



ECOLOGYSOLUTIONS

Part of the ES Group

SAFESTORE,
CHEETHAM HILL,
MANCHESTER

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background & Proposals

- 1.1.1. Ecology Solutions was commissioned in August 2023 by Vincent & Goring, on behalf of Safestore, to assess the net change in biodiversity for the proposed development at Safestore, Cheetham Hill, Manchester (see Plan ECO1).
- 1.1.2. The proposals are for an extension to the east of the existing warehouse building and the installation of new garage-style units in the south of the site. This includes the removal of existing garage-style units to the east to accommodate the warehouse extension.

1.2. Site Characteristics

- 1.2.1. The site is situated in Cheetham Hill, a heavily urbanised area in Manchester city centre. This location supports a mosaic of light industrial and residential areas, of which the development site is a part. The site is flanked by Cheetham Hill Road (A665) to the west and Stocks Street to the east, with industrial buildings surrounding the site in all directions. Said buildings separate the development site from large residential areas to the north and east. The site lies directly north of the Manchester Jewish Museum, on Broughton Street and Melloy Place, and south of a car wash facility off North Street, located along the entire northern boundary.
- 1.2.2. The site is an operational Safestore facility, consisting of a storage building, adjoining car park and garage-style units. A strip of amenity grassland is present along the western site boundary (see Plan ECO2).

1.3. Biodiversity Net Gain Report

- 1.3.1. This document assesses the level of Biodiversity Net Gain within the site. This report has been prepared with due consideration to the guidance published by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)^{1,2} in relation to Biodiversity Net Gain. The assessment is based on the results of the habitat surveys completed, as set out in the Ecological Assessment.

¹ CIEEM (2019). *Biodiversity Net Gain. Good Practice Principles for Development, A Practical Guide.*

² CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA (2016). *Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development.*

2. STATUTORY BIODIVERSITY METRIC

- 2.1. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric was released on 29 November 2023 and uses habitat features as a proxy measure for capturing the value and importance of nature. It uses calculations to assess the importance of each habitat based on its size, ecological condition and location.
- 2.2. At the time of writing, secondary legislation mandating Biodiversity Net Gain and the use of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric had not yet come into force, though this was expected later in January 2024. The assessment uses the Statutory Biodiversity Metric in anticipation of the legislation, in preference to version 4.0 of the Natural England Biodiversity Metric.

2.3. Methodology

- 2.3.1. Measurements for habitats pre-development were calculated using QGIS software. Assessments regarding the habitats present, as well as their condition, were based on information gathered during survey work conducted in November 2023.
- 2.3.2. Habitats were classified based on their conformity to UK Habitat Classifications³ and condition assessments were completed for habitats identified within the site. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Draft User Guide⁴ and Technical Annex 1⁵, in addition to professional judgment were used to inform the habitats' condition criteria.
- 2.3.3. Measurements for the post-development situation were calculated using the Planting Layout (Drg No. 2302/P/100), detailed within the Landscape Proposals document provided by Stephen Martlew Landscape Architecture (see Appendix 1). The Proposed Site Plan (Drg No. 4664-SK01(PL)) produced by Tew and Smith Architects and Surveyors has also been used to inform this document (see Appendix 2).

³ UKHab Ltd (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* at <https://ukhab.org>.

⁴ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2023). *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric: User Guide (draft)*, DEFRA.

⁵ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2023). *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology*, DEFRA.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF METRIC

3.1. This section should be read in conjunction with the Biodiversity Metric calculation tool which has been provided separately.

3.2. Baseline Habitat (Pre-Development)

3.2.1. Table 3.1 below summarises the habitats present on-site pre-development. The information included within this table is based on information gathered during the habitat survey undertaken by Ecology Solutions in November 2023. The locations of these habitats are illustrated on Plan ECO2.

