



Lakeside School, Naylors Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, L27 2YA Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
Report Information.....	3
Executive Summary	4
Introduction	5
Aims and Methodology	7
Results.....	9
Recommendations and Conclusions	12
Bibliography.....	13
Appendix 1 – Baseline Habitat Map	14
Appendix 2 – Proposed Habitat Map.....	15
Appendix 3 – Biodiversity Net Gain Calculation Summary.....	16
Appendix 4 – Condition Assessments for Baseline Habitats	17
Appendix 5 – Condition Assessments for Proposed Habitats.....	18

Report Information

Site Address:	Lakeside School, Naylor's Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, L27 2YA
Central Grid Reference:	SJ 437 893
Report Revisions:	N/A
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Report Reviewer:	Katie Warren BSc (<i>Hons</i>) MSc MEnvSc MRSB Natural England (NE) Level 1 Bat Licence: 2021-52120-CLS-CLS NE Barn Owl Survey Licence: 2021-52120-CLS-CLS NE Level 1 Great Crested Newt Licence: 2022-10883-CL08-GCN Natural Resource Wales Bat Licence: S093440/1

Report Author

Sam James is a seasoned Ecological Consultant with four years of professional experience, specialising in residential development and ecological masterplanning strategy. Sam holds associate membership with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (ACIEEM) and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (AIEMA) and is a chartered Landscape Architect (CMLI). Throughout his career, Sam has successfully managed a diverse portfolio of projects across various sectors, with a particular focus on residential developments, specialising in Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Sam's expertise includes conducting UKHab surveys, performing BNG assessments, and producing comprehensive design stage reports. Sam is also proficient in preparing Preliminary Ecological Appraisals and Ecological Impact Assessments as well as carrying out a range of different faunal surveys. Sam has a passion for report writing, ensuring that information is clearly presented.

Report Reviewer

Katie Warren is an Independent Ecologist with seven years of experience in the ecology sector. Katie has Natural England and Natural Resource Wales survey licences for bats. She has also Natural England survey licences for great crested newts (Level 1) and barn owls. Katie is a full member of the Institute of Environmental Sciences (MEnvSc) and full member of the Royal Society of Biology (MRSB). She has worked on a wide range of projects from residential developments to commercial developments to large infrastructure projects (highways and rail). Her ecological expertise includes Preliminary Ecological Appraisals, Preliminary Roost Assessments (Phase 1 bat surveys), Ecological Impact assessments (EcIA) and surveying for various notable and European Protected Species. Katie is skilled in the production of reports providing advice to ensure legal compliance and consistency with recognised best practice.

Executive Summary

Katie Warren was commissioned by Witherslack Group to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment for the Proposed Development at Lakeside School, Naylors Road, Liverpool, L27 2YA. Planning consent is to be sought from Knowsley Borough Council for a proposed new classroom building. The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment was completed using the 'Statutory Biodiversity Metric' (Natural England, 2024) based on the Proposed Site Layout Plan (Drawing Number: 25.002(9-002) by Space Architecture and Design Limited (19.02.2025).

The baseline value of the site is 0.14 habitat units and 0.00 hedgerow units. The post-development future value of the site is expected to be 0.16 habitat units and 0.00 hedgerow units. This will result in a total net gain of +16.15% for habitat units and 0.00% for hedgerow units. Due to the hedgerow baseline being 0.00% a net gain isn't required for hedgerows. It also passes the trading rules of the DEFRA metric (Natural England, 2023). The full calculation summary can be found in Appendix 3 and the metric will be submitted with the planning application for full review by the Local Planning Authority. The net gain achieved exceeds the 10% net gain in habitat value advocated by the Environment Act 2021 and this demonstrates that the proposal meets and exceeds national standards. This ensures that the proposed development is compliant with planning policy (subject to implementation and management).

The full calculation summary can be found in Appendix 3 and the metric will be submitted with the planning application for full review by the Local Planning Authority. Amendments to the report and calculations must be made in the event of any design changes. A Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) will be required to ensure the successful establishment and long-term management of retained and newly created habitats and hedgerows. This can be secured as a planning condition.

