



BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN STATEMENT

The Convent of Mercy, Hillside Drive, Gravesend

Convent Building

On behalf of: Sisters of Mercy

Client:	Sisters of Mercy			
Project:	The Convent of Mercy, Hillside Drive, Gravesend			
Reference:	LLD3294-ECO-REP-003-02-BNG			
Revision:	Date:	Author	Proof	Approved
00	27/11/2024	Sam Hall BSc (Hons) MSc	Catherine O'Reilly MCIEEM	Catherine O'Reilly MCIEEM
01	07/01/2025	Sam Hall BSc (Hons) MSc	Catherine O'Reilly MCIEEM	Catherine O'Reilly MCIEEM
02	01/04/2026	Sam Hall BSc (Hons) MSc	Catherine O'Reilly MCIEEM	Catherine O'Reilly MCIEEM

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Validity:

This report is valid for 18 months from the date of the final survey visit. If works have not commenced by this date, an updated site visit should be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist to assess any changes in the habitats present on site, to inform whether surveys should be updated.



The Old Bank, 34 South Street, Tarring, Worthing, West Sussex, BN14 7LH
T. 01903 216033 E. office@lizardlandscape.co.uk W. lizardlandscapeecology.com

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology (LLDE) has been commissioned to provide a Biodiversity Net Gain Statement for the proposed development of The Convent of Mercy, Hillside Drive, Gravesend. This report has been written with due regard to best practice guidance for ecological report writing (CIEEM, 2017) and the Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development (CIEEM, 2019) and the Biodiversity Net Gain User Guide (DEFRA, 2023).

1.2 The development does not appear to qualify under any exemption and will therefore be subject to the standard Biodiversity Gain condition.

Site Overview

1.3 The site is located within the town of Gravesend in the county of Kent and encompasses a c. 0.47 Ha plot that includes the western half of a large convent building with associated wooden sheds, hardstanding access, gardens with scattered individual trees and an unmanaged area of sycamore dominated woodland and tall forbs to the south of the site. The site is bordered on all sides by residential development. Soil on site is described as freely draining slightly acid loamy soils.

Surrounding Landscape

1.4 The surrounding landscape is urban and dominated by residential development with the built mass of Gravesend extending out at least 1.4km in all directions. The river Thames is located c. 1.5km north of the site.

Development Proposals

1.5 It is understood that the proposals are for the redevelopment of the western half of the convent building into 3no. new dwellings and provision of sealed surface parking/access.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Assigning Strategic Significance

- 2.1.1 Strategic significance has been assessed using the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Essex, as per table 7 of the User Guide (DEFRA, 2023). Where sites were found to be located within any designated area, such as Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB) or an Area that Could become of particular importance for Biodiversity (ACB), policy statements and management plans for the relevant area were then examined. High strategic significance was then assigned to any habitat creation or enhancement measures identified as a priority within these documents.
- 2.1.2 All baseline habitats, and proposed habitat creation or enhancement measures not identified within the LNRS were assigned low strategic significance.

2.2 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

- 2.2.1 A baseline habitat assessment in accordance with the UK Habitats Classification Manual (UKHabs Ltd., 2023) was undertaken on the 19th of July 2024 by Sam Hall (Consultant Ecologist, LLDE). No habitat degradation had taken place prior to the survey and the baseline data is considered to be an accurate reflection of the ecological value of the site. Full details of the habitats present are contained within the Ecological Impact Assessment (LLD3294-ECO-REP-001-00-EcIA) and summarised herein.
- 2.2.2 All area-based habitats were mapped on site with the aid of aerial imagery and topographical survey where available. The condition of habitats was assessed in accordance with *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric - Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology* (DEFRA, 2023). No linear or watercourse habitats were identified.
- 2.2.3 The habitats, their condition and strategic importance were input into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool (DEFRA, 2023). The area of habitats which would be retained or enhanced based upon the current proposals was also added to the calculator. This allowed the existing baseline value and loss of biodiversity units to be established.

- 2.2.4 The proposed habitat areas and linear habitat lengths was calculated, and target condition determined based upon the existing and proposed management regimes of the site, in consideration with what could realistically be expected to be achieved. Once input into The Biodiversity Metric Calculation, the overall change in value of the site could then be determined.

