

WC-395.1a
BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT

Church Inn, Castle Hill Road, Bury BL9 6UH

HME
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Report prepared by:	Amy Reddick ACIEEM
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1. Introduction

1.1. Scope of Report

- 1.1.1. Woodsage Consulting Ltd have been instructed by BDB Special Projects Ltd, to carry out a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment in relation to a proposed development of the Church Inn, Castle Hill Road, Bury BL9 6UH.
- 1.1.2. The purpose of this report will be to demonstrate compliance with statutory BNG as required by the Environment Act 2021.
- 1.1.3. This report will include:
- a Statutory Biodiversity Metric, with completed pre- and post-development sections;
 - a scaled plan showing the existing onsite habitats and conditions at the date of application; and
 - a scaled plan showing the post-development habitats.

1.2. Site Details

- 1.2.1. The Church Inn - hereafter referred to as 'the site' and shown in **Fig. 1.1**, below - is located approximately 2.9km to the east of Bury and is centred on OS Grid Reference SD 82984 12229.



Figure 1.1: Aerial imagery showing the approximate boundaries of the site, outlined in red.

- 1.2.2. The site covers approximately 0.6 ha and currently comprises the Church Inn, associated parking and beer garden and surrounding landscaping and trees.
- 1.2.3. The site is bound by access roads to the north and south and by agricultural fields to the east and west.

1.3. Development Proposals

- 1.3.1. The development proposals are for a change of use from the existing public house to an office with associated parking and amenities, including a staff garden.

2. Methods

2.1. Survey Details

- 2.1.1. The site survey was carried out on Sunday the 30th of March 2025.
- 2.1.2. The weather at the time of the survey was fine and dry.

2.2. Survey Personnel

- 2.2.1. The survey was carried out by Amy Reddick. Amy is an Associate Member of CIEEM (Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management), and has worked in the ecology sector for over 8 years. Amy holds an MSc in Wildlife Conservation and has experience in conducting botanical surveys including UK Hab Surveys and Protected Species surveys (holding a Level 2 Class Licence to survey bats).
- 2.2.2. Amy is experienced in undertaking and reviewing Biodiversity Net Gain Metrics and Habitat Condition Assessments from both a consultancy and public sector perspective.

2.3. Desk Study

- 2.3.1. The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)¹ was consulted to carry out a desk-based review of nearby designated sites and priority habitats within 500 m of the site.

2.4. Survey Methods

- 2.4.1. A walkover survey was carried out at the site, during which the existing habitats were categorised and recorded using the UK Habitat Classification².
- 2.4.2. Within the grassland habitats the overall abundance of species was recorded to DAFOR scale during the walkover. In addition, five 1 x 1m quadrats were undertaken during which all of the species present within each quadrat were identified and their relative percentage cover recorded.

2.5. Constraints

- 2.5.1. The survey was constrained by the season in which it took place, certain species may only be readily identifiable during the flowering season (May – September). However, given the type of habitats present on the site it is not considered that this will have significantly altered the results of the survey.

¹ DEFRA (2024). Magic Maps. [online]. Available at: > <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap> < [accessed 12th April 2025].

² UKHab (2020). *UK Habitat Classification Basic Edition: Suggested Symbolology for Maps*. [online]. Available at: > <https://ukhab.org/> < [accessed 12th April 2025].

3. Results and Assessment

3.1. Desk-based Survey

Designated Sites

- 3.1.1. There are no designated sites on-site or within 500 m of the site.

Irreplaceable Habitats

- 3.1.2. There are no irreplaceable habitats on the site.

Priority Habitats

- 3.1.3. There are no priority habitats on the site. The closest record of a priority habitat is of open mosaic habitat approximately 30 m to the south of the site, across the access road. There are no anticipated impacts from the proposed development on this habitat.

Local Designations

- 3.1.4. There are no Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) or Local Nature Reserves within 500 m of the site.

