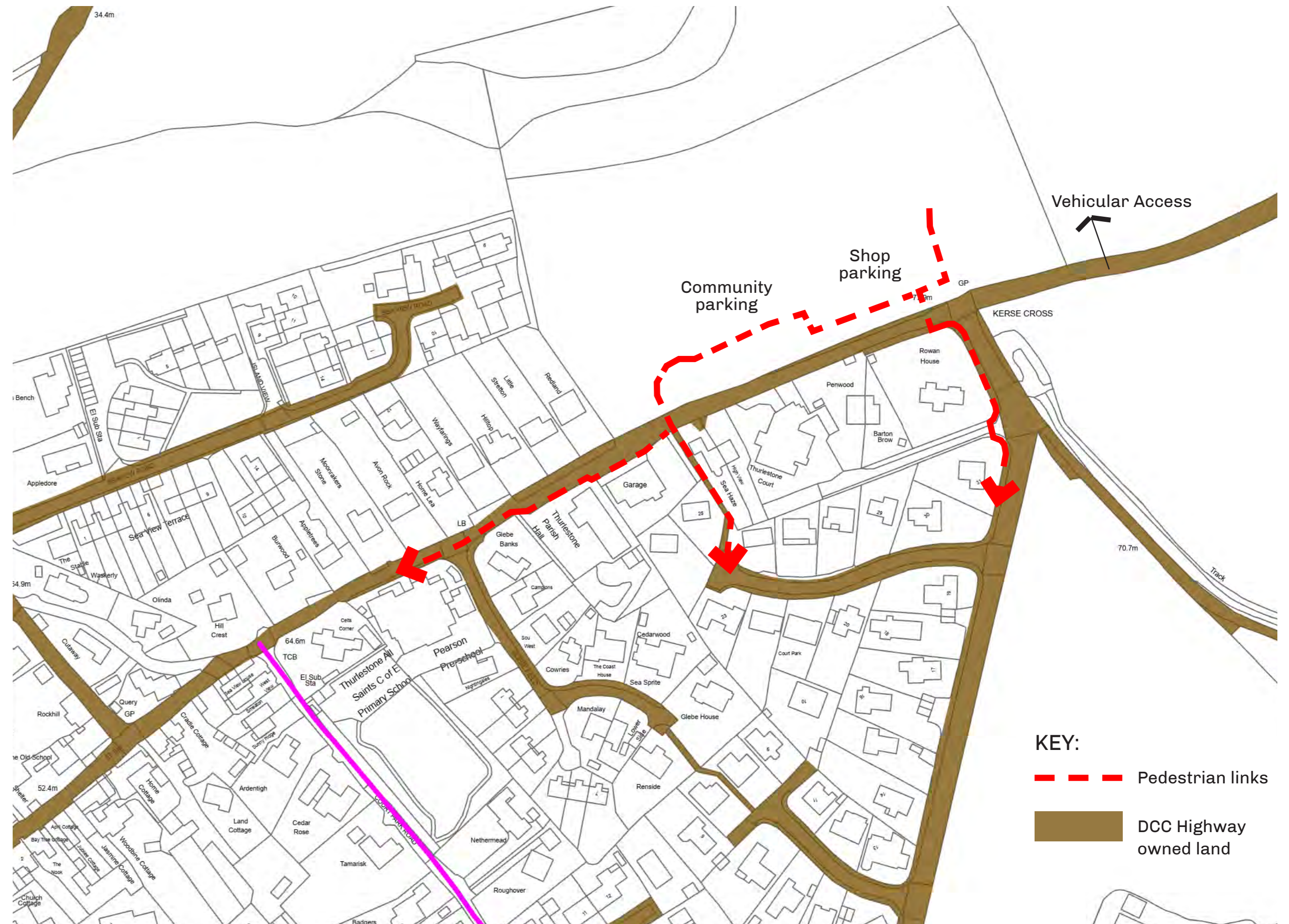
The number of traffic movements generated by the proposal is forecast to be low, with the majority of vehicle trips being drawn away from the village to the east. The number of additional traffic movements through the village itself is therefore not expected to be significant.

