

LHB Ecology

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Site: Land at Styles Close, Porton, Wiltshire

Client: Wild Earth Ecology

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Report Date and Version: 28/03/25 Final

Limitations

This report has been prepared exclusively for the use of the above-named client or their agents. Site assessment and reports have been carried out for the client in accordance with written agreement and with the diligence and skills that are typical of an ecological consultant.

The conclusions and subsequent recommendations contained in this report are partly based upon information provided by third parties. Information obtained from third parties has not been independently verified by LHB Ecology.

Any third-party usage of the report will require prior written agreement from LHB Ecology.

Any assessments made are based upon current site conditions with the assumption that the site will continue to be used for the current purpose without significant change prior to any development. Findings and recommendations within this report are based on the professional opinion of qualified and experienced ecological consultants and do not constitute professional legal advice.

Guidelines

This assessment has been designed to meet:

British Standard 8683:2021 (2021). Process for Designing and Implementing Biodiversity Net Gain.

British Standard 42020 (2013) 'Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development'.

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Construction Industry Research and Information Association & Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2019). Biodiversity Net Gain – Good Practice Principles for Development.

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1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Summary

- 1.1.1 LHB Ecology undertook a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment at Land at Styles Close, Porton, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 0BG (hereinafter referred to as 'the site') on 25 February 2025. The assessment was carried out to inform a full planning application for the site.
- 1.1.2 The development proposals are for construction of a dwelling.
- 1.1.1 The BNG metric calculation indicates a post-development increase of 23.52% for habitat units, from 0.03 biodiversity units to 0.04 biodiversity units post-intervention.
- 1.1.2 The BNG metric calculation indicates no net loss for hedgerow units, from 0.03 hedgerow units to 0.03 units post-intervention.
- 1.1.3 It is therefore assessed that the development as currently proposed will fail to meet Biodiversity Net Gain requirements stipulated through current legislation (Environment Act 2021) and current planning policy (National: NPPF 2024; Local: Core Policy 50).
- 1.1.4 Offsite hedgerow units will need to be purchased in order to meet the shortfall of 0.01 hedgerow units. Offsite units within the local area will be sought in the first instance.

See section 8.0 for further conclusions and recommendations

2.0 Introduction and Context

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 LHB Ecology undertook a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment at Land at Styles Close, Porton, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 0BG (hereinafter referred to as 'the site') on 25 February 2025. The assessment was carried out to inform a full planning application for the site.
- 2.1.2 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool was used to calculate the biodiversity unit score for the site.
- 2.1.3 A site walkover survey was completed on 25th February 2025 and the findings of the walkover have been used to inform the baseline BNG calculation for the site.
- 2.1.4 The Local Planning Authority (LPA) is Wiltshire Council.
- 2.1.5 Biodiversity Net Gain is the end result of a process applied to development so that overall, there is a net gain for biodiversity. The aim of this report is to assess the existing habitats on site in order to determine a quantifiable ecological baseline which is representative of all the species assemblages that associate with the habitats present, determine any impacts on habitats and assess the post-development habitats.
- 2.1.6 Under the Environment Act 2021, all planning permissions granted for major developments in England (with a few exemptions) will have to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain from 12 February 2024. For small developments, biodiversity net gain became mandatory from 2 April 2024.

2.2 Project Description

- 2.2.1 The development proposals are for construction of a dwelling.

2.3 Site Context

- 2.3.1 The site is centred on National Grid Reference SU18923647 and has an area of approximately 0.035 ha. The site consists of a small plot of land with hard standing and soft landscaping. Residential development and private gardens surround the site and there are scattered trees within the vicinity of the site. A landscape map is provided in Appendix 1 and shows the context of the site in the wider landscape.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Assessment of Biodiversity

- 3.1.1 The biodiversity value of the habitats on site i.e. the baseline habitat value was informed by the site walkover survey which was completed by LHB Ecology in 2025.
- 3.1.2 The BNG assessment was undertaken by Joe Slade BSc (Hons) MRSB, Principal Ecologist. The site visit was undertaken on 25th February 2025 and involved a walkover survey to assess the current habitat conditions on site.
- 3.1.3 The site walkover survey included a Phase 1 Habitat Survey in which the site habitats were recorded and mapped. For this BNG assessment, the habitats within the site walkover survey have been translated to the UK Habitat Classification (UKHAB) equivalents using the UKHAB Habitat Definitions Version 2 (2023).
- 3.1.4 Habitat areas and length of linear habitats were calculated using GIS software. The areas of habitats to be retained and habitats to be created post-development were also mapped with reference to the Landscape Proposals (ACD Environmental, 2025).
- 3.1.5 The habitat condition assessment was carried out with reference to the Statutory Biodiversity Technical Annex I (2023). The site walkover survey informed the condition assessment.

