

Our ref: 9159 St Mary's School, Marlborough
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Date: 26/05/26

This technical note provides details of the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment for the planning application at St Marys School, Ducks Meadow, Marlborough, SN8 4BX. The proposed plans are for the extension of an existing nursery alongside landscaping and associated works. The development will result in the loss of over 25 square metres of vegetation and therefore requires a BNG assessment using the Statutory Metric. This technical note should be read alongside the Small Sites Statutory Metric submitted alongside the application.

Methodology

Desk study

A data gathering exercise was undertaken to obtain any available information relating to statutory and non-statutory nature conservation sites to establish the strategic significance of the site. The Defra website MAGIC and ordnance survey maps were consulted to determine locations of any designated sites with two kilometres of the development site. Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire Wildlife websites were consulted to determine locations of Landscape Biodiversity Areas and Biodiversity Action Plan habitats.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Wiltshire was consulted to establish the strategic significance of the site and to inform any potential habitat creation measures.

Baseline Assessment

A site visit was undertaken on 12th May 2026 by Ecologist Maya Crate in sunny conditions, with no wind and an ambient temperature of 13°C. The survey employed techniques based on the UK Habitat Classification System. The collection of botanical information focused on the dominant and/or key indicator species for each habitat, to allow allocation of habitats to hierarchy levels 3 and/or 4 and where relevant to identify any priority habitats which are present on site.

Results

Desk study

The site at St Mary's School is located within the Marlborough Downs and Savernake Forest Landscape Biodiversity Area (LNA). The Marlborough downs and Savernake Forest LNA is typified by a landscape of high, undulating chalk downlands of rolling farmland with remnants of calcareous grassland, scattered woods, and dissected by dry valleys and coombes. The soils here are generally very thin with free draining, calcareous, nutrient poor soils which have been intensively farmed to create an open landscape of arable fields with few hedgerows and only small, scattered clumps of trees, primarily beech. The landscape is generally devoid of water, with dry valleys and long steep scarps dissecting the downland. Running through the centre of the area however is the River Kennet, a tributary of the River Thames, which rises just west of Marlborough and runs east into Berkshire. The Area is entirely within the North Wessex Downs AONB which extends south into the Vale of Pewsey and north and east into Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Hampshire.

Strategic Significance

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Wiltshire was consulted, and the site is not located within the LNRS. Therefore, it is considered to be in an area with no local strategy.

Habitats

Surrounding Habitat

The application site is located within the centre of Marlborough and is accessed via Ducks Meadow Road. The site is bounded by the main school to the north and east and a large number of residential dwellings on all boundaries.

Baseline Habitats

The baseline habitats are described below and shown in **Appendix A**.

Developed land sealed surface

Part of the site comprises a playground and a nursery yard (**Figure 1**). In addition to this hardstanding is present in the form of the pathway associated with the nursery building (**Figure 2**). No vegetation is present within these areas.



Figures 1 and 2: Developed land; sealed surface.

Modified grassland

The other main habitat present on site comprises modified grassland (**Figures 3 and 4**). The majority of the grassland comprises amenity lawn dominated by perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*) and annual meadow-grass (*Poa annua*) with frequent white clover (*Trifolium repens*), occasional dandelion (*Taraxacum* sp.), common daisy (*Bellis perennis*) and creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*).



Figures 3 and 4: Modified grassland

Introduced scrub

Ornamental borders are also present within the modified grassland and include dog rose (*Rosa canina*), daffodil (*Narcissus sp.*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and a small amount of bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*). One tree was present however this had a diameter at breast height less than 7.5 centimetres and is therefore classified as part of a shrub border as it is too small to be classified as an individual tree.

Hedgerow

The final habitat on site is a non-native and ornamental hedgerow which was comprised of cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), Common barberry (*Berberis vulgaris*), Viburnum and a small level of holly (*Ilex aquifolium*). This measured approximately 8 metres in length and was around 1 metre wide. The hedgerow was gappy and contained disturbed ground on the base.

Proposed Habitats

A biodiversity metric has been completed for the site using the Small Sites Statutory Metric based on the following inclusions within the development plans, based on the proposed plans (**Appendix B**).

- The retention of 190 square metres of modified grassland.
- The enhancement of 37 square metres of modified grassland to other neutral grassland adjacent to the new hardstanding to the west of the nursery building. The area will be sown with a wildflower seed mix and managed as a wildflower verge.
- Creation of 26 metres of native hedgerow around the hardstanding areas.

Conclusions

With these measures in place the biodiversity metric provided alongside this report results in a net gain of 0.01 habitat units (10.08%) and a net gain of 0.08 hedgerow units (1143.29%) (**Table 1**).

Table 1: Statutory Small Sites Metric results.

On-site Baseline Habitat	0.1146
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On-site Baseline Hedgerow	0.0070
On-Site Post intervention Habitat	0.1261
On-site Post intervention Hedgerow	0.0870
Total net change Habitat	0.0115
Total net change % Habitat	10.08%
Total net change Hedgerow	0.0800
Total net change % Hedgerow	1143.29%
Habitat Trading Rules	Yes

With these measures in place the development provides the requirements net gains in habitat and hedgerow units.

The development will be subject to the Biodiversity Gain condition under paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The condition is deemed to apply to every planning permission granted for the development of land in England (unless exemptions or transitional provisions apply). Once planning is approved the final details for the discharge of this condition will be required within a Biodiversity Gain Plan which will be submitted to the LPA, it is considered this condition can be discharged based on the on-site solution.

References

CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA (2019). *Biodiversity Net Gain. Good practice principles for development. A practical guide*. CIRIA C776a. London, 2019.