### CAR PARKING

Car parking will be provided for the farm shop as well as sufficient space for delivery vehicles to enter and manoeuvre within the site. Customer car parking will be provided in accordance with the Council's car parking standards. Additional car parking will also be provided to allow parents to pick up and drop off pupils attending the primary school, thus avoiding some of the congestion which currently occurs outside the school. It is proposed that the car park can also be used as pre-arranged parking for the village hall, for example for Parish Council meetings or other larger events. Accessible car parking spaces will be provided adjacent to the shop, with cycle parking also provided.

### PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY

The development will provide a permeable network of pedestrian connections to the surrounding network providing safe walking routes to the centre of the village and a connecting footpath with Court Park. The Farm Shop lies within easy walking distance of existing facilities within the village and a footpath connection to the west of the site will be created, providing direct access from the car park to the school and village hall. An additional footpath connection will be provided connecting the shop with the existing footpath on Court Park.



ArcGIS  
Plot: Contains Ordnance Survey data.  
© Crown copyright and database rights 2024. 100019783.

Map Title: - Thurlestone, Devon  
Date: 19/03/2024  
Author: Land Charges

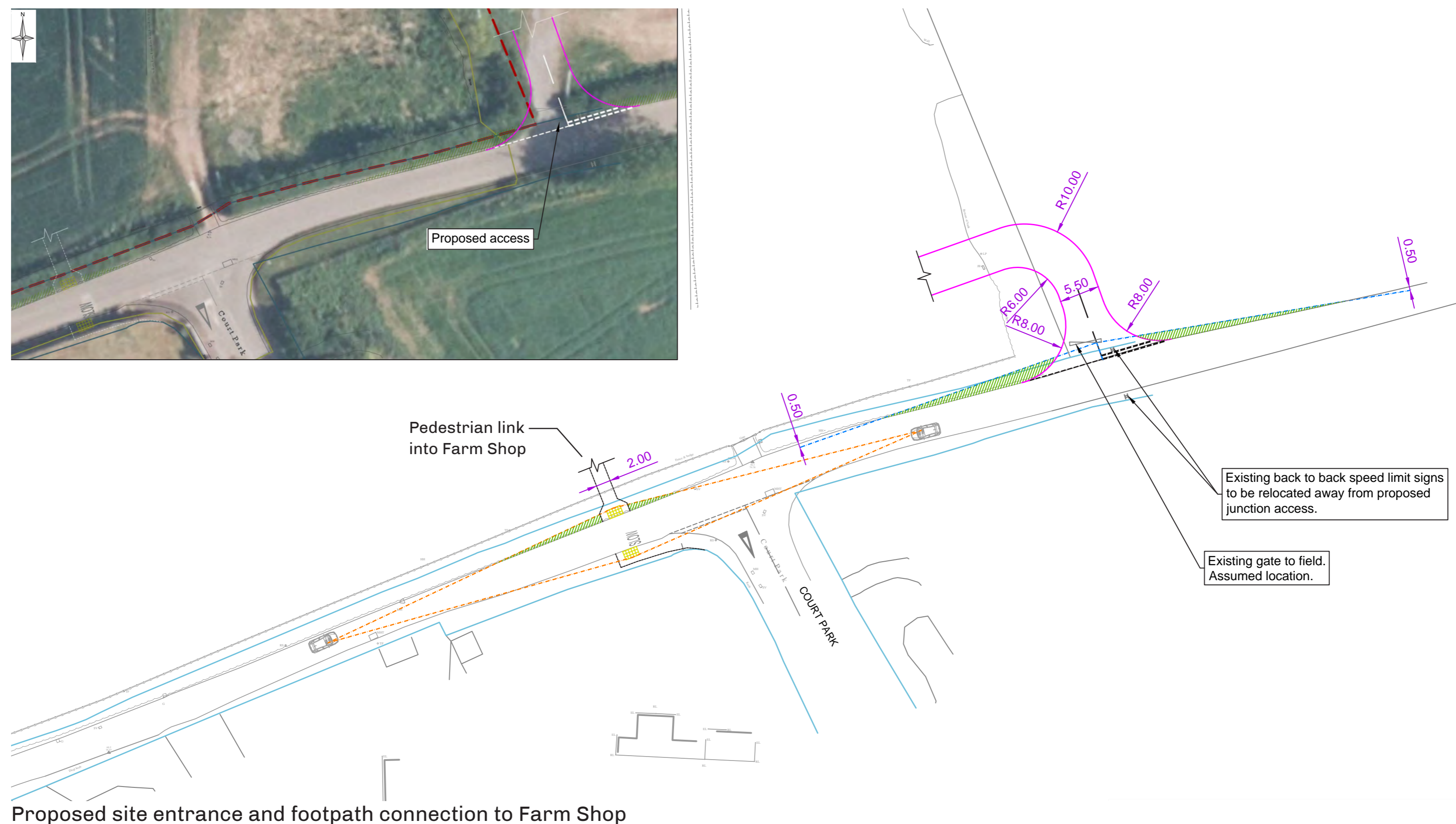
The information on this map is updated periodically but the County Council can give no guarantee that it represents the current up to date position of highways maintainable at public expense. Reliance should not be placed on this data for legal or commercial purposes.