2.3 Survey Constraints / Considerations

- 2.3.1 Areas and linear lengths have been rounded to the nearest 10m² and measurements input to the metric using three decimal places. Due to the output of the Metric being displayed to two decimal places, slight imprecision in output may occur.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 Strategic Significance and Irreplaceable Habitat

- 3.1.1 The site does not fall within any area mapped within the Kent and Medway LNRS and so all habitats have been assigned low strategic significance. No irreplaceable habitat has been identified on-site.

3.2 Baseline Habitat Value

Habitat Degradation

- 3.2.1 No site clearance or habitat degradation was evident, and the baseline information gathered is considered to be a true presentation of the on-site habitats at the time of the survey.

On-Site Habitats

- 3.2.2 The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment concluded that the existing baseline biodiversity value of the site was **1.93** Habitat Units, consisting of:
- 0.204ha of developed land sealed surface providing 0.0 habitat units (condition assessment N/A).
 - 0.004ha of introduced shrub providing 0.01 habitat units (condition assessment N/A).
 - 0.148ha of modified grassland in poor condition providing 0.3 habitat units.
 - 0.0163ha of individual trees (4no. small trees) in poor condition providing 0.07 habitat units.
 - 0.0936ha of individual trees (10no. small trees, 1no. large, 1no. medium) in moderate condition providing 0.75 habitat units.
 - 0.0163ha of individual trees (4no. small trees) in good condition providing 0.2 habitat units.
 - 0.046ha of tall forbs in poor condition providing 0.09 habitat units.
 - 0.065ha of other woodland broadleaved in moderate condition providing 0.52 habitat units.

3.2.3 Some of the existing habitat on site is to be retained in its current condition, meaning the retention of **1.07** habitat units comprised of:

- 0.204ha of developed land sealed surface.
- 0.065ha of other woodland broadleaved.
- 0.0692ha of individual trees (moderate condition, 1no. large, 1no. medium and 4no. small).

3.2.4 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (DEFRA, 2024) states that 'The post-development private garden has no public access, and biodiversity net gains cannot be legally secured'. Further to this the existing garden areas on site do not fit the User Guide definition of a private garden. Therefore, all trees have been recorded at baseline and then those that fall within proposed private gardens as lost within the post-development plan.

3.2.5 A full condition assessment for each existing habitat type is detailed in Appendix A.

3.3 Baseline Hedgerow Value

3.3.1 No linear habitats are present on site.

3.4 Baseline Watercourse Value

3.4.1 No watercourses are present on site.

3.5 Proposed Habitat Creation

3.5.1 Proposals are to result in the creation of new habitat on site, delivering **0.66** habitat units comprised of:

- 0.006ha of developed land, sealed surface (condition assessment N/A) – proposed access and parking areas.
- 0.075ha of vegetated garden (condition assessment N/A) – proposed private garden areas.
- 0.004ha of modified grassland in poor condition – proposed vegetated area adjacent to the north of the convent building.

- 0.0244ha of individual trees in moderate condition – proposed small trees located to the south of the proposed rear garden areas.
- 0.046ha of mixed scrub in moderate condition – proposed along the southern site boundary.
- 0.0081ha of individual trees in moderate condition – proposed small trees located to the north of the convent building.
- 0.006ha of other neutral grassland – proposed along the western site boundary, replacing baseline sealed surface.
- 0.028ha of modified grassland in poor condition – half of the proposed grasscrete area.

3.5.2 A full condition assessment for each proposed habitat type is detailed in Appendix B.

3.5.3 Please note that the areas of proposed grasscrete have been measured as 50% develop land sealed surface and 50% modified grassland in poor condition to capture the low ecological contribution.

3.6 Proposed Hedgerows

3.6.1 Proposals are to result in the creation of new hedgerow on site, delivering **0.13** hedgerow units comprised of:

- 0.04km of native hedgerow in moderate condition – proposed along the southern boundary of the proposed other neutral grassland.

