
MR & MRS WATERFALL

BURNEDGE HOUSE

**ECOLOGICAL SURVEY & BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN
ASSESSMENT**

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Client	Mr & Mrs Waterfall
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Helen Hamilton Ecology was commissioned in May 2024 to carry out ecological surveys and complete a biodiversity net gain assessment of an outbuilding at Burnedge House. The surveys were to support a planning application at the property for demolition of the existing outbuilding and construction of a new similar-sized structure on the same site.
- 1.2 The report provides detail of the methods used and contains:
- preliminary ecological appraisal including desk study
 - preliminary bat roost assessment
 - biodiversity net gain assessment
 - ecological recommendations.

The Site

- 1.3 The site address is Burnedge House, Broad Lane, Rochdale, OL16 4QL, United Kingdom. The Ordnance Survey grid reference for the outbuilding is SD 9202 1048.

Proposals

- 1.4 The existing outbuilding is proposed for demolition and replacement with a new structure of similar size on the same location.
- 1.5 Appendix 1 shows the proposed site plan.

Legislative and Policy Context

- 1.6 This text provides an overview of relevant legislation, and the actual wording of the statutes should be referred to for more detail where needed.

Important Sites and Species

- 1.7 A range of international and national legislation has been established in the UK to protect important nature conservation sites and species. At the international level, European Union (EU) Directives require individual member states to implement their conservation provisions nationally for the benefit of Europe as a whole. These Directives have been transposed into UK law by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (amended); further details can be obtained from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) web site at www.jncc.defra.gov.uk.
- 1.8 Other international conventions include: the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979), which requires the maintenance of populations of wild flora and fauna, giving protection to endangered and vulnerable species; and the Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (1979), which requires the protection of migratory species throughout their entire range. The above conventions are implemented in England and Wales via the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA), 1981 (as amended) and Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. This legislation also protects important habitats and sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- 1.9 At the national level, the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework published in 2012 is the Government's response to the Convention on Biological Diversity (2010). It describes the UK's biological resources, commits a detailed plan for the protection of these resources within the UK's devolved framework across England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. The document

identifies future priorities for nature conservation and adopts a more strategic approach, including ecosystem services and sustainability alongside biodiversity. Despite administrative changes following devolution, there is still an underlying objective of protecting and enhancing a range of priority species and habitats, often still based on the objectives and classifications of the original UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

- 1.10 Biodiversity 2020 is England's national biodiversity strategy. Building on the Natural Environment White Paper published in 2011, this provides a means of delivering the international and EU commitments to biodiversity. Under Biodiversity 2020, Priority Species and Habitats referred to are those of 'Principal Importance' for the conservation of biodiversity in England listed on Section 41 (England) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.
- 1.11 Finally, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021) provides guidance for local authorities on the content of the Local Plans and is a material consideration in determining planning applications. Focussing on sustainable development, the NPPF states that developments should aim for positive outcomes for habitats and biodiversity, with particular emphasis on the maintenance and creation of ecological networks. The NPPF identifies the following principles to be applied by local planning authorities when determining planning applications:
- If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.
 - Development on land within or outside a SSSI, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of SSSI.
 - Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons, and a suitable compensation strategy exists.
 - Development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.
- 1.12 The NPPF states that the planning system should protect the natural environment by:
- Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils.
 - Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services.
 - Minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains for biodiversity including establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.
- 1.13 In addition, to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:
- Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national, and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and steppingstones that connect them; and

areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation.

- Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Bats

- 1.14 Bats are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This legislation means that bats are protected against disturbance, killing or injury and their roosts are protected against obstruction, damage, or destruction. Seven UK bat species are also listed as priority species under the NERC Act 2006.
- 1.15 There are 17 species of native bats known to be resident (i.e., breed) in the British Isles. British bats feed entirely on insects and have developed a complex sonar system, known as echolocation, which enables them to find prey and navigate around their environment at night.
- 1.16 Habitat requirements vary widely, both on an individual and species level, although certain features, such as woodland, parkland, traditional pasture, marshes and areas of freshwater, are often focal points for foraging, as insects are plentiful in these areas (Mitchell-Jones 2004). Bats use linear features such as rivers, hedgerows, roads and woodland edges as landmarks in order to commute from one location to another (Schofield and Mitchell-Jones 2003).
- 1.17 Bats utilise different roosts at different times of the year. Between late October and March, bats hibernate; this requires an unexposed roost with a stable temperature, typically a cave, cellar or tunnel. Around March, the bats emerge and gradually move to their summer roosts, typically within man-made structures or suitable crevices in trees. During the spring and summer period female bats gather together at maternity roosts to give birth and rear their young. Most births occur between late June and mid-July, with the young able to fly within three to five weeks (Altringham 2003; Waters and Warren 2003). By the end of August, most of the young bats are independent and the colony begins to break up (Schofield and Mitchell-Jones 2003). Mating takes place between August and December, either at the winter hibernation site or at autumn breeding sites. The numbers of bats utilising these roosts can vary from single bats to hundreds of bats in a nursery colony or hibernation site (Altringham 2003).
- 1.18 Bats play an important role in many environments, including pollination and insect control. In the UK, bats can tell us a lot about the state of the environment because they are top predators of common nocturnal insects and are extremely sensitive to changes in their surroundings, e.g. climate, landscape, development and habitat fragmentation. Populations of British bats have suffered severe declines in the past century, influenced by these factors.

Wild Birds

- 1.19 All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and it is an offence, with certain exceptions, to: Intentionally kill, injure, or take any wild bird, and to intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built. Birds listed in Schedule 1 of the 1981 Act are further protected by Special Penalties all year round for those in Part 1 and during a specified closed season for those listed in Part 2. Schedule 1 Part 1 birds include barn owl and kingfisher.

