

Land Adjacent to School House, School Lane, Offley, SG5 3AT

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

October 2025

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1. Summary

Elizabeth Greenwood CMLI was commissioned by John Clarke of Hox Design Architects to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment at the land adjacent to School House, School Lane, Offley on behalf of Salusbury and Burrough Educational Foundation.

The site is a small garden area with a hard surfaced driveway and turning space, an area of lawn grass and a small concrete shed. The site was previously part of a larger private garden which has been fenced off to form a smaller land parcel.

The proposals for the site are to develop the site into a terrace of three new dwellings with a parking area and individual private gardens for the properties. The proposals include a landscape design which addresses need for access, parking and increases the site's contribution to biodiversity.

The site at 577m² is below the 1ha area threshold for the full Biodiversity Metric 4.0 and within the appropriate range for the use of the Small Sites Metric (SSM)

This report makes use of the Small Site Metric calculation tool to assess the ecological value of the existing habitat compared with the value of the resulting habitats provided by the proposals if planning permission is granted.

The development area is formed of two habitat types: Vegetated garden, in the form of lawn grass surrounded on two sides by native hedge with trees with some garden planting on the fence line on the eastern side. The remaining area is developed land; sealed surface, in the form of the driveway, path and a shed building on a concrete base. The site has a linear habitat in the form of a native hedgerow with trees which runs along its southern and western boundary.

Desk survey established that The Chilterns AONB is within 500m of the property at roughly 300m to the north. The Chilterns are separated from Offley and the development site by the A505 and it is highly unlikely that the development at the site will have any impact on the designated landscape.

The landscape proposals include:

- 7 new trees, 4 of them are native species;
- 10m of new mixed native hedge;
- Enhancement of existing native hedge with trees
- 6 small areas of ornamental planting.

The native hedgerow on the boundary and the parking area at the front of the new building will be outside the private curtilage of the new properties and will be placed under shared management. The management of the communal space may require monitoring over a 30 year period in the form of a HMMP with a detailed 30-year management plan, which will be provided, as a condition if the proposals are deemed acceptable.

The proposed development was identified to provide an addition of +0.0213 (+22.77%) new habitat units and +0.2440 new hedgerow units (+57.66%).

The development is found to provide a significant increase to the biodiversity value of the site and passes the requirements for biodiversity net gain by a large margin.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background

Elizabeth Greenwood CMLI was commissioned by Millfield Development Ltd to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment at the site.

Elizabeth Greenwood is a chartered member of the Landscape Institute and is considered competent to assess biodiversity net gain according to the BNG guidelines.

2.2 Aim

This report details the ecological baseline for the site and shows how the proposals will provide quantifiable net gain for biodiversity.

The site makes use of the Small Sites Metric (SSM) calculator tool which is a simplified version of DEFRA Biodiversity Net Gain Metric 4.0 appropriate for the assessment of sites of low complexity beneath the threshold of 1ha total area. This tool establishes the habitat value of the site before and after development and the resulting measurable net gain for biodiversity.

3. Baseline Conditions

3.1 Methodology

The site was originally surveyed in person on 24/08/2025 by Elizabeth Greenwood. Habitats areas were recorded and plotted on baseline habitats plan: 1335.25.1. The site and its maintenance have not changed since the date of the original survey. The photographs were retaken on 12/08/2025 by the client as evidence for the current state of the site in relation to the site at the time of the original walkover.

