

**Hollyrood
Ardingly Road
Lindfield
Haywards Heath
RH16 2QY**

Biodiversity Net Gain/Net loss

November 2024

FINAL

Produced by
*Ecology and Land
Management*
For and on behalf of
St Marks Properties
Ltd.



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Site Name: Hollyrood, Ardingly Road, Lindfield, Haywards Heath, Sussex RH16 2QY - the site; Fig. 1

Grid Reference: TQ35432669

County: Mid Sussex

Planning Authority: Mid-Sussex District Council

Natural Character Area: High Weald

Client: St Marks Properties Ltd.

Proposed Disturbance: Residential development

Survey Request: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Surveyor: Henriette Westergaard, MSc, BSc (Hons), MCIEEM, CMLI, CEnv

For and on behalf of Ecology & Land Management

Assessment Period: October/November 2024

Limitations: Protected species surveys are not part of this assessment.

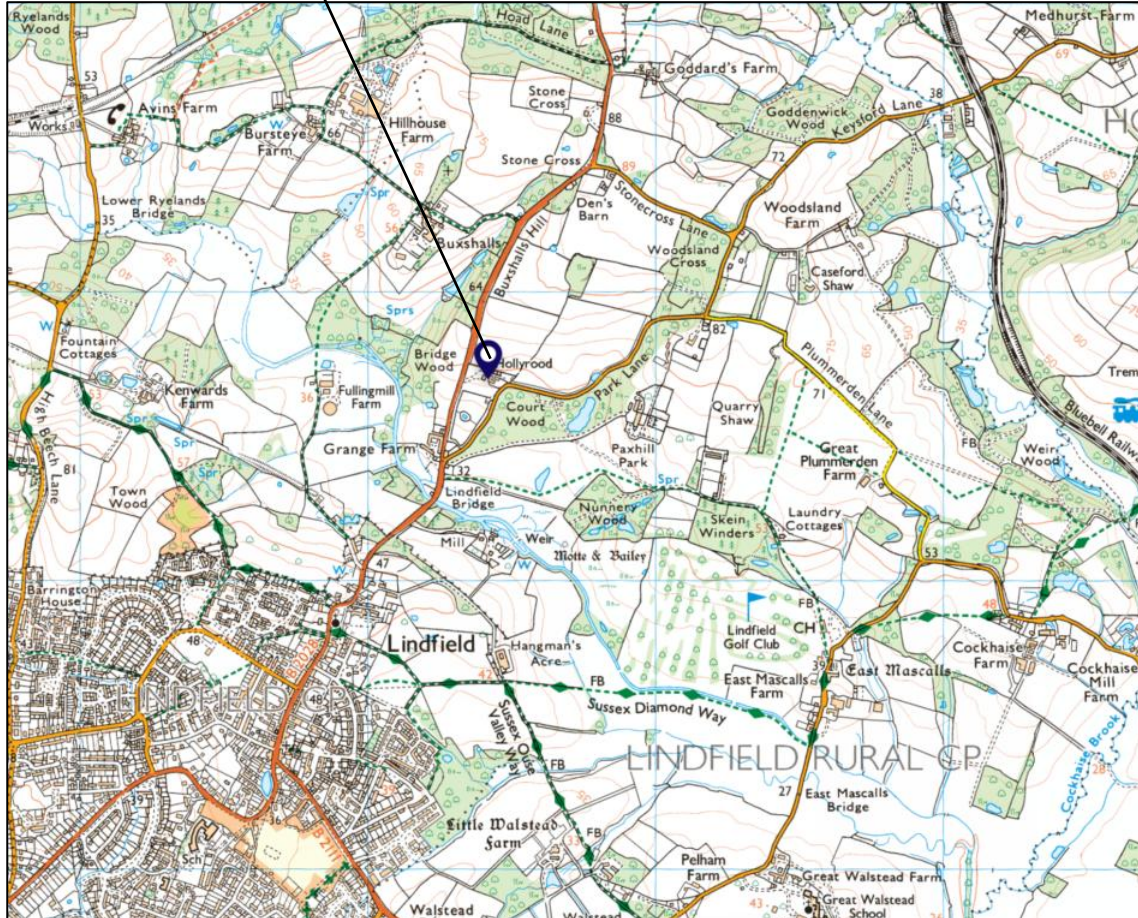
Information within this report is based on information from the preliminary ecological appraisal and measurements provided by the client as indicated on site plan.