Habitat Degradation

- 3.1.5. There has been no degradation of habitat on site since the 30th January 2020.

3.2. Baseline Habitat Assessment

U1b Developed land, sealed surface (DL1)

- 3.2.1. The centre of the site is predominantly developed land sealed surface, comprising the pub building and ancillary buildings to the east, the pub car park and driveway.



Figure 3.1: The Church Inn building and adjacent hard standing



Figure 3.2: The pub car park with mixed scrub to south

G4 Modified Grassland (Habitat Parcels: MG1, MG2 & MG3)

Secondary codes: 108 – frequently mown, 510 – Bare ground

- 3.2.2. Three parcels of modified grassland are present on the site comprising the pub beer garden (MG1), and car park verges (MG2 & 3). All three grasslands are relatively similar in composition with a short frequently mown sward and sown with hard wearing grass mixtures. Species present include Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* (F), Perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne* (A), ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata* (F), white clover *Trifolium repens* (O), common daisy *Bellis perennis* (O) annual meadowgrass *Poa annua* (O), field wood-rush *Luzula campestris* (O), common mouse-ear *Cerastium*

fontanum (O), willowherb species *Epilobium* sp (O), broadleaf plantain *Plantago major* (O) common dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg. (O), creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens* (R), common sorrel *Rumex acetosa* (R), creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense* (R), common nettle *Urtica dioica* (R), common ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris* (R), cat's ear *Hypochaeris radicata* (R) and yarrow *Achillea millefolium* (R). Several introduced species are also present within the car park verges (MG2 & 3) including ornamental daffodil species *Narcissus* sp, tulip species *Tulipa* sp and common field speedwell *Veronica persica*. Areas of bare ground were observed within MG2 on a banking close to the pub building. All of the modified grassland is considered to be poor condition due to failing essential criterion A.



Figure 3.3: MG1 Beer Garden adjacent to the pub building



Figure 3.4: MG1 Beer garden to south.

Table 3.1: Quadrat results for five samples taken across the grassland, the species present, their average cover across the quadrats and constancy.

Species	Average cover %	Constancy
<i>Lolium perrene</i>	40	III
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	18	III
<i>Poa annua</i>	8	IIII
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	6	I
<i>Luzula campestris</i>	6	I
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	<1	III
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	8.6	IIII
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg	2.4	III
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	<1	I
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	<1	I

H3h Mixed Scrub (Habitat Parcels: MS1, MS2 & MS3)

- 3.2.3.** MS1 is the largest parcel of scrub situated to the south of the site on a steep banking up to the pub car park. The scrub is well established and dense in places with good species diversity throughout. Ground flora is sparse to the centre of the scrub with more diversity to the edges. Woody species consist of common dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, elder *Sambucus nigra*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, goat willow *Salix caprea* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. with young to semi-mature ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, sessile oak *Quercus petraea* and silver birch *Butula pendula* trees. Ground flora includes nettle, common dandelion, cleavers *Galium aparine*, wood avens *Geum urbanum*, common ragwort, common vetch *Vicia sativa*, hedge woundwort *Stachys sylvatica*, rosebay willowherb *Chamaenerion angustifolium*, daffodil, bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*, herb Robert *Geranium robertianum*, ribwort plantain, harts tongue fern *Asplenium scolopendrium*, grape hyacinth *Muscari armeniacum*, common sorrel, fox glove *Digitalis purpurea*, common ivy *Hedera helix* and water figwort *Scrophularia auriculata*. Extensive ground elder *Aegopodium podagraria* is dominating the ground flora towards the top of the banking. The scrub was considered to be in moderate condition, failing criterion B and E.

