



Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

The Russets, Strand Close, Meopham

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LIABILITIES:

Whilst every effort has been made to guarantee the accuracy of this report, it should be noted that living animals and plants are capable of migration/establishing. Whilst such species may not have been located during the survey duration, their presence may be found on a site at a later date. This report provides a snap shot of the species that were present at the time of the survey only and does not consider seasonal variation. Furthermore, where access is limited or the site supports habitats which are densely vegetated, only dominant species may be recorded.

The recommendations contained within this document are based on a reasonable timeframe between the completion of the survey and the commencement of any works. If there is any delay between the commencement of works that may conflict with timeframes laid out within this document, or have the potential to allow the ingress of protected species, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted.

It is the duty of care of the landowner/developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to or during works.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Ecology Partnership was commissioned by Frankams to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment for The Russets, Strand Close, Meopham DA13 0HB hereafter referred to as the 'site' (Figure 1).
- 1.2 The site covers an area of approximately 0.10ha consisting of an area of hardstanding and a number of buildings. The extent of the site is shown in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: Approximate site boundary.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric was used to calculate biodiversity losses and gains for habitats within the site. The metric is included as a separate excel document (Appendix 1) and the metric underpins the Environment Bill's provisions for mandatory BNG in England.
- 2.2 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric uses habitat as a proxy for wider biodiversity with different habitat types scoring different values according to their relative biodiversity value and dependent on the condition and location of the habitat, to calculate 'biodiversity units'.

- 2.3 To inform the BNG assessment, the site was subject to a walkover survey on 12th August 2025 by senior ecologist Kieran McGranaghan BSc (Hons) PGDip. The condition assessment tables for each habitat can be seen in Appendix 2 of this report. The baseline conditions and habitat types used as part of this metric calculation are set to be updated by another inspection of the site conducted in late spring/summer, which will better inform the conditions of the habitats present on site.
- 2.4 The habitat creation for the metric is based on the layout plan below (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Current proposals (Ground floor plan)

3.0 RESULTS

Habitat Baseline

- 3.1 The habitats currently present on site have been divided into several habitat types. The baseline habitats are shown in Table 1 and Figure 3 below.

Table 1: Habitat Baseline.

Habitat	Area (ha)	Condition
Urban – Developed land; sealed surface	0.39	N/A – Other
Urban – Developed land; sealed surface	0.048	N/A – Other
Urban – Introduced shrub	0.008	Condition Assessment N/A
Urban – Bare Ground	0.002	N/A – Other
Grassland – Modified grassland	0.003	Condition ‘Poor’
Individual Trees – Rural tree	0.0041	Condition ‘Good’
Individual Trees – Rural tree	0.0326	Condition ‘Good’
Total (excluding individual trees)	0.010	



Figure 3: Habitat Baseline map.

Habitat Creation

- 3.2 The habitat types and areas from the proposals are shown below in Table 2 a as well as Figure 4 below.

Table 2: Habitat Creation.

Habitat	Area (ha)	Condition
Retained		
Individual trees – Urban trees	0.0326	Condition ' Good '
Created		
Individual trees – Urban trees	0.0244	Condition ' Poor '
Urban – Developed land; sealed surface	0.02	Condition ' N/A - Other '
Urban – Developed land; sealed surface	0.0348	Condition ' N/A - Other '
Grassland – Modified grassland	0.0452	Condition ' Poor '
Total (excluding individual trees)	0.010	