3.7 Proposed Watercourses

3.7.1 No watercourses are proposed on-site.

3.8 Proposed Habitat Enhancements

3.8.1 A total of 0.032ha of modified grassland within the site shall be enhanced to other neutral grassland. The ground will be prepared, a diverse native wildflower seed mix applied, and the area managed to achieve moderate condition.

- 3.8.2 A full target condition assessment for the proposed habitat enhancement is detailed in Appendix B. Enhancement measures shall result in the delivery of **0.2** habitat units.

3.9 Overall Results

- 3.9.1 Once all retention, enhancement and habitat creation measures are taken into account, the scheme shall result in **1.93** habitat units and **0.13** hedgerow units, resulting in a net change of **0.00** habitat units and a **0.02%** **Biodiversity Net Gain** in Habitat Units across the site.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Metric calculations have identified that the proposed scheme would result in a **0.02% net gain in biodiversity**. Alongside the provision of a legal agreement / conservation covenant to guarantee the delivery of proposed on-site habitats for at least 30 years, purchase of off-site units has been secured to meet the mandated +10% Biodiversity Net Gain and to comply with the current Local Planning policy.
- 4.2 To ensure the proposed post-development on-site habitats are managed into the future, a suitable management plan shall be produced. This shall include management prescriptions for the proposed habitat creation and enhancement including aspects such as pruning and mowing regimes, which shall ensure the target conditions are achieved.

5.0 REFERENCES

CIEEM. (2017). Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

CIEEM. (2019). Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development. Winchester

Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (2023). *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool.*

Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (2023). *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric - Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology.*

Kent County Council (2024). *Biodiversity Net Gain Guidance Note. Interim Strategic Significance Guidance for Biodiversity Net Gain in Kent and Medway.*

UKHab Ltd (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.1*

Appendix A – Condition Assessment for Existing Habitats

Modified Grassland in Poor Condition:

Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² present, including at least 2 forbs (these may include those listed in Footnote 1). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition.	No	Average of 5/m ²
	Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m ² (excluding those listed in Footnote 1), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.		
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	No	All grass maintained as tight low lawn sward
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Yes	None noted
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	Yes	Very small areas of damage where grass meets hardstanding
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	Yes	Some rabbit holes noted - no more than 1% coverage
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Yes	None noted
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁴).	Yes	None noted
Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)			No
Number of criteria passed			5
Condition Assessment Result (out of 7 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/✓	
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Good (3)		
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Moderate (2)		
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4 - 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)	Poor (1)	x	

Existing Individual Trees:

Limitations (if applicable)		Habitat parcel reference										
		G12 (x5)	G13 (x5)	G14 (x2)	G15 (x2)	T35	T36	T37	T38	T39	T40	
Condition Assessment Criteria		Grid reference										
		Criterion passed (Yes or No)										Notes (such as justification)
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	N	Y	N	N	N	N	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	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .	N	1Y / 4N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Number of criteria passed		3	5 +4	2	2	4	4	5	5	4	6	
Condition Assessment Result (out of 6 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/√										
Passes 5 or 6 criteria	Good (3)		X					X	X		X	
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)	X	X			X	X			X		
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)			X	X							
Note that 'Fairly Good and Fairly Poor' condition categories are not available for this broad habitat type.												

Existing Tall Forbs in Poor Condition:

Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
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	Common nettle dominated over 80%
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.	No	Diversity is low with nettle covering over 80% and bindweed dominating the remaining space
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	None noted
Essential criteria relevant for habitat type achieved (Yes or No)			Yes
Number of criteria passed			1
Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/✓	
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)		
• Passes 0 or 1 of 3 core criteria.	Poor (1)	X	

Existing Other Woodland Broadleaved:

