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Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Steyning Grammar School, West Sussex

Site	Steyning Grammar School, West Sussex
Project number	251882
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Declaration of compliance

The information which we have provided is true, and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In November 2025 MKA Ecology Limited was commissioned to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment for Steyning Grammar School, West Sussex. This Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment has been prepared to detail how the biodiversity enhancements in the proposed scheme will lead to an overall benefit to biodiversity.

The Site currently comprises buildings, hardstanding, areas of modified grassland and woodland, as well as a large number of trees and tree groups, a native hedgerow and ornamental non-native hedgerows. The newly proposed habitats include buildings, hardstanding, introduced shrub, modified grassland, biodiverse green roofs, new trees, species rich hedgerows and a traditional orchard. Areas of other broadleaved woodland and modified grassland are also to be retained.

To provide an objective assessment of the potential value of the proposed biodiversity enhancements, the Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Defra, 2025) is applied. The measures, a proxy for biodiversity that use habitat types and their areas, are compared before (the existing condition) and after the completion of the proposed development.

The Site was found to have a baseline value of 15.49 habitat units. Under the current proposals, a net gain of 2.20 habitat units, equating to 14.23%, is expected. The positive increase in biodiversity is largely attributed to the provision of biodiverse green roofs, traditional orchard, modified grassland and individual trees. There is also a positive increase of 2.32 hedgerow units, equating to 338.05%, expected within the proposals. Trading rules are met for both habitat and hedgerow units.

The area of biodiverse green roof may change within the proposals, as the final roof layout designs are yet to be finalised. The current area within these calculations is 0.7523 hectares. The minimum area that the biodiverse green roof must be for the Site to continue to achieve a net gain is 0.61 hectares. Following liaison with WWA Landscape, the final roof area is expected to accommodate this minimum area and therefore, it is expected that the development will continue to meet the required 10% net gain and trading summaries.

It should be noted that the predicted net-gain in biodiversity is reliant on the successful restoration and/or creation of habitats and their maintenance for the foreseeable future. It will be critical to ensure that appropriate management activities are put in place in order to achieve the desired condition of the proposed habitats. It is recommended that measures to ensure the successful creation and long-term management of proposed habitats delivering significant onsite enhancements are outlined in a Habitat Management and Monitoring (HMMP) for the Site.

2. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this assessment is to review the existing biodiversity value of the Site, comparing this to the proposed landscape masterplan and calculate an overall biodiversity net change for the Site. The
2.1. primary method of calculating this change will follow the Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Defra, 2025). The aim of using this method is to demonstrate whether the proposed development and landscape masterplan will deliver a net gain in biodiversity.

The process of achieving and assessing Biodiversity Net Gain should follow the below principles and rules, as set out within *Biodiversity Net Gain, Good Practice Principles for Development* (Baker *et al.*, 2019) (Table 1) and *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric – User Guide (draft)* (Defra, 2025) (Table 2).

This Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment is in line with British Standard BS8683.

Table 1: The UK's good practice principles for biodiversity net gain (Baker *et al.*, 2019)

Principle	In practice
1. Apply the mitigation hierarchy	Do everything possible to first avoid and then minimise impacts on biodiversity. Only as a last resort, and in agreement with external decision makers where possible, compensate for losses that cannot be avoided. If compensating for losses within the development footprint is not possible or does not generate the most benefits for nature conservation, then offset biodiversity losses by gains elsewhere.
2. Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset elsewhere	Avoid impacts on irreplaceable biodiversity – these impacts cannot be offset to achieve NNL/net gain.
3. Be inclusive and equitable	Engage stakeholders early, and involve them in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the approach to net gain. Achieve net gain in partnership with stakeholders where possible.
4. Address risk	Mitigate difficulty, uncertainty and other risks to achieving net gain. Apply well-accepted ways to add contingency when calculating biodiversity losses and gains in order to account for any remaining risks, as well as to compensate for the time between losses occurring and gains being fully realised.
5. Make a measurable net gain contribution	Achieve a measurable, overall gain for biodiversity and the services ecosystems provide while directly contributing towards nature conservation priorities.

Principle	In practice
6. Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity	Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity by using robust, credible evidence and local knowledge to make clearly-justified choices when: • Delivering compensation that is ecologically equivalent in type, amount and condition, and that accounts for the location and timing of biodiversity losses • Compensating for losses of one type of biodiversity by providing a different type that delivers greater benefits for nature conservation • Achieving Net Gain locally to the development while also contributing towards nature conservation priorities at local, regional and national levels • Enhancing existing or creating new habitat • Enhancing ecological connectivity by creating more, bigger, better and joined areas for biodiversity
7. Be additional	Achieve nature conservation outcomes that demonstrably exceed existing obligations (i.e. do not deliver something that would occur anyway).
8. Create a Net Gain legacy	Ensure Net Gain generates long-term benefits by: • Engaging stakeholders and jointly agreeing practical solutions that secure Net Gain in perpetuity • Planning for adaptive management and securing dedicated funding for long-term management • Designing Net Gain for biodiversity to be resilient to external factors, especially climate change • Mitigating risks from other land uses • Avoiding displacing harmful activities from one location to another and • Supporting local-level management
9. Optimise sustainability	Prioritise Biodiversity Net Gain and, where possible, optimise the wider environmental benefits for a sustainable society and economy.
10. Be transparent	Communicate all Net Gain activities in a transparent and timely manner, sharing the learning with all stakeholders.

Table 2: Biodiversity net gain rules (Defra, 2025)

Rule	In practice
1	The trading rules of this biodiversity metric must be followed.
2	Biodiversity unit outputs, for each type of unit, must not be summed, traded, or converted between types. The requirement to deliver at least a 10% net gain applies to each type of unit.
3	To accurately apply the biodiversity metric formula, you must use the biodiversity metric calculation tool or small sites biodiversity metric tool (SSM) for small sites. The tools remove the need for a user to manually calculate the change in biodiversity value. The tool will summarise the results of the calculation and inform a user whether the biodiversity net gain objective has been met.
4	In exceptional ecological circumstances, deviation from this biodiversity metric methodology may be permitted by the relevant planning authority.

