



BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN STATEMENT

Worthing United Football Club, Hill Barn Lane

On behalf of: Finola Brady Architectural Services

Client:	Finola Brady Architectural Services			
Project:	Worthing United Football Club, Hill Barn Lane			
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Validity:

This report is valid for 18 months from the date of the final survey visit. If works have not commenced by this date, an updated site visit should be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist to assess any changes in the habitats present on site, to inform whether surveys should be updated.



LIZARD

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology has been commissioned to provide a Biodiversity Net Gain Statement for Worthing United Football Club, Hill Barn Lane. This report has been written with due regard to best practice guidance for ecological report writing (CIEEM, 2017) and the *Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development* (CIEEM, 2019) and the *Biodiversity Net Gain User Guide* (DEFRA, 2023).

1.2 The development does not appear to qualify under any exemption and will therefore be subject to the standard Biodiversity Gain condition.

Site Overview

1.3 The red line covers c. 0.08 hectares (ha) to the northwestern corner of Hill Barn Recreation Ground, containing Worthing United Youth Football Club and surrounds. The site is open to the public, with the recreation ground to the southeast and a footpath leading to Hill Barn Lane to the west of the building. The site is dominated by fairly patchy species-poor lawn and ruderal vegetation, with hardstanding around the building.

Surrounding Landscape

1.4 The site is set within a suburban location, in northern Worthing, c.50m to the east of Worthing College. To the east, south and west are residential streets interspersed with areas of grassland, including Broadwater and Worthing Cemetery c.900m south of the site, which is designated as Good Quality Semi-Improved Grassland. To the north are two large golf courses interspersed with lines of trees and areas of woodland, including Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland, and to the northeast are arable fields and pastures separated by hedgerows.

Development Proposals

1.5 It is understood that the proposals include the construction of a new football clubhouse from repurposed shipping containers and associated hard and soft landscaping.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk Study - Assigning Strategic Significance

- 2.1.1 Due to the lack of Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) within West Sussex, strategic significance has been assessed as per table 8 of the User Guide (DEFRA, 2023). This included utilising the West Sussex County Council's draft LNRS which was opened for public consultation in October 2025, as well as examining the local plan for any specific targets regarding creation or retention of certain habitat types.
- 2.1.2 Where sites were found to be located within any designated area, such as Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB) or an Area that Could become of particular importance for Biodiversity (ACB), policy statement and management plans for the relevant area were examined. High strategic significance was then assigned to any habitat identified as a priority within these documents.
- 2.1.3 For any sites not located within a designated area, habitats were generally assigned low strategic significance, unless they were considered to provide important ecological linkages in which case they were assigned medium strategic significance.

2.2 Desk Study – Statutory Designated Sites and Irreplaceable Habitat

- 2.2.1 To identify any designated sites for nature conservation, irreplaceable habitat and/or priority habitats (the presence of which may influence the feasibility of delivering BNG) within or adjacent to the Site, the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) and The Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Inventory were reviewed.

2.3 Baseline Habitat Assessment

- 2.3.1 A baseline habitat assessment in accordance with the UK Habitats Classification Manual (UKHabs Ltd., 2023) was undertaken on the 9th of January 2026 by Wenna Trevena MSc BSc (Hons). The results of this survey are summarised herein.

2.3.2 All area based and linear habitats were mapped on site with the aid of aerial imagery and topographical survey where available. The condition of habitats was assessed in accordance with *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric - Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology* (DEFRA, 2023).

2.3.3 The habitats, their condition and strategic importance were input into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool (DEFRA, 2023). The area of habitats which would be retained or enhanced based upon the current proposals was also added to the calculator. This allowed the existing baseline value and loss of biodiversity units to be established.

2.4 Post-Development Habitats

2.4.1 The proposed landscape plan has been used to inform the post-development scenario. This plan was converted to a GIS environment where it was overlaid on the baseline habitat data. Areas of proposed post development intervention (habitat creation and/or habitat retention / enhancement), including the built development, were calculated using QGIS.

