



9th September 2022

File Note: BNG at Soane Point

Ref: Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) reporting file note

Site address: Soane Point, 3-10 Market Place, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 2EG

National Grid Reference: Centred on SU 7174 7346

Site area: 0.263ha

Recipients: Tene Living UK (Reading) Ltd

Record of activity

➤ **Background**

Arbtech consulting Ltd were instructed by Tene Living UK (Reading) Ltd to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) evaluation of a development on the site, subject to a full planning application submitted to Reading Borough Council:

- *External works to existing building, including partial replacement of the existing façades fronting Market Place and Abbey Square alongside other external works to the building; set back single-storey extension above part of block fronting Market Place, part two part three storey extensions above other blocks; and conversion and alterations to ground floor reception and car parking area; together the works will deliver 38 new homes and (internal and external) residential amenity areas with associated car parking*
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➤ **Purpose of survey**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes it clear (para 170) that “*Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and 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 174 requires the promotion of “*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*”.

Proposals for net gain should be clearly recorded and reported through use of an appropriate metric such as the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric 3.1 or small sites metric. Natural England advise that any net gain should be fully secured and funded for the lifetime of the development. Therefore, the purpose of this survey report is to provide an evaluation of the proposed plans compared to the ecological baseline, and to report any net gain (or loss) to biodiversity using the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric 3.1 scheme.

Although the site is less than 1ha in area, it plans for more than 10 residential units, and as such the small sites version cannot be used and the full version of BNG was completed.

This BNG report was written to comply to Reading Local Plan Policies EN12 and EN14.

➤ **Surveyor and date of survey**

This survey report was carried out by Craig Williams, BSc (Hons), MSc, DIC, MRSB of Arbtech Consulting Ltd. on 22nd August 2022. A previous preliminary roost assessment (PRA) by Arbtech Consulting Ltd is used as the ecological baseline and was carried out on 17th August 2022. The baseline habitat map and the current proposed soft landscaping plans are found in appendices 1 and 2.

Summary findings

- The full results of the metric are included in the excel file:

Biodiversity Metric 3.1 (Soane Point, 3-10 Market Place RG1 2EG)

- This highlights that if the recommended amount of habitats are included in the proposed plan, the change in biodiversity metrics would be:
- + 100% for habitat units (default score for where the baseline habitat score is 0)
- The results indicate a net gain in area units, attributed to the creation of planters and landscaped roof areas, where the baseline site has no botanical habitats present.

Discussion

- The currently advised areas would result in a default 100% net gain in habitat units, exceeding the 10% target for the development.
- The creation management of the habitats on site to the appropriate condition would need to be secured for at least 30 years - linked to the application through a planning obligation in Section 106 (S106) agreement. A management and monitoring plan would also be required for this.

Appendix 1: Habitat baseline map



Appendix 2: Proposed ecological map of the site



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