



Land south of Wisteria Cottage

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN REPORT

**Taylor
Wimpey**

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QUALITY ASSURANCE

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing (2nd Edition, December 2017).

The facts stated in this report are true to the best of our knowledge and belief, and any opinions expressed are held genuinely and in accordance with the accepted standards of the profession. ACD Environmental Ltd is a CIEEM Registered Practice.

Client:	Taylor Wimpey West London
Site/job:	Land south of Wisteria Cottage, Three Mile Cross
Author:	Mollie White
Technical review:	John Constable



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. ACD Environmental Ltd were commissioned by Taylor Wimpey to conduct a Biodiversity Metric Calculation of a site referred to as Land south of Wistaria Cottage, Church Lane, Basingstoke Road, Three Mile Cross, hereafter referred to as 'the Application Site' (OS Grid Reference: SU 71543 67806).
- 1.2. The Application Site comprises approximately 0.5 hectares of land, which is predominantly modified grassland, developed sealed land and native scrub, other neutral grassland, ornamental scrub, and seven non-native small trees.
- 1.3. The proposed development will result in a loss of native scrub and modified grassland.
- 1.4. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric has been used to measure and account for biodiversity losses and gains as a result of the proposed development. The results of the Metric can be summarised as follows:

Baseline Units	Habitat Units	0.04
Post-Development Units	Habitat Units	0.05
Total net unit change	Habitat Units	0.01
Total net % change	Habitats	22.21%

- 1.5. The proposed development will result in a 0.01 change in habitat units. Trading rules with regards to replacing the bramble scrub on-site have not been met by the proposed development; this will require on-site compensation such as incorporating native shrub planting within the scheme, or using like-for-like biodiversity units from off-site, such as off-site landholders, habitat banks (such as Environment Bank), unit marketplaces or Wokingham Borough Council to achieve **habitat units** needed to satisfy the trading rules.
- 1.6. The Baseline Habitat Plan is shown in **Appendix 1**, and the Habitat Creation Plan is shown in **Appendix 2**.
- 1.7. Measures to achieve this net gain in biodiversity include the area lost to the building will see the replacement of modified grassland.
- 1.8. Providing the proposed habitats are created and habitat creation/management prescriptions are secured, the proposed development within the Application Site will be in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Wokingham Borough Council Policies.

2. INTRODUCTION

Background

- 2.1. ACD Environmental Ltd were commissioned by Taylor Wimpey West London to conduct a Biodiversity Metric Calculation of a site referred to as Land east of Wisteria Cottage, Three Mile Cross.
- 2.2. The Application Site is located within Three Mile Cross, Reading. The Application Site comprises approximately 0.5 hectares of land, which is predominantly modified grassland, developed sealed land, building and bramble scrub. The Application Site is surrounded by residential properties and small shops.
- 2.3. The approximate red line boundary of the Application Site is shown in **Image 1**.



Image 1: Application Site location and approximate boundary shown in red¹.

¹ Map data, QGIS 2026

Context

2.4. The development proposals are for a full application for the proposed erection of a new single storey detached garage following demolition of the existing garage.

Purpose

2.5. The purpose of this assessment is to:

- Determine the impact of the development on biodiversity by:
 - Establishing the theoretical value of biodiversity within the Application Site before and after development.
 - Assessing how the value of biodiversity within the Application Site would change following development.
- Make detailed design recommendations to maximise opportunities for biodiversity on-site and where required, establish the parameters of any biodiversity offsetting.
- Evaluate the habitats found onsite.
- Discuss the results of the preliminary roost assessment on the trees.

3. METHODOLOGY

Names and qualifications of surveyors

- 3.1. This report has been written by Mollie White, Assistant Ecologist at ACD Environmental Ltd. She has experience carrying out a wide range of surveys including UK Habitat Classification Surveys and bat surveys. Mollie is a Qualifying member of CIEEM and is working towards obtaining Natural England Class Licences for hazel dormice and bats.
- 3.2. A Technical Review of this report has been undertaken in line with ACD Environmental Ltd's Quality Assurance procedures. The Technical Review was undertaken by John Constable who is the Managing Director at ACD Environmental Ltd.