Invasive Species

- 1.20 Certain non-native species that have been introduced into the UK are regarded as being a threat to native biodiversity. Legislative measures have, therefore, been put in place to prevent the spread of these invasive species in the wild.
- 1.21 Under section 14 of the WCA, 1981 (as amended), it is illegal to introduce plants listed under Part II of Schedule 9 of the WCA into the wild or sell these species. Offences include causing the spread of viable plant material or neglecting to contain or appropriately manage non-native species.
- 1.22 Commonly occurring Schedule 9 plant species include several non-native cotoneaster species including small-leaved cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster microphyllus*) and wall cotoneaster (*C. horizontalis*), plus Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*).

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 1.23 Biodiversity net gain (BNG) aims to make sure development has a measurably positive impact ('net gain') on biodiversity, compared to what was there before development. In England, BNG became mandatory on 12th February 2024 under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Developments must now deliver a BNG of 10% or more.
- 1.24 In addition, Greater Manchester Combined Authority have prepared detailed guidance to provide greater clarity on how BNG will work within Greater Manchester¹, to provide a consistent framework around planning applications. The GMCA Biodiversity Net Gain Guidance for Planners and Developers was published in February 2024.

¹ <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/natural-environment/biodiversity-net-gain/>

2. METHODS

Desk Study

- 2.1 The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside website ² was consulted on 29/4/24 for presence of protected sites and habitats as well as for details of mitigation licences for European Protected Species. Other on-line sources such as the NBN Biodiversity Network ³ were also consulted for records of specific species such as hedgehog.
- 2.2 It is important to note that the desk study results provide an indication of the species and habitats present in and around the site, and do not confirm current presence or absence of any.

Ecological Surveys

- 2.3 The ecological field surveys were carried out on 13/5/24 in daylight hours. Weather was fine but overcast. All areas of the site were accessible.
- 2.4 The habitat survey provides the basis for this preliminary ecological assessment (PEA) which has been prepared following CIEEM guidance (2017). Habitats were mapped within the red line boundary according to UKHAB system of assessment (UKHAB Ltd 2023). Summary plant species lists were compiled for each habitat. Botanical nomenclature followed Stace (2019). Any invasive non-native plants were noted. In addition, the potential of the site to host protected and/or priority species was considered.
- 2.5 The preliminary bat roost assessment (PBRA) followed standard methods for bats (Collins 2023), looking at buildings and trees on site. Buildings and trees were categorised according to their potential suitability for roosting, as follows:
- NONE - no habitat features likely to be used by roosting bats at any time of the year.
 - NEGLIGIBLE - no obvious features likely to be used by roosting bats; however a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
 - LOW - one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically although these sites do not provide sufficient space, shelter, protection and/or appropriate surrounding habitat to be used regularly by a large number of bats.
 - MODERATE - structure with one or more potential roost sites due to size, shelter and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high status.
 - HIGH - structure with one or more potential roost sites obviously suitable for use by larger number of bats more regularly and potentially for longer periods due to size, shelter, protection and suitable surrounding habitat.
- 2.6 The survey work was led by Helen Hamilton MCIEEM⁴ (Natural England Class 2 Bat Licence ref: CLS03190, 2015-15840-CLS-CLS-L2). Helen is appropriately experienced and qualified to carry

² <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx>

³ <https://nbnatlas.org/>

⁴ Full Member of Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)

out surveys of this type for habitats and protected species based on the CIEEM competencies for survey (CIEEM 2013).

- 2.7 In the case of bats, it is often not possible to inspect all locations that they may use and therefore and absence of bat evidence does not mean bats are not present. This why emergence surveys may be recommended/required where potential features that bats would use are present.
- 2.8 The suitability of surrounding habitats for bat commuting and foraging was also considered.
- 2.9 Evidence of other protected species was also sought and noted, e.g. nesting birds.

Survey Limitations

- 2.10 No limitations were experienced, except that no internal access was possible for the garage. A good view into the inside to see the structure was possible however, allowing an assessment to be made.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 2.11 This assessment uses the statutory biodiversity metric to calculate the biodiversity value of habitats in biodiversity units. The key documents used were:
- GMCA Biodiversity Net Gain Guidance for Planners & Applicants, February 2024
 - The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide, February 2024
 - The Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool, February 2024
- 2.12 For this site, the area is 0.79 hectare and the standard biodiversity metric was used.

3. RESULTS

Desk Study

- 3.1 The closest European protected site is the Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This is located 2.47 km to the west of site, beyond the search area and the extent of any possible impacts. There are no SSSI within the search area either.
- 3.2 There are no national nature reserves (NNR) within 2 km of the site, nor any local nature reserves (LNR).
- 3.3 The following Priority Habitats are present within 1 km of the site:
- Good quality semi-improved grassland (711.5 m to the southwest)
 - Lowland fens (893 m to the east)
 - Deciduous woodland (several small areas mainly to the northwest 462 m & 884 m).
- 3.4 There are no granted European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) for bats within the 1km search area, but a wider search revealed licences have been issued for common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle.
- 3.5 The nearest known record for great crested newt (also a European Protected Species), is over 1km to the north, from Class Survey Licence returns. Several ponds in the locality (as shown on colour base mapping) are located 125 m to the northeast (2 ponds) and 642m to the southeast, all across pasture.
- 3.6 A search of the National Biodiversity Network NBN Atlas revealed frequent occurrence of hedgehog in the locality.

Habitat Survey

- 3.7 Figure 1 presents the map of existing habitats recorded on site according to the UKHAB codes. The total site area is 75 m², or 0.0075 hectares.
- 3.8 The species list for the site is shown in Table 1.
- 3.9 Plate 1 presents a photograph of the site.
- 3.10 Burnedge House is situated in farmland between Rochdale and Shaw, just south of the M62. Surrounding agriculture is mainly pasture or grass crops, with defunct hedgerows bounding the fields, and occasional trees. The site lies within the garden of the house and comprises a wooden garage building, hard standing to the south, unmanaged vegetation with piles of building materials and garden items to the sides and a small area of mown grassland which is part of adjoining lawns.
- 3.11 Other than these habitats, most of the area is urban, with a sealed or partially sealed surface and composed of artificial materials. As such they are intrinsically of limited value as habitats for wildlife.

