



# **Essential Ecology**

**Land adjoining No. 2 and No. 3 Townhouse Cottages,  
Townhouse Farm, Coolham Road, Thakeham, RH20  
3EW**

## **Biodiversity Gain Statement**

**(Ref: ESEC/25005/02/v1.0)**

Prepared by Essential Ecology  
on behalf of Fowlers Land and New Homes

November 2025

## Quality Control

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The recommendations and conclusions are valid for the current proposals only. Should the proposals plans be amended, the report will need to be updated and where appropriate informed by additional/update survey work.

Report Ref.	Issue Date	Revision	Surveyor(s)	Author	Comments
ESEC/25005/02	11/11/25	V1.0	MJ	MJ	

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## Drawings

ESEC/25005/02-01	Baseline Habitats
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Appendix 2	Habitat Condition Assessment Sheets – Baseline

## 1. Executive Summary

**Table 1.1. Executive Summary**

Section	Summary
Introduction and Methodology	<p>A Biodiversity Gain Statement, informed by the Statutory Metric, has been provided by Essential Ecology (ESEC) at 'Land adjoining No. 2 and No. 3 Townhouse Cottages, Townhouse Farm, Coolham Road, Thakeham, RH20 3EW', on behalf of Fowlers Land and New Homes</p> <p>The assessment is based on a UK Habitat survey and the proposals provided for the site and has been undertaken in accordance with the Statutory Metric User Guide and the relevant legislation.</p>
Biodiversity Gain Assessment and Strategy	<p>Proposals are shown at the Post-development Habitats Plan (ref: ESEC/25005/02-01). The entirety of the site will be located within private curtilage and/or shared driveway and opportunities for habitat creation and enhancement are limited.</p> <p>Subject to the implementation as set out within this report and the accompanying Statutory Metric, the proposals result in a net loss of habitat units. No existing linear watercourse features are present within the site.</p>
Conclusions	<p>The proposals result in a net loss of habitat units. Therefore, in order to be compliant with the legislation pertaining to BNG, additional habitat units will need to be acquired from a habitat bank in order for the pre-commencement biodiversity gain condition to be discharged. As well as acquiring the unit deficit, it will also be necessary for the offsite habitat proposals to satisfy the metrics trading rules. It is therefore likely that offsite habitat provision will need to include tree planting and/or creation/enhancement of a high/very high distinctiveness habitat.</p>

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 Terms of Reference

2.1.1 Essential Ecology (ESEC) has been commissioned by Fowlers Land and New Homes to provide a Biodiversity Gain Statement to inform a planning application for the site, located at 'Land adjoining No. 2 and No. 3 Townhouse Cottages, Townhouse Farm, Coolham Road, Thakeham, RH20 3EW' (central ordnance survey (OS) grid reference TQ 1033 1760).

2.1.2 The assessment for the site will be submitted to Horsham District Council to inform the planning application.

### 2.2 Site Location and Overview

2.2.1 The site is located adjacent to the west of Coolham Road (B2139), in the north of Thakeham, West Sussex. Within a wider context, the site is surrounded primarily by agricultural land and low-density residential and commercial development, along with a number of wooded belts.

2.2.2 The site itself, as shown by the red line boundary, comprises an area of c. 0.14ha. The site comprises developed land; sealed surface and vegetated garden. Hedgerows are present adjacent to the site, outside of the red line boundary.

### 2.3 Description of Proposals

2.3.1 The proposals include Demolition of Existing Storage Unit and erection of 2no. detached dwellings, associated private gardens, parking and landscaping (see Appendix 1).

### 2.4 Purpose of Report

2.4.1 On the basis of the proposals, the development will be subject to the biodiversity gain condition. The purpose of this Biodiversity Gain Statement is to provide the local planning authority with sufficient information in order to assist the consideration of biodiversity net gain as part of the determination of the planning application.

### 2.5 Quality Assurance and Management

2.5.1 The site survey work and Biodiversity Gain Statement have been undertaken by Megan Jewson (Director). Megan has over 13 years' experience in professional ecological consultancy, is a full member of CIEEM and holds a Master degree in Biodiversity and Conservation. Megan has experience in undertaking numerous biodiversity net gain assessments across a range of sites and development projects in England, since the Warwickshire pilot in 2012.

