Clayton Ecology

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

14a Norman Avenue

October 2025

Client name:	Zoe Thompson
Planning Application Reference	
Report reference:	200_18-02
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Surveyed by:	Nick Clayton BSc (Hons) ACIEEM
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Clayton Ecology Ltd
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SUMMARY

This report has been prepared by Clayton Ecology Ltd on behalf of the Site owner: Zoe Thompson. The report provides the results of a biodiversity net gain assessment of 14a Norman Avenue, Sutton-in-Ashfield NG17 5FZ.

The proposals for the Site are to build a single residential property to the rear of the Site. This will cause the vegetated garden, and sections of non-native hedgerow to be lost.

The attached and supporting Biodiversity Net Gain Small Sites Metric identifies that the changes to the site will result in net loss of biodiversity in the absence of mitigation and compensation.

The habitat units delivered within this Biodiversity Net Gain assessment are:

Habitat Units: Total Net Unit Change of -0.08 (negative; equivalent to a loss of -9.31%).

In order to achieve the biodiversity net gain target of 10% from the project a total of 0.17 habitat units is required.

The hedgerow units delivered within this Biodiversity Net Gain assessment are:

Hedgerow Units: Total Net Unit Change of -0.12 (negative; equivalent to a loss of -50.29%).

In order to achieve the biodiversity net gain target of 10% from the project a total of 0.15 hedgerow units is required.

Trading Rules

The trading rules within the DEFRA calculation tool have not been satisfied with the proposed development plan.

Habitat Unit Loss Offsetting

The loss in habitat units will be offset by purchasing credits from reputable and local suppler such as Wild Solutions or the Environment Bank.

A total of **0.17 habitat units is required** to meet the 10% requirement.

A total of **0.15 hedgerow units is required** to meet the 10% requirement.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by Clayton Ecology Ltd on behalf of behalf of Zoe Thompson. The report provides the results of a biodiversity net gain assessment of 14a Norman Avenue, Sutton-in-Ashfield NG17 5FZ. The survey area is centred at Ordnance Survey grid reference, SK 50028 58272.

The proposals for the Site are to build a single residential property to the rear of the Site. This will cause the vegetated garden, and sections of non-native hedgerow to be lost.

The evidence is presented in the form of a Small Sites Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculations for the site based on a condition assessments of the habitats on-site.

The location of the survey site in relation to wider environment is provided in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: The site highlighted in red, satellite imagery courtesy of Bing Maps (2024).

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desktop Study

A desktop study which comprised a search for records of designated wildlife sites, and protected species licences within a 1-kilometre radius was acquired through the government MAGIC website. A search of local biodiversity records within a 1 km radius was commissioned to Nottinghamshire Biological and Geological Record Centre (NBGRC) on the 26th March 2024.

2.2 Habitat Condition Survey to inform BNG Calculations

To inform the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Calculations, the habitat types and the condition assessments of the habitats. The habitats on the site were assessed and categorised in order to provide baseline information and subsequent interpretation of the ecological value of the site

2.3 BNG Calculations

The latest version of the Small Sites Metric or the Statutory Metric (DEFRA, 2024) has been used to calculate the baseline value of the site (before development) and the post-development value in order to calculate the Total Net Unit Change. The broad habitat type 'Individual trees' has been used where a tree (or a group of trees) over 7 cm in diameter at breast height (DBH) does not meet or contribute towards the definition of another broad habitat type. The tree sizes and areas have been assessed using the guidelines as shown below in Table 1. Please note small trees are not recorded within the baseline assessment of the small sites metric if they are within a residential garden, in line guidelines.

Size class	Diameter at breast height (cm)	Metric area equivalent (ha)
Small	greater than 7cm and less than or equal to 30cm	0.0041
Medium	greater than 30cm and less than or equal to 60cm	0.0163
Large	greater than 60cm and less than or equal to 90cm	0.0366
Very Large	greater than 90cm	0.0765

Table 1: Tree size classes and area equivalents taken from Statutory Metric guidelines.

