

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Site Address:

205 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham RG40 3QB

Client:

Harefield Development

Assessment Date:

10th March 2026

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with the Wokingham Borough Council. The proposal is described as:

The demolition of one existing dwelling and the construction of three houses.

BNG assessment methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: **BNG Methodology and Legislation – 2025.**

The results and recommendations contained within this report are valid for 18 months. An updated site visit and BNG assessment may be required if the report is to be used any longer than 18 months after completion.

Version Control			
Status	Issue	Name	Date
Draft	0.1	Thomas Doarks BSc (Hons); Graduate Ecologist	10/03/2026
Reviewed	0.2	Zenobia – Jay Pattison BSc (Hons); Senior Ecologist	12/03/2026
Final	1.0	Thomas Doarks BSc (Hons); Graduate Ecologist	13/03/2026

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Site Location and Context
A baseline habitat map is provided in Appendix 1, a post development habitat map in Appendix 2, a proposed development plan in Appendix 3, headline BNG results in Appendix 4, and condition assessments in Appendix 5.
The survey site is centred on National Grid Reference SU 79862 64917 and has an area of approximately 0.143ha. The site comprises one dwelling (B1), associated garages (B2 & B3), a gravel driveway, a small parcel of vegetated garden, two small parcels of introduced shrub, areas of bare ground resulting from the commencement of development works (including rubble and soil piles), two ornamental hedgerows and one scattered tree. It is situated within the village of Finchampstead, Berkshire. There are scattered trees within and adjacent to the site and extending into the local garden landscape. Aerial imagery shows the local landscape to have a woodland character, with several small copses and woodland swathes in close proximity to the site. Waterbodies in the wider landscape include Longmoor Lake (~1.2km west), King’s Mere (~1.2km east) and Queen’s Mere (~1.5km northeast). Such features likely enhance the area for a variety of species, including bats, amphibians and reptiles. This report should be read in conjunction with the following documents: ❖ Statutory BNG Metric - 205 Nine Mile Ride, RG40 3QB- v1 (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., 2026) ❖ Baseline Habitat Condition Assessment (BHCA) - 205 Nine Mile Ride, RG40 3QB- v1 (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., 2026) ❖ Tree protection - 25127-TPP-01 - 205 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham RG40 3QB (Barrell Tree Consultancy., 2026)
Executive Summary
❖ The current landscaping proposal generates a net loss of area-based habitat units (-93.05%) and a net loss of linear-based habitat units (-78.82%) with unmet trading rules. In line with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (2025), any loss of a habitat must be replaced on a like-for-like or like-for-better principle. At present, trading conditions are not satisfied for the loss of 4no. rural trees (medium distinctiveness) and areas of vegetated garden (low distinctiveness). With unmet trading conditions and a net loss, the proposal fails principal Rules 1 and 2 of BNG and is not compliant with current legislation (Environment Act 2021) and planning policies (National Planning Policy Framework, 2024; The Berkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy). ❖ In order to achieve a +10% biodiversity net gain for area-based habitats, a minimum area-based unit score of 2.17 will need to be achieved. At present, there is a unit deficit of 2.03 units. Of these units, 1.76 units must be of individual trees to satisfy trading rules. ❖ Similarly, to achieve a +10% biodiversity net gain for linear-based habitats, a minimum linear-based unit score of 0.01 will need to be achieved. At present, there is a unit deficit of 0.01 units.

- ❖ Based on the proposed plans, it is unlikely that net gain will be achieved by ways of habitat creation/enhancement without significant changes to the proposals on site or require unfeasible commitments off-site. As such, a financial contribution to off-site ecological enhancements (i.e. purchasing biodiversity units) within an approved scheme is required to make up the +10% net gain for area-based habitat units. The mechanism for securing this off-setting will need to be proposed to and confirmed by the LPA and would be linked to the application through a planning obligation Section 106 (s106) agreement. The proposed habitat compensation must be of an appropriate distinctiveness to meet the trading rules of BNG.

