# Field Farm, Dial Post

Silage Clamps
Agricultural Appraisal

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# Contents


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Introduction | 2 |
| 2. | Background | 3 |
| 3. | Planning Policy | 5 |
| 4. | Farming System | 7 |
| 5. | Proposed Building and Suitability of design | 8 |
| 6. | Conclusion | 11 |

## Executive Summary

- This report is an appraisal of the current farming system and silage clamp requirements at Field Farm, Dial Post.
- Field Farm totals 446 acres (181 hectares) and comprises of approximately 377 acres (152 hectares) of arable land and 45 acres (18 hectares) of grassland, with the balance principally woodland.
- Christ's Hospital Foundation purchased Field Farm in October 2017 and the land was let under a 16-year FBT to Mr David Exwood of Westons Farm Limited in 2018. This report only considers the farming activities at Field Farm because there are no changes to the farming system on the wider holding associated with this proposal.
- There are two existing agricultural buildings on the holding, erected in 2019 and 2021, principally used as grain stores, however they also provide general purpose agricultural, hay, straw, and machinery storage.
- A livestock building has been approved under application DC/24/0903 and is due to be constructed in Autumn 2024. As part of a more regenerative approach to the farming system at Field Farm, 180 head of cattle will be introduced to the holding, to expand the existing cattle enterprise on Westons Farm Limited. The cattle will graze the permanent and temporary grassland on the holding and be housed during the winter months and for finishing in the livestock building. Farmyard manure, from the cattle housing will be spread on the arable land.
- Three adjacent silage clamps each measuring 13.716m by 27.432m, with a 10.000m apron to the east of the clamps, are proposed to provide storage for forage made both on Field Farm and the wider Westons Farm Limited holding for feeding the livestock, when housed, on Field Farm. The proposed silage clamps will provide c. 2,310 tonnes of fresh weight forage storage capacity, 2.11 times that required per year the head of livestock on the holding, however this is reasonably necessary because grass and maize will be fed in the ration, requiring multiple clamps, silage will be fed throughout the year, meaning that at least one clamp will always be in use and surplus capacity will allow for a buffer of silage to be conserved in years of high forage production. An 8.27m concrete apron will be constructed on the western elevation of the approved livestock building, with a 7.01m wide connecting concrete roadway.
- The development is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture on the holding and is not precluded by any of the circumstances in Part 6 A.1 and therefore benefits from permitted developed rights.
- Its siting, design, scale, and external appearance is appropriate for the intended agricultural use and therefore prior approval from the local planning authority should not be required.

# 1. Introduction

1.1. Savills Food & Farming (Savills) is instructed by Mr David Exwood to undertake an appraisal of the requirement for silage clamps at Field Farm, Dial Post.

1.2. This report is prepared by Stuart Nicholls; Food & Farming Consultant for Savills (UK) Ltd. Savills is an international property consultancy company with a specialist rural advisory business, providing financial and strategic advice to landowners, farmers, and foresters.

1.3. I have over a decade of industry experience, having worked in advisory and practical capacities on farms and estates across the UK. I am a Fellow of the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers (CAAV) and a Member of the British Institute of Agricultural Consultants (BIAC).

1.4. I first visited the farm in December 2018 to discuss proposals for a grain store on the holding and subsequently appraised the agricultural requirements for the two existing agricultural buildings on the holding, and the livestock building due to be constructed in Autumn 2024. I discussed the current proposals and farming system with Mr Exwood in August 2024.

# 2. Background

2.1. Christ's Hospital Foundation purchased Field Farm, Dial Post in October 2017. The land is let under a sixteen-year Farm Business Tenancy (FBT) to Mr David Exwood of Westons Farm Limited. This report does not consider the wider farming operations of Westons Farm Limited because there are no proposed changes to the wider farming operations associated with this development.

2.2. Field Farm extends to 446 acres (181 hectares), comprising of 377 acres (152 hectares) of arable land and 45 acres (18 hectares) of grassland, with the balance principally woodland.

