

**Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.**



ROYSTON WORKING MEN'S CLUB.

OS REF: SE 36277 11314.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT.

Ref No: 240457/BNG.

Date: 28th November 2024.

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. An application is being prepared for the demolition of a building formerly used as a working men's club and the development of residential dwellings.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd were originally commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment of the Working Men's Club, along with subsequent dusk emergence surveys. These were completed during the summer of 2024.

1.3. The site was originally assumed to meet the de-minimis exemption for Biodiversity Net Gain and therefore, no assessment was carried out. However, comments received back from the Local Planning Authority indicated that a small area of grassland to the north of the site may lie within the red line boundary and when checked, this was correct.

1.4. Therefore, Whitcher Wildlife Ltd have now been commissioned to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment.

1.5. The site visit to survey the grassland area was carried out on 25th November 2024. There are no other natural habitats within the survey area, other than occasional ephemerals growing from the hardstanding.

1.6. This report will be accompanied by a Statutory Metric and Condition Assessment sheet which details how condition scores have been calculated.

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

2.1. All surveys were carried out in line with the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM) survey standards and advice.

2.2. A baseline survey was carried out of the site to establish the baseline biodiversity value of the area. Prior to visiting the site, the survey area was cross referenced to maps and aerial photographs to give a general idea of the habitats and potential issues within the area and to identify potential access and walking routes.

2.3. The survey area was walked where access was agreed. All habitats within and immediately around the survey area were documented and the dominant species within that habitat listed in line with the UK Habitat Classification methodology to identify the primary habitat types throughout the survey area. All primary habitats are accompanied by secondary codes which are used to add further specific details where necessary. Each primary habitat and unique set off secondary codes will be shown individually in the appended annotated map.

2.4. This survey of the grassland was undertaken by Dr Steven Paul Sylvester PhD MSc BSc. Steven has over 19 years of experience in ecological surveys in Britain and abroad, both in capacity as a university lecturer training PhD, MSc and BSc students, as well as working within ecological consultancies performing NVC, UKHab, Phase 1 surveys etc. Steven is a specialist in botany and has produced 24 scientific publications focused on plant taxonomy. Steven holds a first-class BSc (Hons) degree in Ecology from University of Wales Bangor, an MSc in Biodiversity and Taxonomy of Plants with distinction from the University of Edinburgh, and a PhD in Ecology and Plant Taxonomy from the University of Zurich. Steven has produced a total of 37 scientific publications in peer-reviewed journals. Steven is currently applying to be a full member of CIEEM.

2.5. This report has been written by Mitchel Greenhalgh, Managing Director of Whitcher Wildlife, and an Ecological Consultant with an array of experience in conducting surveys on a variety of flora and fauna in a professional capacity. Mitchel holds a level two Natural England survey licence in respect of both bats and great crested newts, a NatureScot licence in respect of bats and Natural England class licences for various invertebrates. He is also working towards gaining further survey licences. He has attended courses run by CIEEM, the Species Recovery Trust and the FSC and also holds a BSc in environmental science attained from the University of

Leeds. He is an Associate member of CIEEM and he is therefore committed to continuous professional development.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION.

3.1. The Survey Area.

3.1.1. The survey area comprises a complex building formerly used as a working men's club, which is located in the urban area of Royston, along with its associated hardstanding and small area of grassland to the north. The survey area is shown below by the red shape.



3.1.2. The immediate surrounding area comprises the urban area of Royston, with car parks, roads, residential housing, and a cemetery.

3.1.3. The further surroundings are equally urban, with small areas of green space comprising playing fields, urban treelines, or small woodland pockets.

3.2. Description of Habitats.

3.2.1. Appendices I & II of this report contains annotated maps marked up with the varying habitats within the site. The habitats on the site are: -

- g3c – Other Neutral Grassland
- u1b – Developed Land; Sealed Surface

3.2.2. g3c – Other Neutral Grassland.

To the very north of the survey area, there is a small area of grassland which has established on what used to be a patio area. This was dominated by red fescue (*Festuca rubra*) with birds-foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) also abundant. Tall forbs were present in patches within the grassland, being perforate St. Johns-wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), broad-leaved willowherb (*Epilobium montanum*) and square-stalked willowherb (*Epilobium tetragonum*). Other occasionally encountered species include: black bent (*Agrostis gigantea*), bush vetch (*Vicia sepium*), cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*), common bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), dandelion (*Taraxacum* sp.), false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), musk-mallow (*Malva moschata*), ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), shining cranesbill (*Geranium lucidum*), timothy (*Phleum pratense*), tufted vetch (*Vicia cracca*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*) and purple toadflax (*Linaria purpurea*).



3.2.3. u1b – Developed Land; Sealed Surface.

The remainder of the land within the survey area comprises either the Working Men's Club or its car park, and aside from the occasional ephemerals and immature buddleias growing up within the hardstanding, is unvegetated.



4. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT.

4.1. On-site Assessment.

4.1.1. The below tables demonstrate the baseline on-site units using the Statutory Metric.

Area habitats:

Habitat Type	Extent (Ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Biodiversity units
Other Neutral Grassland	0.0084	Medium	Poor	0.03
Developed Land; Sealed Surface	0.1987	V.Low	N/A	0
Total	0.21			0.03

4.1.2. The small area of grassland will be lost post-works to facilitate the development.

4.1.3. To achieve a sufficient net gain on-site and satisfy the trading rules, an area of other neutral grassland will be created to the north of the site outside of private ownership, with the aim to reach moderate condition. The remainder of the development has been split 70:30 developed land to vegetated garden.

Habitat Type	Extent (Ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Biodiversity units
Other Neutral Grassland	0.0101	Medium	Moderate	0.07
Developed Land; Sealed Surface	0.1379	V.Low	N/A	0
Vegetated Garden	0.0591	Low	N/A	0.11
Total	0.21			0.18

4.1.4. The above will result in a post-works increase 0.15 biodiversity units, equivalent to a 440.71% increase in on-site habitats.

4.2. Biodiversity Net Gain Results.

Based on the above, the development will achieve a net gain of 440.71% and also satisfy the trading rules as shown below.

Total net unit change <small>(Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)</small>	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.15
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00
Total net % change <small>(Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)</small>	<i>Habitat units</i>	440.71%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00%
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

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Checked by:	
Ruth Georgiou BSc MCIEEM.	Date: 28 th November 2024.

5. REFERENCES.

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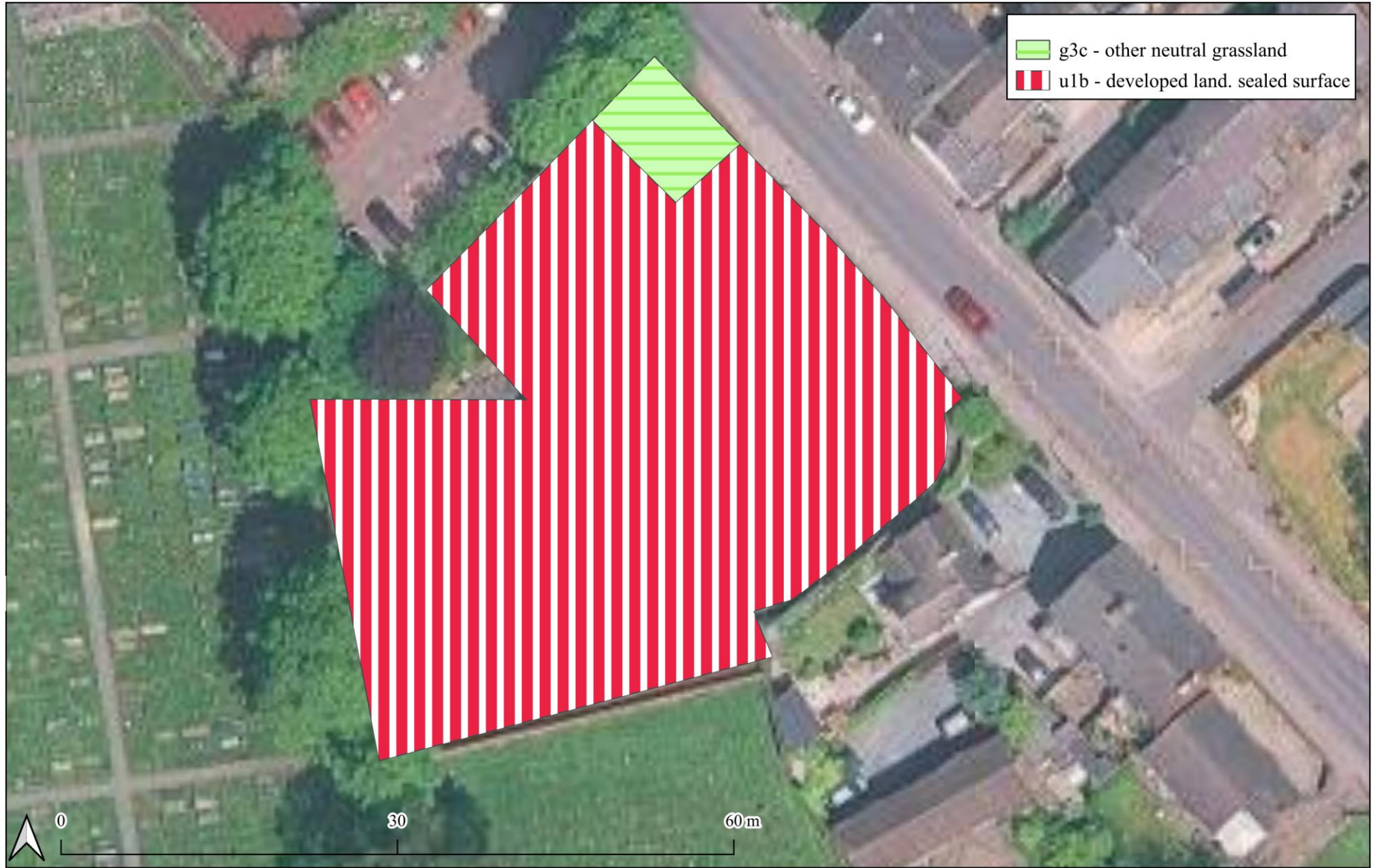
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Appendix I. MAP - BASELINE.