Introduction

BNG Informative		
Habitat Degradation Statement	Date reflected by BNG calculations	23 rd June 2018
	The baseline biodiversity value of the site is not derived from the site as observed during the BHCA field survey (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., 2026) as evidence of habitat degradation had occurred. Therefore, the baseline biodiversity value of the site is derived from assumptions inferred from historic satellite imagery (i.e. GoogleEarth) on the 23 rd June 2018. However, information for the hedgerows H1 and H2 have been taken from the BHCA field survey to provide condition assessment information as this information was obtained on-site.	
	Historical imagery < 23 Jun 2018 >  Historical imagery < 9 May 2025 > 	

Irreplaceable Habitat Statement	No irreplaceable habitats as listed under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations (2024) are currently present nor were present before 30 th January 2020.
Metric Version & Publication Date	Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool first published 29 th November 2023 with last updates to metric tools and user guides on 3 rd July 2025.
BNG Target Uplift	+10%
National Character Area (NCA)	129 - Thames Basin Heaths
Strategic Significance	The Berkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (https://rbwmttogether.rbwm.gov.uk/berkshire-local-nature-recovery-strategy) was used to determine the strategic significance of habitats.
Limitations	
Due to the clearance works and habitat degradation on-site, assumptions of habitats present and their condition has been made using information from Google Earth Imagery.	

Baseline

Baseline Biodiversity Value: On-Site				
Area-Based Habitats (A-1)				
Habitat	Area (ha)	Description	Condition Assessment	Strategic Significance
Vegetated Garden	0.1032	These habitats have been cleared prior to the BHCA survey (Arbtech Consulting Ltd, 2026). Information from Google Earth Imagery and Google Street view has been utilised to establish the baseline habitats present and their condition. Four large trees were identified on site. One located at the southern site boundary and three along the northern site boundary.	Habitat condition pre-determined as ' N/A ' as detailed within the Statutory Biodiversity Condition Assessment Supplement.	Low Strategic Significance
Introduced shrub	0.0016			
Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	0.0137			
Developed land; sealed surface (incl. buildings)	0.0246			
Rural tree	Good: 0.1466		Good: assumed to have passed 6 of 6 criteria. Assessed using the 'Individual Trees' habitat type condition sheet.	

Baseline Biodiversity Value: On-Site**Linear-Based Habitats (B-1)**

Habitat	Length (km)	Description	Condition Assessment	Strategic Significance
Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	0.004	This hedgerow had been cleared prior to the BHCA survey (Arbtech Consulting Ltd, 2026). Information from Google Earth Imagery has been utilised to establish the baseline habitat present. The hedgerow appeared neatly maintained with a uniform structure and consistent height and width along its length. The hedgerow also displayed a dense, regular form typical of planted ornamental boundary hedges, rather than the irregular structure commonly associated with native species-rich hedgerows. Based on its formal appearance, regular management, and location within a residential setting, the feature was therefore interpreted as a non-native ornamental hedgerow, likely planted for landscaping or boundary purposes rather than representing a native hedgerow of ecological value.	Habitat condition pre-determined as ' Poor ' as detailed within the Statutory Biodiversity Condition Assessment Supplement.	Low Strategic Significance
Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	0.0045	There are two ornamental hedgerows on site: - H1 is located along the northeast site boundary and consists of cherry laurel (<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>). The hedgerow measures approximately 1.5m in height, 1m in width, and extends for approximately 30m in length. - H2 is located along the southern site boundary and consists of common beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>). The hedgerow measures approximately 1.5m in height, 1m in width, and extends for approximately 15m in length.		

Post-Development

Post-Development Biodiversity Value: On-Site					
Area-Based Habitats					
	Habitat	Area (ha)	Description	Condition Assessment	Strategic Significance
Retained (A-1)	Vegetated Garden	0.0684	Vegetated garden is to be retained around the three new dwellings. The gardens are to be managed privately.	Habitat condition pre-determined as ' N/A ' as detailed within the Statutory Biodiversity Condition Assessment Supplement.	Low Strategic Significance
Created (A-2)	Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	0.0285	Existing driveway and area of vegetated garden to be replaced by custom designed permeable paving, adding 6 total car parking spaces and bin storage.	Habitat condition pre-determined as ' N/A ' as detailed within the Statutory Biodiversity Condition Assessment Supplement.	
	Developed land; sealed surface (incl. buildings)	0.0462	The construction of three new dwellings with decking, asphalt pavement and one hardstanding car parking space.		