The landscape plan illustrates proposals.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Biodiversity net gain/net loss assessment (BNG) has been produced in response to the proposed development at Hollyrood House, Ardingly Road, Lindfield, Haywards Heath RH16 2QY. Ecology & Land Management were commissioned by St Marks Properties Ltd. to carry out a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment. See Figure 1 for site location.

Figure 1 – Site Location



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2.0 Methodology

Good Practice Principles

- 2.1 Biodiversity net gain has been defined as ‘development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before, and an approach where developers work with local governments, wildlife groups, landowners and other stakeholders in order to support their priorities for nature conservation’ (Baker, 2016).
Good practice principles for development include:
- 2.2 Apply the ‘Mitigation Hierarchy’ (in line with CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA)) (CIEEM, 2018) and be ‘additional’ by achieving outcomes that exceed existing obligations.
- Avoid losing biodiversity which cannot be off-set elsewhere (e.g. irreplaceable habitats).

- Address risk (e.g. difficulty of achieving habitat creation / enhancement for net gain).
- Make a 'measurable' net gain contribution (e.g. calculated using an appropriate metric) and ensure that calculations consistent and transparent (i.e. limitations and assumptions are clearly identified).
- Ensure that net gain design achieves the best outcome for biodiversity (this may require both quantitative and qualitative assessment) and create a net gain legacy for long-term benefits.

Desk Study and Habitat Baseline Assessment

2.3 A baseline habitat assessment was undertaken by Ecology & Land Management in October 2024. It provides a baseline assessment of existing habitats. The baseline is based on a site visit undertaken by a qualified ecologist.

2.4 The BNG assessment measures whether the proposed development will make a contribution to or have an impact on the wider ecosystem service of the site. The BNG assessment is based on data gathered from the baseline habitat assessment and landscape proposals provided by the client. An indicative habitat plan shows the existing site (Appendix I). The baseline assessment has created a biodiversity unit baseline assessing how distinctiveness of habitats retained or lost are replaced or restored by equally distinctive new habitats.

Condition Assessment

2.5 Habitat condition was assigned following guidance from the 'Technical Supplement' document (Natural England, 2021) which accompanies the Biodiversity Metric (Defra 07.24) Assessment criteria as well as the UK Habitat Classification User Manual v.2.0 (July, 2023).

Calculation of Biodiversity Units

2.6 Calculation of biodiversity units has been undertaken using the Defra 07.24 Biodiversity Beta Metric Calculator to calculate the biodiversity unit values of area habitats and linear features for the site before and after development. This helps determine the overall habitat biodiversity net loss or gain of the wider site. This allowed calculation of the change in biodiversity units and the overall percentage of gain/loss achieved. Metric calculations have been undertaken by Principal Ecologist, Henriette Westergaard, Msc, MCIEEM, CMLI, CEnv. Pre-development baseline habitat areas were calculated using measurements taken from measuring the baseline habitats as illustrated on the Indicative Habitat Plan (ELM, October 2024). Post-development habitats were calculated based on information provided by the client. A Proposals plan is shown in Appendix IV. Habitat condition for created habitats was assigned taking a precautionary approach and with consideration of biotic and operational phase conditions (i.e. those which may limit the extent to which 'good' condition is likely to be reached).

Strategic Significance

2.7 The criteria within the Biodiversity Metric (Defra 07.24) was assessed by determining if habitat areas within the site occur within any strategic locations for biodiversity, form part of a designated site for nature conservation or are identified within local plans such as Ecological Networks (MAGIC).