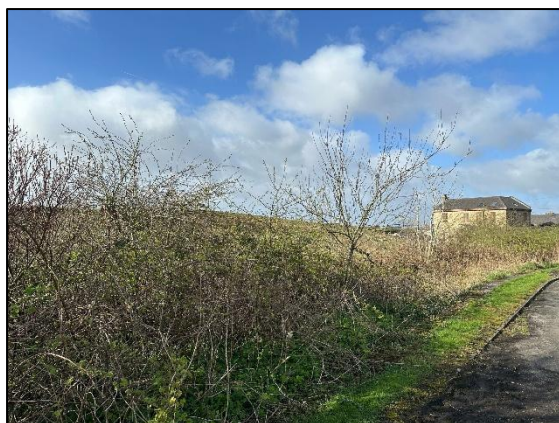


Figure 3.5: MS1 mixed scrub from the top of the banking adjacent to the car park.



Figure 3.6: MS1 mixed scrub from the adjacent field to the east.

MS2 and MS3 are situated behind the pub adjacent to the beer garden. The scrub here is scattered over a tussocky grass sward. Woody species include hawthorn, elder, goat willow, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and bramble. Ground flora include common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, cocks foot *Dactylis glomerata*, teasel *Dipsacus fullonum*, common nettle, broadleaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius* and rosebay willowherb. MS2 is considered to be in moderate condition and MS3 in poor condition due to the dominance of bracken, which is beginning to encroach into the adjacent acid grassland.



Figure 3.7: MS2 mixed scrub adjacent to the beer garden



Figure 3.8: MS3 mixed scrub adjacent to the beer garden and situated to the north of the Pub demonstrating bracken dominance.

H2a Native Hedgerow (H1)

A relatively unmanaged hedgerow running from the pub carpark alongside a footpath to the adjacent access road to the south. The hedgerow is predominantly hawthorn with occasional elder and bramble. Lack of management has allowed the hedgerow to begin to succeed becoming leggy with a significant gap between the bottom of the canopy and the ground. Ground flora is sparse and characterised by species indicative of high nutrient soils including nettle, broadleaved dock, common dandelion, wood avens and Yorkshire fog. The hedgerow is considered to be in good condition.

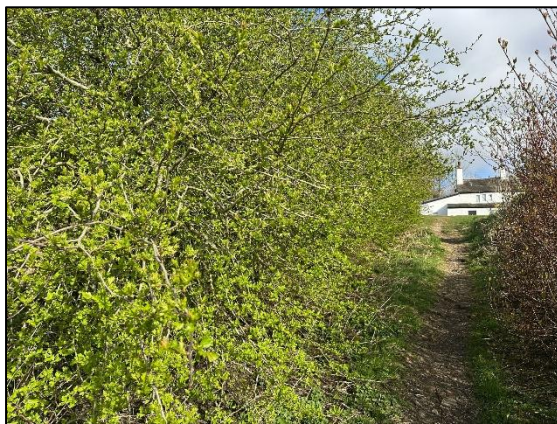


Figure 3.9: Hedgerow H1 alongside the footpath



Figure 3.10: Hedgerow H1 with adjacent footpath and field.

H2a 11 Native Hedgerow with Trees (H2)

A well-maintained hedgerow running along the pub car park and driveway. Predominantly hawthorn with rare elder and holly. Five mature wild cherry *Prunus avium* trees are planted alongside the hedge. The hedgerow is considered to be in moderate condition, failing both criteria relating to height and width within functional group A.



Figure 3.11: Hedgerow H2 with wild cherry trees and grassland parcel MG3.



Figure 3.12: Hedgerow H2 with wild cherry trees and grassland parcel MG3.

33 Line of Trees (H3)

A line of semi-mature trees and saplings to the north of the pub between the car park and the access road. Tree species are predominantly sycamore with wild cherry, beech *Fagus sylvatica*, sessile oak and dogwood. The line of trees is considered to be of moderate condition, failing criterion A as most of the trees are sycamore and criterion D due to the proximity of the access road.



Figure 3.13: Line of trees H3 adjacent to the access road and car park.