3.2.2. Overall, a baseline total of 0.07 habitat units are present within the site pre-development (see Plan ECO3).

Baseline habitat	Baseline Biodiversity Units	Condition Criteria / Pass or Fail / Indicator Score		Condition	Ecological Features and Condition Notes	After Works
Modified Grassland	0.07	Grassland – Low Distinctiveness		Poor 5/7 condition criteria passed = Poor	<p>A strip of amenity grassland is present along the western boundary of the site. Species present include Perennial Rye Grass <i>Lolium perenne</i>, Dandelion <i>Taraxacum officinale</i>, Creeping Buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i>, Nipplewort <i>Lapsana communis</i>, Michaelmas-daisy <i>Aster novi-belgii</i> agg., Creeping Thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i>, Red Clover <i>Trifolium pratense</i>, Yarrow <i>Achillea millefolium</i>, Ribwort Plantain <i>Plantago lanceolata</i>, Cocksfoot <i>Dactylis glomerata</i>, Cat's-ear <i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>, Common Bent <i>Agrostis capillaris</i>, Curled Dock <i>Rumex crispus</i>, Common Nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i> and Ragwort <i>Senecio jacobaea</i>.</p> <p>This grassland contains fewer than 6 plant species per m² and, as such, fails essential criterion A. This criterion is required in order to achieve Moderate or Good condition; thus, this grassland is capped at Poor condition. The sward height is homogenous throughout and criterion B is also failed.</p> <p>This habitat is to be lost following development.</p>	0 units retained
		A – 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² .	Fail			
		B – Sward height is varied.	Fail			
		C – Scrub accounts for less than 20% of total area.	Pass			
		D – Physical damage evident in less than 5% of total area.	Pass			
		E – Cover of bare ground between 1% and 10% of total area.	Pass			
		F – Cover of Bracken less than 20%.	Pass			
		G – Absence of invasive non-native plant species.	Pass			
Developed Land; Sealed Surface	0	No assessment required.		N/A	The site primarily comprises developed land; sealed surface. This includes the Safestore warehouse (B1) and office (B2) buildings as well as several garage-style	N/A

				<p>units (B3). This further includes hardstanding areas which are used as car storage / carparking areas.</p> <p>Marginal vegetation is present throughout these areas, but vegetation is of insufficient quantity to comprise a separate habitat. Buddleia <i>Buddleia davidii</i> is the predominant species here, but other species present include Herb Robert <i>Geranium robertianum</i>, Michaelmas-daisy, Broad-leaved Willowherb <i>Epilobium montanum</i>, Dandelion, Groundsel <i>Senecio vulgaris</i>, Canadian Fleabane <i>Conyza canadensis</i>, Bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i>, Wall Lettuce <i>Lactuca muralis</i>, Ribwort Plantain, Annual Meadow-grass <i>Poa annua</i>, Petty Spurge <i>Euphorbia peplus</i>, Prickly Sow-thistle <i>Sonchus asper</i> and Ivy-leaved Toadflax <i>Cymbalaria muralis</i>. Japanese Knotweed <i>Fallopia japonica</i> is also present along the boundary to the south of the site.</p> <p>The development entails the removal of B3 and erection of a new building in its place, alongside the erection of new garage-style units further south in what is currently a car storage area. This represents a loss of habitat in these areas and like-for-like replacement in habitat type. Development works will also entail the loss of some marginal vegetation, but most of this vegetation is invasive / non-native species which are recommended for removal.</p>	
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Table 3.1 Summary of Baseline habitats present on-site.

3.3. Post-Development

- 3.3.1. Table 3.2 below summarises the habitats proposed on-site post-development, which are illustrated on Plan ECO4 and in Appendix 1. Plan ECO5 illustrates the retention, creation and loss of habitats on-site as part of the development.
- 3.3.2. The landscape strategy will deliver new habitat, including urban trees and ornamental shrub planting. These will provide new foraging and nesting resources for a variety of local wildlife.
- 3.3.3. Overall, the proposed development would result in an increase of 0.08 habitat units, which corresponds to a 121.33% increase from pre- to post-development. Trading rules will be satisfied for habitat units.
- 3.3.4. The targeted conditions for proposed habitats will be achieved through appropriate management undertaken during the operational phase of the proposals. This will ensure that the proposed habitats continue to offer biodiversity benefit in the future.