Assumptions & Limitations

- 2.8 The baseline habitat areas have been calculated by cross referencing the Indicative Habitat Plan (Appendix I) with aerial imagery and information provided by the client. Post-development landscaping proposals have been provided by the client.

3.0 Baseline Habitat Assessment

- 3.1 The existing habitats are shown on the Indicative Habitat Plan. The biodiversity units for each habitat have been calculated and summaries are shown in tables below. The site is approximately 6306.7m² (0.63067ha) in extent. The land slopes gently from north to south at approximately 50m AOD down to 45m AOD. The soils are described in Soilscales (Cranfield University) as slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage. The site is located on the eastern side of the B2028 Ardingly Road, c. 1 mile north of Lindfield village centre. The wider landscape is characterised by the rural landscape of woodlands, ghylls and grazing fields. The site is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The nearest statutory designated site includes Eastern Road Nature Reserve LNR. Non-statutory designated sites include Walstead Cemetery, Burstye Farm Meadow and Wickham Woods local wildlife sites. Nearby priority habitats include Traditional orchard, Deciduous woodland, Ancient woodland and Ghyll woodland. Ancient woodland is adjacent to the southeast (Appendix III).
- 3.2 Habitats within the site boundary include buildings and hard standing with mature trees, amenity lawns adjacent to woodland edges.

4.0 Biodiversity Impact Calculations

Existing Habitats and linear features

- 4.1 The baseline habitat assessment is summarised as follows:

Urban – buildings and hard standing (u1b5/6)

- 4.2 The existing site comprises a main house and several additional buildings (3636m²). The main house is a Victorian brick and sandstone construction with pitched roof. There are 3 further houses and several outbuildings comprising mainly wooden sheds. This is a v. low distinctiveness habitat and a condition assessment is not applicable.

Individual trees (w32)

- 4.3 An Arboricultural Report is available for the site (Argricultural Consultants, June 2024). This shows there is a total of 55 trees and 8 groups of trees. 51 trees and 1 group of trees including 22 category A, 18 category B, 11 category C and 2 category U. Of these 19 trees and 3 groups of trees are within the redline boundary. All trees are described as mature or early mature. Trees include oak (*Quercus robur*), Lawson Cypress (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*), yew (*Taxus baccata*), Locust Tree (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), Norway Spruce (*Picea abies*), Sweet Gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*), Damson (*Prunus Domestica*), Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*), Pear (*Pyrus sp.*), Fig (*Ficus carica*), Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Serbian Spruce (*Picea omorika*), Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*), Copper Beech (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Purpurea'), Wellingtonia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*), Austrian Pine (*Pinus nigra*), Monterey Pine (*Pinus radiata*) and Rhododendron spp. Table 1 lists trees and how they have been considered for the biodiversity metric. This is a medium distinctiveness habitat and the condition has been assessed as 'good' due to passing all 6 criteria (Appendix V).

Table 1 – Trees within redline

Number	Dbh	Area	Lost
T8	250	28.26	28.26
T9	240	26.04	
T10	350	55.39	
T18	1000	452.16	
T22	190	16.32	
T23	300	40.69	
T24	500	113.04	
T25	100	4.52	4.52
T26	150	10.17	10.17
T27	150	10.17	10.17
G28	150 x 3	30.52	30.52
T29	150	10.17	
S30	150	10.17	
T34	150	10.17	
T35	250	28.26	
T36	300	40.69	
T37	250	28.26	
T38	250	28.26	
T39	190	16.32	
G41	250 x 2	56.52	56.52
T42	1000	452.16	
T43	150	10.17	
Total		1478.43	140.16

Grassland – modified (g4)

- 4.4 Large areas of modified grassland is present within the grounds (2671m²). The grassland is maintained as short sward and species diversity was very limited. Species observed include perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), daisy (*Bellis perennis*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*) and dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*). This is a low distinctiveness and the condition has been assessed as ‘poor’ due to failing criteria A and B (See Appendix V).
- 4.5 The following tables show existing and proposed habitats and linear features and their individual biodiversity unit scores.