2.4.2 The proposed habitats and strategic importance were input into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool (DEFRA, 2023). Target condition scores were assigned based upon what could realistically be achieved on site. The area of habitats which would be retained or enhanced based upon the current proposals was also added to the calculator.

2.4.3 The Metric takes into account whether habitat creation or enhancement is delivered in advance of any impact, or whether there will be any significant delay in an intervention relative to the impact. Where delays in habitat creation are anticipated, or habitat creation is to be undertaken in advance, this has been included within the metric and fully explained within section 3 of this report. Where no delays or advance creation shall occur, a standard temporal multiplier has been applied to created habitats.

2.4.4 Once all measures have been input into The Biodiversity Metric Calculation, the overall change in value of the site could then be determined.

2.5 Mitigation Hierarchy

2.5.1 Biodiversity net gain planning practice guidance and Articles 37A and 37D of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, sets out a list of priority actions to ensure adherence to the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy:

- First, in relation to onsite habitats which have a medium, high and very high distinctiveness (a score of four or more according to the statutory biodiversity metric), the avoidance of adverse effects from the development and, if they cannot be avoided, the mitigation of those effects; and
- Then, in relation to all onsite habitats which are adversely affected by the development, the adverse effect should be compensated by prioritising in order, where possible, the enhancement of existing onsite habitats, creation of new onsite habitats, allocation of registered offsite gains and finally the purchase of biodiversity credits.

2.6 Survey Constraints / Considerations

2.6.1 Areas have been rounded to the nearest 10m² and measurements input to the metric using three decimal places. Due to the output of the Metric being displayed to two decimal places, slight imprecision in output may occur.

2.6.2 The site survey was carried out in January, outside of the core growing season. However, all present habitats were of low or very low distinctiveness and the season was not considered to present a constraint in assessing habitat conditions.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

3.1.1 The site is not within any ecological designation, such as a *Biodiversity Opportunity Area* or *Nature Improvement Area* and no habitats on site are directly referenced in any local plan or other such document. Habitats on site have therefore been classified as being of low strategic significance.

3.1.2 There is no irreplaceable habitat within or immediately adjacent to the site.

3.1.3 The site is not located within any statutory designated site.

3.2 Habitats

Habitat Degradation

3.2.1 It was apparent during the site visit that the existing building had already been demolished, and the shipping containers that constitute the new clubhouse had been installed. Therefore, the original landscape plan was used to map the baseline habitats. The habitats which have already been degraded by the installation of the shipping containers are Modified Grassland, Artificial Unvegetated; Unsealed Surface and Developed Land; Sealed Surface. Based on the precautionary principle, the lost Modified Grassland had to be assigned good condition.

On-site Habitats

3.2.2 The following habitats were identified within the red line boundary of the site:

- Modified Grassland
- Artificial Unvegetated; Unsealed Surface
- Developed Land; Sealed Surface
- Ruderal/Ephemeral Vegetation

Modified Grassland

- 3.2.3 The site is dominated by grassland which was c. 5-10cm in length at the time of the survey with an average diversity of 4-5 species per square meter. Species were typical of the habitat type and included perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, annual meadowgrass *Poa annua*, and dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg. Overall, the grassland is of **site** value.



Image No. 01 – Existing modified grassland south of shipping containers.

Artificial Unvegetated; Unsealed Surface

- 3.2.4 To the north of the shipping containers was an area of gravel/unmade ground, gradating into ruderal vegetation from west to east. This appeared to have been previously asphalt hardstanding which had degraded and broken up through use, allowing limited spread of ruderal vegetation as the gravel becomes sparser in the east.



Image No. 02 – Artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface north of shipping containers, with ruderal/ephemeral vegetation.

Developed Land; Sealed Surface

- 3.2.5 To the south and west of the shipping containers was a laid asphalt footpath leading to the public entrance into the recreation ground to the northwest of the clubhouse. The asphalt along the south of the site and in the northwestern corner was in fairly good condition, showing minimal cracks and degradation, but the path along the west of the shipping containers showed significant wear, allowing grass and ruderal vegetation to encroach.