Created Habitats				
Landscape Plan Habitat	Proposed Habitat	Target Condition	Biodiversity Units Delivered	Target Condition Notes
Proposed Extension	Developed Land; Sealed Surface	N/A	0	Two new structures are to be erected, including an extension to the east of the existing warehouse building and the installation of further garage-style units in the south of the site. This will involve the removal of existing garage-style units to the east to accommodate the warehouse extension, and loss of an area of hardstanding currently used as a car storage area to accommodate the new garage-style units to the south. Where this is to occur, current areas of developed land; sealed surface are described as lost within the metric and replaced with like-for-like habitat. Condition assessment is not applicable for this habitat type.
Shrubs and Groundcover Planting, Bulb Planting	Introduced Shrub	N/A	0.07	The area of amenity grassland currently present on-site is to be removed and replaced with an area of introduced shrubs. The planting scheme includes a variety of ornamental species that will provide foraging resources for invertebrates and potentially nesting and foraging opportunities for small mammals and birds. No condition assessment is applicable to this habitat type.
Trees	Urban Trees	Moderate	0.09	Seven trees are proposed, which will be planted amongst new areas of introduced shrubs. These trees will comprise non-native species and are not expected to mature sufficiently to have developed features suitable as ecological niches within the 30-year time to target condition period. These trees will, therefore, fail condition criteria A, C and E for urban trees and achieve a Moderate condition rating. Trees have been sized as small within the metric.

Table 3.2. Summary of post-development habitats on-site.

4. EVALUATION

4.1. The Principles of Evaluation

Biodiversity Net Gain – Good Practice Principle for Development

- 4.1.1. CIRIA, CIEEM and IEMA have developed principles of good practice to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain. These principles provide a framework that helps improve the UK's biodiversity by contributing towards strategic priorities to conserve and enhance nature through sustainable development. There are ten principles in total, and all principles must be applied together as one approach. The ten principles are set out below.
- 4.1.2. **Principle 1. Apply Mitigation Hierarchy.** Do everything possible to first avoid and then minimise impacts on biodiversity. Only as a last resort, and in agreement with external decision makers where possible, compensate for losses that cannot be avoided. If compensation for losses within the development footprint is not possible or does not generate the most benefits for nature conservation, then offset biodiversity losses by gains elsewhere.
- 4.1.3. **Principle 2. Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset by gains elsewhere.** Avoid impacts on irreplaceable biodiversity; these impacts cannot be offset to achieve no net loss or net gain.
- 4.1.4. **Principle 3. Be inclusive and equitable.** Engage stakeholders early, and involve them in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the approach to net gain. Achieve Net Gain in partnership with stakeholders where possible and share the benefits fairly among stakeholders.
- 4.1.5. **Principle 4. Address risks.** Mitigate difficulty, uncertainty and other risks to achieving Net Gain. Apply well accepted ways to add contingency when calculating biodiversity losses and gains in order to account for any remaining risks, as well as to compensate for the time between the losses occurring and the gains being fully realised.
- 4.1.6. **Principle 5. Make a measurable net gain contribution.** Achieve a measurable, overall gain for biodiversity and the services ecosystems provide while directly contributing towards nature conservation priorities.
- 4.1.7. **Principle 6. Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity.** Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity by using robust, credible evidence and local knowledge to make clearly-justified choices when:
- Delivering compensation that is ecologically equivalent in type, amount and condition, and that accounts for the location and timing of biodiversity losses.
 - Compensating for losses of one type of biodiversity by providing a different type that delivers greater benefits for nature conservation.
 - Achieving net gain locally to the development while also contributing towards nature conservation priorities at local, regional and national levels.
 - Enhancing existing or creating new habitat.

- Enhancing ecological connectivity by creating more, bigger, better and joined areas for biodiversity.

4.1.8. **Principle 7. Be additional.** Achieve nature conservation outcomes that demonstrably exceed existing obligations (i.e. do not deliver something that would occur anyway).

4.1.9. **Principle 8. Create a net gain legacy.** Ensure net gain generates long-term benefits by:

- Engaging stakeholders and jointly agreeing practical solutions that secure net gain in perpetuity.
- Planning for adaptive management and securing dedicated funding for long-term management.
- Designing net gain for biodiversity to be resilient to external factors, especially climate change.
- Mitigating risks from other land uses.
- Avoiding displacing harmful activities from one location to another.
- Supporting local-level management of net gain activities.

4.1.10. **Principle 9. Optimise sustainability.** Prioritise Biodiversity Net Gain and, where possible, optimise the wider environmental benefits for a sustainable society and economy.

4.1.11. **Principle 10. Be transparent.** Communicate all net gain activities in a transparent and timely manner, sharing the learning with all stakeholders.

Lawton's Principle

4.1.12. Principles for enhancing England's wildlife sites were developed as part of the Lawton Review⁶. Across the UK, these principles can be used to design Biodiversity Net Gain activities to boost wildlife sites. They are:

- Improving the quality of wildlife sites;
- Increasing the size of the wildlife sites;
- Enhancing connections between, or joining up wildlife sites;
- Creating new wildlife sites; and
- Reducing pressure on wildlife sites.

