Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Document reference	AR187-WellCottage.BNG
Site	Well Cottage, Emms Lane, Brooks Green, Horsham, RH13 0JN
Client	Mr S. Caudill and Ms C. Bell
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The assessment and appraisal are considered relevant for a maximum of 18 months due to the possibility of changes in the habitats on-site and scope of proposals. Should alterations to the proposals or site occur, the ecologist should be consulted to confirm that the appraisal is still valid.

Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION..... 3
2.0 METHODOLOGY..... 4
3.0 RESULTS & DISCUSSION..... 5
4.0 REFERENCES 6
5.0 HABITAT PLANS AND SITE PLANS 7
6.0 Appendix A – Condition Assessment..... 7

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Mr S Caudill and Ms C Bell have commissioned a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment at Well Cottage, Emms Lane, Brooks Green, Horsham (grid refence: TQ12772495, hereafter referred to as 'the site'). A site walkover was undertaken on 30th January 2026 in suitable conditions.

1.2 A baseline assessment was undertaken on 30th January 2026 which identified the following habitats onsite:

- 0.074 ha of Modified Grassland

1.3 The habitat types and conditions were assessed in accordance with the Biodiversity Statutory Metric - Technical Supplement (Panks et al, 2025) and inputted into the current Biodiversity Net Gain Statutory Metric (Natural England, 2024). The proposals area consists of a domestic dwelling with driveway, patio, small patches introduced shrubs, paddock bound by hedgerow and garden. The wider landholding consists of the attached house to the west with associated garden, outbuildings and pond. The proposals are small in scale and only small areas of habitat are to be affected.

1.4 The proposals are for the Change of Use of land from 'paddock' to 'residential'. As such no impacts to soft ground or habitats shall occur.

Site Information

1.5 The survey area measures 0.074 hectares (ha). The site is within the land holding of Well Cottage and is located on Emms Road in the village of Brooks Green, West Sussex.

1.6 The site is bound by Emms lane to the north. Domestic dwellings with associated gardens bound the rest of the site.

1.7 The wider area consists of arable fields, woodland and hedgerows. The village of Coolham lies 2.3km south. The town of Southwater lies 2.5km east.

Development Proposals

1.8 The proposals are for the Change of Use of land from 'paddock' to 'residential'. As such no impacts to soft ground or habitats shall occur.

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2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 A baseline habitat appraisal survey was undertaken at the site to assess the extent, distribution, distinctiveness and condition of the habitats present. This survey was conducted in line with the UK Habitat Classification system (UKHabs) (Butcher et al, 2020) and gathered condition assessment criteria in line with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric - Technical Supplement (Panks et al, 2022).

2.2 The field survey was undertaken on 30th January 2026 to assess the habitats and their condition. Weather conditions were calm and overcast.

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

2.3 A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment was conducted to calculate the existing baseline biodiversity unit score of habitats across the site, to determine the extent to which improvements could benefit / detriment biodiversity interests.

2.4 The calculation was based upon the existing extent, distinctiveness and condition of the habitats on site, compared with the extent, distinctiveness and condition of proposed habitats on site. The BNG assessment uses the latest Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Natural England, 2022) in accordance with current guidance methodology, the Biodiversity Statutory Metric - User Guide (Panks et al, 2022).

Existing Habitats

2.5 The extent of existing habitats was calculated using measurements taken in field. The distinctiveness of the existing habitats was assessed using the UK Habitat Classification system (UKHabs) (Butcher et al, 2020) and the condition of existing habitats was assessed in accordance with the Biodiversity Statutory Metric - Technical Supplement (Panks et al, 2022).

Proposed Habitats

2.6 No new habitats are to be implemented as part of the application.

Survey Constraints / Considerations

2.7 Due to imprecisions associated with mapping the extent of existing and proposed habitats using topographical survey, aerial imagery and desktop study, the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment cannot conclusively ensure that the extent of habitats is precisely quantified. Therefore, the measurement of the extent of existing and proposed habitats were rounded to the nearest 0.001ha (or 10m2), for the sake of simplicity as accuracy below this level is not realistically attainable or likely to result in a significant outcome, given the relative quantum of development proposed. Due care and attention was to ensure that the accuracy of the assessment is not misleading and is appropriate for the scale of development proposed.

2.8 The Biodiversity Net Gain calculation does not take into account the provision of wildlife boxes, such as bat, bird and insect boxes, or log piles, which can provide unquantified betterments for wildlife.

3.0 RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Strategic Significance

3.1 Modified Grassland is not classed as a strategically significant habitat with the Horsham District Planning Framework. The habitat, especially in small areas is of little biodiversity value.

Existing Habitat Assessment

Site Habitat Baseline

3.2 The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment concluded that the baseline biodiversity score for the site was 0.51 Habitat units consisting of:

- 0.74ha of Modified Grassland currently assessed as being in 'good' condition as it passes all the criteria within the Condition Assessment (see Appendix A).

Proposed Habitat Retention and Enhancement

3.3 All habitat is to be retained.

Proposed Habitat Creation

3.4 No habitats are to be created.

Biodiversity Net Gain Exemption

3.5 As the application is for the Change of Use of land from 'paddock' to 'residential', no impacts to any habitats are likely to occur. As such this site is exempt from a Biodiversity Net Gain calculation and full assessment.