Figure 1 Habitats Map

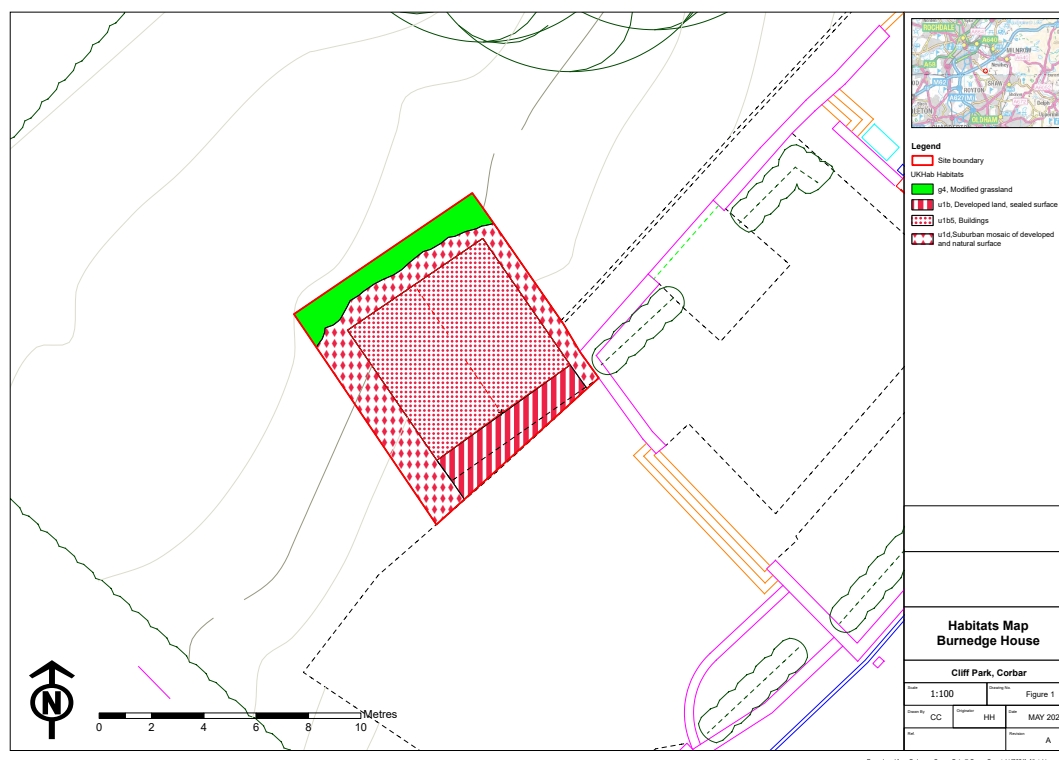


Plate 1 Site Photograph



G4 – Modified Grassland

- 3.12 The small area of modified grassland included within the site was part of a wider area of mown lawn within the garden of Burnedge House. The vegetation within the whole area was typical of modified grasslands of this type. It was uniformly mown and species-poor, with a dense thatch of old grass stems and little bare ground. Beyond the site was more modified grassland and a single species hedge of cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), an introduced shrub species.
- 3.13 The grassland Table 2 lists the botanical species, together with their abundance (d=dominant, a=abundant, f=frequent, o=occasional, r=rare). The dominant grass was Yorkshire fog, with associates indicating modified and intensively managed status such as white clover, creeping buttercup, dandelion, perennial ryegrass and annual meadow grass. Himalayan balsam was present, an invasive non-native weed.

U1b - Developed land; sealed surface

- 3.14 A small hardstanding in front of the garage doors. Little vegetation was present.

U1b5 – developed land; sealed surface; building

- 3.15 A wooden garage on a solid concrete foundation; more details are provided in the PBRA section.

U1d – suburban mosaic of developed and natural surface

- 3.16 This habitat surrounds the building to the west, north and east. The area is a mosaic of stored building materials, garden items and unmanaged vegetation of a ruderal type typical of urban mosaic on disturbed ground. The vegetation was characterised by nettles, great willowherb, grasses and docks. Grassland species were also present, and Himalayan balsam.

Table 1 Botanical Species

Common Name	Scientific Name	Abundance	
		G4 - modified grassland	U1d - mosaic
Annual meadow grass	<i>Poa annua</i>	r	
Broad-leaved dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	f	r
Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>		r
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	o	
Common mouse-ear	<i>Cerastium fontana</i>	r	
Common nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	o	r
Common ragwort	<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>	r	
Creeping buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	o	lf
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinalis</i>	r	
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>		r
Goat willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>		r
Great willowherb	<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>		lf
Ground elder	<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>	r	
Himalayan balsam	<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>	r-f	r-f
Red fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	r	

Ribwort plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	r	
Perennial rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	f	
Silverweed	<i>Potentilla anserina</i>	r	
Soft rush	<i>Juncus effusus</i>		r
Sweet vernal grass	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>		r
White clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	r	
Yorkshire fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	d	ld

Protected Species

- 3.17 During the habitat survey, potential for protected species was also considered.
- 3.18 For bats, see the Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment in the next section.
- 3.19 Great crested newt habitats within the site are considered limited (due to low-value habitat, small-scale, distance and isolation), and on-line records are for over 1 km from the site. Cresswell and Whitworth (2004) report that most GCN occur within 100m of their breeding pond, so this site is beyond that zone for any pond. This species is highly unlikely on site.
- 3.20 Nesting birds were considered possible in the building, with probable nesting activity noted.
- 3.21 Suitable habitats were present for hedgehog in the garden and surrounding land, but onsite habitats for hedgehog were considered limited because of the small scale of the site. However, piled materials could potentially shelter the animals.

