

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment



Hopwood Hall College, Rochdale

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Summary

ADAS Ecology were commissioned by Willmott Dixon on behalf of their client in support of a planning application to develop Hopwood Hall College, a further education centre in Rochdale, located at Rochdale Campus, St Mary's Gate, Rochdale OL12 6RY. The current application involves proposals to demolish an existing college building (block B) and associated garages and the construction of a new block B on an area of the site currently used as a car park, the proposed development includes hard and soft landscaping.

The site comprised Modified Grassland, Developed Land; Sealed Surface and Non-Native Ornamental Hedgerow. It is anticipated that all area habitats on site will be lost besides 0.03 ha of modified grassland and 0.03 of Buildings (block A). In addition, 0.04 km of a 0.07 km non-native ornamental hedgerow will be retained. The site had a baseline of 0.19 habitat units and 0.07 hedgerow units.

To compensate for the loss of habitat the following habitats will be created on site; Other Neutral Grassland, Modified Grassland, Ground Level Planters and thirteen Urban Trees. The creation of Native Hedgerow will compensate for the loss of the 0.03 km of Non-native and Ornamental Hedgerow.

This will result in a net change of 0.56 habitat units and 0.03 linear units.

This change provides a **290.34% net gain** in area habitat units and a **48.13% net gain** in linear units.

A management plan will be required to ensure the target habitats and conditions are attained.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

This report has been commissioned by Willmott Dixon on behalf of their client in support of a planning application to develop Hopwood Hall College, a further education centre in Rochdale, located at Rochdale Campus, St Mary's Gate, Rochdale OL12 6RY (OS Grid Reference SD 89339 13366), hereafter referred to as 'the site'. The current application involves proposals to demolish an existing college building (block B) and associated garages and construct a new block B on an area of the site currently used as a car park, the proposed development includes hard and soft landscaping.

Due to the nature of the proposed development, it is understood that a biodiversity net gain assessment of the proposed works is required, as per local and national policy. Biodiversity net gain occurs in development when the project leaves the natural environment in a better state than it was prior to the project. To achieve biodiversity net gain, the developer is required to ensure that wildlife habitats are created or enhanced. It requires the development to result in a demonstrable increase in habitat value to the baseline (how the site was prior to development). Biodiversity net gain should be demonstrated quantitatively.

To demonstrate biodiversity net gain, the value of the habitats are assessed using a recognised metric tool to calculate biodiversity units. The biodiversity losses or gains resulting from the development are then calculated by subtracting the baseline (pre-development) units from the post development units. The statutory biodiversity metric (Defra, 2024a) has been used to demonstrate biodiversity net gain in a quantitative manner.

The *Biodiversity Net Gain Good Practice Principles for Development* (CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA, 2016) are a set of ten principles which have been produced to provide a framework that helps improve the UK's biodiversity by contributing towards strategic priorities to conserve and enhance nature while progressing with sustainable development. To demonstrate that biodiversity net gain has been achieved in a qualitative manner for a development it would need to be shown that the development meets these ten principles which have been listed below:

- *Apply the mitigation hierarchy*
- *Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset by gains elsewhere*
- *Be inclusive and equitable*
- *Address risks*
- *Make a measurable net gain contribution*
- *Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity*
- *Be additional*

- *Create a net gain legacy*
- *Optimise sustainability*
- *Be transparent*

1.2 Objectives of the report

The biodiversity net gain assessment has been produced in accordance with the British Standard (BS) for Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development, BS42020:2013.

The objectives of this report are as follows:

1. *To identify the planning policy context relevant to BNG matters on the site.*
2. *To describe the baseline biodiversity value of the site based on the UK Habitat condition assessment.*
3. *To evaluate the proposed biodiversity of the site based on the agreed final landscape proposals.*
4. *To calculate the predicted change in the biodiversity unit value of the site post development and demonstrate the potential biodiversity net gain of the proposed development in a quantitative manner.*
5. *To assess if the proposed development meets the requirements of the trading rules and demonstrate how the proposed development does meet those requirements.*
6. *To demonstrate how the proposed development meets the ten principles set out in the 'Biodiversity Net Gain Good Practice Principles for Development' and has led with the mitigation hierarchy.*

1.3 Structure of the Report

The remainder of this report is structured in the following manner:

- *Section 2 Planning Policy Context. This describes the national, county and district level planning policy relevant to biodiversity net gain matters in relation to the proposed development.*
- *Section 3 Methods. Describes the methods used to undertake the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment.*
- *Section 4 Proposed Development. This section describes the proposed development.*
- *Section 5 Baseline Biodiversity Unit Assessment. This section describes the biodiversity baseline information, identifies key habitats, analyses the condition of the baseline habitats, and provides the findings of the baseline biodiversity units.*
- *Section 6 Proposed Biodiversity Unit Assessment. This analyses the effects of the proposed development on the baseline biodiversity units identified in section 5 and details the provision of biodiversity within the proposed development. This section will also assess the proposed development against the mitigation hierarchy and ten principles.*
- *Section 7 BNG Good Practice Principles. This section outlines how each of the BNG Principles have been applied as part of the assessment.*
- *Section 8 Conclusion. This final part of the report summarises the overall effects on biodiversity on the site and if the proposed development can achieve a net gain in biodiversity.*

1.4 The Author

This document has been prepared by Emily King, ADAS Senior Ecological Consultant. Emily is a professional member of Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and holds an Honors degree in Geography and Environmental Sciences. She has FISC level 3 and has attended training delivered by CIEEM on biodiversity net gain. ADAS is a Landscape Institute and CIEEM registered practice, and all work is prepared and reviewed internally by senior highly experienced Ecologists.

