

Our ref: 8624 Church End Lane
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This technical note provides the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment for the planning application at Church End Lane, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 4XA. The proposed plans are for the construction of one residential unit. The development will result in the loss of over 25 square metres of vegetation and therefore requires a BNG assessment using the Statutory Small Sites Metric. This technical note should be read alongside the Small Sites Statutory Metric submitted alongside the application.

Methodology

Strategic Significance

A data gathering exercise was undertaken to obtain any available information relating to statutory and non-statutory nature conservation sites to establish the strategic significance of the site. The Defra website MAGIC and ordnance survey maps were consulted to determine locations of any designated sites with two kilometres of the development site. A data search request was completed with Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) to determine locations of designated sites and Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs). Reading Borough Council was also consulted for Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats.

Baseline Assessment

A site visit was undertaken on 8th August 2024 by ecologist David Casson ACIEEM in cloudy, windy and dry weather conditions with an ambient temperature of 17°C. The survey employed techniques based on the UK Habitat Classification System. The collection of botanical information focused on the dominant and/or key indicator species for each habitat, to allow allocation of habitats to hierarchy levels 3 and/or 4 and where relevant to identify any priority habitats which are present on site. The conditions of the habitats on the site were assessed in line with the condition sheets supplied alongside the Small Sites Statutory Metric.

Results

Strategic Significance

The site at Church End Lane is located within 150 metres of Berkshire Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs). These sites are encompassed by the **West Reading Woodlands and LNR BOA**. This BOA is an urban fringe site. In the west it encompasses the escarpments at the edge of the Pang Valley where there is much woodland and land owned by Englefield Estate. The rest of the area includes the Reading Woodlands Local Nature reserve, a group of mainly wooded sites within Tilehurst as well as a number of other woodlands in this area. There are extensive areas of ancient lowland mixed deciduous woodland on the western escarpment and a number of sites located within Tilehurst which form the West Reading Woodlands LNR. A small area of parkland is present at Purley Hall near Pangbourne.

Whilst the site is located within close proximity to the West Reading Woodlands and LNRs BOA, the habitats on site do not align with the habitats of the BOA and the site does not have any priority habitats present. Therefore, the development site is considered to be in an area with no local strategy.

Baseline Habitats

A map of the baseline habitats is provided in **Appendix A**.

Developed Land; Sealed Surface

A section of tarmac pathway is present in the west of site, a hardstanding patio area is located in the private garden area, connected to the adjacent property.

Modified Grassland

Modified grassland is present in the west section of the site, adjacent to the main road. This section is regularly mown and comprises dominant perennial-rye grass (*Lolium perenne*) with abundant daisy (*Bellis perennis*), dandelion (*Taraxacum* sp.) and creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*).

Vegetated Garden

The majority of the site comprises vegetated garden with a well-maintained lawn, dominated by perennial rye-grass (**Figure 1**) with abundant dandelion, creeping buttercup and springy turf moss (*Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus*). A small section of ornamental shrubs is also present on the western boundary of the site (**Figure 2**).



Figures 1 and 2: Lawn and section of ornamental shrub within vegetated garden, respectively.

Scattered Trees

Two trees are present in the eastern section of the site, within the vegetated garden area (**Figures 3 and 4**). Tree 1 is a small rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) and tree 2 is a small hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*).



Figures 3 and 4: Tree 1 and tree 2, respectively.

All trees within the garden are of a small size and considered part of the vegetated garden habitat. No medium trees were present.

Proposed Habitats

A biodiversity metric has been completed for the site using Statutory Small Sites Metric based on the following inclusions within the development plans, based on the preliminary masterplan (**Appendix B**). The biodiversity metric is available alongside this report.

Due to the nature of the development and due to the land being within private ownership, it is not possible to deliver a net gain in habitat units within the red line boundary and secure management of the land. There is no land available outside the curtilage of the proposed development to secure off-site enhancements.

The proposed development will retain a 92 square metre area of vegetated garden and 30 square metre area of modified grassland in the west of the site. The two trees in the east of the site will also be retained.

Conclusions

A biodiversity metric has been completed for the site using the Small Sites Statutory Metric based on the inclusions within the development plans mentioned above.

With these measures in place the biodiversity metric provided alongside this report results in a net loss of 0.0286 habitat units (-48.47%).

Table 1: Small Sites Statutory Biodiversity Metric.

On-site baseline units	0.0590
On-site post-intervention units	0.0304
Total net unit change	-0.0286 (-48.47%)
Trading Rules Satisfied	No

It is not possible to achieve a 10% net gain in habitat or hedgerow units on site due to the small size of the site and as there is no land available that is outside the curtilage of the proposed residential properties. As it is not possible to secure management of land that is in private ownership it will not be possible to deliver a net gain.

The scheme currently has a deficit in low distinctiveness habitat units that will require a replacement of the same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat. To achieve 10% net gain, the scheme will require 0.0345 habitat units. This will be achieved through purchasing units from a habitat bank.

The development will also result in the creation of 20 metres of native hedgerow around the vegetated gardens of the property. While hedgerows units are not required due to the absence of any hedgerows in the baseline this will provide additional enhancements for the local wildlife not accounted for in the metric.

References

CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA (2019). *Biodiversity Net Gain. Good practice principles for development. A practical guide*. CIRIA C776a. London, 2019.

Defra (2023). *The Small Sites Statutory Biodiversity Metric - auditing and accounting for biodiversity calculation tool*

National Planning Policy Framework (2024). *National Planning Policy Framework*. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, London.