The tree retention can be secured via condition to ensure their successful management and establishment. Suggested wording could be "Within the next planting season, the specified native trees will be planted. If within a period of five years from the date of planting, any retained or planted tree (or any other tree in replacement for it) is removed, uprooted, or destroyed or dies, another tree of the same size and species shall be planted at the same place, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority".

Introduction

Background to the Development

Katie Warren was commissioned by Witherslack Group to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment for the Proposed Development at Lakeside School, Naylor's Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, L27 2YA. The red line boundary is approximately 0.07 hectares and comprises of vacant or derelict land. The development sits within the wider ownership boundary which features associated school buildings and structures, a fishing pond located in the south-western corner of the site and other habitats including grasslands, trees, hedgerows, introduced shrubs and hardstanding areas typical of a school (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Site Location Plan

Proposed Development and Reference Documents

Planning consent is to be sought from Knowsley Borough Council for a proposed new classroom building. The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment was completed using the 'Statutory Biodiversity Metric' (Natural England, 2024) based on the Proposed Site Layout Plan (Drawing Number: 25.002(9-002) by Space Architecture and Design Limited (19.02.2025) (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. Site Layout (Space Architecture and Design Limited, 2025)

Aims and Methodology

Assessment Aims

The purpose and aims of the assessment were to:

- Establish the baseline biodiversity value of the habitats on site according to preliminary survey information to calculate a pre-development value.
- Establish the post-development value of the habitats on the site according to development plans to calculate a post-development value.
- Identify the requirement for further survey / assessment work, mitigation, compensation and / or assessment where necessary and propose solutions to meeting BNG targets.

Good Practice Principles

Biodiversity net gain has been defined as ‘development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before, and an approach where developers work with local governments, wildlife grounds, landowners and other stakeholders in order to support their priorities for nature conservation (Baker, 2016). Good practice principles for developments should be applied to a development where possible including:

- Applying the mitigation hierarchy and being additional by achieving outcomes that exceed existing obligations.
- Avoiding biodiversity loss which cannot be offset elsewhere (e.g., irreplaceable habitats).
- Quantifying risk appropriately – e.g., is there a difficulty creating or enhancing specific habitats according to the site?
- Making a measurable net gain contribution that is calculated using an appropriate metric and ensuring that the calculation are consistent and transparent with limitations and assumptions clearly identified.
- Ensure that the net gain design achieves the best outcome for biodiversity – this may require quantitative and qualitative assessment – and create a net gain legacy for long-term benefits.

Methodology

The BNG calculation tool used for this assessment is the ‘Statutory Biodiversity Metric’ (SBC) published in February 2024 by Natural England (Natural England, 2024). This tool objectively calculates the biodiversity losses and gains for habitats in relation to the proposed development. The SBC requires all habitat data to be categorised according to the UK Habitat Classification (Butcher *et al.*, 2020) and this was completed by Sam James on the 21st February 2025. The habitats were then mapped into a digital map using QGIS coordinate reference systems OSGB 1936/National Grid and a baseline habitat map can be viewed in Appendix 1. Habitats recorded on site were measured using the

derived areas (Ellipsoidal – EPSG 7001) with habitat areas provided in hectares and hedgerow areas provided in kilometres.

The type and condition of the habitats were assessed during the site survey. The distinctiveness of the habitats is pre-defined by the SBC. The following plans, policies and/or strategies were also viewed to determine whether the habitat has formally been identified in a strategy: the council's local plan, Local and UK Biodiversity Action Plans and Green Infrastructure Strategies. All calculations were inserted into the BNG calculator using the technical data. Where possible, the level of mitigation applied was done in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy. A post-development map can be viewed in Appendix 2 and a calculation summary can be viewed in Appendix 3.

Trading Summaries

The term trading up is a concept which requires conserving through offset components of biodiversity that are of a higher conservation priority (for example, they tend to be more irreplaceable and vulnerable and are harder to recreate) than those affected by the development project for which the offset is envisaged. For example, should non-irreplaceable habitats be lost or impacted as a result of the proposed development, it will be necessary to create or enhance habitats that are of the same or higher distinctiveness.