KEY:  
- - - Pedestrian links  
DCC Highway owned land

267992.280171E 43243.034055N



Site connectivity



Proposed site entrance and footpath connection to Farm Shop



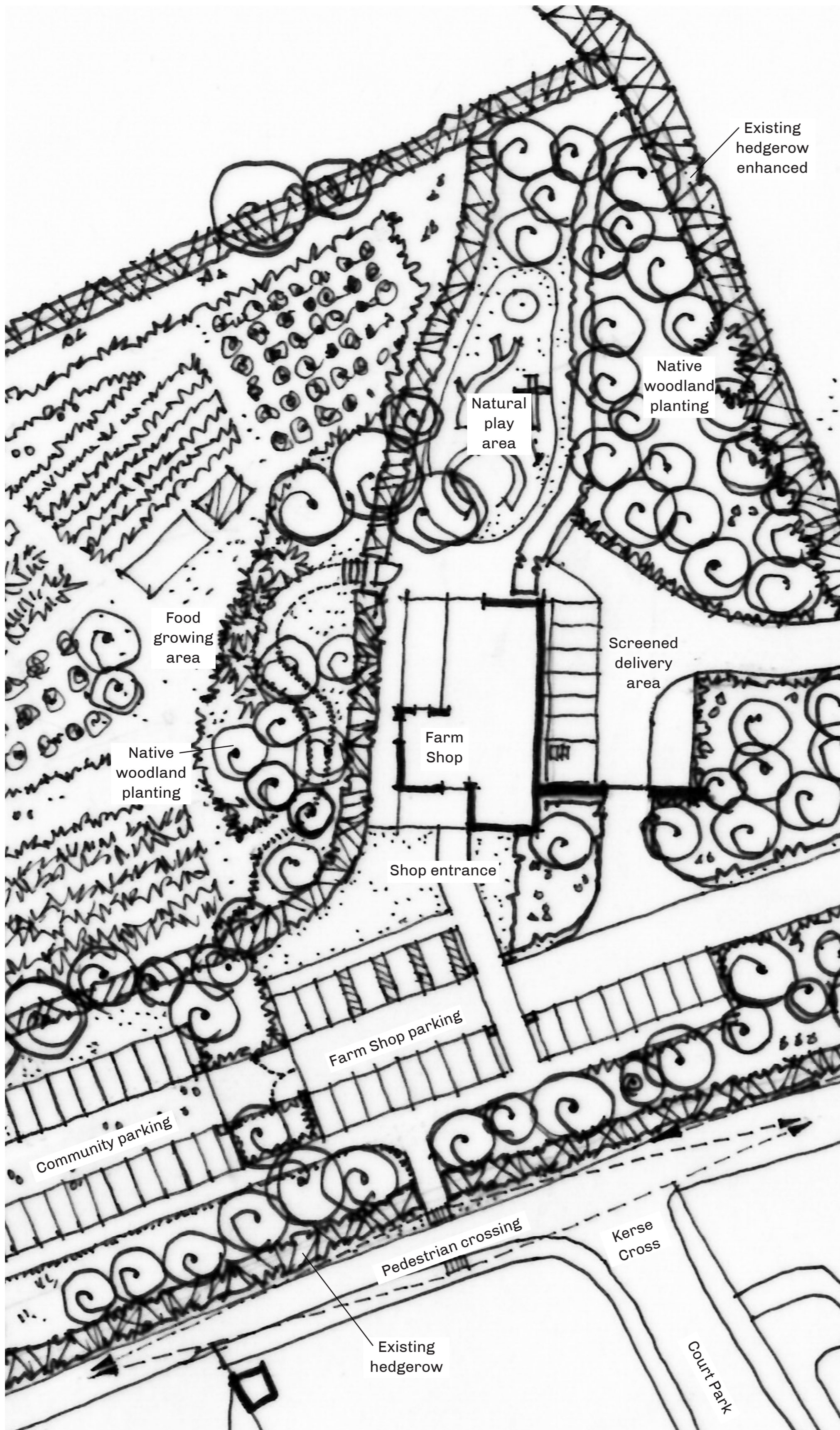
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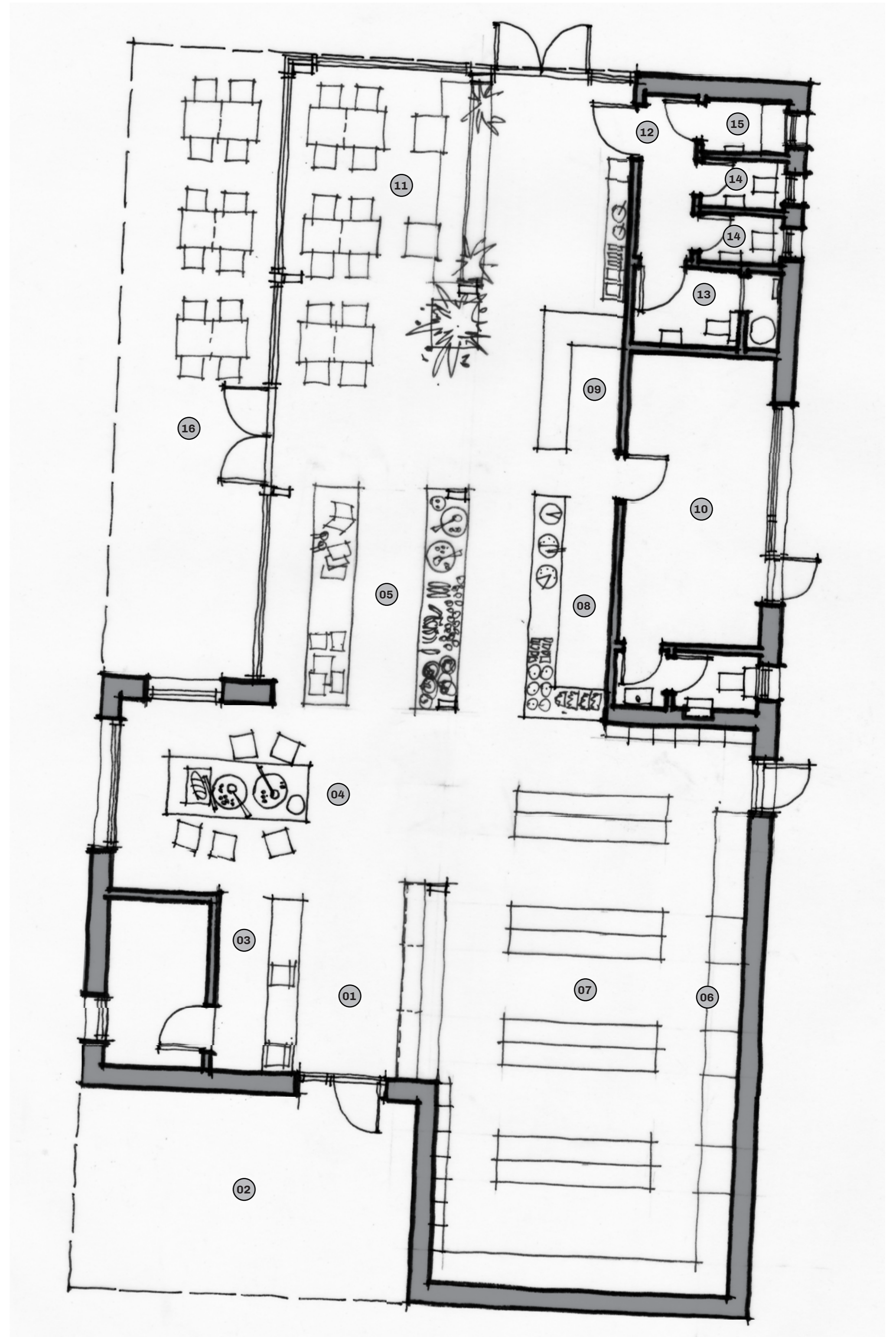
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## 5. Building Layout