2 Legislation and Policy Background

2.1 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2024), is a policy framework document which provides a range of important principles. Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural local environment by:

‘Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.’

Paragraph 188 goes on to state:

‘... take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.’

When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles (paragraph 193):

‘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.’

2.2 The Environment Act (2021)

Paragraph 2 (3) of Schedule 14 of The Environment Act 2021 makes it mandatory for all new developments (with some limited exceptions) to achieve a biodiversity net gain (BNG) of at least 10% by the time the development is completed compared to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat. This percentage may be amended in the future by the Secretary of State. Please note that some Local Policies stipulate a higher target than this.

The Act allows three methods for securing biodiversity net gains:

1. enhancement of the biodiversity of land to which the planning permission relates;
2. the allocation of registered offsite biodiversity gain to any development for which the planning permission is granted; and
3. the purchase of biodiversity credits for any such development.

A biodiversity gain statement must set out whether, and if so how, the biodiversity gain objective applies in relation to development where the onsite habitat is irreplaceable, how the development will minimise any adverse effects to the onsite habitat, and what the evidence must be produced to show how the biodiversity net gain has been met upon completion of the development.

Biodiversity gains will need to be maintained for at least 30 years after the development is completed.

2.3 Local Policy

Table 1 details the policies within the Rochdale Borough Local Plan (Core Strategy 2016 – 2028) which are relevant to the ecological features on site. Rochdale’s Core Strategy was adopted in October 2016 and forms the basis of the Rochdale Local Plan, covering a period of 12 years from 2016 to 2028. It sets out the long-term strategic policies for future development, and will form the framework that planning applications will be assessed against.

Table 1: Summary of relevant local planning policy – Rochdale Borough Local Plan to 2028, adopted October 2016

Policy	Description
SO4	To promote a greener environment To do this, Rochdale will focus on: 1. <i>Minimising Rochdale’s contribution to climate change and mitigating and adapting to its adverse effects;</i> 2. <i>Ensuring in particular that development is energy efficient and contributes to carbon reduction;</i> 3. <i>Reducing the likelihood of flooding through appropriate flood risk management, especially in Rochdale town centre and parts of Littleborough and Heywood;</i> 4. <i>Improving our urban open spaces and making them more accessible;</i> 5. <i>Maximising the value of our green open areas and countryside to provide opportunities for recreation, amenity, biodiversity, and flood management;</i> 6. <i>Minimising and managing waste and managing minerals resources sustainably; and,</i> 7. <i>Ensuring no detriment to the conservation interests of European and other protected natural sites.</i>
G7	Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity We will ensure that sites and features of biodiversity and geodiversity importance are given full and appropriate recognition and protection. Opportunities for enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity, creating new sites and features of interest and improving opportunities for public enjoyment will be supported. No development should result in a net loss of biodiversity or geodiversity interest in the borough and overall development in the borough should result in a net gain. Particular priorities for biodiversity and geodiversity are: 1. <i>The South Pennine Moors - our focus is to maintain and enhance the peatland habitats of the moorland and to support development, land and water management activities which provide an opportunity to conserve and enhance the value of moorland for upland breeding birds of conservation significance and the habitats on which they depend and which do not harm biodiversity value. Our focus is the designated Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation but also the wider moorland where such interest is present or could be supported through appropriate development or land management. We will also protect and support enhancement measures for areas of geodiversity value.</i> 2. <i>The Rochdale Canal - our focus is to ensure that the Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation and the wider biodiversity interest of the canal is given full and appropriate protection and ensure that development which delivers the economic and recreational value of the Rochdale Canal and its wider corridor supports and does not harm its biodiversity value.</i>