Post-Development Biodiversity Value: On-Site					
Linear-Based Habitats					
	Habitat	Length (km)	Description	Condition Assessment	Strategic Significance
Retained (B-1)	Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	0.0018	H2 which is located along the southern site boundary and consists of common beech is to be retained as per the proposed development.	Habitat condition pre-determined as ' Poor ' as detailed within the Statutory Biodiversity Condition Assessment Supplement.	Low Strategic Significance

Change of Biodiversity Value

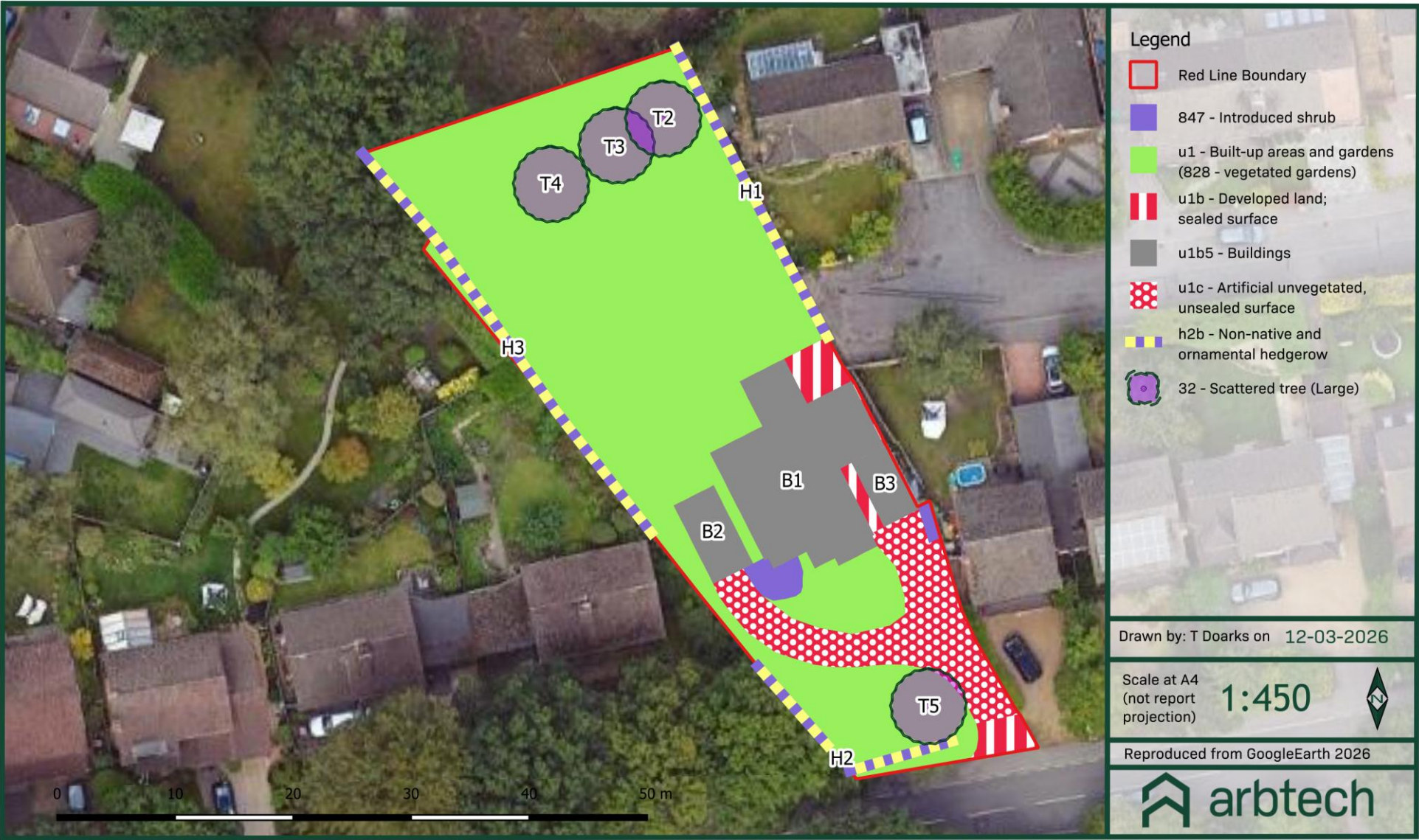
		Biodiversity Units		
		Area-Based	Linear-Based	Watercourse-Based
On-Site	Baseline	1.97 ❖ Vegetated garden 0.21 ❖ Rural trees of good condition (4x large) 1.76	0.01 ❖ Non-native and ornamental hedgerow 0.00	N/A
	Post-Development	0.14 ❖ Vegetated garden 0.14	0.00 ❖ Non-native and ornamental hedgerow 0.00	
	Net Change	-1.83 (-93.05%)	-0.01 (-78.82%)	
Off-Site	Baseline	N/A	N/A	
	Post-Development			
	Net Change			
Overall Net Change		-1.83 (-93.05%)	-0.01 (-78.82%)	

