



**A PLANNING ADVISORY NOTE ON
LLANSHAY LANE ALTERNATIVE ACCESS ROUTE TO
REEVES HILL WIND FARM SITE**

for

Dulas Environmental

prepared by

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REEVES HILL WIND FARM

Knighton - Llanshay Lane Proposed access route

1. Overview

- 1.1. The farmland crossed by the proposed access to Llanshay Lane comprises a livestock farm typical of the region with relatively intensive management of grassland primarily for sheep.
- 1.2. The proposal to construct a temporary access roadway traversing the holding follows the route of least ecological impact avoiding any significant vegetation removal.
- 1.3. No UK or Powys Biodiversity Action Plan habitats exist on the site (priority habitats) and, as far as is known, construction of the access will not affect any schemes for environmental stewardship.
- 1.4. No nature conservation designations apply to the site and no European or UK protected species have been recorded within its boundaries. However, there is a block of Ancient semi-natural woodland to the north-east of the site a significant percentage of which has been replanted. Badger (*Meles meles*) and some species of butterfly (small copper (*Lycaena phlaeas*), wall brown (*Lasiommata megera*) and peacock (*Inachis io*) are present within the 5 kilometre biological records search of Reeves Hill.
- 1.5. No major impact upon watercourses is expected; the only water channel crossed by the proposed access is a small rivulet with no major technical issues or environmental problems foreseen in bridging it.

2. Survey and mapping

- 2.1. Site survey took place on 2nd May 2008 with mapping of the landscape features and habitats to JNCC phase 1 level. These included vegetation types, boundary types and habitat features such as ponds and trees.
- 2.2. Target notes were made of flora and fauna of note with an assessment of any impacts on species potentially present.
- 2.3. The line of the proposed route was scrutinised and the degree of impacts on the ecology considered.

3. Findings

- 3.1. Grasslands on the site were improved or semi-improved but poor in species diversity. The semi-improved fields were located on the steeper slopes of the terrain where cultivations are not possible. Target notes were made of the flora and are presented in Table 1. Significantly wetter conditions in the semi-improved grassland in the valley bottom at the northern part of the site leading to somewhat greater diversity.
- 3.2. Many of the fields have intact, well-maintained hedgerows which are species poor consisting primarily of *Crataegus monogyna* but with some admixtures of *Corylus avellana* and some tree species. The group of hawthorn trees are a remnant of original hedgerows whilst the coppice stools present along the holloway represent some continuity with the original woodland cover.
- 3.3. Trees present on site are documented in target notes but a few are notable. The former orchard contains a single pear of some age but unknown variety. The holloway maintains several *Ulmus procera* whilst a single old pollard of lime (*Tilia cordata* – possibly *T. platyphyllos*) which is almost certainly a remnant tree of the original woodland covering the site.
- 3.4. An alder carr (*Alnus glutinosa*) exists upslope of the proposed route on the stream banks. Further up the valley lies a large pond around which is clustered a mix of broadleaved tree species. This area was not surveyed as it is well beyond any influence of road construction effort but may hold great crested newt, a species which is capable of dispersing from this potential breeding pond to hibernation sites provided by areas such as the holloway.
- 3.5. New planting of standard trees have taken place along the hedge-line flanking the Presteigne – Knighton road.

4. Assessment of impact

- 4.1. Very little ecological impact will result within grassland areas from a temporary road construction. Grassland flora are not diverse nor compromised of rare or notable species. The species present are easily re-established on site when grassland is reinstated.
- 4.2. No fully mature trees are likely to be removed in establishing the access road but some removal of woody vegetation or small shrubby trees.
- 4.3. The road route will breach some hedgerows and the fringing vegetation of Holloway. However, gaps within hedges and the holloway, in gateways and via fence lines are to be used minimising loss of this habitat. Where loss is inevitable, replacement or translocation of the hedging plants will be

undertaken. The exit point of the proposed road will breach the Presteigne – Knighton roadside hedge which also has a rich bank-side flora. Reinstatement of this flora is possible through direct planting or through translocation and storage of the ‘turf’ if lifted properly prior to road construction.