4.2. Post-Development Evaluation

4.2.1. The site's contribution to Biodiversity Net Gain has been assessed with due regard to the principles outlined and discussed above.

4.2.2. The landscaping proposals succeed in achieving a net gain in habitat units, delivering an increase of 0.08 units.

4.2.3. The net gain in habitat units is achieved primarily through the provision of urban trees, combined with the inclusion of new areas of introduced shrub.

⁶ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2010). *Making Space for Nature: A Review of England's Wildlife Sites*, DEFRA.

- 4.2.4. Opportunities for improving the ecological value of the site are largely restricted to the amenity grassland area. Owing to the poor condition of the amenity grassland on-site, this habitat provides limited ecological niches and foraging resources. The proposed shrubs and trees, however, will be able to provide a more diverse vegetation structure which could provide nesting opportunities for small mammals and birds, as well as providing improved nectar resources for foraging invertebrates. Additionally, the removal of non-native / invasive plant species notified on-site during survey work, including Buddleia and Japanese Knotweed, presents another improvement for local species not captured by the metric calculation.

Site Baseline	Habitat Units	0.07
Post-intervention	Habitat Units	0.15
Total Net Unit Change	Habitat Units	+0.08
Total Net Percentage Gain	Habitat Units	+121.33%

Table 4.1. Summary of Biodiversity Net Gain results.

- 4.2.5. Specific guidance regarding Biodiversity Net Gain is provided in a document produced by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)⁷. Principle 5 of this document outlines that, for developments in Greater Manchester, the minimum acceptable level for net gain is said to be achieved at an increase of 10%, or more, post-development. The Environment Act 2021 similarly requires a net gain of 10%, a threshold that is expected to become mandatory in January 2024. According to current landscaping proposals, the development will lead to an increase for habitat units in excess of 10% and, therefore, the development will be compliant with both local and national planning policy.