3. HABITATS

Present – baseline condition survey

3.1. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was conducted by MKA Ecology Ltd on 1 December 2025 (MKA Ecology Ltd, 2026) to inform the baseline habitats present. The Site was found to cover a total of 8.6 hectares and comprises buildings, hardstanding, areas of modified grassland and woodland, as well as a large number of trees and tree groups, a native hedgerow and ornamental non-native hedgerows. The habitats at the Site were mapped during the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and are presented in Figure 1.

A condition assessment of the baseline habitats was conducted on 1 December 2025. More information on how habitat conditions were assigned is provided in Appendix 1. Survey constraints of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal are described in Section 4.9.

There are no irreplaceable habitats within the redline boundary. Please note that any impacts on designated sites and protected species that may result from the development have been addressed in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, which also outlines plans for mitigation and enhancement where required (MKA Ecology Ltd, 2026).

3.2. Future – proposed landscape and enhancements

The proposals involve a school redevelopment which entails the demolition of existing buildings and erection of new buildings within the site extent and associated vegetation removal. The proposed habitats for the Site are presented in Figure 2. Proposed habitats include buildings, hardstanding, introduced shrub, modified grassland, biodiverse green roofs, new trees, species rich hedgerows and a traditional orchard. Areas of other broadleaved woodland and modified grassland are also to be retained.

It is these proposed habitats that will form the basis of the calculation of ‘net-change’ in biodiversity using the Defra metric (see Section 4).

Figure 1: Baseline habitats at Steyning Grammar School, West Sussex

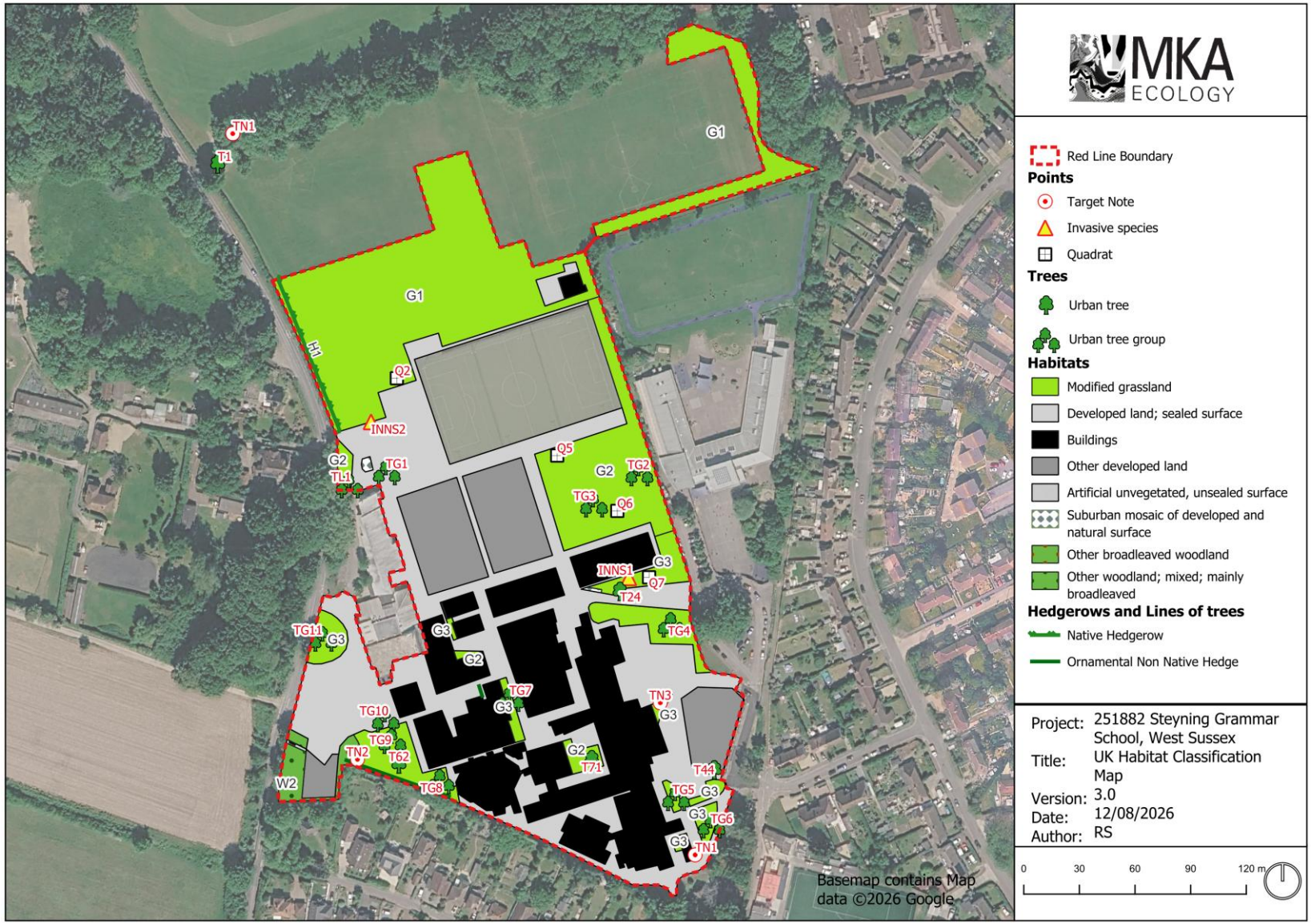
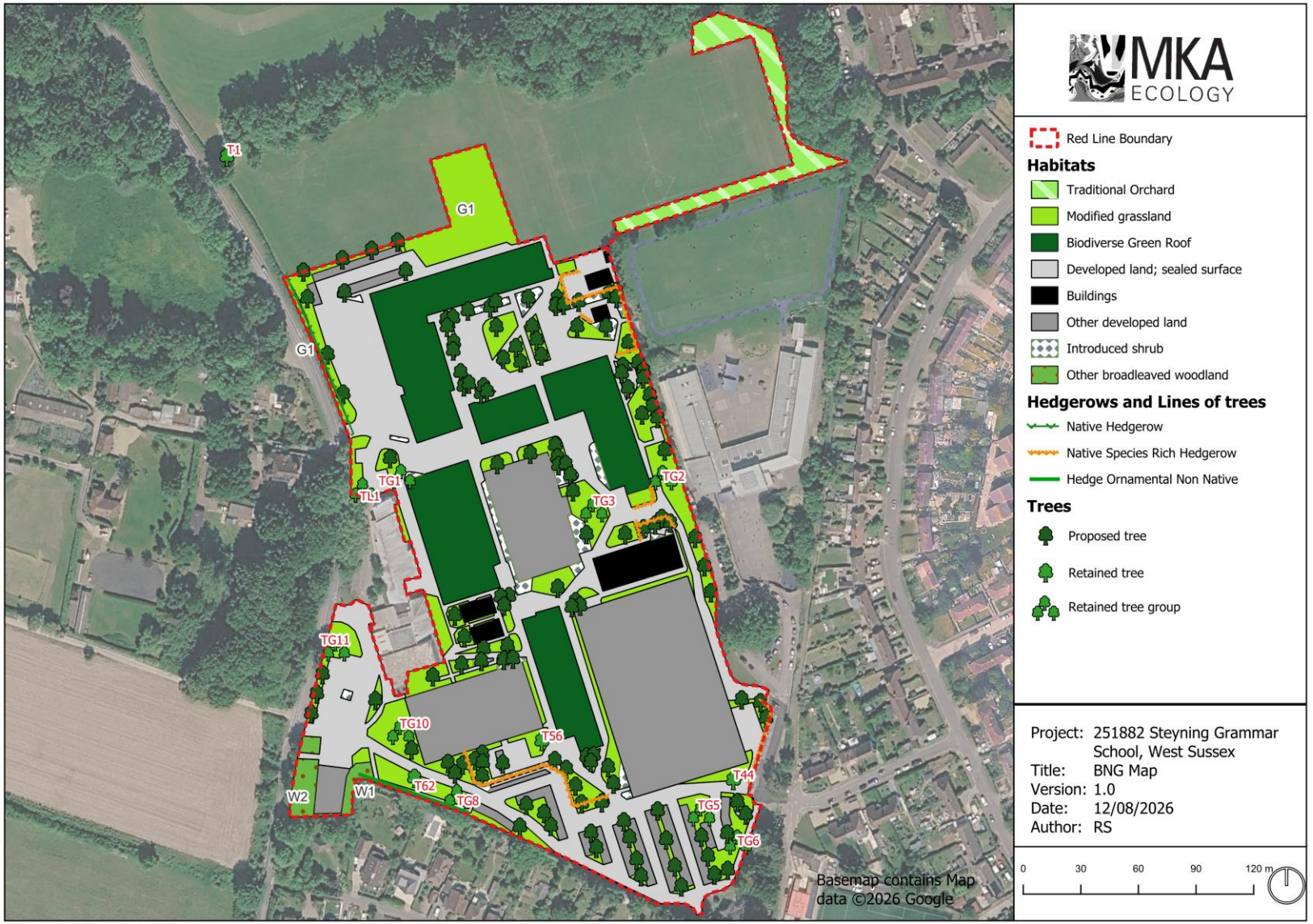