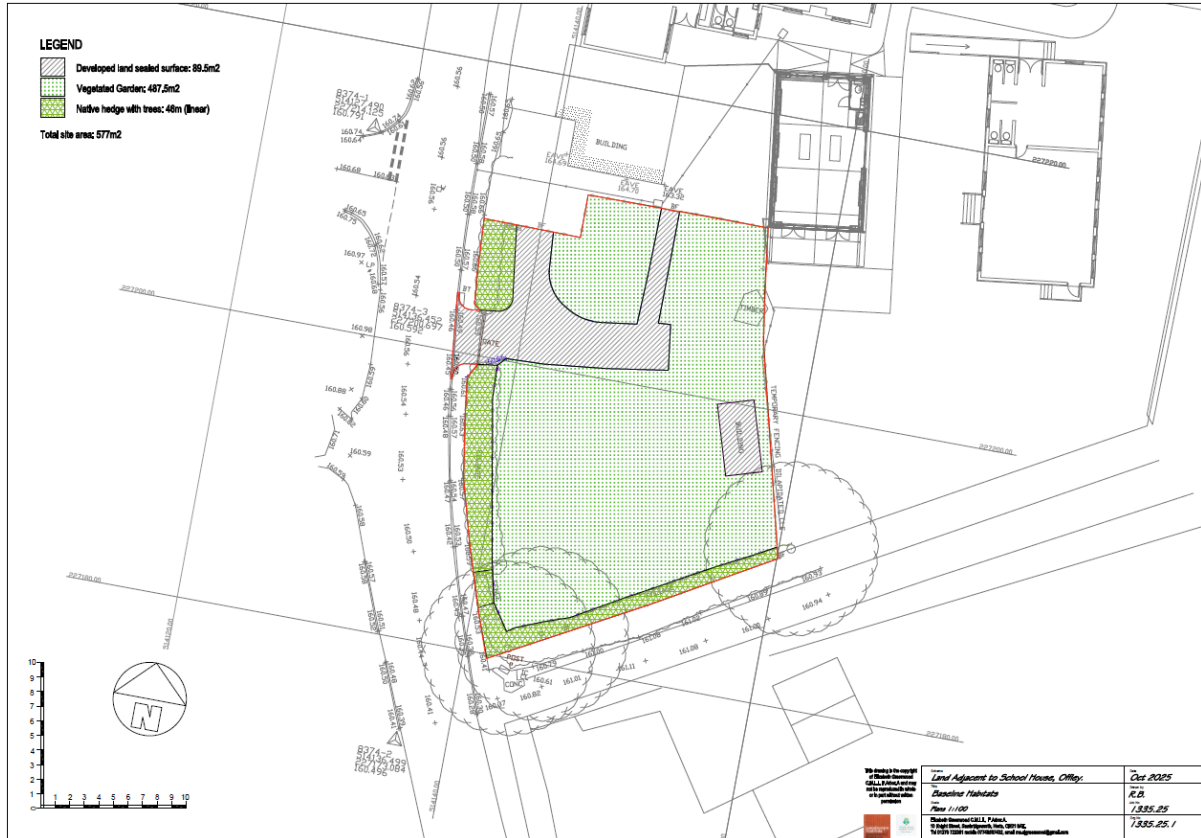
Desk-based research, using publicly available tools such as the Magic Map Application, Google Earth and policy documents by the relevant local authority were used to establish the context and status of the site and surrounding area and to look for valued habitats and landscape designations within a 500m radius of the site.

The Landscape Proposal Plan 1335.25.2 was drafted and the area habitats were measured and added to the metric calculation to determine the relative biodiversity of the pre and post development schemes.

3.2 Findings

After a thorough investigation of the site, including the identification and accurate measurement of the various habitat types and a photographic survey, the results were drafted in plan form and the BNG small site's metric was completed.

Plan 1. Baseline Habitats Plan: 1335.25.1



Above: Habitat type: Vegetated garden



Above: Habitat type: Developed land sealed surface



Above: Habitat type: Native hedge with trees

The site is a small garden area with a hard surfaced driveway and turning space, an area of lawn grass and a small concrete shed. The site was previously part of a larger private garden which has been fenced off to form a smaller land parcel. A hard surfaced path still runs towards the property to the north but is blocked midway by a closeboard fence. The development area is surrounded on the south and western side by hedgerow.