Invasive non-native species

- 3.22 Himalayan balsam was present throughout the site. This is an invasive non-native plant listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and countryside Act 1981.

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

- 3.23 The building was an old wooden shed or former garage with a corrugated asbestos roof and a timber frame and walls. It was intact and in an acceptable condition; it had been patched up to the north with other boards. Wooden doors to the front (south) had glass windows, making the interior lit during daylight hours. On the outside, most visible gaps at the eaves were cobwebbed over, with clean ones showing no evidence of use by bats. There was no internal access for the survey, but the inside could be viewed the broken glass panes - the shed is used for storage and is very cluttered inside making it less attractive for bats to fly into. In addition, the bare timber structure supports the roof material directly and provides no void. The building is considered to have 'negligible' bat roosting potential. If a complete search had been completed inside, this would probably be classified as 'none'.
- 3.24 Habitats around the site were assessed for their likely commuting and foraging value for bats. Despite a rural setting the site is considered to be quite isolated from optimal bat habitats, with an exposed hill-side position; gappy hedgerows and roads provide the main linear features. Occasional larger trees are present within 200m, as are several ponds, but none very well connected to other higher quality habitats. The land use of low-diversity intensive pasture and croplands offer relatively poor habitats for bats and overall these are considered to be 'low'.

4. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

- 4.1 The detail of proposals is presented in Appendix 1.
- 4.2 Figure 2 shows the approximate locations of post-development habitats. It can be seen that the new proposals are similar to existing, but the old shed is to be replaced by a new same-size structure which is realigned to match the orientation of the house and better suit the location.
- 4.3 Table 2 presents the existing and proposed habitat areas in m2.

Figure 2 Post-Development Habitats Map

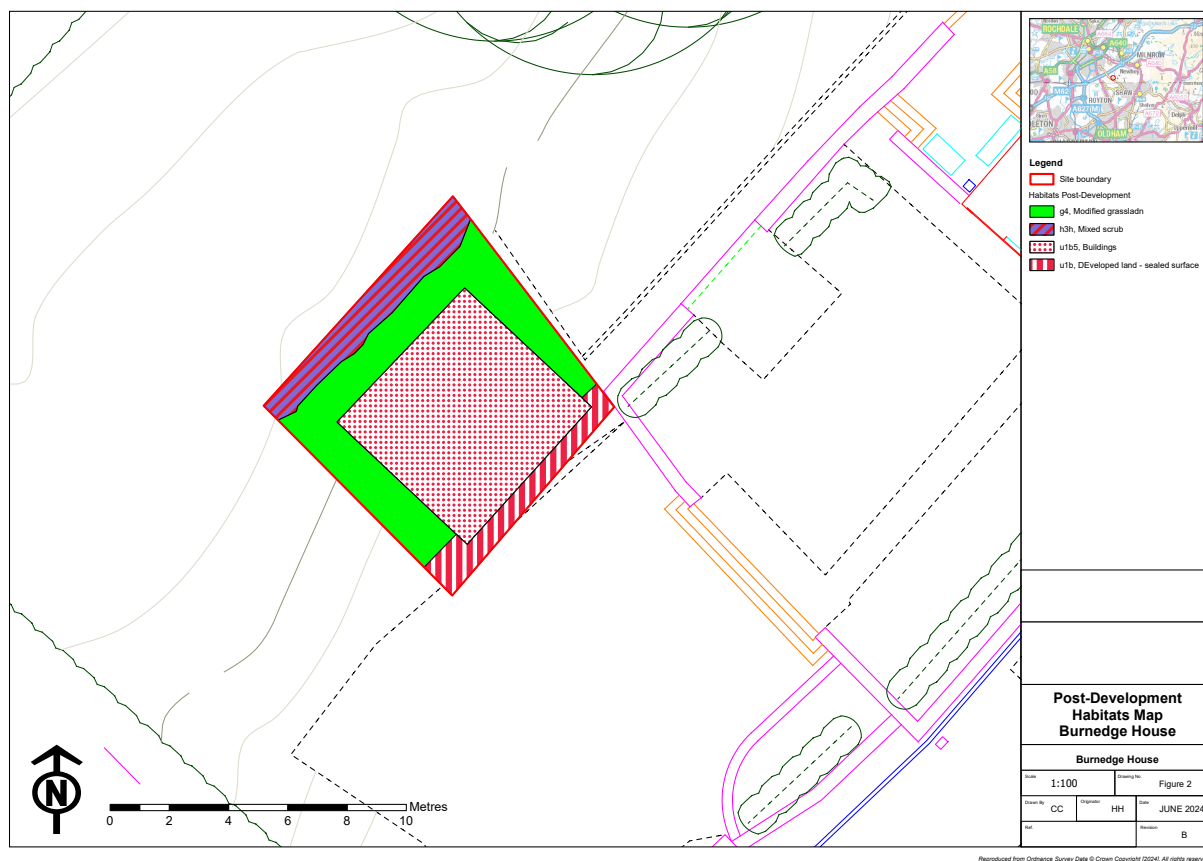


Table 2 Habitats and Areas, Existing and Proposed

Habitats (CONDITION)	Existing			Proposed		
	Area (m2)	Hectares	Area for Metric (ha)	Area (m2)	Hectares	Area for Metric (ha)
Modified grassland G4 (POOR)	9	0.0009	0.001	25	0.0025	0.002
Developed Land; sealed surface						
U1b	8	0.0008		7	0.0007	
U1b5 Buildings	37	0.0037		37	0.0037	
Total	45	0.0045	0.005	44	0.0049	0.005
Suburban mosaic of developed and natural surface U1d (POOR)	25	0.0025	0.002	0	0	0
Mixed Scrub (h3h)	0	0	0	10	0.001	0.001
TOTAL	79	0.0079	0.008	79	0.0079	0.008

