

Report for: James Northern, D Northern & Sons

Commissioned by: Tom Donovan

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment



Proposed Site Plan

Slip End Farm, Slip End, Ashwell, SG7 6SL

Report No: 3172/4

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SUMMARY

On the instructions of Tom Donovan on behalf of James Northern, D Northern & Sons, MS Ecology carried out a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment for the site at Slip End, Ashwell, SG7 6SG.

Proposals for the site include nine houses comprising a combination of conversion and new build.

The proposed development will result in a **15.24%** BNG loss in Habitat Area Units with the trading rules not satisfied.

This is due to a slight increase in developed land area and subsequent decrease in vegetated area on site.

No baseline habitats are to be retained or enhanced, however, these are of low ecological value, consisting of developed land and poor modified grassland, and will be replaced with habitats within the same distinctiveness band post development (residential houses and gardens).

To achieve the required 10% net gain on site, a further 0.13 Habitat Units are needed. To meet the trading rules, this can be of any habitat type and distinctiveness level.

Based on the proposals, it will not be possible to achieve a gain on site. Therefore, the units will be sourced off-site, through a third-party habitat bank.

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	5
1.1	Instructions and Objectives	5
2	Method.....	6
2.1	BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN.....	6
2.1.1	Data Sources.....	6
2.2	Surveyor Information	6
2.3	Limitations.....	6
3	Results.....	7
3.1	Site Location and Settings	7
3.2	Desk Study.....	8
3.2.1	Magic.....	8
3.3	Strategic Significance	8
3.4	BNG Assessment.....	10
3.4.1	Baseline Units.....	10
3.4.2	Post-Development Units	11
4	Discussion & Conclusion	12
4.1	Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	12

TABLES

Table 3.1	Baseline Area Units	10
Table 3.2	Post-development Area Units	11

FIGURES

Figure 3-1	Location of proposed development area with red boundary.	7
Figure 3-2	MAGIC Map.....	8
Figure 3-3	Mapped measures with strategic significance (Hertfordshire LNRS).....	9
Figure 3-4	Baseline Habitat Map	10
Figure 3-5	Post Development Habitats	11

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Title:	Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Site Slip End Farm, Slip End, Ashwell, SG7 6SG
The Client:	James Northern, D Northern & Sons

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Report Number 3172/4	Status FINAL	Date of issue 21/06/23
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Reviewed by		
Page no	Page 4 of 12	

Biological Records of species identified during this survey, the date, their location and a brief description of the circumstances of their identification, may be passed on to Biological Records Centres, local wildlife groups, the Wildlife Trust, Natural England and other interested parties unless written instructions not to do so are received within 30 days of receipt of this report.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INSTRUCTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

On the instructions of Tom Donovan on behalf of James Northern, D Northern & Sons, MS Ecology carried out a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment for the site at Slip End, Ashwell, SG7 6SG.

Proposals for the site include nine houses comprising a combination of conversion and new build.

The aim of this report is to determine the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for the proposed development and, where necessary, provide recommendations for increasing net gain.

BNG is an approach to developments that aims to measurably improve the natural environment from its previous state. The mitigation hierarchy is followed to first avoid the loss of biodiverse habitats, secondly to enhance and create biodiverse habitats on site and thirdly to seek off-site compensation as a last resort.

2 METHOD

2.1 BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

This report uses the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (DEFRA, 2023) to make the calculations for the baseline biodiversity units and the post-development biodiversity units, to quantify the net gain of the development.

Supporting documentation for the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (listed below) is used and adhered to:

- Statutory biodiversity metric: draft user guide
- Statutory biodiversity metric condition assessments

2.1.1 DATA SOURCES

QGIS Open-Source software and Google Earth are used to measure and calculate the habitat areas and lengths.

A site walkover was carried out on 31/10/2025 to determine the baseline habitats and assess the potential for protected species and other wildlife on site.

The Ecological Impact Assessment (Morgan & Stuckey, Ecological Consultants, 2024) was used to determine the baseline habitats.

Proposed Site Plan, Drawing No. P03 (Red Shed Design, 2025) used to determine the post-development habitats.

2.2 SURVEYOR INFORMATION

This report and the BNG calculation, has been carried out by Dr Clifford Stuckey BSc (Hons), PHD, CEnv, MCEEIM.

