

DURHAM STREET, ROCHDALE

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

December 2025



Report Control Sheet

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCOPE & PURPOSE

1.1.1. Collington Winter Environmental Ltd was commissioned by Design Studio North Architects to prepare a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment for the proposed works at Durham Street, Rochdale, OL11 1LS. This report has been prepared to inform planning application for the erection of four residential dwellings with associated private gardens.

1.1.2. The author of this report is Michael Boucher, Ecological Project Manager at Collington Winter and has been overseen by Katie Bird MEnvSci ACIEEM, Associate Director, who is highly experienced managing schemes and has produced many ecological reports to inform planning management plans.

1.1.3. This report has been written broadly following the Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Audit Templates (CIEEM, 2023).

1.2. LOCATION

1.2.1. Please refer to Figure 1.1 for the site location. The site is located in the centre of Rochdale, in highly urbanised surroundings just south of the trainline.

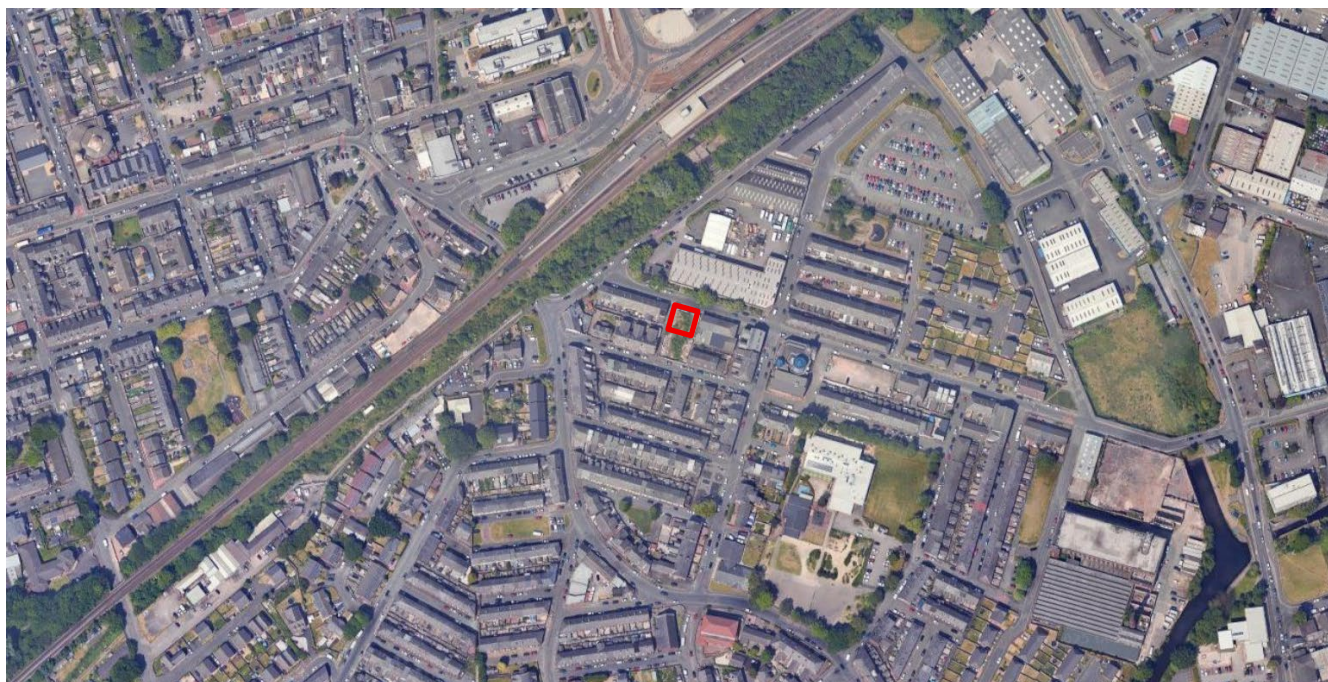


Figure 1.1 Site Location

1.3. OBJECTIVES

1.3.1. The report has been produced to document the methods, results and conclusions of a BNG Assessment undertaken based on the proposed development for the site to fulfil the following:

- Ensure that the mitigation hierarchy has been applied;
- Identify the baseline habitats present and provide a condition assessment;
- Identify the post development habitats on site, assess the possible target condition and provide an indication of the likely importance of those habitats;
- Calculate the overall change in biodiversity score from pre- post development
- Provide design recommendations to maximise potential net gain achievable
- Provide an indication of likely outcomes and indicative cost as required.