2.3. The holding has two existing agricultural buildings, with a third due to be constructed in Autumn 2024:

- Grain store 1 – steel portal frame building, pressed concrete panels, 30m x 33m erected in 2019.
- Grain store 2 – steel portal frame building, pressed concrete panels, 30m x 33m erected in 2021.
- Livestock building – steel portal frame, pressed concrete panels, Yorkshire boarding, 39.62m x 36.58m, construction due to start Autumn 2024 (awaiting delivery of steels)

| Building | Plan Number | Building Size ($m^2$) |
|---|---|---|
| Grain store 1 | 1 | 990 |
| Grain store 2 | 2 | 990 |
| Livestock building | 3 | 1,449 |
| | **TOTAL** | **3,429** |

**Table 1: Field Farm – Existing Agricultural Buildings**




**Image 1: Field Farm – Existing & Permitted Agricultural Buildings[1]**

2.4. The Soil Survey of England and Wales categorise the land as Wickham 1, a slowly permeable and seasonally waterlogged fine silty over clayey, fine loamy over clayey and clayey soil. It is suitable for dairying on short term grassland and winter cereals. Deciduous woodland is also commonly found in the High Weald of Kent and Sussex.[2]

2.5. The Agricultural Land Classification Provisional (England) map (1:250,000) published in 1983 by MAFF indicates that the land is Grade 3 and Grade 4. Grade 3 is described as good to moderate quality agricultural land, with moderate limitations that affect the choice of crops, timing, and type of cultivation, harvesting or the level of yield. Where more demanding crops are grown, yields are generally lower or more variable than on land in Grades 1 and 2. Grade 4 is poor quality agricultural land with severe limitations, which significantly restrict the range of crops and/or level of yields.

2.6. The land at Field Farm is managed under a Sustainable Farming Incentive agreement and is part of the Upper Adur Landscape Recovery scheme.

2.7. The farm is not within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ), nor within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or a National Park. There is not a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) on the farm.

[1] Google Maps Field Farm 50°57'31.79"N, 0°20'59.52"W [online] Available through https://www.google.co.uk/maps/ [Accessed 22 August 2024]

[2] Soil Survey of England and Wales 1:250,000 Soil Map

# 3. Planning Legislation

3.1. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended June 2024) Schedule 2 Part 6 Agricultural and forestry Class A is the relevant legislation to this matter.

3.2. The legislation states that permitted development is the "*carrying out on agricultural land comprised in an agricultural unit of 5 hectares or more in area of works for the erection, extension or alteration of a building or any excavation or engineering operations, which are reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within that unit*".

3.3. Development is not permitted by Class A if:

1. *the development would be carried out on a separate parcel of land forming part of the unit which is less than 1 hectare in area;*
2. *it would consist of the erection or extension of any agricultural building on an established agricultural unit where development under Class Q or S has been carried out within a period of 10 years ending with the date on which development under Class A begins;*
3. *it would consist of, or include, the erection, extension, or alteration of a dwelling;*
4. *it would involve the provision of a building, structure or works not designed for agricultural purposes;*
5. *the ground area which would be covered by—*

   *(i) any works or structure (other than a fence) for accommodating livestock or any plant or machinery arising from engineering operations would exceed 1,000 square metres; or*

   *(ii) any building erected or extended or altered by virtue of Class A, would exceed 1,500 square metres*
6. *the height of any part of any building, structure or works within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome would exceed 3 metres;*
7. *the height of any part of any building, structure or works not within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome would exceed 12 metres;*
8. *any part of the development would be within 25 metres of a metalled part of a trunk road or classified road;*

9. *it would consist of, or include, the erection or construction of, or the carrying out of any works to, a building, structure or an excavation used or to be used for the accommodation of livestock or for the storage of slurry or sewage sludge where the building, structure or excavation is, or would be, within 400 metres of the curtilage of a protected building;*
10. *it would involve excavations or engineering operations on or over article 2(4) land which are connected with fish farming; or*
11. *any building for storing fuel for or waste from a biomass boiler or an anaerobic digestion system—*

    *(i) would be used for storing waste not produced by that boiler or system or for storing fuel not produced on land within the unit; or*

    *(ii) is or would be within 400 metres of the curtilage of a protected building.*

# 4. Farming System

4.1. The arable land is farmed in a rotation typical for the soil type and area comprising principally of winter cereal cropping and includes winter wheat, winter barley, oilseed rape, winter beans, winter oats, temporary grass, and maize.

