



INDEPENDENT RURAL CONSULTANTS

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Ecological Enhancement Plan

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1.0 Introduction

A planning application has been submitted to Staffordshire Moorland District Council for the construction of a general-purpose agricultural building within a field of poor, modified grassland at Gorstead Mill Farm, Bradnop, Staffordshire, ST3 7NL.

Ecological Enhancement Plan

The purpose of this biodiversity enhancement plan is to include a strategy to incorporate wildlife features into the proposed development to result in an overall enhanced site biodiversity and provide habitat of value to wildlife within the development. Enhancement of biodiversity is required under the updated National Planning Policy (NPPF). This report has been prepared by Alexandra Lewis BSc MSc PhD.

2.0 Building description

The proposed building measures as follows:

Length = 18.3m

Width = 9.14m

Eaves Height = 3.65m

Ridge Height = 4.3m

The total surface area of the proposed building will measure **167m²**.

The building has been designed to be within keeping with the existing agricultural buildings and other agricultural buildings in the surrounding areas. The eaves height of the existing building and proposed extension allow for machinery to access the building as well as providing sufficient area within the building to stack hay bales and other produce items. The building perimeter will be constructed with 2m high concrete panels and finished to the eaves with Yorkshire boarding clad. The roof of the proposed building will be constructed using fibre cement roof sheets. The North East Elevation will provide access through a roller shutter door, containing a small personal access door, the roller shutter door will ensure the machinery and produced stored within is secure.

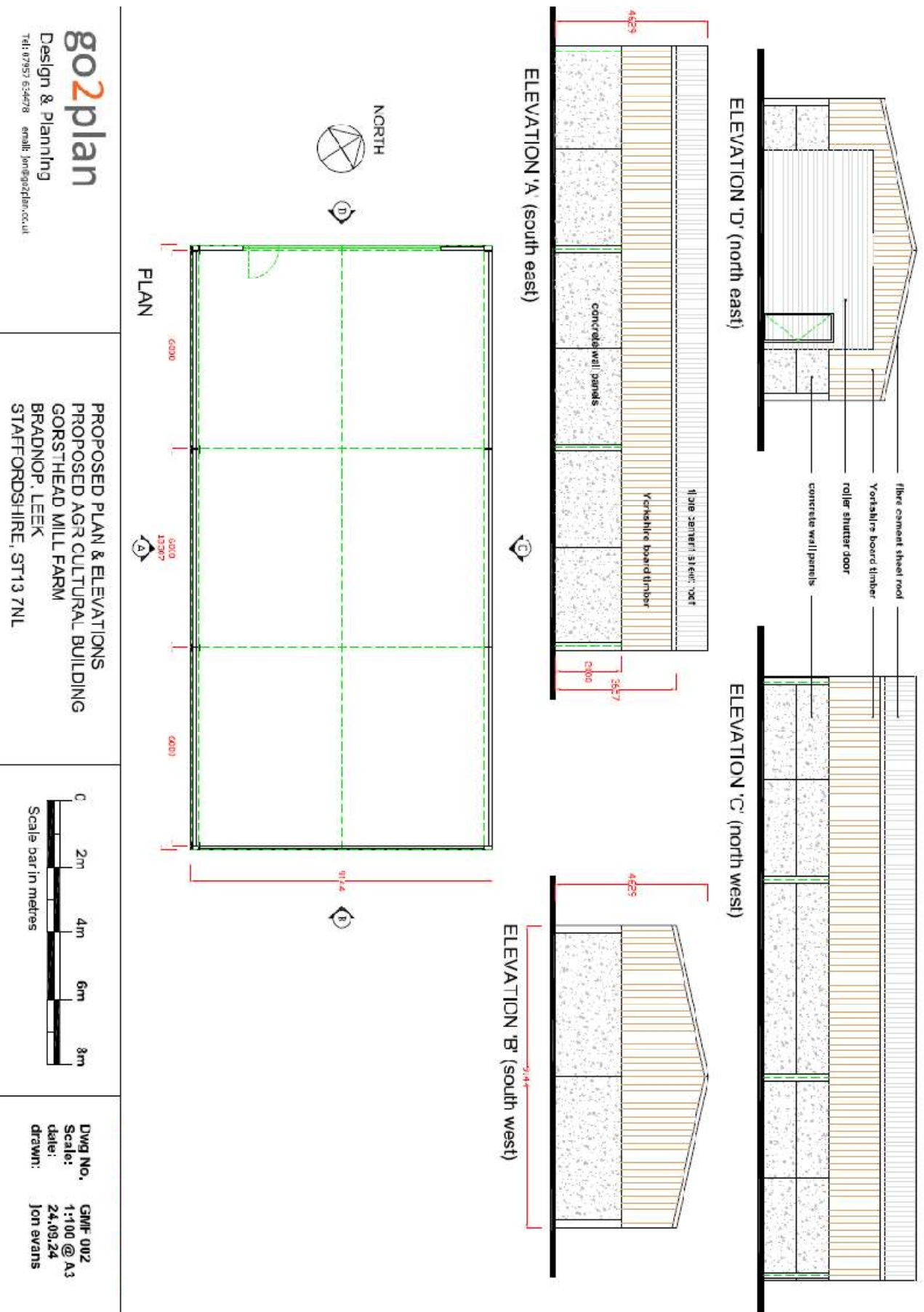


Figure 1 – Proposed plan and building elevations.