Images No. 03 and 04 – Developed land; sealed surface to the south (left) and west (right) of the shipping containers.

Ruderal/Ephemeral Vegetation

- 3.2.6 The majority of the western end of the site was made up of ruderal/ephemeral vegetation growing along the fenceline and under the canopies of the offsite trees. This featured species such as nettle *Urtica dioica*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., buddleia *Buddleja davidii*, yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, hedge bedstraw *Gallium mollugo*, and ivy *Hedera helix*. Overall, this habitat is of **site** value.



Image No. 05 – Ruderal/ephemeral vegetation to the west of the site.

Baseline Habitat Value

- 3.2.7 The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment concluded that the existing baseline biodiversity value of the site was **0.15** Habitat Units, consisting of:
- 0.003ha of artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface providing 0.0 habitat units (condition assessment N/A).
 - 0.029ha of developed land; sealed surface providing 0.0 habitat units (condition assessment N/A).
 - 0.026ha of modified grassland in poor condition providing 0.5 habitat units.
 - 0.007ha of modified grassland assumed to be in good condition providing 0.04 habitat units.
 - 0.014ha of ruderal/ephemeral vegetation in moderate condition providing 0.06 habitat units.
- 3.2.8 A full condition assessment for each existing habitat type is detailed in Appendix A.

Habitat Retention

- 3.2.9 Some of the existing habitat on site is to be retained in its current condition, meaning the retention of **0.07** habitat units comprised of:
- All existing developed land; sealed surface and 0.002ha of the artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface.
 - 0.025ha of the modified grassland surrounding the building.
 - 0.012ha of the ruderal/ephemeral vegetation to the west.

3.3 Hedgerows

- 3.3.1 No hedgerows are present on site.

3.4 Baseline Watercourse Value

- 3.4.1 No watercourses are present on site.

3.5 Proposed Habitat Creation

- 3.5.1 Proposals are to result in the creation of 0.011ha of new developed land; sealed surface on site, which will provide **0.00** habitat units.

3.5.2 Condition assessment of the new habitat is not applicable.

3.6 Proposed Hedgerows / Watercourses

3.6.1 No new hedgerows or watercourses are proposed within the scheme.

3.7 Proposed Habitat Enhancements

3.7.1 No habitat enhancements are proposed for the site.

3.8 Adherence to the Mitigation Hierarchy

Avoidance and Mitigation

3.8.1 The scheme has been designed to minimise impacts on the modified grassland and ruderal/ephemeral vegetation (both low distinctiveness habitats). This has been done by restricting the new building to the existing building footprint as much as possible.

3.8.2 Due to space restrictions within the redline and the applicants lease area, it has not been possible to achieve +10% biodiversity net gain onsite. Therefore, offsite units will be required.

3.9 Trading Summary

3.9.1 Trading rules are not currently satisfied due to the net loss in units across the site.

3.10 Overall Results

3.10.1 Once all retention and habitat creation measures are taken into account, the scheme currently results in the delivery of **0.10** Habitat Units, resulting in a net decrease of **-0.05** units and a **-34.67%** change in Habitat Units.

4.0 MEASURES TO ACHIEVE MINIMUM REQUIRED LEVELS OF BNG

- 4.1 Proposals currently result in a deficit of 0.07 habitat units. Trading rules for low distinctiveness habitats are not currently met due to the deficit in units.
- 4.2 The purchase of units from a private habitat provider, such as the Environment Bank, Wiston Estate or Nature Impact, shall be sought post-planning approval to allow the shortfall in units to be addressed. Purchased units shall include a minimum of 0.07 units of a low or higher distinctiveness habitat type to ensure that all trading rules are met. This approach is in accordance with Government guidelines, with the completion of a full metric with inclusion of off-site habitats provided pre-commencement as part of the standard Biodiversity Gain Condition.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Metric calculations have identified that the proposed scheme currently does not result in a minimum of +10% Biodiversity Net Gain in Habitat Units, however habitat units shall be purchased from a third-party provider to satisfy the current deficit and ensure that the current proposals abide by the trading rules.

