

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Site Address:

Hambrook School, Leylands Road, Burgess Hill, RH15 8HY

Client:

Space M Studio

Assessment Date:

23rd May 2025

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with the Mid Sussex District Council. The proposal is described as: *“The installation of play equipment and a summer house at an existing school”*.

BNG assessment methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: **BNG Methodology and Legislation – 2025**.

The results and recommendations contained within this report are valid for 18 months. An updated site visit and BNG assessment may be required if the report is to be used any longer than 18 months after completion.

Version Control			
Status	Issue	Name	Date
Draft	0.1	Abby Pidgen BSc (Hons) MSc, Consultant Ecologist	27/05/2025
Final	1.0	Abby Pidgen BSc (Hons) MSc, Consultant Ecologist	29/05/2025

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Site Location and Context

A baseline habitat map is provided in **Appendix 1**, a post development habitat map in **Appendix 2**, a proposed development plan in **Appendix 3**, headline BNG results in **Appendix 4**, and condition assessments in **Appendix 5**.

The survey site is centred on National Grid Reference TQ 31191 19608 and has an area of approximately 0.27ha. The site comprises an area of grassland, trees and a small garden shed to the south of the main Hambrook School building. The site is surrounded by urban infrastructure with associated gardens in all directions and Marle Place Playground to the immediate south which contains amenity grassland and scattered trees. The trees within the site extend into the local garden landscape. Aerial imagery shows the local landscape to have a highly urbanised character, dominated by built developments such as dwellings, roads, amenity areas and commercial buildings.

The site does not impact on more than 25m² of vegetated habitat and no trees are to be removed to facilitate the works, therefore the site is exempt under the de-minimis exemption, however evaluation of habitats on site, intended impacts and losses have been calculated to prove exemption.

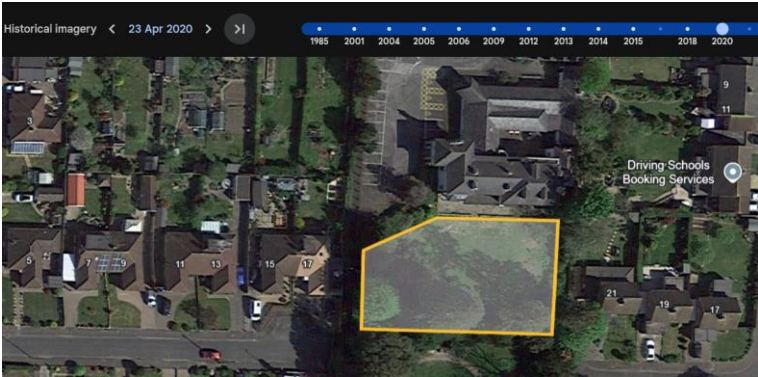
This report should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- ❖ Statutory BNG Metric – Hambrook School, RH15 8HY (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., 2025)
- ❖ Hambrook School, Marle Place, Laylands Rd, Burgess Hill, RH15 – External Works (Space M Studio, April 2023)
- ❖ Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment (PEA/PRA) - Hambrook School, RH15 8HY (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., 2025)
- ❖ Tree Survey Schedule - Hambrook School, Marle Place, Laylands Rd, Burgess Hill, RH15 (County Tree Surgeons Ltd, November 2023)
- ❖ Arboricultural Impact Assessment - Hambrook School, Marle Place, Laylands Rd, Burgess Hill, RH15 (JAG Arboriculture Consultancy, December 2023)
- ❖ Statement in Support of Planning Application: De Minimis Impact on Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Executive Summary

- ❖ The baseline habitat value of the site is 4.42 units with 4.86 units required to achieve the 10% uplift in biodiversity units, however, the site is exempt from expressing the 10% biodiversity uplift through the de minimis exemption.