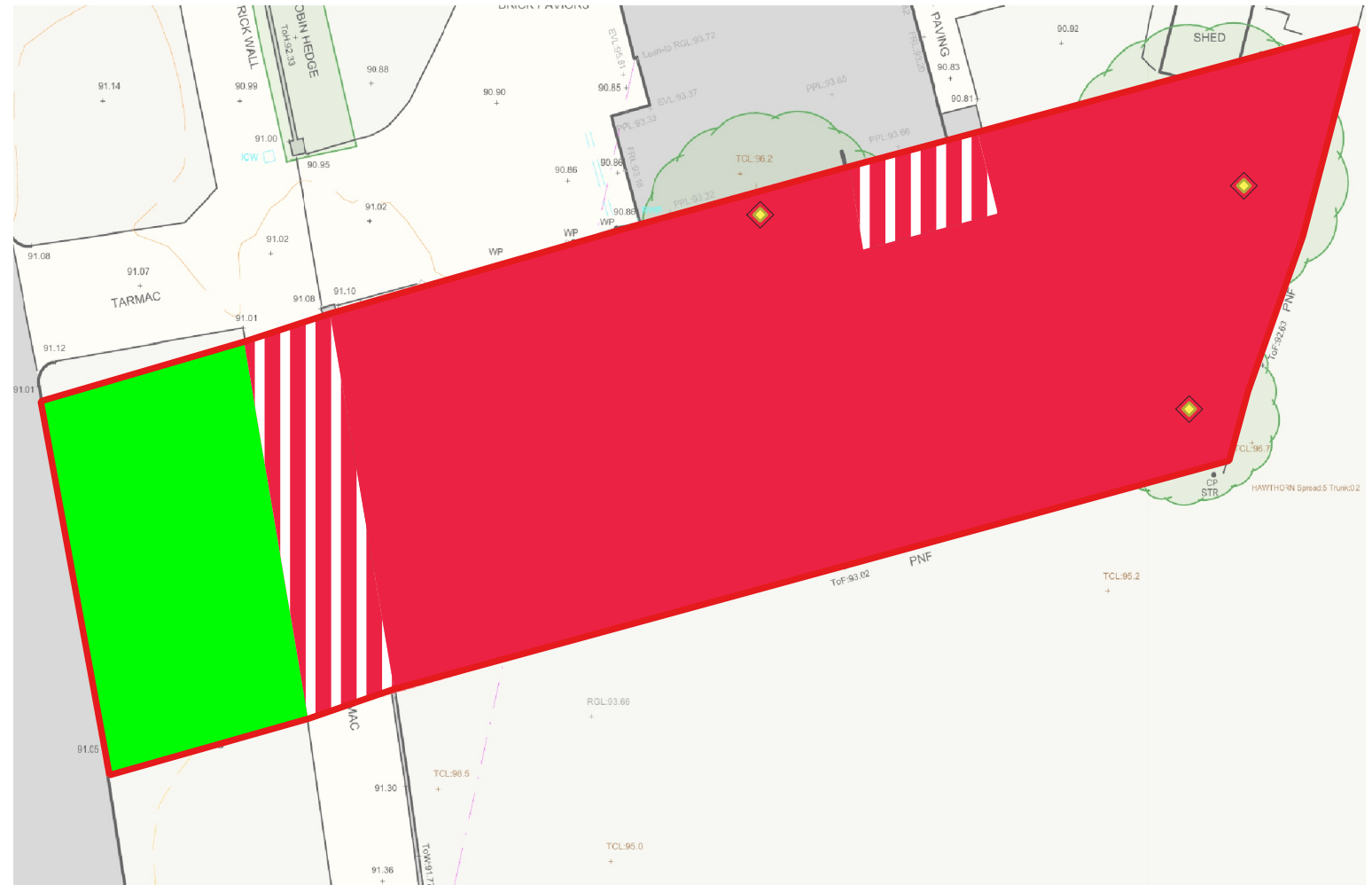
TVERC (2024) *Data Search Results – Church End Lane*.

Appendix A – Baseline Habitats

The proposal presented here is subject to review by specialist consultants, and is to be read in conjunction with all relevant specialist's drawings and information where available. Any discrepancies between this and any other consultant's drawings and information should be reported to Pro Vision immediately.

Legend

-  Red Line Boundary
 Developed Land; Sealed Surface
 Modified Grassland
 Vegetated Garden
 Small Tree

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CLIENT:	Bradfield Properties	
PROJECT:	Church End Lane	
DRAWING:	Baseline Habitats	1:16
NUMBER:	8624-XX-E0-01	A
ISSUE:	v1	04.09.2



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Appendix B – Proposed Habitats

The plan shown here is for the purpose of supporting a planning application only. Only scale from this drawing for the purposes of determining a planning application. Do not scale from this drawing for construction purposes.

The proposal presented here is subject to review by specialist consultants, and is to be read in conjunction with all relevant specialist's drawings and information where available. Any discrepancies between this and any other consultant's drawings and information should be reported to Pro Vision immediately.

Legend

- Red Line Boundary
- Developed Land; Sealed Surface
- Modified Grassland
- Vegetated Garden
- Native Hedgerow



ISSUE	DATE	DESCRIPTION	DRAWN	CHECKED
v1	06/09/24	First Issue	DC	LSJ
v2	26/03/25	Updated with Latest Plans	DC	LSJ

CLIENT:	Bradfield Properties		
PROJECT:	Church End Lane		
DRAWING:	Proposed Habitats	1:160	
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