1.4 PLANNING CONTEXT

- 1.4.1 The Government 25-year Environment Plan states that government will “embed environmental net gain principle for development.”
- 1.4.2 National policy already sets out that planning should provide Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) where possible. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Paragraphs 174(d), 179(b) and 180(d) refer to this policy requirement and the Natural Environment Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides further explanation on how this should be done.
- 1.4.3 Under the Environment Act 2021, all planning permissions granted in England (with a few exemptions) except for small sites will have to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain from January 2024. BNG will be required for small sites from April 2024. BNG will be measured using Defra’s biodiversity metric and habitats will need to be secured for at least 30 years. Key points regarding BNG are listed below:
- Minimum 10% gain required calculated using Biodiversity Metric & approval of net gain plan.
 - Habitat secured for at least 30 years via obligations/ conservation covenant.
 - Habitat can be delivered on-site, off-site or via statutory biodiversity units.
 - There will be a national register for net gain delivery sites.
 - The mitigation hierarchy still applies of avoidance, mitigation, and compensation for biodiversity loss.
 - Will also apply to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs)
 - Does not apply to marine development.
 - Does not change existing legal environmental and wildlife protections.
- 1.4.4 Developers are required to undertake an assessment (using the nationally set BNG metric tool) of the current biodiversity value of their site both prior to and post the development proposal. In the event that the value of the site post-development is less than 10% better than it was prior to development then the developer will have an obligation to provide additional off-site BNG units to achieve the mandatory 10% net gain.

2 METHODS

2.1 EXISTING HABITAT (BASELINE)

- 2.1.1. A walkover of the site was undertaken by Michael Boucher, Ecological Project Manager at Collington Winter Environmental Ltd on the 25th November 2025. The methods were based on the standard methodology as detailed by UKHab classifications (The UK Habitat Classification Working Group, May 2023) using the UK Habitat Classification V2 guidance tool.

2.2 PLANNING LAYOUT (POST-DEVELOPMENT)

- 2.3.1. The Site Layout Plans created by Design Studio North Architects (reference: 597-001-0002) has provided a red line boundary.

2.3 STATUTORY BIODIVERSITY METRIC

- 2.3.1 The BNG calculation was undertaken utilising The Statutory Biodiversity Metric from DEFRA, the site's UK Habitat map and the Site Plan. The calculation was performed by a technically competent and experienced ecologist as detailed in British Standard BS8683 – Suitably qualified person – definition in BS8683:2020.
- 2.3.2 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric uses habitat features as a proxy measure for capturing the value and importance of nature. The metric considers the size, ecological condition, location and proximity to nearby 'connecting' features. The metric enables assessments to be made of the present and forecast future biodiversity value of a site.

2.4 HABITAT SCORING

- 2.4.1 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric supplies reference documents and user guides in which to accurately evaluate and assess the different habitats on site. The methodology for the baseline and post development calculations are demonstrated in the following sections.

Baseline Units

- 2.4.2 To assess the quality of a habitat and therefore calculate the units scored the Statutory Biodiversity Metric utilises three scoring factors as detailed below.

Condition

- 2.4.3 The condition of a habitat is assessed utilising the Condition Sheets provided for each habitat type. These list positive indicators for each habitat and indicate how many of these indicators need to be present to meet certain thresholds of condition. These condition sheets can be found in The Statutory Biodiversity Metric habitat condition assessment sheets with instructions tool Technical (Natural England Joint Publication, 2023).

