



## Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Land Behind Ugley Village Hall, Cambridge Road, Bishop's Stortford, Uttlesford,  
CM22 6HR

### Pelham Structures Ltd

Status	Issue	Name	Date
Draft	1	Jonathan Stuttard BSc (Hons) MSc, Principal Ecologist	01/07/2024
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## Industry Guidelines and Standards

This report has been written with due consideration to:

- British Standard 42020 (2013). Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development.
- British Standard 8683:2021 (2021). Process for Designing and Implementing Biodiversity Net Gain.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2018). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. Version 1.1. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2020). Guidelines for Accessing, Using and Sharing Biodiversity Data in the UK. 2nd Edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Construction Industry Research and Information Association & Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2019). Biodiversity Net Gain – Good Practice Principles for Development.

## Proportionality

The work involved in preparing and implementing all ecological surveys, impact assessments and measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development. Consequently, the decision-maker should only request supporting information and conservation measures that are relevant, necessary and material to the application in question. Similarly, the decision-maker and their consultees should ensure that any comments and advice made over an application are also proportionate.

This approach is enshrined in Government planning guidance, for example, paragraph 185 of the National Planning Policy Framework for England.

The desk studies and field surveys undertaken to provide a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) might in some cases be all that is necessary.

(BS 42020, 2013)

## Executive Summary

Arbtech Consulting Ltd was instructed by Pelham Structures Ltd to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment for a proposed development at Land Behind Ugley village Hall, Cambridge Road, Bishop's Stortford, Uttlesford, CM22 6HR (hereafter referred to as "the site"). Proposals for the site comprise redevelopment to provide new residential dwellings, alongside associated infrastructure and landscaping (hereafter referred to as the "Proposed Development").

The proposed development is anticipated to result in a **48.43% net loss** in area-based habitat units and a **56.78% net gain** for hedgerow units. It is noted that watercourse units are not applicable to this assessment. Whilst the anticipated net gain for hedgerow units is >10% (compliant), a minimum 10% net gain for area-based habitat units is not achieved. As such, the proposed development is not currently compliant with legislation (Environment Act 2021). Furthermore, the habitat trading rules are not satisfied as baseline low distinctiveness habitats are not sufficiently compensated for through post-development habitat creation.

In order to achieve the required 10% net gain in area-based habitat units and to satisfy the habitat trading rules, the proposed development needs to provide an additional **4.675 area-based habitat units**, comprising the correct habitat types to compensate for the overall loss in low distinctiveness habitat types. Proposals for biodiversity off-setting are included in Section 4.

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## 1.0 Introduction and Context

### 1.1 Introduction

Arbtech Consulting Ltd was instructed by Pelham Structures Ltd to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment for a proposed development at Land Behind Ugley village Hall, Cambridge Road, Bishop's Stortford, Uttlesford, CM22 6HR (hereafter referred to as "the site"). Proposals for the site comprise redevelopment to provide new residential dwellings, alongside associated infrastructure and landscaping (hereafter referred to as the "Proposed Development"). A plan shown the proposed development is provided in **Appendix 1**.

This report should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Statutory Biodiversity Metric completed in accordance with the proposed development (Arbtech Consulting Ltd 2024).
- Ecology Report (4<sup>th</sup> edition) (Ashley Arbon Consultant Ecologist 2024).
- Tree survey Data (Ashley Arbon Consultant Ecologist 2024).

### 1.2 Site Context

The site is located at National Grid Reference TL 51562 27266 and has an area of 1.14ha. The site is characterised by a derelict area of land to the rear of a village hall. Habitats present on site include tall ruderal/ ephemeral vegetation mosaic, artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface, wet moss lawn over a disused sports court, individual trees, and lines of trees. The site is located semi-rurally, approximately 2.3km north of Stansted Mountfitchet. The site is enclosed by the B1383 and open agricultural land to the west, residential properties to the north and south, and an area of woodland/ scrubland to the east. A site location plan is provided in **Appendix 2**.

### 1.3 BNG Informative

BNG is a specific, measurable outcome of project activities that deliver demonstrable and quantifiable benefits to biodiversity compared to the baseline situation. In order to achieve BNG, a project must be able to demonstrate that it has followed all 10 of the Principles of Biodiversity Net Gain (as outlined in the *British Standard 8683:2021 Process for Designing and Implementing Biodiversity Net Gain*).

