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Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Survey site:

Land at Cantelowes Gardens, Camden Road, London NW5 2AU

Client:

Sports Facility Planning and Design

Survey date:

11th October 2024

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with the London Borough of Camden. The proposal is described as:

The construction of a padel court and further enhancements.

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Industry Guidelines and Standards

This report has been written with due consideration to:

- British Standard 42020 (2013). Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development.
- British Standard 8683:2021 (2021). Process for Designing and Implementing Biodiversity Net Gain.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2018). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. Version 1.1. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2020). Guidelines for Accessing, Using and Sharing Biodiversity Data in the UK. 2nd Edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- 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.

Proportionality

> The work involved in preparing and implementing all ecological surveys, impact assessments and measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development. Consequently, the decision-maker should only request supporting information and conservation measures that are relevant, necessary and material to the application in question. Similarly, the decision-maker and their consultees should ensure that any comments and advice made over an application are also proportionate.
>
> The desk studies and field surveys undertaken to provide a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) might in some cases be all that is necessary.
>
> (BS 42020, 2013)

Executive Summary

Arbtech Consulting Limited was instructed by Sports Facility Planning and Design to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment at Land at Cantelowes Gardens, Camden Road, London NW5 2AU (hereafter referred to as "the site"). The assessment was required to inform a planning application for the construction of a padel court and further enhancements (hereafter referred to as "the proposed development").

BNG change summary:

	Habitat area units	**Hedgerow units**	**Watercourse units**
Change in units	**17.49%**	**55.85%**	N/A
Units required for a 10% net gain	0 units	0 units	N/A

Areas of Habitat

The baseline habitat value of the site is 0.05 units, comprising modified grassland.

The post development habitat value of the site is 0.06 units, comprising retained modified grassland (<0.01 units) and enhanced modified grassland to other neutral grassland (0.05 units).

Hedgerows

The baseline hedgerow value of the site is 0.02 units, comprising ornamental non-native hedgerow.

The post development habitat value of the site is 0.02 units, comprising native hedgerow (0.02 units).

Contents

1.0 Introduction and Context

1.1 Background

Arbtech Consulting Limited was instructed by Sports Facility Planning and Design to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment at Land at Cantelowes Gardens, Camden Road, London NW5 2AU (hereafter referred to as "the site"). The assessment was required to inform a planning application for the construction of a padel court and further enhancements (hereafter referred to as "the proposed development"). A plan showing the proposed development is provided in Appendix 1.

This report should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric for Land at Cantelowes Gardens, Camden Road, London NW5 2AU
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) for Land at Cantelowes Gardens, Camden Road, London NW5 2AU (Arbtech, October 2024)

1.2 Site Location, Geology and Landscape Context

The surveyed land at Cantelowes Garden, NW5 2AU (hereafter referred to as 'the site'), is centred on National Grid Reference TQ 2984 5075 and has an area of approximately 0.163ha. It is located within the Cantelowes Gardens Public Park (UKHabs code 808 - neighbourhood park), which contains hardstanding paths and play areas, artificial football turf, a pavilion, a sand play pit, and modified grassland. Several mature trees line the paths throughout the gardens. Modified grassland is kept to a short sward with regular maintenance. There is a northwest to south train line located 40 m to the west of the site; the further landscape is residential urban, comprising private dwellings with gardens, and commercial buildings further afield. There is little direct connectivity from the site to the further landscape. Although parcels of private gardens are widespread, these are segmented by numerous busy roads. A site location plan is provided in Appendix 2.

1.3 BNG Informative

BNG is a specific, measurable outcome of project activities that deliver demonstrable and quantifiable benefits to biodiversity compared to the baseline situation. In order to achieve BNG, a project must be able to demonstrate that it has followed all 10 of the Principles of Biodiversity Net Gain (as outlined in the British Standard 8683:2021 Process for Designing and Implementing Biodiversity Net Gain).