Habitat Survey

- 3.3. The Application Site was subject to a site walkover on 28th May 2026, completed by ACD Environmental Ltd. This survey confirmed the baseline habitats within the Application Site consisted predominantly of modified grassland, bramble scrub, and four non-native small trees.
- 3.4. The data from the site visit completed in June 2026 was classified with reference to the UK Habitat Classification System (UKHab)² and input into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric.

² UKHab (2023). UK Hab V2. Available at: <https://ukhab.org/>

Limitations and Precautionary Approach

- 3.5. The site visit was undertaken during May, an optimal month for vegetation surveys. However, the modified grassland was recently mowed to a short sward. This provided some difficulty in species identification, but habitats were readily apparent/easily distinguished, therefore, this is not considered to be a significant limitation.
- 3.6. Professional judgement was used by ACD Environmental Ltd and justification for the habitat's conditions will be evidenced where required.

Calculator Tool

Assessment Framework

- 3.7. For the purposes of this assessment, the Statutory Biodiversity Metric has been utilised. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric is accompanied by a 'Calculation Tool'. This was used to calculate the biodiversity units for the Application Site before and after development. The assessment was conducted using the criteria set out within the Natural England guidance document³.

Habitat Measurements

- 3.8. Baseline habitat measurements were carried out in line with the survey results from the site walkover survey. Measurements were calculated using QGIS.
- 3.9. Proposed habitat measurements were calculated from the Landscape Proposals, which is shown in **Appendix 3**. These proposals were georeferenced using satellite imagery into QGIS.
- 3.10. Measurements were entered to the nearest 0.0001 ha.

Distinction Assessments

- 3.11. Habitats are assigned to distinctiveness bands automatically within the Metric. These are based on an assessment of the distinguishing features of a habitat or linear feature, including the consideration of species richness, rarity (at local, regional, national and international scales), and the degree to which a habitat supports species rarely found in other habitats.
- 3.12. The distinctiveness band of each habitat is preassigned in the Biodiversity Metric. The bands are based upon the UK Habitat Classification system. A combination of simple rules and professional judgement have been used to assign each habitat type to the appropriate

³ Biodiversity Statutory Metric: *Small Statutory Biodiversity Metric - User Guide*. Natural England. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides>

distinctiveness band. The distinctiveness categories used are tailored to habitat type.

3.13. Distinctiveness Assessments are assigned according to **Table 1**.

Table 1: Distinctiveness Assessment

Category	Scores	Multiplier
Very High	8	Priority habitats as defined in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act that are highly threatened, internationally scarce and require conservation action e.g. blanket bog
High	6	Priority habitats as defined in Section 41 of the NERC Act requiring conservation action e.g. lowland fens
Medium	4	Semi-natural habitats not classed as a Priority Habitat but with significant wildlife benefit e.g. mixed scrub or other neutral grassland
Low	2	Habitat of low biodiversity value e.g. modified grassland or introduced shrub
Very Low	0	Little or no biodiversity value e.g. developed land/ sealed surface

Proposed Target Condition Assessments

- 3.14. Proposed habitats will have a different ecological target condition. The Metric therefore takes account of variation in habitat target conditions.
- 3.15. Condition Assessments are assigned according to **Table 2**. Habitat Condition was assessed using the criteria set out within the Natural England guidance document.

Table 2: Condition Assessment.

Category	Score
Good	3
Fairly Good	2.5
Moderate	2
Fairly Poor	1.5
Poor	1

Strategic significance

- 3.16. The spatial location of a habitat is treated as a component of the quality of a habitat parcel in the same way as distinctiveness or condition. Strategic significance is used to determine whether the habitat is of increased importance due to its location.

4. ASSESSMENT

Context

- 4.1. The Application Site is located within the centre of Three Mile Cross, Shinfield. The Application Site comprises of predominantly modified grassland, bramble scrub, developed land, unsealed surface and four small trees identified by the tree survey⁴ including Cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*, orange bell buddleia *Buddleja globosa*, box leaf honeysuckle *Lonicera* sp. (Invasive).
- 4.2. The Application Site is surrounded by residential properties, to the west and north, and to the immediate south of the Application Site is Church Lane allotments. The site is immediately south of Church Lane and to the east of Basingstoke Road. The site also includes Church Lane Playground an area of fenced of hardstanding, well managed modified grassland, a small garage, scrub and a gravel driveway.