Distinctiveness

- 2.4.4 The distinctiveness of each habitat (area and linear) is automatically assigned by the tool, based upon national records of the occurrence and rarity of each habitat (The Statutory Biodiversity metric).

Strategic Significance

- 2.4.5 The idea of strategic significance works at a landscape scale. It gives additional unit value to habitats that are in preferred locations for biodiversity and other environmental objectives. Strategic significance utilises published local plans and objectives to identify local priorities for targeting biodiversity and nature improvement, such as Nature Recovery Areas, local biodiversity plans, National Character Area objectives and green infrastructure strategies.

Post Development Units

- 2.4.6 Additional factors are implemented when assessing post development habitats.

- Difficulty of Creation/Enhancement
- Temporal Risk "Time to target condition"
- Spatial Risk (when offsite mitigation is necessary)

2.5 LIMITATIONS OF ASSESSMENT

- 2.5.1 Whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no investigation could ensure the complete characterisation and prediction of the natural environment. The conclusions and recommendations detailed in this report are based upon the site redline boundary and the development proposals as outlined by the client at the time of writing. Should there be any changes to the site redline boundary or development proposals at a later stage, this assessment should be reviewed to determine whether any amendments or additional survey work is required.
- 2.5.2 Habitat areas (predevelopment) have been measured using online mapping and therefore will not be completely accurate. Post development areas have been provided by the client.

Table 2.1 Limitations Review

Limitation	Analysis
Competence of surveyor	The Condition Assessment was undertaken Michael Boucher, Ecological Project Manager at Collington Winter Environmental Ltd. The Condition Assessment was overseen by Katie Bird MEnvSci, ACIEEM Associate Director at Collington Winter Environmental Ltd who has over 9 years professional experience in ecological consultancy and holds key experience undertaking BNG assessments and providing advice on habitat creation, management and enhancements for both developers and habitat banks.
Competence of ecologist completing the metric	The metric was completed by Michael Boucher and overseen by Katie Bird.
Age of survey data	The condition assessment was undertaken in November 2025 and is therefore less than 12 months old. There is no constraint to the age of survey data and this falls within best practice guidance.
Timing of survey	The survey was undertaken in November which falls outside the optimal period for botanical surveys and habitat assessments (typically May to September). Consequently, some plant species, particularly graminoids, may have been present which were not detectable at the time of the survey. However, seasonality is not considered to have significantly affected the assessment, as the existing habitats could still be characterised using vegetative perennials that are identifiable outside the main season for plant growth. Where plant identification was uncertain due to early developmental stages, species were recorded to genus level or preceded by 'cf.' where features were insufficient for diagnostic identification but bore reasonable resemblance or habitat preferences to a particular species.
Departure from best practice guidance	No departure from best practice guidance.

3 BASELINE CONDITIONS – HABITATS

3.1. STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

- 3.1.1. The site falls under the jurisdiction of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) who have published a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). The local habitat map for Greater Manchester has been developed as a tool to guide nature recovery and is made up of two components: core local nature sites and opportunity areas. A review of the site within this map demonstrates that site does not fall under either of the two components. As such, the site is assessed as 'low' strategic significance.