Assessment Limitations and Assumptions

A small number of limitations were noted but it is considered that an accurate assessment of the site's ecological value has been obtained:

- BNG assessments and calculations can only provide a proxy measure for the real long-term biodiversity changes that occur on any given site.
- The assessment does not give credit, in terms of a score / biodiversity units, to any actions that are taken as part of the development that add features to the site such as bird and bat boxes which support certain species groups. Such measures are beyond the scope of this report.
- A site visit was not undertaken as part of this assessment. However, due to the availability of recent ecology surveys, up-to-date satellite imagery, and recently taken photographs of the development area, this was not considered detrimental to the accuracy of the condition assessments or the overall results. These sources provided sufficient detail to make informed judgements on habitat types and conditions in line with Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements.

Results

Site Habitat Baseline

The red line boundary is approximately 0.07 hectares and comprises of vacant or derelict land. (see Table 1). A plan of the existing habitats can be viewed in Appendix 1 and the condition assessments for these habitats are provided in Appendix 4, where applicable. The baseline value totals 0.14 Habitat Units and 0.00 Hedgerow Units.

Table 1. Baseline Habitats and Corresponding Information. *Numbers are based on rounded figures, check the associated metric calculator for more information.

UK Habitat	Area (ha)	Description (distinctiveness, condition, connectivity and strategic significance)	Value (units)*
Area Based Habitats			
Vacant or Derelict Land; 82	0.07	All the site comprises areas disturbed by previous land use, which have been left abandoned for some time. These areas feature open mosaic habitats in the early stages of natural succession; however, due to their limited size (<0.25ha), they do not meet the criteria for Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land (OMHPDL). The vegetation structure is not varied and provides limited opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live, eat and breed. The habitat offers limited plant species for wildlife though no invasive non-native plant species were recorded as being present. This habitat is automatically classed as being of 'Low' distinctiveness and has been assessed as being in poor condition. This habitat is not identified in any local strategies.	0.14
Total Area (ha)	0.07 Without Trees / 0.07 With Trees	Total Baseline Value (Habitat Units)	0.14

Future Baseline

The post-development habitats and corresponding future values are set out in the proposed habitat map (see Appendix 2). The condition assessments for the future habitats and hedgerows are provided in Appendix 5, where applicable. This has been based on the Proposed Site Layout Plan (Drawing Number: 25.002(9-)002 by Space Architecture and Design Limited (19.02.2025)). (see Figure 2)

Table 2. Future Baseline and Corresponding Habitats

UK Habitat	Area (ha)	Description (distinctiveness, condition, connectivity, strategic significance and risk multipliers)	Value (units)
Area Based Habitats - Created			
Developed Land; Sealed Surfaces (Buildings and Hardstanding); u1b	0.0174	Comprises the areas of built development (buildings and hardstanding). The habitat is automatically classed as being 'Very Low' distinctiveness and due to the limited attributes for biodiversity, it is not assigned a condition. This habitat is not identified in any local strategies.	0.00
Modified Grassland; g4	0.0376	Area of managed grassland throughout the development which will be maintained through a management company. The habitat is automatically classed as being 'Low' distinctiveness and it is expected to reach a poor condition (a conservative score has been applied). This habitat is not identified in any local strategies.	0.07
Other Neutral Grassland; g3c	0.015	Area of managed wildflower grassland throughout the development which will be maintained through a management company. The habitat is automatically classed as being 'Medium' distinctiveness and it is expected to reach a poor condition (a conservative score has been applied). This habitat is not identified in any local strategies.	0.06
Urban Trees; u132	0.0122	Native trees planted within the site along the southern edge along the boundary. The habitat is automatically classed as being 'Medium' distinctiveness and the trees are expected to reach a poor condition. This habitat is not identified in any local strategies.	0.03
Total Area (ha)	0.08	Total Habitat Units Delivered	0.16

Habitat Trading Requirements

The site passes the habitat trading requirements to provide the “same broad habitat or higher distinctiveness habitat” required by the trading standards of the SBC (Natural England, 2023).