4.0 Existing Habitat Baseline

The baseline habitats are listed below along with their UKHAB classification in parentheses. The full habitat descriptions and completed condition assessment sheets are provided in Appendix 4, where necessary.

4.1.1 Gravel hard standing (*Urban, Artificial unvegetated unsealed surface – u1c*)

Gravel area used for parking and working area.

4.1.2 Intact Species Poor Hedgerow (*Native hedgerow*)

A young hedgerow that lines the northern boundary and consists entirely of beech.

4.1.3 Amenity grassland (*Modified grassland*)

Grassland that surrounds the area of gravel hard standing. The grass is short-mown and consists of perennial ryegrass, dandelion and daisy.

4.1.4 Introduced shrubs (*Introduced shrubs*)

Introduced shrubs are present within the areas of grass. These include *Photinia* 'Red Robin' and *Ceanothus* sp. An immature ornamental tree is located adjacent to the northern boundary.

5.0 Site Habitat Enhancement and Creation – On-site

The habitats that are to be enhanced or created post-development are listed below along with their UKHAB classification in parentheses and target condition.

5.1.1 Hard standing and building (*Urban, developed land, sealed surface*)

Areas of hard standing and a new dwelling.

5.1.2 Native species-poor hedgerow, native shrubs, scattered trees, amenity grassland (*Urban, vegetated garden*)

New areas of soft-landscaping which will form garden areas. Native hedgerow to be retained and enhanced. Target condition: N/A.

6.0 Limitations

- 6.1.1 The assessment was completed during winter months, and therefore outside of the optimal period for undertaking Phase 1 Habitat surveys. Given the nature of the site and habitats present, it is considered highly unlikely that completing the survey during a more optimal time of the year would alter any of the findings.

7.0 Results and Evaluation

- 7.1.1 The supporting biodiversity metric calculation spreadsheet '*The_Statutory_Biodiversity_Metric_Calculation_Tool_Land at Styles Close*' provides the full details for the BNG calculation including a habitat trading summary which shows the habitat distinctiveness groups and the post-development changes within each distinctiveness group.

7.1.2 Areas of habitat

Baseline habitat units = 0.03

Baseline Hedgerow units= 0.03

Post-development habitat units (including all on-site and off-site habitat retention, creation and enhancement) = 0.04 which is a net gain of 23.52%

Post-development hedgerow units (including all on-site and off-site hedgerow retention, creation and enhancement) = 0.03 which is no net loss.

- 7.1.3 Onsite Biodiversity Net Gain is less than the target set of 10%.

8.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 Conclusions

- 8.1.1 No irreplaceable habitat or statutory designated sites are directly impacted by the proposed development.
- 8.1.2 The BNG metric calculation indicates a post-development increase of 23.52% for habitat units, from 0.03 biodiversity units to 0.04 biodiversity units post-intervention.
- 8.1.3 The BNG metric calculation indicates no net loss for hedgerow units, from 0.03 hedgerow units to 0.03 units post-intervention.
- 8.1.4 It is therefore assessed that the development as currently proposed will fail to meet Biodiversity Net Gain requirements stipulated through current legislation (Environment Act 2021) and current planning policy (National: NPPF 2024; Local: Core Policy 50).

8.2 Recommendations

- 8.2.1 Offsite hedgerow units will need to be purchased in order to meet the shortfall of 0.01 hedgerow units. Offsite units within the local area will be sought in the first instance.
- 8.2.2 The proposed habitats will need to be created and retained for a period of 30 years.

9.0 Bibliography

- British Standard 42020, Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development (2013) <http://www.eoebiodiversity.org/pdfs/BS42020.pdf>
- British Standard 42020, Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development (2013) <http://www.bsigroup.com/LocalFiles/en-GB/biodiversity/BS-42020-Smart-Guide.pdf>
- British Standard 8683:2021 (2021). Process for Designing and Implementing Biodiversity Net Gain.
- CIEEM, CIRIA & IEMA. (2016). Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice principles for development
- Google Earth (2025)
- MAGIC database (2025) <http://www.magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>
- National Planning Policy Framework, 2024 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework>
- Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (2023) The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (draft)
- UKHab Ltd (2023). UK Habitat Classification version 2.0 <http://ukhab.org>