Policy	Description
	3. <i>Upland farmland - our focus is to ensure that the biodiversity interest of upland farmland including its value for birds, woodland and grassland is protected and opportunities for enhancement and the creation of new interest maximised through land management improvements and appropriate development activities.</i> 4. <i>Countryside around towns - our focus is to protect and enhance the biodiversity interest of river valleys, woodland, water and farmland including the reclamation of derelict and neglected land and flood risk management measures. We will also support actions which enhance public access and enjoyment of countryside close to urban areas including Local Nature Reserves and the wider countryside.</i> 5. <i>Urban Areas - our priority is to protect and enhance existing urban biodiversity and to support opportunities for new urban biodiversity corridors, sites and features including sustainable urban drainage schemes, new public realm provision, street trees and urban woodlands, ponds and lodges, green roofs and natural play areas.</i> 6. <i>Designated sites of ecological importance - will be given appropriate protection according to their European, national or local status and in accordance with policies in other development plan documents, supporting Supplementary Planning Documents and Biodiversity Action Plans.</i> 7. <i>Protected Species: Development proposals which would affect a species protected by law or its habitat will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that:</i> a. <i>There is no adverse impact on the species concerned;</i> b. <i>Damage to habitats is minimal and alternative habitat provision is effective in maintaining those species.</i> Opportunities to protect, enhance and create features of biodiversity or geodiversity interest should be informed by the detail of any formal designation of a site or area and supporting plans and guidance such as Local Biodiversity Action Plans, Green Infrastructure Strategies and Action Plans and the Council's Biodiversity and Development SPD. We will expect development proposals and improvements to: a) <i>Protect and include existing biodiversity (including established biodiversity interest on brownfield land) within new developments, public realm and open spaces and meet the requirements of the Biodiversity and Development SPD, Greater Manchester and Local Biodiversity Action Plans;</i> b) <i>Protect and enhance existing features such as peatland, ponds, wetlands, reservoirs, mill lodges, trees, hedges, wooded areas, meadows, flora and fauna;</i> c) <i>Take opportunities to promote biodiversity and create new habitats through new development using landscaping and building and construction features wherever possible (e.g. ponds, species of vegetation, green roofs and walls, bat boxes, roof space, appropriate nest boxes and landscaping);</i> d) <i>Enhance strategic wildlife corridors and the most natural areas and ensure that habitats and corridors are not fragmented by development;</i> e) <i>Improve access where appropriate to new or existing biodiversity interest for public enjoyment; and</i> f) <i>Protect important geology and take opportunities to increase interest and accessibility.</i>

3 Methods

3.1 Baseline Habitat Assessment

This assessment was carried out as a desk-based exercise, using the results of the UK Habitat Classification Survey (UKHab Ltd 2023) and DEFRA Condition Assessment (DEFRA, 2024) by ADAS Senior Ecological Consultant Emily King ACIEEM, and ADAS Assistant Ecological Consultant Lucy Cater on 11 September 2024 and based on the landscape design drawing, shown in Appendix 1.

3.2 The Mitigation Hierarchy

The aim of the BNG assessment is to identify, predict and evaluate potential key effects arising from the proposed development and assess them against the mitigation hierarchy. The mitigation hierarchy requires that developers first take steps to avoid and then to minimise impacts on biodiversity. Only after these steps are taken should developers look to compensate for losses that cannot be avoided. Finally, if compensation within the development footprint is not possible or does not generate the most benefits for nature conservation, the losses should be offset elsewhere. The proposals have been developed in accordance with the British Standard for 'Process for designing and implementing Biodiversity Net Gain – Specification', BS8683:2021 to reduce risk to harm of biodiversity and maximise the potential gains on the site.

3.3 Biodiversity Metric Rules

The rules set out in table 2 must be followed, otherwise a biodiversity net gain cannot be claimed for the project.

Table 2: Metric rules

Rule	Details
1	The trading rules of the biodiversity metric must be followed.
2	Biodiversity unit outputs, for each type of unit, must not be summed, traded, or converted between types. The requirement to deliver at least a 10% net gain applies to each type of unit.
3	To accurately apply the biodiversity metric formula, you must use the statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool or small sites biodiversity metric tool (SSM) for small sites. The tools remove the need for a user to manually calculate the change in biodiversity value. The tool will summarise the results of the calculation and inform a user whether the biodiversity net gain objective has been met.
4	In exceptional ecological circumstances, deviation from this biodiversity metric methodology may be permitted by the relevant planning authority

3.4 Biodiversity Metric Calculation

Biodiversity metrics (units) were calculated for the site using the “Statutory Biodiversity Metric- Calculation Tool” and guidance available on the government website (Defra, 2024a, 2024b). The biodiversity metric spreadsheet is provided as an Excel file with this report.

The metric uses area and linear habitat features as a proxy measure for capturing the value and importance of biodiversity. It uses a calculation in MS Excel to allow for the importance of these features for nature: their size, ecological condition, distinctiveness and location. The metric enables assessments to be made of the baseline (pre-intervention) biodiversity value of a site in terms of ‘biodiversity units’ and calculates the projected post-development (post-intervention) biodiversity value. The metric can also be used to measure off-site biodiversity changes for a project or development and can be applied from the level of an individual field to, for example, an entire river catchment.

The calculator uses the following variable elements to determine biodiversity units, based on the information collected in the field:

Habitat type: The original survey was based on the UK Habitat (UKHabs) classification system (UKHab Ltd, 2023).

