



BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN REPORT

**LAND ADJACENT TO 1 LOWER MARSH
SOUTHWICK
TROWBRIDGE
BA14 9PA**

JULY 25

ON BEHALF OF NIAMH CRONIN



The Old Squash Court
Rempstone Hall
Rempstone
Corfe Castle
Wareham
Dorset
BH20 5JQ
www.ecological-services.co.uk

Tel: 01929 477115
E-mail: enquiries@ecological-services.co.uk

Authorisation

	Name	Date
Report prepared by:	HB	08/07/2025
Report checked and authorised by:	JS	09/07/2025

The contents of this report were correct at the time of the last survey visit. The report is provided for the sole use of the named client and is confidential.

All rights in this report are reserved. No part of it may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, or stored in any retrieval system of any nature, without our written permission. Its content and format are for the exclusive use of the addressee in dealing with this. It may not be sold, lent, hired out or divulged to any third party not directly involved in this situation without our written consent.

It is company policy to share species records collected during our surveys with local biological records centres unless instructed otherwise by the client.

CONTENTS

1.0	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
2.0	INTRODUCTION	2
3.0	LEGISLATION AND POLICY	3
4.0	ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY	5
5.0	BASELINE	7
6.0	BNG GOOD PRACTICE FOR PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT.....	8
7.0	IMPACT ASSESSMENT	9
8.0	CONCLUSION.....	11
9.0	REFERENCES.....	11
APPENDIX I	Site location plan	12
APPENDIX II	Proposed plans	13
APPENDIX III	Baseline habitat survey map	14
APPENDIX IV	Proposed habitat plan.....	15
APPENDIX V	Habitat condition assessment (Baseline)	16
APPENDIX VI	Site photos	17

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report, prepared by LC Ecological Services Limited was undertaken to assess the net changes in biodiversity value resulting from the proposed development on Land adjacent to 1 Lower Marsh, Southwick, Trowbridge, BA14 9PA (central OS grid reference: ST 83576 54846). The proposals are for the erection of a single dwelling.
- 1.2. The purpose of this report is to identify the net percentage change in biodiversity value on site post-development and to establish whether a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain can be delivered in accordance with the mandatory national policy requirements.
- 1.3. The baseline habitat survey was conducted using the UK Habitat Classification assessment methodology (UKHab, 2023). Condition assessments were undertaken using Defra's Statutory biodiversity metric condition assessment methodology (Defra, 2024b).
- 1.4. The baseline habitats included Suburban mosaic of developed and natural surface, and bramble scrub. The baseline value of the site equates to 0.09 habitat units, no linear units and no watercourse units.
- 1.5. The BNG assessment has identified that the current proposals will result in a **net loss of – 0.07 (83.03%) habitat units**. The minimum BNG target score of 10% has not been achieved.
- 1.6. To meet the 10% minimum target score 0.10 habitat units will be required. Following statutory guidelines, as this figure is lower than 0.25 biodiversity units and on-site BNG is not achievable, statutory credits can therefore be bought without providing evidence that insufficient off-site options are available in England.
- 1.7. To achieve the minimum BNG target score of 10%, off site habitat must be enhanced or created. Any proposed habitats and features created off-site will need to be managed and maintained over a minimum 30-year aftercare period, in line with the mandatory requirements.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. This Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report, prepared by LC Ecological Services Limited (LCES), was undertaken to assess the net changes in biodiversity value resulting from the proposed development on Land adjacent to 1 Lower Marsh, Southwick, Trowbridge, BA14 9PA (central OS grid reference: ST 83576 54846). The proposals are for the erection of a single dwelling.
- 2.2. The BNG score for the project has been determined based on the proposed development for the site which comprises a single dwelling with vegetated garden at this design stage.

Preparation of Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

- 2.3 This assessment was undertaken using the statutory DEFRA biodiversity metric calculation tool (DEFRA, 2023).

