



ECOLOGY TECHNICAL NOTE

SITE NAME & ADDRESS	Written Stone Farm, Written Stone Lane, Longridge, Preston, PR3 2ZN
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL	Conversion of existing redundant agricultural building to form a dwelling and ancillary works including new access.
PLANNING REFERENCE	Not known
ECOLOGY ASSESSMENT TYPE	BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN
DATE	24 June 2024 – Revision 01
AUTHOR	Ryan Knight BSc (Hons) MCIEEM - Principal Ecologist

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Knight Sky Ecology was commissioned to provide a Small Sites Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool (hereafter referred to as the metric tool) for the proposed development of the 'large barn' at Written Stone Farm. This technical note has been produced to accompany the metric tool and provide an overview of the results.

In England, biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This legislation was inserted into the 1990 Act by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021, and was amended by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain, subject to some exceptions, every planning permission is subject to a condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met ("the biodiversity gain condition"). This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the on-site habitat. This increase can be achieved through on-site biodiversity gains, registered off-site biodiversity gains or through statutory biodiversity credits.

METHODS

The latest version of the metric tool and User Guide (Feb 2024) have been accessed from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides>

Desk Study

The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) mapping tool (Available from: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>) was used to search for ecological information contained within the following datasets:

- Statutory designated sites for nature conservation within a 500m radius.
- Priority habitats (as listed within Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006) within a 500m radius.



A site walkover was undertaken on **12th April 2024** by Ryan Knight MCIEEM (Full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management). Ryan has extensive experience in survey and site assessment for habitats and protected species and holds a Level 2 Natural England Class Licence for bats (ref. 2015-12611-CLS-CLS) and a Level 1 licence for great crested newts (ref. 2015-16727-CLS-CLS).

All habitats within the site were described and mapped using UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Version 2 definitions (UKHab Ltd, 2023).

RESULTS

BASELINE

Designated Sites

The proposed development is not located within 500m of any statutory designated sites. In addition, there are no such sites within 2km.

Priority Habitats (including Ancient Woodland)

Excluding hedgerows, there are no priority habitats on site. The nearest priority habitat is a deciduous woodland located 300 east. The development type does not pose any risk of impacts to such priority habitats.

Lancashire Ecological Network

The site is not within the Lancashire Ecological Network.

Habitats

Photos which provide a general overview of the site and supporting data for the metric tool are provided below. Figure 1 at the foot of this document provides an overview of the habitat baseline as existing in April 2024.

The site area measures 4745.8m² and includes the existing access road, hardstanding areas, the barn and outbuildings and, sections of two agriculturally improved pasture fields (UKHab Classification – g4 modified grassland).

A small, self-seeded ash and an elder tree are located on the boundary directly adjacent to the barn. The combined biodiversity value of the existing habitats is **1.2 habitat units**. The only habitat of measurable value that would be lost as a result of development is grassland (due to new road access, conversion to gardens and creation of a species rich grassland).

Hedgerows

There is a species rich hedgerow on the existing boundary of Written Stone Lane. A small section of this hedgerow would need to be removed for the new access.

Watercourses

No watercourses were identified within the site or within 10m of the boundary.



ENHANCEMENTS

No habitats are proposed to be enhanced.

CREATION

Habitats

Figure 2 located at the foot of this document provides a UK Habitat Classification map of the site as proposed. It has been based on the DWG (CAD) file provided from the agent.

The habitats to be created are: vegetated gardens to the front and rear of the barn; and, a species-rich grassland (UKHab g3c other neutral grassland) which would bound the new access. This grassland has been assumed to achieve a 'moderate' condition.

Trees

In order to achieve at least a 10% gain in biodiversity value, tree planting is considered to be the most ecologically viable option for the site. Based on the site plans provided from the agent, the development would result in the planting of 17 native trees (as per Figure 2).

On the presumption that 17 trees would be planted, the combined value of the retained and created habitats post-development would be **1.4964 habitat units**.