Area (Hectares): The area has been measured based on the digitized habitat map using QGIS. Measurements have been rounded up or down to achieve a minimum mapping unit (MMU) of 0.01 ha. Mapping habitats at different times of year may lead to variation between where one habitat starts and another begins as there is potential overlap between habitats (the ecotone). The actual field mapping is based on both field survey and aerial imagery (Figure 1) in order to achieve the best representation of the areas covered by each habitat identified on-site. The areas for the post development site were taken from a pdf version of the development plan - Appendix 1 (Drawing number FE0012-ALA-XX-XX-D-L-0029_ Site Landscape Plan - Illustrative_P06).

Condition: The condition is a means to measure the quality of a habitat based on a series of physical characteristics and typical species of a particular habitat type. In order to aid the process, the statutory metric provides ‘condition assessment sheets (Defra, 2024c).’ Condition sheets provide a list of positive indicators for each habitat and dependent on how many positive indicators a particular habitat meets will equate to the relevant condition for that specific habitat. In order that this process can be followed, in relation to this calculation, the number of positive indicators that are met for each habitat type are presented in the accompanying excel document for each habitat found on-site.

Strategic significance: This element is to assess the habitats on site in relation to the geographical location in which they are located. Information to determine the significance of a habitat within a specific landscape can be found in Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) as well as a variety of sources that

include local plans, local biodiversity and National Character Areas. The strategic significance is based on three categories which equate to a different score, which are as follows: High – 1.15; Medium – 1.1 and Low - 1.

3.5 Limitations

Measurements are based on a two-dimensional mapping and would assume the site is completely flat and therefore certain habitats may be greater in extent if they occur on a slope.

In the field the surveyor will have judged the approximate area of each of the habitat types and where appropriate used aerial imagery to assist with mapping of the habitats as accurately as possible.

4 Proposed Development

Development proposals includes the demolition of block B and garages. A four-storey building (Block B replacement) will be constructed to the northwest of the site on the existing car park. Proposals include associated hard and soft landscaping comprising Modified Grassland, Neutral Grassland, Ground Level Planters, thirteen Urban Trees and Native Hedgerow.

The area in which 'potential block A replacement' will be located; however, is not included within the existing planning application, therefore has been classified as Developed Land; Sealed Surface since any temporary enhancements here may not be retained for 30 years which would be required as part of the biodiversity net gain agreement. Current proposed plans are outlined in the document 'FE0012-ALA-XX-XX-D-L-0029_Site Landscape Plan - Illustrative_P06' (see Appendix 1).

5 Baseline Biodiversity Unit Assessment

5.1 On-site Baseline

The habitats identified during the habitat survey are listed and described below. All habitats are marked on the habitat map in Appendix 2, and each habitat type is illustrated with a photograph in Appendix 5. No habitats present on site were considered irreplaceable.

- *Modified Grassland – g4 (108, 845, 202)*
- *Developed Land; Sealed Surface u1b (800, 804)*
- *Buildings – u1b5 (813)*
- *Other Developed Land – u1b6 (847, 823, 814, 845)*
- *Non-Native and Ornamental Hedgerows – h2b (523, 510)*

5.1.1 Habitats

5.1.1.1 *Modified Grassland – g4*

Modified grassland was present on site, all of which was frequently mown (Secondary code 108) (Appendix 5: Photograph 1 and 2). Frequent mowing to maintain the lawn has resulted in a very short sward which was on average 5-7 cm tall. Four patches of grassland were present, the first located to the west of the site adjacent to the car park entrance (Grid reference: SD 89207 13424), the second immediately east of the main college building (Grid reference: SD 89321 13364), the third immediately north of the main college building (Grid reference: SD 89354 13404) and the fourth was located to the east of the main college building (Grid reference: SD 89368 13381). Where the retaining walls were staggered, this formed tiered grassland areas leading down to the children play area. Ground level planters (Secondary code 845) were located around the edges of this area and two young self-set trees (Secondary code 202) were growing from the planters both of which had stems measuring <7.5cm diameter at breast height (DBH).

All grassland areas were similar in composition, dominated by grasses typical of improvement including Perennial Ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*) and Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), as well as scattered patches of thick moss (*Bryophyta* sp). The most frequent herbs were also indicative of improvement; these included White Clover (*Trifolium repens*), Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), Ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), Self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*), and Common Mouse-ear (*Cerastium fontanum*). Daisy (*Beilis perennis*), Dandelion (*Taraxacum agg.*), Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Small-flowered Bittercress (*Cardamine parviflora*), and Common Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*) were also present but rare. Rough Hawkbit (*Leontodon hispidus*), Ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*) and Round-leaved Cranesbill (*Geranium rotundifolium*) were also present occasionally.

5.1.1.2 Developed land: sealed surface u1b (800, 804)

A car park (Secondary code 804) (Appendix 5: Photograph 3) with associated roads (Secondary code 800) and pathways were present.