Condition Assessment Criteria						
Indicator	Good (3 points)	Moderate (2 points)	Poor (1 point)	Score per indicator	Notes (such as justification)	
A	Age distribution of trees	Three age-classes ¹ present.	Two age-classes ¹ present.	One age-class ¹ present.	1	All intermediate
B	Wild, domestic and feral herbivore damage	No significant browsing damage evident in woodland ² .	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in less than 40% of whole woodland ² .	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or more of whole woodland ² .	3	
C	Invasive plant species	No invasive species ³ present in woodland.	Rhododendron <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> or cherry laurel <i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> not present, and other invasive species ³ <10% cover.	Rhododendron or cherry laurel present, or other invasive species ³ ≥10% cover.	3	
D	Number of native tree species	Five or more native tree or shrub species ⁴ found across woodland parcel.	Three to four native tree or shrub species ⁴ found across woodland parcel.	Two or less native tree or shrub species ⁴ across woodland parcel.	2	Yew/Elder/Holly
E	Cover of native tree and shrub species	>80% of canopy trees and >80% of understory shrubs are native ⁵ .	50 - 80% of canopy trees and 50 - 80% of understory shrubs are native ⁵ .	<50% of canopy trees and <50% of understory shrubs are native ⁵ .	1	Dominated by Sycamore
F	Open space within woodland	10 - 20% of woodland has areas of temporary open space ⁶ . Unless woodland is <10ha, in which case 0 - 20% temporary open space is permitted ⁷ .	21 - 40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space ⁶ .	<10% or >40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space ⁶ . But if woodland <10ha has <10% temporary open space, please see Good category ⁷ .	3	<10ha and no temporary space noted
G	Woodland regeneration	All three classes present in woodland ⁸ ; trees 4 - 7 cm Diameter at Breast Height (DBH), saplings and seedlings or advanced coppice regrowth.	One or two classes only present in woodland ⁸ .	No classes or coppice regrowth present in woodland ⁸ .	1	None noted
H	Tree health	Tree mortality 10% or less, no pests or diseases and no crown dieback ⁹ .	11% to 25% tree mortality and or crown dieback or low-risk pest or disease present ⁹ .	Greater than 25% tree mortality and or any high-risk pest or disease present ⁹ .	3	Trees appeared in good health
I	Vegetation and ground flora	Recognisable NVC plant community ¹⁰ at ground layer present, strongly characterised by ancient woodland flora specialists.	Recognisable woodland NVC plant community ¹⁰ at ground layer present.	No recognisable woodland NVC plant community ¹⁰ at ground layer present.	1	Ground was either bare or dominated by Ivy
J	Woodland vertical structure	Three or more storeys across all survey plots, or a complex woodland ¹¹ .	Two storeys across all survey plots ¹¹ .	One or less storey across all survey plots ¹¹ .	1	Only upper canopy noted
K	Veteran trees	Two or more veteran trees ¹² per hectare.	One veteran tree ¹² per hectare.	No veteran trees ¹² present in woodland.	1	None noted
L	Amount of deadwood	50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, branch stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities ¹³ .	Between 25% and 50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities ¹³ .	Less than 25% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities ¹³ .	3	Small plot - deadwood noted
M	Woodland disturbance	No nutrient enrichment or damaged ground evident ¹⁴ .	Less than 1 hectare in total of nutrient enrichment across woodland area, and or less than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground ¹⁴ .	1 hectare or more of nutrient enrichment, and or 20% or more of woodland area has damaged ground ¹⁴ .	3	None noted
Total Score (out of a possible 39)				26		
Condition Assessment Result			Condition Assessment Score		Result Achieved	
Total score >32 (33 to 39)			Good (3)		Moderate	
Total score 26 to 32			Moderate (2)			
Total score <26 (13 to 25)			Poor (1)			

Appendix B – Target Condition Assessment for Proposed Habitats

Mixed Scrub – Target Condition Moderate

Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A	The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type - the appearance and composition of the vegetation closely matches its UKHab description (where in its natural range). ¹ - At least 80% of scrub is native, - There are at least three native woody species ² , - No single species comprises more than 75% of the cover (except hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i> , common juniper <i>Juniperus communis</i> , sea buckthorn <i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i> (only in its restricted native range), or box <i>Buxus sempervirens</i> , which can be up to 100% cover).	Yes	Will be planted with a high diversity of woody shrub species and remedial action taken if any species becomes dominant
B	Seedlings, saplings, young shrubs and mature (or ancient or veteran ³) shrubs are all present.	No	Cannot guarantee
C	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ⁴ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁵) and species indicative of suboptimal condition ⁶ make up less than 5% of ground cover.	Yes	None will be planted. Any colonisers will be removed
D	The scrub has a well-developed edge with scattered scrub and tall grassland and or forbs present between the scrub and adjacent habitat.	No	Not practice
E	There are clearings, glades or rides present within the scrub, providing sheltered edges.	Yes	Clusters of scrub species planted and annual pruning clearing to create openings
Number of criteria passed			
Condition Assessment Result (out of 5 criteria)		Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/√
Passes 5 criteria		Good (3)	
Passes 3 or 4 criteria		Moderate (2)	X
Passes 2 or fewer criteria		Poor (1)	