6.0 REFERENCES

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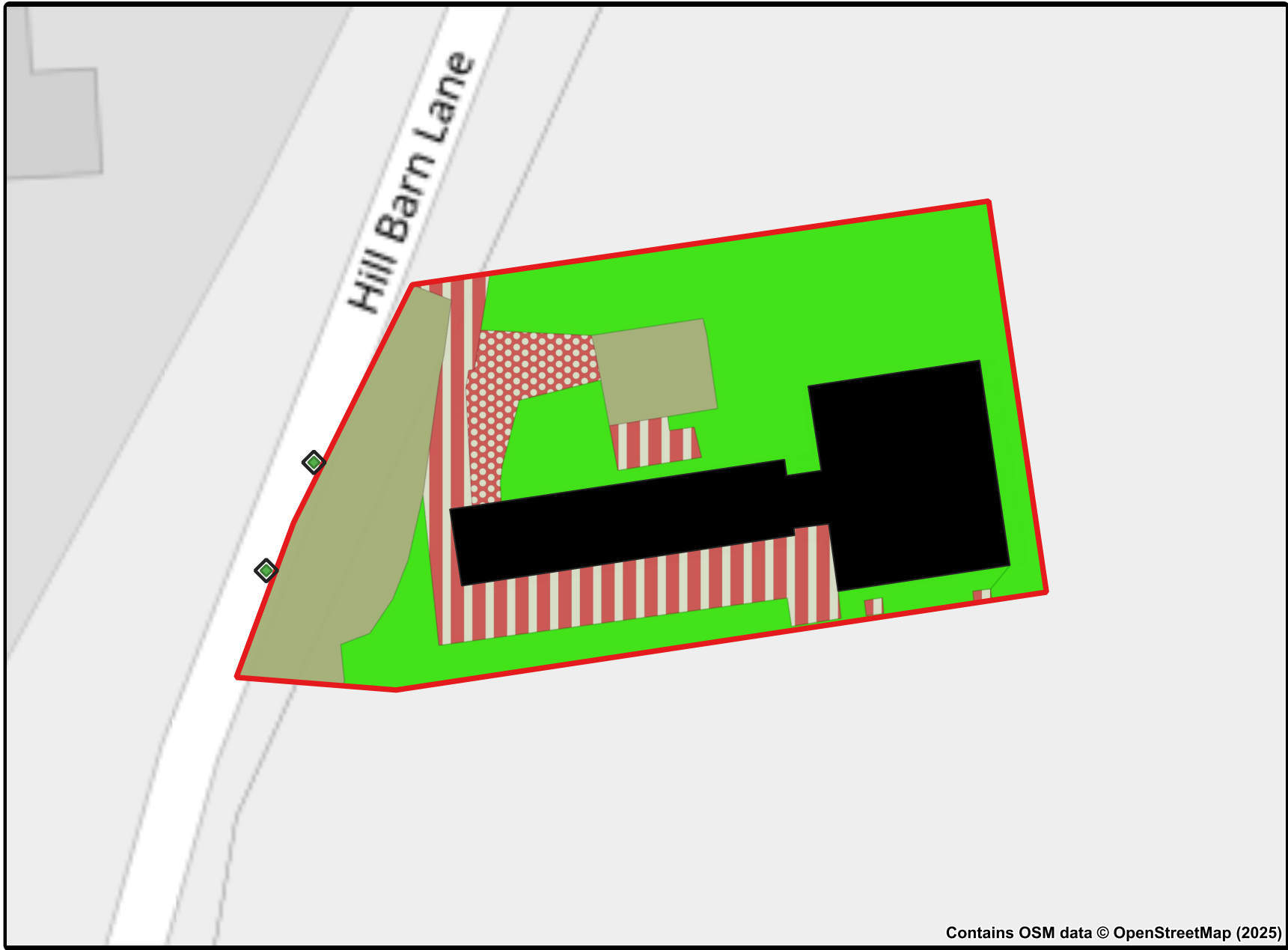
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Legend