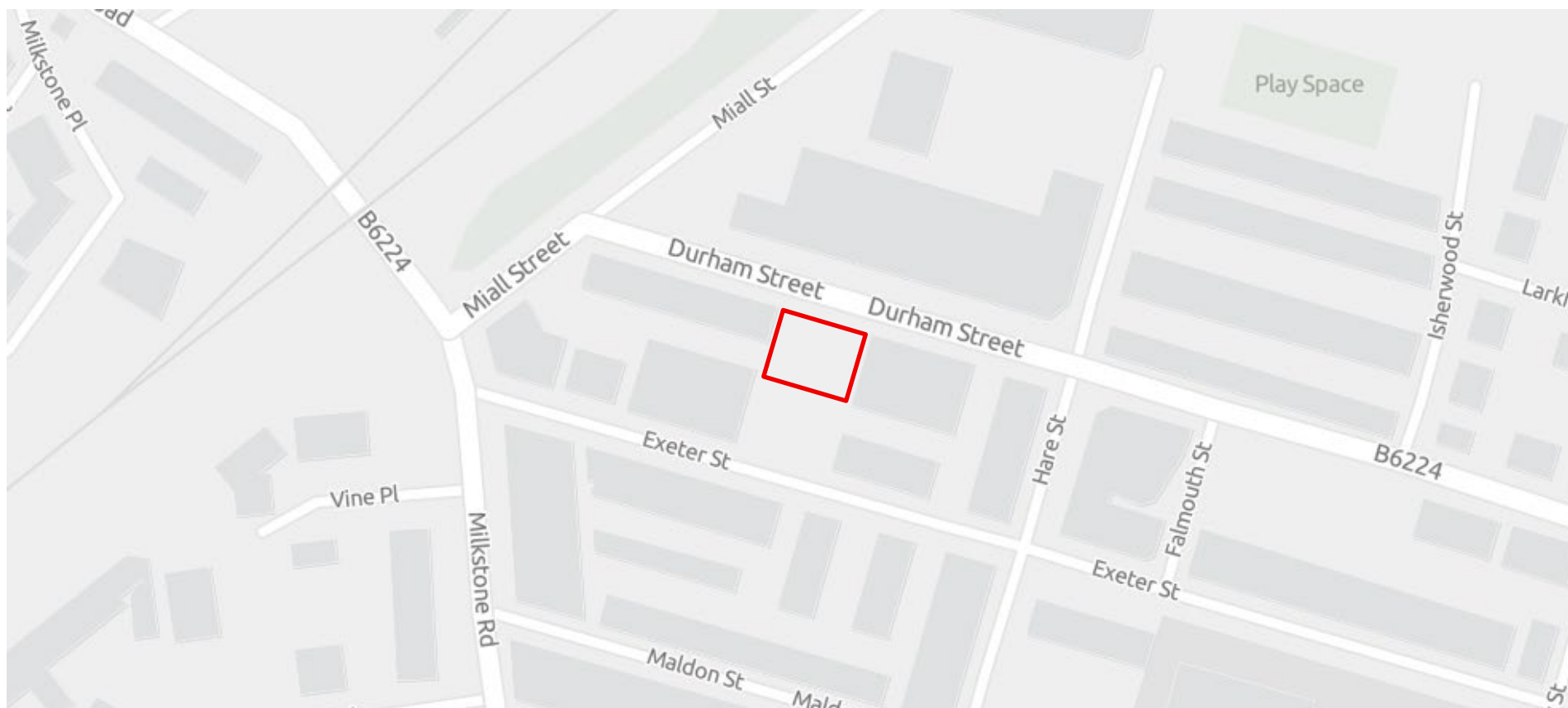


Figure 3.1 LNRS Map, site indicated in red

3.2. HABITATS PRE-DEVELOPMENT

3.2.1. Table 3.1 summarises the baseline habitats and area size. Please refer to the Appendix 2 for the Condition Assessment Sheets for each habitat.

Vacant or derelict land

3.2.2. The area consists largely of hardstanding with scattered litter and rubble, reflecting its former use as a garage court within an established residential area. Some disturbance and lack of management have allowed some early-successional species to establish, though overall vegetation structure lacks diversity. Several flowering ruderal species provide some seasonal nectar and pollen resources for invertebrates, and no invasive non-native species were recorded.

3.2.3. The following species were recorded on site: oxford ragwort (*Senecio squalidus*), little-robin (*Geranium purpureum*), great willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), smooth sow-thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*), delicate thuidium moss (*Thuidium delicatulum*), herb-robert (*Geranium robertianum*), wood avens (*Geum urbanum*), dandelions (*Taraxacum spp.*), mare's-tail (*Hippuris vulgaris*), butterfly-bush (*Buddleja davidii*), curled dock (*Rumex crispus*), hairy bitter-cress (*Cardamine hirsuta*), spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), and ivy-leaved toadflax (*Cymbalaria muralis*).