4.4. Potential impacts on nesting birds may result from breaching hedgerows and so timing of hedgerow removal should ideally take place before the beginning of March or from September onwards. Alternatively, hedgerows should be checked for nesting birds prior to removal but work should not progress should nests be located.

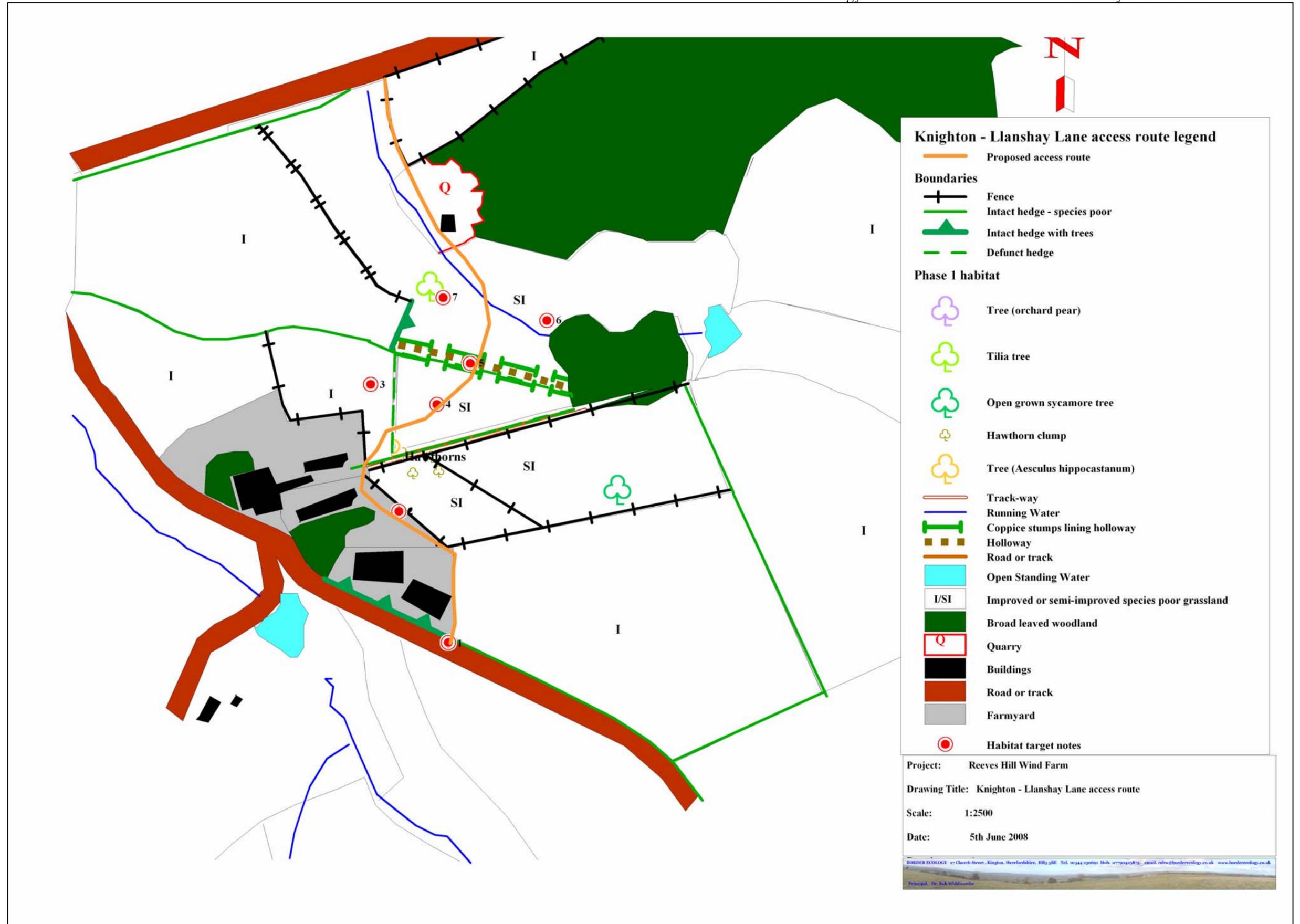
4.5. Similarly, prior to work on hedgerows or the holloway, inspection of the areas should be made for great crested newt or other amphibians.