Figure 2. Proposed habitats for Steyning Grammar School, West Sussex



4. METHODOLOGIES

4.1. Biodiversity Net Gain assessor

This Biodiversity Net Gain assessment was conducted by Radha Singh and Olivia Hine, both Ecologists at MKA Ecology Ltd. Radha has over a years' experience while Olivia has over two years' experience conducting Biodiversity Net Gain assessments; they are considered competent assessors under the Statutory Biodiversity Metric requirements (Defra, 2025). The Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment was reviewed by Lydia Ennis ACIEEM, Senior Ecologist at MKA Ecology Ltd. Lydia has nine years' experience as an ecologist.

4.2. Assignment of habitats

To establish whether the proposed development will contribute positively to biodiversity we use the Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Defra, 2025). This method uses habitat as a proxy for biodiversity and its primary application is to provide planners and developers with a method of establishing how much and what type of habitats should be created or enhanced in order to ensure that the proposed development results in a net gain for biodiversity. Habitats are assigned the following scores:

- Distinctiveness: A measure of the type and importance of a habitat.
- Condition: A measure of the present or predicted condition of a habitat type.
- Strategic significance: How a habitat is regarded within Local Planning Policy.

Habitat distinctiveness is automatically assigned in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. Please see Appendix 1 for further information on how habitat condition and strategic significance was assigned in this assessment.

For proposed habitats, where there is an attempt to predict the habitat type following establishment additional handicaps or risk scores are imposed representing the following factors:

- Difficulty: More difficult habitats incur a greater risk.
- Time to condition: In general, it takes longer for habitats to reach a better condition, plus certain habitats by their very nature take longer to create or restore.
- If the creation or enhancement of habitats is delayed, an additional risk score is applied. This will not apply in the present case.
- If habitats are created off-site, an additional risk score is applied. This will not apply in the present case.