3.2.4. The survey took place in November, a sub-optimal period for botanical assessment, so some species may have been absent during the surveyed period.

Willow Scrub

3.2.5. A central strip of immature goat (*Salix caprea*) and grey willow (*Salix cinerea*) shrub was present, interspersed with a small number of young silver birch (*Betula pendula*) trees. Along the northern boundary, a single rockspray cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*) was recorded; this species is listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act and is therefore considered invasive, though its extent on site is currently very limited.

Table 3.1 Habitat Type and Condition Assessment (pre-development)

Habitat Type	Irreplaceable habitat	Area (hectares)	Distinctiveness	Score	Condition	Score
Vacant or derelict land	No	0.0331	Low	2	Moderate	2
Willow scrub	No	0.009	Medium	4	Poor	2

3.3. RETAINED AND LOST HABITATS

3.3.1. No habitats are set to be retained within the development; all habitats will be lost.

3.4. PRE- DEVELOPMENT HABITAT BASELINE

3.4.1. Please refer to Table 3.2 summarising the Habitat Baseline for the calculation, demonstrating habitats to be retained, enhance and/or lost.

Table 3.2 Habitat Baseline

	<i>On site Baseline</i>	<i>Retained</i>	<i>Enhanced</i>	<i>Lost</i>
<i>Habitat (Area) Units</i>	<i>0.17</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0.17</i>

4 HABITAT CREATION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

4.1.1. Please refer to the Site Layout Plan (597-001-0002) for full details of the proposed layout. No proposed landscaping under a management company is included and all landscaping relates to proposed residential gardens.

Table 4.1. Post Development Habitats, area sizes and target conditions

Habitat Type	Area (hectares)	Distinctiveness	Score	Condition	Score	Notes
Developed land; sealed surface	0.0344	V.Low	0	N/A - Other	0	Total area of hardstanding onsite post development
Vegetated garden	0.0068	Low	2	Condition Assessment N/A	1	Total area of vegetated garden onsite post development

5. SUMMARY

- 5.1.1. The current baseline value of the application site is assessed as 0.17 habitat units. To achieve the statutory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain, the scheme must deliver a total 0.19 habitat units.
- 5.1.2. This report and the DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric submitted have demonstrated that the proposed habitat creation for the site at Durham Street, Rochdale creates a net loss of biodiversity within the site of -92.21% in habitat units (-0.16 habitat units).
- 5.1.3. The trading rules have not been satisfied due to the replacement of low and medium distinctiveness habitats (vacant or derelict land and willow scrub) with very low and low distinctiveness habitats (developed land; sealed surface and vegetated garden).
- 5.1.4. In accordance with the metric standards, low distinctiveness habitats must be offset with the same distinctiveness band (low) or better (medium, high, very high), whilst medium distinctiveness habitats must be offset with the same broad habitat (other woodland; broadleaved, blackthorn scrub, bramble scrub) or a higher distinctiveness habitat (high or very high) to compensate for any losses.
- 5.1.5. Please refer to Figure 5.1 for the headline results.

Figure 5.1 On site net %

FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Area habitat units</i>	-0.16
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Area habitat units</i>	-92.21%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00%
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	No - Check Trading Summaries ▲	

- 5.1.6. Given that the net gain on site is insufficient to achieve the required 10% relating to the Habitat Units, and the lack of further opportunity within the current scheme to provide sufficient habitat quality to achieve a net gain, offsetting will be required to meet emerging policy requirements. It is calculated that a further 0.17 Habitat Units are required for the scheme to achieve the minimum 10% net gain.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- CIEEM (2021) Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Audit Templates.
- DEFRA (2023) The Statutory Biodiversity Metric: Auditing and Accounting for Biodiversity
- DEFRA (2023) The Statutory Biodiversity Metric: Auditing and Accounting for Biodiversity. Condition Assessment Sheets (Excel Format)
- Collington Winter Environmental (2020) Preliminary Ecological Appraisal; Land at Scotforth Road, Lancaster.