4.0 REFERENCES

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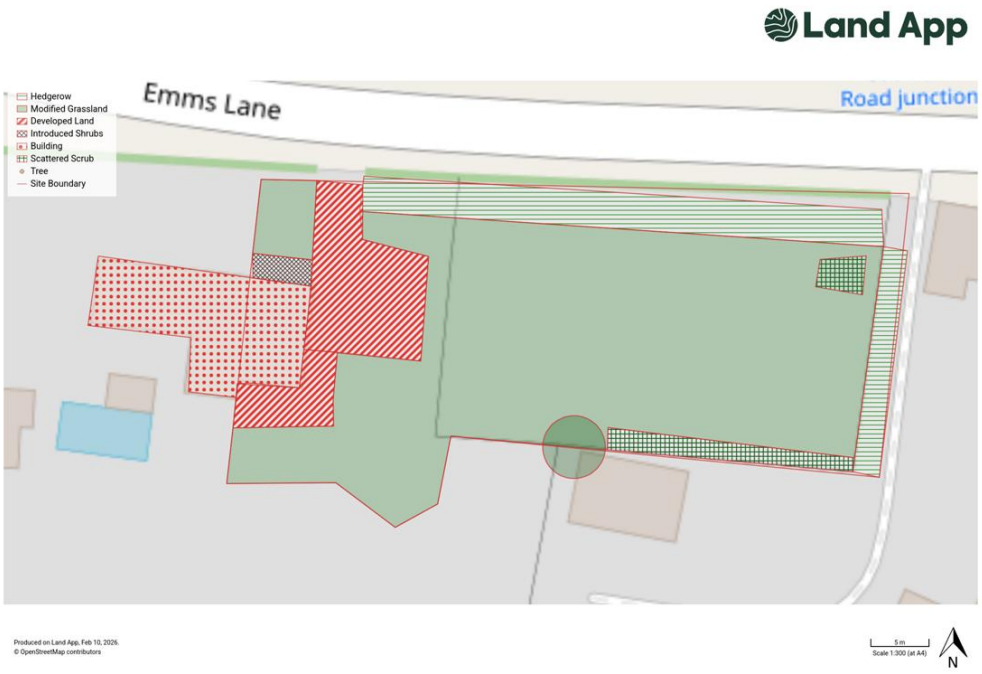
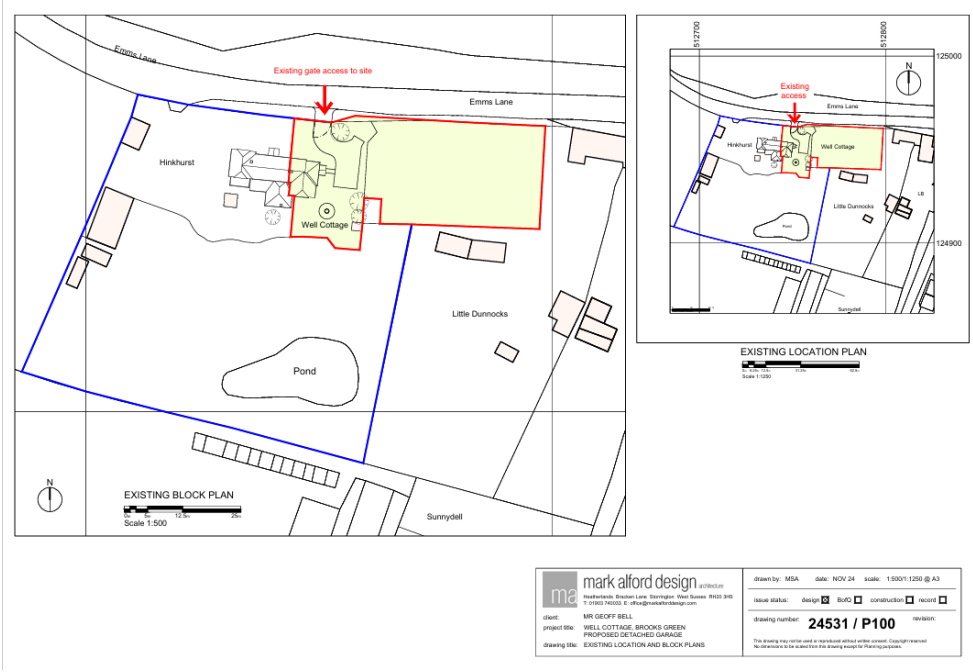
Natural England. (2022). The Biodiversity Metric 3.1 (JP039). Published by Natural England on 7 July 2021. The Biodiversity Metric 3.1 – Calculation Tool Available online: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6049804846366720 *[Last Accessed 29/06/2022]*

5.0 HABITAT PLANS AND SITE PLANS

Pre-Development



Site Plan



6.0 Appendix A – Condition Assessment

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		**Survey date and Surveyor name**	
Limitations (if applicable)		**Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)**	
Grid reference		**Habitat parcel reference**	
Habitat Description			
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.		
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)[2].		
F	Cover of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is less than 20%.		
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species[3] (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA[4]).		
		Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)	
		Number of criteria passed	

Condition Assessment Result (out of 7 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved ×/✓
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)	