

VINE HOUSE, LINDFIELD

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

July 2025



Report Control Sheet

Project Name: Vine House, Lindfield
Project Reference: CW20-2474
Report Title: Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment
Report Reference: CW20-2474 BNG 001
Printing Instructions: Print at A4 Portrait, Double Sided.

<i>Rev</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Prepared</i>	<i>Reviewed</i>	<i>Approved</i>
/	02/07/2025	Report sent to Client for comment.	AT	KB	KB

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCOPE & PURPOSE

1.1.1. Collington Winter Environmental Ltd was commissioned by Mr Mike Eliades to prepare a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment for the proposed works at Vine House, Lindfield RH16 2QY. This report has been prepared to inform planning permission for a development of a car port at the site.

1.1.2. The author of this report is Andrew Taylor MSc (Hons) Ecological Project Manager at Collington Winter Environmental Ltd, and overseen by director Olivia Collington BSc (Hons), MEnvSc, CEnv who is highly experienced managing schemes and has produced many ecological reports to inform planning management plans.

1.1.3. This report has been written broadly following the Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Audit Templates (CIEEM, 2023).

1.2. LOCATION

1.2.1. Please refer to Figure 1.1 for the site location. The site is located within the town of Epsom, Surrey, England (Grid reference: TQ 36163 26444).



Figure 1.1 Site Location

1.3. OBJECTIVES

1.3.1. The report has been produced to document the methods, results and conclusions of a BNG Assessment undertaken based on the proposed development for the site to fulfil the following:

- Ensure that the mitigation hierarchy has been applied;
- Identify the baseline habitats present and provide a condition assessment;
- Identify the post development habitats on site, assess the possible target condition and provide an indication of the likely importance of those habitats;
- Calculate the overall change in biodiversity score from pre- post development
- Provide design recommendations to maximise potential net gain achievable
- Provide an indication of likely outcomes and indicative cost as required.

1.4 PLANNING CONTEXT

- 1.4.1 The Government 25-year Environment Plan states that government will “embed environmental net gain principle for development.”
- 1.4.2 National policy already sets out that planning should provide Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) where possible. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Paragraphs 174(d), 179(b) and 180(d) refer to this policy requirement and the Natural Environment Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides further explanation on how this should be done.
- 1.4.3 Under the Environment Act 2024, all planning permissions granted in England (with a few exemptions) except for small sites will have to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain from January 2024. BNG will be required for small sites from April 2024. BNG will be measured using Defra’s biodiversity metric and habitats will need to be secured for at least 30 years. Key points regarding BNG are listed below:
- Minimum 10% gain required calculated using Biodiversity Metric & approval of net gain plan.
 - Habitat secured for at least 30 years via obligations/ conservation covenant.
 - Habitat can be delivered on-site, off-site or via statutory biodiversity units.
 - There will be a national register for net gain delivery sites.
 - The mitigation hierarchy still applies of avoidance, mitigation, and compensation for biodiversity loss.
 - Will also apply to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs)
 - Does not apply to marine development.
 - Does not change existing legal environmental and wildlife protections.
- 1.4.4 Developers will be required to undertake an assessment (using the nationally set BNG metric tool) of the current biodiversity value of their site both prior to and post the development proposal. In the event that the value of the site post-development is less than 10% better than it was prior to development then the developer will have an obligation to provide additional off-site BNG units to achieve the mandatory 10% net gain.

2 METHODS

2.1 EXISTING HABITAT (BASELINE)

- 2.1.1. A walkover of the site was undertaken by Collington Winter Environmental Ltd on the 3rd June 2025. The weather was overcast (7/8 oktas), with light wind and light rain. The methods were based on the standard methodology as detailed by UKHab classifications (The UK Habitat Classification Working Group, May 2023) using the UK Habitat Classification V2 guidance tool.

2.2 PLANNING LAYOUT (POST-DEVELOPMENT)

- 2.2.1 The Landscape Plan created by DEB Architects Ltd (reference: PA-003 PROPOSED SITE PLAN) for full details of proposed landscaping within the development.

2.3 STATUTORY BIODIVERSITY METRIC

- 2.3.1 The BNG calculation was undertaken utilising The Statutory Biodiversity Metric from DEFRA, the site's UK Habitat map and the Site Plan. The calculation was performed by a technically competent and experienced ecologist as detailed in British Standard BS8683 – Suitably qualified person –definition in BS8683:2020.
- 2.3.2 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric uses habitat features as a proxy measure for capturing the value and importance of nature. The metric considers the size, ecological condition, location and proximity to nearby 'connecting' features. The metric enables assessments to be made of the present and forecast future biodiversity value of a site.