Introduction

BNG Informative		
Habitat Degradation Statement	Date reflected by BNG calculations	23rd May 2025
	<p>The baseline biodiversity value is derived from the site as observed during the PEA/PRA field survey (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., 2025). As evident in the screenshots of satellite imagery obtained from Google Earth dated 23rd April 2020, the site does not appear to have undergone any degradation. The habitats on site, and therefore biodiversity value of the site, is not considered to have undergone degradation since 30th January 2020.</p> 	
Irreplaceable Habitat Statement	No irreplaceable habitats as listed under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations (2024) are currently present nor were present before 30 th January 2020.	
Metric Version & Publication Date	Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool first published 29 th November 2023 with last updates to metric tools and user guides on 23 rd July 2024.	
BNG Target Uplift	De-minimis exemption.	
National Character Area (NCA)	121 – Low Weald	

Strategic Significance	<p>West Sussex County Council (WSCC), the responsible authority for drafting the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Mid Sussex District Council, has yet to adopt a comprehensive LNRS. As advised by the WSCC, the following documents from its adopted Local Plan (including Supplementary Planning Documents, SPDs), were used to determine strategic significance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Policies Map ❖ Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 - 2031 		
	Habitat	Baseline / Post-Development	Justification
	Scattered Trees - 32	Medium Strategic Significance. Location ecologically desirable but not in local strategy.	Several TPO trees on site with good connectivity to further treelines/hedgerows and the wider environment. However, all trees are to be retained.
Limitations			
There were no specific limitations to the assessment.			

Baseline

Baseline Biodiversity Value: On-Site				
Area-Based Habitats (A-1)				
Habitat	Area (ha)	Description	Condition Assessment	Strategic Significance
Buildings (u1b5)	0.0014	There is a single building, B1, in the northwest corner of the site. B1 is a small wooden shed that is frequent use.	Condition assessment N/A	Low Strategic Significance
Developed Land; Sealed Surface (u1b)	0.002	A small section of hardstanding pavement is present to the north of the site.	Condition assessment N/A	Low Strategic Significance
Artificial Unvegetated; Unsealed Surface (u1c)	0.034	Within the western half of the site is an area of bare ground and woodchip. The only vegetation present in this area are sporadic garlic mustard <i>Alliaria petiolata</i> and stinking iris <i>Iris foetidissima</i> around the base of scattered trees.	Condition assessment N/A	Low Strategic Significance
Modified Grassland (g4)	0.103	<p>The rest of the site comprises grassland that is considered to align best with UKHabs description of 'modified grassland'. The grassland is in regular use by the school, resulting in high level of damage and trampling. The sward length of the grassland is kept short through management and frequent use. The borders of the grassland have a higher species composition due to less footfall in these areas.</p> <p>The vegetation is dominated by perennial rye grass <i>Lolium perenne</i>, with common daisy <i>Bellis perennis</i> and broadleaved plantain <i>Plantago major</i> being abundant. Broadleaved dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i> and meadow buttercup <i>Ranunculus acris</i> and frequent; black medick <i>Medicago lupulina</i>, curly leaved dock <i>Rumex crispus</i> and cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i> are</p>	<p>Poor: passes 3 of 7 criteria excluding essential criterion A.</p> <p>Assessed using the 'Grasslands Low Distinctiveness' habitat type condition sheet.</p>	Low Strategic Significance

		occasional; bramble <i>Rubus spp.</i> , herb Robert <i>Geranium robertianum</i> , field speedwell <i>Veronica agrestis</i> and spear thistle <i>Cirsium vulgare</i> are rare.		
Urban Tree (32)	Moderate: 0.1579	There are 12 scattered trees throughout the site. The species, measurements and condition assessments are included within Table 1. Tree condition assessment categories can be found in Appendix 5. Tree numbers correlate with those found within Arboricultural Report with Tree Constraints Plan and Arboricultural Impact Assessment (JAG Arboricultural Company, 2023). All trees will be retained on the site and no further works are planned works regarding trees.	Moderate: passes 3 or 4 of 6 criteria. 2no. small (T15, T16) 2no large (T6, T13) 1no very large (T11)	Medium Strategic Significance
	Good: 0.2140		Good: passes 5 of 6 criteria. 2no. small (T5, T10) 1no. medium (T17) 1no. large (T4) 2no very large (T8, T9)	Medium Strategic Significance