The legalised Environment Act (2021) requires developments in England to demonstrate a measurable net gain in biodiversity and sets a target of a minimum of +10% BNG for all developments. It also stipulates that a management plan with a minimum 30-year term should be adopted to ensure biodiversity net gain can be delivered. Biodiversity Net Gain became mandatory for new developments (non-exempt) on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

The DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric is the latest version of the metric tool used to calculate BNG. It enables the calculation of habitat value pre- and post-development in order to determine the overall change in biodiversity value as a result of the proposed development. The Biodiversity Metric has separate BNG assessments for areas of habitat, hedgerows and watercourses.

The biodiversity value of a site should be maximised. However, it may not always be possible to achieve a +10% biodiversity net gain within a site and therefore the Statutory Biodiversity Metric can also account for offsite habitat creation, where land is available. Alternatively, developers can seek to provide an agreed financial contribution to an appropriate third party (such as the Local Authority, the UK Government or another landowner) to deliver the required biodiversity net gain elsewhere on their behalf.

## 2.0 Methodology

### 2.1 Baseline Biodiversity Value

The baseline BNG Calculation was informed by the Ecology Report (4<sup>th</sup> edition) (Ashley Arbon Consultant Ecologist 2024). The baseline habitat plan is provided in **Appendix 3**. Existing tree specifications and retention were informed by the Tree Survey Data (Ashley Arbon Consultant Ecologist 2024).

### Habitat Classification

Whilst the Ecology Report did not classify habitats on site according to UK Habitat Classification User Manual 2.0 (UK Habitat Classification Working Group, 2023), liaison between consultant ecologists was undertaken prior to completing this BNG whereby an appropriate UKHabs classification of the site was collaboratively determined to inform the baseline mapping and condition assessments.

### Habitat Area/Length

The area or length of each habitat was calculated using qGIS software. In calculating the area or length of each habitat, habitats which occur as two or more isolated parcels across the site were combined, where they were deemed to be of a similar composition and condition. Distinctions were made between habitats to be retained (i.e. left as found in baseline), enhanced (i.e. improved condition) or lost (i.e. destroyed by proposed development). Areas of scattered trees were calculated using the Tree Helper tool within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. Class sizes for urban trees are set out in Table 13 of the Draft Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (Natural England, 2023).

### Habitat Condition

Habitat condition was assessed using the relevant condition assessment sheets found in the Draft Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (Natural England, 2023).

### Strategic Significance

Strategic significance was assigned for each habitat based upon a review of the following:

- Ecological value (based on the Ecology Report and Tree Survey Data);
- Function within the landscape (based on a review of Google and OS imagery); and
- Any site or habitat allocations under the relevant Local Planning Policy and Biodiversity Action Plan.



## **2.2 Post Development Biodiversity Value**

The post development BNG Calculation was informed by the Proposed Site Plan (Pelham Structures Ltd 2024), which shows the broad landscape proposals. The Proposed Site Plan is provided in **Appendix 1**. Habitat coverage anticipated post-development is illustrated on the plan in **Appendix 4**.

### **Habitat Classification**

Proposed habitats were translated to their equivalents in the UK Habitat Classification using The UK Habitat Classification Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (The UK Habitat Classification Working Group, 2023).

### **Habitat Area/Length**

The area or length of each proposed habitat was calculated using qGIS software. In calculating the area or length of each habitat, habitats which occur as two or more isolated parcels across the site were combined, where they were deemed to be of similar composition and condition. Distinctions were made between habitats to be retained (i.e. left as found in baseline), enhanced (i.e. improved condition) or newly created. Areas of scattered trees were calculated using the Tree Helper tool within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. Class sizes for urban trees are set out in Table 13 of the Draft Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (Natural England, 2023).

### **Habitat Condition**

Target habitat condition for each proposed habitat was determined assessed using the Temporal Multipliers Tool and the Enhancement Temporal Multipliers Tool included in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric spreadsheet as well as the relevant condition assessment sheets found in the Draft Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (Natural England, 2023). This is based on the assumption that a 30-year management plan will be adopted for the site.