-  Offsite tree
-  Redline boundary
-  Building
-  Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface
-  Developed land; sealed surface
-  Modified grassland
-  Ruderal/ephemeral vegetation



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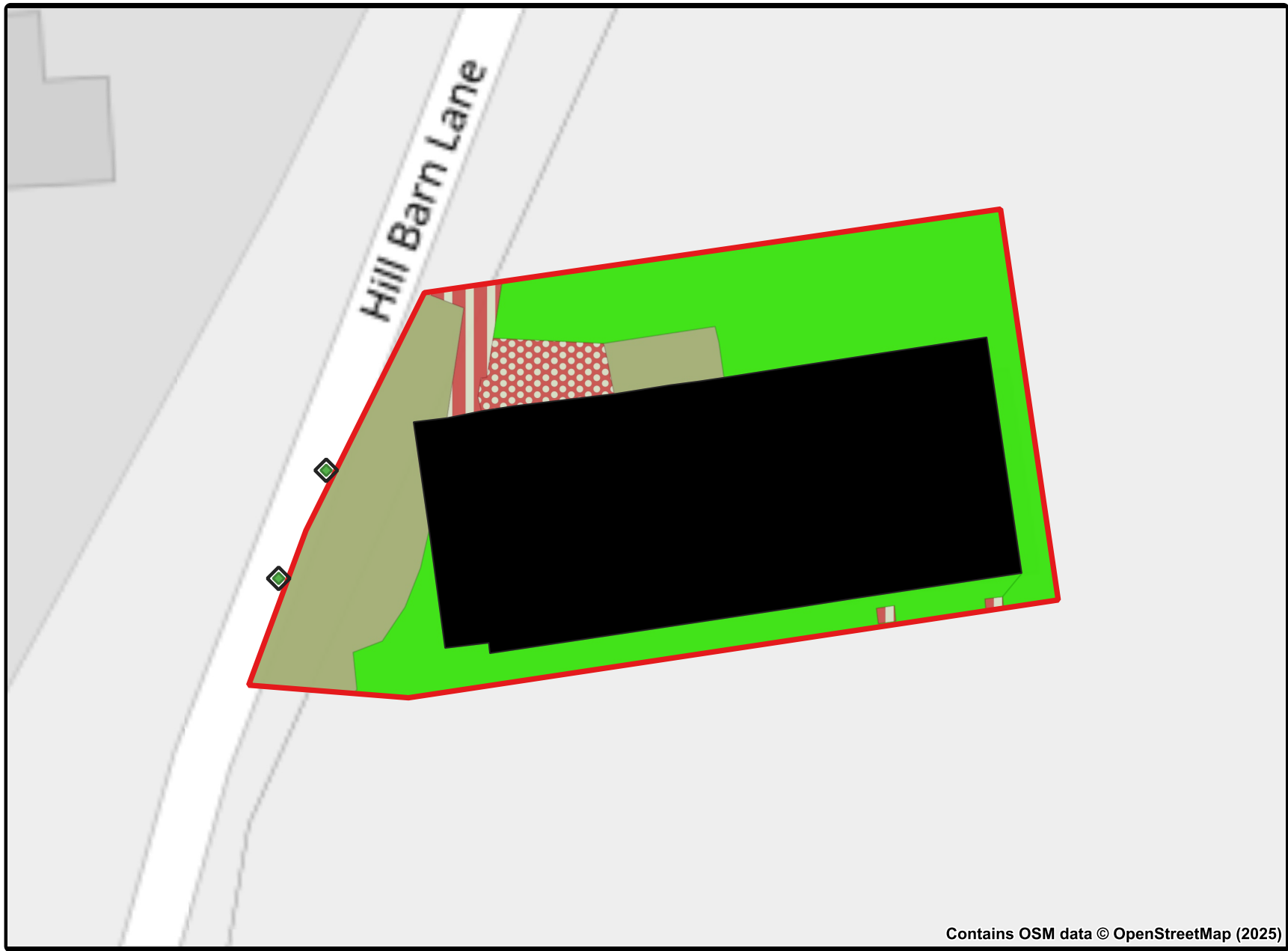
Finola Brady Architectural Services

