Technical Note

CLIENT:	Atri7 6 Limited
PROJECT:	Whitworth Street West
SUBJECT:	Preliminary Biodiversity Offsetting Assessment
DATE ISSUED:	23rd April 2026
JOB NO:	ST21315
REPORT NO:	0003
PREPARED BY:	Tess McAlister – Senior Field Ecologist
REVIEWED & APPROVED BY:	Jake Smith – Principal Ecologist

BACKGROUND

Wardell Armstrong LLP (WA) (now part of SLR Consulting Ltd. (SLR)) was commissioned by Atri7 6 Limited in February 2026 to undertake a Preliminary Biodiversity Offsetting Assessment in support of a planning application for the proposed 39-storey purpose built student accommodation scheme. The project is located at 10-12 Whitworth Street West, Manchester centred on approximate National Grid Reference (NGR) SJ 83579 97521, hereafter referred to as the 'Site'.

The planning application area comprises a plot of land, previously used for storage and since been converted to an area of modified grassland, covering approximately 0.09 hectares (ha) (henceforth known as the Application Site). The Site is bounded by metal fencing, with Whitworth St and the Rochdale Canal just beyond the northern extent and a railway line to the south. There are buildings to the east and west of the Site. The Site is situated in the centre of Manchester and is surrounded by commercial and residential land uses.

WA undertook a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) in March 2025. This report is based upon the redline boundary used within the PEA and the proposed site designs by Park Hood Chartered Landscape Architects displayed on drawing *'8585-PHL-XX-00-DR-L-2000 - Combined Ground and 38th Floor Landscape Plan'.*

This report should be read in conjunction with the completed Statutory Biodiversity Metric ST21315 V1 (WA, 2026).

It is understood that due to a planning condition regarding landscaping (Condition 1 of Application Ref: 135272/JO/2022), the site was converted from artificial/developed urban land to grassland in June 2025. Therefore, this Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment Technical Note has been informed by the ecological baseline as determined during the 2026 walkover.

This Technical Note presents the methodology, the BNG Assessment, results summary and discussion and conclusions in relation to the BNG assessment for the Site.

METHODS

The Statutory Defra Metric

The BNG has been calculated using the Department of Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool (SBM) (updated 3rd July 2025) and associated user guidance, particularly the 'Statutory biodiversity metric: user guide' document. The relative condition of the habitats present was assessed in accordance with 'Statutory biodiversity metric condition assessment sheets' once the data was collected.

This assessment has been undertaken in accordance with current Biodiversity Net Gain requirements (as of 23rd April 2026) and does not consider anticipated legislative updates expected on or before 31st July 2026. **Please note** that these forthcoming updates may influence the requirement of BNG regarding the planning application this assessment supports as the changes will include a new exemption for BNG requirements will include sites 0.2ha in size or below which do not support priority habitat. As such, if the planning application for this project is submitted prior to this update, then the mandatory BNG Assessment will be required. However following the update, it will no longer be required provided that size of the application boundary is <0.2ha and does not support priority habitat.

The SBM uses habitat features as a proxy measure for the value and importance of nature. The following information on each habitat are the required metric inputs:

- Type;
- Area;
- Condition; and,
- Strategic significance.

The habitats present have been classified using the UK Habitat Classification (UKHAB) for use within the metric.

Statutory Biodiversity Metric

Biodiversity metric calculations provide a numerical score for the current value in Habitat Units (HU), Hedgerow Units (HeU) and Watercourse Units (WU), of the habitats on Site (where applicable) and their likely value post-development in order for the impact of the proposed development to be quantitatively assessed.

The biodiversity metric inputs collected for the Site were entered into the SBM Calculator Tool (Natural England, 2025) to calculate the predicted net change in the biodiversity value of the Site due to the proposed development.

Using the SBM tool, habitat values are calculated based on their abundance, area (ha) or length (km) for linear features such as hedgerows, condition, and importance within the local area, usually identified from local relevant planning policies or documents. This gives individual pre-development HU, HeU and WU for area habitats, linear habitats and watercourse habitats respectively. Units for each type are treated separately and cannot be combined.

The post-development value can then also be calculated for habitats where factors including time to target condition and difficulty of creation/enhancement are also taken into consideration. This provides an overall assessment of the biodiversity net gain or loss as a result of a development.

Statutory Biodiversity Metric Rules

There are four rules which must be followed in order to claim that a biodiversity net gain has been gained. If any of the rules are failed unless under exceptional circumstances the consenting body may invalidate the biodiversity net gain assessment.

The four rules are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Biodiversity metric rules

Rule	Rule Detail
Rule 1	The trading rules of this biodiversity metric must be followed.
Rule 2	Biodiversity outputs, for each type of unit (HU, HeU, WU), must not be summed, traded, or converted between types. The requirement to deliver at least a 10% gain applies to each type of unit
Rule 3	To accurately apply the biodiversity metric formula, you must use the SBM.
Rule 4	In exceptional ecological circumstances, deviation from this biodiversity metric methodology may be permitted by the relevant planning authority.