2.4 HABITAT SCORING

- 2.4.1 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric supplies reference documents and user guides in which to accurately evaluate and assess the different habitats on site. The methodology for the baseline and post development calculations are demonstrated in the following sections.

Baseline Units

- 2.4.2 To assess the quality of a habitat and therefore calculate the units scored the Statutory Biodiversity Metric utilises three scoring factors as detailed below.

Condition

- 2.4.3 The condition of a habitat is assessed utilising the Condition Sheets provided for each habitat type. These list positive indicators for each habitat and indicate how many of these indicators need to be present to meet certain thresholds of condition. These condition sheets can be found in The Statutory Biodiversity Metric habitat condition assessment sheets with instructions tool Technical (Natural England Joint Publication, 2023).

Distinctiveness

- 2.4.4 The distinctiveness of each habitat (area and linear) is automatically assigned by the tool, based upon national records of the occurrence and rarity of each habitat (The Statutory Biodiversity metric).

Strategic Significance

- 2.4.5 The idea of strategic significance works at a landscape scale. It gives additional unit value to habitats that are in preferred locations for biodiversity and other environmental objectives. Strategic significance utilises published local plans and objectives to identify local priorities for targeting biodiversity and nature improvement, such as Nature Recovery Areas, local biodiversity plans, National Character Area objectives and green infrastructure strategies.

Post Development Units

- 2.4.6 Additional factors are implemented when assessing post development habitats.

- Difficulty of Creation/Enhancement
- Temporal Risk "Time to target condition"
- Spatial Risk (when offsite mitigation is necessary)

2.5 LIMITATIONS OF ASSESSMENT

- 2.5.1 Whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no investigation could ensure the complete characterisation and prediction of the natural environment. The conclusions and recommendations detailed in this report are based upon the site redline boundary and the development proposals as outlined by the client at the time of writing. Should there be any changes to the site redline boundary or development proposals at a later stage, this assessment should be reviewed to determine whether any amendments or additional survey work is required.
- 2.5.2 Habitat areas (predevelopment) have been measured using online mapping and therefore will not be completely accurate. Post development areas have been provided by the client.
- 2.5.3 The Proposed Site Layout used for post development areas is indicative in nature and does not constitute a detailed landscape plan.

Table 2.1 Limitations Review

Limitation	Analysis
Competence of surveyor	Condition Assessment was undertaken by Andrew Taylor MSc (Hons) Ecological Project Manager, who holds 2 years' experience. The survey was overseen and reviewed Katie Bird, MEnvSci ACIEEM Associate Director at Collington Winter Environmental Ltd who has over 9 years professional experience in ecological consultancy and holds key experience undertaking BNG assessments and providing advice on habitat creation, management and enhancements for both developers and habitat banks.
Competence of ecologist completing the metric	As above – The metric was reviewed by Katie Bird, MEnvSci ACIEEM Associate Director at Collington Winter Environmental Ltd.
Age of survey data	The condition assessment was undertaken in June 2025 and is therefore less than 12 months old. There is no constraint to the age of survey data and this falls within best practice guidance.
Timing of survey	The survey was undertaken in June which is an optimal time of year to undertake condition assessments
Departure from best practice guidance	No departure from best practice guidance.

3 BASELINE CONDITIONS - HABITATS

3.1. STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

3.1.1. A Local Nature Recovery Strategy is currently being prepared by Sussex Nature Recovery. The Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Habitat Measures (May 2025) has been utilised to define the site.

3.1.2. The majority of site was defined as “Area/Compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy”.

3.1.3. Urban trees are assessed as “Formally identified in local strategy” on account of them forming a component of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

3.2. HABITATS PRE-DEVELOPMENT

3.2.1. Table 3.2 summarises the baseline habitats and area size. Please refer to the Appendix 2 for the Condition Assessment Sheets for each habitat.

Table 3.2 Habitat Type and Condition Assessment (pre-development)

Habitat Type	Irreplaceable habitat	Area (hectares)	Distinctiveness	Score	Condition	Score	Notes
Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	No	0.01	V.Low	0	N/A – Other	0	Driveway
Vegetated Garden	No	0.009	Low	2	Condition Assessment N/A	1	Vegetated garden made up of modified grassland. Species include Lesser Trefoil (<i>Trifolium dubium</i>), Daisy (<i>Bellis perennis</i>), White Clover (<i>Trifolium repens</i>), and Common Vetch (<i>Vicia sativa</i>). Also present are Smooth Cat's-ear (<i>Hypochaeris glabra</i>) and Perennial Ryegrass (<i>Lolium perenne</i>)

3.3. LOST HABITATS

3.3.1. All habitats within the red line boundary are to be lost to development.

3.4. PRE- DEVELOPMENT HABITAT BASELINE

3.4.1. Please refer to Table 3.3 summarising the Habitat Baseline for the calculation, demonstrating habitats to be retained, enhance and/or lost.