⁷ GMCA Biodiversity Net Gain, *Guidance for Greater Manchester*, February 2021

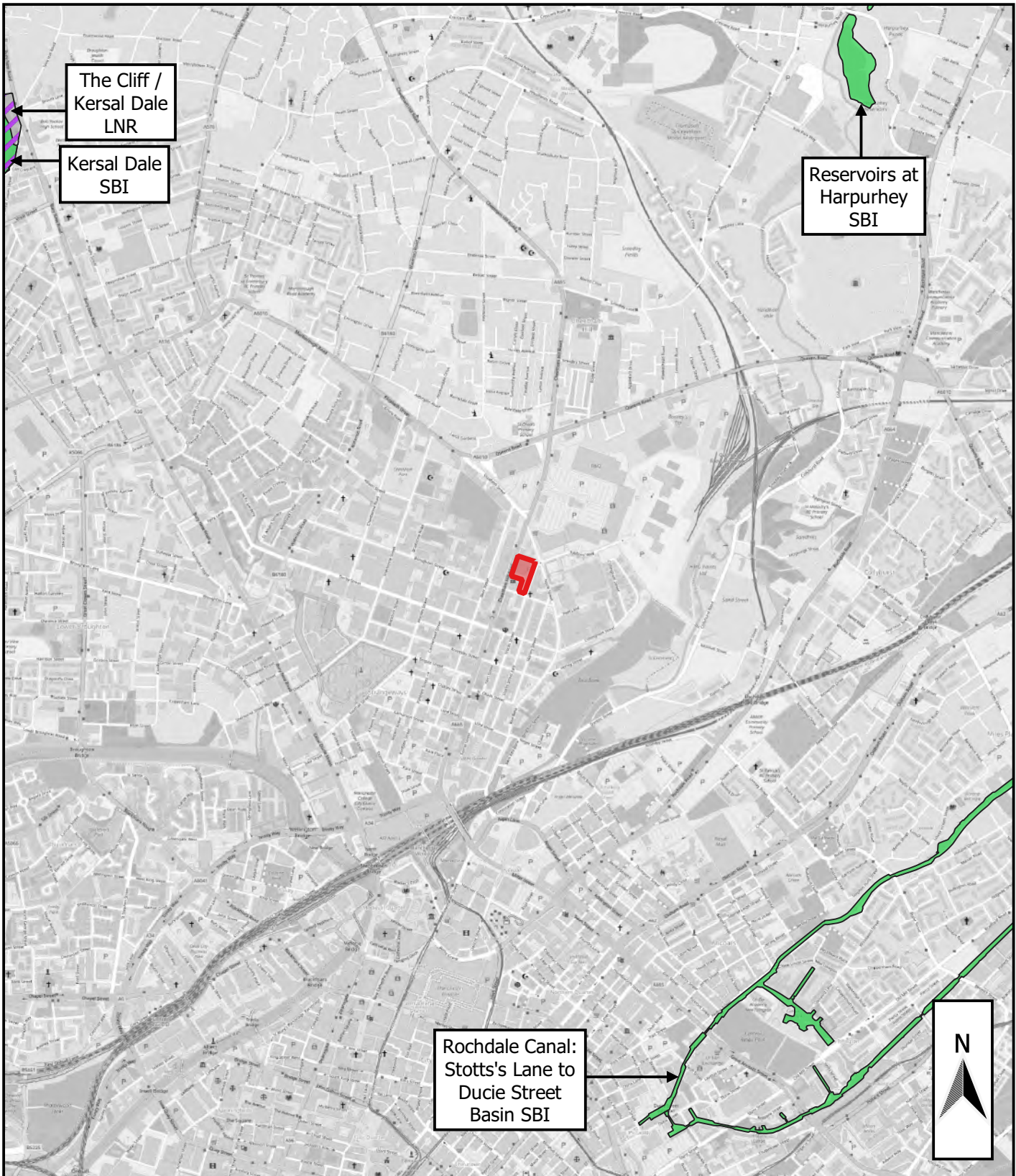
5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1. Ecology Solutions was commissioned in August 2023 by Vincent & Goring, on behalf of Safestore, to assess the net change in biodiversity for the proposed development at Safestore, Cheetham Hill, Manchester.
- 5.2. The proposals are for an extension to the east of the existing warehouse building and the installation of further garage-style units to the south of the site. This includes the removal of existing garage-style units to the east to accommodate the warehouse extension.
- 5.3. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric was used to calculate the pre-development baseline units. 0.07 baseline habitat units are present on-site pre-development. The proposed development would result in an increase of 0.08 habitat units, which corresponds to a 121.33% increase from pre- to post-development. Trading rules will be satisfied for habitat units.
- 5.4. The proposed shrub and tree planting will be able to provide a more diverse vegetation structure which could potentially provide new nesting opportunities for small mammals and birds, as well as improved nectar resources for foraging invertebrates. Additionally, the removal of non-native / invasive plant species notified on-site during survey work, including Buddleia and Japanese Knotweed, presents another improvement for local species not captured by the metric calculation.
- 5.5. The Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment concludes that there is a net gain well in excess of 10% for habitat units, satisfying the targets of both the Environment Act and local planning policy documents.

PLANS

PLAN ECO1

Site Location and Ecological Designations



KEY:

-  SITE BOUNDARY
-  LOCAL NATURE RESERVE (LNR)
-  SITE OF BIOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE (SBI)



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MANCHESTER

PLAN ECO1: SITE LOCATION AND
ECOLOGICAL DESIGNATIONS

Rev: A
Nov 2023

PLAN ECO2

Ecological Features



- KEY:
- SITE BOUNDARY
 - BUILDINGS
 - HARDSTANDING
 - AMENITY GRASSLAND
 - ✱ JAPANESE KNOTWEED



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PLAN ECO2: ECOLOGICAL
FEATURES

Rev: A
Nov 2023

PLAN ECO3

Pre-development Habitats



KEY:

-  SITE BOUNDARY
- HABITATS BASELINE**
 -  DEVELOPED LAND;
SEALED SURFACE
 -  MODIFIED GRASSLAND



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PLAN ECO3:
PRE-DEVELOPMENT HABITATS

Rev: A
Jan 2024

PLAN ECO4

Post-development Habitats



- KEY:**
- SITE BOUNDARY
 - HABITATS PROPOSED**
 - DEVELOPED LAND; SEALED SURFACE
 - INTRODUCED SHRUB
 - INDIVIDUAL TREES PROPOSED**
 - SMALL URBAN TREE
 - LOCATIONS OF PROPOSED STRUCTURES



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PLAN ECO4: POST-
DEVELOPMENT HABITATS