Hedgerows

Hedgerow planting would include a native species hedgerow along the boundaries of the garden and a species rich native hedgerow along the new access (both assumed 'moderate' condition). The combined value of the retained and created habitats post-development would be **1.44 hedgerow units**.

SUMMARY

The development proposals will result in:

- a net gain of biodiversity value comprising **0.2328 habitat units (19.28 %)**; and,
- a net gain of biodiversity value comprising **0.7788 hedgerow units (108.53%)**

Table 1.1 provides the headline results from the metric tool.

Table 1.1. Headline Results

Baseline Units	<i>Habitat units</i>	1.2076
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.7176
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	Zero Units Baseline
Post-development Units	<i>Habitat units</i>	1.4404
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	1.4964
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.0000



Total net unit change	Habitat units	0.2328	✓
	Hedgerow units	0.7788	✓
	Watercourse units	0.0000	
Total net % change	Habitat units	19.28%	✓
	Hedgerow units	108.53%	✓
	Watercourse units	% target not appropriate	

The development will therefore meet the biodiversity net gain condition as the 10% net gain for habitats and hedgerows will be exceeded provided that the landscaping works are carried out in accordance with the specifications within this document.

The time to target condition of the habitats (namely, the species rich grassland) is 5 years. The time to target condition of the hedgerows is 5 years and the trees 27 years.

PLEASE DO NOTE – The development would result in 0.112 excess habitat units being created on the site (i.e., the value over the mandatory 10% threshold) along with approximately 0.7 excess hedgerow units. The planting of only 8 trees is technically required to achieve the 10% gain. The developer may wish to ‘bank’ these excess credits for any further development sites that are subject to the BNG condition.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Post-consent Requirements & Recommendations

The statutory framework for biodiversity net gain requires a Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) to be submitted and approved by the planning authority to discharge the biodiversity gain condition prior to the commencement of development. The BGP should detail the measures undertaken to achieve the required 10% net gain as stated in the metric tool.

Local planning authorities have and are integrating their own approaches to detailing planning conditions since the government issued further legislation and guidance on BNG planning requirements between November 2023 and February 2024.

Further Commitments

The post-development habitat plan has been based on the layout plan designed by the agent with the addition of habitats which can be most feasibly be achieved within the site. This habitat plan is required to be supplemented with the design of a planting schedule and planting establishment and management measures which are typically completed by a specialist landscape contractor prior to the commencement of the works. Ecological consultancies do not typically design landscaping plans.

In late March 2024, Natural England issued a “*Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan For use with Small Sites Metric*” that can form the basis for the habitat monitoring commitments that are to be made.



Any seeds, plants or trees used within the landscaping scheme should be sourced from a reputable stockist and be of local provenance. Only UK based stock is advised to be purchased. Only UK native species should be used with regards to trees and grassland seed mixes. The developer may wish to plant more trees than required to allow for failures.



PHOTOS

Photo 1.
Grassland to
the rear (north)
of the barn.



Photo 2.
Hardstanding
area adjacent
to the barn.





Photo 3.
View
southwards
over new
proposed
access.



Photo 4.
Species rich
hedgerow.





Photo 5.
View north-
west over
proposed new
access.

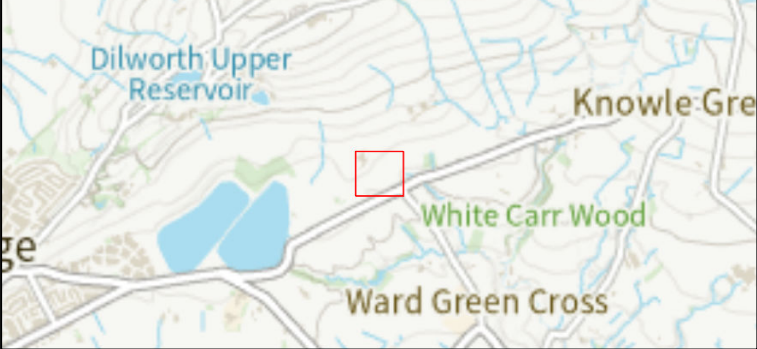


Photo 6.
View of barn
and field area.