Defra (2025). *The Small Sites Statutory Biodiversity Metric - auditing and accounting for biodiversity calculation tool*

Defra (2025) The Statutory Biodiversity Metric - GIS Import Tool

National Planning Policy Framework (2024). *National Planning Policy Framework*. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, London.

UKHab Ltd (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0*

Wiltshire Council (2015). *The Wiltshire Council Core Strategy (2012-2026), adopted January 2015*

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Appendix A – Baseline Habitats

The plan shown here is for the purpose of supporting a planning application only. Only scale from this drawing for the purposes of determining a planning application. Do not scale from this drawing for construction purposes.

The proposal presented here is subject to review by specialist consultants, and is to be read in conjunction with all relevant specialist's drawings and information where available. Any discrepancies between this and any other consultant's drawings and information should be reported to Pro Vision immediately.

Legend

-  Non-native and Ornamental Hedgerow
-  Red Line Boundary
-  Developed Land; Sealed Surface
-  Introduced Shrub
-  Modified Grassland



ISSUE	DATE	DESCRIPTION	DRAWN	CHECKED
v1	28.05.26	Map Created	MC	U

CLIENT:	Karen Giddings		
PROJECT:	St Mary's		
DRAWING:	Baseline Map		1:300
NUMBER:	9159-XX-E0-01		A4
ISSUE:	v1		28.05.26

Appendix B – Proposed Habitats

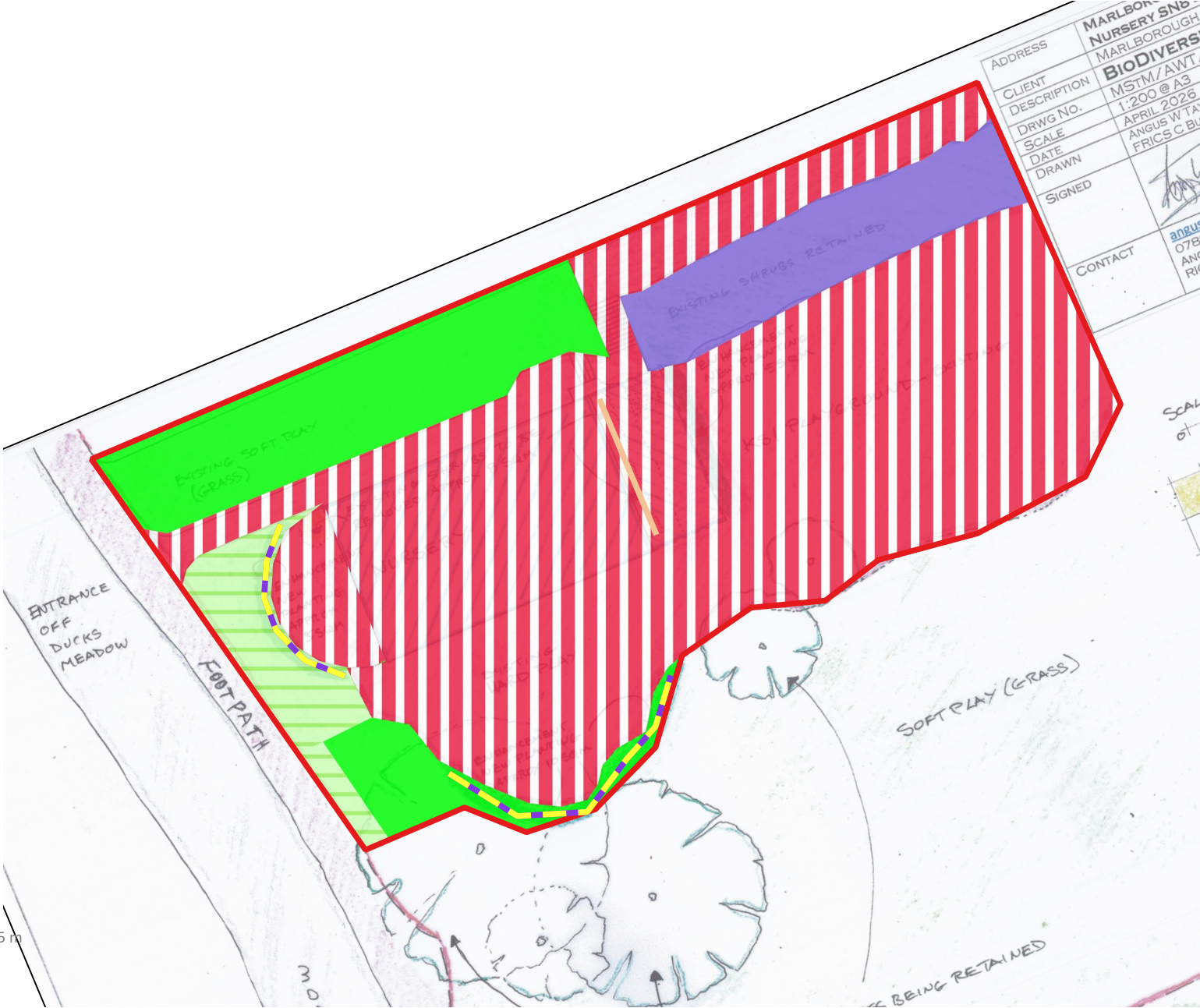
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Legend

INDIVIDUAL TREES

- Red Line Boundary
- Native hedgerow
- Developed land; sealed surface
- Introduced shrub
- Modified grassland
- Other neutral grassland



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v1	28.05.26	Map Created	MC	U

CLIENT:	Karen Giddings		
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DRAWING:	Proposed Habitat Map	1:300	
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