Table 2 - UKHab Definitions of existing habitats and linear features

Description	UKHab
Buildings/hard surfaces	u1b5/6
Individual trees	w32
Grassland – modified	g4

- 4.6 A summary of existing biodiversity units is presented in tables 3 and 4 below.

Table 3 – Summary of Existing Habitat Biodiversity Units

All habitats within boundary	Area (ha) Existing	Condition	Area (ha) Retained	Biodiversity Units Current	Biodiversity Units Lost
Urban – Developed sealed surface	0.3636	N/A	0	0	0
Individual trees	0.147843	Moderate	0.133827	1.36	0.13
Grassland - modified	0.2671	Poor	0	0.61	0.61
Total	0.6307*		0	1.97	0.74

*excluding trees

- 4.7 There native tree lines and non-native hedges associated with the site. These comprise two lines of trees and two hedges within the site. The tree lines include a row of yew (*Taxus baccata*) (G32), which was recently cut down and a row of hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) (G31), which is retained. A line of cherry laurel (G47) forms a hedge along building B3 and a short length of mature yew hedge is present within the southeast corner of the grounds

Table 4 – Summary of Existing Linear Features Biodiversity Units

Linear Feature	Length (km) Existing	Length (km) Lost	Biodiversity Units Current	Biodiversity Units Lost
Native tree line	0.0335	0.0161	0.23	0.12
Non-native ornamental	0.0258	0.0258	0.03	0
Total		0	0.26	0.12

Compensation - Habitats

- 4.8 The proposed soft landscape includes creation of soft landscaping, which is described below. The proposed design has been created to provide soft landscaping to reduce carbon footprint with a list of plants appropriate for potential climate change impacts. Detailed species specifications are not yet available. These will be provided by the client. In addition to habitats that can be counted as part of the metric calculations, an area along the northern boundary of the rear garden will be enhanced to include wildflower grassland managed as traditional meadow to promote biodiversity enhancement and link to the adjacent priority habitat.

Individual trees (rural) (w32)

- 4.9 A total of 8 individual small native trees will be planting within the proposed landscape. These will be based on trees suitable for the local landscape to provide pollination opportunities for invertebrates. This is a medium distinctiveness habitat and the target condition is assessed as 'moderate'. This will rely on the tree habitat meeting 5 or 5 of the criteria listed below.

- "A: The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).
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).
C: The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature)¹.
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.
E: Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.
F: More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath."

Grassland – modified (g4)

- 4.10 Large areas of modified grass (3268m²) will be created around the refurbished buildings. This will be for communal use but the intention is to create grassland of increased floristic diversity. This is a low distinctiveness habitat and the target condition is assessed as 'moderate'. This will rely on the habitat meeting 4 or 5 criteria including criterion A as listed below.

"A: There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m² 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.**

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 m² (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.

C: Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. may be present).

Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.

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.

E: Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens).

F: Cover of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is less than 20%.

There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA)."

Urban – introduced shrub (u1(847))

- 4.11 As part of the soft landscaping a total of 237m² of introduced shrub will be created. Although the planting has not yet been specified it is intended it should be based on shrubs and ground cover mixes suitable for pollinators. This is a low distinctiveness habitat and a condition assessment is not applicable.

Urban – Other green roof (u1(89))

- 4.12 An area of biodiverse roof (21.46m²) is proposed for the site. Although the planting has not yet been specified it is intended that the roof should provide a mixture of species suitable for pollinating insects. This is a low distinctiveness habitat and the target condition is not applicable.

Urban – artificial unvegetated unsealed surface (u1c)

- 4.13 A total of 964m² of permeable ground will be created associated with permeable parking, permeable pedestrian access and grass filled cell web. This is a v. low distinctiveness habitat and a condition is not available.

Urban – Developed Land, sealed surface

- 4.14 A new area of sealed surface will be created. A total of 845m² in addition to the areas retained. This type of habitat does not provide any biodiversity unit on the metric. The building footprint will remain more or less the same, which includes refurbished building and hard standing. This is a low distinctiveness habitat and a condition assessment is not applicable.