2.4 Minimum Mapping Units

The minimum mappable area used is equal to or above 25 m^2, the minimum mappable length of a linear feature is equal to or above 5 m.

2.5 Survey constraints

The survey was undertaken outside of the optimal period for habitat surveys (April to October); however, given the nature of the habitats present, it is considered that sufficient botanical information was collected to categorise the habitats and identify potential features of value.

2.6 Personnel

The condition assessments were undertaken by Clayton Ecology Ltd on the 26th March 2024. The survey was carried out by Mr Nick Clayton BSc (Hons) ACIEEM. Nick has extensive experience in habitat survey and condition assessments for biodiversity net gain and is appropriately qualified for the surveys based on the CIEEM competencies (CIEEM, 2017).

2.7 National Policy

The Environment Act 2021

This legislation and the requirement for mandatory biodiversity net gain of new developments came into force on the 12th of February 2024. As such, all developments (aside from those exempt) are required to demonstrate a 10% biodiversity net gain.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) guides Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) when developing their planning policies and considering planning applications affecting protected habitats, sites and species.

Planning Policy Statement 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment of the NPPF recognises that, planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Section D of Paragraph 180 states:

"Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures; In respect of the natural environment."

Section B of Paragraph 185 states:

"Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity".

Section D of Paragraph 186 also states:

"Development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate".

2.8 Local Policy

Ashfield Borough Council is the local authority, the Local plan is currently being updated therefore the 2002 version was used Ashfield Local Plan Review Adopted November 2002 was therefore used to understand the local biodiversity targets. Policy EV8 has specific aims, shown below.

"DEVELOPMENT WHICH ADVERSELY AFFECTS TREES WORTHY OF RETENTION, INCLUDING WOODLAND AND INDIVIDUAL TREES, WILL NOT BE PERMITTED. WHERE TREES ARE LOST AS A RESULT OF DEVELOPMENT, REPLACEMENT OR MITIGATING PLANTING WILL BE REQUIRED.

Existing Ancient Woodland sites are listed in Appendix 2 and shown on the Proposals Map

3.50 Trees and woodlands make an important contribution to the quality of particular areas and are significant both as landscape features and individual habitats and can be of recreational value. Wherever possible the Authority will protect existing trees within development sites and will introduce Tree Preservation Orders as necessary. Existing trees and woodlands will be expected to remain within development proposals and be complemented by new landscaping schemes. Where trees are lost as a result of development, replacement trees or mitigating planting will be required.

Section 2 - Environment

3.51 An Ancient Woodland is an area which has had continuous cover of native trees and plants since at least 1600 A.D., neither having being cleared nor extensively replanted since then. The date is adopted as marking the time when forestry began to be widely adopted and when evidence in map form began to become available. Nine Ancient Woodland sites have been identified by English Nature within Ashfield.

HEDGEROWS

3.52 Hedgerows are the most traditional types of field boundaries in many areas and make an important contribution to the landscape of the District. They are often of considerable historic and wildlife interest and, particularly in the case of older hedgerows, often contain a great diversity of plant and wildlife species. As such, the loss of hedgerows from the countryside landscape has been a continuing cause for concern.

3.53 On the 1st June 1997 the Hedgerows Regulations, 1997 came into force under section 97 of the Environment Act, 1995. They introduced new arrangements for local planning authorities to protect "important" hedgerows in the countryside, by controlling their removal through a system of notification. The regulations set out criteria that must be used by the local planning authority in determining which hedgerows are "important". The criteria relate to the value of hedgerows from an archaeological, historical, landscape and wildlife perspective. There is a strong presumption that "important" hedgerows and other hedgerows, where possible, will be protected and wherever possible incorporated into open space and landscaping proposals for new development.".

