



21<sup>st</sup> September 2023

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**File Note: BNG for 6th Form block at Alexandra Park School**

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**Ref:** Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) version 4.0 reporting file note

**Site address:** 6th Form block at Alexandra Park School, Bidwell Gardens, London, N11 2AZ

**National Grid Reference:** Centred on TQ 2914 9095

**Site area:** 0.10003ha BNG area assessed.

**Recipients:** Alexandra Park School

**Record of activity**

➤ **Background**

Arbtech consulting Ltd were instructed by Alexandra Park School to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) evaluation of a development on the site, subject to a planning application with London Borough of Haringey for:

- The extension of the 6<sup>th</sup> Form block

➤ **Purpose of survey**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes it clear (para 170) that “Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by; minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures”.

Paragraph 174 requires the promotion of “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”.

Proposals for net gain should be clearly recorded and reported through use of an appropriate metric such as the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric 4.0. Natural England advise that any net gain should be fully secured and funded for the lifetime of the development.

Therefore, the purpose of this survey report is to provide an evaluation of the proposed plans compared to the ecological baseline, and to report any net gain (or loss) to biodiversity using the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric 4.0 scheme.

➤ **Surveyor and date of survey**

This survey report was carried out by Craig Williams, BSc (Hons), MSc, DIC, MRSB of Arbtech Consulting Ltd. on 30<sup>st</sup> August 2023 and updated on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023. A previous preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) is used as the ecological baseline and was carried out on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2023. The baseline habitat map and the current proposed soft landscaping plans are found in appendix 1 and 2.

## **Summary findings**

- The full results of the metric are included in the excel file:

***Biodiversity Metric 4.0 (6th Form block at Alexandra Park School N11 2AZ) v2***

This highlights that the current change in the biodiversity habitat metric is:

- +17.15% in habitat units
  - +242.95% in linear units
- The results indicate a net gain in habitat area units and linear units. This is mainly contributed to replacement of part of the baseline grassland with the proposed buildings and hard standing area, compensated for with meadow grass creation and the planting of 5 trees within the wider site, and the proposed planting of short new hedgerows to replace one lost.

## **Discussion**

- The currently proposed plan results in a 17.15% net gain in habitat units (a gain of 0.14 area units from a baseline of 0.81), and a 242.95% net gain in linear units (a gain of 0.1 linear units from a baseline of 0.04).
- The change in area and linear units are both more than the 10% target of biodiversity net gain and are likely to be sufficient for planning approval.

### **Compensation scheme**

- The proposed compensation scheme is to be located on land owned by the school to the south-east (see appendix 3 and 4).

- **0.035ha** of poor-quality modified grass e.g., pasture, lawn, wasteground enhanced to modified grass of moderate condition within the same local authority or national character area, and the planting of 5 native trees.
- **Creation criteria:**

#### Modified grass of moderate condition (0.035ha)

- A. *There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m<sup>2</sup> present, including at least 2 forbs (this may include those listed in Footnote 1). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition.*
- B. *Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.*
- C. *Some scattered scrub (including bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg.) may be present, but scrub accounts for less than 20% of total grassland area.*

*Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.*
- D. *Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.*
- E. *Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens).*
- F. *Cover of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is less than 20%.*
- G. *There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species<sup>3</sup> (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA4).*

At least four of these criteria must be reached for the targeted moderate condition including essential criterion A.