Other Neutral Grassland – Target Condition Moderate

Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A	The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type, with a consistently high proportion of characteristic indicator species present relevant to the specific habitat type (and relative to Footnote 3 suboptimal species which may be listed in the UKHab description).¹ Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.	Yes	A diverse seed mix will be used and management prescribed to encourage the maximum diversity of species establish and persist
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.	No	Management will be for a single late summer cut
C	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens².	Yes	Small amounts of disturbance are likely / expected from pedestrians / vehicles / animals
D	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20% and cover of scrub (including bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.) is less than 5%.	Yes	None noted at baseline
E	Combined cover of species indicative of suboptimal condition³ and physical damage (such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging management activities) accounts for less than 5% of total area. If any invasive non-native plant species⁴ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA⁵) are present, this criterion is automatically failed.	Yes	Management and monitoring will target optimum species diversity and remedial measures taken if necessary
Additional Criterion - must be assessed for all non-acid grassland types			
F	There are 10 or more vascular plant species per m² present, including forbs that are characteristic of the habitat type (species referenced in Footnote 3 and 5 cannot contribute towards this count). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.	No	Answered no as a precaution. Maximum species diversity will be targeted.
Essential criterion for Good condition achieved (for non-acid grassland) (Yes or No)		Yes	
Number of criteria passed		4	
Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/√	
Acid grassland types (Result out of 5 criteria)			
Passes 5 criteria	Good (3)		
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)		
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)		
Non-acid grassland types (Result out of 6 criteria)			
Passes 5 or 6 criteria, including essential criterion A and additional criterion F.	Good (3)		
Passes 3 - 5 criteria, including essential criterion A.	Moderate (2)	x	
Passes 2 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 3 or 4 criteria excluding criterion A and F.	Poor (1)		

Individual trees located south of the private gardens and within proposed other neutral grassland – target condition moderate

Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	Yes	All native species to be specified
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).	Yes	Individual trees automatically pass
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .	No	Unlikely within 30 years
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	Yes	Trees are located in area that will be retained and managed within the convent landholding, and only pruned when necessary for safety reasons.
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	No	Cannot guarantee
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Yes	To be planted in grassland
Number of criteria passed		4	
Condition Assessment Result (out of 6 criteria)		Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/✓
Passes 5 or 6 criteria		Good (3)	
Passes 3 or 4 criteria		Moderate (2)	x
Passes 2 or fewer criteria		Poor (1)	
Note that 'Fairly Good and Fairly Poor' condition categories are not available for this broad habitat type.			

Individual tree located north of the convent building – target condition moderate