Purpose of the report

- 2.4 The purpose of this report is to outline the following:
- To identify the net percentage change in biodiversity value on site resulting from the current design proposals.
 - To propose potential solutions to meet the mandatory minimum 10% BNG value in accordance with national planning legislation.
 - To demonstrate that any biodiversity net gain commitment can be obtained with reasonable and viable habitat creation which can be maintained in the long term.

3.0 LEGISLATION AND POLICY

3.1. Chapter 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) ‘Conserving and enhancing the natural environment’ sets out the Government’s policies on biodiversity, landscape, and geological conservation. Relevant paragraphs within this chapter include:

- **Paragraph 187:** Recognise the wider benefits of ecosystem services and minimise impacts on biodiversity, providing net gains in biodiversity.
- **Paragraph 188:** Planning positively and distinguishing between the hierarchy of designated sites and allocating land with the least environmental value and maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure.
- **Paragraph 192:** Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity by safeguarding wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks; promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and securing biodiversity net gain.
- **Paragraph 193:** Refuse development if found to have significant harm to biodiversity; is on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which is likely to have an adverse effect; if results in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats. Developments with the primary objective to conserve or enhance biodiversity will be supported, while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design and can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature.
- **Paragraph 194:** Protection to be given to potential SPA and possible SACs, proposed Ramsar sites, and sites identified or required as compensatory measures for impacts to these sites.
- **Paragraph 195:** Considers if the development is to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.

3.2. From 12th February 2024, delivery of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain became mandatory for most developments, through the Environment Act 2021. Small developments were required to achieve this net gain from 2nd April 2024. Current regulations and guidance have been included here for context (DLUHC, 2023):

- **The Environment Act 2021 (Commencement No.8 and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2024:** Establishes the official start date for the mandatory requirement of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for most types of new planning applications in England. It also outlines transitional provisions to ensure a smooth transition from the existing system to the new BNG requirement.
- **The Biodiversity Net Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024:** Specifies categories of development that are exempt from the BNG

requirement, such as projects deemed to have minimal impact on biodiversity. This regulation aims to ensure that BNG is focused on developments that have a significant impact on the natural environment.

- **The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024:** Amends existing planning regulations to incorporate provisions related to BNG, including requirements for planning applications, Biodiversity Gain Plans, and phased developments. This regulation aims to streamline the delivery of BNG and ensure it is effectively integrated into the planning process.

- 3.3. The Wiltshire Core Strategy adopted 2015: **Core Policy 50** specifies that new development should seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity.

4.0 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Study Area

- 4.1. The application area is located around central Ordnance Survey (OS) grid reference ST 83576 54846. The site plan is included as appendix I, whilst the proposed site layout plan for the development proposals is included in appendix II.

Sources of information

- 4.2. A baseline botanical assessment was undertaken in accordance with the UK Habitat Classification methodology (UKHab, 2023). The habitat assessment was conducted on 16th April 2025 by senior ecologist Hannah Barlow.
- 4.3. The habitat survey recorded the habitat types across the site with a record made of the vegetation and plant species recorded in each area. The baseline habitat map of the site is provided in appendix III.
- 4.4. The habitats recorded on site were transposed into a digital map using QGIS coordinate referencing system OSGB 1936/ British National Grid.
- 4.5. Habitats recorded on site were measured using the derived areas (Ellipsoidial – EPSG 7001) and habitat areas are provided in hectares. Linear features were measured using the derived length (Ellipsoidial – EPSG 7001) and the measurements provided in kilometres.