5.1.1.3 Buildings u1b5 (813)

Educational buildings were present on site (Secondary code 813). Block A is partially included within the site boundary with the main section of the block outside the site boundary; however, a single storey main entrance / reception with a Skywalk above connecting block A and B is included within the site boundary. It is anticipated that block A will be retained (Appendix 5: Photograph 4). Block B (Appendix 5: Photograph 5,) a modern multistorey building, was the largest building on site. Adjacent to block B was a small single storey garage (Appendix 5: Photograph 6), which was being used as storage and workshops. Both structures will be demolished as part of the proposed development.

5.1.1.4 Other developed land u1b6 (847,823,814,845)

An outside children's play space (Secondary code 823, 814) (Appendix 5; Photograph 7) was present immediately to the east of block B. The area comprised a solid rubber surface with scattered ground level planters (Secondary code 845) and a small area of ornamental planting (Secondary code 847).

5.1.1.5 Non-native and ornamental hedgerow h2b (523, 510)

A non-native (Secondary code 523) hedgerow bordered a patch of grassland to the north of block B (OS Grid Reference SD 89375 13399) (Appendix 5: Photograph 8) which was composed of privet (*Ligustrum sp.*). The ground at the base of the hedgerow was bare (Secondary code 510).

5.2 Habitat Baseline Assessment

The condition of each habitat has been assessed against the relevant positive indicators. Summaries of the habitat units and linear units for each baseline habitat are provided in Tables 3 and 4 below. A full breakdown of the condition assessments is presented in a separate document, accompanying this report and the metric.

For strategic significance, the Greater Manchester Nature Network Map was consulted, two small parcels of modified grasslands (SD 89203 13423 and SD 89321 13363) were identified as 'Nature Recovery Opportunity Areas'.

Table 3: Baseline assessment – on-site area habitats

Habitat type	Area (hectares)	Condition	Strategic significance	Total habitat units
Modified grassland	0.03	Poor	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.06
Modified grassland	0.02	Poor	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.04
Modified grassland	0.04	Poor	Formally identified in local strategy	0.09
Developed land; sealed surface (Hardstanding)	0.83	N/A - Other	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.00
Developed land; sealed surface (Buildings)	0.21	N/A - Other	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.00
Developed land; sealed surface (Children's outside play area)	0.04	N/A - Other	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.00
Total	1.17	-	-	0.19

Table 4: Baseline assessment – on-site linear habitats

Habitat type	Length (km)	Condition	Strategic significance	Total habitat units
Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	0.07	Poor	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.07
Total	0.07	-	-	0.07

5.3 Trading Rules

For habitat trading purposes the following is required for each baseline habitat:

- *Modified Grassland: Low distinctiveness, replace with same distinctiveness or better;*
- *Developed Land; Sealed Surface: Very low distinctiveness, compensation not required;*
- *Non-native and Ornamental hedgerow: Very low distinctiveness, compensation not required.*

6 Proposed Biodiversity Unit Assessment

6.1 Impacts of the Proposed Development

Development proposals includes the demolition of block B and garages. A four-storey building (Block B replacement) will be constructed to the northwest of the site on the existing car park. Proposals include associated hard and soft landscaping comprising Modified Grassland, Neutral Grassland, Ground Level Planters, thirteen Urban Trees and Native Hedgerows. A parcel of grassland (grid reference: Grid reference: SD89368 13381) will be retained to the east of the existing block B where the retaining walls were staggered forming tiered grassland areas leading down to the children play area, a short section of non-native and ornamental hedgerow will also be retained.

The area in which 'Potential block A replacement' will be located; however, is not included within the existing planning application therefore has been classified as developed land sealed surface since any temporary enhancements here may not be retained for 30 years which would be required as part of the biodiversity net gain agreement. Current proposed plans are outlined in the document 'FE0012-ALA-XX-XX-D-L-0029_ Site Landscape Plan - Illustrative_P06' (see Appendix 1).

6.2 On-site Habitats

The new on-site area habitats are based on the development plan in Appendix 1 and are summarised in Table 5 with new linear features summarised in Table 6.

Table 5: Summary of on-site habitat creation and retention

Habitat type	Area (hectares)	Condition	Strategic significance	Total habitat units
Creation				
Modified grassland	0.09	Poor	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.17
Other neutral grassland	0.05	Moderate	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.33
Ground level planters	0.01	Condition Assessment N/A	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.02
Developed land; sealed surface	0.6	N/A - Other	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.00
Developed land; sealed surface	0.18	N/A - Other	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.00
Developed land; sealed surface	0.19	N/A - Other	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.00

Habitat type	Area (hectares)	Condition	Strategic significance	Total habitat units
Urban tree	0.0529	Moderate	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.16
Retained				
Modified grassland	0.03	Poor	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.06
Developed land; sealed surface	0.03	N/A - Other	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.00
Total	1.17			0.75

*The metric calculator does not include the area measurement for urban street trees in the total due to the overlap in habitats

Table 6: Summary of on-site linear feature creation and retention

Linear type	Length (km)	Condition	Strategic significance	Total habitat units
Creation				
Native hedgerow	0.03	Poor	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.06
Native hedgerow	0.003	Poor	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.01
Retained				
Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	0.04	Poor	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	0.04
Total	0.073			0.11

6.2.1 Condition

It is considered that Other Neutral Grassland can achieve a moderate condition within five years, it is understood that parcels will be seeded with a wildflower mix, not regularly mown, resulting in a varied sward height, scrub present will account for less than 20%, physical damage less than 5%, bare ground no more than 10%, cover of Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) less than 20%, and an absence of invasive non-native plant species.