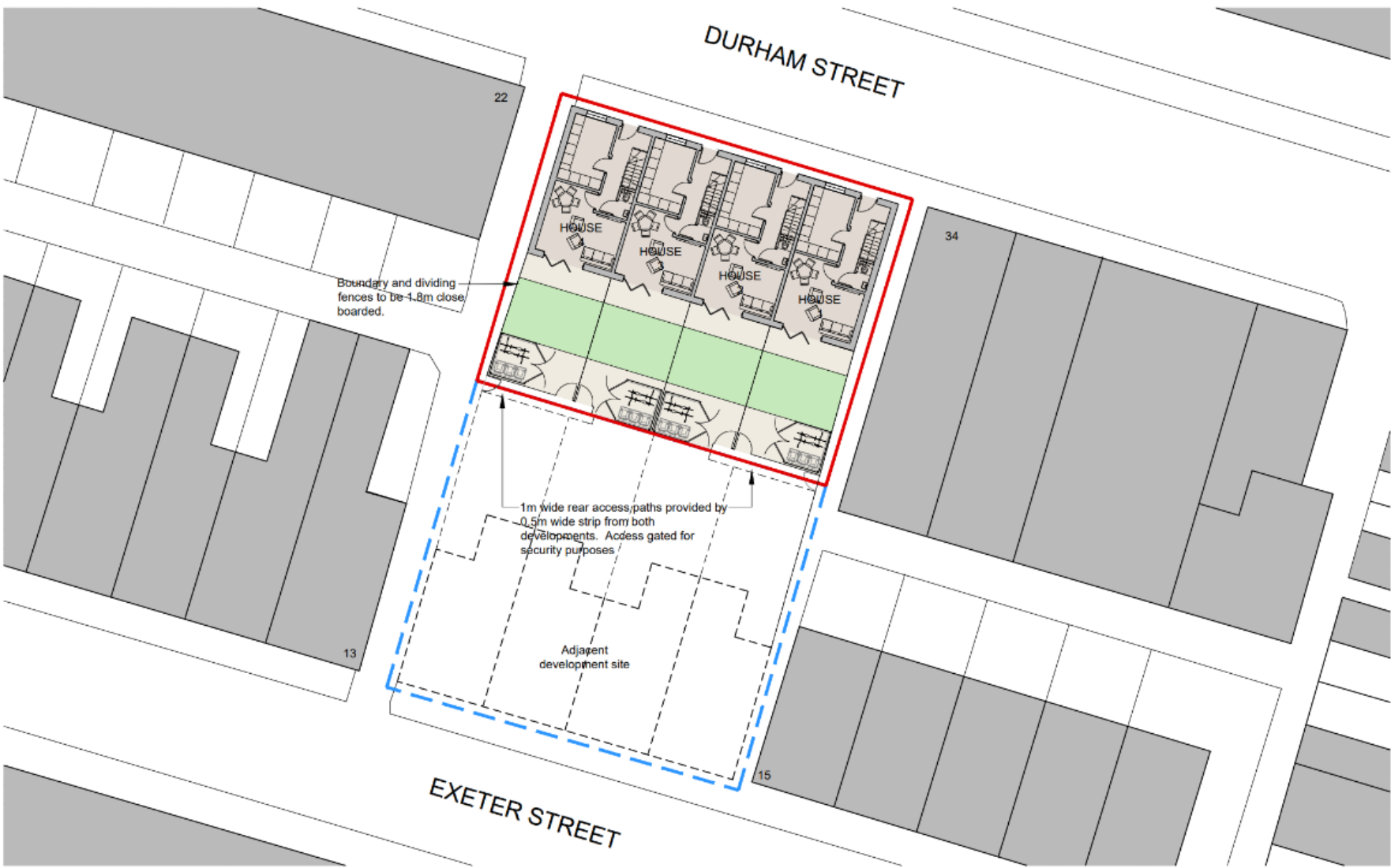
APPENDIX 1 – BASELINE HABITAT MAP



APPENDIX 2 – SITE PHOTOS

Habitat	Photo			
Vacant or Derelict Land				
				
Willow Scrub				

APPENDIX 3 – POST DEVELOPMENT MAP



Copyright Notice: This drawing is the copyright of Design Studio - North LLP (p) and shall be reproduced without permission. © 2025			Project 4no. new Builds on plot of land between 22 and 34 Durham Street, Rochdale. OL11 1JJ		Client Mr U. Ali	 DESIGN STUDIO NORTH ARCHITECTS 17-19 Stott Hill Cathedral Quarter Bradford BD1 4EH Tel : (01274) 727740 - Fax : (01274) 729817 Email : mail@ds-n.co.uk
Design Purpose Planning			Design Title Proposed Site Plan			
No.	Revision / Issue	Date				
Design No. 597-001-0002 Scale 1:200 Date Jan 2025 Drawn by JLR Checked DKW						

APPENDIX 4 – BASELINE CONDITION ASSESSMENT SHEETS

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													
Vacant or Derelict Land													
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	Onsite	Survey date and Surveyor name	25.11.25 Michael Boucher										
		Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)											
Limitations (if applicable)		Habitat parcel reference											
		3026680											
		6 - Vacant/D											
Condition Assessment Criteria		Grid reference											Notes (such as justification)
		SD											
		89934											
12501													
		Criterion passed (Yes or No)											
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											
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.	Yes											
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).	Yes											
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.												
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:													

F	The roof has a minimum of 50% native and non-native wildflowers. 70% of the roof area is soil and vegetation (including water features).											
Additional Criterion - must be assessed for Biodiverse green roofs only:												
G	The roof has a varied depth of 80 – 150 mm; at least 50% is at 150 mm and is planted and seeded with wildflowers and sedums or is pre-prepared with sedums and wildflowers. Note – to achieve Good condition, some additional habitat, such as sand piles, stones, logs etc. are present.											