### **Strategic Significance**

Strategic significance was assigned for each proposed habitat based upon a review of the following:

- Likely ecological value (based on the development plans and professional judgement);
- Function within the landscape (based on the location of the proposed habitats and a review of Google and OS imagery); and
- Any site or habitat allocations under the relevant Local Planning Policy and Biodiversity Action Plan.

## **2.3 Limitations**

None.

### 3.0 Results and Evaluation

#### 3.1 Baseline Habitats

**Table 1** details the baseline habitats present within the site along with their area/length, condition, and strategic significance.

Table 1: Baseline Biodiversity Value

Habitat	Area (ha)/ Length(km)	Description	Condition Assessment	Strategic Significance	Area Retained or Enhanced
<b>Area-based habitats</b>					
<b>Urban:</b> Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	0.091ha	Area covered by bare ground as identified through previous ecological assessment.	Habitat condition is predetermined as N/A.	Not included within local strategy.	0ha
<b>Sparsely vegetated land:</b> Ruderal/ ephemeral	0.076ha	Area covered by wet moss lawn over the disused sports court as identified through previous ecological assessment	Habitat condition was assessed using the Urban Habitat Type Condition Sheet. The wet moss lawn is assessed to pass criteria C and fail criteria A & B. The wet moss lawn is therefore assessed to be in poor condition.	Not included within local strategy.	0ha
<b>Sparsely vegetated land:</b> Ruderal/ ephemeral	0.968ha	Areas covered by ruderal/ ephemeral vegetation as identified through previous ecological assessment.	Habitat condition was assessed using the Urban Habitat Type Condition Sheet. The tall ruderal/ ephemeral vegetation is assessed to pass all criteria A, B, & C. The tall ruderal/ ephemeral vegetation is therefore assessed to be in good condition.	Not included within local strategy.	0ha
<b>Individual trees:</b> Rural trees	0.166ha	Area covered by individual trees outside of tree lines as identified through previous ecological assessment. Tree specifications were determined by arboricultural work undertaken at the site (1no. Small; 3no. Medium; 1no. Large; and 1no. Very Large).	Habitat condition was assessed using the Individual Tree Habitat Type Condition Sheet. The trees are assessed to pass criteria A, C, D, E, & F and fail criteria B. The trees are therefore assessed to be in good condition.	Area ecologically desirable but not included within local strategy.	0.166ha retained
<b>Hedgerows</b>					
<b>Hedgerow:</b> Ecological	0.341km	Area covered by lines of trees enclosing the east, south, and west site boundaries as	Habitat condition was assessed using the line of trees habitat type condition	Area ecologically desirable but not	0.341km retained

valuable line of trees		identified through previous ecological assessment.	sheet. The lines of trees are assessed to pass criteria A, B, C, & E and fail criteria D. The lines of trees are therefore assessed to be in moderate condition.	included within local strategy.	
<b>Hedgerow:</b> Line of trees	0.044km	Area covered by line of trees located centrally to the north dominated by non-native species as identified through previous ecological assessment.	Habitat condition was assessed using the line of trees habitat type condition sheet. The lines of trees are assessed to pass criteria B, & E and fail criteria A, C, & D. The line of trees is therefore assessed to be in poor condition.	Area ecologically desirable but not included within local strategy.	Oha

### 3.2 Post Development Habitats

**Table 2** details the post development habitats present within the site along with their area/length, condition, and strategic significance.

Table 2: Post Development Biodiversity Value

Habitat (UK Habs)	Area	Description	Target Condition	Strategic Significance
<b>Area-based habitats</b>				
<b>Urban;</b> Developed Land; Sealed Surface	0.496ha	Area covered by buildings and hardstanding as shown on the Proposed Site Plan.	Habitat condition is predetermined as N/A.	Not included within local strategy.
<b>Urban;</b> Vegetated garden	0.506ha	Area covered by private residential gardens as shown on the Proposed Site Plan.	Habitat condition is predetermined as N/A.	Not included within local strategy.
<b>Urban;</b> Bioswale	0.007ha	Area covered by the swale shown on the Proposed Site Plan. Habitat condition was assessed using the urban habitat type condition sheet.	The swale is anticipated to pass all criteria A, B, C, E1, & E2. The swale is therefore anticipated to be in good condition.	Area ecologically desirable but not included within local strategy.
<b>Grassland:</b> Other neutral grassland	0.126ha	Area covered by grassland located within public realm areas.	Habitat condition was assessed using the Grassland - Medium, High, and Very High Distinctiveness habitat type condition sheet. The grassland is anticipated to pass criteria A, C, D, & E and fail criteria B & F. The grassland is therefore anticipated to be in moderate condition.	Not included within local strategy.
<b>Individual trees:</b> Urban trees	0.0489ha	Area covered by proposed new trees within the public realm (12no. Small).	Habitat condition was assessed using the individual tree habitat type condition sheet. The trees are anticipated to pass criteria A, D, & F and fail criteria B, C, & E. The trees are therefore anticipated to be in moderate condition.	Area ecologically desirable but not included within local strategy.