Assessment Process

- 4.6. The BNG assessment was undertaken in accordance with the CIRA *Biodiversity Net Gain – Good Practice Principles for Developments* (CIRA, 2019).
- 4.7. To undertake the BNG assessment the habitat classification notes obtained from the baseline botanical assessment were input into the BNG metric calculator following the technical data provided in the appendices of the calculator tool.
- 4.8. The condition of the habitat types was assigned in accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical supplement (Natural England, 2024).
- 4.9. The level of mitigation applied was in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy outlined in table 11.5 of the *Biodiversity Net Gain – Good Practice Principles for Developments* (CIRA, 2019), and has been provided below:

Any combination of these factors might apply	
Does the habitat affected have high biodiversity value?	When a project affects rare habitats, creating new areas of the habitat is often required to ensure no reduction in cover. This only applies after strict application of the mitigation hierarchy, and does not apply to irreplaceable habitat or statutory designated sites. Enhancing existing habitats that should have high biodiversity value, but that are currently degraded, could generate valuable benefits for biodiversity.
Does the habitat affected provide a critical ecological function?	When a project affects critical ecological functions, creating new habitat that provides equivalent or better ecological functions is often required to ensure no reduction in provision of the function.
Do stakeholders or local policies prioritise enhancements in the habitat over increasing its coverage?	Enhancing existing habitats could contribute to this priority.
Alternatively, do stakeholders or local policies prioritise increases in habitat cover?	Creating new habitat could be most appropriate.
Is provision of green space a priority issue locally?	Projects that achieve BNG by enhancing habitats elsewhere, although resulting in a loss of green space, can cause significant negative consequences locally.
Are existing habitats at risk from future threats and/or under continued decline?	Enhance habitat to secure its long-term future, eg by making habitat more resilient to other pressures, such as the effects of climate change. Also protect habitats in decline from declining further (also known as averted loss).

Limitations

- 4.10. Whilst every effort has been made to accurately map the habitats on site there may be discrepancies associated with the projected coordinate reference system. However, the National Grid transformation is considered to be the most accurate with an accuracy level of less than 1 metre.
- 4.11. The survey was conducted in April which is outside the optimum survey period therefore some species could have been missed. Nonetheless, the broad habitats have been identified, and the habitats present on site are common and widespread, therefore it is unlikely that any additional species would change the impact assessment. This is not considered to be a significant limitation.

5.0 BASELINE

Habitats

5.1. The site comprises a small area of vacant land with tussocky grasses and few botanical species present. The majority of the site is covered by bramble scrub. A review of historic aerial photography shows that site was unvegetated unsealed surface in 2001 and 2002.

5.2. The baseline value of the site has been determined from the following habitats:

- Urban, suburban mosaic of developed and natural surface (u1d – condition moderate)
- Heathland and scrub, bramble scrub (h3d condition not applicable)

Table 1: Summary of baseline habitats.

Habitat units				
Habitat	Distinctiveness	Condition	Area (ha)	Biodiversity units
Suburban mosaic of developed and natural surface	Low	Moderate	0.00936	0.05
Bramble scrub	Medium	N/A	0.0131	0.04
Total			0.02246	0.09

6.0 BNG GOOD PRACTICE FOR PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT

- 6.1. As part of the BNG process there are ten good practice principles that help to achieve BNG if they are followed. Each principle is described below and how the project has addressed each principle.

Apply the Mitigation Hierarchy

- 6.2. The design of the development has tried to utilise the mitigation hierarchy by avoidance to any adverse impacts on habitats and species on site.
- 6.3. Species recorded on site are considered to be of low ecological value, and no priority habitats were recorded.
- 6.4. The development has not resulted in any adverse impacts by following the mitigation hierarchy.

Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset by gains elsewhere

- 6.5. Habitats which are considered 'irreplaceable' are those which would be technically difficult to recreate, replace, or restore once destroyed. Habitats such as ancient woodland and veteran trees are considered irreplaceable due to the time it takes to reach such condition. Irreplaceable habitat includes factors which contribute to the condition of that habitat including age, environmental context, achievability to recreate and its geographical position within the landscape.
- 6.6. The site does not support any habitats of principal importance.

Be inclusive and equitable

- 6.7. Discussion have been had and shared to demonstrate how the design can achieve a better outcome for BNG.