The multipliers used in habitat assignment in the Biodiversity Net Gain Metric are detailed further in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Multipliers used in the calculation of Biodiversity Net Gain

Multiplier	When applied	Description
Distinctiveness	Before and after	A measure of the type of habitat, automatically assigned within the Metric. Habitats with greater value are assigned a higher score.
Condition	Before and after	The condition of the habitat. Uses the Technical Supplement (*Panks et al. 2021a*); Higher levels of condition give rise to greater values. In some cases, no condition assessment is required and these habitats are automatically allocated a score.
Strategic significance	Before and after	Whether a habitat is important within its local context.
Time to target condition	After	Used to account for the fact that habitat creation as part of a development is rarely instant. A 'handicap' is applied, with habitats that take longer to establish resulting in a greater reduction.
Difficulty of creation/restoration	After	Habitats that are more difficult to create/restore cause a reduction in the biodiversity unit as they are associated with a greater risk of failure.
Spatial risk	After	Habitat that is created at a greater distance away from the development site carries a greater risk of removing other natural habitats.
Advanced and delayed habitat creation	After	Used to account for situations where there is a mismatch between a negative impact on biodiversity and work to create or enhance the 'post-intervention habitats'. This can either be in the form of habitat creation occurring in advance or being delayed beyond the point of baseline losses.

4.3. Trading Summary

The Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric includes a Trading Summary which must be satisfied to achieve a positive outcome in the Net Gain assessment (see Rule 1, Table 2). The trading rules ensures that habitat losses are compensated for on a "like for like" or "like for better" basis. Newly created or enhanced habitats should achieve a higher distinctiveness and/or condition than those lost.

Further details on how the metric is calculated is provided in the aforementioned publications, with more site-specific detail provided in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

4.4. Mapping habitats

Current habitats were mapped and areas calculated using QGIS during the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (see Section 3.1 for details of habitat types). The proposed habitats were calculated in QGIS using a digitised and geo-referenced version of the General Arrangement Green Infrastructure Plan (WWA Landscape, 2026) provided in Figure 2 (see Section 3.2 for details of habitat types).

4.5. Hedgerows

Hedgerows, given their unique linear characteristic and their position as 'edge habitats' are treated as linear features in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculator and are calculated as 'biodiversity metres'. The metrics calculated for hedgerows have therefore been calculated and presented separately. Current and proposed hedgerows were mapped, and their lengths calculated, using QGIS.

4.6. Rivers and streams

A dry ditch is located within 5 metres of the red line boundary on the northeastern aspect of the Site, however, for this to be classed as a ditch it must hold water for a minimum of four months per year. Using data available from site investigations (CTP, 2026) it was determined that it does not meet this definition and therefore, should not be classed as a ditch, nor as any other watercourse. Subsequently, it is exempt from a ditch condition assessment and needs no further assessment due to its location outside the red line boundary. Rivers and streams are not considered further within this report.

4.7. Habitat degradation

It is confirmed that the baseline habitats have not been significantly altered or modified since 30 January 2020 and, as such, it is appropriate to assess the baseline habitats in their current condition.

4.8. Sharing data

Relevant ecological data collected during baseline habitat and protected species surveys at the Site will be shared with Sussex Biodiversity Information Centre following acceptance of this Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment.

4.9. Assumptions and constraints

Several assumptions are made to enable this Biodiversity Net Gain assessment. The primary assumptions and constraints are listed below:

- The net gains in biodiversity that are estimated are reliant on the successful restoration and/or creation of habitats and their maintenance for the foreseeable future; this is particularly true for the biodiverse green roofs, traditional orchard, modified grassland and individual trees.;
- The condition assessment for some habitats is assumed. Tree T71 was not assessed on Site during the survey in date. Where there is doubt in determining the condition, a conservative approach is taken, therefore T71 was assessed to be of good condition, to assume a worst-case scenario;

- The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was undertaken outside of the optimal survey period for Phase 1 surveys. This is not considered to be a significant constraint to the survey effort as all the habitats recorded were of low value and common in the surrounding area;
- Tree canopy areas have been calculated using the "Tree Helper" within the Metric calculator tool. As per The Statutory Biodiversity Metric: User Guide (Defra, 2025) size classes for newly proposed trees have been categorised as small; and
- It is assumed that there will be no time delay in establishing the habitats and the habitats will not be created in advance.

5. RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Results

The overall comparison of biodiversity units is presented in Table 4 below. The calculator used to derive these figures is provided as a separate appendix (Appendix 2) to this report. With the current layout, there will be a net gain of biodiversity of 14.23% with a positive net change of 2.20 habitat units. There will also be a net gain of hedgerow units of 338.05% with a positive net change of 2.32 hedgerow units.

Table 4: Results of biodiversity metric calculations

Habitat	Biodiversity units (current)*	Biodiversity units (proposed)*	Biodiversity net-change*	Net percentage change
Habitats	15.49	17.69	2.20	14.23%
Hedgerows	0.69	3.01	2.32	338.05%

* Habitat areas are calculated as biodiversity hectares, hedgerows as biodiversity metres

The gain of units is largely attributed to the provision of the biodiverse green roofs which provide 3.37 habitat units to the proposals. Other significant onsite gains include the creation of modified grassland (2.03 units), the planting of individual trees (1.68 units) and the creation of traditional orchard (1.14 units).

The area of biodiverse green roof may change within the proposals, as the final roof layout designs are yet to be finalised. The current area within these calculations is 0.7523 hectares. The minimum area that the biodiverse green roof must be for the Site to continue to achieve a net gain is 0.61 hectares. Following liaison with WWA Landscape, the final roof area is expected to accommodate this minimum area and therefore, it is expected that the development will continue to meet the required 10% net gain and trading summaries.

The planting of the species-rich native hedgerow is also significant, contributing 2.32 hedgerow units to the proposals.

Significant onsite gains within Horsham District Council are defined as:

- Where the overall net change 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.

Therefore, the habitats listed above are classified as significant onsite gains within the proposals at Steyning Grammar School.