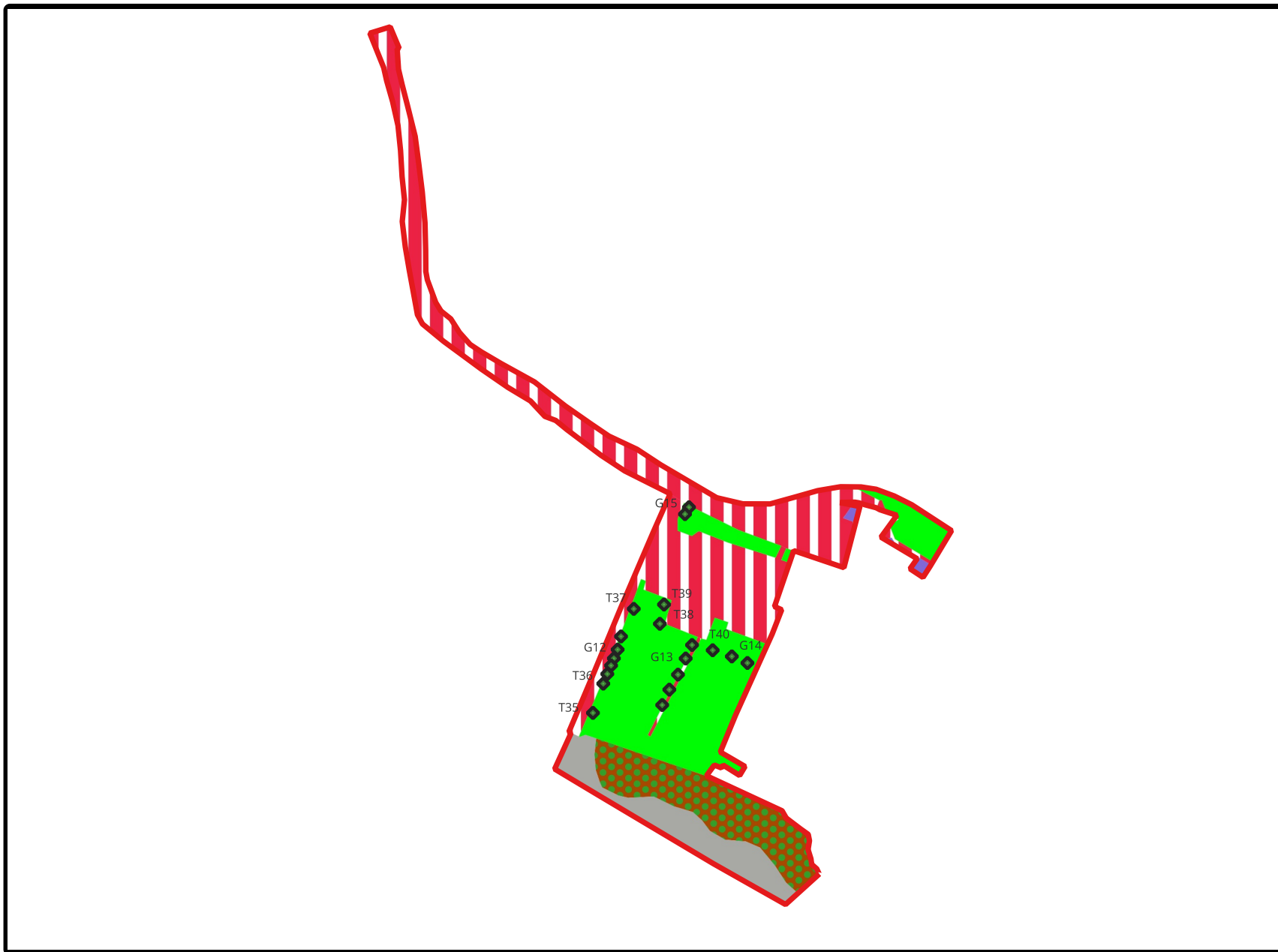
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	Yes	All native species to be specified
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	Yes	Individual trees automatically pass
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .	No	Unlikely within 30 years
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	No	Planting location close to access road and the convent building - more regular pruning may be required
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	No	Cannot guarantee
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Yes	To be planted in grassland
Number of criteria passed		3	
Condition Assessment Result (out of 6 criteria)		Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/✓
Passes 5 or 6 criteria		Good (3)	
Passes 3 or 4 criteria		Moderate (2)	x
Passes 2 or fewer criteria		Poor (1)	
Note that 'Fairly Good and Fairly Poor' condition categories are not available for this broad habitat type.			