Area habitats:

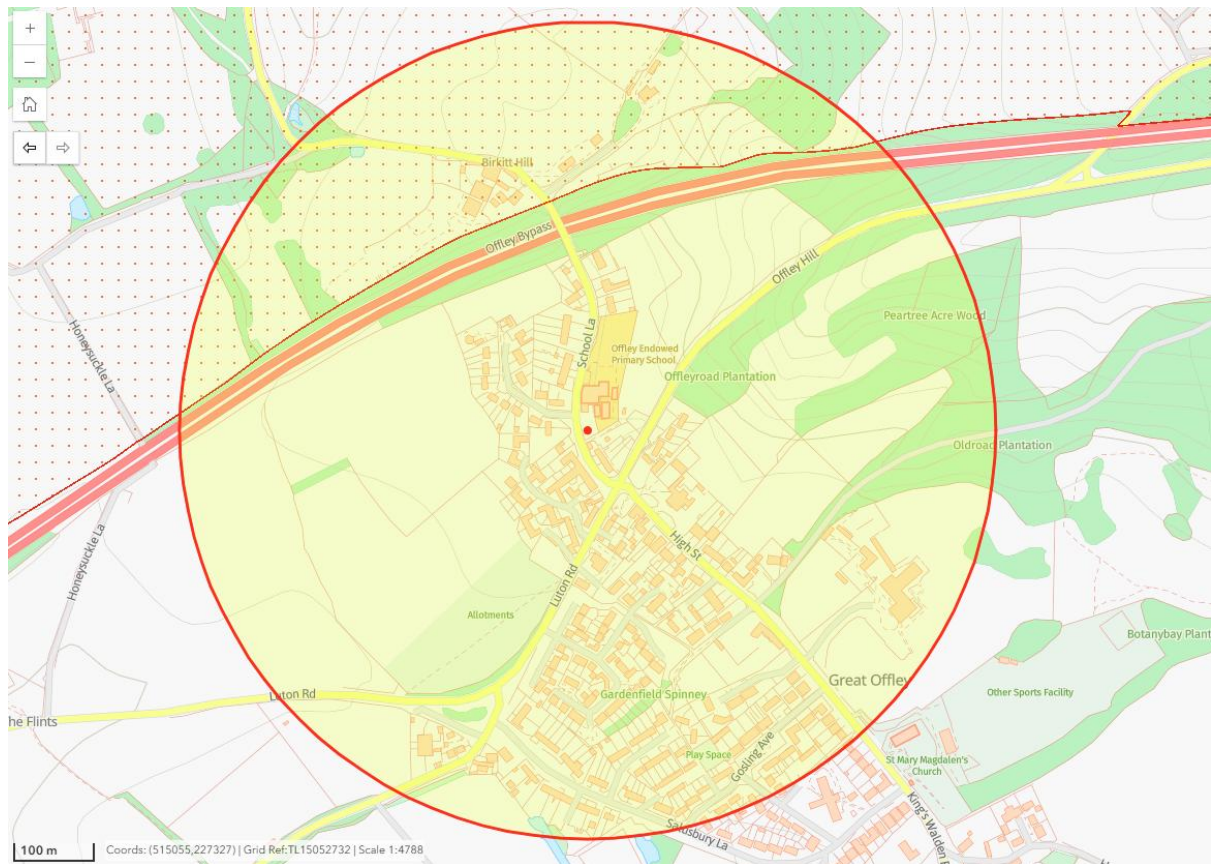
- **Vegetated garden.** Total area: 487.5m². Comprised of lawn grass surrounded by hedge on the southern and western sides and some garden plants along the fence. Previously part of a larger garden area. It has been maintained in the same way since being divided off from the larger property and exhibits the typical characteristics of a vegetated garden habitat. The lawn grass has been consistently mown and has a low species diversity.
- **Developed land; sealed surface.** Total area: 89.5m². Comprised of a driveway surfaced with tarmac and a small shed set on a concrete base.

Linear features and trees:

- **Native hedge with trees.** Total length: 46m. A mixed native hedgerow with several tree species growing up through the line of the hedge. Hawthorn-based hedge dominated by ivy in places. The trees are hawthorn and cherry.