Proposed setting of the Farm Shop building within the site



Proposed Farm Shop building layout

### KEY:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 01 - Main customer entrance             | 09 - Cafe sales   |
| 02 - Covered entrance area              | 10 - Kitchen / stores / staff toilet                    |
| 03 - Shop sales                         | 11 - Cafe seating                                       |
| 04 - Food demonstration and information | 12 - Entrance to customer toilets                       |
| 05 - Fresh produce area                 | 13 - Universal accessible toilet                        |
| 06 - Chilled produce area               | 14 - Universal ambulant toilets                         |
| 07 - Dry produce area                   | 15 - Parent baby / toddler change room                  |
| 08 - Delicatessen                       | 16 - External terrace with views over food growing area |

### BUILDING LAYOUT PRINCIPLES

The farm shop building and delivery yard have been sympathetically designed to ensure that the development is as discreet as possible. The building has been set into the natural sloping land and the proposed landscaping designed to minimise the visual impact from the lane into the village and from locations further afield. The proposals will incorporate the following design features:

- The building has been nestled into the natural sloping ground, with the delivery area set into the land behind.
- The proposed development is enclosed by new hedgerows and native woodland planting. Existing hedgerows will be renovated and enhanced with additional native planting.
- The proposed finished floor level within the farm shop building has been set lower than the recommended finished floor level identified by the Summary Landscape Visual Impact Assessment prepared by local landscape architects Rathbone Partnership, minimising the impact of the building.

- Customer parking is close to the shop entrance with level access into the shop for those with buggies or mobility difficulties. All parking spaces will be slightly wider than normal to allow for easier access. Several disabled parking spaces will be provided adjacent to the shop entrance
- Charging points for electric vehicles within the customer parking area in accordance with South Hams District Council's Climate Emergency planning policies
- The parking area will be fully screened by new hedgerows and an enclosure of woodland planting
- The building has been orientated to look out over the food growing field and adjacent fields, making the clear connection between the land and the production of local food in the shop
- The farm shop has been designed as a single storey barn with a convenient and a fully accessible internal layout



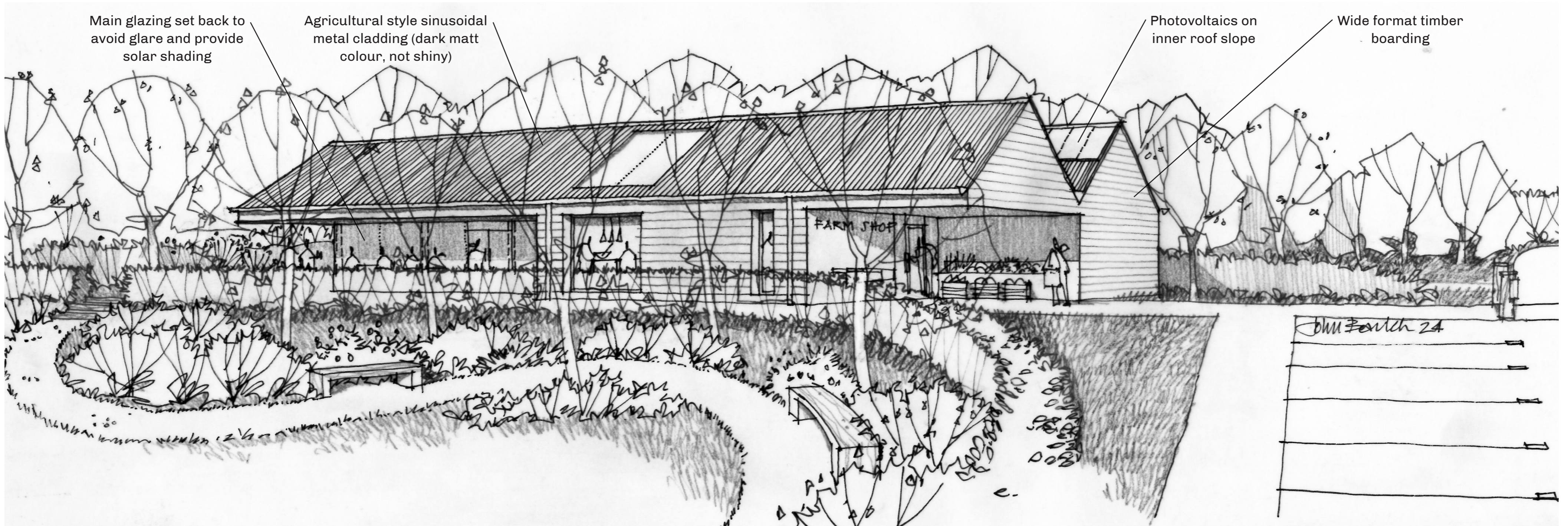
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## 6. Building Appearance and Sustainability