Post-Development

Post-Development Biodiversity Value: On-Site

Area-Based Habitats

	Habitat	Area (ha)	Description	Condition Assessment	Strategic Significance
Retained (A-1)	Buildings (u1b5)	0.0014	B1 will be retained.	<i>Condition assessment N/A</i>	Low Strategic Significance
	Developed Land; Sealed Surface (u1b)	0.002	Retained hardstanding.	<i>Condition assessment N/A</i>	Low Strategic Significance
	Artificial Unvegetated; Unsealed Surface (u1c)	0.03	Retained woodchip surrounding trees.	<i>Condition assessment N/A</i>	Low Strategic Significance
	Modified Grassland (g4)	0.1	Retained amenity grassland.	<i>Poor: no change expected.</i>	Low Strategic Significance
	Urban Tree (32)	Moderate: 0.1579	There are 12 scattered trees throughout the site. The species, measurements and condition assessments are included within Table 1. Tree condition assessment categories can be found in Appendix 5. Tree numbers correlate with those found within Arboricultural Report with Tree Constraints Plan and Arboricultural Impact Assessment (JAG Arboricultural Company, 2023).	Moderate: passes 3 or 4 of 6 criteria. 2no. small (T15, T16) 2no large (T6, T13) 1no very large (T11)	Medium Strategic Significance

		Good: 0.2140	All trees will be retained on the site and no further works are planned works regarding trees.	Good: passes 5 of 6 criteria. 2no. small (T5, T10) 1no. medium (T17) 1no. large (T4) 2no very large (T8, T9)	Medium Strategic Significance
Created (A-2)	Developed Land; Sealed Surface (u1b)	0.002	Created outdoor learning space and play equipment. There will be a very minimal impact on the surrounding grassland in these areas. Play equipment areas are highlighted in blue in Appendix 2 and due to the minimal impact, the majority of the grass is to be retained.	Condition assessment N/A	Low Strategic Significance

Post-Development Biodiversity Value: On-Site					
Linear-Based Habitats					
	Habitat	Length (km)	Description	Condition Assessment	Strategic Significance
Created (B-2)	Non-native and Ornamental Hedgerows (h2b)	0.074	Ornamental hedgerows and planting will be created along border of the site and surrounding the new open classroom learning space.	<i>Poor: Condition predetermined within statutory biodiversity metric.</i>	Low Strategic Significance

Change of Biodiversity Value

		Biodiversity Units	
		Area-Based	Linear-Based
On-Site	Baseline	<div>4.42</div> <div><div>❖ Buildings, hardstanding and unsealed surfaces (0)</div><div>❖ Modified grassland of poor condition (0.21)</div><div>❖ Urban trees of moderate condition (1.39)</div><div>❖ Urban trees of good condition (2.82)</div></div>	<div></div> <div><div>❖ N/A</div></div>
	Post-Development	<div>4.42</div> <div><div>❖ Buildings, hardstanding and unsealed surfaces (0)</div><div>❖ Retained modified grassland of poor condition (0.21)</div><div>❖ Retained urban trees of moderate condition (1.39)</div><div>❖ Retained urban trees of good condition (2.82)</div></div>	<div></div> <div><div>0.07</div><div>❖ Non-native and Ornamental Hedgerows (0.07)</div></div>
Overall Net Change		<div>-0.00</div> <div>-0.09%</div>	<div>+0.07</div> <div>+100%</div>