In line with the recommendations provided within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Geosphere Environmental, 2023; MKA Ecology Ltd, 2026) bird and bat boxes should be installed in the new buildings or on retained trees. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric has no means to formally account for these enhancements in the net gain assessment. However, they will provide additional value for biodiversity post-development and therefore should be noted.

5.2. Recommendations

The overall net gain in biodiversity units predicted in this assessment is reliant on the successful restoration and/or creation of habitats and their maintenance for the foreseeable future. It is critical that habitats and hedgerows delivering significant onsite gains reach the target condition estimated in this assessment, and this will require careful consideration during both the planning and construction phase. It is particularly important that the biodiverse green roofs, traditional orchard and individual trees achieve 'moderate' condition, while the modified grassland must achieve a minimum of 'poor' condition.

It is recommended that a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) is produced for the Site. This will outline measures for the successful creation and management of habitats delivering significant onsite gains for a minimum of 30 years to ensure the target conditions for each habitat type is reached as outlined in this assessment.

Recommendation 1
Produce a HMMP for the Site covering habitats delivering significant onsite gains for a minimum of 30 years post-development.

For all other habitats created or retained at the site, a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) must be produced outlining measures for the successful creation and management of these habitats.

Recommendation 2
Produce a LEMP for the Site covering all other habitats to be created or retained.

As the final roof layout designs are not yet finalised, it is recommended that the area of biodiverse green roof does not reduce lower than 0.61 hectares as this is the minimum area that is required for the Site to continue to exceed a 10% net gain and meet the trading summaries.

Recommendation 3

The minimum area of biodiverse green roof at the Site post-development should be 0.61 hectares so the required 10% net gain is still achieved.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The proposed development at Steyning Grammar School, West Sussex, involves a school redevelopment which entails the demolition of existing buildings and erection of new buildings within the site extent and associated vegetation removal. The landscaping plans include buildings, hardstanding, introduced shrub, modified grassland, biodiverse green roofs, new trees and species rich hedgerows and a traditional orchard. Areas of other broadleaved woodland and modified grassland are also to be retained.

The use of the Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric to calculate measures of biodiversity for the existing and proposed habitats confirm that the proposed development is likely to lead to a net gain of 14.23% in biodiversity, equating to the gain of 2.20 habitat units. The positive increase in biodiversity is largely attributed to the provision of biodiverse green roofs, traditional orchard, modified grassland and individual trees. There is also a gain of 2.32 hedgerow units, equating to 338.05%.

The predicted net-gain in biodiversity is reliant on the successful restoration and/or creation of habitats and their maintenance for the foreseeable future. It will be critical to ensure that appropriate management activities are put in place in order to achieve the desired condition of the proposed habitats. It is recommended that measures to ensure the successful creation and long-term management of proposed habitats are outlined in a HMMP for the Site.

7. REFERENCES

Baker, J., Hoskin, R. & Butterworth., T. (2019) *Biodiversity net gain: Good practice principles for development. Part A. A practical guide.* CIRIA, UK

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Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) (2025) *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric – User Guide – July 2025.* Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides

Geosphere Environmental (2023) *SRP1121 Steyning Grammar School, Shooting Field, Steyning, West Sussex, BN44 3RX – Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*. Geosphere Environmental: Ipswich.

MKA Ecology Ltd (2026) *Steyning Grammar School, West Sussex - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Technical Note.* MKA Ecology Ltd: Cambridge.

WWA Landscape (2026) *Steyning Grammar School - General Arrangement Green Infrastructure Plan UGF*. WWA Landscape: London.

8. APPENDICES

8.1. Appendix 1: Assignment of biodiversity metric multipliers

Strategic significance

Strategic significance was set to 'high' for the current native hedgerow and proposed species-rich hedgerows as they are listed as Habitats of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. Although Policies 26 and 31 of Horsham District Councils' Local Plan (2015) state that woodlands, hedgerows and trees should be protected, this is with regard to rural and priority areas, of which the Site does not fall within. Therefore, all other baseline and newly created habitats were set to be of a 'low' strategic significance.

Condition

The below tables detail the rationale for the condition assessments made for each habitat type.

Current habitats

Modified grassland

Condition Assessment Criteria		Habitat Name			Rationale for Meeting Condition Assessment Criteria
		G1	G2	G3	
1	*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.*	x	x	x	**G1, G2 and G3:** Species density for all areas of grassland is less than six species per m².
2	*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.*	x	x	x	**G1, G2 and G3:** The sward height for all areas of grassland was not varied.

Condition Assessment Criteria		Habitat Name			Rationale for Meeting Condition Assessment Criteria
		G1	G2	G3	
3	*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.*	✓	✓	✓	**G1, G2 and G3:** Bramble scrub is not abundant within these parcels of grassland.
4	*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.*	✓	✓	x	**G1 and G2:** Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of the total grassland area. **G3:** Physical damage is evident via high levels of access, presumably trampling.
5	*Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens)[2].*	✓	✓	x	**G1 and G2:** Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10% across these areas of grassland. **G3:** Bare ground is greater than 10%.
6	*Cover of bracken Pteridium aquilinum is less than 20%.*	✓	✓	✓	**G1, G2 and G3:** Bracken cover is less than 20% for all areas of grassland.
7	*There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species[3] (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA[4]).*	✓	✓	✓	**G1, G2 and G3:** Invasive non-native species are absent in all areas of grassland.
	Target Condition: **G1 and G2 – Poor:** meets five out of seven criteria, excluding essential criterion A **G3 – Poor:** meets three out of seven criteria, excluding essential criterion A				

Other broadleaved woodland (W1) other woodland mixed; mainly broadleaved (W2)