Native Hedgerow – Target Condition Moderate

Hedgerow favourable condition attributes				
Attributes and functional groupings (A, B, C, D and E)		Criteria - the minimum requirements for 'favourable condition'	Criteria description	Criterion passed (Yes or No)
Core groups - applicable to all hedgerow types				
A1.	Height	>1.5 m average along length	The average height of woody growth estimated from base of stem to the top of the shoots, excluding any bank beneath the hedgerow, any gaps or isolated trees. Newly laid or coppiced hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice). A newly planted hedgerow does not pass this criterion (unless it is >1.5 m height).	No Not targeted - and the height of the hedge may be constrained by adjacent woodland
A2.	Width	>1.5 m average along length	The average width of woody growth estimated at the widest point of the canopy, excluding gaps and isolated trees. Outgrowths (such as blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i> suckers) are only included in the width estimate when they are >0.5 m in height. Laid, coppiced, cut and newly planted hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice).	No Not targeted - and the width of the hedge may be constrained by adjacent woodland
B1.	Gap - hedge base	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length	This is the vertical 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow, and its distance from the ground to the lowest leafy growth. Certain exceptions to this criterion are acceptable (see page 65 of the Hedgerow Survey Handbook).	No Not targeted as a precaution - adjacent woodland may cause leggy shrubs
B2.	Gap - hedge canopy continuity	Gaps make up <10% of total length; and No canopy gaps >5 m	This is the horizontal 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow. Gaps are complete breaks in the woody canopy (no matter how small). Access points and gates contribute to the overall 'gappiness' but are not subject to the >5 m criterion (as this is the typical size of a gate).	Yes Double rows of whips to be prescribed and replacement planting of failures
C1.	Undisturbed ground and perennial vegetation	>1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length: - Measured from outer edge of hedgerow; and - Is present on one side of the hedgerow (at least).	This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedgerow. Undisturbed ground is present for at least 90% of the hedgerow length, greater than 1 m in width and must be present along at least one side of the hedgerow. This criterion recognises the value of the hedgerow base as a boundary habitat with the capacity to support a wide range of species. Cultivation, heavily trodden footpaths, poached ground etc. can limit available habitat niches.	Yes Targeted through management of other neutral grassland
C2.	Nutrient-enriched perennial vegetation	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground.	The indicator species used are nettles <i>Urtica</i> spp., cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i> and docks <i>Rumex</i> spp. Their presence, either singly or together, does not exceed the 20% cover threshold.	Yes Targeted through management of other neutral grassland
D1.	Invasive and neophyte species	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ³) and recently introduced species.	Recently introduced species refer to plants that have naturalised in the UK since AD 1500 (neophytes). Archaeophytes count as natives. For information on archaeophytes and neophytes see the JNCC website ⁴ , as well as the BSI website ⁵ where the 'Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora' ⁶ contains an up-to-date list of the status of species. For information on invasive non-native species see the GB Non-Native Secretariat website ⁷ .	Yes Non in planting and will be removed in management
D2.	Current damage	>90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities.	This criterion addresses damaging activities that may have led to or lead to deterioration in other attributes. This could include evidence of pollution, piles of manure or rubble, or inappropriate management practices (for example, excessive hedgerow cutting).	Yes No such disturbance expected

Native hedgerow continued

Condition categories for hedgerows without trees		
Category	Category Requirements	Metric Score
Good	No more than 2 failures in total; AND No more than 1 failure in any functional group.	3
Moderate	No more than 4 failures in total; AND <u>Does not fail both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and C2 = Moderate condition).	2
Poor	Fails a total of more than 4 attributes; OR <u>Fails both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and B2 = Poor condition).	1
Score achieved:		2



Baseline Site Habitat Plan - Convent

Legend

-  Red Line Boundary
-  Individual tree
-  Developed land; sealed surface
-  Introduced shrub
-  Modified grassland
-  Other woodland; mixed
-  Tall forbs