2.5.2 This report and the associated Statutory Metric have been produced with reference to the relevant legislations and current best practice guidance produced by DEFRA, including

*'Statutory biodiversity metric: user guide'* (DEFRA 2024), as well as British Standard (BS) 8683:2021 (The British Standards Institution 2021) which sets out the process for designating and implementing biodiversity net gain.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Habitat Survey

3.1.1 The site was surveyed on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2025 based on UK Habitat Classification Survey (v2) (UKHab Ltd 2023) methodology. This involves identifying and mapping habitat types. The condition of each habitat has been assessed in accordance with technical Annex 1 of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric '*Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology*' (DEFRA 2024).

### 3.2 Statutory Metric

3.2.1 To quantify the level of biodiversity net gain that can be achieved under the proposed development, the change in biodiversity value has been calculated using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool (DEFRA 2024). The Statutory Metric has been completed in accordance with the relevant legislation and the accompanying user guide (DEFRA 2024). The completed metric is based on the UK Habitat survey undertaken by Essential Ecology and the proposals plan provided at Appendix 1.

### 3.3 Survey and Assessment Limitations

3.3.1 The UK Habitat Classification Survey was undertaken in June, within the optimum survey season. It is therefore considered that the data collected represents a valid sample of ecological evidence and provides a robust assessment of the habitats.

## 4. Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy

### 4.1 Overview

4.1.1 The relevant date for the pre-development biodiversity value is the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2025.

4.1.2 All of the land within the site, as shown by the red line boundary, has contributed to the overall biodiversity net score. There are no other schemes in place at the site which would mean it can only contribute in part or not at all (e.g., suitable alternative green space (SANG)<sup>1</sup>, nutrient neutrality or environmental impact assessment compensation).

### 4.2 Statutory Metric

4.2.1 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Tool has been used to complete the assessment. The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the User Guide (DEFRA 2024).

4.2.2 The site comprises only of habitats. No linear habitats are present onsite, whilst no watercourse features are present onsite or within 10m of the site.

4.2.3 Coding for strategic significance of habitats pre- and post-development should be based on Local Nature Recovery Strategies. Where these are not yet in place, strategic significance of habitats has been based on their inclusion within Local Plans, strategies or policies, such as the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. In this instance, habitats have been assigned strategic significance in accordance with information on Biodiversity Net Gain set out on the Horsham District Council website (Horsham District Council n.d.). This states that:

- *“Habitats considered as having High Strategic Significance are within areas depicted within the Council’s Green Infrastructure Strategy and Guide (2024), which includes statutory and non-statutory designated sites, river corridors and features, and the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats listed within Sussex Biodiversity Opportunity Areas. High Strategic Significance is referred as ‘Formally identified in local strategy’ within the metric.”*
- *“Medium Strategic Significance (i.e., ‘ecologically desirable but not in a local strategy’ within the full statutory biodiversity metric only) should apply to all priority habitats as well as habitats with a biodiversity value greater than zero” and*
- *“All other habitats that do not fall within the above should be classed as Low Strategic Significance (‘Area/compensation not in local strategy/no local strategy’) by default.”*

4.2.4 On this basis, vegetated garden and the individual trees have been assigned medium strategic significance.

<sup>1</sup> SANG will be required as mitigation at this site, however the strategy will be to provide financial contributions to offsite SANG rather than to provide SANG onsite.

### Baseline

#### *Habitats*

4.2.5 Baseline habitats are shown at drawing ESEC/25005/02-01, whilst condition assessment sheets are provided at Appendix 2.

4.2.6 The site comprises very low to medium distinctiveness habitats in the form of:

- Very Low – Developed land; sealed surface (condition N/A)
- Low – Vegetated garden (condition N/A)
- Medium – Individual trees (moderate condition).