Assessment Results

The baseline value of the site is 0.14 habitat units and 0.00 hedgerow units. The post-development future value of the site is expected to be 0.16 habitat units and 0.00 hedgerow units. This will result in a total net gain of +16.15% for habitat units and 0.00% for hedgerow units. Due to the hedgerow baseline being 0.00% a net gain isn't required for hedgerows. It also passes the trading rules of the DEFRA metric (Natural England, 2023). The full calculation summary can be found in Appendix 3 and the metric will be submitted with the planning application for full review by the Local Planning Authority. The net gain achieved exceeds the 10% net gain in habitat value advocated by the Environment Act 2021 and this demonstrates that the proposal meets and exceeds national standards. This ensures that the proposed development is compliant with planning policy (subject to implementation and management).

Table 3. Assessment Results.

	Habitat Value (Units)	Hedgerow Value (Units)
Baseline value	0.14	0.00
Future value	0.16	0.00
Total net % change	+16.15%	N/A
Trading standards	Pass	

Recommendations and Conclusions

Katie Warren was commissioned by Witherslack Group to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment for the Proposed Development at Lakeside School, Naylor's Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, L27 2YA. Planning consent is to be sought from Knowsley Borough Council for a proposed new classroom building. The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment was completed using the 'Statutory Biodiversity Metric' (Natural England, 2024) based on the Proposed Site Layout Plan (Drawing Number: 25.002(9-)002 by Space Architecture and Design Limited (19.02.2025).

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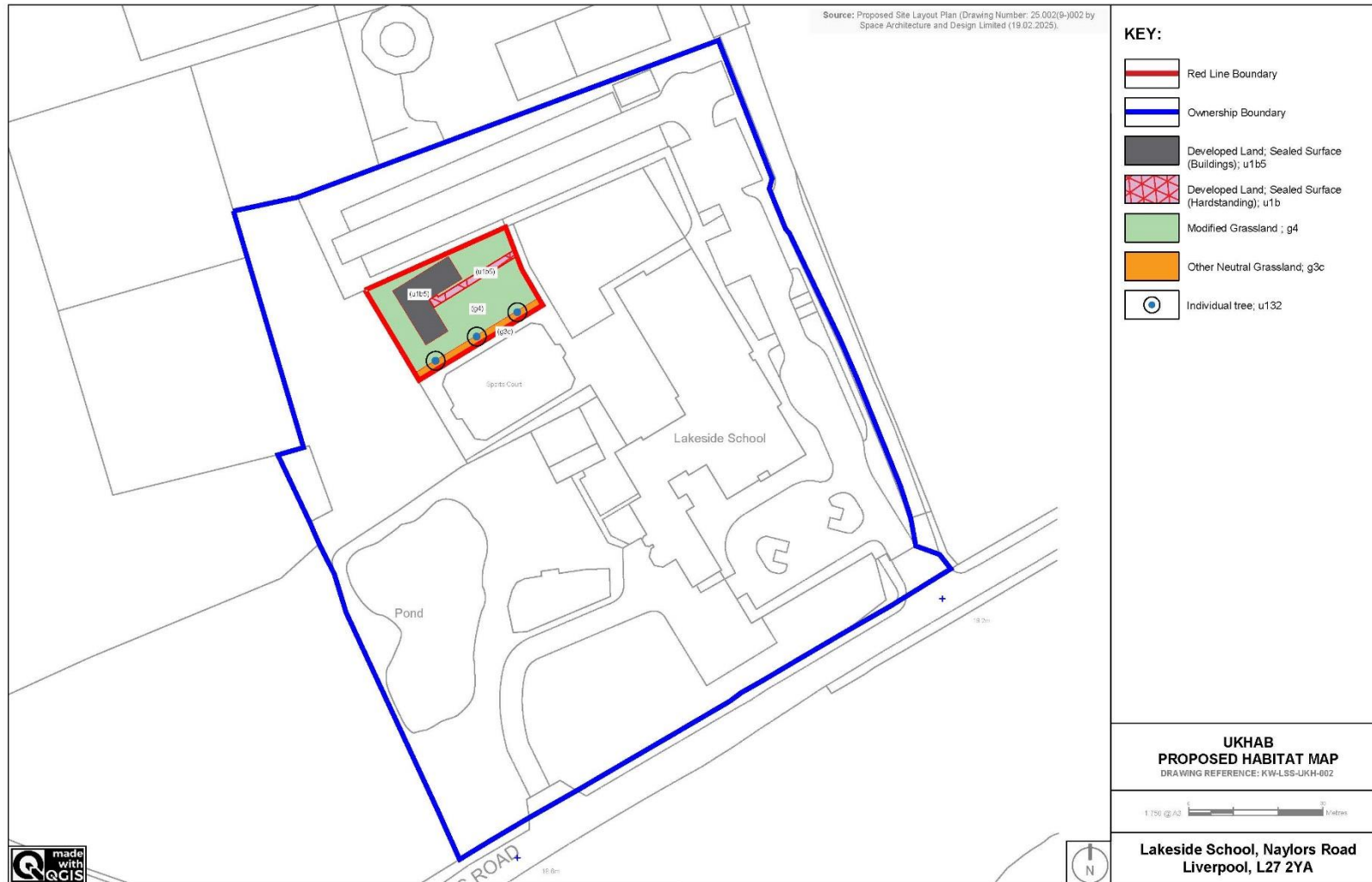
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Appendix 1 – Baseline Habitat Map