The legalised Environment Act (2021) requires developments in England to demonstrate a measurable net gain in biodiversity and sets a target of a minimum of 10% BNG for all developments. It also stipulates that a management plan with a minimum 30-year term, should be adopted to ensure biodiversity net gain can be delivered. The requirement for biodiversity net gain is also enshrined within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021). The DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric is the widely accepted tool used to calculate BNG. It enables the calculation of habitat value pre- and post-development in order to determine the overall change in biodiversity value as a result of the proposed development. The Biodiversity Metric has separate BNG assessments for areas of habitat, hedgerows and watercourses. The biodiversity value of a site should be maximised. However, it may not always be possible to achieve a 10% biodiversity net gain within a site and therefore the Statutory Biodiversity Metric can

also account for offsite habitat creation, where land is available. Alternatively, developers can seek to provide an agreed financial contribution to an appropriate third party (such as the Local Authority, the UK Government or another landowner) to deliver the required biodiversity net gain elsewhere on their behalf.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Baseline Biodiversity Value

The baseline BNG Calculation was informed by a PEA (Arbtech, October 2024). A baseline habitat plan is provided in Appendix 3.

Habitat Classification

The PEA classified the habitats on site according to The UK Habitat Classification Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (The UK Habitat Classification Working Group, July 2023).

Habitat Area/Length

The area or length of each habitat was calculated using qGIS software. In calculating the area or length of each habitat, habitats which occur as two or more isolated parcels across the site were combined, where they were deemed to be of a similar composition and condition. Distinctions were made between habitats to be retained (i.e. left as found in baseline), enhanced (i.e. improved condition) or lost (i.e. destroyed by proposed development).

Areas of scattered trees were calculated using the Tree Helper tool within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. Class sizes for urban trees are set out in Table 14 of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (Natural England, 2023).

Habitat Condition

Habitat condition was assessed using the relevant condition assessment sheets found in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (Natural England, 2023).

Strategic Significance

Strategic significance was assigned for each habitat based upon a review of the following:

- Ecological value
- Function within the landscape
- Any site or habitat allocations under the Camden Local Plan 2017 adopted 3rd July 2017.

2.2 Post Development Biodiversity Value

The post development BNG Calculation was informed by a Proposed site plan and Proposed BNG areas plan (Sports Facility Planning and Design, 2024) which is included in Appendix 1. A post development habitat plan is provided in Appendix 4.

Habitat Classification

Proposed habitats were translated to their equivalents in the UK Habitat Classification using The UK Habitat Classification Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (The UK Habitat Classification Working Group, July 2023) and the information provided within the Proposed site plan and Proposed BNG areas plan.

Habitat Area/Length

The area or length of each proposed habitat was calculated using qGIS software. In calculating the area or length of each habitat, habitats which occur as two or more isolated parcels across the site were combined, where they were deemed to be of similar composition and condition. Distinctions were made between habitats to be retained (i.e. left as found in baseline), enhanced (i.e. improved condition) or newly created.

Areas of scattered trees were calculated using the Tree Helper tool within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. Class sizes for urban trees are set out in Table 14 of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (Natural England, 2023).

Habitat Condition

Target habitat condition for each proposed habitat was determined assessed using the Temporal Multipliers Tool and the Enhancement Temporal Multipliers Tool included in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric spreadsheet as well as the relevant condition assessment sheets found in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (Natural England, 2023). This is based on the assumption that a 30-year management plan will be adopted for the site.

Strategic Significance

Strategic significance was assigned for each proposed habitat based upon a review of the following:

- Likely ecological value
- Function within the landscape
- Any site or habitat allocations under the Camden Local Plan 2017 adopted 3rd July 2017.

2.3 Limitations

No limitations encountered during this assessment.

3.0 Results

3.1 Baseline Habitats

Table 1 details the baseline habitats present within the site along with their area/length, condition and strategic significance. A full condition assessment for each habitat (where relevant) is provided in Appendix 5a.