2.3 LIMITATIONS

Ecological surveys are limited by factors which affect the presence of plants and animals such as the time of year, migration patterns and behaviour and the ecological survey of this site has not produced a complete list of plants and animals. Nevertheless, the results of the ecological survey allow evaluation of nature conservation value, assessment of the significance of potential impacts that may arise from the proposals and consideration of appropriate mitigation measures.

3 RESULTS

3.1 SITE LOCATION AND SETTINGS

The site is centred on OS NGR TL 28306 36697, post code SG7 6SG, in Ashwell, Hertfordshire.

The site is surrounded by agricultural land and arable fields on all sides, with the A505 road running close to the south-eastern boundary of the proposed development site.

Small copses and larger areas of woodland are found throughout the vicinity of the site, with the closest approx. 120m SW from the development area.

A ditch runs approx. 150m S from the site, otherwise there are no known water bodies within 2km of the site.

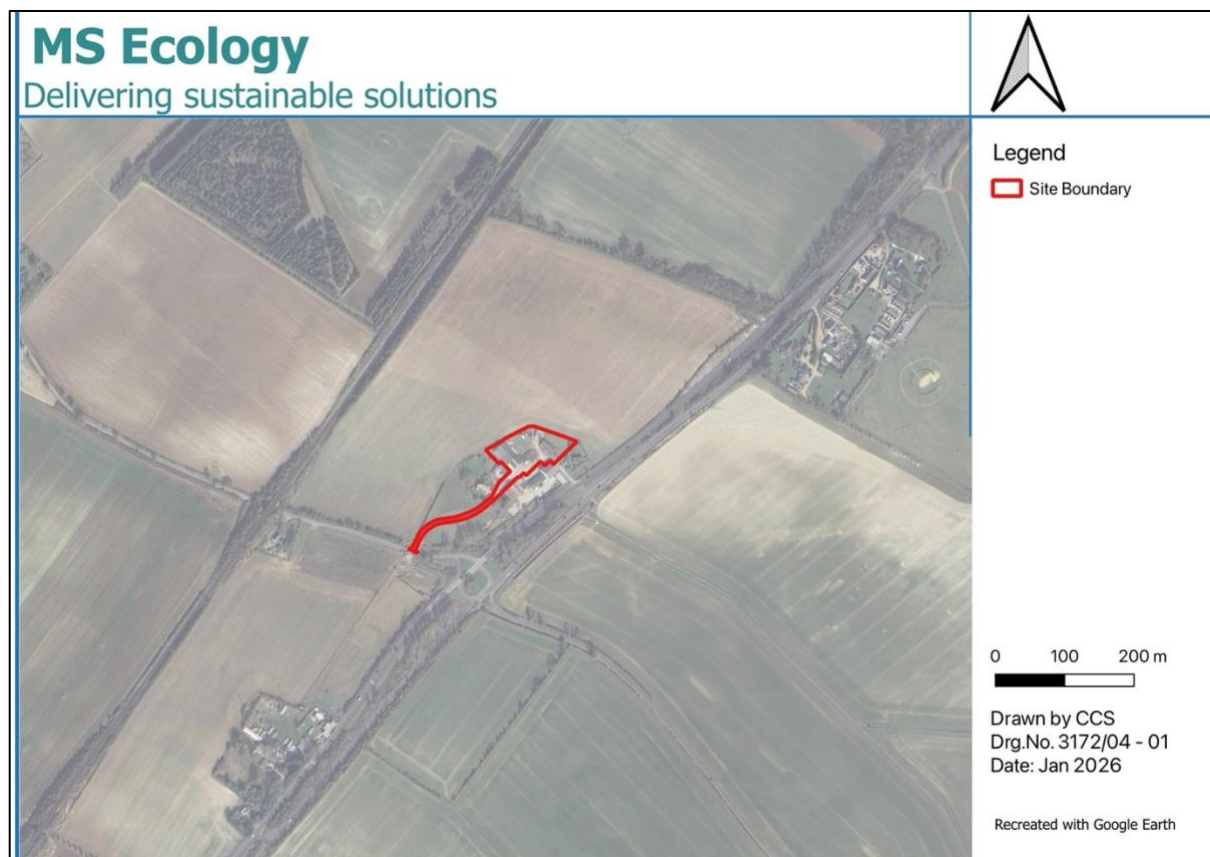


Figure 3-1 Location of proposed development area with red boundary.