4.2. Grain produced on the holding is stored in the existing grain stores. A mobile batch grain dryer is used to dry grain as necessary prior to storage. Grain is typically stored from harvest (August/September) through to the following spring, with loads of grain sold throughout this period, subject to grain contracts and market prices.

4.3. Straw is baled for bedding and feed use on the wider holding or chopped behind the combine, subject to cropping, demand, and agronomic advice.

4.4. Grass silage is principally made from the temporary grassland in the arable rotation and higher quality permanent pasture, with hay made from lower quality permanent pasture. Principally all home-grown maize is conserved as silage, with any surplus combined as grain maize for animal feed.

4.5. Westons Farm Limited currently finish c. 240 head of dairy beef cattle per year from an existing livestock enterprise on Sluetts Farm. The business is expanding the successful dairy beef enterprise and taking a more regenerative approach to the arable land at Field Farm, through the integration of 180 head of cattle on the holding. The cattle will be purchased as two-week-old autumn born dairy beef calves and reared through to finishing at c. 22 months old. The beef calves will be grazed for their first summer, before being housed in the autumn at c. 12 months old and taken through to finishing.

4.6. Livestock will graze the permanent and temporary grassland on the holding, with farmyard manure from when the cattle are housed during the winter months spread on the arable land. Addition of organic matter from farmyard manure forms a key part of the arable system on the wider Westons Farm holding and Mr Exwood will be replicating this approach at Field Farm.

4.7. All farming operations are carried out in house, with the exception of baling and forage conservation, for which local contractors are used.

4.8. There is a strong focus on cost of production in both the arable and beef enterprises. There are no changes to the farming system on the wider holding farmed by Westons Farm Limited.

# 5. Proposed Building and Suitability of design

5.1. It is proposed that No. 3 13.716m by 27.432m silage clamps, with a 10.0m concrete apron, will be constructed. The silage clamps will have pressed concrete panel walling to 3.0m and an impermeable concrete floor. The clamps will have steel stanchions to 4.0m, with a handrail at 4.0m. The silage clamps will be orientated east-west, and sited adjacent to the second grain store, and opposite the livestock building that is due to be constructed this autumn. The silage clamps will be sited to the south of the public footpath that runs east-west across the site. The silage clamps will have an impermeable drainage channel around the perimeter.

5.2. The silage clamps will be used for the storage of grass and maize silage for feeding the cattle when housed in the new livestock building at Field Farm.

5.3. An 8.27m concrete apron will be constructed on the western elevation of the consented livestock building, and a 7.01m wide concrete roadway to connect the silage clamps to the beef building.

### Existing Buildings

5.4. The existing buildings are designed for grain storage and general-purpose agricultural storage, and for the housing of livestock and are therefore not suitable for the storage of silage. The existing buildings are used throughout the year, with the principal demand during the winter months, when grain is stored, and livestock housed in them and therefore the buildings are not available to store clamped silage for feeding to the cattle during the winter months. The existing buildings are not compliant with the Storing of silage, slurry, and agricultural fuel oil[3] (SSAFO) regulations and therefore should not be used for the storage of silage.

### Proposed Silage Clamps

5.5. Table 2 details the total volume of silage required per year for Field Farm based on finishing 180 head of cattle.

[3] Storing silage, slurry and agricultural fuel oil https://www.gov.uk/guidance/storing-silage-slurry-and-agricultural-fuel-oil

| Livestock | Number | Average fresh weight of forage fed per day (kgs) | Number of days housed[4] | Total fresh weight forage requirement (kgs) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Finishing stock | 180 | 20 | 304 | 1,094,400 |

**Table 2: Field Farm – Annual silage requirements**

5.6. The silage clamps will provide a total of c. 3,000m$^3$ of storage capacity, equating to c. 2,310t of fresh weight clamped grass silage or clamped maize silage[5] storage, 2.11 times that required per year on the holding.