4.2.7 None of the habitats within the site form irreplaceable habitats.

### Post-development

#### *Habitats*

4.2.8 Post-development habitats are shown at drawing ESEC/25005/02-02, whilst condition assessment sheets are provided at Appendix 3.

4.2.9 Following development, the site will comprise very low to low distinctiveness habitats in the form of:

- Very Low – Developed land; sealed surface (condition N/A)
- Low – Vegetated garden (condition N/A)

4.2.10 The entirety of the site will be located within private curtilage and/or shared driveway and therefore, in accordance with the User Guide, the inclusion of onsite habitat enhancements is not appropriate.

### Results

4.2.11 Subject to the information set out within this report and the accompanying Statutory Metric, Table 4.1 below provides a summary of the overall results:

<b>Table 4.1: BNG Results Summary</b>					
<b>Habitat Type</b>	<b>Baseline Units</b>	<b>Post-development Units</b>	<b>Net Change Units</b>		<b>Unit Deficit to achieve 10%</b>
			<b>Units</b>	<b>%</b>	
Habitats	0.56	0.08	-0.49	-86.30%	0.54

4.2.12 On the basis of the results, the proposals result in a loss of habitat units. Therefore, additional habitat units will need to be acquired from a habitat bank in order for the pre-commencement

biodiversity gain condition to be discharged. As well as acquiring the unit deficit, it will also be necessary for the offsite habitat proposals to satisfy the metrics trading rules. It is therefore likely that offsite habitat provision will need to include tree planting and/or creation/enhancement of a high/very high distinctiveness habitat.

### **4.3 Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy**

- 4.3.1 The proposals for the site largely impact habitats of low/very low distinctiveness. These habitats are subject to less stringent requirements within the Biodiversity Net Gain hierarchy.
- 4.3.2 The proposals do result in the loss medium or higher distinctiveness habitats. As such, whilst losses of medium distinctiveness habitats are required in order to deliver the proposals, these are minimal, equating to loss of a two moderate-sized tree.
- 4.3.3 Under the proposals, the site will be located entirely within private curtilage or shared driveway. New habitat creation will be provided as part of the proposals, in the form of tree and hedgerow planting. However, in accordance with the User Guide, it is not appropriate to include these as part of the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and the site will rely on the purchase of offsite units in order for the pre-commencement biodiversity gain condition to be discharged.
- 4.3.4 The proposals are therefore in accordance with the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy.

## 5. Conclusions

- 5.1.1 Essential Ecology has undertaken a UK Habitat survey and completed the Statutory Metric in order to inform a Biodiversity Gain Statement for the site. The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the User Guide and consideration has been given to the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy.
- 5.1.2 On the basis of the assessment of the proposals using the Statutory Metric, the development of the site will result in a net loss of habitat and therefore, additional habitat units will likely need to be acquired from a habitat bank in order for the pre-commencement biodiversity gain condition to be discharged.
- 5.1.3 As well as acquiring the unit deficit, it will also be necessary for the offsite habitat proposals to satisfy the metrics trading rules and it is therefore likely that offsite habitat provision will need to include tree planting and/or creation/enhancement of a high/very high distinctiveness habitat.

## 6. References

DEFRA. 2024. *Statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool*. London: DEFRA.