Address risks

- 6.8. All habitats have been calculated within the red line boundary, including habitats within the development footprint. No additional land for the construction phase and site compounds has been included within the calculator.
- 6.9. Habitats to be created will be done so by appointed contractors who have experience in habitat creation, with the guidance of the appointed ecologist.

Make a measurable Net Gain contribution

- 6.10. The proposed development has been measured against The Statutory Biodiversity Metric. Enhancements to offset the biodiversity loss and attain the statutory 10% should be attained through the design of the scheme where possible, and/or off-site mitigation, and in last resort through the purchase of third-party units

Achieving the best outcomes for biodiversity

- 6.11. The habitats on site post development should include urban habitats, vegetated gardens with hedgerows, tree lines, grasslands as well as scrub which are important habitats supporting local bird and invertebrates.

Additional enhancements

- 6.12. As well as habitats being enhanced and created, measures including bat and bird boxes will be included. These however are not measurable as part of the BNG metric.

Create a Net Gain legacy

- 6.13. It is not possible to determine some of the long-term benefit to biodiversity as individual homeowners will manage the garden as they chose. However, the amenity space should be managed in the long term to attain the best outcome for biodiversity.

Optimise sustainability

- 6.14. The landscaping plan for the development aims to be as sustainable as possible and providing net gain on site in an environment which is subject to change and management depending on the homeowners.

Be transparent

- 6.15. Through the progression of the development the design team and client have all been made aware of the communications and outcomes of the BNG.

7.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1. The proposed development will result in the loss of suburban mosaic of developed and natural surface, and bramble scrub.

Baseline habitat loss

- 7.2. All baseline habitat loss is assumed to be permanent, and any impacts from the construction phase that are located outside of the development footprint are assumed to be temporary and are not included within this calculation.
- 7.3. There will be a loss of 0.00936 hectares of suburban mosaic of developed and natural surface which will result in a loss of 0.02 habitat units.
- 7.4. There will be a loss of 0.0131 hectares of bramble scrub which will result in the loss of 0.05 habitat units.
- 7.5. These impacts have been minimised as far as possible under the mitigation hierarchy.

Created habitats under the current proposals

- 7.6. The current development plans for the site will include the following habitat creation:

- Developed land; sealed surface
- Developed land; sealed surface – buildings
- Vegetated garden

- 7.7. 0.0076 hectares of Developed land; sealed surface – buildings will be created. This will provide 0 habitat units.
- 7.8. 0.0078 hectares of developed land; sealed surface will be created. This will provide 0 habitat units.
- 7.9. 0.0079 hectares of vegetated garden will be created. This will provide 0.02 habitat units.
- 7.10. Overall, there would be a net loss of - **0.07** habitat units which equates to a loss of - **83.03%**. The BNG metric trading rules have **not been satisfied**.
- 7.11. Figure 1 below shows the BNG metric headline results for the development proposals.

Figure 1: Headline results as a result of the proposals

Land Adjacent to 1 Lower Marsh, Southwick

Headline Results

Scroll down for final results

Return to results menu

On-site baseline

Habitat units0.09

Hedgerow units0.00

Watercourse units0.00

On-site post-intervention

(Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)

Habitat units0.02

Hedgerow units0.00

Watercourse units0.00

On-site net change

(units & percentage)

Habitat units-0.07

Hedgerow units0.00

Watercourse units0.00

-83.03%

On-site net gain is less than target set

Off-site baseline

Habitat units0.00

Hedgerow units0.00

Watercourse units0.00

Off-site post-intervention

(Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)

Habitat units0.00

Hedgerow units0.00

Watercourse units0.00

Off-site net change

(units & percentage)

Habitat units0.00

Hedgerow units0.00

Watercourse units0.00

0.00%

0.00%

0.00%

Combined net unit change

(Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)

Habitat units-0.07

Hedgerow units0.00

Watercourse units0.00

Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions

Habitat units0.00

Hedgerow units0.00

Watercourse units0.00

FINAL RESULTS

Total net unit change

(Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)

Habitat units-0.07

Hedgerow units0.00

Watercourse units0.00

Total net % change

(Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)

Habitat units-83.03%

Hedgerow units0.00%

Watercourse units0.00%

Total net gain achieved is less than target set

Trading rules satisfied?