3.2 DESK STUDY

3.2.1 MAGIC

Interrogation of the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) showed that the site falls into the SSSI Impact Risk Zone for three SSSI's around the site:

- Ashwell Springs
- Therfield Heath
- Blagrove Common

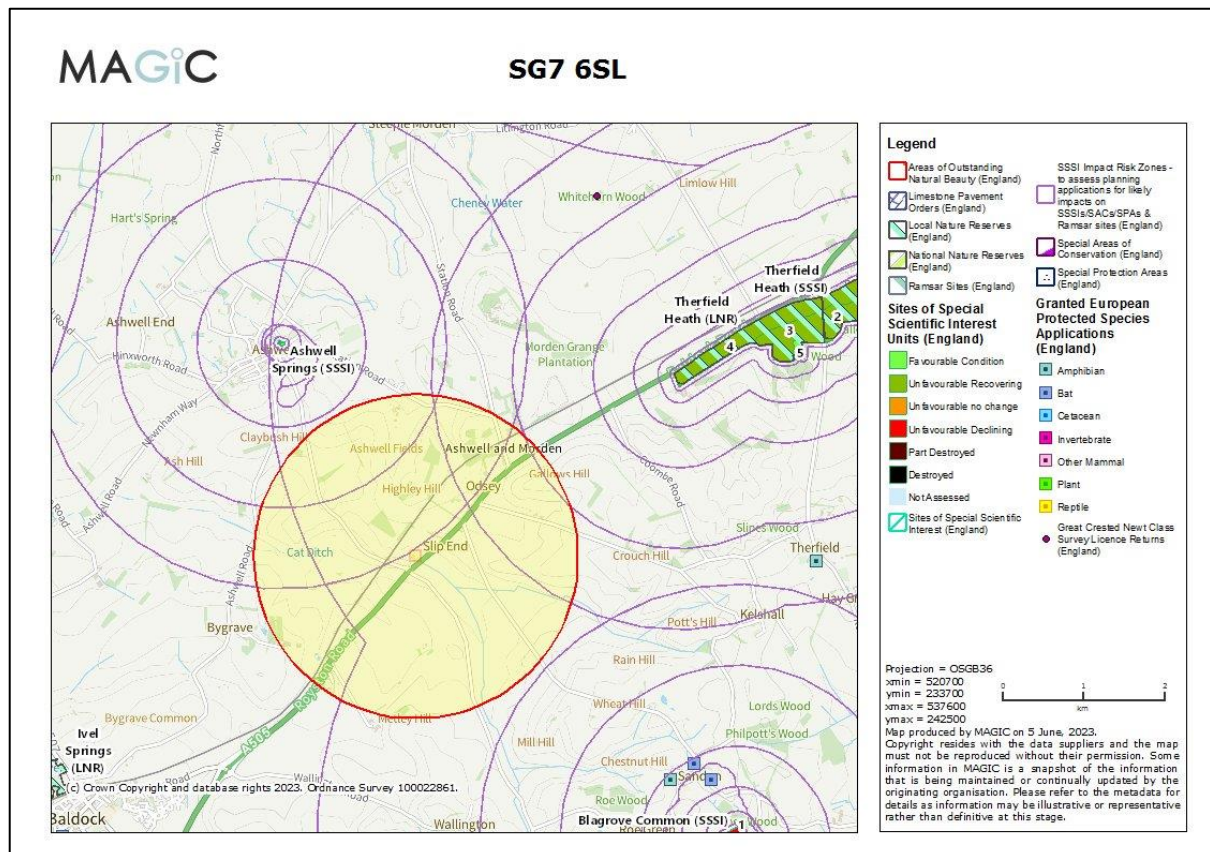


Figure 3-2 MAGIC Map

3.3 STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

Based on the Hertfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (Hertfordshire Nature Recovery Partnership – HNRP), the site falls near to an APIB (Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity) along the A505, and the surrounding habitat is designated as an ACIB (Area that Could become of Particular Importance for Biodiversity). Habitat measures for this land include targets for woodland and scrub, grassland and heathland and measures for targeted species. The bulk of the site itself (excluding the existing access road) does not fall within any mapped measures; therefore, no strategic significance will apply.