Essential criteria relevant for habitat type achieved (Yes or No)		No										
Number of criteria passed		3										
Condition Assessment Result		Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved ×/√									
Results for habitats requiring assessment of 3 core criteria only (all listed urban habitats except Open mosaic habitat on previously developed land, Bioswale, SuDS and Green roofs):												
• Passes all 3 core criteria; AND • Meets the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.		Good (3)										
• Passes 2 of 3 core criteria; OR • Passes 3 of 3 core criteria but does not meet the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.		Moderate (2)	Yes									
• Passes 0 or 1 of 3 core criteria.		Poor (1)										
Results for Green roofs and Open mosaic habitat on previously developed land (requiring assessment of 4 criteria only - core criteria plus additional criterion specified for habitat type):												
• Passes all 3 core criteria; AND • Meets the requirements for Good condition within criterion C; AND • Passes additional criterion relevant to specific habitat type (D, F or G).		Good (3)										
• Passes 2 or 3 of 4 criteria; OR • Passes 4 of 4 criteria but does not meet the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.		Moderate (2)										
• Passes 0 or 1 of 4 criteria.		Poor (1)										
Results for Bioswale or SuDS (requiring assessment of 5 criteria - core criteria plus additional criteria specified for habitat type):												
• Passes all 3 core criteria; AND • Meets the requirements for Good condition within criterion C; AND • Passes all additional criteria relevant to specific habitat type (Group E)		Good (3)										
• Passes 3 or 4 of 5 criteria; OR • Passes 5 of 5 criteria but does not meet the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.		Moderate (2)										
• Passes 2 or fewer of 5 criteria.		Poor (1)										
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score												
Footnotes												

Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)	Yes										
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score												

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