Rev: A
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PLAN ECO5

Retention, Creation and Loss



KEY:

SITE BOUNDARY

HABITATS RETENTION

RETAINED

LOST

INDIVIDUAL TREES RETENTION

CREATED



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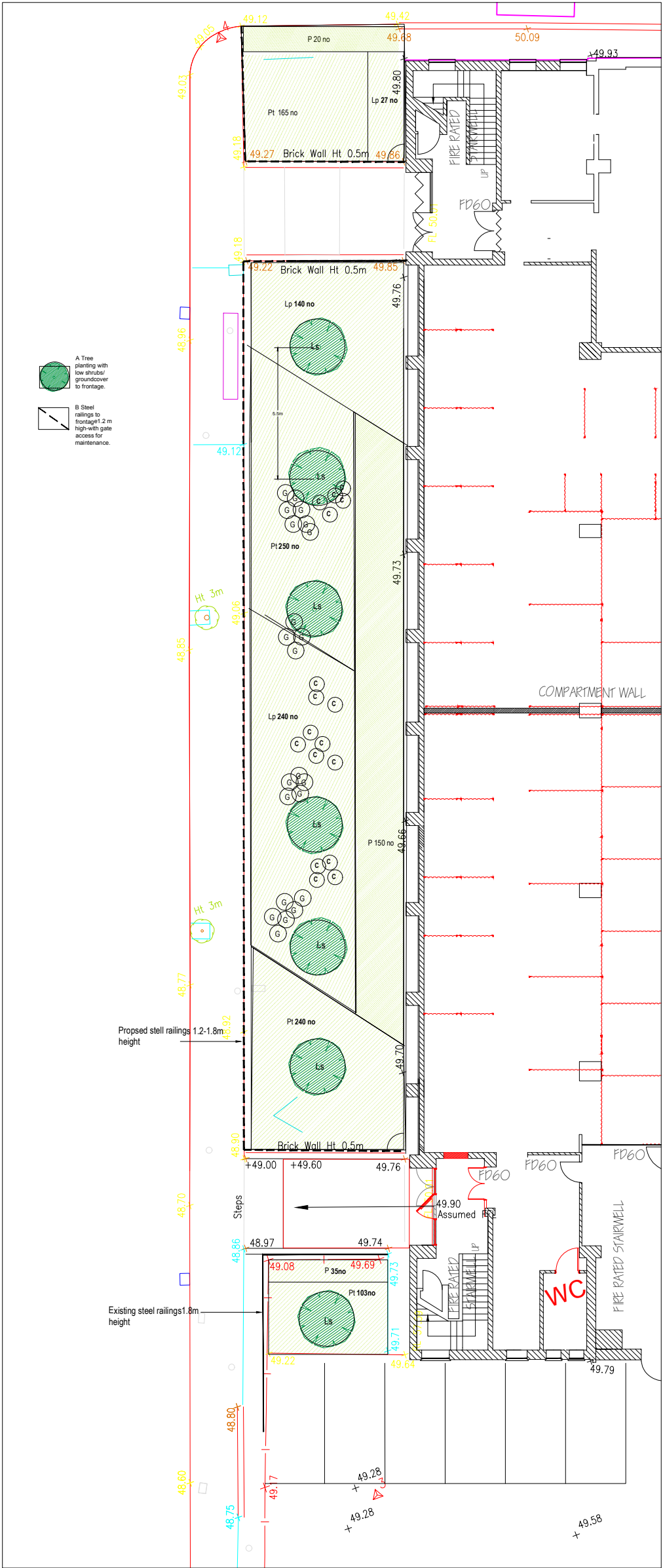
PLAN ECO5: RETENTION,
CREATION AND LOSS

Rev: A
Jan 2024

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX 1

Stephen Martlew Landscape Architecture:
Planting Layout
(Drg No. 2302/P/100)



BOUNDARY TREATMENTS KEY PLAN 1:125

PLANTING SCHEDULE

TREES

Species	Stock type	Spacing	Quantity	Notes
Liquidambar styraciflua Paarl* (Fastigiate Sweet Gum) Ls	Feathered 20-25 cm rootballed underground guyed.	5.5m	6	

SHRUBS and GROUND COVER PLANTING

Species	Stock type/size	Spacing	Quantity	Notes
Photinia Red Robin P	600-900 3l c.g	3/sq.m	205	Maintain at 1.5m max height keeping natural growth habit.
Lonicera pileata Maigrun Lp	300-450 3 l c. g	4/sq.m	407	
Pachysandra terminalis Pt	2l c.g.	6/sq.m.	755	

Bulb Planting all 4-6cm. bulbs

- C Crocus tommasinianus/C. chrysanthus /Crocus siebrii Atticus Firefly in single species groups 340 no in equal proportions
G Galanthus nivalis (Snowdrop) 480 no

Each symbol represents 20 bulbs.

