

Land to the rear of Kenyon Lane,
Middleton
Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment
2024



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Client Whitebox Architecture

Project Title Land to the rear of Kenyon Lane, Middleton

Project Reference RHE.4105

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Executive Summary

Development Details

The client is proposing residential development at Land to the rear of Kenyon Lane, Middleton hereafter referred to as the 'site'.

This report assesses the predicted changes in biodiversity units resulting from the proposed development.

Biodiversity Impact Assessment

Baseline habitats score 1.87 area units, 0.0 hedgerow units and 0.0 river units.

Proposed habitats score 1.14 area units, 0.06 hedgerow units and 0.0 river units.

The assessment shows a net loss of 0.73 area units (-39.13%) and a net gain of 0.06 hedgerow units (N/A%).

Outcomes

The proposed development is predicted to achieve a net loss in biodiversity units. The development will need to achieve 10% BNG. Recommendations are included within this report.

Retained and created habitats will be managed in the long-term through a 30-year Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP), which can be secured via a planning condition.



1. Introduction

1.1 Project Brief

- 1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2024 by Whitebox Architecture to carry out a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment of Land to the rear of Kenyon Lane, Middleton. The site is located at O.S. grid reference: SD 88080 05919 (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Map showing the location of the site courtesy of OpenStreetMap

- 1.1.2 The proposed development site is a patch of vegetation, adjacent to the rear of the gardens of the surrounding properties. The site was cleared, including the felling of trees, towards the end of 2022 (anecdotal evidence). It appears that the site was overgrown with coniferous and broad-leaved trees/shrubs prior to clearance.

Description of Development

- 1.1.3 The site is the subject of a planning application for the construction of eight dwellings and associated landscaping (22/01223/FUL).

1.2 Scope of Work

- 1.2.1 The Client commissioned Rachel Hacking Ecology to undertake a Biodiversity Impact Assessment to quantify the predicted changes in habitats resulting from the proposed development.



2. Methods

2.1 Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.1.1 Austin Rigby (Junior Ecologist) carried out the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Condition Assessment on 14th March 2024. Austin is trained in botanical surveys and protected species assessments. The site was walked and habitats were recorded and mapped. February is considered a sub-optimal month for botanical work but due to the habitats present, a robust assessment could be made. The weather at the time of the survey was cloudy and dry.
- 2.1.2 Due to the site clearance, the baseline habitats and conditions were determined from a combination of on-site evidence and satellite imagery.

2.2 Biodiversity Impact Assessment

- 2.2.1 The Statutory Small Sites Metric calculation tool was used to assess the predicted changes in habitat units resulting from the proposed development. This report should be read in conjunction with the spreadsheet RHE.4105 Kenyon Road - Statutory Metric - REV A.
- The baseline habitats recorded during the Extended Phase 1 habitat Survey were measured using QGIS software.
 - The baseline habitats were translated into UKHab classification using the translation tool in the metric.
 - Habitat conditions were assessed using the Biodiversity Statutory Metric Habitat Condition Assessment sheets.
 - The strategic significance of baseline habitats was assessed on whether they were formally identified in a local strategy or policy, or whether they were in an ecologically desirable location.
 - The proposed habitats, including any retained or enhanced habitats, were assessed based on information provided by the developer.
- 2.2.2 The predicted change in biodiversity units was determined by calculating the difference between the baseline units and the post-development units.
- 2.2.3 Austin Rigby carried out the calculations and assessment in March 2024.

3. Baseline Habitats

3.1 Area Habitats

- 3.1.1 The baseline is calculated to be 1.87 habitat units.

Other Woodland; Mixed

- 3.1.2 The tree brash/stumps present at the time of the survey are mostly Leyland Cypress *Cupressus × leylandii*. From the satellite imagery, broad-leaved tree species can also be seen such as Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*. Ash saplings are currently present on site, as well as the occasional Goat Willow *Salix caprea*. It appears that the canopy is more or less unbroken across the site. Therefore, without survey data pre-clearance, the majority of the site is classified as Other woodland; mixed. It is unknown what percentage of coniferous compared to broad-leaved species there were in the canopy, pre-clearance. The location of the site, presence of non-natives and ground flora character indicate that the woodland would have been in poor condition. It appears that part of the site was 'gardened' and garden waste was tipped within it. No evidence of a typical woodland ground flora was found. However, the site has been cleared pre-BNG and the BNG rules include increasing the value of a habitat due to clearance. Therefore, the woodland has been input to the Metric as moderate condition. It is the opinion of the author and reviewer of this report that this piece of woodland would never have been in good condition. This habitat is of medium distinctiveness and low strategic significance. This habitat measures to 0.2336ha, which is estimated based on aerial views and anecdotal evidence. This habitat scores a total of 1.87 units.

Developed Land

- 3.1.3 Some small areas of hardstanding are present on site. This habitat is of very low distinctiveness and requires no condition assessment. Developed land extends to 0.0115ha and scores a total of 0 units.



4. Proposed Habitats

4.1 Created Habitats

Urban – Developed Land; Sealed Surface

- 4.1.1 Buildings, pavements, roads and hardstanding will extend to 0.106ha. This is a habitat of very low distinctiveness and low strategic significance. Condition assessment is not applicable. Developed land; sealed surface scores 0 units.

Vegetated garden

- 4.1.2 Private gardens will extend to 0.049ha. This is a habitat of low distinctiveness and low strategic significance. Condition assessment is not applicable. Vegetated garden scores 0.09 units.