Baseline Habitats

- 4.3. Locations of habitats can be found in the Baseline Habitat Map in **Appendix 1**. Site photographs can be found within Appendix one of the Update Ecological Appraisal and Bat Preliminary Roost Assessment⁵.
- 4.4. The Application Site predominantly consists of modified grassland, bramble scrub and hardstanding.

Modified grassland

- 4.5. The Application Site comprises of modified grassland around the play area, and the footpath. Due to the grassland being mown botanical identification was limited. The grassland is dominated by perennial rye grass *Lolium perenne*, cocks foot *Dactylis glomerata*, creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, wall barley *Hordeum murinum*, oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, nettles *Urtica dioica*, broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, common ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*, bristly oxtongue *Picris echioides*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg. and cleavers *Galium aparine*. The modified grassland to the north of the site is managed more regularly by mowing and the grassland has a short sward height. The grassland close to the play area has a longer swards height, greater diversity and is less managed.

⁴ FLAC. Shinfield-Garage Application. *Tree survey to BS5837:2012 Tree retention & removal advice*. June 2025.

⁵ EPR. Church Lane Junction. *Update Ecological Appraisal and Bat Preliminary Roost Assessment*. January 2026.

Developed land/ sealed surface

- 4.6. The site contains a disused play area to the east of the site, the hardstanding has occasional cock's foot, ragwort and perennial rye grass emerging through the cracks.
- 4.7. The site contains one building, the garage is located in the south of the site. The garage is a single storey pitched roof building with wood cladding and a corrugated metal roof.
- 4.8. ***Dense scrub***
- 4.9. There is a significant area of scrub to the south of the site (0.004ha). The scrub is dominated by bramble *Rubus fruticosus agg.*, buddleja *Buddleja davidii*, and ivy *Hedra helix* with a small hawthorn tree in the scrub. Within the scrub there is also nonnative species including Boxleaf honeysuckle *Lonicera nitida* Snowberry *Symphoricarpos albus*, elder *Sambucus nigra*, orange ball buddleia *Buddleja globosa* and cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*.

Proposed Habitats

- 4.10. The following habitats are proposed as part of the development within the Application Site:
- Developed land/ sealed surface
 - Building
 - Modified grassland
- 4.11. Locations of proposed habitats can be found in the Habitat Creation Plan at **Appendix 2**.

Developed land/sealed surface

- 4.12. The development will result in the creation of a new garage with associated hard landscaping (0.002615 ha).
- 4.13. Developed land/ sealed surface is allocated a pre-determined, fixed condition score within the Metric. Therefore, due to the lack of biodiversity value, developed land/ sealed surface is assessed as '**N/A - Other**'.

Modified grassland

- 4.14. Turf to be laid on min. 150mm depth topsoil, turf to be supplied as multi-purpose turf or similar approved (0.01 ha).
- 4.15. Modified grassland is considered to reach '**Good Condition**' in the Metric due to the varied vegetation structure consisting of a range of native plant species which will provide good opportunities for invertebrates including pollinators.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1. The full results of the Metric have been provided separately as an Excel document. A summary of results can be found in **Table 3** below.

Table 3: Summary of results.

