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Report prepared for: Leon Cassidy and Hannah Cassidy

For the Site of: Holborn Farmhouse, Therfield, Herts, SG8 9RH

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Ecological reports are limited in shelf life, usually 12 to 18 months for baseline surveys and for BNG as and when plans change. Information is believed to be accurate at the time of the survey; recommendations are made without bias based on good practice guidelines within the industry. However, species presence and ecological parameters can change over time.

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Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)/Biological Impact Assessment (BIA)

0.0 Non-Technical Summary

0.1 Background

The client commissioned Cherryfield Ecology to undertake a Biodiversity Net gain (BNG)/Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA) for the site of Holborn Farmhouse, Therfield, Herts, SG8 9RH, to determine the biological impact of the proposed development.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach to development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than it was before. The process relies on the mitigation hierarchy, which sets out that everything possible must be done to firstly avoid, secondly, minimise and thirdly restore and rehabilitate losses of biodiversity on site.

This report uses the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (DEFRA 2024), to quantify the biodiversity baseline for the site and calculate the post-development biodiversity unit for the proposed scheme following the best practice guidelines as set down by CIRIA (2019).

0.2 Results and Findings

A summary of the change in Biodiversity Net Gain on site is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Change in Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on site

BIA Units	Total Net Unit Change	Total Net % change	Trading Rules Met?
Habitat Units	+0.07	+171.12%	Yes
Hedgerow Units	n/a	n/a	n/a
River Units	n/a	n/a	n/a

A 10% increase for each unit type present is required and the trading rules for each habitat type must be met to meet the minimum statutory requirement.

Due to the conversion of the hardstanding yard into vegetated garden, the proposed development will result in a **+171.12% net gain** in Habitat Units, thereby meeting the requirements.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Aim

The client, Leon Cassidy and Hannah Cassidy, has commissioned Cherryfield Ecology to undertake a BNG/BIA for the site of Holborn Farmhouse, Therfield, Herts, SG8 9RH.

The aim of this report is to determine the Biodiversity Net Gain for the proposed scheme and, where necessary, make recommendations for increasing net gain in order to comply with the statutory requirements.

1.2 Site Information

The site consists of a barn complex and hardstanding, with small amounts of introduced shrub and a single small tree. The proposed development includes the conversion of the existing barn (B1) into one 5-bed dwelling including extensions, associated landscaping and parking following demolition of existing stable extension, car port and lean-to structure.

1.3 Study Area

The site is 0.13 Ha in size. The national grid coordinates for the center of the site are TL 34712 36154.

1.4 Suitably Qualified Ecologist

This report has been completed by Heather Stuckey and checked by Martin O'Connor. Heather and Martin both meet the criteria for a suitably qualified Ecologist as defined in BS 8683:2021.

2.0 Methods

Biodiversity Net Gain is assessed through the use of biodiversity calculators to assess the biodiversity value of habitats pre- and post-development based on habitat type, distinctiveness and condition.

A biodiversity index is derived from the baseline and the proposed development and net gain is achieved where an increase in value is delivered either on-site (or through offsite compensation), where lower value habitat is replaced with one of higher value.

This report uses the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (DEFRA 2024), to quantify the biodiversity baseline for the site and calculate the post-development biodiversity unit for the proposed scheme following the best practice guidelines as set down by CIRIA (2019).

2.2 Limitations

It is important to note that a scheme-wide biodiversity net gain or no net loss cannot be achieved for the scheme as a whole if there are negative impacts on irreplaceable habitats.

Any compensation offered to address impacts on irreplaceable habitats should be agreed directly with Natural England (NE). The baseline habitat which is identified for such compensation and the biodiversity units resulting from this compensation should also be excluded from biodiversity unit calculations.

Following Defra guidance, impacts on irreplaceable habitats and their compensation have been excluded from this biodiversity unit calculation.

Biodiversity Impact Assessment only deals with habitat and as such this report does not cover any of the requirements of the proposed development arising from potential impacts on protected species and designated sites.

3.0 Strategic Significance

Based on MAGIC, the following statutory sites and Natural England Protected Species (NEPS) have been located within the 2km search area (Figure 1).