Artist's impression of the proposed Farm Shop as viewed from the parking area



Building precedent imagery

### BUILDING FORM & APPEARANCE

The building form and appearance of the farm shop has been carefully designed to be sustainable and to reflect the character of traditional farm buildings. The design incorporates the following design features;

- The farm shop has been designed as a single storey barn with a very low profile, minimising the visual impact from the lane into the village and from locations further afield
- The ridge height of the proposed farm shop building is in accordance with the recommendations of the Summary Landscape Visual Impact Assessment prepared by local landscape architects Rathbone Partnership
- External building materials have been selected to reflect typical materials used on traditional farm buildings including sinusoidal corrugated metal cladding and wide format timber boarding
- The main range of windows have been set well back under a roof overhang to provide shading that will minimise any glare when viewed from locations along the coastpath and other other paths beyond the site

### SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

The building has been designed to be highly energy efficient and to address South Hams District Council's Climate Emergency planning policies. The development will provide an equivalent 20% carbon saving through on-site renewable energy generation in accordance with Joint Local Plan policy DEV32.5. The building design incorporates many sustainability features:

- Walls, roof and floor will be highly insulated
- Main range of windows orientated in a sunny westerly direction to benefit from solar gain in colder winter months
- Roof overhangs to provide solar shading in warmer months
- Air source underfloor heating system
- Heat pumps and condensers located on the cooler shaded north side within the enclosed delivery yard
- Solar photovoltaic panels on the roof to generate renewable energy and battery storage to provide electricity for the farm shop



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## 7. Biodiversity and Landscaping