Indicator		Good (3 points)	Moderate (2 points)	Poor (1 point)	Score per indicator		Justification
					W1	W2	
1	Age distribution of trees	Three age-classes present (young, intermediate and old)	Two age-classes present	One age-class present	2	2	**W1 and W2**: Two age classes are present (young and mature).
2	Wild, domestic and feral herbivore damage	No significant browsing damage evident in woodland	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or less of whole woodland.	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or more of whole woodland.	3	3	**W1 and W2:** No evidence of significant browsing throughout these areas of woodland.
3	Invasive plant species	No invasive species	Rhododendron *Rhododendro*	Rhododendron or cherry laurel present	3	3	**W1, and W2**: no invasive non-native species were identified

Indicator		Good (3 points)	Moderate (2 points)	Poor (1 point)	Score per indicator		Justification
					W1	W2	
		present in woodland	*n ponticum* or cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* not present, other invasive species <10% cover	or other invasive species >10% cover			within any of the woodland parcels.
4	Number of native tree species	Five or more native tree or shrub species found across woodland parcel	Three to four native tree or shrub species found across woodland parcel	Two or less native tree or shrub species across woodland parcel.	1	2	**W1:** Only one native tree species was identified in this section (hazel *Corylus avellana*). **W2:** Three native species were identified in this section (oak *Quercus robur*, beech *Fagus sylvatica*, and hazel).
5	Cover of native tree and shrub species	>80% of canopy trees and >80% of understory shrubs are native	50-80% of canopy trees and 50-80% of understory shrubs are native	<50% of canopy trees and <50% of understory shrubs are native	1	2	**W1:** <50% of canopy trees and <50% of understory shrubs are native. **W2:** 50-80% of canopy and shrubs are native.
6	Open space within woodland	10-20% of woodland has areas of temporary open space. Unless woodland is less than 10ha, in which case 0-20% temporary open space is permitted.	21-40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space.	<10% or >40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space. BUT if woodland <10has <10% temporary open space, please see Good category	3	3	**W1, and W2:** All parcels of woodland are <10ha, in which case the 0-20% temporary open space present is permitted.
7	Woodland regeneration	All three classes present in woodland; trees 4-7cm	One or two classes only present in woodland	No classes or coppice regrowth present in woodland	2	2	**W1 and W2:** There are two classes of trees within the woodland parcels (saplings and trees).

Indicator		Good (3 points)	Moderate (2 points)	Poor (1 point)	Score per indicator		Justification
					W1	W2	
		Diameter at Breast height (DBH), saplings and seedlings or advanced coppice regrowth					
8	Tree health	Tree mortality less than 10%, no pests or diseases and no crown dieback	11% to 25% mortality and/or crown dieback or low-risk pest or disease present	Greater than 25% tree mortality and or any high-risk pest or disease present	3	3	**W1, and W2:** Tree mortality is less than 10%, no pests or diseases and no crown dieback within any of the woodland parcels.
9	Vegetation and ground flora	Recognisable NVC plant community at ground layer present, strongly characterised by ancient woodland flora specialists	Recognisable woodland NVC plant community at ground layer present	No recognisable woodland NVC plant community at ground layer present	1	1	**W1 and W2:** There is no recognisable woodland NVC plant community at ground layer present.
10	Woodland vertical structure	Three or more storeys across all survey plots or a complex woodland	Two storeys across all survey plots	One or less storey across all survey plots	2	2	**W1 and W2:** There are two storeys across all survey plots.
11	Veteran trees	Two or more veteran trees per hectare	One veteran tree per hectare	No veteran trees present in woodland	1	1	**W1 and W2:** There are no veteran trees present within the woodland parcels. All trees are young or mature.
12	Amount of deadwood	50% of all survey plots within the woodland	Between 25% and 50% of all survey plots within	Less than 25% of all survey plots within the	1	1	**W1 and W2:** There is very little deadwood present across all woodland parcels.

Indicator		Good (3 points)	Moderate (2 points)	Poor (1 point)	Score per indicator		Justification
					W1	W2	
		parcels have deadwood, such as standing deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, branch stubs and stumps or an abundance of small cavities	the woodland parcels have deadwood, such as standing deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, branch stubs and stumps or an abundance of small cavities	woodland parcels have deadwood, such as standing deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, branch stubs and stumps or an abundance of small cavities			
13	Woodland disturbance	No nutrient enrichment or damaged ground evident	Less than 1 hectare in total of nutrient enrichment across woodland area and or less than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground	More than 1 hectare of nutrient enrichment and or more than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground.	2	2	**W1 and W2:** There are less than 20% of the woodland parcels have damaged ground.
	Condition: Poor (W1) **Condition: Moderate (W2)** **W1 has a score of 25 points** **W2 has a score of 27 points**						

Individual trees (6 no.)

	Condition Assessment criteria	Rationale for Meeting Condition Assessment Criteria		
	Tree or tree group. *Please referrer to numbering in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (MKA Ecology Ltd, 2025):*	T44	TG9	TG10
1	*More than 70% of trees are native species.*	x	x	x
2	*Tree canopy is predominantly continuous with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide.*	✓	✓	✓
3	*More than 50% of trees are mature or veteran.*	x	x	x

	Condition Assessment criteria	Rationale for Meeting Condition Assessment Criteria		
4	*There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by anthropogenic activities such as vandalism or herbicide use. There is no current regular pruning regime so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.*	✓	x	✓
5	*Management regime has encouraged micro habitat sites for birds, mammals and insects e.g. presence of deadwood, cavities or loose bark etc.*	x	x	x
6	*More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.*	x	✓	x
*	**Condition: Poor** T44, TG9 and TG10 pass two out of six criteria.			

Individual trees (59 no.)