Table 5 – Summary of On-site Habitat Compensation Biodiversity Units

Compensation Habitat	Area/ha	Distinctiveness Score	Target Condition Score	Biodiversity Units achieved
Individual trees - rural	0.0326	Medium	Good	0.14
Grassland – modified	0.3268	Low	Moderate	1.30
Urban – introduced shrub	0.0237	Low	n/a	0.05
Urban – other green roof	0.002146	Medium	Good	0
Urban – artificial unvegetated	0.0964	v. Low	n/a	0
Urban – developed/sealed surface	0.0845	v. Low	n/a	0
Total	0.5314*		Total	0.19**

*excluding trees.

Compensation – Linear Features

- 4.16 The proposals include the creation of native hedgerow. A total of 63.39m will be created. This is a low distinctiveness habitat and the target condition is assessed as good. This relies on the habitat meeting the following criteria: 'No more than 2 failures in total; **AND** No more than 1 failure in any functional group'.

Table 6 – Summary of Compensation Linear Biodiversity Units

Compensation Linear	Km	Distinctiveness Score	Target Condition Score	Biodiversity Units
Native hedge	0.06339	Low	Good	0.29
Total	0.06339		Total	0.29

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 Biodiversity off setting has been used to inform the habitat retention, restoration, creation and enhancement proposals for the proposed site. The results show that the proposals will lead to a net gain for habitat biodiversity units and increase in linear features.
- 5.2 The development is valued at 1.97 units for habitats and 0.26 units for linear features. The retention of the most of the trees and the creation of floristically diverse modified grassland, introduced shrubs and green roofs will mitigate the loss of habitat features. In summary the resulting biodiversity net change are 2.74 units (38.56%) for habitat units and 0.43 (63.33%) Units for linear features. There is no habitat or linear unit deficit.
- 5.3 As proposals currently stand the trading rules have been satisfied. Overall, the current proposals meet the national planning policy (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2021) and the environment Bill 2021.
- 5.4 If all the landscape proposals are followed as prescribed and the landscape is managed favourably for the required length of time the current proposed development will make a net gain in terms of habitat biodiversity units. Headline results from the biodiversity calculator have been included in Table 7.

Table 7 – Headline results

Hollyrood

Headline Results

Scroll down for final results ↴

Return to results menu

On-site baseline	Habitat units	1.97	
	Hedgerow units	0.26	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	2.74	
	Hedgerow units	0.43	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	0.76	38.57%
	Hedgerow units	0.17	63.33%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%

Off-site baseline	Habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	0.00	0.00%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%

Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.76	
	Hedgerow units	0.17	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	Habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	

FINAL RESULTS

Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.76	
	Hedgerow units	0.17	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	38.57%	
	Hedgerow units	63.33%	
	Watercourse units	0.00%	

Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓
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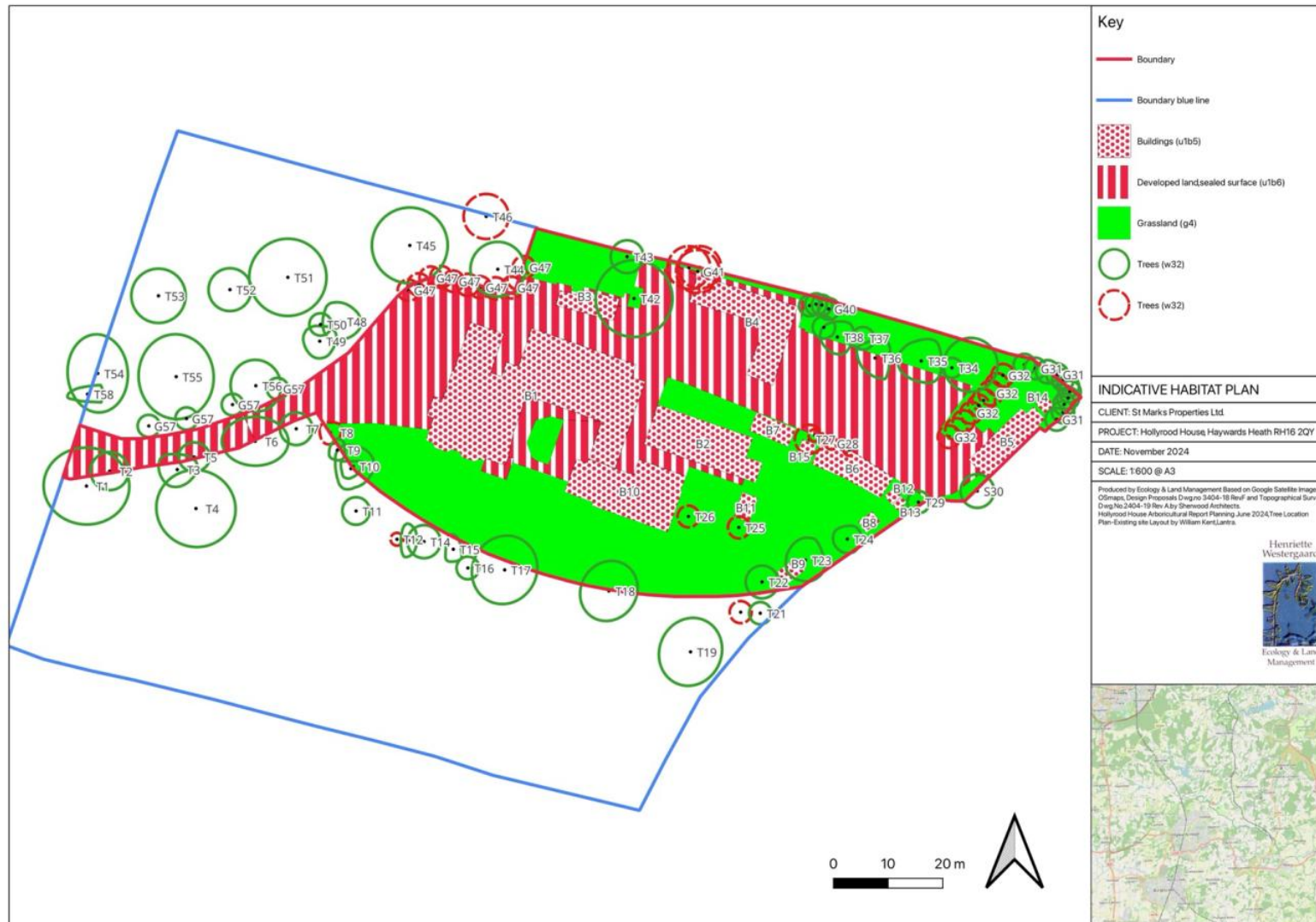
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Habitat units	10.00%	1.97	2.17	0.00
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.26	0.29	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓

No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓

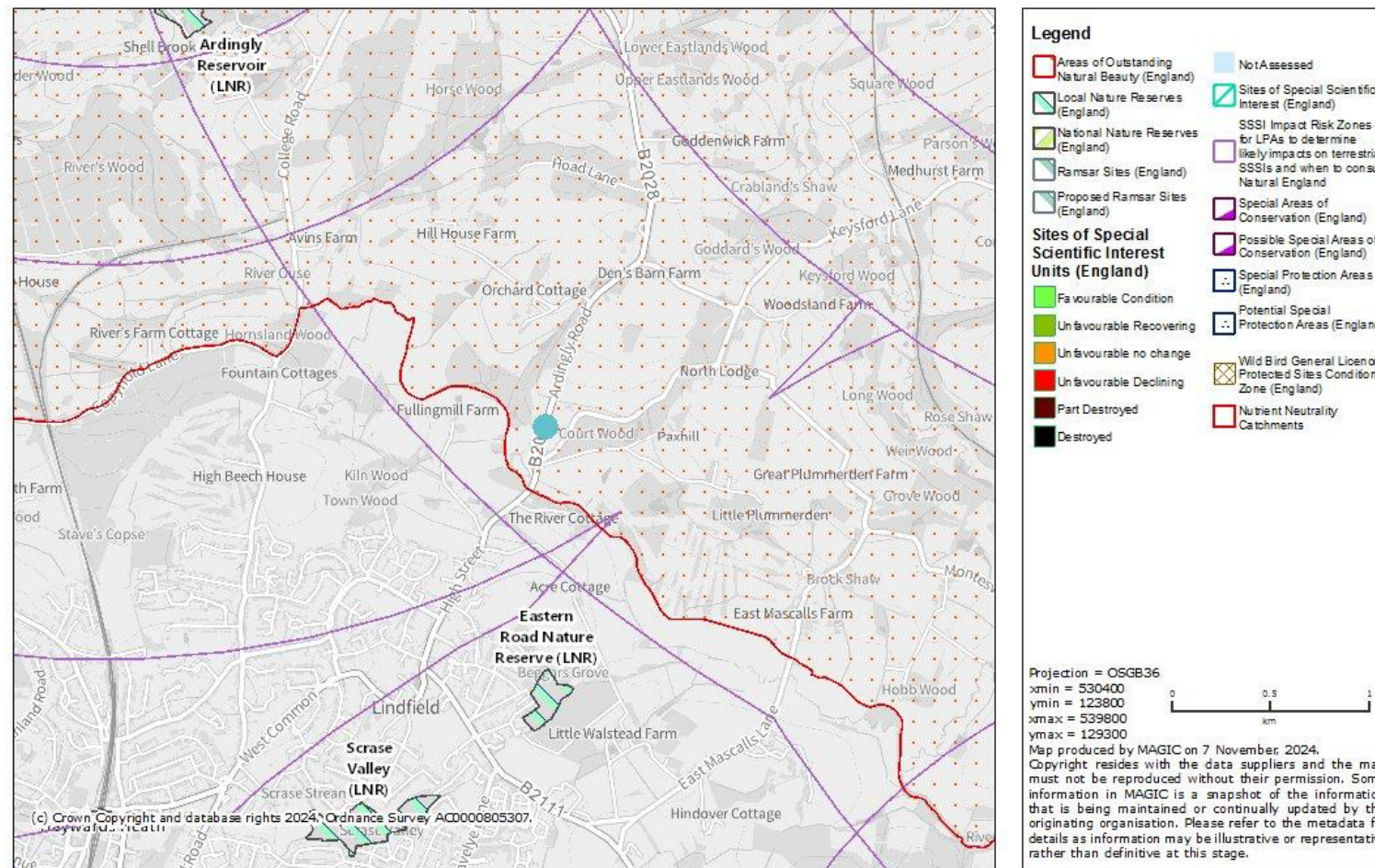
No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