Results, Discussion, and Next Steps

BNG Informative	
Results	The current landscaping proposal generates a net loss of area-based habitat units (-93.05%) and a net loss of linear-based habitat units (-78.82%) with unmet trading rules. In line with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (2025), any loss of a habitat must be replaced on a like-for-like or like-for-better principle. At present, trading conditions are not satisfied for the loss of 4no. rural trees (medium distinctiveness) and areas of vegetated garden (low distinctiveness). With unmet trading conditions and a net loss, the proposal fails principal Rules 1 and 2 of BNG and is not compliant with current legislation (Environment Act 2021) and planning policies (National Planning Policy Framework, 2024; The Berkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy). In order to achieve a +10% biodiversity net gain for area-based habitats, a minimum area-based unit score of 2.17 will need to be achieved. At present, there is a unit deficit of 2.03 units. Of these units, 1.76 units must be of individual trees to satisfy trading rules. Similarly, to achieve a +10% biodiversity net gain for linear-based habitats, a minimum linear-based unit score of 0.01 will need to be achieved. At present, there is a unit deficit of 0.01 units.
Recommendations and Next Steps	In order to achieve the required net gain in biodiversity as a result of the proposed development, the provision of additional or alternative landscaping should be explored and the proposed plans amended accordingly to achieve a net gain on site. The provisioning of additional landscaping should first be considered within the site boundary. There is limited scope on site and this provision will not be possible to achieve on site or adjacent with the current arrangement (within the redline boundary or offsite on other owned land) considering the site is a private garden and no higher distinctiveness habitats can be provisioned here. Based on the proposed plans, it is unlikely that net gain will be achieved by ways of habitat creation/enhancement without significant changes to the proposals on site or require unfeasible commitments off-site. As such, a financial contribution to off-site ecological enhancements (i.e. purchasing biodiversity units) within an approved scheme is required to make up the +10% net gain for area-based habitat units. The mechanism for securing this off-setting will need to be proposed to and confirmed by the LPA and would be linked to the application through a planning obligation Section 106 (s106) agreement. The proposed habitat compensation must be of an appropriate distinctiveness to meet the trading rules of BNG.

	A summary as to what off-site units will be required is detailed in the table below.				
		Distinctiveness	Broad Habitat Group	Habitat	Units Required
	Area-Based	Medium	Individual Trees	Urban Tree	1.76
		Any	Any	Any	0.27
		Total			
	Linear-Based	Any	Hedgerow	Any	0.01
		Total			
BNG Mitigation Hierarchy					
Avoidance	The loss of vegetated garden and ornamental hedgerow has been avoided where possible.				
Minimisation					
Mitigation	Enhancement or creation of habitats with a higher distinctiveness on site is not possible as the site is a private garden.				
Offset	Offsetting will be required to achieve 10% net gain.				

