

Baseline Habitat Condition Assessment (BHCA)

Survey site:

1A New Road, Reading, RG1 5JD

Client:

Hurst Grove Estates Ltd

Survey date:

29th January 2026

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with Reading Borough Council. The proposal is described as:

The construction of a new dwelling.

The BHCA survey is written to inform the baseline for a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) report, and is based on UKHabs habitat methodology in accordance with [PEA Methodology and Legislation - 2024](#).

The site survey was undertaken by Jessica Orr BSc (Hons) Graduate Ecologist.					
A BHCA was conducted to support the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) (Arbtech, 2023), which is now outdated, to inform a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) report.					
Date of survey	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (mph)	Rain
29/01/2026	5	87	70	13	None

Ecological Survey Factor	Detailed using desk study and site survey (carried out under good weather conditions). Any specific limitations noted within relevant section. This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.
Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations	
Habitats and plants (see habitat map in appendix 1, location plan in appendix 2, proposed plans in appendix 3, photos in appendix 4 and habitat condition assessments in Appendix 5). Botanical species are described with reference to the DAFOR scale (D = Dominant; A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional, R = Rare).	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i> <i>(UKHab codes used)</i>	The survey site is centred on National Grid Reference SU 72725 72209 and has an area of approximately 0.049ha. The site comprises a vegetated garden with scattered trees. It is surrounded by residential dwellings within the town of Reading, a series of lakes to the east and southeast, arable fields to the north and the M4 motorway to the south. Habitat classification and condition assessment <u>u1b</u> – Vegetated garden [828] with scattered trees [32] The entirety of the site is comprised of vegetated garden, which contains a modified grass lawn, scattered trees and areas of ruderals. Species composition of the lawn includes: D: Perennial ryegrass (<i>Lolium perenne</i>), Cocksfoot (<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>)

	F: Ribwort plantain (<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>), daisy (<i>Bellis perennis</i>), bramble (<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>), common yarrow (<i>Achillea millefolium</i>) O: Clover (<i>Trifolium sp.</i>), cranesbill (<i>Geranium sp.</i>), creeping buttercup (<i>Ranunculus repens</i>) R: Ragwort (<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>), Cyclamen (<i>Cyclamen sp.</i>), Cleavers (<i>Galium aparine</i>) To the south of the site, there is a small area of ruderals. The species composition includes: D: Bluebell (<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>) F: Bramble (<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>), Common nettle (<i>Urtica dioica</i>) O: Cow parsley (<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>) R: White dead nettle (<i>Lamium album</i>), Cyclamen (<i>Cyclamen sp.</i>) There are 5 scattered trees onsite, which are comprised of Lime (DBH ~35cm), silver birch (DBH ~12cm), apple (DBH ~19cm) and ivy (DBH ~25cm). The trees are semi-mature to mature in age and there is no evidence of an adverse impact to tree health from anthropogenic activities and no regular pruning regime. The lime and ivy trees were covered by a dense layer of ivy; however, the silver birch and apple had no ecological niches present. All trees were oversailing more than 20% vegetation beneath. u1e – Built linear features There is a brick wall along the eastern and southern site boundaries and a wooden panel fence along the northern and western site boundaries.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	The proposed development will result in the loss of ~0.02ha of vegetated garden and 4 scattered trees.
<i>Recommendations</i>	As more than 25m ² of habitat is being removed for the development (building demolition and dwelling construction), the proposals are not a householder application or a self-build scheme, a biodiversity net gain (BNG) will be required as the proposals do not fall under any of the exemption cases. The BNG metric will use this report to inform the baseline.
<i>Biodiversity Enhancements</i>	❖ The installation of one bat box at the site will provide additional roosting habitat for bats: ○ The bat box will be attached to the retained tree. It will be suitable for pipistrelles (which have been identified locally through EPSL data – see PEA). Suitable bat boxes include Habibat Bat Box, Ibstock Enclosed Bat Box or similar alternative brand.

	○ Bat boxes should be positioned 3-5m above ground level facing in a south or south-westerly direction with a clear flight path to and from the entrance, away from artificial light. ❖ The installation of a minimum of two bird boxes on the retained tree or on the new building will provide additional nesting habitat for birds e.g. ○ Schwegler No 17 Swift Nest Box (buildings) ○ Schwegler 1SP Sparrow Terrace (buildings) ○ Schwegler 1B Nest Boxes (trees) ○ Schwegler 2H Robin Boxes (trees) ○ Woodstone Nest Box (buildings or trees) ○ Tree boxes should be positioned approximately 3m above ground level where they will be sheltered from prevailing wind, rain and strong sunlight. Small-hole boxes are best placed approximately 1-3m above ground on an area of the tree trunk where foliage will not obscure the entrance hole. ○ Swift and sparrow boxes should be positioned at the eaves of a building and can be incorporated into the fabric of the building during construction.
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Appendix 1: Survey/Habitat map



Appendix 2: Location map



Appendix 3: Proposed plan



Appendix 4: Photos

Photo 1: Modified grass lawn	Photo 2: Small apple tree
	
Photo 3: Silver birch trees	Photo 4: Lime tree surrounded by ruderals



Photo 5: Ivy tree



Photo 6: Modified grass lawn and fence to the north of site



Appendix 5: Habitat Condition Assessments

Urban Trees; assessed using 'Individual Trees' habitat type condition sheet:

Condition Assessment Criteria		Condition Achieved (Y/N)	Condition Achieved (Y/N)	Condition Achieved (Y/N)	Condition Achieved (Y/N)	Condition Achieved (Y/N)
		T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
A	The tree is a native species (or more than 70% within the block are native species).	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).	Y	Y	N	N	Y
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by anthropogenic activities such as vandalism or herbicide use. There is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
E	Natural Ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	Y	N	N	N	Y
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Number of criteria passed		6	5	4	4	6

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