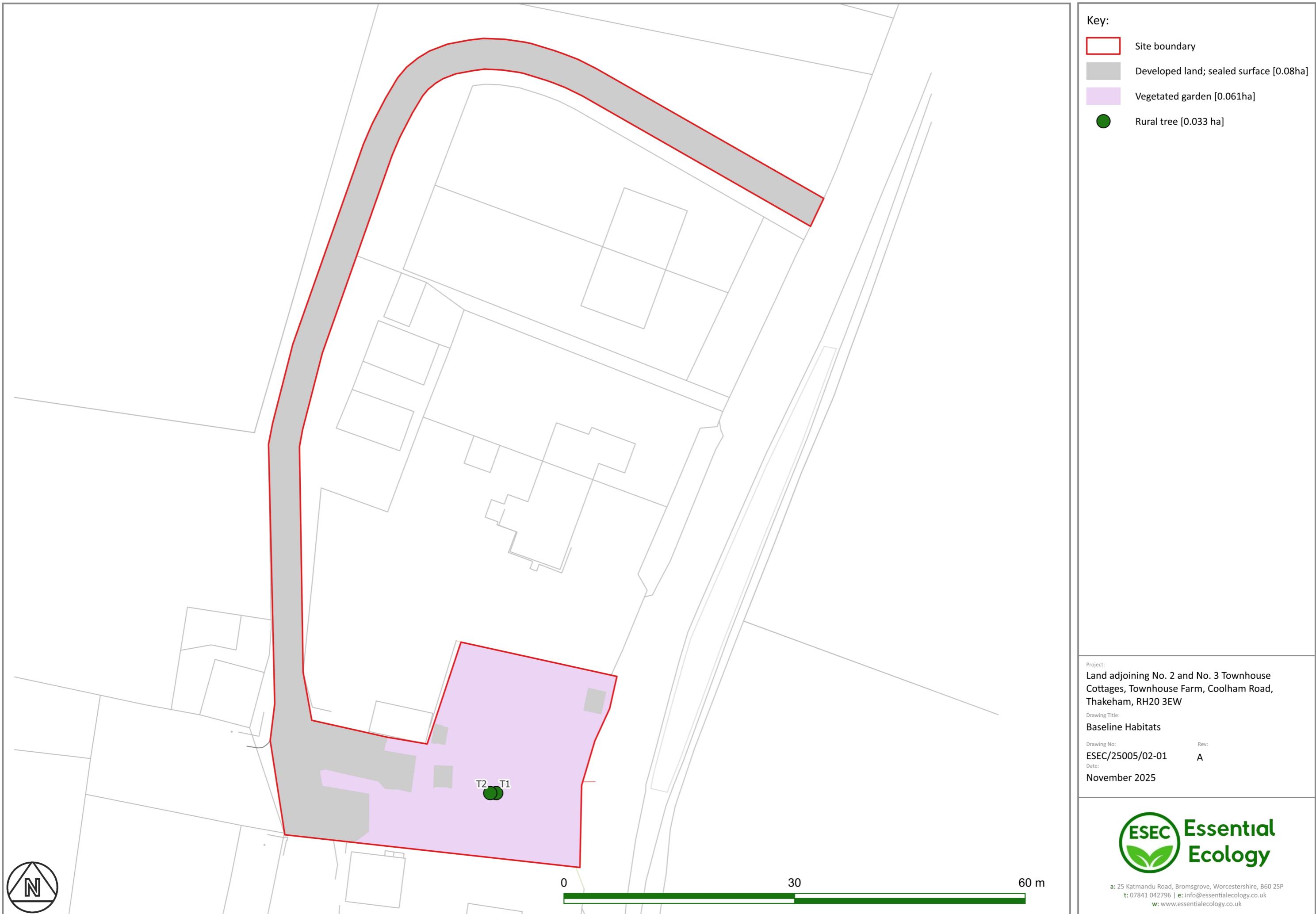
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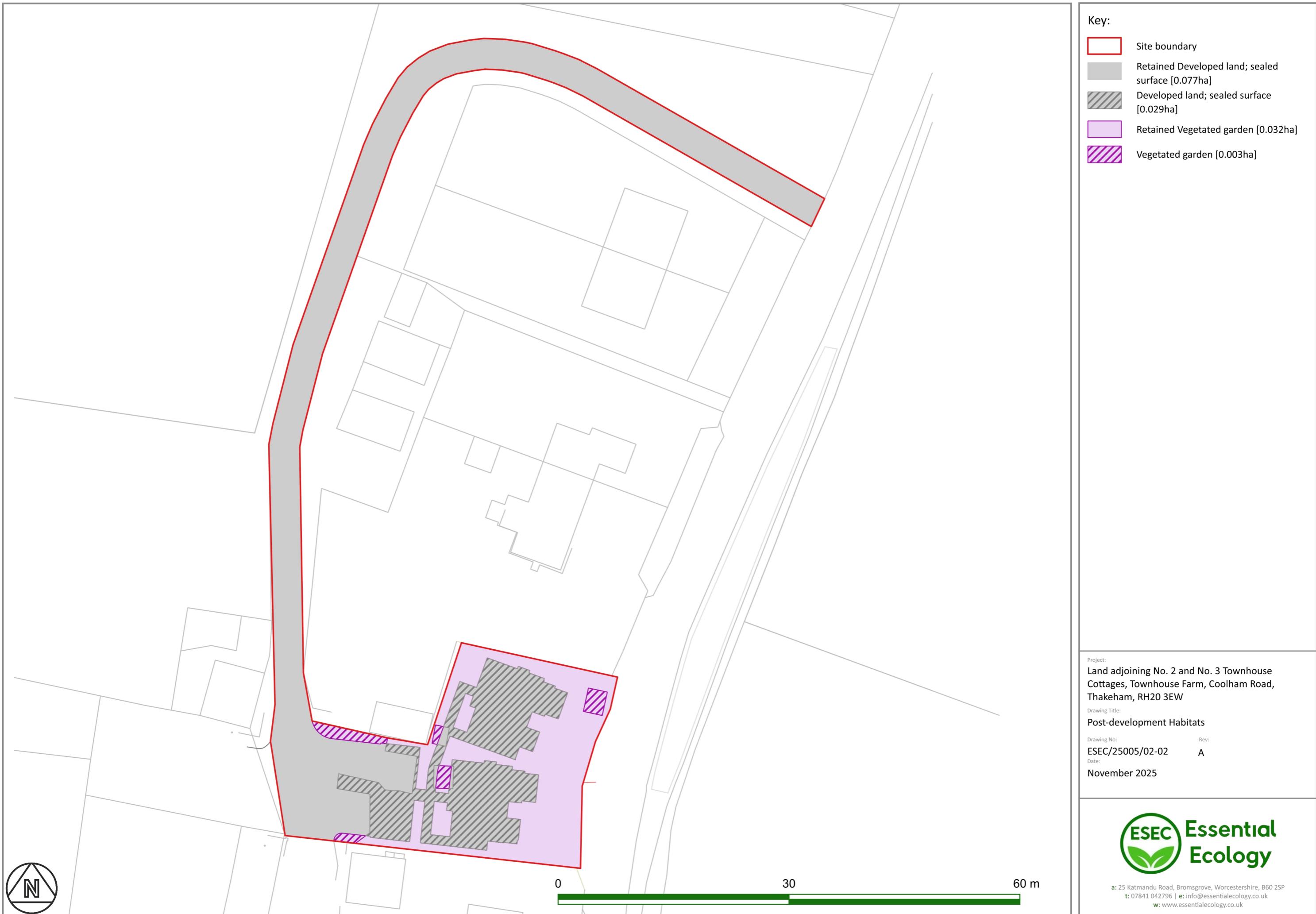
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<https://www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/biodiversity-net-gain#significance>.

The British Standards Institution. 2021. *Process for designing and implementing Biodiversity Net Gain - Specification*. London: BSI Standards Limited.

UKHab Ltd. 2023. "UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0." *UK Habitat Classification website*. Accessed 2024. <https://www.ukhab.org>.

## Drawings





## Appendices



P05	Plot numbering updated and Plot 01 flipped	19.10.25
P04	Dwelling position & roof plan updated	28.09.25
P03	Site boundary and carports moved	14.09.25
P02	Site boundary and house types revised	20.08.25
P01	First Issue	10.08.25

Rev Amendments Date

Document Status Preliminary

Client Name Fowlers Land and New Homes

Project Name 2 Townhouse, Thakeham

Scale A3 - 1:250 Project No. THK18 Date Created AUG 25

Document Title Proposed Site Plan

Document Reference PL01 Revision P05

Habitat	Trees	Parcel Reference										Notes
Condition Assessment Criteria		T1	T2									
		Criterion passed (Yes or No)										
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) <sup>1</sup> .	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	Y									
Number of criteria passed		6	6									
Result	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/✓										
Passes 5 or 6 criteria	Good (3)	✓	✓									
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)											
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)											



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