Project Title & Location

Worthing United Football Club, Hill Barn Lane

Drawn by	Approved by	Rev	Date
WT	HS	00	10/02/26

Figure No. 01 - Baseline Habitat Plan



Legend

-  Offsite tree
-  Redline boundary
-  Building
-  Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface
-  Developed land; sealed surface
-  Modified grassland
-  Ruderal/ephemeral vegetation



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Drawn by	Approved by	Rev	Date
WT	HS	00	10/02/26

Contains OSM data © OpenStreetMap (2025)

Figure No. 02 - Proposed Habitat Plan

Appendix A – Condition Assessment for Existing Habitats

Modified Grassland in Poor Condition:

ukhab - UK Habitat Classification		
Condition Assessment Criteria	Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² present, including at least 2 forbs (these may include those listed in Footnote 1). 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 (excluding those listed in Footnote 1), 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.	N	5 species per m2 on average = perennial rye, annual meadow grass, common daisy, dandelion, shepherds purse
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.	N	Some taller than 7cm (around base of shipping containers) but less than 20%
C Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). Note – patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Y	Limited scrub at eastern edges of habitat
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.	N	Bare ground and growth suppression from heavy access
E Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localized areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	N	More than 10%
F Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Y	No bracken present
G There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁴).	Y	No schedule 9, but buddleia is present
Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)		N
Number of criteria passed		3
Condition Assessment Result (out of 7 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved *1/
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Good (3)	
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Moderate (2)	
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4 – 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)	Poor (1)	x

Modified Grassland in Good Condition:

ukhab - UK Habitat Classification		
Condition Assessment Criteria	Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² present, including at least 2 forbs (these may include those listed in Footnote 1). 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 (excluding those listed in Footnote 1), 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.	Y	habitat lost so assumed to meet all criteria
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.	Y	habitat lost so assumed to meet all criteria
C Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). Note – patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Y	habitat lost so assumed to meet all criteria
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.	Y	habitat lost so assumed to meet all criteria
E Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	Y	habitat lost so assumed to meet all criteria
F Cover of broken <i>Phlebotomus aquilinus</i> is less than 20%.	Y	habitat lost so assumed to meet all criteria
G There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁴).	Y	habitat lost so assumed to meet all criteria
Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)		Y
Number of criteria passed		7
Condition Assessment Result (out of 7 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x1/7
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Good (3)	8
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Moderate (2)	
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4 – 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)	Poor (1)	

Ruderal/Ephemeral Vegetation in Moderate Condition:

Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
Core Criteria - must be assessed for all urban habitat types :			
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.	N	Vegetation mostly short
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.	Y	Bramble, yarrow, bristly ox tongue, ribwort plantain, ivy
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)² cover less than 5% of the total vegetated area³. Note - to achieve Good condition, this criterion must be satisfied by a complete absence of invasive non-native species (rather than <5% cover).	Y	No schedule 9 present

Essential criteria relevant for habitat type achieved (Yes or No)			Y
Number of criteria passed			2
Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/✓	
Results for habitats requiring assessment of 3 core criteria only (all listed urban habitats except Open mosaic habitat on previously developed land, Bioswale, SuDS and Green roofs):			
• Passes all 3 core criteria; AND • Meets the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.	Good (3)		
• Passes 2 of 3 core criteria; OR • Passes 3 of 3 core criteria but does not meet the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.	Moderate (2)	x	
• Passes 0 or 1 of 3 core criteria.	Poor (1)		