Appendix 2 – Proposed Habitat Map



Appendix 3 – Biodiversity Net Gain Calculation Summary

Proposed New Classroom Building, Lakeside		Return to results menu	
Headline Results			
Scroll down for final results ▲			
On-site baseline	Habitat units	0.14	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.16	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	0.02	16.15%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%
Off-site baseline	Habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	0.00	0.00%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%
Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.02	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	Habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	

FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.02
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	16.15%
	Hedgerow units	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Habitat units	10.00%	0.14	0.15	0.00
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓
 No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
 No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

Appendix 4 – Condition Assessments for Baseline Habitats

Condition Assessment Criteria for Vacant or Derelict Land

Condition Assessment Criteria		Pass or Fail?
A	Vegetation structure is varied, providing opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live, eat and breed. A single structural habitat component or vegetation type does not account for more than 80% of the total habitat area.	Fail
B	The habitat parcel contains different plant species that are beneficial for wildlife, for example flowering species providing nectar sources for a range of invertebrates at different times of year.	Fail
C	Invasive non-native plant species (listed on Schedule 9 of WCA1) and others which are to the detriment of native wildlife (using professional judgement) cover less than 5% of the total vegetated area. Note - to achieve Good condition, this criterion must be satisfied by a complete absence of invasive non-native species (rather than <5% cover).	Pass
Final Condition (Passes on C but not A and B)		Poor

Appendix 5 – Condition Assessments for Proposed Habitats

There are no condition assessments for developed land; sealed surfaces (buildings and hardstanding).

Condition Assessment Criteria for Modified Grassland

Condition Assessment Criteria		Pass or Fail?
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² present, including at least 2 forbs. Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition. Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m ² , please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.	Fail
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.	Fail
C	Some scattered scrub (including bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> 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.	Pass
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.	Fail
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens).	Fail
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Pass
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA4).	Pass
Final Condition (Passes on C, F & G but not A, B, D or E)		Poor

Condition Assessment Criteria for Other Neutral Grassland

Condition Assessment Criteria		Pass or Fail?
A	The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type, with a consistently high proportion of characteristic indicator species present relevant to the specific habitat type (and relative to Footnote 3 suboptimal species which may be listed in the UKHab description). <i>Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.</i>	Fail
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 insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.	Pass

C	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens.	Pass
D	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20% and cover of scrub (including bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.) is less than 5%.	Pass
E	Combined cover of species indicative of suboptimal condition and physical damage (such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging management activities) accounts for less than 5% of total area. If any invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA5) are present, this criterion is automatically failed.	Pass
Final Condition (Passes on B, C & D but not A or E)		Poor

Condition Assessment Criteria for Urban Trees

Condition Assessment Criteria		Proposed Trees
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	Pass
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	Pass
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).	Fail
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	Fail
F	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	Fail
G	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Fail
Final Condition Score: (Passes on A & B not C, D, F or G)		Poor

END OF REPORT

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