Trading Rules

The SBM considers distinctiveness (automatically assigned) and using this data it applies trading rules that require that any habitat loss is replaced on a 'like for like' or 'like for better' basis. The trading rules are detailed below in Table 2.

Table 2: Trading rules for habitat creation depending upon distinctiveness of habitat lost

Distinctiveness Group	Trading Rules
Very High	Bespoke compensation likely to be required

High	Same habitat required
Medium	Same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat required
Low	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required
Very Low	Compensation not required

Strategic Significance

The level of Strategic Significance per habitat was determined by undertaking a review of local planning policies. The Site falls within the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

Strategic Significance, has therefore been allocated as follows:

- '**High**' (formally identified in local strategy) – areas mapped within the Nature Network and;
- '**Low**' (area/compensation not in local strategy) – areas outside the Nature Network or mapped areas where the project's proposed interventions are not consistent with the measures proposed by the LNRS for that location.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN (BNG) ASSESSMENT

Ecological Baseline

The ecological baseline habitat calculations of the Site have been calculated using the UK Habitat Plan (Drawing Ref: ST21315-005 UKHab Baseline Survey Plan 2026). The following habitats were present at the Site, as identified during the update walkover:

- **Modified grassland:** newly laid grass turf covers the majority of the Site
- **Developed land; sealed surface:** hardstanding strip

There are no priority or irreplaceable habitats within the Site boundary.

The 'area' habitats (e.g., grassland and urban) are measured in hectares (ha).

Baseline Condition Assessments have not been undertaken for urban habitats, e.g. developed land; sealed surface, in line with guidance for this habitat type, as the SBM calculator automatically assigns this habitat type as 'Condition Assessment N/A'.

The on-site baseline habitat areas are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Baseline Biodiversity Unit Score – Habitat Areas

Habitat Type	Area (ha)	Condition	Distinctiveness	Baseline Biodiversity Units	Area (Ha) Retained / Enhanced / Lost
Modified Grassland	0.0828	Poor	Low	0.17	0.0828 lost
Developed Land; Sealed Surface	0.0049	N/A - Other	Very low	0	0.0036 retained
Total	**0.09**			**0.17 HU**	**0.0828 ha Lost**

Post-Development Habitats

Calculations for the Site have been calculated using the Landscape Plan (Drawing Ref: *'8585-PHL-XX-00-DR-L-2000 - Combined Ground and 38th Floor Landscape Plan'* produced by Park Hood Chartered Landscape Architects). The habitats present post-restoration at the Site as detailed on the Landscape Plan have been converted into UK Habitat Classification (UKHAB) habitats for use within the metric. The hedgerows are classed as 'linear' habitats and therefore these are measured in kilometres (km). This has been achieved using the habitat descriptions and planting schedule provided as well as professional judgement, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Habitat Conversion from Landscape Plan to UKHAB & BNG Metric Habitats		
Landscape Plan Habitat Type	**UKHAB Habitat Type**	**BNG Metric Habitat Type**
Ornamental shrubs & perennials planting	H3h - mixed scrub	Introduced shrub
Hedge	H2b - Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	Non-native and ornamental hedgerow

The created habitat areas on Site (within the red line boundary) are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5. Biodiversity Unit Score for Proposed Habitat Creation – On Site			
BNG Habitat Type	**Area (Ha)**	**Condition**	**Biodiversity Units**
Introduced shrub	0.0038	Condition Assessment N/A	0.01
Developed land; sealed surface	0.0692	N/A – Other	0.00
Developed land; sealed surface	0.0111	N/A - Other	0.00
Total	**0.08**	**-**	**0.01**

The post-development linear habitats (hedgerows) are summarised in Table 6.

Table 6: Linear Unit Score for Proposed Habitat Creation – On Site			
Habitat Type	**Length (km)**	**Condition**	**Linear Units**
Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	0.02297	Poor	0.02
Total	**0.02297**	**-**	**0.02 HeU**

Results Summary

The headline results of the BNG calculations are presented on Plate 1.

FINAL RESULTS			
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	-0.16	
	Hedgerow units	0.02	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	-95.73%	Total net gain achieved is less than target set ▲
	Hedgerow units	N/A	0 baseline units - % cannot be calculated
	Watercourse units	0.00%	
Trading rules satisfied?	No - Check Trading Summaries ▲		

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit	
Area habitat units	10.00%	0.17	0.18	0.18	
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

Plate 1 – Headline Results

The proposed post-restoration Site layout in its current form, will result in a biodiversity net loss of -0.16 habitat units which equates to **-95.57%** in relation to area habitats. There is a deficit of 0.18 units. There has been a net gain in hedgerow units of 0.02, however percentage change cannot be calculated as zero baseline hedgerow units are present. The trading rules have **not** been met.