The site contains no water courses.

Desk survey established that The Chilterns AONB is within 500m of the property at roughly 300m to the north. The Chilterns are separated from Offley and the development site by the A505 and it is highly unlikely that the development at the site would have any impact on the designated landscape



Above: Magic Map Application site check tool showing site with 500m radius. Chilterns AONB area shown in red dots.

The proposals are for a new residential building with driveway, paths, patios and area of communal garden. The Existing hedgerow will be fenced off from the private curtilage of the individual properties and will fall under a management plan which will serve the communal areas of the site such as the parking area at the front.

- 7 New trees (4 native species)
- 10m of new mixed native hedgerow
- Enhancement of native hedge with trees
- Retention of 138.5m² of vegetated garden with additional mixed planting

Plan 2: Landscape Proposals Plan: 1335.25.2

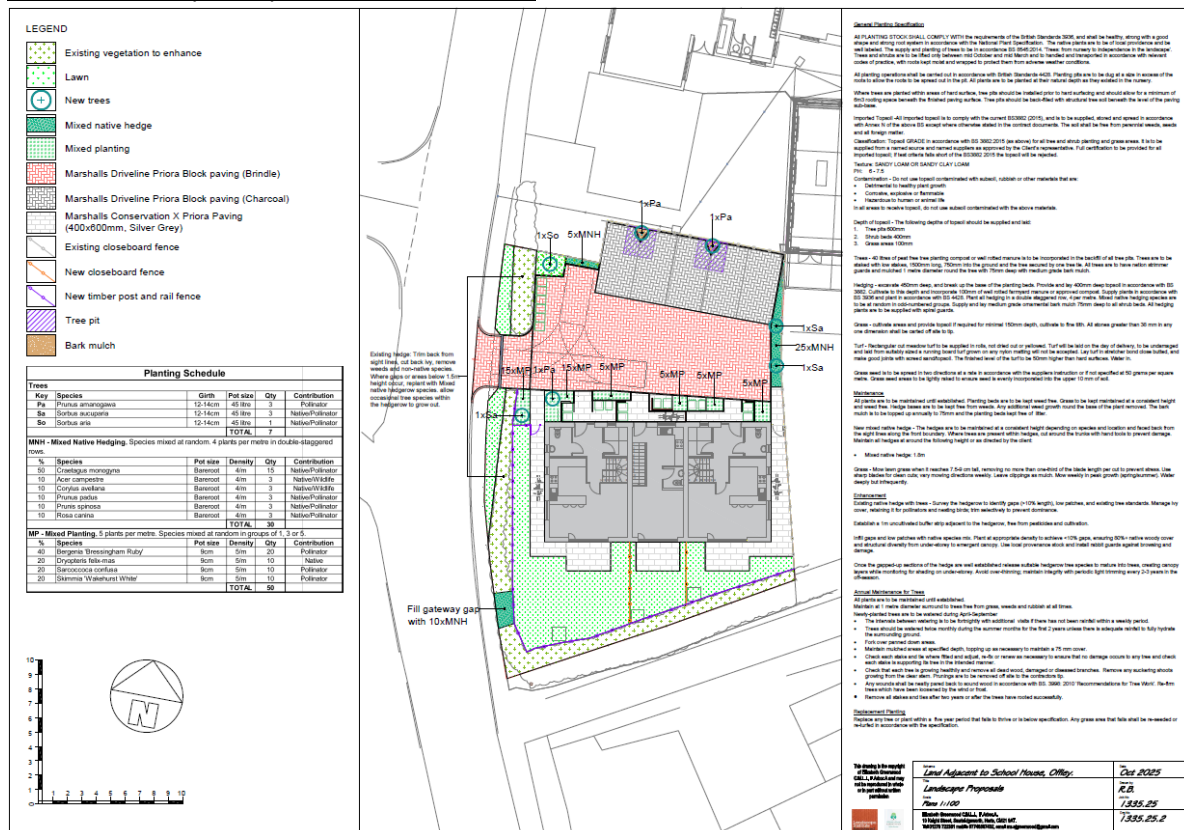


Table 1: Proposed planting schedule

Planting Schedule					
Trees					
Key	Species	Girth	Pot size	Qty	Contribution
Pa	Prunus amanogawa	12-14cm	45 litre	3	Pollinator
Sa	Sorbus aucuparia	12-14cm	45 litre	3	Native/Pollinator
So	Sorbus aria	12-14cm	45 litre	1	Native/Pollinator
			TOTAL	7	
MNH - Mixed Native Hedging. Species mixed at random. 4 plants per metre in double-staggered rows.					
%	Species	Pot size	Density	Qty	Contribution
50	Craetagus monogyna	Bareroot	4/m	15	Native/Pollinator
10	Acer campestre	Bareroot	4/m	3	Native/Wildlife
10	Corylus avellana	Bareroot	4/m	3	Native/Wildlife
10	Prunus padus	Bareroot	4/m	3	Native/Pollinator
10	Prunus spinosa	Bareroot	4/m	3	Native/Pollinator
10	Rosa canina	Bareroot	4/m	3	Native/Pollinator
			TOTAL	30	
MP - Mixed Planting. 5 plants per metre. Species mixed at random in groups of 1, 3 or 5.					
%	Species	Pot size	Density	Qty	Contribution
40	Bergenia 'Bressingham Ruby'	9cm	5/m	20	Pollinator
20	Dryopteris felix-mas	9cm	5/m	10	Native
20	Sarcococca confusa	9cm	5/m	10	Pollinator
20	Skimmia 'Wakehurst White'	9cm	5/m	10	Pollinator
			TOTAL	50	

4.1 Enhancement

The landscape proposals and management plan shall:

- Infill all gaps and low patches in the native hedgerow using a native species mix including tree species such as field maple and bird cherry.