Site: Royston WMC

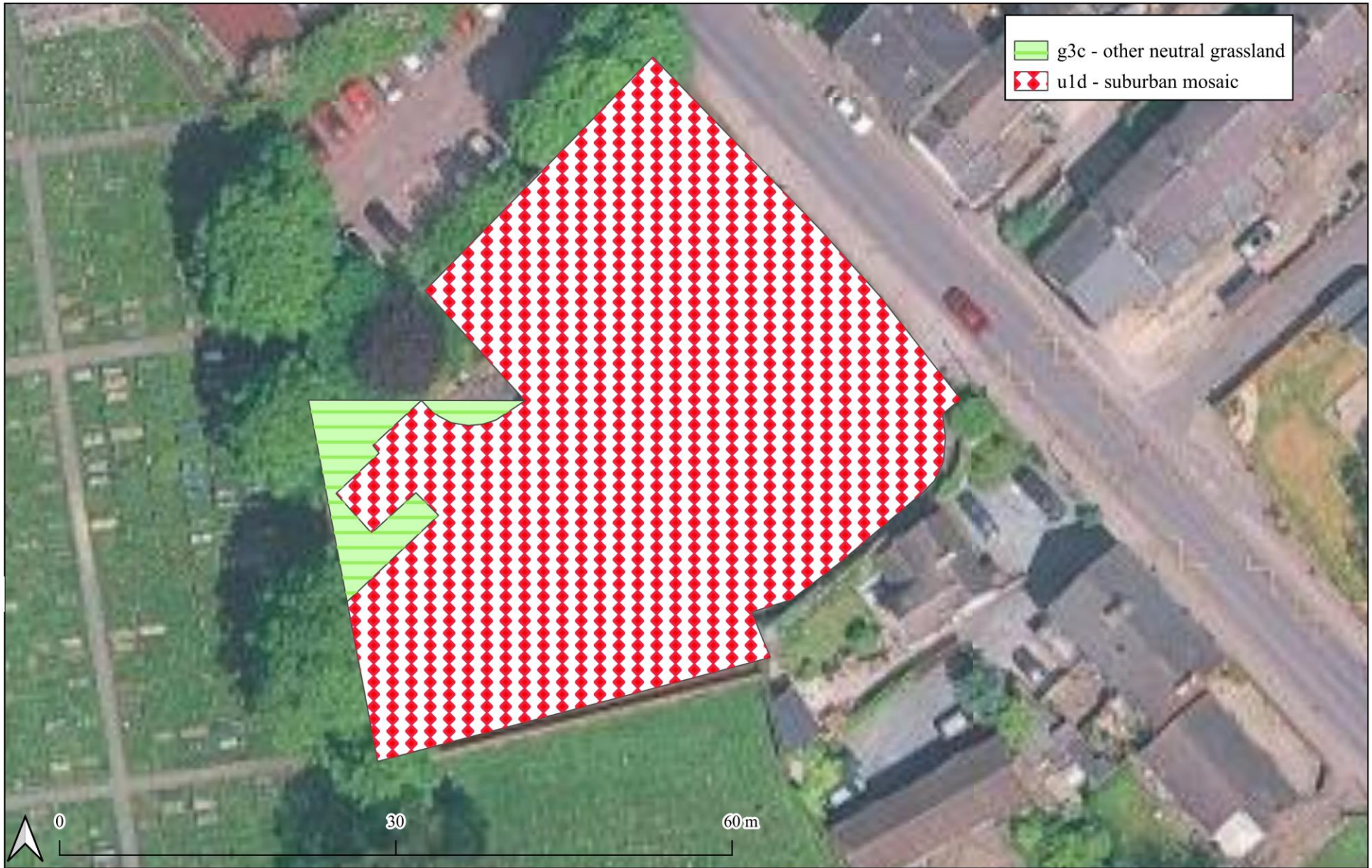
Date: 04.12.2024

Reference: 240457/BNG

Produced by: Mitch Greenhalgh



Appendix II. MAP - POST DEVELOPMENT.



Site: Royston WMC / Post

Date: 04.12.2024

Reference: 240457/BNG

Produced by: Mitch Greenhalgh



Appendix III. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.