5.7. Whilst the proposed silage clamps provide a surplus capacity for a 12-month period, this is reasonably necessary because a combination of grass and maize silage will be fed in the ration, requiring multiple silage clamps for each forage to be stored in.

5.8. Silage will be fed throughout the year, meaning that at least one clamp will always be in use. This leads to logistical challenges when making new silage and subsequently impacts quality and clamp management.

5.9. Surplus clamp capacity will allow for a buffer of silage to be conserved on the holding in years of high forage production to offset years of lower production. Producing higher quality forage and minimising waste will improve the returns from the enterprise.

5.10. The proposed silage clamps are SSAFO compliant because they are not within 10 metres of inland or coastal waters, nor within 50 metres of a protected water supply source. The proposed silage clamps have an impermeable concrete base, extending beyond the walls, with a drainage channel around the outside.

5.11. The concrete base is hard wearing, allowing high levels of traffic and movement of forage into and out of the clamps without degradation.

5.12. The concrete base and walls will allow the forage to be well compacted, to minimise the amount of oxygen in it, and in turn promote fermentation to allow for high quality silage to be conserved.

5.13. The proposed silage clamps have a handrail at 4.00m for health and safety purposes for staff working on top of the clamped silage.

5.14. The concrete aprons and roadway will:

- Assist with drainage and surface water control to minimise any diffuse pollution or environmental risks

[4] Assumes housed for 10 months from aged 12 months to finishing at 22 months

[5] John Nix Pocketbook for Farm Management 2024 54th Edition Storage requirements – Grass silage 18% DM and maize silage 1.3m$^3$/tonne

- Provide a cleanable surface finish therefore reducing contamination of livestock feed from vehicle wheelings
- Reduce vehicle and machinery wear and tear
- Provide a hard flat surface to improve health and safety on the site
- Contribute towards an acceptable and tidy appearance to the general public

5.15. The proposed development is therefore suitable for its intended agricultural use.

5.16. The silage clamps are of a typical agricultural design, scale, and function and therefore suitable for the purposes of agriculture.

5.17. The development will be carried out on an agricultural unit of more than 5 hectares and involves the erection of a building that is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within the unit.

5.18. There has been no development under Class Q or S on the holding.

5.19. The development does not consist of the erection, extension, or alteration of a dwelling.

5.20. The proposed development is not a building. The silage clamps and yard area would not be used for accommodating livestock or any plant or machinery and are therefore exempt from the ground area criterion.

5.21. The development is not within 3 kilometres of the perimeter or an aerodrome, nor does any part of the development exceed 12 metres in height.

5.22. The development is not within 25 metres of metalled road.

5.23. The development is within 400 metres of the curtilage of a protected dwelling; however the development will not be used for the accommodation of livestock or for the storage of slurry or sewage sludge.

5.24. The development is not connected with fish farming.

5.25. The development is not connected with a biomass boiler or an anaerobic digester.

# 6. Conclusion

6.1. Field Farm totals 446 acres (181 hectares) and comprises of approximately 377 acres (152 hectares) of arable land and 45 acres (18 hectares) of grassland, with the balance principally woodland. Field Farm was let under a sixteen-year FBT in 2018 to Mr David Exwood of Westons Farm Limited.

6.2. The holding has two grain stores, constructed in 2019 and 2021 and a consented livestock building that will be constructed in Autumn 2024.

6.3. It is proposed to construct No. 3 13.716m by 27.432m silage clamps, with a 10.0m concrete apron, providing c. 2,310$m^3$ of clamped silage storage capacity and a further 8.27m concrete apron on the western elevation of the consented livestock building, with a 7.01m wide concrete roadway.

6.4. The proposed development will provide forage storage for the livestock to be housed on the holding, which is an expansion of the existing dairy beef livestock enterprise operated by Westons Farm Limited.

6.5. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended June 2024) Part 6 Agricultural and forestry Class A is the relevant legislation for this matter.

6.6. The proposed development is reasonably necessary for the purposes of the agriculture at Field Farm and is not precluded by any of the circumstances in Part 6 A.1 and therefore benefits from permitted development rights.