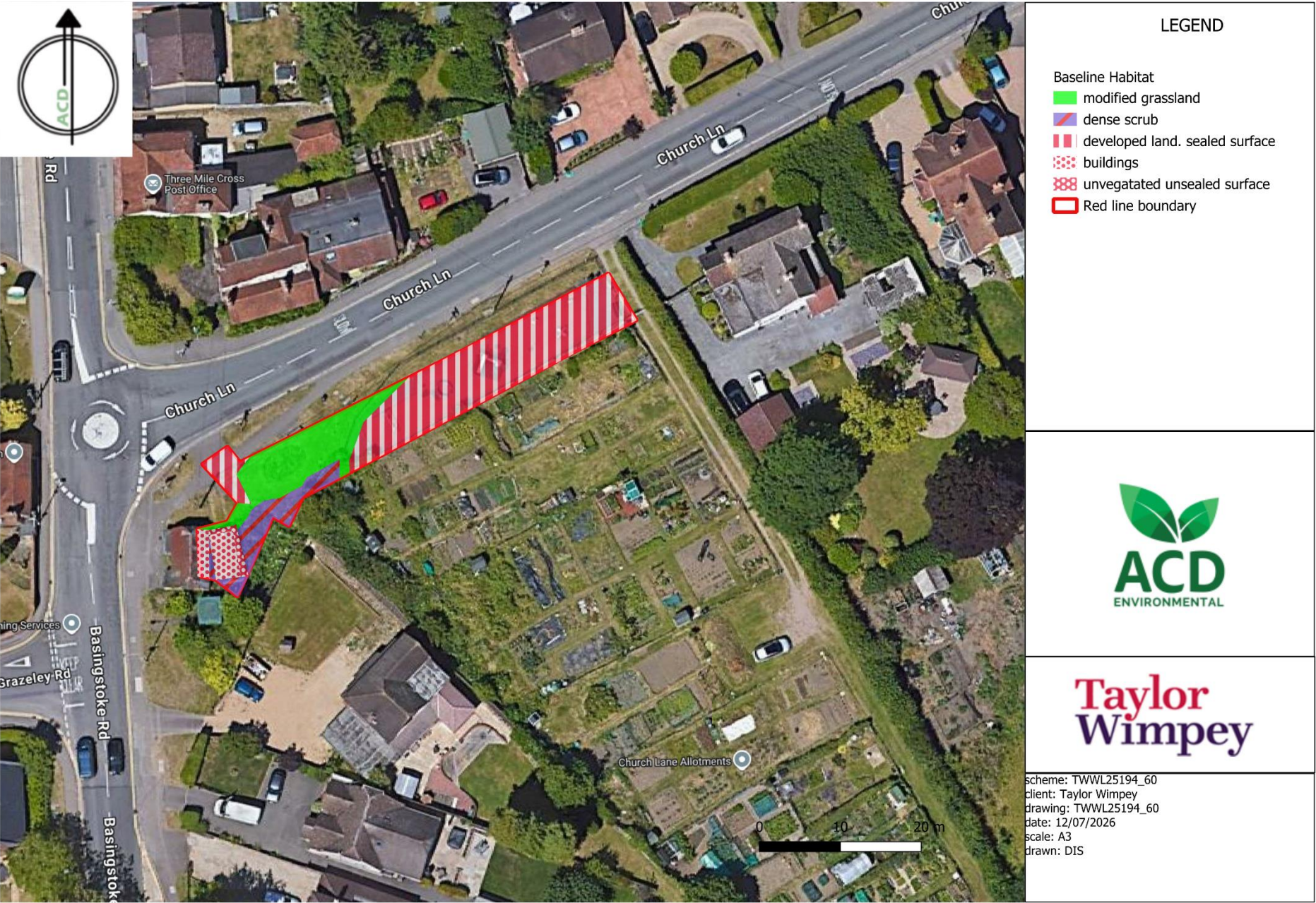
Baseline Units	Habitat Units	0.04
Post-Development Units	Habitat Units	0.05
Total net unit change	Habitat Units	0.01
Total net % change	Habitat	22.21%

- 5.2. The proposed development will result in a net change of 22.21%. Trading rules with regards to replacing scrub on-site have not been met by the proposed development; this will require on-site compensation.
- 5.3. The Metric's habitat trading rules have not been met due to the loss of scrub area; which will require on-site compensation such as incorporating native shrub planting within the scheme or using like-for-like biodiversity units from off-site, such as off-site landholders, habitat banks, unit marketplaces or Wokingham Borough Council.
- 5.4. It is important to note that the Metric does not explicitly deal with fauna. Instead, it uses habitat types as a proxy for the biodiversity 'value' of the species communities that make up those different habitats, and its results must be considered in conjunction with other measures.