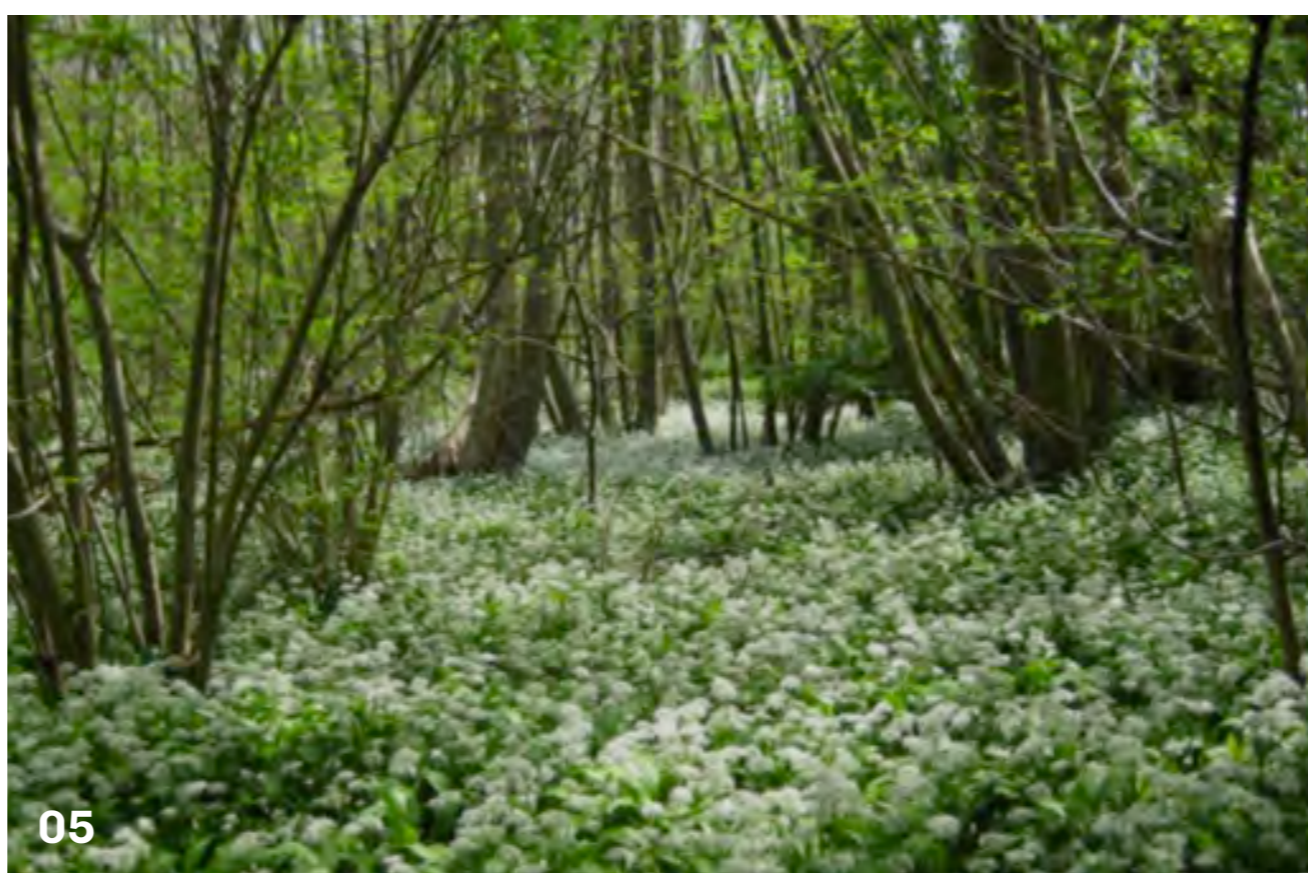
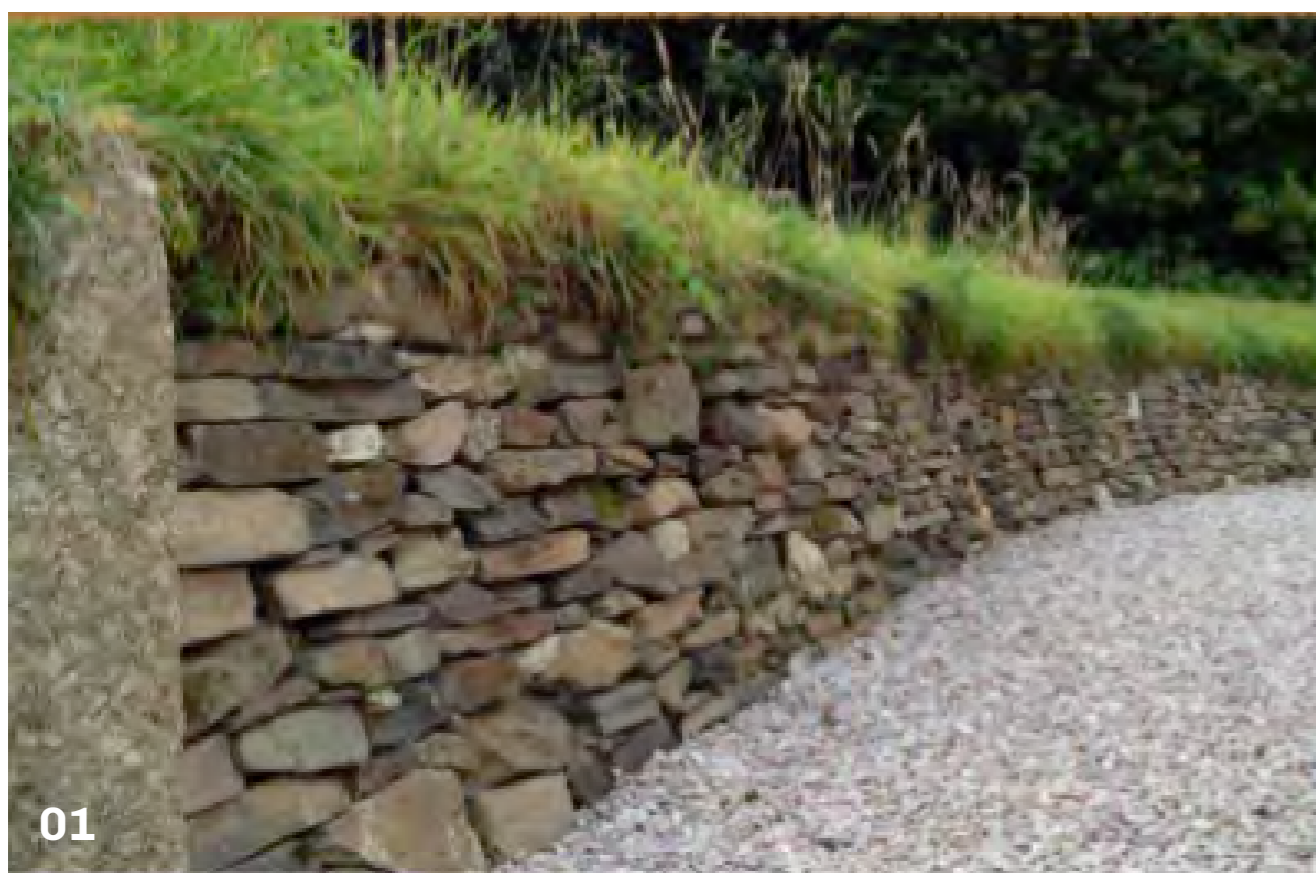
### LANDSCAPE AND BIODIVERSITY PRINCIPLES