Number	Feature	Target notes
1	Roadside bank herbs	<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i> , <i>Alliaria petiolata</i> , <i>Silene dioca</i> , <i>Achillea millefolium</i> , <i>Stellaria holostea</i> , <i>Primula vulgaris</i> , <i>Veronica persica</i> , <i>Mercurialis perenne</i> , <i>Digitalis purpurea</i> .
2	Semi-improved grassland	<i>Festuca ovina</i> , <i>Luzula campestre</i> , <i>Ranunculus ficaria</i> , <i>Achillea millefolium</i> , <i>Rhytidadelphus squarosus</i> (dominant), <i>Cirsium palustre</i> , <i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>
3	Improved grassland	Possible old orchard site
4	Semi-improved grassland	<i>Festuca ovina</i> , <i>Luzula campestre</i> , <i>Ranunculus ficaria</i> , <i>Achillea millefolium</i> , <i>Rhytidadelphus squarosus</i> (dominant), <i>Cirsium palustre</i> , <i>Ranunculus ficaria</i> , <i>Cerastium fontanum</i> ; <i>Cirsium vulgare</i>
5	Old holloway/ stream bed	Lined either side with substantial coppiced stools of <i>Corylus avellana</i> , <i>Crataegus monogyna</i> , <i>Sambucus nigra</i> alongside <i>Betula pendula</i> , and <i>Ulmus procera</i> , Redstart heard singing within the vegetation cover.
6	Semi-improved grassland	<i>Festuca ovina</i> , <i>Luzula campestre</i> , <i>Ranunculus ficaria</i> , <i>Achillea millefolium</i> , <i>Rhytidadelphus squarosus</i> (dominant), <i>Cirsium palustre</i> , <i>Ranunculus ficaria</i> , <i>Cerastium fontanum</i> , <i>Cirsium vulgare</i> , <i>Urtica dioca</i> .
7	Tila cordata (platyphyllos?) stump	Probable pollard remnant of ancient woodland.

Table 1. Target notes mapped in Figure 1.

