



Project: 24_BNG_11_03
Site: The Generator Building,
Client: James Gran



Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

The Generator Building, Hexton Manor, Hexton, Hitchin, Hertfordshire
SG5 3JH
DEFRA Metric - Completed December 2024

ROAVR Group

Project Number:	24_BNG_11_03
Report Type:	Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment
Site Address:	The Generator Building, Hexton Manor, Hexton, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 3JH

Role:	Name:	Position:	Date:
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1. Summary

ROAVR was appointed by James Gran to undertake an appraisal of The Generator Building, Hexton Manor in order to map and assess habitats on site to support a BNG assessment based upon data from a previous Ecological appraisal.

It is proposed to redevelop the site with the extension and conversion of the existing building into a three-bedroom dwelling

Following a recent UK Habitat (UKHab) survey and Preliminary Ecology Assessment (PEA) provided in client documents (Ecological Appraisal 2024 - The Generator Building) and the clients site plans, a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment was conducted for the The Generator Building project. This assessment evaluated biodiversity units on site to ensure that post-development biodiversity levels would align with or exceed current baseline values.

The on-site baseline biodiversity is calculated at 2.04 habitat units, 0.02 hedgerow present and no watercourse units present on site. After development, projections indicate a slight reduction to 1.97 habitat units, resulting in a net loss of -0.07 habitat units, or a 3.39% decrease. The hedgerow achieves a net gain of 60.31% and watercourse units remain at zero, demonstrating that watercourse features are unaffected by the development.

2. Scope

This report contains the details of a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment carried out by ROAVR Group for The Generator Building, situated by Hexton Manor, Hexton. The Generator Building will hereafter be referred to as “the site”.

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Please note this report does not purport to provide definitive legal advice. The Summary contains an overview of key findings and conclusions. However, no reliance should be placed on the Executive Summary until the whole of the report has been read. Other sections of the report may contain information which puts into context the findings noted within the Summary.

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Plans provided by client as of 12/12/24
The Generator Building, Hexton Manor - Site and Location Plan.pdf
The Generator Building Hexton Manor - Proposed Site Plan.pdf
The Generator Building Hexton Manor - Proposed Plans and Elevations.pdf
Ecological Appraisal 2024 - The Generator Building.pdf

3. Legislative Overview

3.1 National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and accompanying Technical Guidance and NPPG supersede all Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and remaining Planning Policy Guidance (PPGs).

3.2 Environment Act (2021) & Biodiversity Net Gain

The Environment Act (2021) introduces mandatory biodiversity net gain (BNG) to ensure that new developments enhance biodiversity and help deliver thriving natural spaces for communities. This follows the change from a 'No Net Loss' to 'Net Gains' within the National Planning Policy Framework. The Environment Act entered force in January 2024 concerning Biodiversity Net Gain.

3.3 Local Policy

North Hertfordshire District Council as the local planning authority has policies to encourage developments to incorporate net gain including:

- Policy SP12 - Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Landscape

<https://north-herts.oc2.uk/document/11/101#d315>

4. Assessment of The Proposed Development

A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment was undertaken using Natural England's 'Statutory Biodiversity Metric ' under the guidance of the 'Statutory Biodiversity Metric - User Guide' (Natural England, 2024).

The site currently comprises an area of developed land and native hedging.

The PEA (Ecological Appraisal 2024) concludes:

The proposed development involves the extension and conversion of the site into a three-bedroom dwelling. The site comprises one detached outbuilding, amenity grassland, and urban trees. No protected species or evidence of protected species were identified during the ecological survey.

The potential for badgers on the site is considered negligible due to the absence of suitable habitat and limited connectivity to more favorable environments. Similarly, the site offers low potential for reptiles and Great Crested Newts (GCN), attributed to the limited suitable habitat available and its proximity to a pond that could support GCN populations. The outbuilding (B1) on the site provides low

potential for roosting bats, as it has few roosting features and access points.

However, the site does include confirmed evidence of breeding birds, with a swallow's nest and owl pellets identified within the building. Other protected species are unlikely to be present due to the lack of suitable habitat. Recommendations for additional surveys and assessments are detailed in section 4.3 of the appraisal report previously conducted.

4.1 Natural England Metric

The scheme provides an opportunity for some areas of enhancement as listed below.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

4.2 The on-site baseline biodiversity is calculated at 2.08 habitat units, with 0.01 hedgerow units and no watercourse units present.

4.3 After development, projections indicate a slight reduction to 1.97 habitat units, resulting in a net loss of -0.07 habitat units, or a 3.39% decrease. The hedgerow increases to 0.02 units, and watercourse units remain at zero. These features are unaffected by the development.

4.4 No offsite calculations were included in the assessment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4.5 Grassland Enhancement: South of the Generator building lies a 705-square-meter area of modified grassland. If a plan is implemented to convert this area into other neutral grassland meeting the "good condition" criteria defined by statutory metrics, the site could achieve a 10% net gain in biodiversity (refer to Appendix 2, Figure 3).