Part of the enjoyment of visiting a farm shop and café is to experience the landscape where your food is grown. This is becoming increasingly important, and the project will deliver this connection, for future years to come. The maintenance and enhancement of landscape character, as set out in the landscape character assessment, and as experienced in the landscape itself, is a key objective for this development. Through taking this approach the landscape will be in better condition and more highly valued after the development has been implemented than it currently is as an ordinary agricultural field.

The landscape within which the farm shop will be set has been designed by a rural practice landscape architect, drawing inspiration from features found locally such as Devon hedge banks, copses and Hazel coppice. Orchards have traditionally been a very important feature of this landscape and have declined. By bringing an orchard back into this landscape there is a direct link between orchard produce and the farm shop, as well as enabling people to enjoy landscape views and connection throughout the year with the trees going through their annual cycle of blossom and fruiting.

The farm shop will be the agrarian interface between the land and those wishing to visit and spend time in this part of the landscape. The positioning of the farm shop has been very carefully considered to allow visitors to appreciate views out across the rural landscape. Design elements, such as earth banks, are to be used on the edge of the outdoor spaces to conceal clutter from any long range views back towards the site from the surrounding area, as well as providing shelter from the south-westerly winds.

Without the landscape there would not be the produce. This is a wonderful opportunity for visitors and local people alike to experience local produce in a landscape specifically designed to enhance those features that are valued locally, and nationally, in an environment that will incorporate native planting significantly increasing the biodiversity and enhancing the sense of place.



#### 01. DEVON BANKS

Turf topped stone faced banks will be incorporated into the design as linear boundaries and points of change of character that define the transition between the more domestic spaces around the cafe, and the spaces between the cafe and the car park. The local brown stone will be used, extracted from within the site during the initial earthworks and reused alongside soil to form the core of the earth bank. Turf on the top of the bank will further assimilate these features into the landscape and provide biodiversity net gain. Some of the banks will be single-faced and retaining whilst others will be double faced and stand alone. The ends will be bull-nosed to create an attractive, traditional design detail.

#### 04. BIO-DIVERSE GRASSLAND

Grassland beyond the site will be maintained for biodiversity gain.

#### 02. DEVON HEDGEROWS

New earth banks on the southern boundary of the site will be planted in the traditional way with a double row of native hedge plants (whips / transplants) with individual field maple and oak trees tagged along the hedge at approximately 20m centres to mature into trees in the long term. Hedge to the boundaries to be infilled where gappy and for hedge each side of path. Existing boundary hedges are 80% Elm. Boundary hedges to be maintained at the same height to ensure Elm hedges do not succumb to Dutch Elm disease.

#### 05. NATIVE WOODLAND AREAS

Planting of hazel coppice to be on a 7 year rotation on the eastern side of the site to shelter and provide a distinct enclosure from the adjacent air ambulance landing site to the east. The 7 year rotations will keep it below 5m height. Underplant with wild garlic and other native woodland floor supply.

#### 03. TRADITIONAL ORCHARD

Traditional orchards have been lost from within this landscape and whilst orchards were not present on the actual site, see map progression within Landscape Visual Assessment, they were present in the context of the site. The inclusion of a new orchard alongside the access road within the parking area will provide landscape enhancement, restore features lost from this landscape, and provide biodiversity net gain. The orchard will be planted at 8m centres / on an 8m grid, using traditional standard (M25 rootstock) Devon varieties of orchard fruit. This feature will also help to assimilate the landscape.

#### 06. SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE

SUDS will be managed through a wildlife pond / swales system that also provides biodiversity net gain to this site.



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