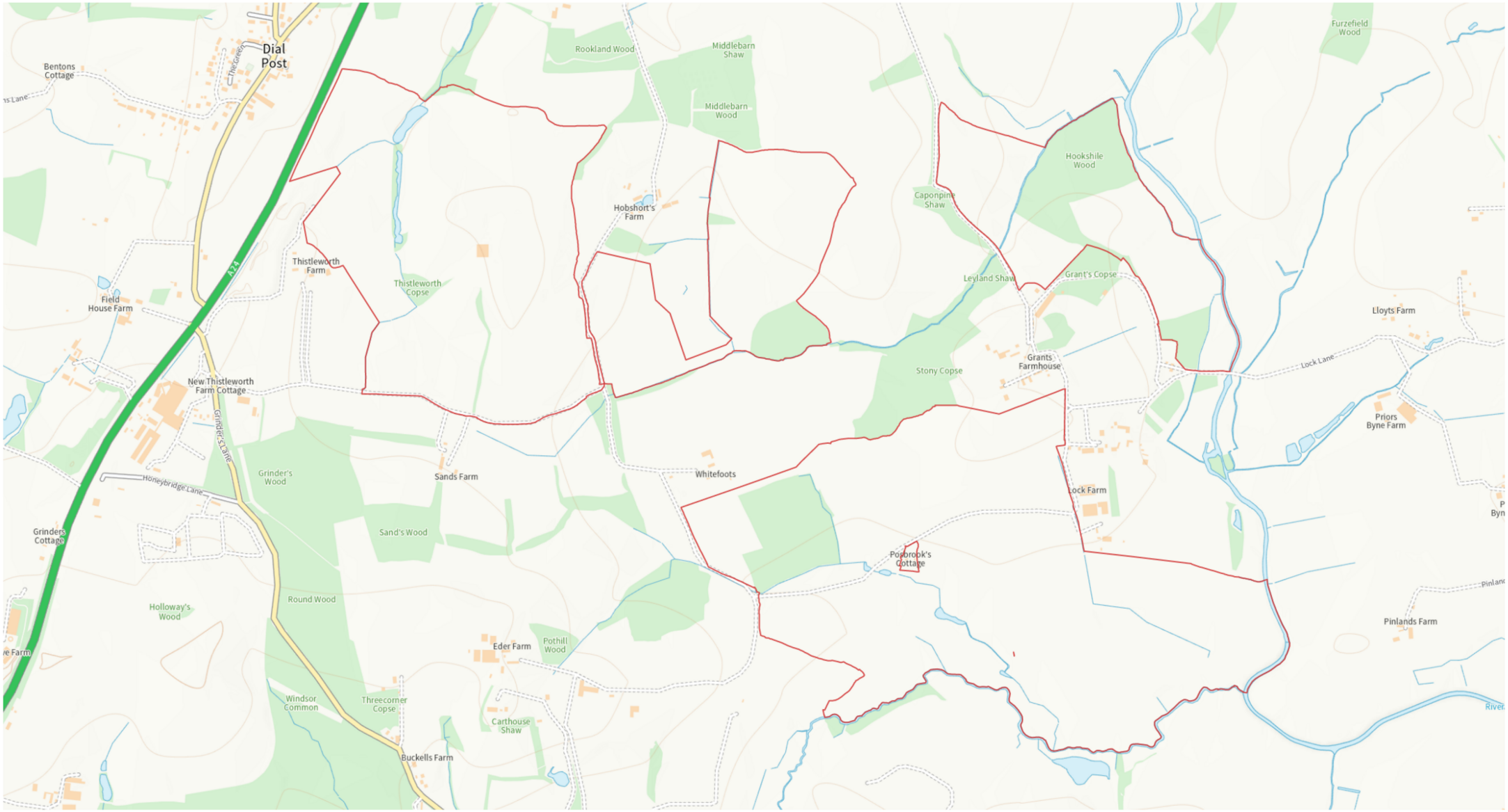
6.7. Its siting, design, scale, and external appearance is appropriate for the intended agricultural use and therefore prior approval from the local planning authority should not be required.