Figure 3-3 Mapped measures with strategic significance (Hertfordshire LNRS)

3.4 BNG ASSESSMENT

3.4.1 BASELINE UNITS

The site is situated within a farmyard, with a large modern grain store which is currently disused (B1), disused pigsties (B2), disused cattle shed (B3) and an open pole barn (B4). The site also contains hardstanding, regularly mown and parked upon grassland and occasional areas of tall ruderal (as part of the grassland).

The pre-development habitats on site were entered into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric and the results are summarised below.

Table 3.1 Baseline Area Units

UKHab Classification	Condition	Area (ha)	Units
Developed Land; Sealed Surface	N/A	0.404	0.00
Modified Grassland	Poor	0.263	0.53
Total area units			0.53

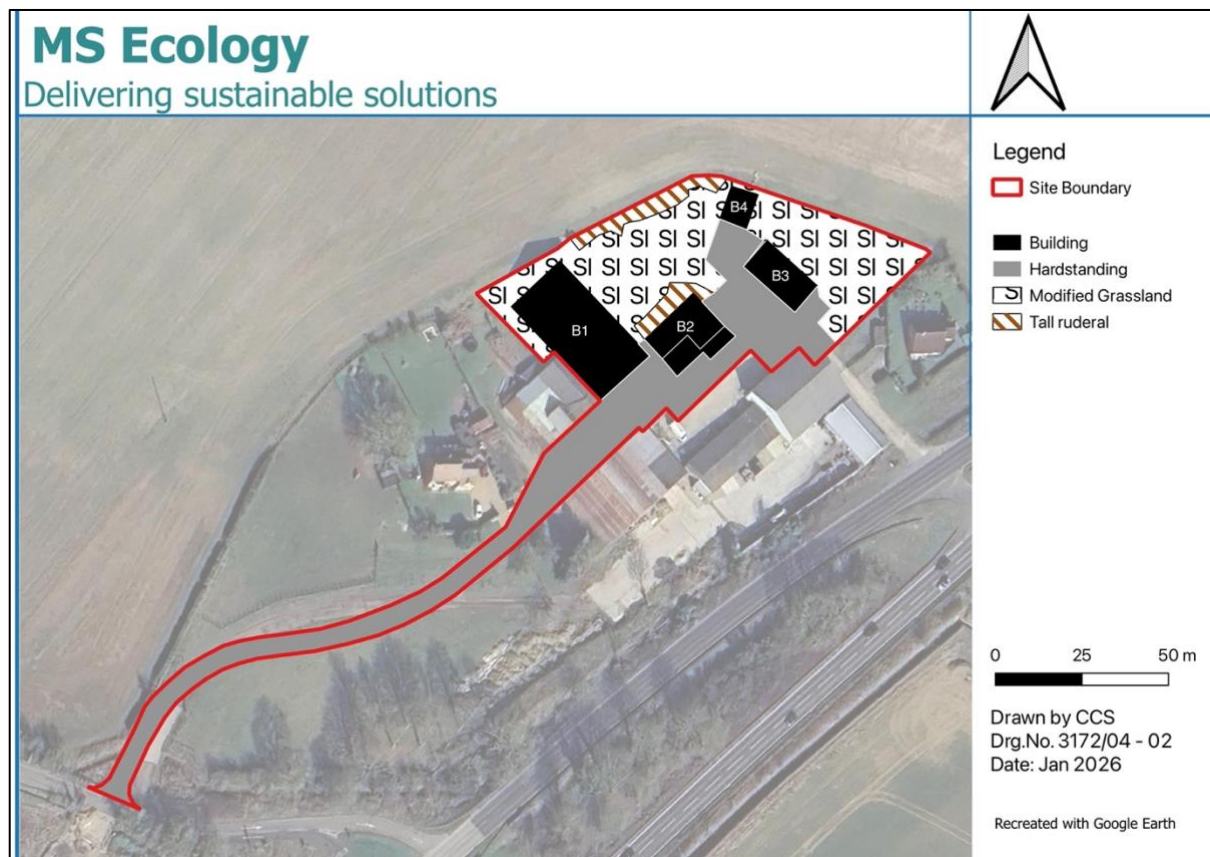


Figure 3-4 Baseline Habitat Map

3.4.2 POST-DEVELOPMENT UNITS

The post-development habitats proposed for the site were entered into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric and the results are summarised below.