Results, Discussion, and Next Steps

BNG Informative	
Results	The current landscaping proposal generates a net loss of area-based habitat units (-0.09%) and a net gain of linear-based habitat units (+100%). However, this highlights the minimal impact on the grassland and overall habitat loss at the site, supporting the application of the de minimis exemption.
Recommendations and Next Steps	Losses can be minimised on site through the provision of additional landscaping, however due to overshadowing from existing retained trees, usage of the site as an amenity grassland and restricted available space, scope for enhancements is limited. As the site is exempt from expressing the 10% uplift in biodiversity, the additional provision of hedgerows around the border of the site are proportionate to the observed losses and further habitat enhancement is not required.
Policy Requirements	Habitats proposed on site consist of low value and low-quality grassland and hedgerows, both of which do not require long term management and monitoring. Additionally, the de minimis exemption prevents the need for a long-term management and monitoring strategy.
BNG Mitigation Hierarchy	
Avoidance	All trees within the site boundary will be retained, therefore there are no losses of medium distinctiveness (or higher distinctiveness) habitats. Additionally, modified grassland will be retained insofar as possible in regard to the development plans and feasibility on site.
Minimisation	
Mitigation	Enhancement of retained modified grasslands is considered unfeasible due to the usage of such amenity areas by school students.

Appendix 1: Baseline Habitat Plan



Appendix 2: Post-Development Habitat Plan



The site plan for Burgess Hill Primary School shows a large building with a 'Sensory Garden' and 'Staff Parking' area. A 'Play Equipment Area' is located to the right of the building. The plan includes various rooms, corridors, and outdoor spaces. A 'Summer House' is shown with dimensions 3350 x 4150. A 'Fencing Key' indicates the 'Existing Close Board Fencing'. The plan also shows 'Existing Grass Surface' and 'Vegetation'. A 'KEEP CLEAR' zone is marked near the entrance. The plan includes a north arrow and a scale bar.

Summer House
 3350
 4150
 SUMMER HOUSE Front Elevation
 SUMMER HOUSE Side Elevation
 SUMMER HOUSE Rear Elevation
 SUMMER HOUSE Side Elevation

Fencing Key
 Existing Close Board Fencing

PROJECT
 Marie Place, Laylands Rd, Burgess Hill, RH15

DESCRIPTION
 External Work
 Sheet 2 of 2

NO 1766 DATE Apr 2023
 SCALE 1:100 @A1 NO 1766-2023

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Appendix 4: Headline BNG Results

FINAL RESULTS				
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.00		
	Hedgerow units	0.07		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	-0.09%	Total net gain achieved is less than target set ▲	
	Hedgerow units	N/A	0 baseline units - % cannot be calculated	
	Watercourse units	0.00%		
Trading rules satisfied?	No - Check Trading Summaries ▲			
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Habitat units	10.00%	4.42	4.86	0.45
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
				No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
				No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

Appendix 5: Baseline Habitat Condition Assessment Sheets

Condition Sheet: INDIVIDUAL TREES Habitat Type													
Habitat Types													
Individual trees – Urban trees													
Individual trees – Rural trees													
Complete a condition sheet for each tree or block of trees.													
Please see separate line of trees condition sheet for a line of Rural trees.													
Habitat Description													
Individual trees across the site.													
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 must 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		Onsite		Survey date and Surveyor name		23/05/2025							
				Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)		Baseline and Retained							
Limitations (if applicable)		Habitat parcel reference											
		T4	T5	T6	T8	T9	T10	T11	T13	T15 & T16	T17		
		Grid reference											
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	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	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).	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
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	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes		
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		
Number of criteria passed		5	5	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	5		
Condition Assessment Result (out of 6 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/√											
Passes 5 or 6 criteria	Good (3)	x	x		x	x	x				x		
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)			x				x	x	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.													

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)			
UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type			
Grassland - Modified grassland			
On-site or off-site, site name and location	Onsite	Survey date and Surveyor name	23/05/2025
Limitations (if applicable)		Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)	Baseline and Retained
Grid reference		Habitat parcel reference	Modified Grassland
Habitat Description			
Amenity grassland across the site			
ukhab – UK Habitat Classification			
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. 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.	No	Only 4 species present consistently	
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	Consistent short sward due to amenity usage	
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	No scrub present	
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.	No	Physical damage present in more than 5% due to amenity use	
E Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	No	Bare ground >10% due to amenity use	
F Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Yes	No bracken present	
G There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁴).	Yes	No invasive species present	
Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)		No	
Number of criteria passed		3	
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	