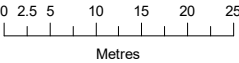


FIGURES (NEXT PAGE)

- **FIGURE 1. UK HABITAT CLASSIFICATION MAP (BASELINE)**
- **FIGURE 2. UK HABITAT CLASSIFICATION MAP (POST-DEVELOPMENT)**



Survey Information	
<div><div></div></div>	Site boundary (4,745.8m ²)
UKHab Habitat Survey	
<div></div>	g4 - Modified grassland (2,831.7m ²)
<div></div>	u1b - Developed land; sealed surface (1,011.2m ²)
<div></div>	u1b5 - Buildings (490.1m ²)
<div></div>	800 - Road (412.8m ²)
<div></div>	h2a5 - Species-rich native hedgerow (89.7m)
<div></div>	32 - Scattered tree (2)



PROJECT TITLE

WRITTEN STONE FARM, LONGRIDGE

DRAWING TITLE

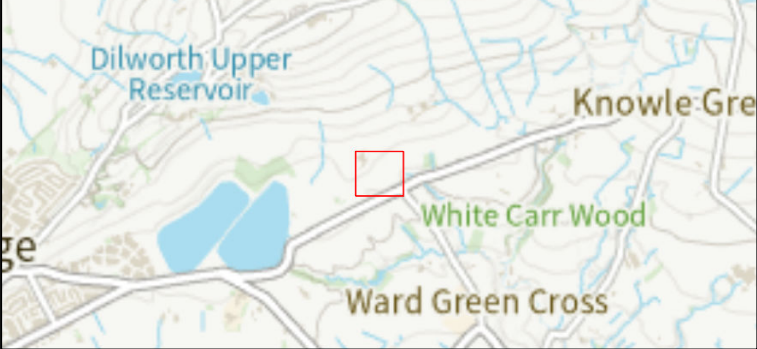
Figure 1: UK Habitat Classification Map (Baseline)

VER	DATE	REMARKS	Drawn	Checked
1.0	17/06/24	UKHab	MP	RK

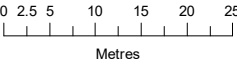
DRAWING NUMBER:				
KSEcology/WrittenStoneFarm/UKHab				
SCALE	1:825	PLOT SIZE	A3	DATUM
		OSGB	PROJECTION	BNG

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KNIGHT SKY ECOLOGY



Survey Information	
<div><div></div></div>	Site boundary (4,745.8m ²)
UKHab Habitat Survey	
<div></div>	g3c - Other neutral grassland (1,403.4m ²)
<div></div>	g4 - Modified grassland (406.8m ²)
<div></div>	u1b - Developed land; sealed surface (849.8m ²)
<div></div>	u1b5 - Buildings (489.6m ²)
<div></div>	800 - Road (412.8m ²)
<div></div>	828 - Vegetated garden (656.1m ²)
<div></div>	829 - Unvegetated garden (527.3m ²)
<div></div>	h2a5 - Species-rich native hedgerow, retained (160.9m)
<div></div>	h2a - Native hedgerow (95.6m)
<div></div>	32 - Scattered tree (17)



PROJECT TITLE

WRITTEN STONE FARM, LONGRIDGE

DRAWING TITLE

Figure 2: UK Habitat Classification Map (Post-Development)

VER	DATE	REMARKS	Drawn	Checked
1.2	24/06/24	Post-Development	MP	RK

DRAWING NUMBER:

KSEcology/WrittenStoneFarm/Post-Development

SCALE	1:825	PLOT SIZE	A3	DATUM	OSGB	PROJECTION	BNG
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