Hedgerows				
<b>Hedgerows:</b> Native hedgerow	0.504km	Area covered by proposed native hedgerows as shown on the Proposed Site Plan.	Habitat condition was assessed using the hedgerow habitat type condition sheet. The hedgerows are anticipated to pass criteria A1, A2, B1, B2 & D1 and fail criteria C1, C2, & D2. The hedgerows are therefore anticipated to be in moderate condition.	Area ecologically desirable but not included within local strategy.

### 3.3 Change in Biodiversity Value of the Site

Full details are provided in the Defra Statutory Metric. The headline results as described below.

- The baseline biodiversity unit score: **Area-Based Habitat Units:** 8.15; **Hedgerow Units:** 4.20; **Watercourse units:** N/A.
- The post-development biodiversity unit score: **Area-Based Habitat Units:** 4.20; **Hedgerow Units:** 4.86; **Watercourse units:** N/A.

This results in the following change in biodiversity value of the site:

- **Area Based Habitat Units: -48.43%**
- **Hedgerow Units: +56.78%**
- **Watercourse units: N/A**

## 4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

### 4.1 Discussion

The proposed development is anticipated to result in a **48.43% net loss** in area-based habitat units and a **56.78% net gain** for hedgerow units. It is noted that watercourse units are not applicable to this assessment. Whilst the anticipated net gain for hedgerow units is >10% (compliant), a minimum 10% net gain for area-based habitat units is not achieved. As such, the proposed development is not currently compliant with legislation (Environment Act 2021). Furthermore, the habitat trading rules are not satisfied as baseline low distinctiveness habitats are not sufficiently compensated for post-development.

### 4.2 Scope for Enhancement

It is assessed that there is limited scope for enhancement within the site in accordance with the existing scheme. This is due to the residential nature of the development, which comprises a significant coverage of private vegetated gardens. The post-development unit value of vegetated gardens is low as their future management cannot be secured through a planning section (S) 106 agreement. To this end, areas of the site available for enhancement to maximise the post-development unit score are limited to areas within the public realm, which are small in extent and already contain habitats of higher distinctiveness/ condition. However, there is scope to boost the unit value of these areas, albeit limited, through the provision of additional individual trees.

### 4.3 Off-Setting

In order to achieve the required 10% net gain in area-based habitat units and to satisfy the habitat trading rules, the proposed development needs to provide an additional **4.675 area-based habitat units**, comprising the correct habitat types to compensate for the overall loss in low distinctiveness habitat types.

The client owns over 800 acres of land in close proximity to the proposed development that will be used for biodiversity off-setting, as shown on the plan in **Appendix 5**. Whilst it is acknowledged that a specific location is yet to be selected for off-site compensatory habitat creation, it is assessed that there is more than sufficient scope to provide the required off-setting within off-site land available to the client. A review of aerial imagery indicates that much of this land is agricultural in nature and thus likely to represent a low baseline unit value, whereby there is excellent scope for enhancement to deliver the required 4.675 unit deficit.

It is therefore suggested that this report is sufficient to demonstrate that a compliant biodiversity net gain is achievable in accordance with the proposed development, whereby a suitable baseline survey effort and scope for compensatory habitat creation is finalised post-planning permission. This could be secured through a pre-commencement planning condition.