# Appendix 1 – Field Farm

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# Field Farm

Land App



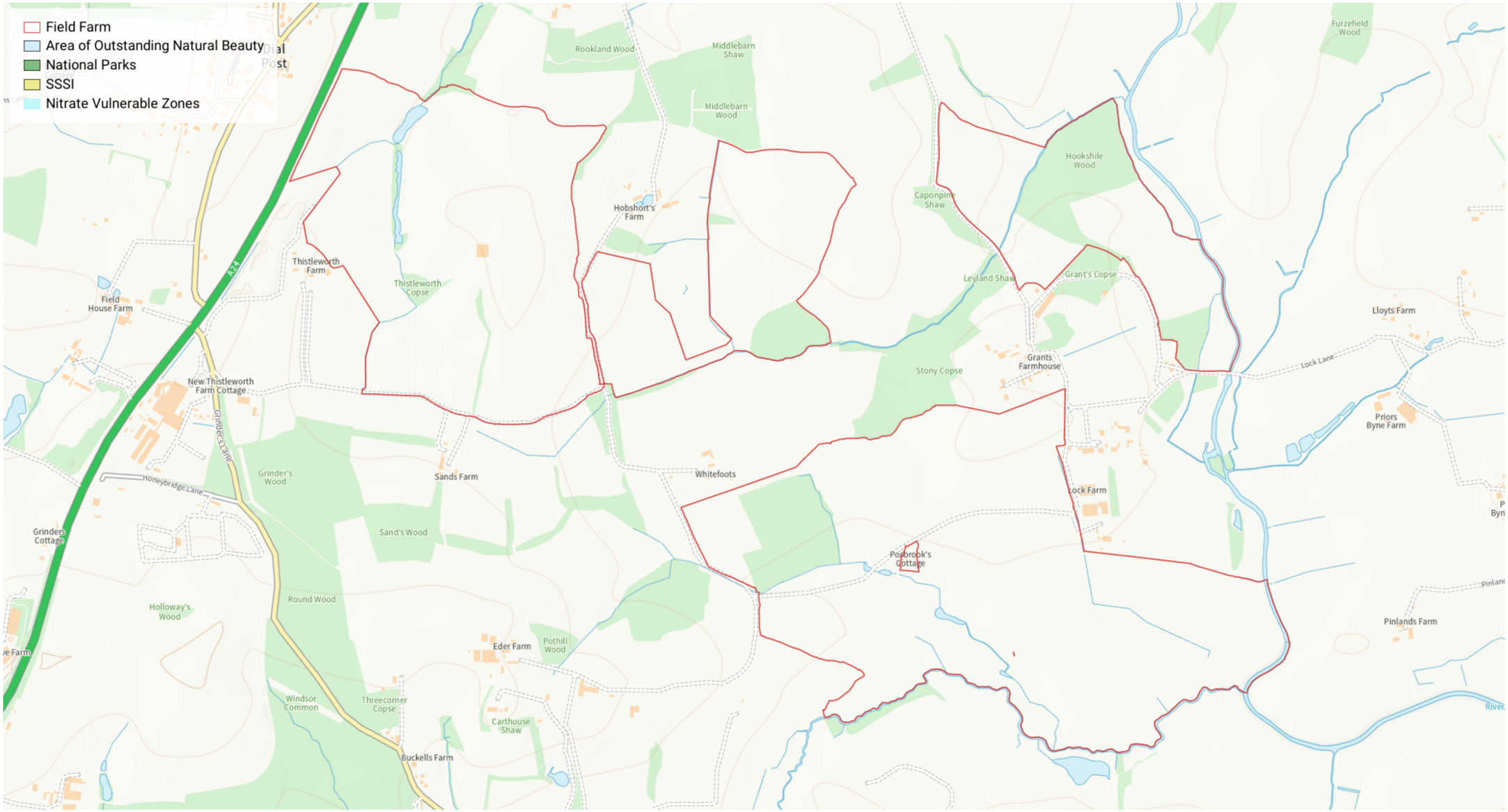

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500 m
Scale 1:13733 (at A4)

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## Appendix 2 – Field Farm Designations

# Field Farm




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Farm Designations

500 m
Scale 1:13733 (at A4)

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