	Condition Assessment criteria	Rationale for Meeting Condition Assessment Criteria								
	Tree or tree group. *Please referrer to numbering in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (MKA Ecology Ltd, 2024):*	TG1	TL1	TG2	TG3	T24	TG4	TG5	TG6	TG7	TG8
1	*More than 70% of trees are native species.*	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓
2	*Tree canopy is predominantly continuous with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide.*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓
3	*More than 50% of trees are mature or veteran.*	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x
4	*There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by anthropogenic activities such as vandalism or herbicide use. There is no current regular pruning regime so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓
5	*Management regime has encouraged micro habitat sites for birds, mammals and insects e.g. presence of deadwood, cavities or loose bark etc.*	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x
6	*More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
*	**Condition: Moderate** TL1 and TG7 passes three out of six criteria TG1, TG2, TG3, T24, TG4, TG5, TG6 and TG8 pass four out of six criteria										

Individual trees (6. no)

	Condition Assessment criteria	Rationale for Meeting Condition Assessment Criteria		
	Tree or tree group. *Please referrer to numbering in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (MKA Ecology Ltd, 2025):*	T62	TG11	T71
1	*More than 70% of trees are native species.*	x	x	x
2	*Tree canopy is predominantly continuous with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide.*	✓	✓	✓
3	*More than 50% of trees are mature or veteran.*	✓	✓	✓
4	*There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by anthropogenic activities such as vandalism or herbicide use. There is no current regular pruning regime so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.*	✓	✓	✓
5	*Management regime has encouraged micro habitat sites for birds, mammals and insects e.g. presence of deadwood, cavities or loose bark etc.*	✓	✓	✓
6	*More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.*	✓	✓	✓
*	**Condition: Good** T62, TG11 and T71 pass five out of six criteria			

Other habitats

Habitat	Condition score	Rationale for condition assessment
Urban – developed land; sealed surface (3.6169 ha)	N/A – other	No condition assessment required – allocated a score of 0
Urban – introduced shrub (0.0062 ha)	Condition Assessment N/A	No condition assessment required – allocated a score of 2
Urban – artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface (0.5845 ha)	N/A – other	No condition assessment required – allocated a score of 0

Current hedgerows

Native hedgerows

	Condition Assessment criteria	Rationale for Meeting Condition Assessment Criteria	
A1	*Height* *>1.5m average along the length*	The hedgerow is over 1.5m in height.	✓
A2	*Width* *>1.5m average along length*	The hedgerow is greater than 1.5m in width.	✓
B1	*Gap – hedge base* *Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5m for >90% of length*	The gap between the hedge and the ground is less than 0.5m.	✓
B2	*Gap – hedge canopy continuity*	Gaps are less than 5m wide, making up less than 10% of the total length.	✓

Condition Assessment criteria		Rationale for Meeting Condition Assessment Criteria	
	Gaps make up <10% of the total length and no canopy gaps >5m		
C1	*Undisturbed ground and perennial vegetation* *>1m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length measured from outer edge of hedgerow and is present on one side of the hedgerow at least.*	A minimum of 1m of undisturbed ground is present on either side of the hedgerow.	✓
C2	*Nutrient-enriched perennial vegetation* *Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground.*	Nutrient-enriched vegetation were not present within the hedgerow.	✓
D1	*Invasive and neophyte species* *>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (included those listed on Schedule 9 of the WCA[3]) and recently introduced species.*	No evidence of invasive non-native species during the survey.	✓
D2	*Current damage* *>90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activity.*	Evidence of pruning along the length of the hedgerow due to the school setting, being on the edge of a sports field.	x
*	**Condition: Good** Meets seven out of eight criteria		

Habitat	Condition score	Rationale for condition assessment
Ornamental non-native hedgerow (0.065 km)	Condition Assessment N/A	No condition assessment required – allocated a score of 1

Proposed habitats

Modified grassland

Condition Assessment Criteria		Rationale for Meeting Condition Assessment Criteria	
1	*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*	The Germinal Seeds A24 Wear and Tear seed mix includes more than 6 species. However, local conditions and management may not result in all grassland areas containing more than 6 species per m².	x

	Condition Assessment Criteria	Rationale for Meeting Condition Assessment Criteria	
	distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.		
2	*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.*	This grassland will likely be mowed and therefore it is unlikely that the sward height will be varied.	x
3	*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.*	Bramble scrub will likely not be present within this parcel.	✓
4	*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.*	Due to the location, within a school, it is likely that physical damage, such as through high levels of access (excessive poaching) could exceed 5% of the total area. Therefore this condition has been conservatively failed.	x
5	*Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens)[2].*	Areas of modified grassland will be located within a school, and it is likely areas of bare ground will develop through physical damage (excessive poaching).	x
6	*Cover of bracken Pteridium aquilinum is less than 20%.*	With good management, bracken cover will be less than 20%.	✓
7	*There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species[3] (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA[4]).*	With good management, it is assumed that no invasive non-native species will be present.	✓
	Target Condition: Poor Meets three out of seven criteria, not including essential criterion A.		

Biodiverse green roof (5 no.)

	Condition Assessment Criteria	Rationale for Meeting Condition Assessment Criteria	
1	Vegetation structure is varied, providing opportunities for insects, birds and bats to live and breed. A single ecotone (i.e. scrub, grassland, herbs) should not account for more than 80% of the total habitat area.	The area of green roof if a sufficient size to support a varied structure and includes a mix of wildflowers, annuals, grasses and sedums.	✓
2	There is a diverse range of flowering plant species, providing nectar sources for insects. These species may be either native, or non-native but beneficial to wildlife. **NB - To achieve GOOD condition, this must be satisfied by native species only.**	The BauderGREEN Flora 3 Seed Mix contains 49 species including 31 species of wildflower; therefore, it is assumed there will be a diverse range of flowering plants.	✓
3	Invasive non-native species (Schedule 9 of WCA) cover less than 5% of total vegetated area. **NB - To achieve GOOD condition, criterion 3 must be satisfied by a complete absence of invasive non-native species (rather than <5% cover).**	Regular checks of this habitat should be carried out by the appointed management contractor, with any invasive non-native identified and removed. Provided this is followed, it is considered that this criterion can be met.	✓

	Condition Assessment Criteria	Rationale for Meeting Condition Assessment Criteria	
4	Biodiverse green roofs have a varied depth of 80 - 150mm at least 50% is at 150mm and is planted and seeded with wildflowers and sedums or is pre-prepared with sedums and wildflowers. **NB - To achieve Good condition some additional habitat, such as sand piles, logs etc should be present.**	The green roof will have a varied depth of a minimum of 100 - 150mm and includes wildflowers and sedums within the seed mix. However, this habitat is unlikely to contain sand and log piles, therefore, this criterion has been conservatively failed.	x
*	**Target Condition: Moderate** Passes three out of four criteria excluding the last essential criteria.		