Table 2: MAGiC search results

Receptor	Distance and Direction to Nearest (m/km)	Description
Statutory sites		None within search area
Granted protected species licenses	~339m NE	2009-1020 - Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatu</i>
	~1355m NW	2010-2054 - Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatu</i>
Priority habitat	On site	Traditional orchard
	~576m E	Deciduous woodland
	~1637m SW	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland
	~10m W	Chalk rivers - high certainty
	~1030 SW	Chak rivers - low certainty
	~1037m WNW	Good quality semi improved grassland

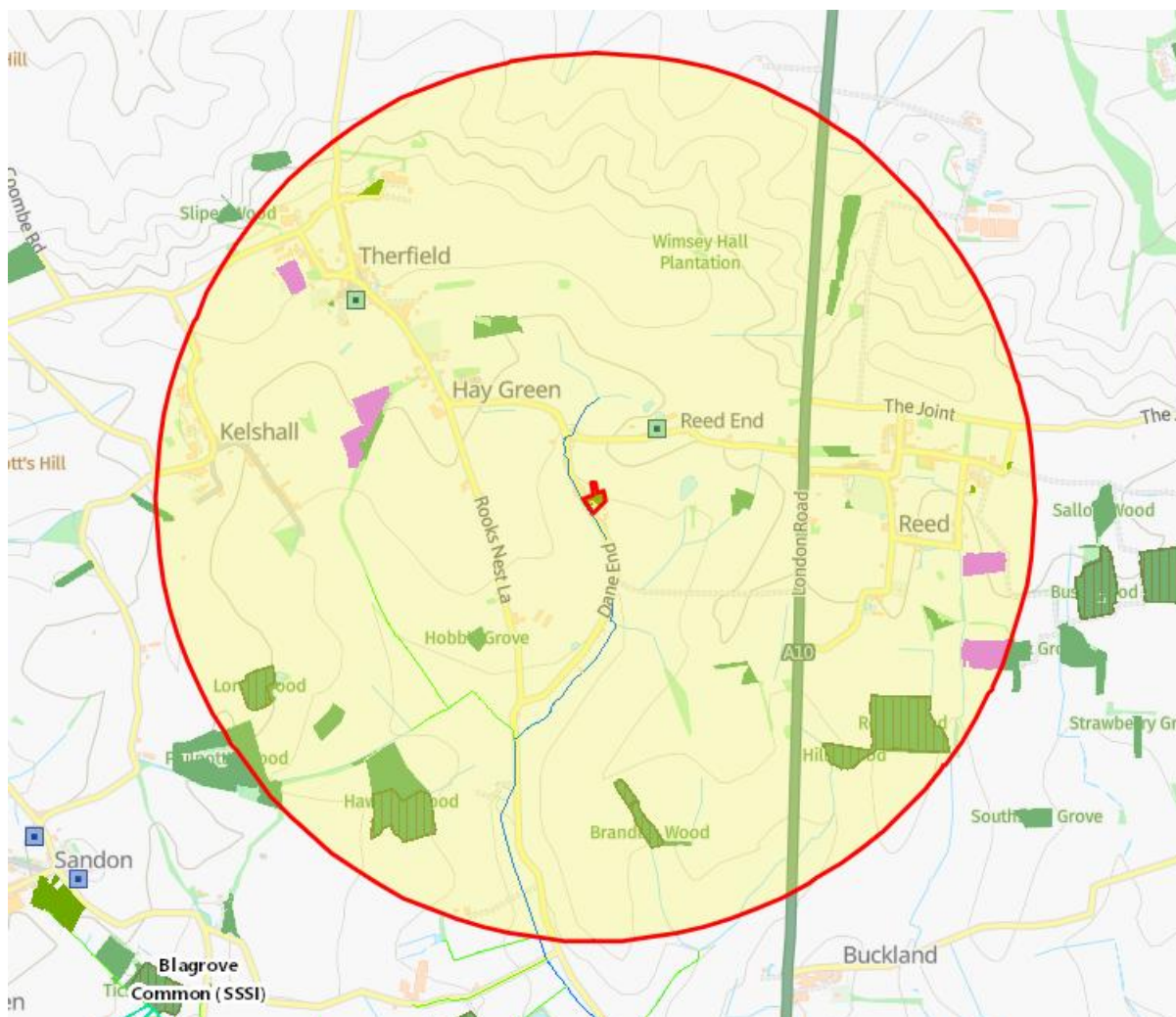


Figure 1: MAGiC

Based on Hertfordshire Ecological Network Mapping, the site falls within an orange zone. These areas contain ‘no mapped existing habitats of any significance. Therefore, in the context of the ecological networks dataset, these areas are suitable for appropriate development’. Therefore, the baseline habitats on site have been assigned ‘low’ strategic significance.

However, ‘these areas also form the potential for new habitat corridors to be created to improve ecological network integrity’, therefore, ‘high’ strategic significance will be applied to any relevant created habitats on site.

4.0 Baseline Units

The UK Hab survey map used to assess the baseline is provided in Figure 2. Please refer to the Ecological Appraisal (Cherryfield Ecology, 2025) for full site details and to the separate Excel sheet for full condition assessments.

The following table summarises the baseline habitat value on-site. There are no linear or watercourse features present.

Table 3: Baseline Habitat Value

Baseline Units	Total Net Unit
Habitat Units	0.04
Hedgerow Units	n/a
River Units	n/a



Figure 2: Baseline Habitats Site Plan

5.0 Post-Development Units

Proposed site plans “272_Proposed Site Plan-P1” were provided by the Client and used to calculate the Biodiversity Units post-development.

The following table summarises the post development habitat value on-site. There are no linear or watercourse features present.

Table 4: Post Development Habitat Value

Post Development Units	Total Net Unit
Habitat Units	0.11
Hedgerow Units	n/a
River Units	n/a



Figure 3: Proposed Habitats Site Plan

6.0 Results

Table 5: Change in Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on site

BIA Units	Total Net Unit Change	Total Net % change	Trading Rules Met?