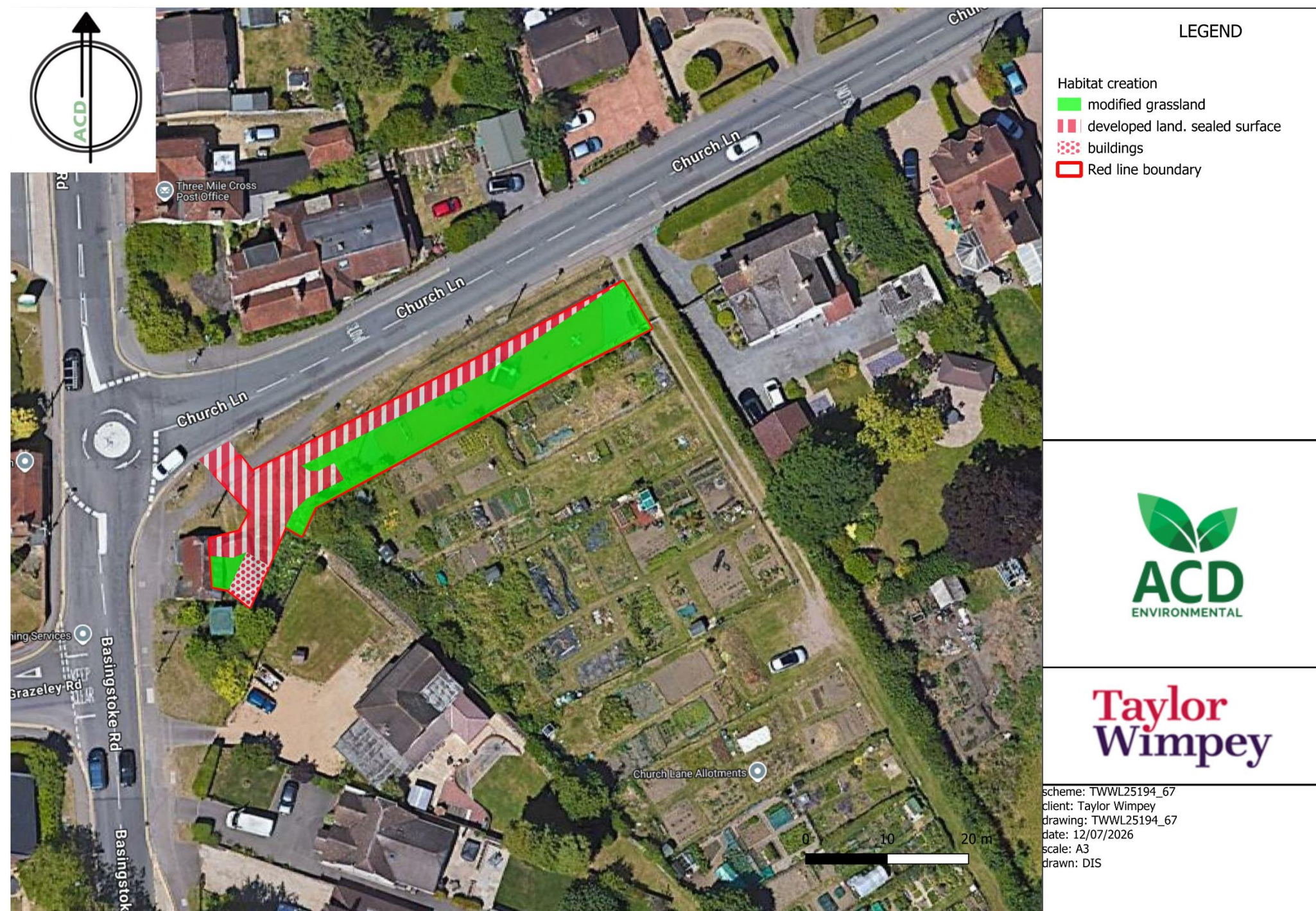
6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1. The proposed development has not satisfied the trading rules for the loss of bramble scrub and has a net change of 0.01 habitat units (22.21%).
- 6.2. Trading rules with regards to scrub on-site has not been met by the proposed development; this will require on-site compensation such as incorporating native shrub planting within the scheme, or using like-for-like biodiversity units from off-site, such as off-site landholders, habitat banks (such as Environment Bank), unit marketplaces or Wokingham Borough Council.
- 6.3. Provided the proposed post-development habitats are created/ sought, the proposed development will be in accordance with the relevant Local Planning Policies and will be in accordance with the NPPF.