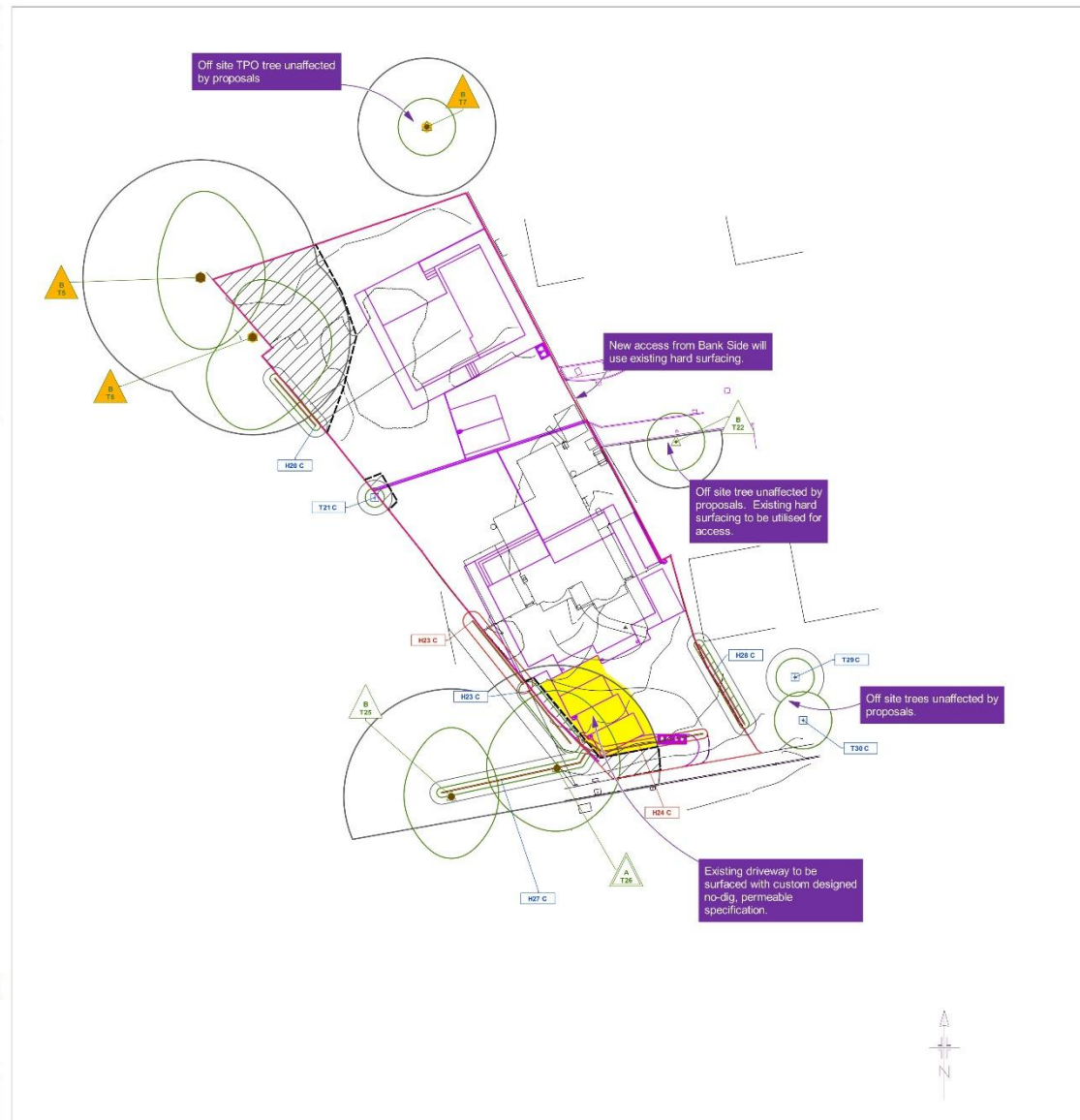
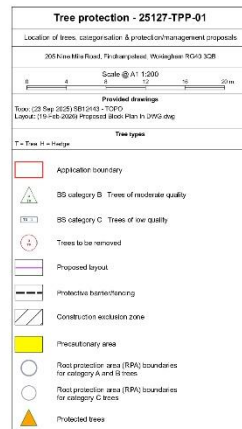
Appendix 1: Baseline Habitat Plan



