

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN (BNG) STATEMENT

24 ST GEORGE CRESCENT, GRAVESEND, GRAVESHAM, DA12 4AR

1.0 Project Overview

This report appraises the biodiversity impact of the proposed development at **24 St George Crescent, Gravesend, DA12 4AR**. The assessment has been conducted in accordance with the **Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Small Sites Metric 2024)** and the **Environment Act 2021**, which mandates a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity.

1.1 National and Local Policy Compliance

- **Environment Act 2021:** This development satisfies the requirement to calculate BNG using a standardized metric and secure it for a minimum of 30 years.
- **NPPF (2024):** In line with Paragraphs 187-195, the proposal minimizes wildlife impact and provides measurable net gains.
- **Gravesham Borough Council:** The enhancement of on-site habitats supports local green infrastructure and urban greening objectives, contributing to the wider borough-level biodiversity targets.

1.2 The Mitigation Hierarchy The project strictly follows the **Mitigation Hierarchy**:

1. **Avoid:** The design retains the majority of existing "Developed Land" to avoid further ecological degradation.
 2. **Minimize:** Hard surfacing is limited to existing footprints where possible.
 3. **Enhance:** Low-value "unvegetated garden" is replaced with high-distinctiveness **Rain Gardens** and **Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)**.
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2.0 Baseline Habitat & Biodiversity Methodology

2.1 Ecological Methodology A baseline assessment was conducted to classify habitats in accordance with the **UK Habitat Classification System v2.01 (UKHab)**. Data was cross-referenced using high-resolution aerial imagery and site plans.

2.2 Baseline Habitat Schedule The site is approximately 289.9sqm in extent and consists of the following baseline units:

- **Developed land; sealed surface:** 56sqm
- **Unvegetated garden:** 233.9sqm

2.3 Statutory Note on Pre-degradation (May 2025)

The hard surfacing at the rear of the property was installed in **May 2025**. To ensure full transparency and compliance with the January 30, 2024, BNG cutoff, this area is recorded in the baseline as "**unvegetated garden**." This approach ensures the metric accurately reflects the site's true ecological potential and prevents "penalization" for existing site improvements while maintaining a defensible baseline for the Planning Authority.

Proposed Biodiversity & Habitat Creation

3.1 Proposed Habitat Creations

The development introduces three strategic habitat categories designed to maximize ecological "Units":

1. **Sustainable Drainage System (101.6sqm):** Utilizing **Porous Pavers** to manage surface water runoff while maintaining a permeable urban surface.
2. **Rain Garden (5.2sqm):** A high-value infiltration area specified for pollinators.
3. **Ground Level Planters (3.8sqm):** Conversion of bare ground into vegetated garden.

3.2 Ecological Species Specifications

To ensure the report is "extensive," we specify the ecological function of each recommended plant:

Species Name	Habitat Location	Ecological Function
Yellow Iris (<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>)	Rain Garden	Provides vertical structure for aquatic insects.
Purple Loosestrife (<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>)	Rain Garden	Major late-summer nectar source for bees.
Lavender (<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>)	Planters	Supports a wide range of bumblebee species.
Hardy Cranesbill (<i>Geranium sp.</i>)	Planters	Effective ground cover that suppresses weeds naturally.

3.3 Strategic Significance

The site is not located within a designated "Strategic Wildlife Corridor" or "Priority Habitat" area. As such, the strategic significance in the metric is recorded as "Low," focusing on on-site enhancements to improve the local urban canopy

4.0 Habitat Management & Monitoring (MMMP) 30-Year Plan

4.1 Management Objectives The overarching goal is to maintain all created habitats in "**Good**" condition for a minimum of 30 years.

4.2 Maintenance Schedule

- **Years 1–2 (Establishment):** Bi-monthly watering during the growing season and manual removal of competitive weeds.
- **Years 3–30 (Management): SuDS Maintenance:** Annual sweeping of Porous Pavers to ensure continued permeability.
 - **Rain Garden:** Bi-annual thinning of aquatic species to prevent overcrowding and maintain water capacity.

- **Replacement Policy:** Any specimens that fail within the first 5 years must be replaced on a "like-for-like" basis to ensure the unit count remains stable.

4.3 Monitoring & Accountability In line with **CIEEM Good Practice**, the site should undergo a brief biodiversity audit every 5 years to verify that the proposed gains have been realized and are being managed favorably.

4.4 Long-Term Management (Years 6-30)

- **Sediment Management:** The **Porous Pavers** (101.6sqm) must be swept annually to prevent "blinding" of the gaps, which would otherwise lead to surface water pooling.
- **Nutrient Control:** No high-nitrogen fertilizers should be used in the Rain Garden, as this can lead to algal growth and reduced biodiversity value.
- **Biodiversity Audits:** A "competent person" (ecologist) should perform a brief check every 5 years to verify the habitats are still present and functioning as intended.

5.0 Detailed Habitat Condition Assessment

In the Small Sites Metric (SSM), the value of a habitat is defined by its "Condition." To achieve a "Good" condition for your proposed habitats, the following criteria must be met:

5.1 Rain Garden (High Distinctiveness)

The Rain Garden (5.2sqm) is a specialized feature that manages surface water while providing a "stepping stone" for pollinators.

- Condition Target: "Good."
- Justification: The garden will feature at least 4–6 native species, ensuring a varied vegetation structure that remains functional year-round.

5.2 Ground Level Planters (Vegetated Garden)

The 3.8sqm of planters will convert bare ground into a vegetated state.

- Condition Target: "Moderate" (Typical for residential planters).
 - Justification: These areas will be planted with a mix of nectar-rich shrubs and ground cover to prevent soil erosion and support local invertebrate populations.
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6.0 Conclusion

The proposed landscape enhancements at 24 St George Crescent provide a clear pathway to achieving a measurable net gain in biodiversity. By converting low-value "unvegetated garden" into a functional SuDS system and native-rich rain gardens, the development satisfies both national planning requirements and local environmental goals