- 4.4 The condition of both developed land habitats is pre-assigned as 'n/a' (not applicable) in the metric, under the heading 'developed land sealed surface'.
- 4.5 For 'modified grassland', habitat condition is determined to be 'poor' because the vegetation is species-poor, forbs are a small component, the sward height is uniform; the sward is damaged by regular cutting and there is no bare ground. Furthermore, Himalayan balsam is present, a non-native invasive plant.
- 4.6 For suburban mosaic (classified for BNG as 'vacant or derelict land'), habitat condition was classified as 'poor' because the vegetation is sparse or rank and dominated by a few ruderal species, where grasses dominate and there is more than 5% Himalayan balsam.
- 4.7 Condition sheets are presented in Appendix 2.
- 4.8 The site was assessed using the standard metric, because the small sites metric would not accept the figures as applying to a site less than 1 ha in size. In order for the standard metric to accept the figures, each had to be rounded to 3 decimal places as shown in the final column of Table 2. This has resulted in an approximate site area of 79m2 and results which need interpretation to better align them with the site's actual dimensions.

- 4.9 In order to make the biodiversity net gain, it is proposed to enhance 0.001ha of the existing modified grassland by planting mixed scrub (of moderate condition). This is a significantly higher value habitat than the existing and can be easily established at the site, with likely good success and rapid establishment.
- 4.10 In addition, the 0.002ha of vacant and derelict land will become 0.002ha of moderate-condition modified grassland.
- 4.11 These habitats would complement other recommendations for the site such as installation of bird nest boxes.
- 4.12 Figure 3 shows the biodiversity net gain headline results for Burnedge House. The metric calculates there are **0.01 on-site baseline Habitat Units**.
- 4.13 Appendix 3 presents the full calculations.
- 4.14 **Post development, the total % biodiversity net gain is 91%.** This is achieved by creating 0.01 habitat units of moderate-condition mixed scrub plus changing vacant and derelict land to moderate-condition modified grassland. Based on the areas entered into the metric this equates to 10m² of scrub. A net change of 91% is much higher than the required 10% and represents a considerable additional biodiversity gain for this small site.
- 4.15 Figure 2 illustrates a suggested arrangement of mixed scrub and modified grassland, but the final position of these habitats is not critical within the red line. Native mixed scrub is an appropriate enhancement for the habitats affected, and will establish well on site if selected, planted and maintained appropriately. Details of appropriate species and establishment are given in the next section (recommendations).
- 4.16 In addition to adding native mixed scrub to enhance the site, mixed native scrub will be complimented by the proposed sparrow nest boxes. This species is known to favour nest boxes sited close to vegetation.

Figure 3 Biodiversity Net Gain Headline Results

Burnedge House		Return to results menu	
Headline Results			
Scroll down for final results ☑			
On-site baseline	Habitat units	0.01	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.01	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	0.01	91.06%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%
Off-site baseline	Habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	0.00	0.00%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%

Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.01			
	Hedgerow units	0.00			
	Watercourse units	0.00			
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	Habitat units	0.00			
	Hedgerow units	0.00			
	Watercourse units	0.00			
FINAL RESULTS					
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.01			
	Hedgerow units	0.00			
	Watercourse units	0.00			
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	91.06%			
	Hedgerow units	0.00%			
	Watercourse units	0.00%			
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓				
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit	
Habitat units	10.00%	0.01	0.01	0.00	No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	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 ✓

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 There are no statutory protected sites within 2 km of the site, nor any SSSI, NNR or LNR.
- 5.2 Priority Habitats present within 1 km of the site are: Good quality semi-improved grassland (711.5m to the southwest), Lowland fens (893 m to the east), and Deciduous woodland (several small areas mainly to the northwest). None will be affected by this small-scale project.
- 5.3 There are no granted European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) for bats within the 1km search area, but a wider search revealed licences have been issued for common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle.
- 5.4 The nearest known record for great crested newt (also a European Protected Species), is over 1km to the north. Two ponds are located 125 m to the northeast and a third 642m to the southeast. The status of these ponds as GCN breeding habitat is not known, but habitats between them and the site are of low quality for the species and it is highly unlikely to be present.
- 5.5 A search of the National Biodiversity Network NBN Atlas (<https://nbnatlas.org/>) revealed frequent occurrence of hedgehog in the locality, and these animals could be present on site.
- 5.6 Habitats on site are also potentially suitable for breeding birds.
- 5.7 The on-site baseline habitats are:
- G4 – modified grassland (poor condition)
 - U1b – developed land; sealed surface
 - U1b5 – developed land; sealed surface; buildings
 - U1d – suburban mosaic of developed and natural surface (poor condition).
- 5.8 The botanical species list for the site is very limited. Himalayan balsam, a non-native invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, is rare to frequent throughout.
- 5.9 The single wooden shed-type building on site was classed as ‘negligible’ value for roosting bats. Habitats around the site were considered to be of ‘low’ quality for foraging and commuting.
- 5.10 A precautionary approach is recommended for the development in relation to protecting breeding birds and hedgehogs during site clearance and demolition.
- 5.11 **A Biodiversity Net Gain of 91% can be achieved at this site, through planting 10m2 of moderate-condition native mixed scrub and establishing 25m2 of moderate-condition modified grassland.**
- 5.12 Management to achieve stated condition is detailed under recommendations.
- 5.13 The enhanced habitats should lie within the area indicated in Figure 2 and would be an enhancement of existing modified grassland and vacant derelict land (both in poor condition), but the exact lay-out is flexible and can be decided by the applicant. However, the mixed scrub should be planted as a single block of habitat rather than scattered plants.
- 5.14 Native mixed scrub is an appropriate enhancement for the habitats affected, and will establish well on site if selected, planted and maintained appropriately. Similarly, modified grassland is already present on site and moderate condition examples offer some benefits for wildlife over

grassland in poor condition, Details of appropriate species and establishment to achieve moderate condition for both habitats are given in the next section (recommendations).