Habitat Units	+0.07	+171.12%	Yes
Hedgerow Units	n/a	n/a	n/a
River Units	n/a	n/a	n/a

6.1 Discussion

The mitigation hierarchy is the cornerstone of achieving net gain. It is a sequence of mitigation actions as described in Table 6.

Table 6: Mitigation hierarchy

Stage	In practice
Avoidance	This first stage is to avoid harm to biodiversity, for example locating to an alternative site. It is the most important stage and can ease the consent process, whereas missing this stage can lead to objections and refusal of permission to the development.
Minimise	If avoiding all adverse impacts is not possible, action is taken to minimize these effects.
Compensation	Addresses residual adverse effects, only considered after all possibilities for avoidance and minimising the effects have been implemented. Offsetting is a form of compensation that trades losses of biodiversity in one location with measurable gains in another. Offsetting losses of biodiversity with gains elsewhere can be within or outside of the development footprint.

Table 7 outlines how the mitigation hierarchy has been applied to this site.

Table 7: Application of the mitigation hierarchy

Hierarchy Level	Action	Habitat on site
Avoidance	Avoid	There are no priority habitats on site that would make avoidance necessary.
Minimise	Retain	No habitats are to be retained, however, the existing grass and introduced shrub beds will be converted into vegetated garden. A small cherry tree is located just beyond the eastern boundary of the site, along the roadside. This will be retained and safeguarded from the development following advice from an arboriculturist.
	Enhance	As the site consists solely of residential land, no habitats can be enhanced.
Compensation	On-site creation	Amendments will be made to the existing building, and new areas of vegetated garden will be created.
	Off-site creation	N/A

7.0 Conclusion

A 10% increase for each unit type present is required and the trading rules for each habitat type must be met to meet the minimum statutory requirement.

Due to the conversion of the hardstanding yard into vegetated garden, the proposed development will result in a **+171.12% net gain** in Habitat Units, thereby meeting the requirements.

8.0 References

Cherryfield Ecology (2025), Ecological Appraisal Report

CIRIA (2020), Biodiversity Net Gain: good practice principles for development.

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