Table 3.2 Post-development Area Units

UKHab Classification	Condition	Area (ha)	Units
Developed Land; Sealed Surface	N/A	0.436	0.00
Vegetated Garden	N/A	0.209	0.40
Introduced Shrub	N/A	0.022	0.04
Total area units			0.44

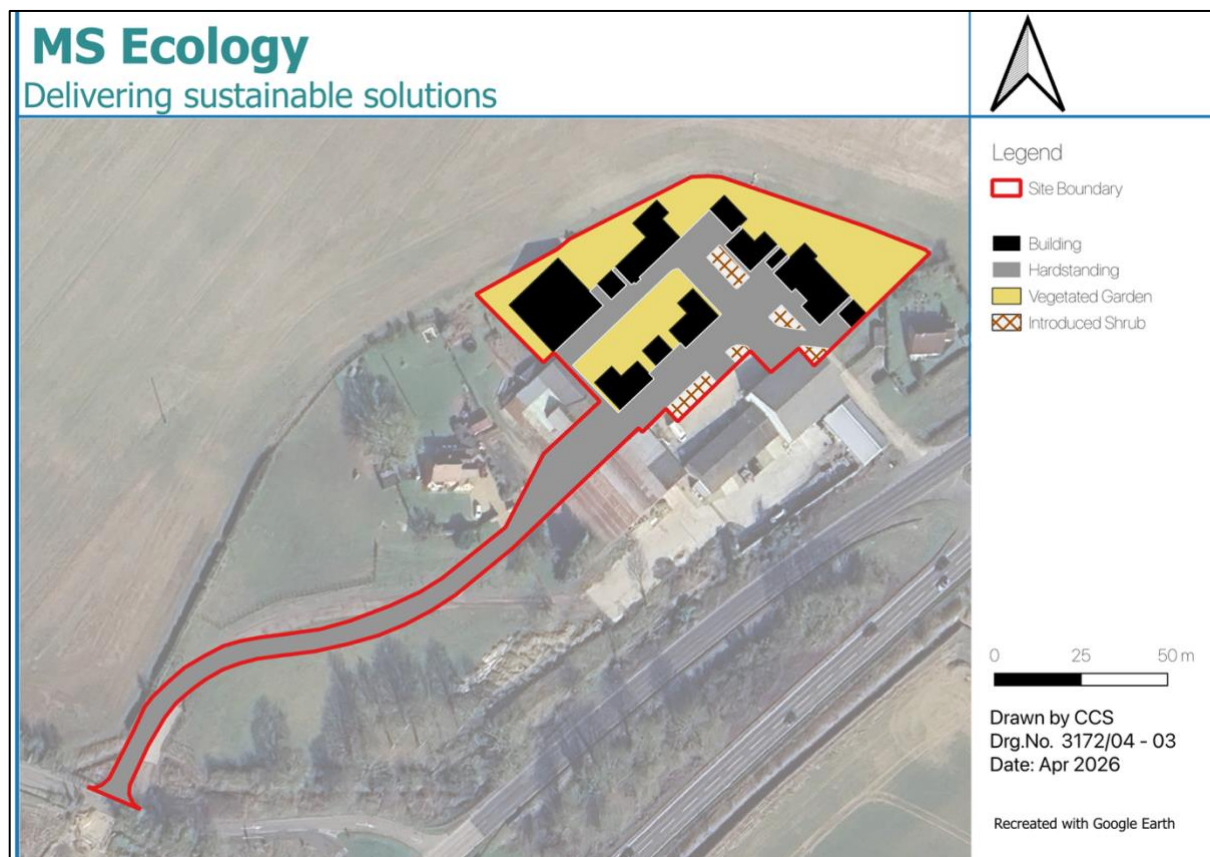


Figure 3-5 Post Development Habitats

4 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

4.1 BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN (BNG)

The proposed development will result in a **15.24%** BNG loss in Habitat Area Units with the trading rules not satisfied.

This is due to a slight increase in developed land area and subsequent decrease in vegetated area on site.

No baseline habitats are to be retained or enhanced, however, these are of low ecological value, consisting of developed land and poor modified grassland, and will be replaced with habitats within the same distinctiveness band post development (residential houses and gardens).

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