No - Check Trading Summaries

Unit Type

Target

Baseline Units

Units Required

Unit Deficit

Habitat units

10.00%

0.09

0.10

0.08

Hedgerow units

10.00%

0.00

0.00

0.00

Watercourse units

10.00%

0.00

0.00

0.00

No additional hedgerow units required to meet target

No additional watercourse units required to meet target

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1. It is concluded from this assessment and the BNG metric calculation that the current development proposal will result in an overall net loss of – **0.07 habitat units** which equates to – **83.03%**. The minimum target BNG score of +10% has not been achieved and the trading rules have not been satisfied for this development.
- 8.2. To meet the 10% minimum target score off site habitat must be enhanced or created with a minimum of **0.10** habitat units required. Following statutory guidelines, as this figure is less than 0.25 biodiversity units and on-site BNG is not achievable due to the small size of the development site, statutory credits can therefore be bought without providing evidence that insufficient off-site options are available in England.
- 8.3. To ensure that habitats created and enhanced on-site and off-site reach their target condition, a Biodiversity Net Gain Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) will need to be created and implemented. Any proposed habitats and features created on-site will need to be managed and maintained over a minimum 30-year aftercare period, in line with the mandatory requirements.

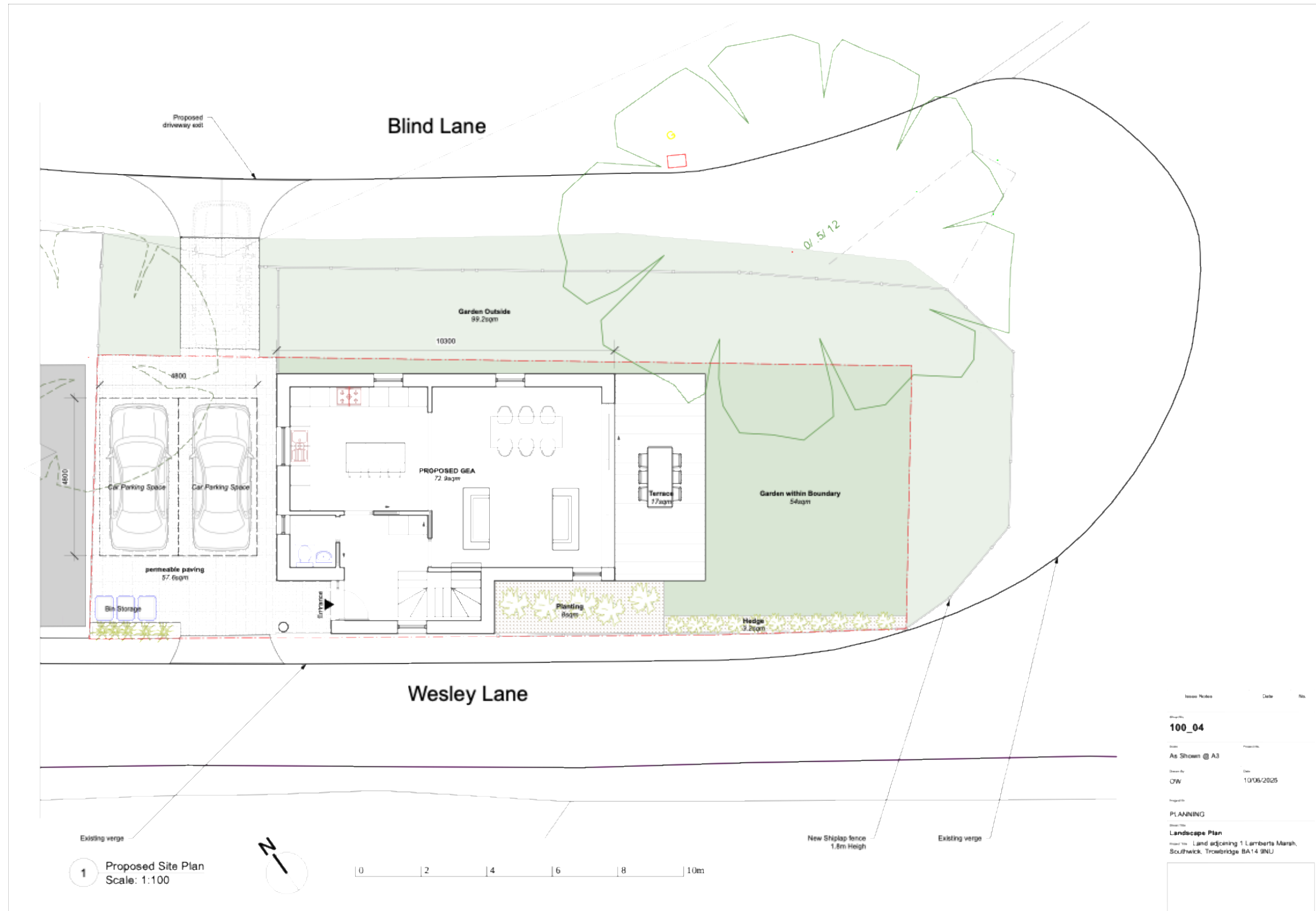
9.0 REFERENCES

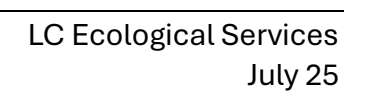
- Baker, J. Hoskin, R. & Butterworth, T. (2019). *Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development. A Practical Guide*. CIRIA, London.
- CIEEM (2022). *Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Audit Templates* Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester, UK.
- CIRA (2019). *Biodiversity Net Gain – Good Practice Principles for Developments*
- Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (2023) *Statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool*.
- LCES (2025). *Preliminary ecological appraisal and bat survey report: Land adjacent to 1 Lower Marsh, Southwick, Trowbridge, BA14 9PA*