Table 3.3 Habitat Baseline

	On site Baseline	Retained	Enhanced	Lost
Habitat (Area) Units	0.02	-	-	0.02

4 HABITAT CREATION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

4.1.1. Please refer to the Landscape Plan by DEB architects Ltd (reference: PA-003 PROPOSED SITE PLAN) for full details of proposed landscaping within the development.

4.1.2. Please refer to the Appendix for details of the condition criteria targeted for each habitat group (where appropriate).

4.1.3. A 1-year delay in creating habitats has been applied to the post development habitats.

Table 4.1 Post Development Habitats, area sizes and target conditions

Proposed habitat	Area (hectares)	Distinctiveness		Condition		Habitat Units Delivered
		Distinctiveness	Score	Condition	Score	
Developed land; Sealed surface	0.019	V.Low	0	N/A - Other	0	0.00

5 SUMMARY

5.1.1. This report and the DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric submitted have demonstrated that the proposed habitat creation create a net loss of biodiversity within the site of 0.02 Habitat Units equating to -100% in habitat units. **The trading rules have not been satisfied.**

Figure 5.1 On site net

FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	-0.02
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	-100.00%
	Hedgerow units	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	No - Check Trading Summaries ▲	

5.1.2. A desk-based assessment has been undertaken using the Statutory Metric of land within the applicant's ownership (blue line boundary). A 10% gain can be achieved by the creation planting of a total of two small trees in 'Poor' condition within the blue line. It is recommended that these trees are of native species. Please refer to Appendix 2 for the target conditions if this option is selected.

5.1.3. Please refer to Table 5.2 for results of recommended habitat creation to achieve a 10% net gain on-site. This habitat creation would satisfy the trading rules.

Figure 5.2 Recommended Off Site Creation to achieve net % gain

Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.01
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	39.88%
	Hedgerow units	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

5.1.4. If the total 0.02 Habitat units cannot be provided on-site, the required habitat units should be provided through off site habitat creation or monetary fee to a habitat bank or the LPA if an offsetting scheme is available

5.1.5. There is currently no set definition of what constitutes 'significant' in national legislation or guidance therefore it is up to individual Authorities to decipher. As such, a review of 'Horsham District Council Appendix 1 – HDC Definition of 'Significant on-site BNG' was conducted. The recommendation of the council officers, define as significant onsite BNG is defined as:

- Where the increase in Biodiversity Units is 0.5 or more; and/or
- The gain relates to habitats of high or very high distinctiveness (as defined within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide); and/or –
- In the case of major development, where the gain relates to habitats of medium distinctiveness.

5.1.6. The results of the BNG metric demonstrates that the onsite BNG does not meet the 'significant' habitat criteria should the recommendations of the council officers apply:

5.1.7. There is no increase in Biodiversity Units.

- The gain does not relate to high or very high distinctiveness
- The development includes medium distinctiveness habitats due to the proposed planting of two trees. It should be noted these trees are to be planted to compensate for the loss of trees located outside of the application boundary. However, the application is not a major development, as defined under Article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, "major development".

6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- CIEEM (2021) Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Audit Templates.
- DEFRA (2023) The Statutory Biodiversity Metric: Auditing and Accounting for Biodiversity
- DEFRA (2023) The Statutory Biodiversity Metric: Auditing and Accounting for Biodiversity. Condition Assessment Sheets (Excel Format)

Description	Photographs
Urban – Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	
Urban – Vegetated garden	



APPENDIX 2 – POST DEVELOPMENT TARGET HABITAT CONDITIONS

Habitat Type: Individual Trees		Target Condition: Poor
Condition Assessment Criteria		Targeted?
A	The tree is a native species (or more than 70% within the block are native species).	Yes
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).	No
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).	No
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
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	Yes
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	No



20-2474 Vine House
UKHab
Date: 09.07.2025

- Built-up Areas and Gardens - u1
Secondary Code: Vegetated Garden - 828
- Artificial Unvegetated Unsealed Surface - u1c
- Red Line Boundary

Scale: 1:1000
Drawn By: CW
Checked By: AT
Approved By: OC



Client: Mr Mike Eliades
Site: Vine House, Lindfield
Project Number: 20-2474
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