It is considered that Modified Grassland can achieve a poor condition within one year. It is not possible for the habitat to achieve moderate or good condition as it is not expected to achieve between 6-8 vascular plant species per m².

It is considered that the Native Hedgerow will achieve poor condition, it will comprise one species Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), be 150cm in height and 0.35m in width with a regular management routine keeping it neatly clipped.

It is considered that Urban Trees can achieve moderate condition, the trees are anticipated to be native species (or at least 70% within a block native species); more than 20% of each tree canopy is expected to over sail vegetation (Modified Grassland or Other Neutral Grassland).

6.3 Summary of Habitat Changes

The total biodiversity value of the onsite habitats prior to development was 0.19 units. Of these habitats, 0.06 units (Modified Grassland) will be retained and protected during the construction phase of the development. All other baseline units will be lost during the construction phase of the development. Post-construction, 0.69 units of equal or better distinctiveness will be created on-site.

Under the current scheme design, post-development habitats and their associated target conditions will achieve **a total net change of 0.56 biodiversity units, which represents a 290.34% net gain.**

It is anticipated that 0.03 km of non-native and ornamental hedgerow will be lost and 0.04 km will be retained. It is anticipated that two native hedgerows will be created totaling 0.033 km, **equal to 0.06 linear units.** This represents a **48.13% net gain.**

A screenshot of the headline results within the biodiversity metric is shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Summary of Statutory Biodiversity Metric results

On-site baseline	Habitat units	0.19			
	Hedgerow units	0.07			
	Watercourse units	0.00			
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.75			
	Hedgerow units	0.10			
	Watercourse units	0.00			
On-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	0.56	290.34%		
	Hedgerow units	0.03	48.13%		
	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	0.56			
	Hedgerow units	0.03			
	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	0.56			
	Hedgerow units	0.03			
	Watercourse units	0.00			
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	290.34%			
	Hedgerow units	48.13%			
	Watercourse units	0.00%			
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓				
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit	
Habitat units	10.00%	0.19	0.21	0.00	No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.07	0.08	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 ✓

7 BNG Good Practice Principles for Development

Table 8 below outlines the justification of how each of the BNG Principles has been applied as part of the biodiversity net gain assessment.

Table 8: Good practice principles and their consideration within the scheme

Good Practice Principle	Site Considerations
Apply the mitigation hierarchy	Refer to Section 7.1 for more information
Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset elsewhere	No irreplaceable habitat will be lost, and no habitats of very high or high distinctiveness will be impacted. There will be a loss of Modified Grassland and a section of Non-Native Ornamental Hedgerow. The loss of the aforementioned habitats have been offset site with the creation of habitats.
Compensate / Offset	The creation of Modified Grassland, Neutral Grassland, Ground Level Planters and Urban Trees on site will achieve >10% increase in habitat areas and compensate for area habitat loss. The creation of Native Hedgerow will achieve >10% net gain in linear (hedgerow) units.
Be inclusive and equitable	Achieve net gain with the inclusion of a range of local and specialist stakeholders during enhancement design and implementation, where possible.
Address risk	The Statutory Biodiversity Metric has been used as a nationally recognised method to quantify biodiversity changes from the proposed development. Proposed retained and created habitats will meet biodiversity net gain targets. A management plan will be produced to ensure biodiversity and environment targets for the development are actioned.
Make a measurable net gain contribution	The Statutory Biodiversity Metric has been used to quantify the net change in biodiversity achieved using the recommended enhancements and will achieve a 290.34 % net gain in habitat units and a 48.13% gain in linear units.
Be additional	A gain of over 10% is expected and the creation of a variety of habitats creates more ecological diversity.
Create a net gain legacy	The production of a Conservation Covenant agreement to ensure biodiversity net gain is achieved within 30 years at the site and habitats managed long-term to achieve best possible biodiversity and ecological status.
Optimise sustainability	By achieving net gain from proposed recommendations for the site in relation to biodiversity and ecology, the development will optimise environmental sustainability within the local area.
Be transparent	The biodiversity net gain assessment of the site has been made using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, and this report will be delivered alongside the calculation sheet and supported drawings used in the calculations. All metric choices have been fully explained and justified.

7.1 Consideration of the Mitigation Hierarchy

Table 9 below outlines how the mitigation hierarchy is being considered.