Table 1: Baseline Biodiversity Value

Habitat	Area / Length	Description	Condition Assessment	Strategic Significance
Developed land; sealed surface	0.02693ha	Pathways are entirely paved hardstanding. Two picnic tables attached to concrete slabs are included within the site boundaries.	N/A - Other	Low Area/compensation not in local strategy
Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	0.01308ha	A good portion of the site consists of a large artificial sand pit, which measures approximately 200 sq m. The sand pit is to be removed to make way for the padel court. The sand pit is partially edged with wooden blocks with some spillage to the bordering grassland. There are no vegetative grown within the sand nor habitat for local species. There are several boulders fixed in place within the sand pit as play features.	N/A - Other	Low Area/compensation not in local strategy
Modified grassland	0.0242ha	Approximately half of the site consists of modified grassland, maintained to a short sward and without any uncommon species present. The grassland is consistent throughout the site and the further Gardens. Species include common rye-grass (D), common daisy (F), and dandelions (O). There are no significant verge habitats. The grassland to the north of the site is supported by grass cells which have become visible due to footfall. There are two instances of sedge clumps on site.	Poor	Low Area/compensation not in local strategy
Ornamental non-native hedgerow	0.0189km	The hedges lining the west elevation of the pavilion. There are no significant undergrowth as the gardens are maintained regularly.	Poor Automatic condition	Low Area/compensation not in local strategy

3.2 Post Development Habitats

Table 2 details the post development habitats present within the site along with their area/length, condition and strategic significance. An assessment of the anticipated condition for each habitat (where relevant) is provided in Appendix 5b, which is based on the assumption that a 30 year management plan will be implemented for the site. The proposed development will result in the loss of sand pit on site and an area of modified grassland.

Table 2: Post Development Biodiversity Value

Habitat	Area / Length	Description	Target Condition	Strategic Significance
Developed land; sealed surface	Retained: 0.02693ha Proposed: 0.02731ha	Retained walkways and associated hardstanding for use of the site. As well as a proposed area to be used as a	N/A - Other	Low Area/compensation not in local strategy
Other neutral grassland (Enhanced)	0.00875ha	Proposed area of grassland to be enhanced into a wildflower meadow (extending from an existing wildflower meadow). The wildflower meadow will incorporate the planting of a high-quality wildflower meadow seed mix. Suggested wildflower mixes are available here: https://britishwildflowermeadowseeds.co.uk	Moderate	Low Area/compensation not in local strategy
Retained modified grassland	0.0013ha	Retained areas of grassland as understory for hedgerow.	Poor	Low Area/compensation not in local strategy
Native hedgerow	0.008km	A length of planted native hedgerow. Native hedgerow is available at: https://www.hedgesdirect.co.uk/acatalog/native-hedge-plants.html	Moderate	Medium Area/compensation not in local strategy but ecologically desirable

3.3 Change in Biodiversity Value of the Site

Full details are provided in the Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric. The headline results are presented in Appendix 6.

Areas of Habitat

The baseline habitat value of the site is 0.05 units, comprising modified grassland.

The post development habitat value of the site is 0.06 units, comprising retained modified grassland (<0.01 units) and enhanced modified grassland to other neutral grassland (0.05 units).

This results in a net change in biodiversity of 17.49% (i.e. a net gain).

Hedgerows

The baseline hedgerow value of the site is 0.02 units, comprising ornamental non-native hedgerow.

The post development habitat value of the site is 0.02 units, comprising native hedgerow (0.02 units).

This results in a net change in biodiversity of 55.85% (i.e. a net gain).

4.0 Recommendations to Deliver BNG

4.1 Discussion

The current proposed plan results in a 17.49% net gain in habitat units and a 55.85% net gain in hedgerow units. This is more than the 10% target of biodiversity net gain.

A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Management Plan must be produced for the site.

4.2 Post Development

A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Management Plan must be produced for the site. This should include recommendations for the implementation, management and monitoring of the site for at least 30 years.