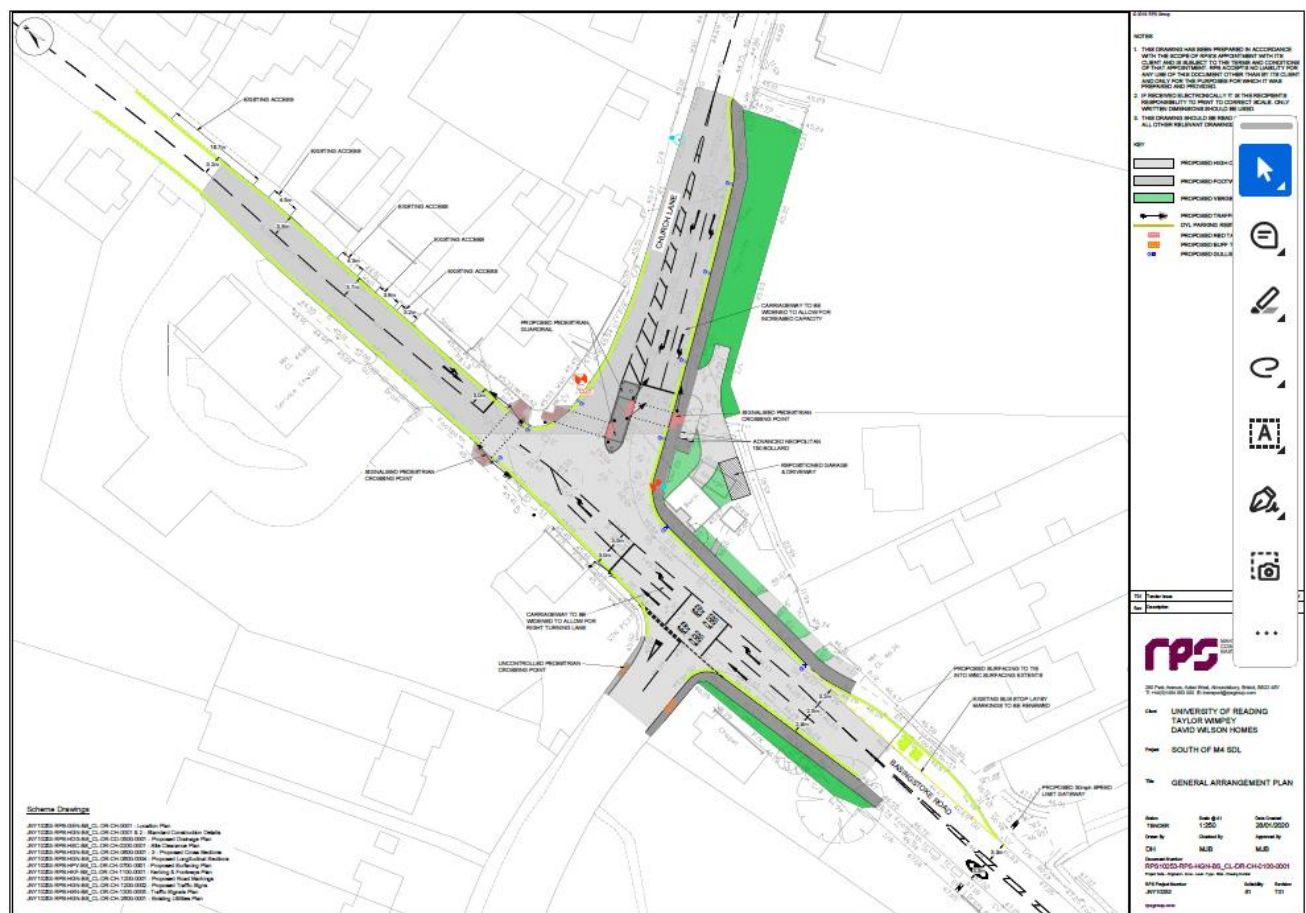
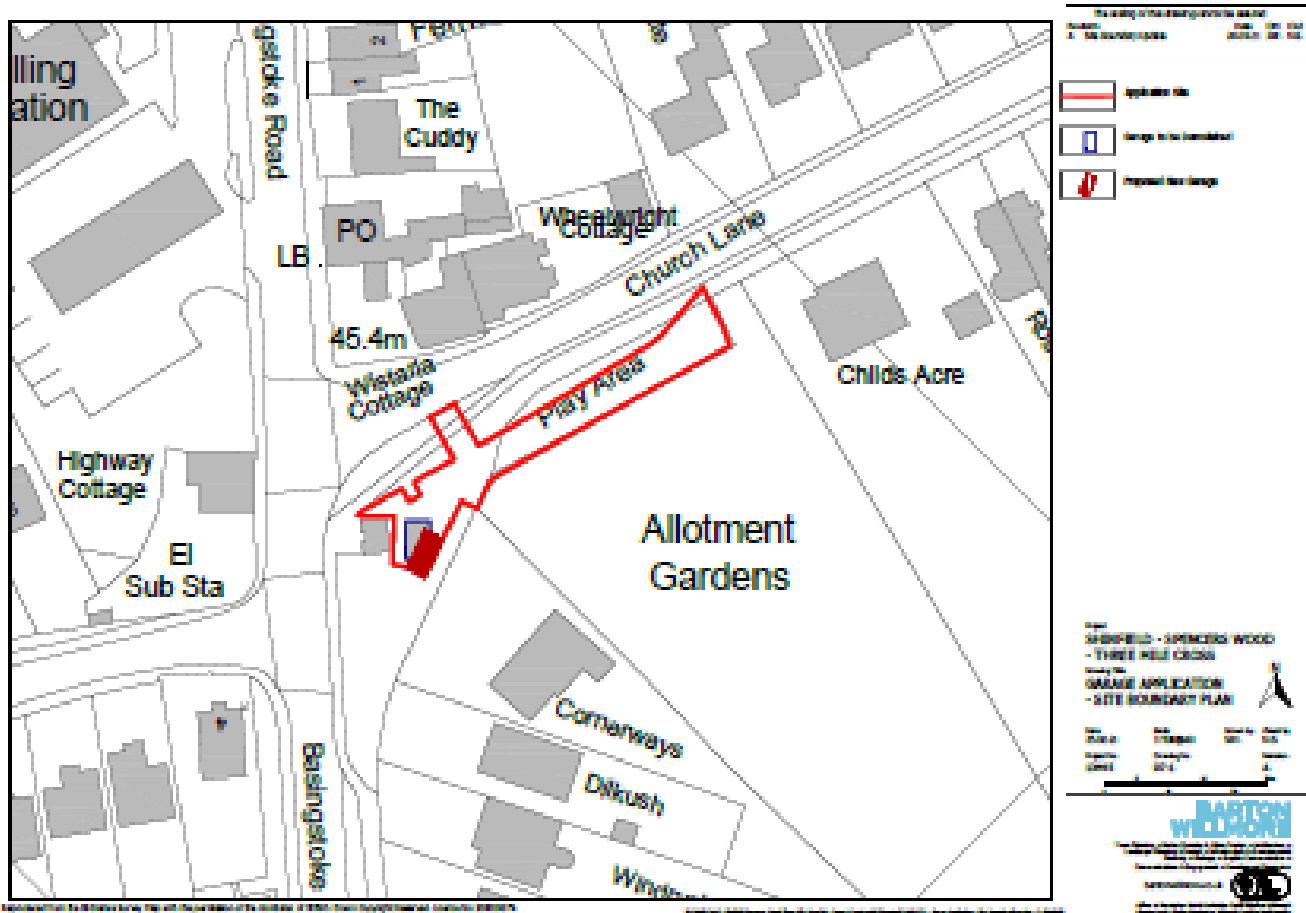
APPENDIX 1: BASELINE HABITAT MAP



APPENDIX 2: HABITAT CREATION PLAN



APPENDIX 3: Red Line & General Arrangement Plan



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