Mixed scrub

- 4.1.3 The areas surrounding the building footprints will support mixed scrub, extending to 0.1ha. Suggested species to create this habitat are: Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Hazel *Corylus avellana*, Buckthorn *Rhamnus cathartica*. These species should be pruned rarely and be allowed to form a continuous scrub. This habitat is of medium distinctiveness and low strategic significance. The target condition is moderate, providing 0.67 units.

Urban – Urban Trees

- 4.1.4 30 small trees will be planted on site. This habitat is of medium distinctiveness and low strategic significance. The target condition is moderate, providing 0.37 units.

Native Hedgerow

- 4.1.5 30m of native hedgerow will be created. This habitat is of low distinctiveness and low strategic significance. The target condition is moderate, providing 0.06 units.

5. Assessment

Baseline Units

- 5.1.1 Baseline habitats score 1.87 area units, 0.0 hedgerow units and 0.0 river units.

Proposed Habitats

- 5.1.2 Proposed habitats score 1.14 area units, 0.06 hedgerow units and 0.0 river units.

Predicted Change

- 5.1.3 The Biodiversity Impact Assessment shows a net loss of 0.73 area units (-39.13%) and a net gain of 0.06 hedgerow units (N/A%).

Trading Rules

- 5.1.4 The Trading Rules have not been satisfied, due to a loss of woodland.

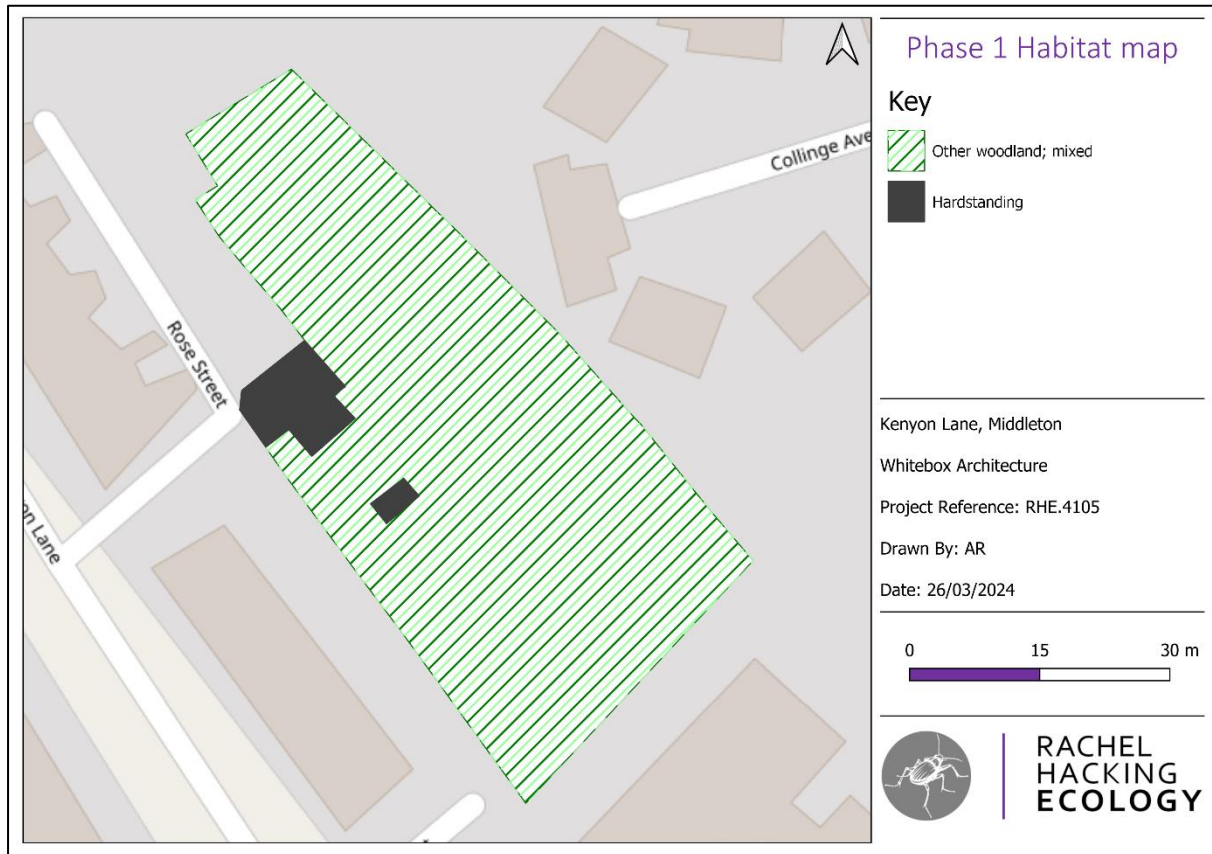
6. Summary

- 6.1.1 The proposed development is predicted to result in a net loss of area units. The Trading Rules are also not satisfied.
- 6.1.2 To achieve 10% BNG, the landscaping within the site will need to be increased and changed. For example, species-poor grassland could be replaced with wildflower grassland. Multiple trees will need to be planted. To satisfy the Trading Rules, woodland creation will be required and unless this can take place on site, within a large enough area, this will need to be off-set, elsewhere in Greater Manchester, either by identifying land within the developers control or off-setting via a commuted sum to a third party.
- 6.1.3 A Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) will be imposed as a planning condition to ensure that retained and newly created habitats are managed to maximise their value for wildlife in the long-term.



Appendix 1: Phase 1 Habitat Map

(assumed pre-clearance)



Appendix 2: Headline Results

FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	-0.73
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.06
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	-39.13%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	N/A
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	No - Check Trading Summaries ▲	



Appendix 3: Layout plan