Table 9: Mitigation hierarchy

Hierarchy Step	Site Considerations
Avoid	The site is avoiding any significant impacts to designated sites or irreplaceable habitats. It is also avoiding the clearance of any medium or high distinctiveness habitats.
Minimise	Where possible impacts to existing biodiversity assets will be minimised (for example retaining a parcel of Modified Grassland and a section of existing Non-Native Ornamental Hedgerow).
Compensate / Offset	Detailed habitat compensation measures have been identified using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. Habitats lost on site will be compensated for by the creation of alternate ecologically distinct habitats, including Other Neutral Grassland, Modified Grassland, Ground Level Planters, and Urban Trees achieving >10% increase in habitat areas and compensate for area habitat loss. The creation of Native Hedgerow and will achieve >10% net gain in linear (hedgerow) units.

8 Conclusion

The site comprised Modified Grassland, Developed Land; Sealed Surface and Non-native and Ornamental Hedgerow. It is anticipated that all area habitats on site will be lost besides 0.03 ha of modified grassland and 0.03 ha of Buildings (block A). In addition, 0.04 km of a 0.07 km non-native ornamental hedgerow will be retained. The site had a baseline of 0.19 habitat units and 0.07 hedgerow units.

To compensate for the loss of habitat the following habitats will be created on site; Other Neutral Grassland, Modified Grassland, Ground Level Planters and twelve Urban Trees. The creation of Native Hedgerow will compensate for the loss of the 0.03 km of Non-native and Ornamental Hedgerow.

This will result in a net change of 0.56 habitat units and 0.03 linear units.

This change provides a **290.34% net gain** in area habitat units and a **48.13% net gain** in linear units.

A management plan will be required to ensure the target habitats and conditions are attained.

9 References

ADAS (2025) *ADAS_WNT69105-2007 (00) ADAS WNT69105-2007 (00) - Hopwood Hall College_PEA and PRA_December 2024*

CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA (2016) *Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice principles.*

CIEEM (2018) *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. September 2018.*

Defra (2024a) *Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool.*

Defra (2024b) *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User guide.*

Defra (2024c) *Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments*

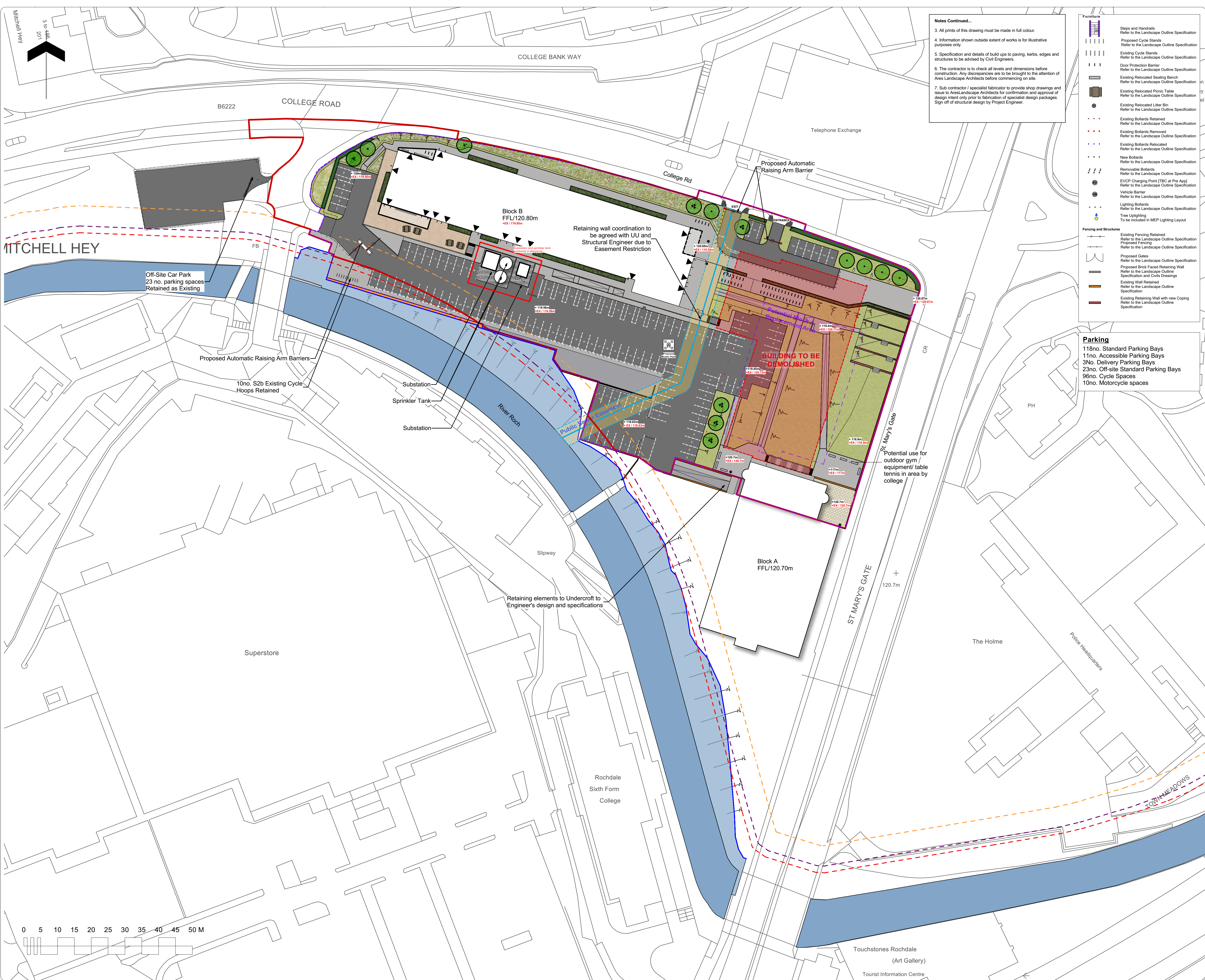
NPPF (2023) *National Planning Policy Framework: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation* . Department for Communities and Local Government, Norwich.