3. SURVEY RESULTS

Figure 2: The baseline assessment of the area impacted.

3.1 Desktop Study

There are no Statutory Designated Sites (Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) / Special Area of Conservation SAC / National Nature Reserve (NNR) within the 500 metre search radius.

3.2 On-site Habitats/Hedgerows and Condition Assessment Results

The survey site is generally an inverse L-shape, situated at the southern end of Norman Avenue, an additional section of the neighbouring property has been purchased to allow better access into the Site. To the south of the Site is the dual carriageway A38, to the east, west and north of the Site are residential and commercial properties and urban infrastructure. The majority of the Site was dominated by regularly mown grassland of low quality. The wider area consists of commercial and residential, with patches of woodland and a large reservoir to the north east.

3.2.1 Developed land; sealed surface – u1 (Map indictor 1).

This habitat defines the dwelling, garage and associated hard standing areas within the Site.

Commented [BM1]: Format all photos to the same width

Photograph 1: The area of developed land including the dwelling.

3.2.2 Vegetated garden – 828 (Map indictor 2).

The majority of the garden was amenity grassland cut to a short sward. Species comprised. Perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne - O*, Red fescue *Festuca rubra - R*, Cock's foot *Dactylis glomerata - O*, Annual meadow grass *Poa annua* - O, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* – D, Rough meadow grass *Poa trivialis* - R, Springy turf moss *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus - D*, Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale agg.*, Daisy *Bellis perennis*, Ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, White clover *Trifolium repens* and at the edges Spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, Dock species *Rumex sp.*, Nettle *Urtica dioica*, Bramble *Rubus frutiscosus agg., Yarrow Achillea millefolium– O, Cleavers Galium aparine – D,* Garlic mustard *Alliaria petiolate, Rosa species,* Round leaved Crane's-bill

Geranium rotundifolium, Common Mouse-ear *Cerastium fontanum,* Meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris, Berberis species, Buddleia and Honeysuckle Lonicera sp.*. At the far south of the Site, is an area that until recently was separated from the rest of the garden. This has had some clearance activity and has started to regenerate species comprised: Cleavers, Nettle, Garlic mustard, Ivy *Hedera helix*, Herb Robert *Geranium robertianum* and some Bramble.

Photograph 2: The amenity grassland cut to a short sward, looking south down the Site from the north.

3.2.3 Individual trees – 200

There were two large leylandii at the northwestern boundary of the Site and two cedar semi-mature trees at the southern end of the garden. Details shown below in Table 3.

Tree No.	Common Name	Botanical Name	Diameter Breast Height (DBH) (mm)	Size Class
T1	Leyland cypress	Cupressocyparis leylandii	390	Medium
T2	Leyland cypress	Cupressocyparis leylandii	400	Medium
T3	Cedar	Cedrus sp.	370	Medium
T4	Cedar	Cedrus sp.	400	Medium

Table 2: A table showing the baseline values of individual trees within the site.

3.2.4 Line of trees - 33

The southern boundary alongside the dual carriageway had a line of young to semi-mature trees, containing Pine, Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Hazel *Corylus avellana*, Birch *Betula sp.,* and shrubs Holly *Ilex aquifolium* and Cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*.

Photograph 3: The line of trees visible on the right hand side of the photograph looking east.

3.2.5 Non - native and ornamental hedgerow – h2b

The three sections of non-native hedgerow were present, a section of Privet hedgerow alongside the dwelling to the northern boundary and two sections of conifer hedgerow approximately 3 metre high lining the western boundary and the new central section (formerly part of the neighbours garden).

Photograph 7: The non-native hedgerow alongside the western boundary of the Site.

3.3 Baseline Total Habitat Units

Map ref	Baseline Habitat	Condition assessment	Area (ha)	Habitat Units (HBU)
On-site				
1.	Developed land; sealed surface	N/A	0.0519	0.00
2.	Vegetated garden	N/A	0.1530	0.31
3.	Individual trees Medium x 4	Automatically generated at Moderate	0.0651	0.60
Totals (areas excluding trees)			**0.2049**	**0.31**
Totals				**0.91**

Table 4: A table showing the baseline values of habitats within the site.