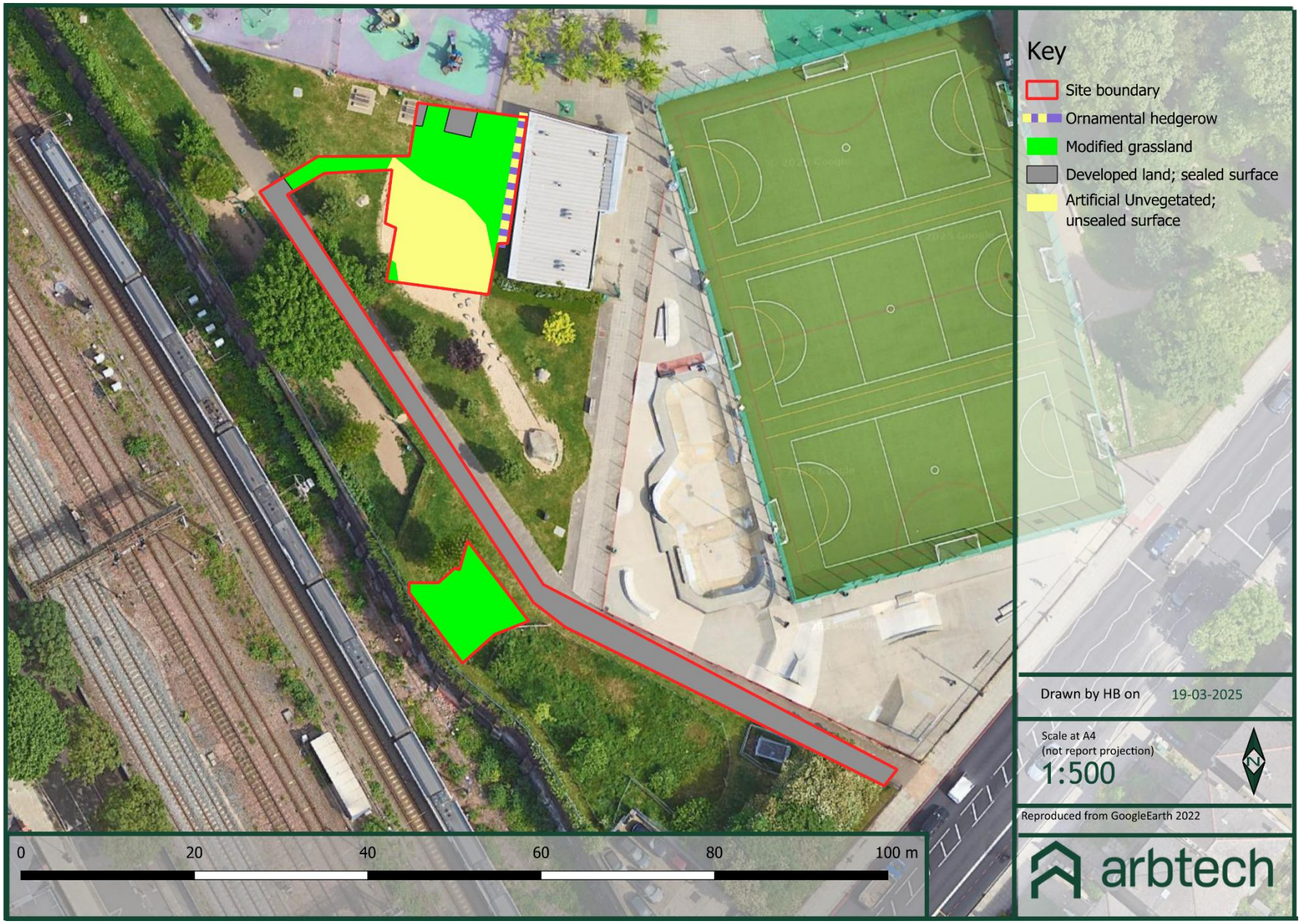
5.0 Bibliography

- Arbtech (2024) Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for Land at Cantelowes Gardens, Camden Road, London NW5 2AU. October 2024.
- British Standard 8683:2021 (2021). Process for Designing and Implementing Biodiversity Net Gain.
- CIEEM-CIRIA-IEMA (2019) Biodiversity Net Gain – Good Practice Principles for Development.
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2010). Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey a technique for environmental audit. http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/PDF/pub10_handbookforphase1habitatsurvey.pdf
- London Borough of Camden (2017) Camden Local Plan. Adopted 3 July 2017. Available at: https://www.camden.gov.uk/camden-local-plan1
- Natural England (2024). The Statutory Biodiversity Metric (JP039).
- Natural England (2024). The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (JP039).
- Natural England (2024). The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1 - Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology (JP039).
- Natural England (2024). The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 2 – Technical Information (JP039).
- Sports Facility Planning and Design (2024) Proposed site plan for Land at Cantelowes Gardens, Camden Road, London NW5 2AU.
- The UK Habitat Classification Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (The UK Habitat Classification Working Group, July 2023)