Figure 3.14: Line of trees H3 adjacent to the access road and car park with grassland MG2 beneath.

- 3.2.4.** A **Baseline Habitat Map** is provided in **Appendix 1**, which shows the baseline UK Habitat Classifications and other land-uses at the site. **Habitat Condition Assessment Sheets** for all habitats are provided separately as an Excel Spreadsheet to be submitted alongside this report.

3.3. Post-development

- 3.3.1.** The proposals will result in the loss of poor condition mixed scrub (MS3) for the creation of the staff garden and a small area of modified grassland (MG 2 & 3) to widen the access into the driveway. No loss of hedgerow or removal of trees is planned as part of the proposals.
- 3.3.2.** A **Post-Development Habitat Map** is provided in **Appendix 2**, which shows the habitats which will be lost, and the corresponding habitat units for each parcel.

3.4. Net Gain Summary

- 3.4.1.** The baseline and post-development biodiversity values of the site are summarised in **Tab. 3.2**, below. The Statutory Metric Calculations have been provided separately as an Excel Spreadsheet to be submitted alongside this report.

Table 3.2: Summary of baseline and post-development biodiversity values.

Habitat Parcel number	Habitat	Baseline area (m ²)/length (m)	Baseline BU	Post-development area (m ²)/length (m)	Post-development BU	Net Change in BUs
MG1	Modified grassland	949	0.21	937	0.41	+0.20
MG2	Modified grassland	388	0.09	378	0.09	0
MG3	Modified grassland	61	0.01	0	0	-0.01
MS1	Mixed scrub	1726	1.52	1726	1.52	0
MS2	Mixed scrub	83	0.07	83	0.07	0
MS3	Mixed scrub	120	0.05	0	0	-0.05
DL1	Developed land	2663	N/A	2465	N/A	N/A
MS4	Mixed scrub	0	0	258	0.17	+0.17
VG1	Vegetated garden	0	0	198	0.04	+0.04
H1	Native hedgerow	28	0.17	28	0.17	0
H2	Native hedgerow with trees	45	0.36	45	0.36	0
H3	Line of trees	30	0.13	30	0.13	0
H4	Species rich hedgerow	0	0	44	0.29	+0.29

4. Summary

4.1. Summary

- 4.1.1.** The proposals will result in a biodiversity net gain of **17.88% Habitat Units** (+ 0.35 Habitat Units) and **44.63% Hedgerow Units** (+0.29 Hedgerow Units).
- 4.1.2.** Therefore, the Statutory Metric demonstrates achievement of the Biodiversity Objective to deliver a 10% biodiversity net gain, as set out by the Environment Act 2021.

4.2. BNG 10 Good Practice Principles

- 4.2.1.** In accordance with the Environment Act, proposals must demonstrate consideration of the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy to inform the design.
- 4.2.2.** Within Local Planning Authorities in Greater Manchester proposals are also encouraged to document how they adhere to the 10 BNG Good Practice Principles³. Given the scale and scope of the proposals it is not considered that all of these are relevant in this case, however Table 4.1 below outlines how these have been met where relevant.

Table 4.1 Overview of adherence to relevant BNG Good Practice Principles.

Principle	
1. Apply the Mitigation Hierarchy	The Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy requires retention of habitats of medium distinctiveness on-site in the first instance. Although there are losses of mixed scrub to facilitate the creation of the staff garden, this habitat is currently isolated from other areas of scrub and beginning to have a negative impact on the adjacent grassland. Therefore, it was considered appropriate to mitigate for this via the creation of mixed scrub of a higher condition which is ecologically connected to the existing scrub on-site.
2. Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset by gains elsewhere	There are no irreplaceable or priority habitats lost from the site.
5. Make a measurable Net Gain contribution	A 10% net gain on-site has been achieved.
6. Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity	The habitats to be created and enhanced on-site meet the trading rules within the metric and are in keeping with the existing on-site habitats and those adjacent to the site. Species of local providence will be incorporated into the habitat management plan.

³ Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2024). *Biodiversity Net Gain Guidance for Planners & Applicants*. [online]. Available at: > https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/9280/gmeu_lpa_guidance-note_final_1402_issue.pdf< [accessed 12th April 2025].

5. Recommendations

5.1. On-site Habitat Creation and Enhancement

- 5.1.1. In order to achieve a biodiversity net gain of 10% the following habitats will be created or enhanced on-site:

Mixed Scrub in moderate condition (Habitat Parcel MS4)

- 5.1.2. An area of scrub will be planted over areas of existing modified grassland (MG3 and a portion of MG1) and developed sealed surface (a portion of the existing car park). In order to meet the required habitat definition and provide benefit to native pollinators, the following species are recommended for the mixed scrub: hawthorn, dog rose *Rosa canina*, dogwood, elder, silver birch and rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*. This species mixes aligns with the existing scrub whilst introducing additional flowering and fruiting species on-site.

Modified Grassland in good condition (Habitat Parcel MG1)

- 5.1.3. The retained area of grassland parcel MG1 will be enhanced to good condition. A seed mix containing a mixture of native wildflower and grass species, which are tolerant of regular mowing, will be sown. Examples of suitable mixtures include Emorsgate EL1 or Naturescape N14. The mowing regime will allow a period for species to flower and set seed as well as maintaining a diverse sward length.

Species-rich native hedgerow (Hedgerow H4)

- 5.1.4. A 44m species rich hedgerow will be planted along the north and east boundary of the existing beer garden. The following species are recommended to be planted within the hedgerow: hawthorn, elder, sessile oak, holly, dog rose, crab apple *Malus sylvestris* and rowan.

5.2. Future Commitments

- 5.2.1. A Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) will be required to ensure the habitats reach their target description and condition. The finalised HMMP to deliver on-site biodiversity net gain will be required alongside the submission of the Biodiversity Gain Plan, pre-commencement of the development, to discharge the Biodiversity Gain Condition.

5.3. Other Local Policy Requirements

- 5.3.1. **Rochdale Borough Council Core Strategy Policy G7 - Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity** requires development proposals to “take opportunities to promote biodiversity and create new habitats through new development using landscaping and building and construction features wherever possible”⁴. In accordance with this policy, a sparrow terrace will be installed on the east gable. The box will be constructed of long-lasting material (such as woodcrete or woodstone) and be retained thereafter. The approximate location of the sparrow terrace is indicated on the **Post-Development Habitat Map** provided in **Appendix 2**.

⁴ Rochdale Borough Council (2016) [online]. *Rochdale Adopted Core Strategy*. Available at: ><https://www.rochdale.gov.uk/local-planning-policy/core-strategy-local-plan/2>< [accessed 12th April 2025]

Appendices

Appendix 1: Baseline Habitat Map

Site Name:	Church Inn
Drawing No.:	WC 395.1a 1
Client:	BDB Special Projects Ltd
Revision:	1
Drawn by:	Amy Reddick
Date:	12/04/2025
Scale:	1:800 @ A4

Map key:

 Red Line Boundary

UK Hab Baseline Habitats:

 Developed land; sealed surface

 Mixed scrub

 Modified grassland

 Line of trees

 Native hedgerow

 Native hedgerow with trees

Appendix 2: Post-development Habitat Map

Site Name:	Church Inn
Drawing No.:	WC 395.1a 2
Client:	BDB Special Projects Ltd
Revision:	1
Drawn by:	Amy Reddick
Date:	12/04/2025
Scale:	1:800 @ A4

Map key:

 Red Line Boundary

 Sparrow terrace

UK Hab Post-development habitats:

 Developed land; sealed surface

 Mixed scrub

 Modified grassland

 Vegetated garden

 Line of trees

 Native hedgerow

 Native hedgerow with trees

 Species-rich native hedgerow