- Existing hedgerow tree species on the western side of the hedge shall be allowed to mature into trees over the 30 year period.
- A buffer strip of 1m uncultivated growth will be established at the base of the hedge.
- Extensive ivy cover will be retained to support pollinators and nesting birds, but managed to allow space for other species in the hedgerow.

The enhancement procedures are given in detail in the management plan submitted with this report.

4.2 Monitoring and Management

The native hedgerow on the boundary and the parking area at the front of the new building will be outside the private curtilage of the new properties and will be placed under shared management.

The management of the communal space may require monitoring over a 30 year period in the form of a HMMP with a detailed 30-year management plan, which will be provided, as a condition if the proposals are deemed acceptable.

5. Results

The proposed development was identified to provide an addition of +0.0213 (+22.77%) new habitat units and +0.2440 new hedgerow units (+57.66%).

The development is found to provide a significant increase to the biodiversity value of the site and passes the requirements for biodiversity net gain by a large margin.

Site Name		Land Adjacent to School House, School Lane, Offley	
Sheet Name		Headline Results	
Headline Results			
Headline		BNG Targets Met ✓	
Trading Rules		Trading Rules Satisfied ✓	
Next steps		Check for input errors/rule breaks present in the metric ⚠	
Baseline Units	Habitat units	0.0935	
	Hedgerow units	0.4232	
	Watercourse units	Zero Units Baseline	
Post-development Units	Habitat units	0.1148	
	Hedgerow units	0.6672	
	Watercourse units	0.0000	
Total net unit change	Habitat units	0.0213	✓
	Hedgerow units	0.2440	✓
	Watercourse units	0.0000	
Total net % change	Habitat units	22.77%	✓
	Hedgerow units	57.66%	✓
	Watercourse units	% target not appropriate	
Habitats units required to meet target		0.0000	
Hedgerow units required to meet target		0.0000	
Watercourse units required to meet target		0.0000	

Above: Headline results from Small Sites Metric

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October 2025.

6. References

Natural England (2023). Small Sites Metric (Biodiversity Metric 4.0). Natural England Joint Publication JP040. Available online at:

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