EXISTING GRASS AREAS -Grass to be stripped or herbicide sprayed before cultivation of planted area to 400 mm depth.

Allow 300mm wide pcc access strip to edge of building frontage.

GENERAL SPECIFICATION NOTES

All trees, shrubs and hedge plants supplied shall comply with the requirements of British Standard 3836, Specification -for Nursery Stock. All pre-planting site preparation, planting and post-planting maintenance works shall be carried out in accordance with the requirements of British Standard 4428(1989) Code of Practice for General Landscape Operations (excluding hard surfaces).

All new tree plantings shall be positioned in accordance with the requirements of Table A.1 of BS5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction (Recommendations)

a) Tree pit sizes:Semi mature 2100x750 depth extra heavy

b) Imported topsoil to comply with BS.3882 general purpose.

Medium texture, stone content less than 10%. Free from weeds, sticks and foreign matter.

c) Sloping ground - maintain horizontal bases and vertical sides with no less than minimal depth through out.

d) Trees to receive base dressing of slow release fertilizer 70g/ tree pit. Enmag or similar approved.
Suppliers: Scotts, Paper Mill Lane, Bradford, Ipswich IP8 4BZ

e) All tree planting in grassed areas to incorporate 300mm radius circle of bark mulch dressing to base of tree stem.

f) All planted areas to be cultivated to 400mm depth, add imported topsoil & soil improvers eg sand /manure to improve drainage.

g) Planting beds to be raked over and edges defined.

h) All planted areas to be mulched with 75 mm depth coarse bark mulch.

i) Any debris or stones larger than 50mm to be taken off site.

k) Plants to be watered as necessary

l) Sow grass seed generally April-October, preferably late summer early autumn. Topsoil depth to be 150mm.Medium texture, stone content less than 10%. Free from weeds, sticks and foreign matter.

MAINTENANCE

Contractor to allow for one year's maintenance post practical completion:to allow for adequate watering and weed control of plant beds.Dead or stunted plants to be replaced by contractor.at the end of the defects period.

Maintenance to be as per detailed project specification.