The British Standard Institute (2013) *BSI Standards Publication, Biodiversity — Code of practice for planning and development.*

UK HABS (2023) *The UK Habitat Classification: Habitat Definitions. Version 2.01.*

Appendix 1: Proposed Development

See following page.



Note

1. Do not scale from this drawing
2. To be read in conjunction with Project Risk Register REF: FS0939-ALA-XX-XX-RR-L-0001
3. To be read in conjunction with Landscape Outline Specifications REF: FE012-ALA-ZZ-XX-SP-L-0001
4. To be read in conjunction with all submitted Landscape Architect's drawings.
5. To be read in conjunction with all other consultants' drawings.

KEY

Site	Planning Application Boundary
Extent of Works	
Proposed Level	
Existing Level	
Gradient	
Proposed Building	
Existing Building to be demolished	
8m Defra boundary	
10m Riparian boundary	
16m Defra boundary	
Flood Zone 3 Boundary	
Building Overhang	
Future Building Footprint	
PV Canopy	
Planting	
Proposed Tree	
Proposed Multi-stem Tree	
Grass Seed	
Hedge Planting	
Amenity Planting	
Meadow Planting (Mix A)	
Meadow Planting (Mix B)	
Paving	
Pedestrian Macadam	
Vehicular Macadam	
Wet Pour Surface	
Concrete Surface	
Corduroy Paving	
Existing Concrete Flag	
Existing Macadam	
Blister Paving	
Lambeth Blister Paving	

ID	RISK	MITIGATION	DATE MITIGATED
RESIDUAL PROJECT RISKS			

DATE	REV	DESCRIPTION OF REVISION	DRAWN BY	APPROVED BY
28/04/2025	P06	Updated with rationalised grassland planting layout.	MM	MM
24/04/2025	P05	Issued for planning consultation boards.	MM	MM
10/04/2025	P04	Issued for draft Stage 4	LS	MM

REVISIONS

DEIR:

150

STATUS

S4 - Suitable for WDC Review & Authorisation

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CLIENT:

Hopwood Hall College

PROJECT TITLE:

Hopwood Hall College

DRAWING TITLE:

Site Landscape Plan - Illustrative

DRAWING SCALE:	DRAWN BY:	DRAWN DATE:
1:500	LS	02/12/2024
PAPER SIZE:	APPROVED BY:	ALA PROJECT CODE:
A1	MM	ALA866

DRAWING NUMBER:	STATUS:	REVISION:
FE0012-ALA-XX-XX-D-L-0029	S4	P06

Appendix 2: Habitat Survey Plan

See following page.



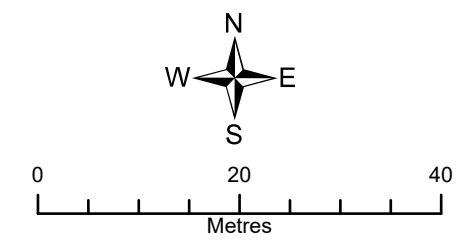
Hopwood Hall College

Rochdale Campus, St Mary's Gate,
Rochdale OL12 6RY
(SD 89339 13366)

UK Habitat Baseline

- Site boundary
- g4 - modified grassland
- h2b - non-native ornamental hedgerow
- u1b - developed land, sealed surface
- u1b5 - buildings
- u1b6 - other developed land
- Target notes

Drawn by Lewis Palmer 08/05/2025, Verified by Emily King 08/05/2025



1:750 at A3 size
Service Layer Credit
Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, IGN, and the GIS User Community

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Appendix 3: Photographs



Photograph 1: Modified grassland.



Photograph 2: Modified grassland close to the children's play area to the northeast of the site.



Photograph 3: Developed land; sealed surface. Car park and roads.



Photograph 4: Block A connected to block B.



Photograph 5: Block B.



Photograph 6: Garages.



Photograph 7: Other developed land; children's play area.



Photograph 8: Non-native and ornamental hedge.