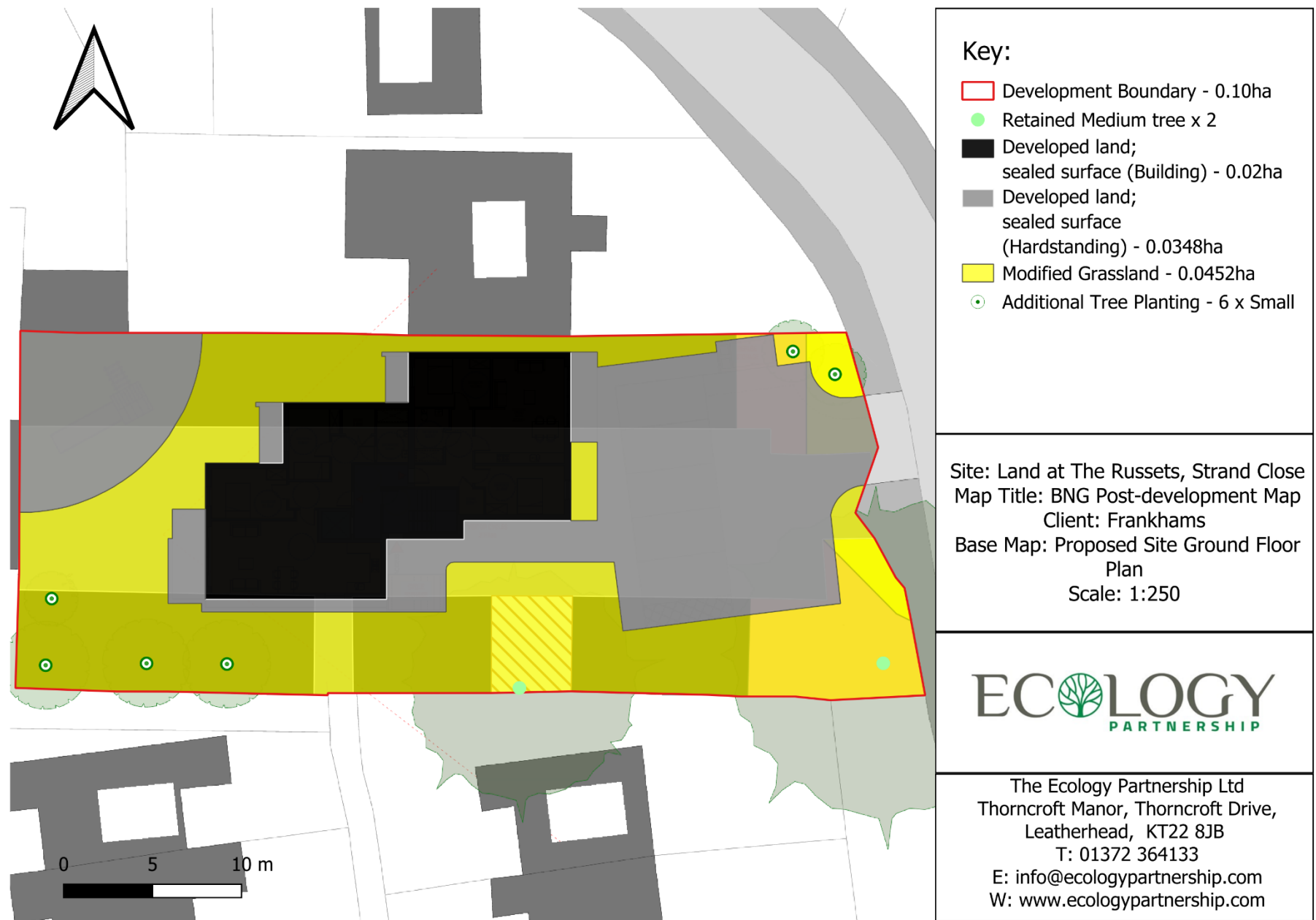


Figure 4: Habitat creation map.

Results

- 3.3 The development will result in a **17.23%** biodiversity net gain in habitat units, whilst also satisfying the trading summary (Figure 5).

FINAL RESULTS				
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)		Area habitat units	0.08	
		Hedgerow units	0.00	
		Watercourse units	0.00	
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)		Area habitat units	17.23%	
		Hedgerow units	0.00%	
		Watercourse units	0.00%	
Trading rules satisfied?		Yes ✓		
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Area habitat units	10.00%	0.47	0.51	0.00
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

Figure 5: Headline Results.

4.0 DISCUSSION

- 4.1 The site is set to achieve a **17.23%** biodiversity net gain in habitat units, as well as satisfying the trading rules. This is largely due to the creation of new areas of modified grassland within the site, retention of the English walnut tree as well as new tree planting, to replace the loss of existing trees. This creation also ensures that the small loss of existing trees is more than sufficiently compensated, ensuring the trading rules are satisfied.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The baseline value of the site is **0.47 area units**, with the proposed development resulting in the habitat value being **0.55 area units**. This will result in a **17.23% net gain**, with all trading rules being satisfied.
- 5.2 As such, the proposals are achieving the mandatory 10% net gain in biodiversity units, as well as satisfying the trading rules, as such no further recommendations for habitats and enhancements are required.

Appendix 1: The Statutory Biodiversity Metric

- Separate excel document.

Appendix 2: Condition Assessment Tables

-Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)		
UKHab Habitat Type(s): Grassland - Modified grassland		
Condition Assessment Criteria		Grassland 1
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² present, including at least 2 forbs (this may include those listed in Footnote 1). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition. 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.	N
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.	N
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.	Y
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.	Y
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens?).	N
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Y
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species? (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA*).	Y
Condition		Poor
Condition Assessment Result		
Good	Passes 6 or 7 of 7 criteria including essential criterion A	
Moderate	Passes 4 or 5 of 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	

