

## **EEL997 Rowden Hill, Chippenham– Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment**

Ellendale Environmental Limited was commissioned by Rowden Hill Holdings Limited to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment for an area of land at 49, 51 & 53 Rowden Hill Chippenham Hospital, Chippenham, SN15 2AJ ('the site'). It is proposed to develop the site for housing including the redevelopment of the existing buildings ('the proposed development').

Using current information on the development, this assessment estimates the BNG anticipated to be achieved through the proposed plans and has been undertaken with reference to The Statutory Biodiversity Metric<sup>1</sup>. This is a biodiversity accounting tool used for the purposes of calculating biodiversity net gain for a site and is based on 'biodiversity units' calculated according to the habitats present and their size, distinctiveness and condition. This enables the quantitative calculation of the predicted change in biodiversity value as a result of the proposed development, with the objective of achieving a net gain in biodiversity.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was undertaken for the site, and where applicable, up to 50 m beyond it. In contrast, the BNG area measurements are taken from the site's red line boundary. Therefore, habitats mentioned in the PEA report may not have been included in the BNG metric.

The site is located at Rowden Hill and comprises of the former Chippenham Hospital buildings and associated former amenity land, which is 2.62 acres (1.06 hectares) in size, located at OS grid reference ST 91182 72634. The former hospital is present to the east and residential properties are located to the north, south and west of the site.

The post-development site habitat units have been determined using the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 calculation tool and this is summarised in **Table 1**.

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<sup>1</sup> [Statutory biodiversity metric tools and guides - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/statutory-biodiversity-metric)

*Table 1: Site habitat creation (post-development)*

| BROAD HABITAT       | HABITAT TYPE                   | AREA (HA) | CONDITION   | TOTAL HABITAT UNITS | COMMENTS                                                                               |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Grassland           | Other neutral grassland        | 0.035     | Moderate    | 0.23                | New SuDS Pond to be seeded with appropriate grass mix that will take seasonal flooding |
| Grassland           | Other neutral grassland        | 0.0445    | Moderate    | 0.30                | Grassland to be planted                                                                |
| Woodland and forest | Other woodland; broadleaved    | 0.0188    | Moderate    | 0.09                | Woodland to be planted in rear                                                         |
| Urban               | Developed land; sealed surface | 0.285     | N/A – Other | 0                   | Hard standing                                                                          |
| Urban               | Developed land; sealed surface | 0.0545    | N/A - Other | 0                   | Buildings                                                                              |
| Individual trees    | Urban tree                     | 0.4234    | Good        | 1.62                | 26 trees to be planted                                                                 |

The existing hedgerows will be gapped up and mainly retained except for areas where access is required. Overall, 2.4m is to be lost to form an access track, 55.7m is to be retained and 65m of new hedgerow is to be added to the site.

Based on this, The Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool indicates that the development will result in a net gain of **41.30%** for non-linear habitats and **138.81%** for linear habitats.

Positive effects for biodiversity are encouraged in new developments by contributing to the enhancement of biodiversity, restoring degraded habitats and building and strengthening nature networks.

Examples of additional biodiversity improvements for the development include:

- The installation of bird and bat boxes to provide suitable nesting and roosting habitat;

- A designated bat loft is planned for Building 1B, alongside a compensatory loft within the existing chimney on the site;
- The planting of native trees, shrubs and fruit trees to provide important resources, especially for early season pollinators, other insects and birds;
- The plantation of wildflower areas to benefit a large number of species including pollinators, small mammals, birds and other invertebrates;
- The implementation of living roofs (green, brown and blue) or green walls to provide additional food source and shelter for the local wildlife; and
- The development has been designed to maintain a dark corridor along the Kennet and Avon Canal to the north of the site through the use of wildlife friendly lighting to reduce the light disturbance for the local wildlife, including bats and otter.

# Appendix A – PR site plan