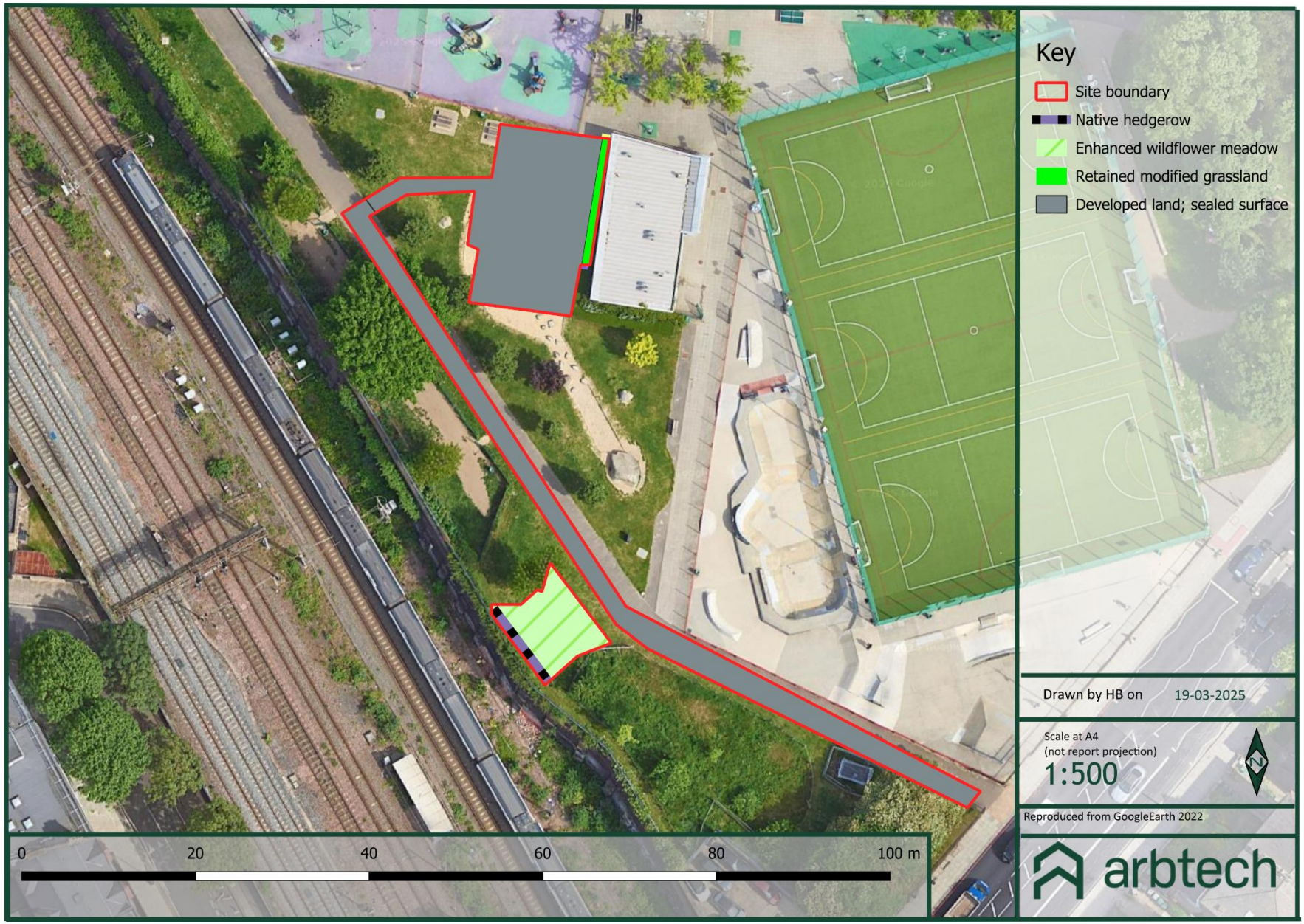
Appendix 1: Proposed Development Plan

Appendix 2: Site Location Plan

Appendix 3: Baseline Habitat Plan



Appendix 4: Post Development Habitat Plan



Appendix 5a: Habitat Condition Assessment Sheets – Baseline

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)

	Condition Assessment Criteria	Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m^2 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 m^2 (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 grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.	no	
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.	yes	
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble *Rubus fruticosus* 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.	no	
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens)[2].	no	
F	Cover of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* 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)	
		Number of criteria passed	

Condition Assessment Result (out of 7 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved ×/✓
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)	yes

Appendix 5b: Habitat Condition Assessment Sheets – Proposed

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (medium, high and very high distinctiveness)

	Condition Assessment Criteria	Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A	The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type, with a consistently high proportion of characteristic indicator species present relevant to the specific habitat type (and relative to Footnote 3 suboptimal species which may be listed in the UKHab description).[1] **Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.**	yes	
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 insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.	yes	
C	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens[2].	yes	
D	Cover of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is less than 20% and cover of scrub (including bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg.) is less than 5%.	yes	
E	Combined cover of species indicative of suboptimal condition[3] and physical damage (such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging management activities) accounts for less than 5% of total area. If any invasive non-native plant species[4] (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA[5]) are present, this criterion is automatically failed.	yes	
	Additional Criterion - must be assessed for all non-acid grassland types		