3.0 Biodiversity Enhancement Measures

The submitted strategy should include proposals for the provision of features for nesting birds including house sparrow

Although the footprint of the new building does not see the loss of any trees or hedges, with little to no expected impact on bird nesting opportunities - it is recommended that the resulting structure provides enhanced nesting opportunities for birds as part of ecological enhancement of the site. Farm buildings can provide valuable nesting habitat for birds and enhancing this structure to improve nesting and habitat opportunities will contribute to improvements for a variety of wildlife using the landscape.

It is proposed that 3 swift nest boxes (e.g. Swift Conservation Polymer Swift Nest Box, see figure 2) should ideally be placed up on the highest external points of the building. These boxes consist of a single compartment with an oval entry point with an overhanging panel, a moulded in nest platform and a greppable floor. This box is suitable to be screwed into the external Yorkshire boarding. If an alternative supplier is used ensure that boxes are durable and waterproof. These types of bird boxes are 'universal' in that they also provide nesting opportunities for other bird species.

Ideal Location:

Height: >5m where possible. The building is less than 5m, however bird boxes should be placed at the highest point where other aspect and location considerations have been made.

Aspect: North / East and out of direct sunlight. Boxes should be placed in a position away from the midday sun/not on the south facing side.

Location:

- under eaves with open flight-line into the box, in groups of 3 or more
- avoiding installing directly above windows, doors or other possible disturbance (therefore not on the north east face of the building above the access doors).

Given the aspect considerations and location of doors/ access points where disturbance levels will be higher – it was not deemed suitable to locate bird boxes on either of the taller faces of the building under the gable ends. The long south face has been ruled out due to the midday sun – therefore the ideal location would be on the long north face. Consideration has been given to these constraints and the proposed locations are outlined in figure 3 below.



Figure 2. Swift Conservation Polymer Swift Nest Box

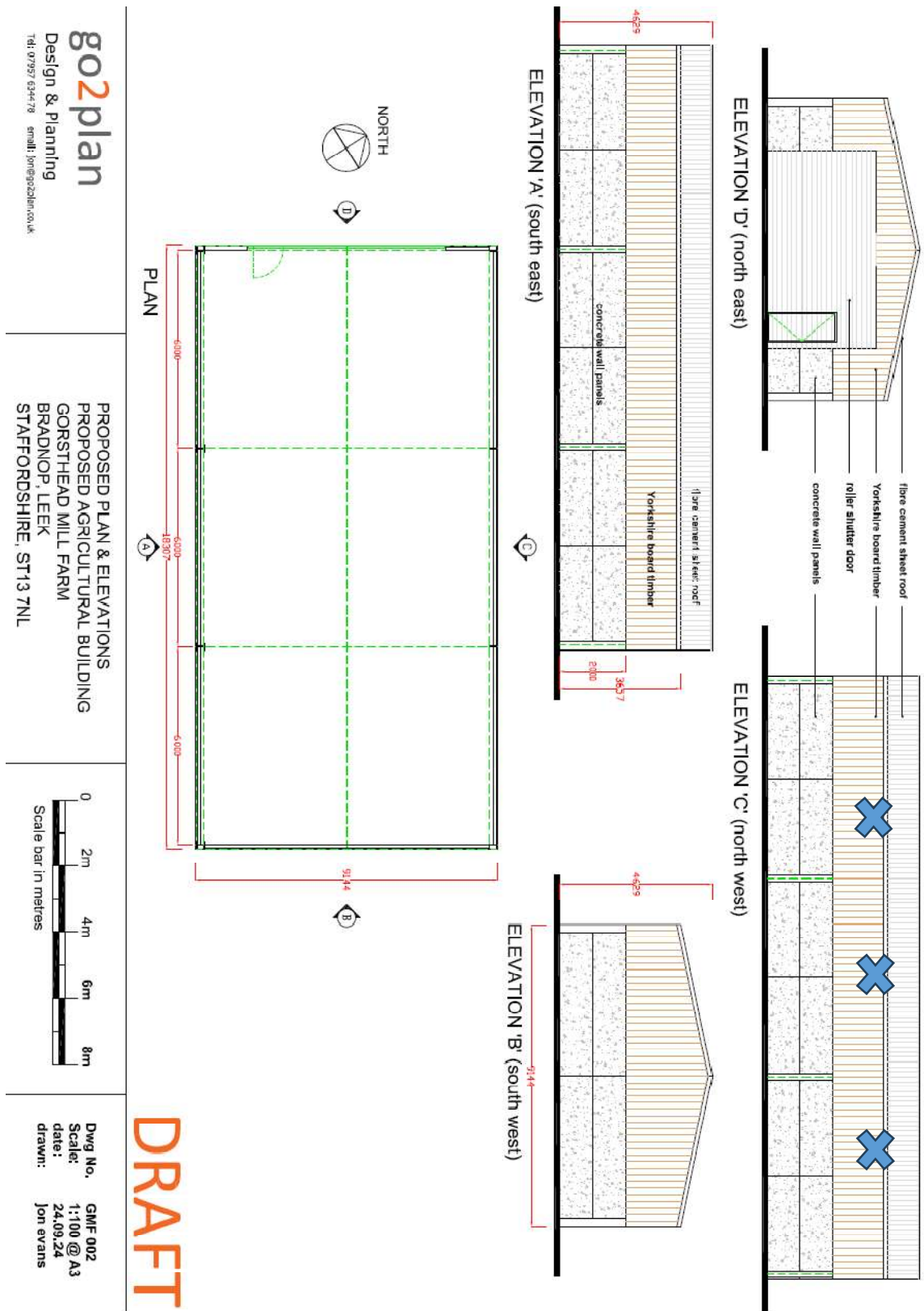


Figure 3. Proposed EXTERNAL locations for 3 x bird nesting boxes (blue crosses)