3.4 Baseline Total Hedgerow Units

Map ref	Baseline Hedgerow	Condition assessment	Length (km)	Hedgerow Units (HDBU)
On-site				
4.	Line of trees	Automatically generated as Moderate	0.026	0.12
5.	Non-native hedgerow	Automatically generated as Poor	0.032	0.03
6.	Non-native hedgerow		0.061	0.06
7.	Non-native hedgerow		0.028	0.03
Total on-site			**0.147**	**0.24**

Table 5: A table showing the baseline values of hedgerows within the site.

4. PROPOSED DESIGN

Figure 3: The proposed design.

4.1 On-site Habitat/Hedgerow Creation/Retention

4.1.1 Developed land, sealed surface

These areas include the existing and new dwelling, and entrance roads.

Minimum Targeted Condition: N/A

4.1.2 Vegetated garden

The gardens around the site will be maintained by the householders and are therefore counted as vegetated garden.

Minimum Targeted Condition: N/A

4.1.3 Individual trees – 200

There are four medium sized trees around site, all of these will be retained.

Minimum Targeted Condition: Moderate

Tree No.	Common Name	Retention status	Size Class
T1	Leyland cypress	Retained	Medium
T2	Leyland cypress	Retained	Medium
T3	Cedar	Retained	Medium
T4	Cedar	Retained	Medium

Table 6: A table showing the baseline and retained/lost values of individual trees within the site.

4.1.4 Lines of trees (linear features)

The line of trees will be retained.

Retained

Reference	Baseline Hedgerow type	Description
4	Line of trees	Corsican pine trees

Table 7: A table showing the baseline and retained values of linear lines of trees within the site.

4.2 Proposed Total Habitat Units

Map ref	Proposed Habitat On-site	Area retention category	Proposed Condition assessment	Area (ha)	Habitat Units (HBU)
On-site					
1.	Developed land; sealed surface	Retained/ Created	N/A	0.0900	0.00
2.	Vegetated garden	Created	N/A	0.1149	0.22
3.	Individual trees (combined) Medium x 4	Retained	Moderate	0.0651	0.60
			Totals (areas excluding trees)	0.2049	0.22
			Totals		0.82

Table 8: A table showing the proposed values of the retained/created habitats.

4.3 Proposed Total Hedgerow Units

Map ref	Hedgerow	Retention category	Target Condition assessment	Length Retained (m)	Hedgerow Units (HDBU)
On-site					
4.	Line of trees	Retained	Moderate	0.026	0.12
			Total on-site	**0.026**	**0.12**

Table 9: A table showing the proposed values of retained hedgerows post development.

5. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN RESULTS

5.1 Habitats

Habitat Units: Total Net Unit Change of -0.08 (negative; equivalent to a loss of -9.31%).

5.2 Habitats units required to meet target

In order to achieve the biodiversity net gain target of 10% from the project a total of 0.17 habitat units is required.

5.3 Hedgerow

Hedgerow Units: Total Net Unit Change of -0.12 (negative; equivalent to a loss of -50.29%).

5.4 Hedgerow units required to meet target

In order to achieve the biodiversity net gain target of 10% from the project a total of 0.15 hedgerow units is required.

5.5 Trading Rules

The trading rules within the DEFRA calculation tool have not been satisfied with the proposed development plan.

5.6 Habitat Unit Loss Offsetting

The loss in habitat units will be offset by purchasing credits from reputable and local suppler such as the Environment Bank.

Please see the excel document for full calculation details labelled:

V1_14a Norman Avenue - Small_Sites_Metric__Statutory_Biodiversity_Metric__Calculation_Tool_02.24

REFERENCES

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