- 5.15 In addition to adding native mixed scrub to a currently modified grassland area to enhance the habitat, mixed native scrub will complement the proposed sparrow nest boxes (see recommendations). House sparrows are known to favour nest boxes sited close to vegetation.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1 – Native Mixed Scrub

- 6.1 The Biodiversity Net Gain is to be achieved at this site through the planting of 10m² of moderate-condition native scrub around the new outbuilding. Figure 2 shows an indicative lay-out, with flexibility over the exact positions of the habitats.
- 6.2 Native scrub is defined in UKHAB as patches of shrubs that are up to 5m in height and cover 75% of the land area, and the habitat can include occasional small trees. A native species mix should be indigenous to the locality.
- 6.3 Table 3 lists the condition criteria for scrub (UKHABS 2024), of which moderate condition scrub must achieve 3 or 4 of the 5 criteria. It is likely that 3 of the criteria can easily be achieved at this site.

Table 3 Achieving Moderate Condition Mixed Scrub

Condition Criteria	Action to achieve moderate condition
The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type - the appearance and composition of the vegetation closely matches its UKHab description (where in its natural range). ¹ - At least 80% of scrub is native, - There are at least three native woody species ² , - No single species comprises more than 75% of the cover (except hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i> , common juniper <i>Juniperus communis</i> , sea buckthorn <i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i> (only in its restricted native range), or box <i>Buxus sempervirens</i> , which can be up to 100% cover).	-Use only native species. -Plant 3 or more native species, with no single species dominant.
Seedlings, saplings, young shrubs and mature (or ancient or veteran ³) shrubs are all present.	NA – too small.
There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ⁴ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA5) and species indicative of suboptimal condition ⁶ make up less than 5% of ground cover.	-Eradicate Himalayan balsam by pulling – this may need continuous attention but is easy to do in a small area.
The scrub has a well-developed edge with scattered scrub and tall grassland and or forbs present between the scrub and adjacent habitat.	-Adjacent grassland proposals will provide nearby habitat which meets this criterion.

There are clearings, glades or rides present within the scrub, providing sheltered edges.	NA – too small.
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- 6.4 Scrub should be planted as a single block rather than separate scattered plants.
- 6.5 Suitable species for the site include the following and at least 3 species should be chosen to form the mix for this site, including one small tree:
- Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*
 - Holly *Ilex aquifolium*
 - Hazel *Corylus avellana*
 - Dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*
 - Elder *Sambucus nigra*
 - Dog rose *Rosa canina*
 - Guelder rose *Viburnum opulus*
 - Gorse *Ulex europaeus*
 - Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* (small tree)
 - Field maple *Acer campestre* (small tree)
- 6.6 Native scrub should be established by planting shrubs according to the supplier's instructions, but at a slightly denser spacing than used for horticulture plantings in order to establish the habitat more quickly. Pot grown or bare-rooted plants can be used. Some management to ensure successful establishment may be needed for the first 5 years, such as manual weeding, watering, and protection from grazing. Staking should not be needed.
- 6.7 Scrub can be underplanted with native woodland ground flora such as native bluebell, cowslip, dog's mercury, ramsons, enchanter's nightshade etc. (See also <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/plants/wild-flowers/>) or left to colonise naturally.
- 6.8 Winter and early spring is the optimal time for establishing scrub plants as woody plants are dormant and cooler weather means they are less likely to dry out after planting
- 6.9 Once established, occasional pruning and coppicing can be used to manage bushes if they become too large, carried out in winter when woody plants are dormant and to avoid disturbing breeding birds. Herbicides, pesticides and fertiliser should not be used in creating or maintaining native habitats.
- 6.10 Additional information on selecting and establishing native scrub can be found from a range of sources including the following:
- Royal Horticultural Society <https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/types/trees/native-tree-shrubs>
 - Lancashire Wildlife Trust <https://www.lancswt.org.uk/wildlife-explorer/trees-and-shrubs> .

Recommendation 2 – Modified Grassland

- 6.11 To reach 'moderate' ecological condition, grassland needs to attain 4 or 5 of the 7 criteria published by UKHABS (2024). There are listed in Table 4.
- 6.12 Seed mixes containing native wildflowers are available from a range of suppliers. Suitable mixes would include annuals and perennials appropriate for northern England on neutral soils, e.g.:
- <https://www.wildflower.co.uk/products/wildflower-seed-mixtures/100-wildflower-seed-mixtures/lwre-restore-enrich-100.html>
 - <https://www.wildflower.co.uk/products/wildflower-seed-mixtures/100-wildflower-seed-mixtures/lw1-traditional-meadow-100.html>
 - <https://britishwildflowermeadowseeds.co.uk/collections/wildflower-meadow-seeds/products/northumberland-meadow-seed-mix>
- 6.13 More information on creating wildflower grasslands can be found at:
- <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/gardening>
 - <https://www.rhs.org.uk/wildlife>

Table 4 Achieving Moderate Condition Grassland

Condition Criteria	Action to achieve moderate condition
There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m2 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 m2 (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.	Increase vegetation diversity by: -Always removing mowings to reduce soil fertility over time. -Avoiding cuts during May to July to allow flowering plants to set seed. Sometimes vary later cut to August or September. - Avoid all herbicides and pesticides. Manage unwanted plants such as thistles by hand pulling; easy over such a small area. - Introduce wildflowers by overseeding during dry weather into very short turf which has been scarified to expose bare soil.
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.	Achieve through mowing regime which leaves the on-site area to grow during summer, while off-site lawn is managed more intensively.

Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	NA
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.	Do not store building materials or other items on grassland. Do not damage the sward during mowing.
Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens)2.	Keep bare ground to a minimum and sow bare areas with wildflower mix rather than lawn grass.
Cover of bracken is less than 20%.	NA
There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA4).	Hand-pull Himalayan balsam to eradicate from site.

Recommendation 3 - Protected Species

- 6.14 Nesting birds were noted on site. In addition, there is a slight possibility of hedgehogs being present and a precautionary approach to protected species is recommended.
- 6.15 An ecological clerk of works (ECOW) should oversee site clearance. Disturbance to nesting birds can be avoided by timing works outside the active nesting period of March – September. Harm to other species can be minimised by careful hand-search of the potential habitats around the garage prior to clearance and demolition of the structure.

Recommendation 4 – Sensitive Lighting

- 6.16 Nocturnal wildlife is affected by artificial lighting. It is recommended that a sensitive lighting scheme is used at this site to allow wildlife to benefit from dark areas, especially around the west and north of the new structure. Key features of such a scheme would be in line with guidance on bats and artificial lighting (Institution of Lighting Professionals 2018). Some key points are summarised as follows:
- Direct light away from key habitats, especially roost and nesting areas.
 - Keep light sources as low as possible to minimise light spill.
 - Use LED luminaries with a warm white spectrum (<2700 Kelvin) and peak wavelengths more than 550nm.
 - Set motion sensors on short timers (<1 minute if possible).

Recommendation 5 – New Sparrow Nest Sites

- 6.17 To compensate for the loss of bird nest sites resulting from the development, and provide enhancements which are likely to become occupied, at least 2 sparrow nest terraces (with 2 or more nests each) are recommended for inclusion into the new garage.
- 6.18 Build-in woodcrete/woodstone (or equivalent) boxes are particularly suitable as these are durable and do not need to be replaced. They can also be attached permanently to exterior walls, and opened for annual cleaning out in autumn. Suitable boxes can be sourced from retailers such as NHBS, Wildcare and the RSPB. An example build-in nest box is shown in Figure 4.
- 6.19 For sparrow boxes, installation should follow manufacturer's guidance, with placement:
- under the eaves or high on a wall
 - at least 3m (10 feet) from the ground
 - facing north or east to avoid getting too hot or wet
 - close to vegetation
 - in groups.
- 6.20 Nest boxes can be cleaned annually to remove old nest material, in autumn after birds have finished breeding.

Figure 4 – Example Build-in Sparrow Terrace⁵

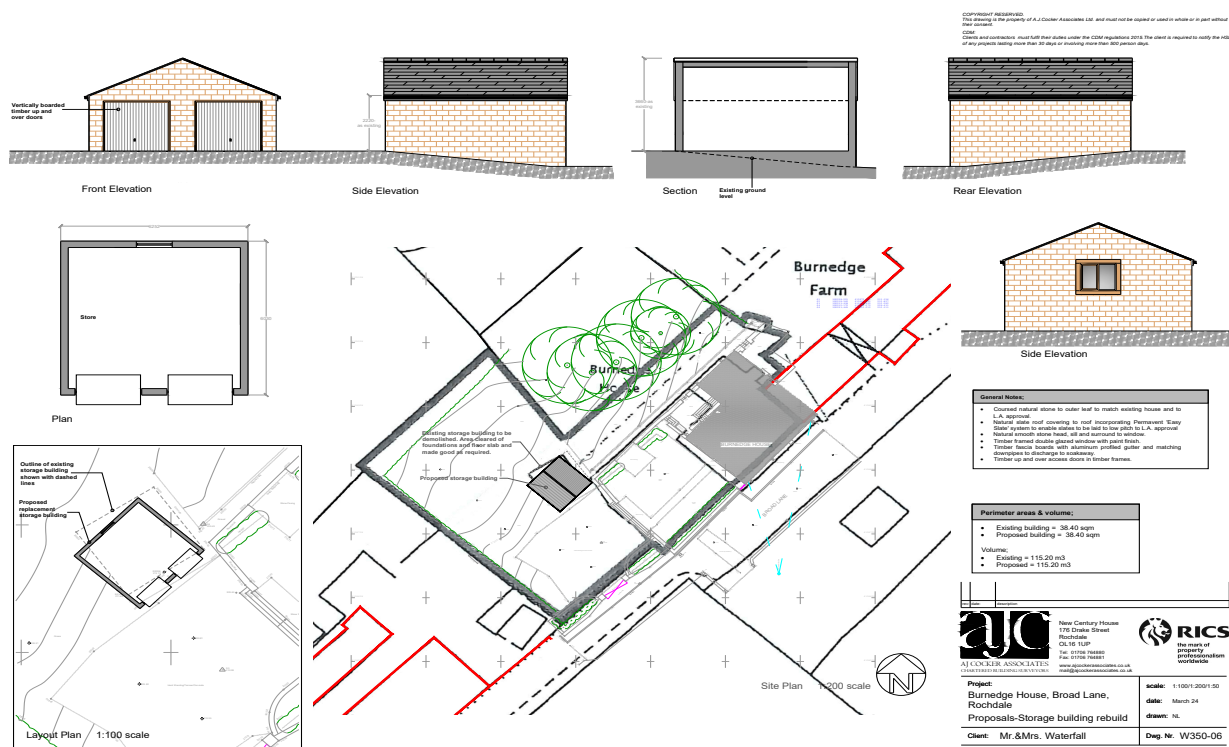


⁵ <https://www.nhbs.com/vivara-pro-woodstone-house-sparrow-nest-box>

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APPENDIX 1 PROPOSED SITE PLAN