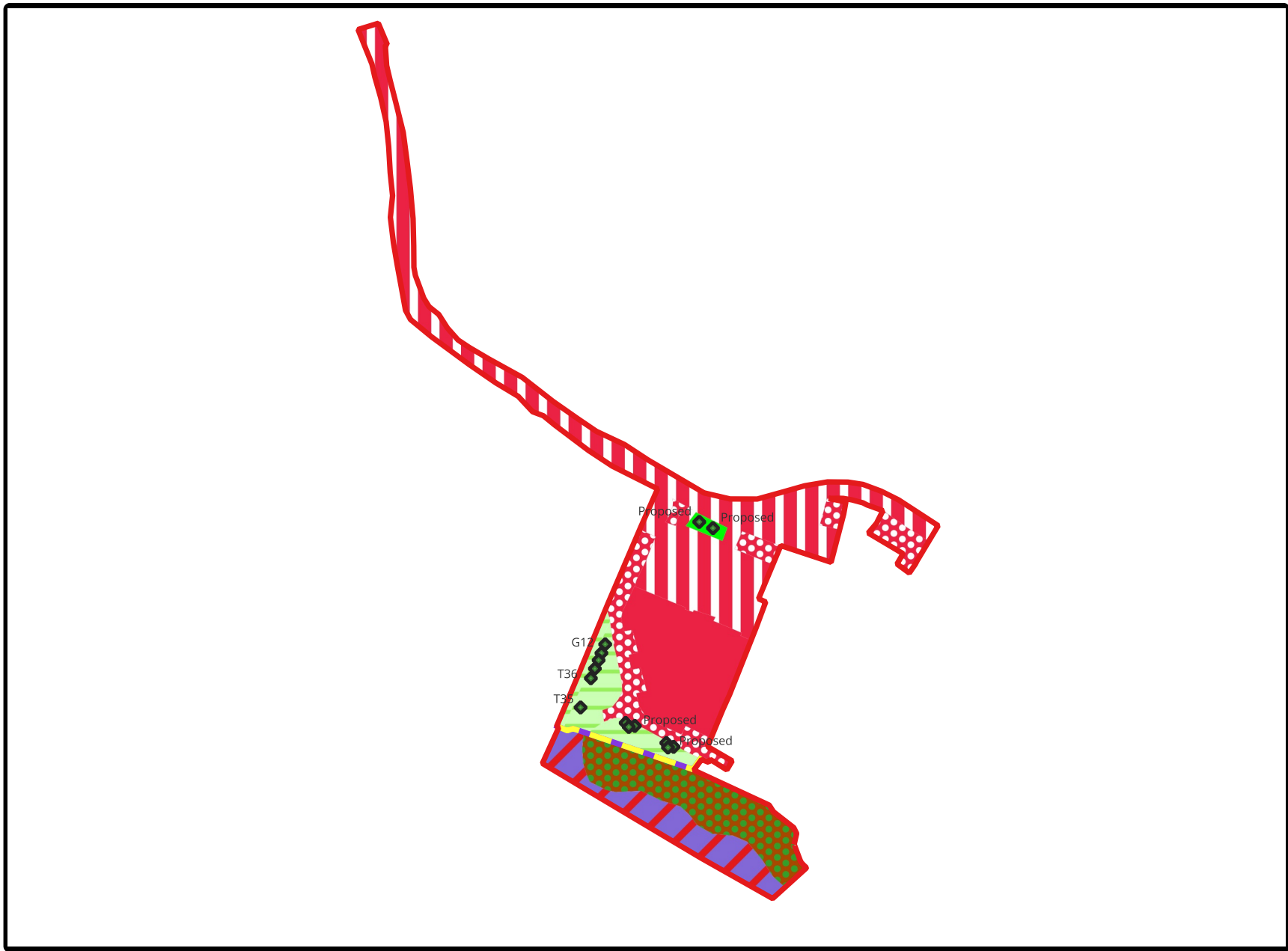
Client

Sisters of Mercy

Project Title & Location

Convent of Mercy
Gravesend

Drawn by	Approved by	Rev	Date
SH	COR	01	26/11/25



Legend

- Red Line Boundary
- Individual tree
- Native hedgerow
- Grasscrete
- Developed land; sealed surface
- Mixed scrub
- Modified grassland
- Other neutral grassland
- Other woodland; mixed
- Vegetated garden



The Old Bank, 34 South Street, Tarring, Worthing, West Sussex, BN14 7LH
T: 01903 216033 E: office@lizardlandscape.co.uk W: lizardlandscape.co.uk

Client

Sisters of Mercy
Project Title & Location
Convent of Mercy
Gravesend

Drawn by	Approved by	Rev	Date
SH	COR	01	26/11/25

Proposed Site Habitat Plan - Convent