- Natural England (2024). *Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Supplement*
- UKHab Ltd (2024). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* accessed from <https://www.ukhab.org>

APPENDIX I Site location plan



APPENDIX II Proposed plans





APPENDIX IV Proposed habitat plan



APPENDIX V Habitat condition assessment (Baseline)

Condition assessment for the Urban – sparsely vegetated land, ruderal / ephemeral, (u1f, 81)

Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
Core Criteria - must be assessed for all urban habitat types :			
A	Vegetation structure is varied, providing opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live, eat and breed. A single structural habitat component or vegetation type does not account for more than 80% of the total habitat area.	Yes	Mixture of bramble scrub (0.0243 ha) and vacant ground (0.0121 ha) with tussocky grasses.
B	The habitat parcel contains different plant species that are beneficial for wildlife, for example flowering species providing nectar sources for a range of invertebrates at different times of year.	Yes	
C	Invasive non-native plant species (listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ¹) and others which are to the detriment of native wildlife (using professional judgement) ² cover less than 5% of the total vegetated area ³ . Note - to achieve Good condition, this criterion must be satisfied by a complete absence of invasive non-native species (rather than <5% cover).	Yes	Presence of Spanish bluebell, (<i>Hyacinthoides hispanica</i>) prevents assessment of Good condition.
	Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score	Score achieved
	• Passes all 3 core criteria; AND • Meets the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.	Good (3)	
	• Passes 2 of 3 core criteria; OR • Passes 3 of 3 core criteria but does not meet the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.	Moderate (2)	Yes
	• Passes 0 or 1 of 3 core criteria.	Poor (1)	

APPENDIX VI Site photos



Photograph 1: Site viewed from the southeast



Photograph 2: Depicting bramble scrub and vacant ground on site



Photograph 3: View southeast along northern site boundary.



Photograph 4: Depicting bramble scrub on site and lime tree adjacent to the northern site boundary.