**4.4 30-Year Management Plan**

A BNG Management Plan must be produced for the site to comply with current guidance detailed within the draft statutory metric guidance documents. The management plan will provide best practice prescriptions for the implementation, management, and monitoring of the proposed landscaping for a minimum term of 30 years to ensure the site is developed in accordance with the BNG Assessment. It is anticipated that a BNG Management Plan will be produced prior to any development activity that incorporates the selected option for biodiversity off-setting and subsequently demonstrates a compliant BNG.

## 5.0 Bibliography

- Arbtech Consulting Ltd. (2024). Statutory Biodiversity Metric. Land Behind Ugley village Hall, CM22 6HR.
- Ashley Arbon Ecology Consultant. (2024). Ecology Report 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Land Behind Ugley village Hall, CM22 6HR.
- Ashley Arbon Ecology Consultant. (2024). Tree Survey Data. Land Behind Ugley village Hall, CM22 6HR.
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- Natural England (2023). The Statutory Biodiversity Metric (November 2023). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides>
- Pelham Structures Ltd. (2024). Proposed Site Plan. Drawing reference: 596 x PL00
- UK Habitat Classification Working Group (2023). UK Habitat Classification – Habitat Definitions V2.0.

Appendix 1: Proposed Development Plan



Planting Schedule

- T1 - Pear
- T2 - Holly
- T3 - Holly
- T4 - Holly
- T5 - Dogwood
- T6 - Hazel
- T7 - Hazel
- T8 - Dogwood
- T9 - Dogwood
- T10 - Dogwood
- T11 - Goat willow
- T12 - Goat willow
- T13 - Pear
- T14 - Apple
- T15 - Apple
- T16 - Pear
- T17 - Hawthorn
- T18 - Hawthorn
- T19 - Hawthorn
- T20 - Apple
- T21 - Apple
- T22 - Goat willow
- T23 - Dogwood
- T24 - Dogwood
- T25 - Dogwood
- T26 - Holly
- T27 - Dogwood

Single Hedge Row - 0.5m spacing, approx. 0.5m thick:  
H0-5, H0-9, H14, H17-20, H24-35, H37

Double Hedge Row - two rows 0.5m spacing staggered, approx. 1m thick:  
H2-2, H6-7, H10-13, H15-16, H21-23, H36

Garden sizes

- Plot 1: 100sqm
- Plot 2: 140sqm
- Plot 3: 137sqm
- Plot 4: 81sqm
- Plot 5: 108sqm
- Plot 6: 145sqm
- Plot 7: 118sqm
- Plot 8: 328sqm
- Plot 9: 218sqm
- Plot 10: 447sqm
- Plot 11: 307sqm
- Plot 12: 430sqm
- Plot 13: 657sqm
- Plot 14: 270sqm
- Plot 15: 361sqm
- Plot 16: 214sqm

Landscaping Specification

**Planting:** All trees and shrubs to be planted in accordance with the planting schedule and to be planted in accordance with the following specifications. The planting schedule is a guide only and does not constitute a contract. The contractor shall be responsible for any plants not shown on the planting schedule.

**Planting Methods:** All trees and shrubs to be planted in accordance with the following specifications. The contractor shall be responsible for any plants not shown on the planting schedule.

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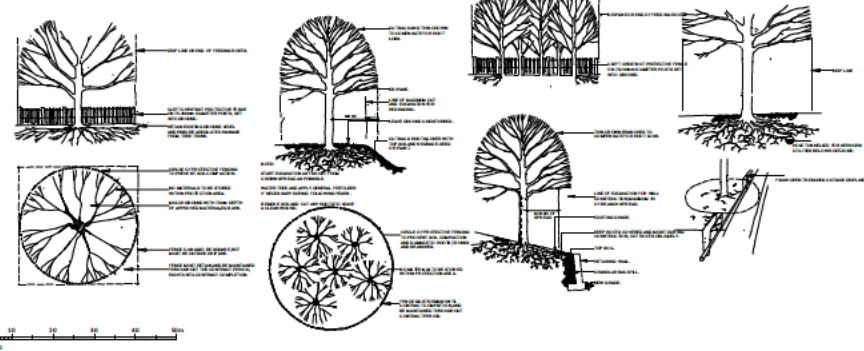
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Standard Tree Protection Details



- Proposed new boundary - 1.5m post and rail fence
- Proposed new boundary - 1.8m draw bar fence
- Block paved driveway
- Patio
- New 2m wide footpath
- Ball box - box to be concealed within structure. Box to face South, South East or South West
- Hedgehog box
- Proposed LED lamps (max. 2000 lumens / 20-30 Watts) with PIR sensor. Temperature of warm white (or as 2700K) and having a downward of light angle (with no overlap of light past the horizontal plane)



Item	Description	Quantity	Unit
1	...	...	...
2	...	...	...
3	...	...	...
4	...	...	...
5	...	...	...