5. Photography

5.1. Photographic locations and direction are located in Figure 2 followed by the images.



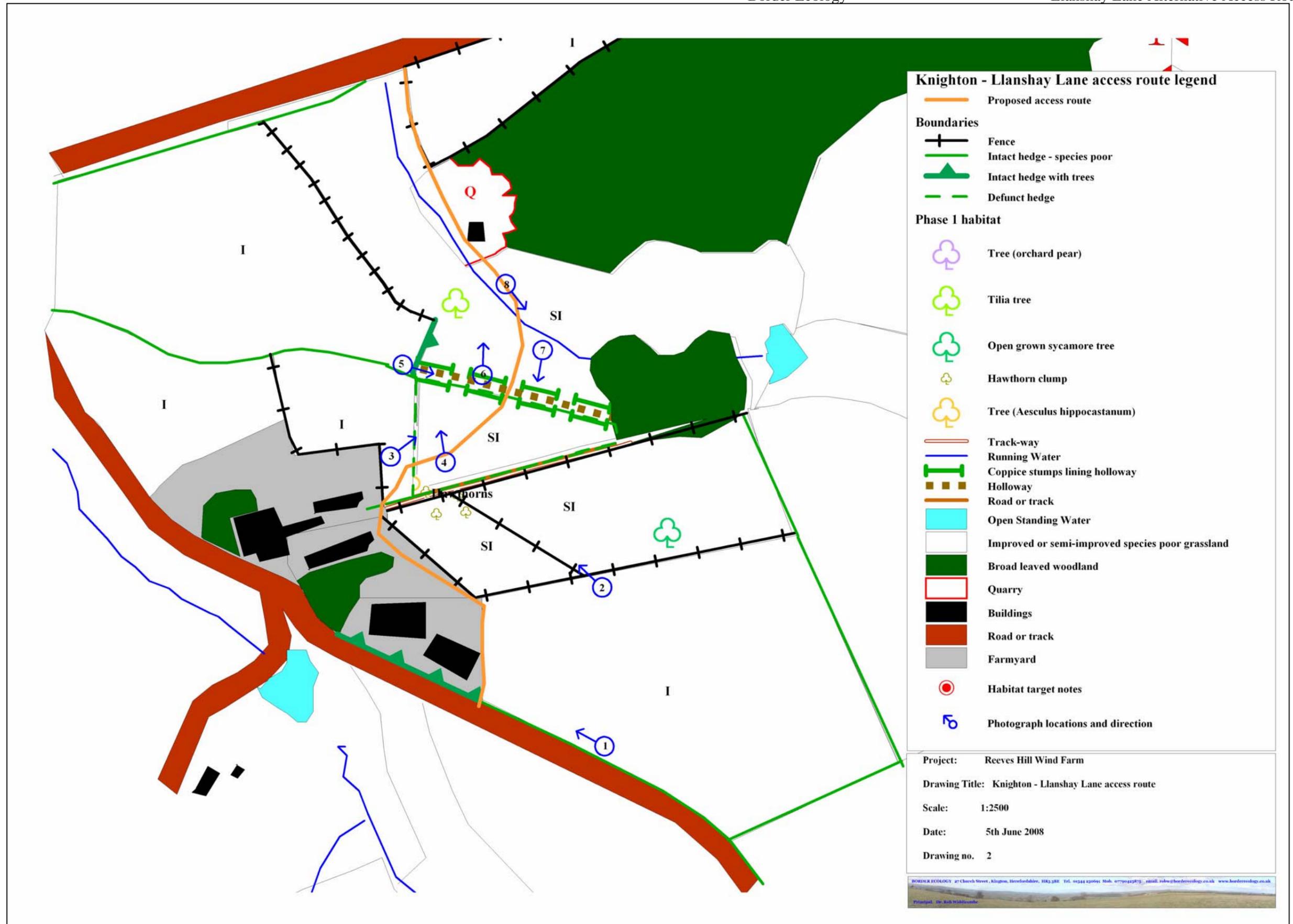


Figure 2. Photographic locations and direction



Plate 1. Hedge bordering Presteigne - Knighton road



Plate 2. View down slopes to the north



Plate 3. Remnant orchard showing gap for access route



Plate 4. View of orchard and track-way vegetation

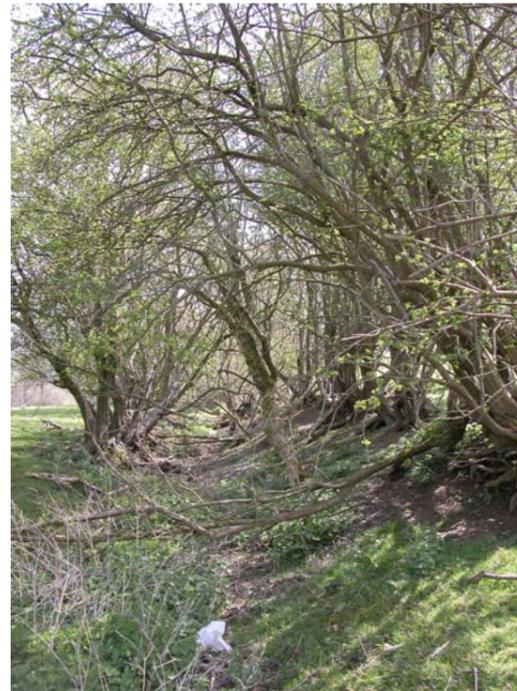


Plate 5. Track-way and fringing vegetation



Plate 6. Tree lined track-way view



Plate 7. Northerly field showing wetter conditions

Plate 8. Upstream view of rivulet towards alder wood



6. Conclusion

- 6.1.** No priority habitat or features critical to the nature conservation value of the site will be directly impacted upon by construction of the track.
- 6.2.** No European or UK protected species or habitat harbouring them are likely to be directly affected should construction proceed within the advised period.
- 6.3.** In principal, there are no ecological issues preventing establishment of the track. However, should construction proceed further inspection prior to commencement of works for species of interest will be required to ensure that none are present.