Appendix I – Indicative Baseline Habitat Plan





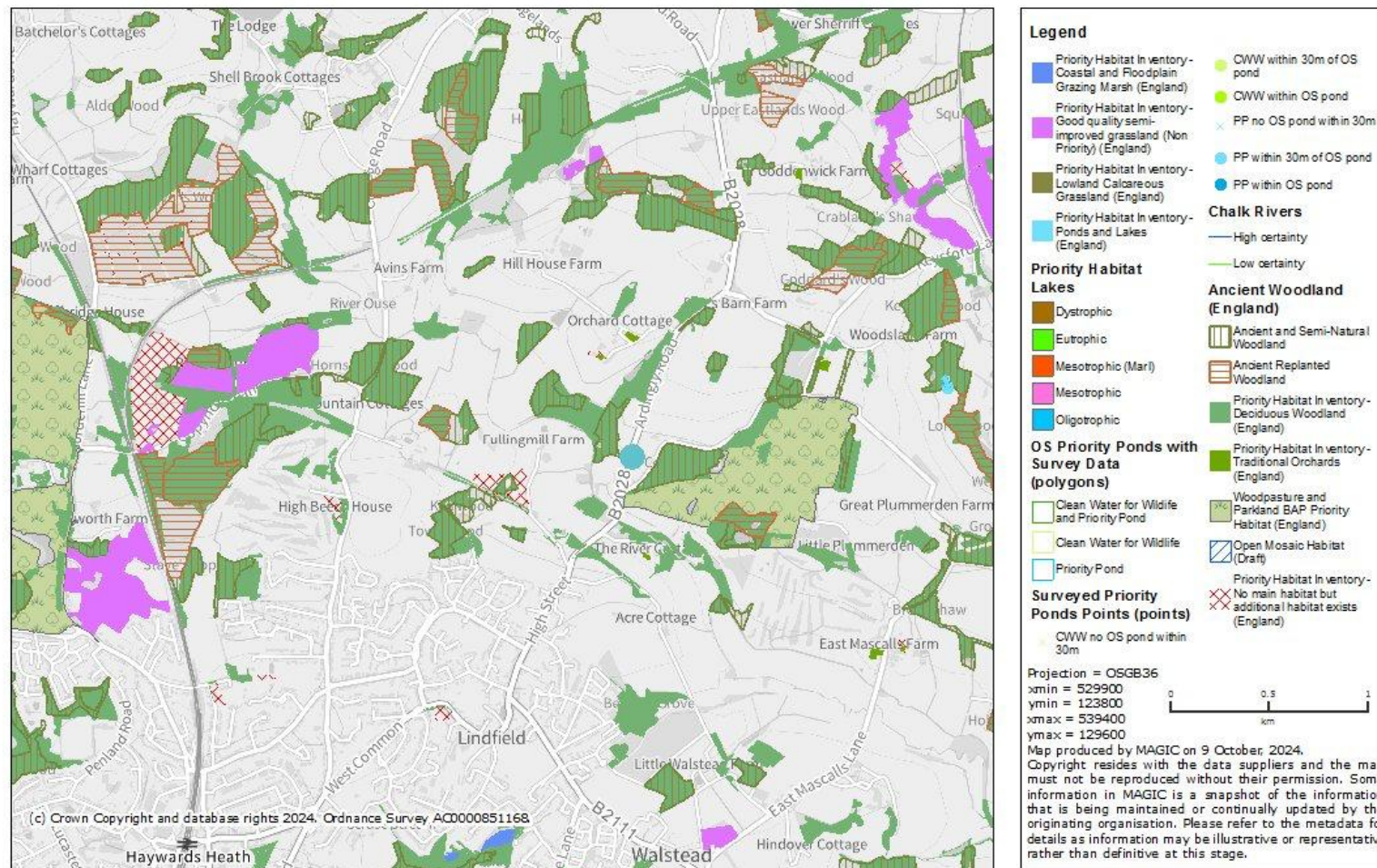
Statutory designated sites



Source: Magic.gov.uk online November 2024

MAGiC

Priority habitats



Source: Magic.gov.uk online November 2024



Appendix V – Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment Criteria

Individual Trees

Condition Sheet: INDIVIDUAL TREES Habitat Type			
Individual trees (description applied to the urban or rural environment): Young trees over 7.5 cm 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 should predominantly overlap continuously. Groups of urban trees that don't match the descriptions for woodland may be assessed within this category.			
On-site or off-site, site name and location	Hollyrood House	Survey date and Surveyor name	17.10.24 Henriette Westergaard
Limitations (if applicable)		Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)	
Grid reference	TQ35432669	Habitat parcel reference	w32
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).	n	
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	
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .	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	
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	n	
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	y	
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)	Moderate	
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)		
Note that 'Fairly Good and Fairly Poor' condition categories are not available for this broad habitat type.			

Grassland – modified

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat type (low distinctiveness)

Grassland - Modified grassland

On-site or off-site, site name and location	Hollyrood House	Survey date and Surveyor name	23.10.2024
Limitations (if applicable)		Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)	
Grid reference	TQ35432669	Habitat parcel reference	g4

Habitat Description



[ukhab – UK Habitat Classification](#)

Condition Assessment Criteria	Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m² 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. A 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 m² (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)².	y	
F Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	y	
G There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA⁴).	y	

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)	Poor

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