**Pelham Structures**  
LIMITED

100 High Street, Ugley, Essex CM22 6HR  
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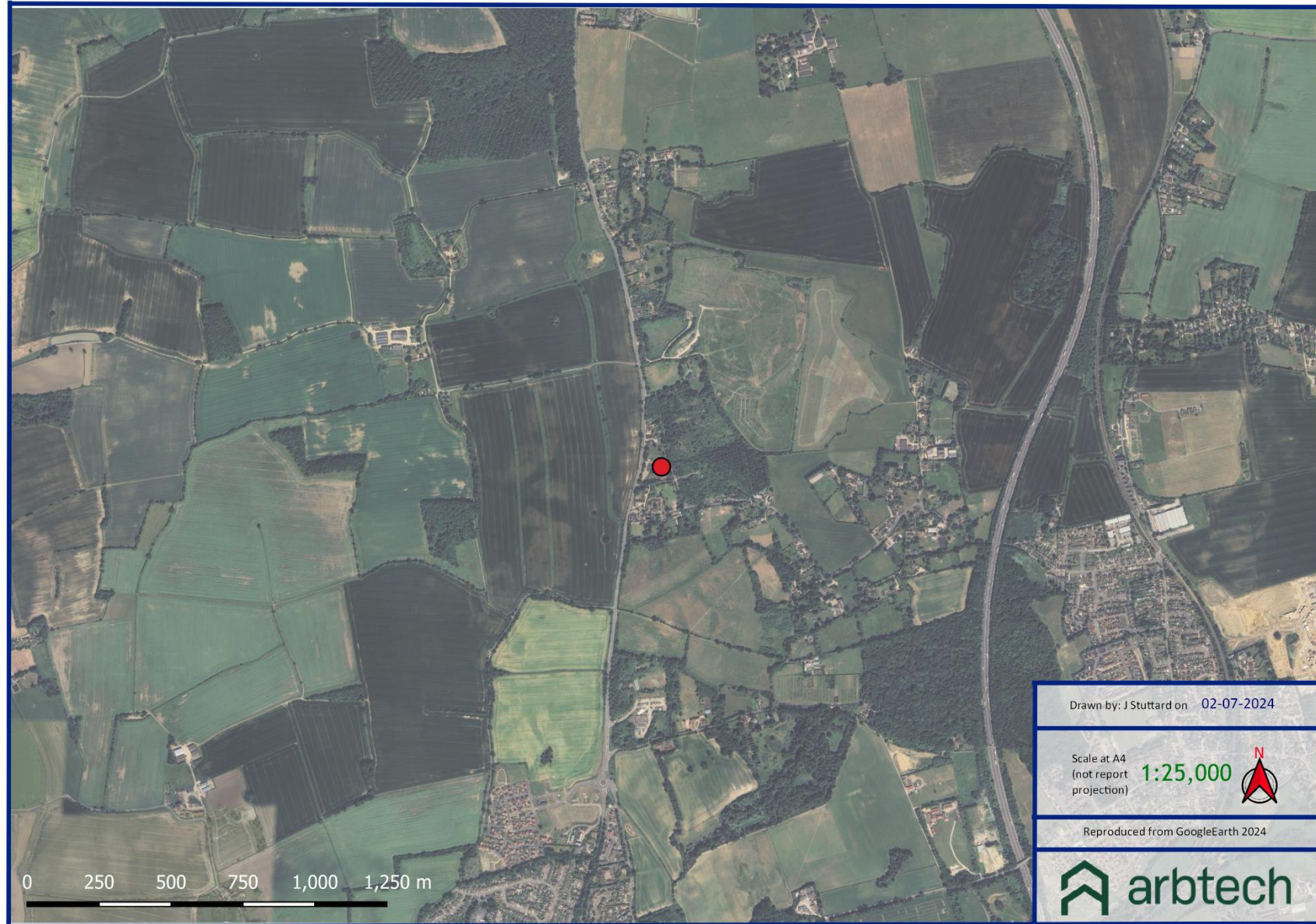
Project: Land East of Ugley Village Hall, Ugley