APPENDIX 2 HABTIAT CONDITION SHEETS

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)			
UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type			
Grassland - Modified grassland			
On-site or off-site, site name and location	On site, Burned House	Survey date and Surveyor name	13/5/24 Helen Hamilton
Limitations (if applicable)		Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)	
Grid reference		Habitat parcel reference	
Habitat Description			
ukhab – UK Habitat Classification			
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.	no	
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Yes	no scrub
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	storage, regular mowing
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	No	dense sward
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> less than 20%.	Yes	no bracken
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁴).	No	Himalayan balsam
Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)			
Number of criteria passed			
Condition Assessment Result (out of 7 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/✓	
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)	1	
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score			

Condition Sheet: URBAN Habitat Type			
Habitat Types			
Sparsely vegetated land - Ruderal/Ephemeral Sparsely vegetated land - Tall forbs Urban - Allotments Urban - Biodiverse green roof Urban - Bioswale Urban - Cemeteries and churchyards Urban - Facade-bound green wall Urban - Ground based green wall Urban - Intensive green roof Urban - Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land Urban - Rain garden Urban - Sustainable drainage system (SuDS) Urban - Vacant or derelict land Urban - Bare ground			
Habitat Description			
Developed land sealed surface. Mosaic of developed land and natural surface			
See the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide for green roofs and UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) for other habitats:			UKHab – UK Habitat Classification
On-site or off-site, site name and location	Buredge House	Survey date and Surveyor name	13/5/24 Helen Hamilton
Limitations (if applicable)		Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)	
Grid reference		Habitat parcel reference	Developed land sealed surface; mosaic of developed land and natural
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
Core Criteria - must be assessed for all urban habitat types :			
A	Vegetation structure is varied, providing opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live, eat and breed. A single structural habitat component or vegetation type does not account for more than 80% of the total habitat area.	No	Sparse or tall rank ruderal vegetation
B	The habitat parcel contains different plant species that are beneficial for wildlife, for example flowering species providing nectar sources for a range of invertebrates at different times of year.	No	Grass dominant
C	Invasive non-native plant species (listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ¹) and others which are to the detriment of native wildlife (using professional judgement) ² cover less than 5% of the total vegetated area ³ . Note - to achieve Good condition, this criterion must be satisfied by a complete absence of invasive non-native species (rather than <5% cover).	No	Himalayan balsam 5% of vegetation in both habitats
Additional Criterion - must be assessed for Open mosaic habitat on previously developed land only:			
D	The parcel shows spatial variation and forms a mosaic of bare substrate PLUS: - At least four early successional communities (a) to (i); Communities: (a) annuals; (b) mosses/liverworts; (c) lichens; (d) ruderals; (e) inundation species; (f) open grassland; (g) flower-rich grassland; (h) heathland, (i) pools.	NA	
Additional Criteria - must be assessed for Bioswale and SuDS habitat types only:			
E1	Plant species are mostly native. If non-native species are present, they should not be detrimental to the habitat or native wildlife ⁴ .		
E2	The vegetation is comprised of plant species suited to wetland or riparian situations.		
Additional Criterion - must be assessed for Intensive green roofs only:			

APPENDIX 3 STATUTORY BIODIVERSITY METRIC

Project Name: Burnedge House Map Reference: Figure 1					Area habitat summary					
A-1 On-Site Habitat Baseline					Total Net Unit Change		0.01			
					Total Net % Change		91.04%			
					Trading Rules Satisfied		Yes ✓			
Condense / Show Columns					Condense / Show Rows					
Main Menu										
Existing area habitats					Distinctiveness		Condition		Strategic significance	
Ref	Broad Habitat	Habitat Type	Irreplaceable habitat	Area (hectares)	Distinctiveness	Score	Condition	Score	Strategic significance	Strategic significance
1	Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	No	0.005	V.Low	0	N/A - Other	0	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance
2	Urban	Vacant or derelict land	No	0.002	Low	2	Poor	1	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance
3	Grassland	Modified grassland	No	0.001	Low	2	Poor	1	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance

	Required Action to Meet Trading Rules	Ecological baseline							
Strategic significance multiplier		Total habitat units		Area retained	Area enhanced	Baseline units retained	Baseline units enhanced	Area habitat lost	Units lost
1	Compensation Not Required	0.00		0.005	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required ≥	0.00		0	0.001	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required >	0.00		0	0.001	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Project Name: Burnedge House Map Reference: Figure 2					A-3 On-Site Habitat Enhancement						
Condense / Show Columns					Condense / Show Rows						
Main Menu											
					Baseline habitats						
Baseline ref	Baseline habitat	Total habitat area (hectares)	Baseline distinctiveness band	Baseline distinctiveness score	Baseline condition category	Baseline condition score	Baseline strategic significance category	Baseline strategic significance score	Baseline habitat units	Required Action to Meet Trading Rules	Proposed Broad Habitat
2	Urban - Vacant or derelict land	0.002	Low	2	Poor	1	Low Strategic Significance	1	0.00	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required ≥	Grassland
3	Grassland - Modified grassland	0.001	Low	2	Poor	1	Low Strategic Significance	1	0.00	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required ≥	Heathland and scrub

Area habitat summary											
Total Wet Year Change			0.01								
Wet Wet Yr Change			0.00								
Wet Wet Yr Change			Yes ✓								
Pool intervention habitats											
Habit (Broad habitat pre-populated but can be overridden)		Change in distinctiveness and condition		Area (hectares)	Distinctiveness	Score	Condition	Score	Strategic significance		
		Distinctiveness change	Condition change						Strategic significance	Strategic significance	Strategic significance
Proposed habitat									Location ecologically desirable but not in local strategy	Medium strategic significance	1.1
Modified grassland		Low - Low	Poor - Moderate	0.001	Low	2	Moderate	2	Location ecologically desirable but not in local strategy	Medium strategic significance	1.1
Mixed scrub		Low - Medium	Lower Distinctiveness Habitat - Moderate	0.001	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Location ecologically desirable but not in local strategy	Medium strategic significance	1.1