F	There are 10 or more vascular plant species per m^2 present, including forbs that are characteristic of the habitat type (species referenced in Footnote 3 and 5 cannot contribute towards this count). **Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.**	no	
	Essential criterion for Good condition achieved (for non-acid grassland) (Yes or No)		
	Number of criteria passed		

Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved ×/✓
Acid grassland types (Result out of 5 criteria)		
Passes 5 criteria	Good (3)	
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)	
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)	
Non-acid grassland types (Result out of 6 criteria)		
Passes 5 or 6 criteria, including essential criterion A and additional criterion F.	Good (3)	
Passes 3 - 5 criteria, including essential criterion A.	Moderate (2)	yes
Passes 2 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 3 or 4 criteria excluding criterion A and F.	Poor (1)	

Condition sheet: HEDGEROW Habitat Types

Core groups – applicable to all hedgerow types					
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 pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice). A newly planted hedgerow does not pass this criterion (unless it is >1.5 m height).	yes	
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 *Prunus spinosa* 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).	no	
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).	yes	
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).	yes	
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.	yes	
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 *Urtica* spp., cleavers *Galium aparine* and docks *Rumex* spp. Their presence, either singly or together, does not exceed the 20% cover threshold.	no	
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].	yes	
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).	yes	

Condition categories for hedgerows without trees		
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:	Moderate

Appendix 6: Headline BNG Results

The Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric is provided as a separate excel spreadsheet.

FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	0.01
	Hedgerow units	0.04
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	15.53%
	Hedgerow units	192.84%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit	
Habitat units	10.00%	0.05	0.06	0.00	No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.02	0.02	0.00	No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

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Version control			
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Draft	0.1	Harry Brindle BSc (Hons), Graduate ecologist	11/10/2024
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