Site Plan: Proposed Site Plan

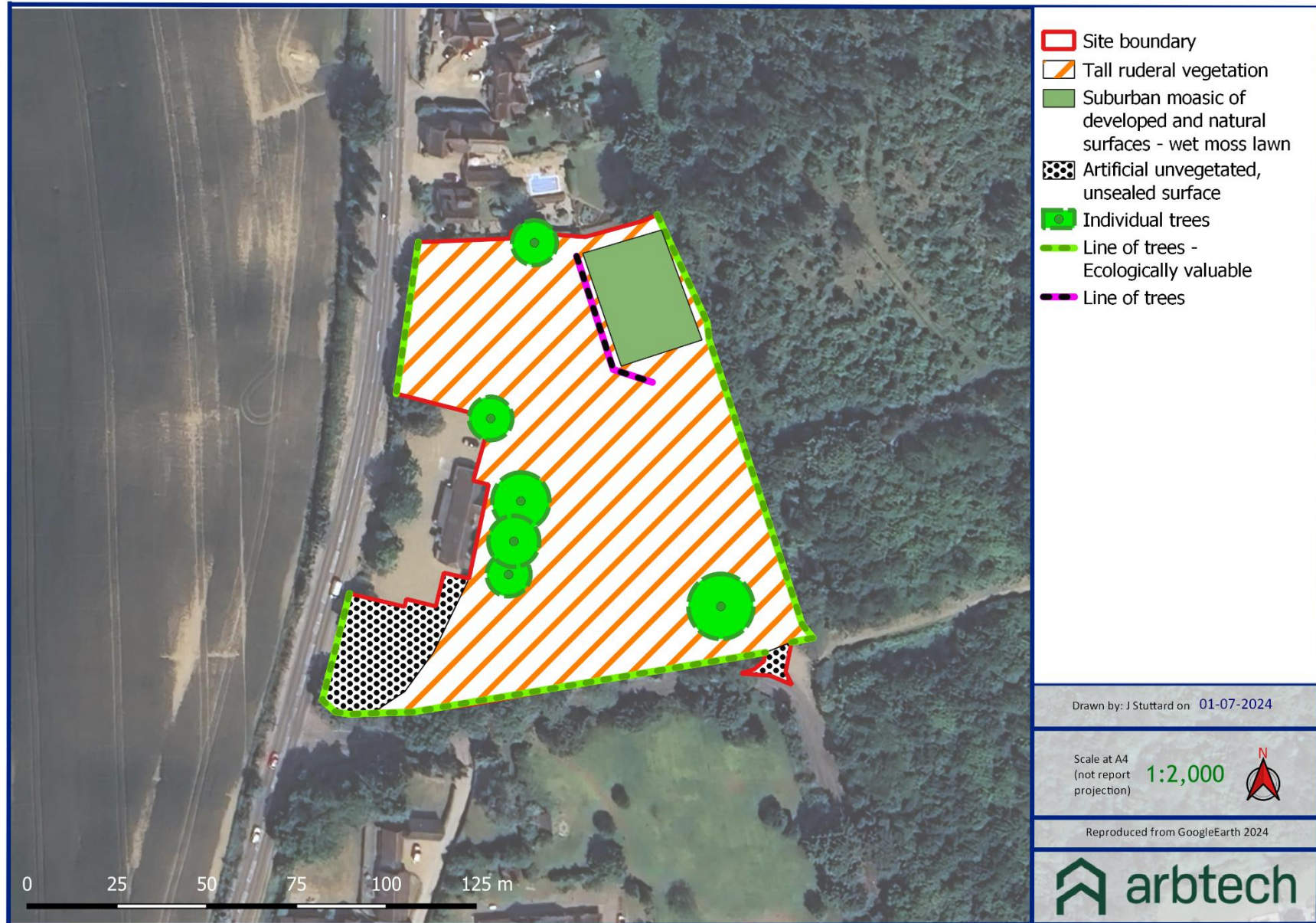
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Author: AJ Papier	Checker: SJK
596 X PLOO	



