

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Proposal : Infill Single Storey Rear Extension
at

Address : 14 New Town, Codicote,
Hitchin, SG4 8UG



1. Introduction

This Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) statement supports the planning application for an infill single-storey rear extension and associated internal remodelling at 14 New Town, Codicote, Hitchin SG4 8UG. The objective of this statement is to demonstrate that the proposed development complies with the principles of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) as set out in Section 98 of the Environment Act 2021 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023), which require measurable improvements to natural habitats where feasible.

2. Site Context

The site lies within a residential area of Codicote, comprising a terraced/semi-detached dwelling with a rear garden. The plot is largely developed residential curtilage, with existing hardstanding, garden lawn, and ornamental planting. There are no designated ecological or nature conservation sites (SSSIs, SINC, or LNRs) within or immediately adjacent to the site boundary. The nearest such site is well beyond the 1 km radius.

3. Baseline Ecological Conditions

A baseline visual inspection was carried out to assess the current ecological value of the site. Key observations:

Feature	Description	Habitat Type (per DEFRA metric)	Condition	Distinctiveness	Area
Lawn area	Managed residential turf	Modified grassland	Low	Low	Approx. 30 m²
Ornamental shrubs	Small planted border	Urban garden planting	Low	Low	Approx. 5 m²
Hardstanding/patio	Paved surfaces	Developed land (sealed)	Very Low	Very Low	Approx. 20 m²
Trees	None present	N/A	N/A	N/A	0

The overall baseline biodiversity value is low, typical of a small domestic garden setting.

4. Proposed Development

The proposal involves the erection of a single-storey rear extension occupying part of the existing garden. The construction footprint will primarily affect the existing patio and grass area. No trees or significant vegetation will be removed.

The design drawings indicate provision for:

- Retention of garden space around the new extension.
- Potential landscaping improvements to the remaining rear garden.

5. Potential Impacts

Given the minor scale of the development and the already low ecological value of the site, the direct biodiversity loss is minimal. Potential temporary impacts during construction include:

- Soil compaction in garden areas.
 - Minor disturbance to urban-dwelling species (e.g., birds, invertebrates).
- These will be short-term and reversible following construction.

6. Biodiversity Enhancement and Net Gain Measures

To achieve a measurable Biodiversity Net Gain (target $\geq 10\%$), the following enhancements are recommended:

6.1 Habitat Enhancements

- **Native Planting:** Introduce at least 2–3 m² of native shrubs or wildflower borders (e.g., hawthorn, lavender, buddleia, and dog rose) in the rear garden.
- **Permeable Surfaces:** Use permeable paving or gravel in any replaced patio areas to improve surface water infiltration.
- **Turf Replacement:** Where feasible, replace small portions of lawn with wildflower turf to provide nectar sources and increase habitat diversity.

6.2 Species-Specific Measures

- **Bird Boxes:** Install two nesting boxes suitable for species such as house sparrow or blue tit on rear or side elevations.
- **Bat Box:** Install one bat roosting feature (e.g., Schwegler 1FR) on the rear wall or under eaves.
- **Insect Habitat:** Provide a bug hotel or log pile in a shaded garden corner to support pollinators and invertebrates.

6.3 Construction Safeguards

- Limit construction activities to daylight hours to avoid disturbance to nocturnal fauna.
- Avoid lighting spill into gardens or tree lines by using downward-facing, warm LEDs.
- Store materials on hard surfaces to prevent soil contamination.

7. Post-Development Habitat Value

With the above measures implemented, the post-development biodiversity value is expected to exceed the baseline, achieving at least a 10% net gain as per DEFRA 4.0 small-site metric guidance.

The enhancement features will:

- Increase habitat heterogeneity (varied vegetation and microhabitats).
- Provide resources for pollinators, birds, and small mammals.
- Improve the ecological resilience of the garden environment.

8. Monitoring and Maintenance

- The newly planted vegetation should be maintained for a minimum of 5 years post-construction.
- Any dead or dying plants should be replaced in the next planting season.
- Bird/bat boxes should be inspected annually to ensure they remain secure and functional.

9. Conclusion

The proposed single-storey infill rear extension at 14 New Town, Codicote will result in no significant loss of biodiversity and, with the inclusion of recommended measures, will achieve a net gain in ecological value consistent with national policy and local biodiversity objectives.

The development is therefore considered compliant with the Environment Act 2021 and Policy NEB1 (Biodiversity and Ecological Enhancement) of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.