Poor	Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR 4-6 of criteria but failing criterion A
Footnote 1 – Creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i>, spear thistle <i>Cirsium vulgare</i>, curled dock <i>Rumex crispus</i>, broad-leaved dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>, common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i>, creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i>, greater plantain <i>Plantago major</i>, white clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> and cow parsley <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>. Footnote 2 – For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing establishment of new species, or localised patches where not exceeding 10% cover. Footnote 3 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying the buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, using professional judgement. Footnote 4 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)	

Condition Sheet: URBAN - NON PRIORITY Habitat Type		
UKHab Habitat Type(s): Sparsely vegetated land - Ruderal/ephemeral and Tall forbs; Urban – Allotments/Bioswale/Cemeteries and churchyards/Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land(OMH)/Rain garden/SUDs/bare ground/all green walls and roofs		
Condition Assessment Criteria		Bare Earth
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.	N
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.	N
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).	y
D	OMH only: The parcel shows spatial variation and forms a mosaic of bare substrate PLUS: - At least four early successional communities (a) to (i): Communities: (a) annuals; (b) mosses/liverworts; (c) lichens; (d) ruderals; (e) inundation species; (f) open grassland; (g) flower-rich grassland; (h) heathland, (i) pools.	
E1	SUDs/Bioswales only: Plant species are mostly native. If non-native species are present, they should not be detrimental to the habitat or native wildlife ⁴ .	
E2	SUDs/Bioswales only: The vegetation is comprised of plant species suited to wetland or riparian situations.	
F	Intensive green roofs – The roof has a minimum of 50% native and non-native wildflowers - 70% of the roof area is soil and vegetation (including water features)	
G	Biodiverse green roofs - have a varied depth of 80 - 150mm at least 50% is at 150mm and is planted and seeded with wildflowers and sedums or is pre-prepared with sedums and wildflowers. Note – to achieve Good condition some additional habitat, such as sand piles, stones, logs etc. be present.	
Condition		Poor

Condition Assessment Result		
Good	Passes 3 of 3 core criteria; AND Meets the requirements for good condition within criteria 2 and 3	Passes 3 of 3 core criteria; AND Meets the requirements for good condition within criteria 2 and 3; AND Passes additional criterion 4
Moderate	Passes 2 of 3 core criteria; OR Passes 3 of 3 core criteria but does not meet the requirements for good condition within criteria 2 and 3	Passes 2 of 3 of 4 criteria; OR Passes 4 of 4 criteria but does not meet the requirements for good condition within criteria 2 and 3
Poor	Passes 0 or 1 of 3 core criteria	Passes 0 or 1 of 4 criteria
Footnote 1 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Footnote 2 – Sources of information about detrimental non-native species can be found on the GB Non-native Species Secretariat (GBNNSS) website: Home » NNSS (nonnativespecies.org) And Natural England Access to Evidence page should also be checked for up-to-date information: Horizon-scanning for invasive non-native plants in Great Britain - NECR053 (naturalengland.org.uk) For criterion C – For green roof habitat types only – buddleia <i>Buddleja davidii</i> should be assessed alongside Schedule 9 species. This species impairs the health of the local ecosystem and reduces the biodiversity potential of the roof. It is also a sign that a roof has not been planted and seeded correctly in subsequent years. Footnote 3 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying a buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, using professional judgement. Footnote 4 – Use professional judgement. Sources of information about non-native species that are not detrimental to native wildlife can be found on the GBNNSS website: Alternative plants » NNSS (nonnativespecies.org)		

Condition Sheet: INDIVIDUAL TREES Habitat Type				
UKHab Habitat Type(s): Urban tree: Covers the following topographical formations most commonly found in urban areas¹: Individual Trees (urban or rural): Young trees over 75mm in diameter at breast height whose canopies are not touching. Urban Perimeter / Linear Blocks and Groups (description applied to the urban environment only): Groups or stands of trees (size requirement as defined above) within and around the perimeter of urban land. This includes those along urban streets, highways, railways and canals, and also former field boundary trees incorporated into developments. Canopies must overlap continuously. Groups of urban trees that don't match the descriptions for woodland may be assessed within this category.				
Condition Assessment Criteria		Apple	English Walnut	
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	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	
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .	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	
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	Y	Y	
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Y	N	
Condition		Good	Good	
Condition Assessment Result				
Good	Passes 5 or 6 criteria			
Moderate	Passes 3 or 4 criteria			
Poor	Passes 2 or fewer criteria			
Footnote 1 - See gov.uk standing advice on ancient and veteran trees. Available from: Keepers of time: ancient and native woodland and trees policy in England (publishing.service.gov.uk) and:				

[Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-ancient-trees-and-veteran-trees-advice-for-making-planning-decisions)

Footnote 2 - Enhancement of this habitat type is only possible by improving the habitat so that it meets all Criteria B, D and F. It is not possible or appropriate to enhance individual tree/s through meeting just one or two of those Criteria, nor by meeting Criteria A, C or E.

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