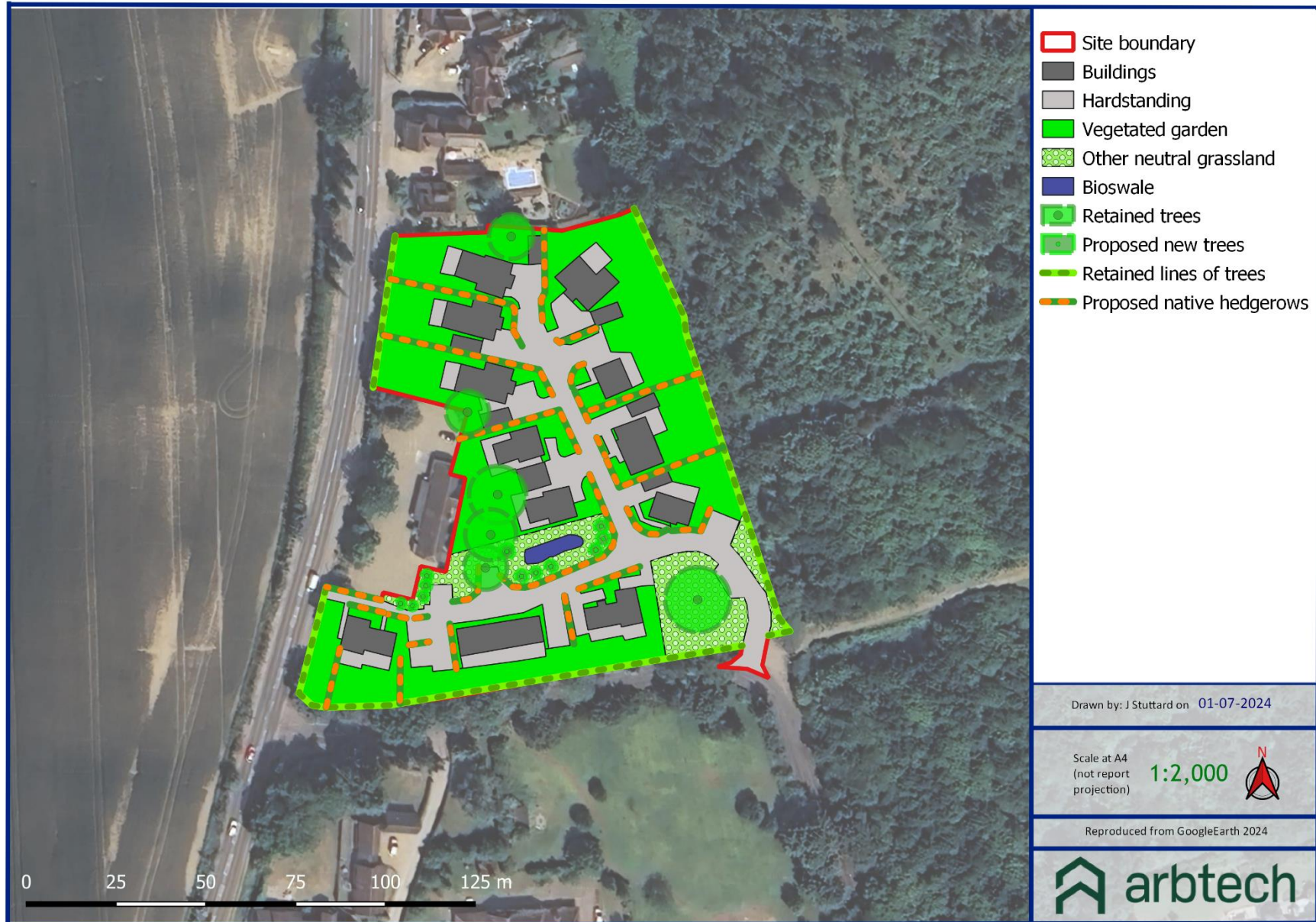
### Appendix 2: Site Location Plan



Appendix 3: Baseline Habitat Survey Plan



Appendix 4: Post-Development Habitat Plan



### Appendix 5: Client Ownership Boundary Showing Scope for Off-Sit Unit Creation