REVISIONS

A plant species modified 13/12/2023

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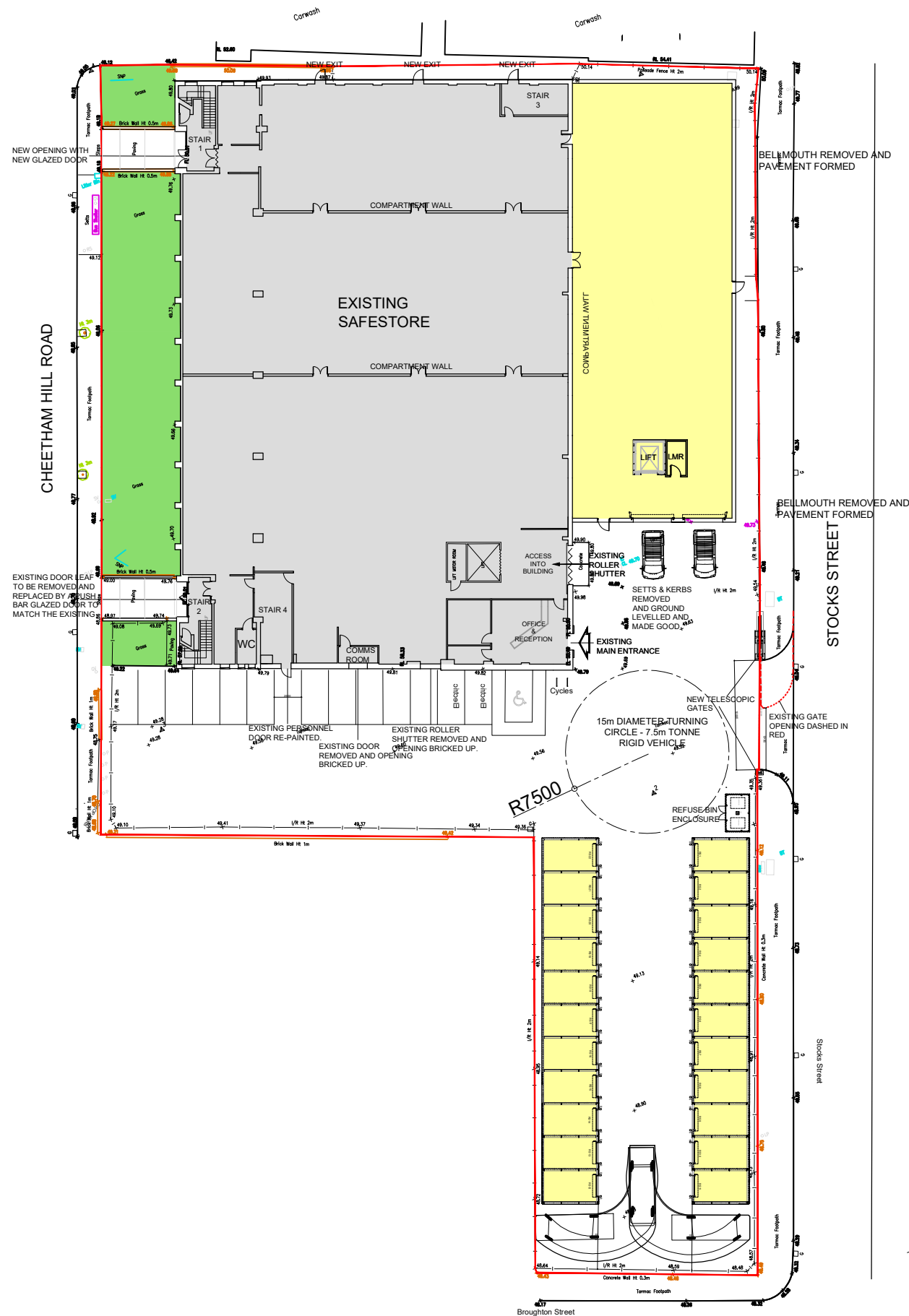
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TELEPHONE 0795 1023205 email martlewsteve@gmail.com

DRAWING TITLE	PLANTING LAYOUT	
DRAWING No	2302/P/100	
PROJECT	Safestore Cheetham Hill	
CLIENT	SAFESTORE	
SCALE	1:125 @ A 1	REVISION A
DATE	December 2023	REVISED
DRAWN	PG	CHECKED SM

APPENDIX 2

Tew and Smith Architects and Surveyors:
Proposed Site Plan
(Drg No. 4664-SK01(PL))



KEY

SITE BOUNDARY

EXISTING BUILDING

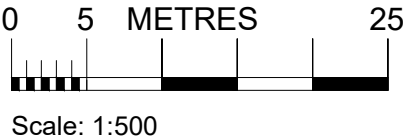
PROPOSED EXTENSION

LANDSCAPE AREA - SEE S MARTLEW LANDSCAPE PROPOSAL 2302/P/100

AREAS

TOTAL SITE AREA - 5,093.90m² - 0.509ha

EXISTING BUILDING		
Ground floor	1 882.73m ²	20 265.54ft ²
First floor	1 910.53m ²	20 564.77ft ²
SUB-TOTAL EXISTING	3 793.26m²	40 830.31ft²
PROPOSED EXTENSION		
Ground floor	585.21m ²	6 299.15ft ²
External units	322.67m ²	3 473.19ft ²
SUB-TOTAL PROPOSED	907.88m²	9 772.34ft²
TOTAL	4 701.14m²	50 602.65ft²



PLANNING APPLICATION DRAWING ONLY

TEW AND SMITH
ARCHITECTS AND SURVEYORS

Drawing issue:

Revisions:
A. 14.12.2023 - ER. Refuse bin enclosure and cycles hoops added.
B. 19.12.2023 - ER. 19.12.2023 - ER. EV parking added.

Project:
SAFESTORE
PROPOSED EXTENSION
CHEETHAM HILL ROAD
MANCHESTER, M8 8LW

Title:
PROPOSED SITE PLAN

Date: 06.11.23	Drg No.	Rev:
Scale: 1:500@A3	4664-SK01(PL)	B
Drawn: ER		
Checked: BF	© Proprietor: Tew and Associates Limited	

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