Appendix 2: Post-Development Habitat Plan



Appendix 3: Proposed Development Plan



Tree	Species	Category	Nominal RPA index (%)	True works
T15	Oak	B	12.3	
T16	Oak	B	10.2	
T17	Scot pine	B	2.1	
H02	Laural	C	1.2	
T21	Rosarin	C	1.8	
T22	Birch	B	3.6	
H23	Holly, laurel, sabel, ash, alder	C	1.2	Partial fall
H24	Beech, hazel	C	1.2	Fall for development
T25	Oak	B	9	
T36	Oak	A	9	
H27	Laural	C	1.2	
H28	Laural	C	1.2	
T29	Purple Runway maple	C	3	
T30	Walnut	C	3	

All retained trees & hedges
Carry out safety check and lift over site to 3-4 m as necessary

Offsite trees
T5, T6, T7, H20, T21, T22, H23, T25, T26, H27, H28, T29, T30

Trees not shown on original topographical survey
T7, H20, T21, H23, H27

SGN 1 *Monitoring tree protection*

Always:

- ✓ have a plan for each site, starting with the minimum tree buffer, and extend from there
- ✓ use the minimum buffer as a guide, not a fixed, inflexible rule to follow
- ✓ use the minimum buffer as a guide, not a fixed, inflexible rule to follow
- ✓ keep an audit trail of all work

SGN 2 Fencing protected trees

Always:

- ✓ consult a professional before erecting a fence
- ✓ obtain a permit from the City of Vancouver, if the fence is to be erected in a protected area
- ✓ get written permission from the City of Vancouver, if the fence is to be erected in a protected area
- ✓ get written permission from the City of Vancouver, if the fence is to be erected in a protected area

Don't:

- ✗ fence a tree without a permit
- ✗ fence a tree without a permit
- ✗ fence a tree without a permit
- ✗ fence a tree without a permit

SGN 4 Pollution control

Always:

- ✓ keep toxic products away from SWM



SGN 9 *Installing/upgrading surfacing in RPAs*

Always:

- ✓ use the correct material to achieve the correct RPA
- ✓ use the correct drainage to achieve the correct RPA
- ✓ use the correct materials and layering for achieving parking in the

SGN 11 *installing services in RPAs*

Always:

- ✓ use the new conduit to replace work in place
- ✓ select the best cabling system for the building services, as opposed to the building, and install it in the building
- ✓ hard-wired services if possible to save time and cost

SGN 12 Landscaping in RPAs

Always:

- ✓ use the minimum to achieve work
- ✓ increasing ground levels with a mix of the kinds of retained soils



Appendix 4: Headline BNG Results

FINAL RESULTS				
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	-1.83		
	Hedgerow units	-0.01		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	-93.05%	Total net gain achieved is less than target set ▲	
	Hedgerow units	-78.82%	Total net gain achieved is less than target set ▲	
	Watercourse units	0.00%		
Trading rules satisfied?	No - Check Trading Summaries ▲			
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Habitat units	10.00%	1.97	2.17	2.03
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.01	0.01	0.01
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓				

Appendix 5a: Baseline Habitat Condition Assessment Sheets

Individual Tree Condition Assessment T2, T3, T4, T5

Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed	Notes (such as justification)
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	Yes	Tree assumed to have been native
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).	Yes	Individual trees automatically pass
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .	Yes	Tree assumed to have been mature
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.	Yes	No historic adverse impacts assumed prior to felling
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	Yes	Natural ecological niches present assumed to have been present
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Yes	>20% of tree canopy over sails vegetation beneath prior to works using aerial imagery
Number of criteria passed		6	
Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/√	
Passes 5 or 6 criteria	Good (3)	✓	
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)		
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)		