Proposed trees (135 no.)

	Condition Assessment criteria	Rationale for Meeting Condition Assessment Criteria	
1	*The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).*	The trees are a mix between native and non-native, with the majority being non-native	x
2	*The tree canopy will be 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).*	Individual trees automatically pass this criterion. Where trees are planted in close proximity, the canopies are likely to form continuous cover once they mature.	✓
3	*The tree will be mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).*	This is not possible to achieve within the 27-year timeframe.	x
4	*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.*	The tree species listed in the planting strategy will need light pruning within the first five years, however, this is unlikely to impact more than 75% of their expected canopy. Once established a regular pruning regime will not be required, and adverse anthropogenic impacts such as vandalism and herbicide use can be prevented following a management plan.	✓
5	*Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.*	This is unlikely to be achieved within the timeframe due to the size.	x
6	*More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.*	The trees will be oversailing vegetation.	✓
*	**Condition: Moderate** Meets one out of six criteria.		

Traditional orchard

	Condition Assessment criteria	Rationale for Meeting Condition Assessment Criteria	
1	*Presence of ancient and or veteran trees.*	It is unlikely that ancient or veteran trees will be present within this area.	x
2	*Presence of deadwood in or on trees, or on the ground: at least 20% of mature trees have deadwood associated with them.* *Some examples of deadwood are: standing, attached or fallen trees or limbs, dead stems, branches and branch stubs greater than 10cm diameter, and internal cavities. The types and distribution of deadwood provide a range*	Although log piles could be created within this habitat, it is unlikely that this criterion can be achieved within the management period, therefore, it has been conservatively failed.	x

	Condition Assessment criteria	Rationale for Meeting Condition Assessment Criteria	
	of habitats suitable to support a wide assemblage of saproxylic invertebrates.		
3	*Less than 5% of fruit trees are smothered by scrub. Small patches of dense scrub and or scattered scrub growing between trees can be beneficial to biodiversity, however these occupy less than 10% of ground cover.*	Less than 5% of trees will be smothered by scrub following appropriate management.	✓
4	*There is evidence of formative and or restorative pruning to maintain longevity of the trees.*	This can likely be achieved following appropriate management.	✓
5	*At least 95% of the trees are free from damage caused by humans or animals, for example browsing, bark stripping or rubbing on non-adjusted ties.*	Over 5% damage to trees may occur due to recreational impacts.	x
6	*Grassland is not overgrazed, poaching is not evident around the trees, with no more than 10% of trees poached under the canopy.*	The grassland should not be overgrazed nor poached due to the fencing which is proposed to surround the orchard. Some trampling and poaching are expected but this is not likely to exceed 10% of the area under tree canopies, given the size of the orchard.	✓
7	*Species richness of the grassland is equivalent to a medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland.*	Due to the school setting and shading from the orchard trees, this criterion is conservatively failed; it is unlikely that the species richness of the grassland will be able to meet medium distinctiveness habitats at a minimum.	x
8	*There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and species indicative of suboptimal condition make up less than 10% of ground cover.*	There will be an absence of invasive non-native species should the appropriate management be followed.	✓
*	**Condition: Moderate** Passes four out of eight criteria.		

Habitat	Condition score	Rationale for condition assessment
Urban – developed land; sealed surface (3.431 ha)	NA – other	No condition assessment required – allocated a score of 2
Urban – introduced shrubs (0.187 ha)	Poor	No specific condition assessment for introduced shrubs – conservative approach used when estimating condition for this habitat

Proposed hedgerows

Species-rich native hedgerows

	Condition Assessment criteria	Rationale for Meeting Condition Assessment Criteria	
A1	*Height* *>1.5m average along the length*	The required height should be achieved assuming the hedgerow is appropriately managed.	✓
A2	*Width* *>1.5m average along length*	The required width will unlikely be achieved due to the school setting.	x
B1	*Gap – hedge base* *Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5m for >90% of length*	This should be achieved assuming it is appropriately managed. With the appropriate management, gaps will not make up greater than 10% of the total length.	✓

	Condition Assessment criteria	Rationale for Meeting Condition Assessment Criteria	
B2	*Gap – hedge canopy continuity* *Gaps make up <10% of the total length and no canopy gaps >5m*	With the appropriate management, gaps will not make up greater than 10% of the total length.	✓
C1	*Undisturbed ground and perennial vegetation* *>1m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length measured from outer edge of hedgerow and is present on one side of the hedgerow at least.*	Much of the proposed hedgerows are oversailing areas of hardstanding, therefore, it is likely that this will not be achieved.	x
C2	*Nutrient-enriched perennial vegetation* *Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground.*	The hedgerows must be managed correctly for this to be feasible; however this will be achievable following a management plan.	✓
D1	*Invasive and neophyte species* *>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (included those listed on Schedule 9 of the WCA[3]) and recently introduced species.*	Good management should ensure that there is an absence of invasive non-native plant species.	✓
D2	*Current damage* *>90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activity.*	Damage is likely due to the school context and recreational use.	x
*	**Condition: Moderate** Meets five out of eight criteria.		

8.2. Appendix 2: Biodiversity net gain calculator

As attachment.



MKA
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