4.6 Tree Enhancement: To achieve the equivalent biodiversity net gain through small trees in poor condition, as outlined by DEFRA guidelines, the site would require the planting of 24 trees.

4.7 Net Gain Feasibility: Biodiversity net gain is achievable on-site through a combination of these proposed enhancements.

4.8 If the area were to be cordoned off for a private garden, biodiversity net gain could not be achieved on site within the residential curtilage as the condition cannot be guaranteed as outlined by DEFRA and thus all created habitat would be classified as Vegetated garden.

Appendix 1: Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Calculations

A1.1 The Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment was undertaken based on the site conditions on 01/05/24 by Cherryfield Ecology

REFERENCES

Natural England. (2024). *Statutory Biodiversity Metric - User Guide*. York, Natural England.

Metric completed by Connor Johnston - Ecologist December 2024

Appendix 2: Site Plans



Figure 1 – Baseline Habitats



Figure 2 - Proposed Development

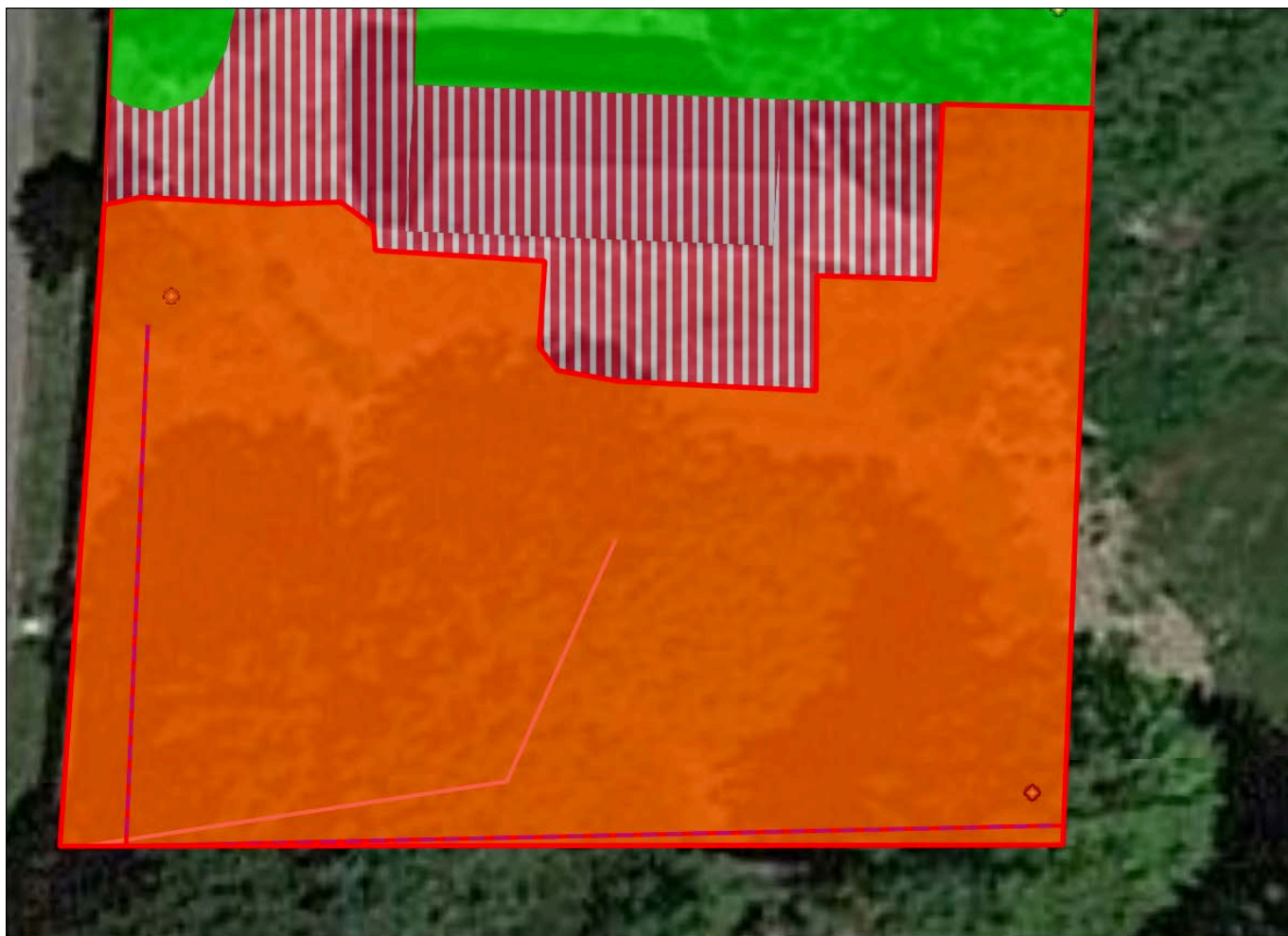


Figure 3 – Area of Grassland - Suitable for Enhancement