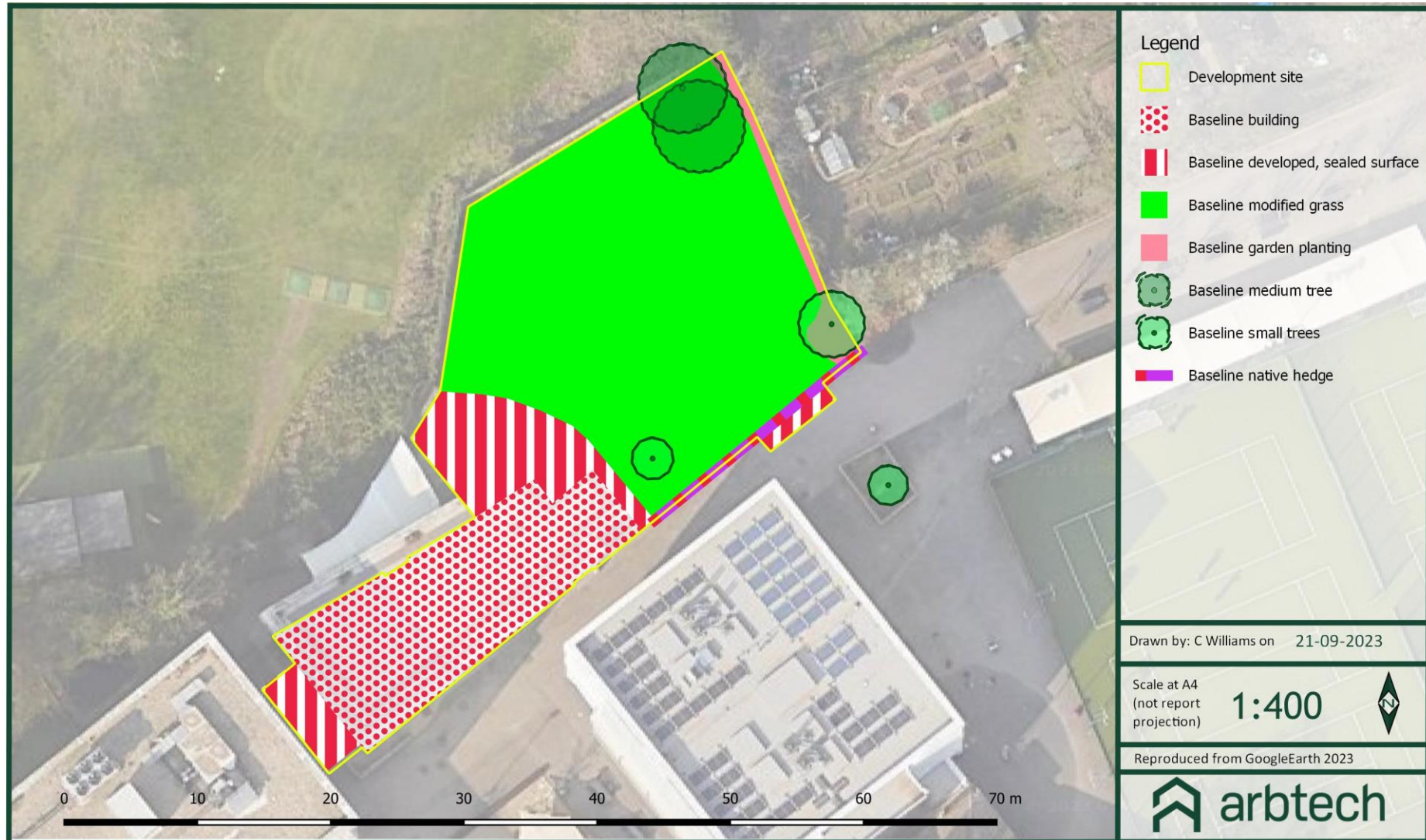
## **Creation and management**

- The creation and management of the habitats on the compensation site to the appropriate condition would need to be secured for at least 30 years - linked to the application through a planning obligation in Section 106 (S106) agreement.

- Design statement

This report contains recommendations on measures for achieving BNG. These recommendations do not constitute a design for BNG. In submitting these recommendations, Arbtech Consulting has no Design Liability associated with these recommendations for BNG. The strategy sets out the criteria which the landscape team can use to design the creation and management of the site.

## Appendix 1: Habitat baseline map



## Appendix 2: Currently proposed ecological map of the site (based on the site habitats in the metric)



### Appendix 3: Off-site habitat baseline map



#### Appendix 4: Proposed off-site habitat map showing compensation



**BACK PAGE**

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