Appendix 1 – Site Location Plan



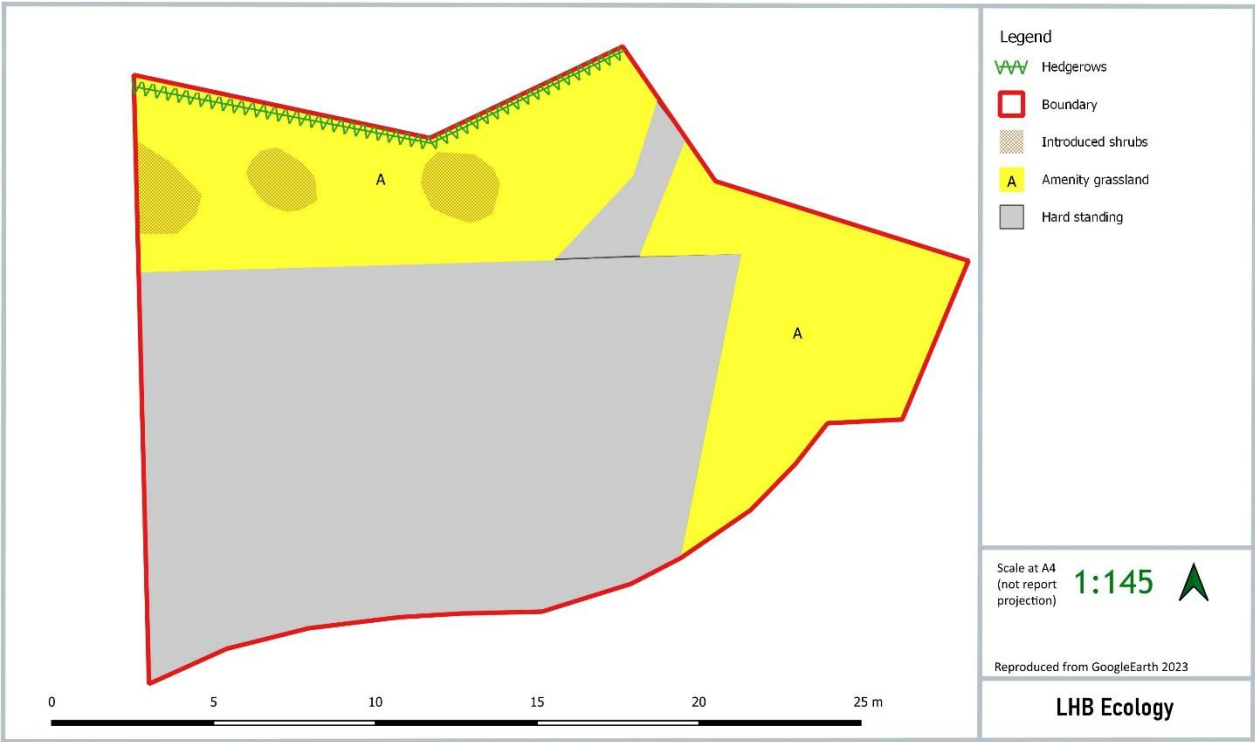
Planting Schedule

Species Name	Grth	Height	Density	Specification	No
Euonymus fortunei 'Silver Queen'	15-18cm	400-450cm	Counted	Extra Heavy Standard Clear Stem min. 200 3x RB	1
Betula pendula	10-18cm	400-450cm	Counted	Extra Heavy Standard Clear Stem min. 200 3x RB	1
Carpinus betulus	10-18cm	400-450cm	Counted	Extra Heavy Standard Clear Stem min. 200 3x RB	1
Malus 'Evereste'	14-16cm	400-450cm	Counted	Clear Stem 175-200 Extra Heavy Standard 4 brks 3x RB	1

Species Name	Height	Pot Size	Specification	Density	No
Euonymus fortunei 'Silver Queen'	80-100cm	2L	Bushy C	4/m²	10
Betula pendula	80-100cm	2L	Bushy C	4/m²	10
Ligustrum vulgare	80-100cm	2L	Bushy 7/10 brks. Cl. 40x Double Staggered at 0.6m offset	4/m²	10
Pittosporum tenuifolium 'Golf Ball'	80-100cm	2L	Bushy C	4/m²	10
Skimmia japonica 'Kew White'	80-100cm	2L	Bushy C	4/m²	10
Viburnum davidii	80-100cm	2L	Bushy	4/m²	10

Species Name	Height	Pot Size	Specification	Density	No
Carex buchananii	80-100cm	2L	Full Pot	4/m²	2

Appendix 3 – Habitat Survey Plan



Appendix 4 – Habitat Condition Assessment

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)			
UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type			
Grassland - Modified grassland			
On-site or off-site, site name and location	On-site	Survey date and Surveyor name	
Limitations (if applicable)	n/a	Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)	
Grid reference		Habitat parcel reference	
Habitat Description			
The site consists of gravel hard standing with amenity grass surrounding the site. The grass is short-mown and consists of perennial ryegrass, dandelion and daisy.			
<u>ukhab – UK Habitat Classification</u>	-	-	-
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m² present, including at least 2 forbs (these may include those listed in Footnote 1). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition. Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m² (excluding those listed in Footnote 1), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness	No	Sward formed of max 3 species in total

	grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.		
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	no	
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	yes	
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	yes	
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	yes	
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	yes	
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁴).	yes	

Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)			No
Number of criteria passed			5
Condition Assessment Result (out of 7 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/√	
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Good (3)		
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Moderate (2)		
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4 - 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)	Poor (1)	x	

Condition sheet: HEDGEROW Habitat Types														
Habitat Type														
Native hedgerow Native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch Native hedgerow with trees Native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch Species-rich native hedgerow Species-rich native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch Species-rich native hedgerow with trees Species-rich native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch														
Habitat Description														
A well pruned beech hedgerow lines the northern boundary. The hedgerow is approximately 1.5 m tall and 1 m wide.														
ukhab – UK Habitat Classification														
On-site or off-site, site name and location	On-site	Survey date and Surveyor name	25/02/2025 J Slade											
Limitations (if applicable)	n/a	Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)	New Dwelling Styles Close, Porton											
Condition Assessment Details														
A series of ten attributes, representing key physical characteristics are used for this assessment. Each attribute is assigned to one of five functional groups (A – E) and the condition of a hedgerow is assessed according to the number of attributes from these functional groups which pass or fail the 'favourable condition' criteria.														
This assessment is based on the Hedgerow Survey Handbook ¹ and Favourable Conservation Status document ² . For further clarification please refer to the Hedgerow Survey Handbook.														
Best practice would be to record the species, age, spacing and other key information about all trees present along a hedgerow within the 'Habitat Description' box, as well as other key features of the hedgerow.														
Hedgerow favourable condition attributes														
Attributes and functional groupings (A, B, C, D and E)	Criteria - the minimum requirements for 'favourable condition'	Criteria description	Habitat parcel reference											
			1											
			Grid reference											
			1											
Core groups - applicable to all hedgerow types			Criterion passed (Yes or No)										Notes (such as justification)	
A1.	Height	>1.5 m average along length	The average height of woody growth estimated from base of stem to the top of the shoots, excluding any bank beneath the hedgerow, any gaps or isolated trees. Newly laid or coppiced hedgerows are indicative of good management and	N										Hedge height is up

A2.	Width	>1.5 m average along length	The average width of woody growth estimated at the widest point of the canopy, excluding gaps and isolated trees. Outgrowths (such as blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i> suckers) are only included in the width estimate when they are >0.5 m in height. Laid, coppiced, cut and newly planted hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice).	N												Average width is 1 m
B1.	Gap - hedge base	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length	This is the vertical 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow, and its distance from the ground to the lowest leafy growth. Certain exceptions to this criterion are acceptable (see page 65 of the Hedgerow Survey Handbook).	Y												

B2.	Gap - hedge canopy continuity	Gaps make up <10% of total length; and No canopy gaps >5 m	This is the horizontal 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow. Gaps are complete breaks in the woody canopy (no matter how small). Access points and gates contribute to the overall 'gappiness' but are not subject to the >5 m criterion (as this is the typical size of a gate).	Y												
			This is the level of disturbance													

C1.	Undisturbed ground and perennial vegetation	>1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length: · Measured from outer edge of hedgerow; and · Is present on one side of the hedgerow (at least).	This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedgerow. Undisturbed ground is present for at least 90% of the hedgerow length, greater than 1 m in width and must be present along at least one side of the hedgerow. This criterion recognises the value of the hedgerow base as a boundary habitat with the capacity to support a wide range of species. Cultivation, heavily trodden footpaths, poached ground etc. can limit available habitat niches.	N													Short mown amenity grass present
C2.	Nutrient-enriched perennial vegetation	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground.	The indicator species used are nettles <i>Urtica</i> spp., cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i> and docks <i>Rumex</i> spp. Their presence, either singly or together, does not exceed the 20% cover threshold.	Y													
D1.	Invasive and neophyte species	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ³) and recently introduced species.	Recently introduced species refer to plants that have naturalised in the UK since AD 1500 (neophytes). Archaeophytes count as natives. For information on archaeophytes and neophytes see the JNCC website ⁴ , as well as the BSBI website ⁵ where the 'Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora' ⁶ contains an up-to-date list of the status of species. For information on invasive non-native species see the GB Non-Native Secretariat website ⁷ .	Y													
D2.	Current damage	>90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities.	This criterion addresses damaging activities that may have led to or lead to deterioration in other attributes. This could include evidence of pollution, piles of manure or rubble, or inappropriate management practices (for example, excessive hedgerow cutting).	N													Intensive pruning is apparent

Condition categories for hedgerows without trees			Score achieved							
Category	Category Requirements	Metric Score								
Good	No more than 2 failures in total; AND No more than 1 failure in any functional group.	3								

Moderate	No more than 4 failures in total; AND Does not fail both attributes in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and C2 = Moderate condition).	2										
Poor	Fails a total of more than 4 attributes; OR Fails both attributes in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and B2 = Poor condition).	1										
Score achieved:			1									

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