Discussion and Conclusion

A biodiversity net gain in excess of 10% will not be achieved at the Site with the current design, which equates to a net loss of -95.57%. The trading rules have not been met.

It is considered unlikely that any significant additional gains can be made on-site within the confines of the proposed development; as such, off-site offsetting is recommended.

Option 1 – Delivery via land purchase and external offset.

This would involve the purchase of an area of land within the same LPA of the Site (distant provisions are penalised in the Metric), assessment of the current baseline value, exploring habitat creation and enhancement opportunities and delivering at least an additional 0.17 habitat units to achieve the minimum 10% net gain requirement. Note that in order to satisfy the 'trading rules' requirement within the Metric, off site enhancement would need to include the creation/enhancement of a low distinctiveness habitat, to compensate for the loss of modified grassland.

Option 2 – Delivery via offset land rental or purchase of units.

Option 2 would involve the client securing an agreement with a landowner to use their available land for an external offset and paying to rent the offset land from the landowner. The client could also secure an agreement with a habitat and purchase for the biodiversity units which the habitat bank will provide and undertake the management of the habitats that provide the units.

This external offset would need to be able to accommodate an uplift in biodiversity value of at least 0.18 habitat units to achieve the statutory requirement of a minimum 10% net gain (assuming the offset site is within the same LPA as the Site). The offset site would also need to ensure that the 'Trading Rules' are satisfied.

Once a suitable site has been found, it may then be necessary to consult with a Solicitor and/or Land Agent to draft up an agreement for how the offset will be delivered. It will also be necessary to negotiate over the level of payment to be provided by yourselves to the landowner. In addition to Legal Agreement a fully costed and detailed Biodiversity Management and Monitoring Plan would also be required to satisfy the LPA that the external offset will be delivered in full. This will need to include feedback mechanisms and a strategy for modifying any management failures or failure for other reasons for the required level of habitat improvement to be met. Management of the offset site and monitoring protocols would need to be secured for at least 30 years.

Option 3 - Statutory Biodiversity Credits

As a last resort, this option would involve purchasing credits from the government, at the rate of two credits for each outstanding biodiversity unit. Indicative costs based on the unit shortfall summary within the Statutory Metric (0.35 Tier A1 units) are estimated at £14,700[1].

[1] Add statutory biodiversity credits - GOV.UK

APPENDIX 1

ST21315-005 UKHab Baseline Survey Plan 2026



KEY

Site Boundary

Habitat Type

g4 - Modified grassland

u1b - Developed land, sealed surface

Secondary Codes:

106- Mown

Notes:

Boundaries are indicative. Aerial imagery shown for context purposes only.

© UKHAB LTD, under licence. No onward licence implied or provided. All rights reserved https://ukhab.org/commercial-eula/

REVISION	DETAILS	DATE	DRAWN	CHK'D	APP'D
A	FIRST ISSUE	24/04/26	EK	JS	TA

CLIENT

ATRI7 6 LIMITED

PROJECT

WHITWORTH STREET WEST

DRAWING TITLE

UKHAB BASELINE SURVEY PLAN
2026

DRG No.	REV	SUIT. CODE
ST21315-005	A	--

DRG SIZE	SCALE	DATE
A3	1:250	24/04/2026

DRAWN BY	CHECKED BY	APPROVED BY
EK	JS	TA

wardell armstrong
PART OF SLR

© Copyright Reserved

N:\ST\ST21315 - Whitworth Street EIA\03 - Design\GIS\ST21315-005 UKHab Baseline Survey Plan 2025\ST21315-005 UKHab Baseline Survey Plan 2025.aprx

APPENDIX 2

ST21315-006 UKHab Proposed Layout Plan



KEY

Site Boundary

Habitat Type

- h2b - Non-native and ornamental hedgerow
- h3h - Mixed scrub
- u1b5 - Buildings
- u1b6 - Other developed land

Secondary Codes:

523 - Non-native
847 - Introduced shrub

Notes:

Boundaries are indicative. Aerial imagery shown for context purposes only.

© UKHAB LTD, under licence. No onward licence implied or provided. All rights reserved https://ukhab.org/commercial-eula/

REVISION	DETAILS	DATE	DRAWN	CHKD	APP'D
A	FIRST ISSUE	24/04/26	EK	JS	TA

CLIENT

ATRI7 6 LIMITED

PROJECT

WHITWORTH STREET WEST

DRAWING TITLE

UKHAB PROPOSED LAYOUT PLAN

DRG No.	REV	SUIT. CODE
ST21315-006	A	--

DRG SIZE	SCALE	DATE
A3	1:200	24/04/2026

DRAWN BY	CHECKED BY	APPROVED BY
EK	JS	TA

wardell armstrong
PART OF SLR

© Copyright Reserved

N:\ST\ST21315 - Whitworth Street EIA\03 - Design\GIS\ST21315-006 UKHab Proposed Layout Plan\ST21315-006 UKHab Proposed Layout Plan.aprx

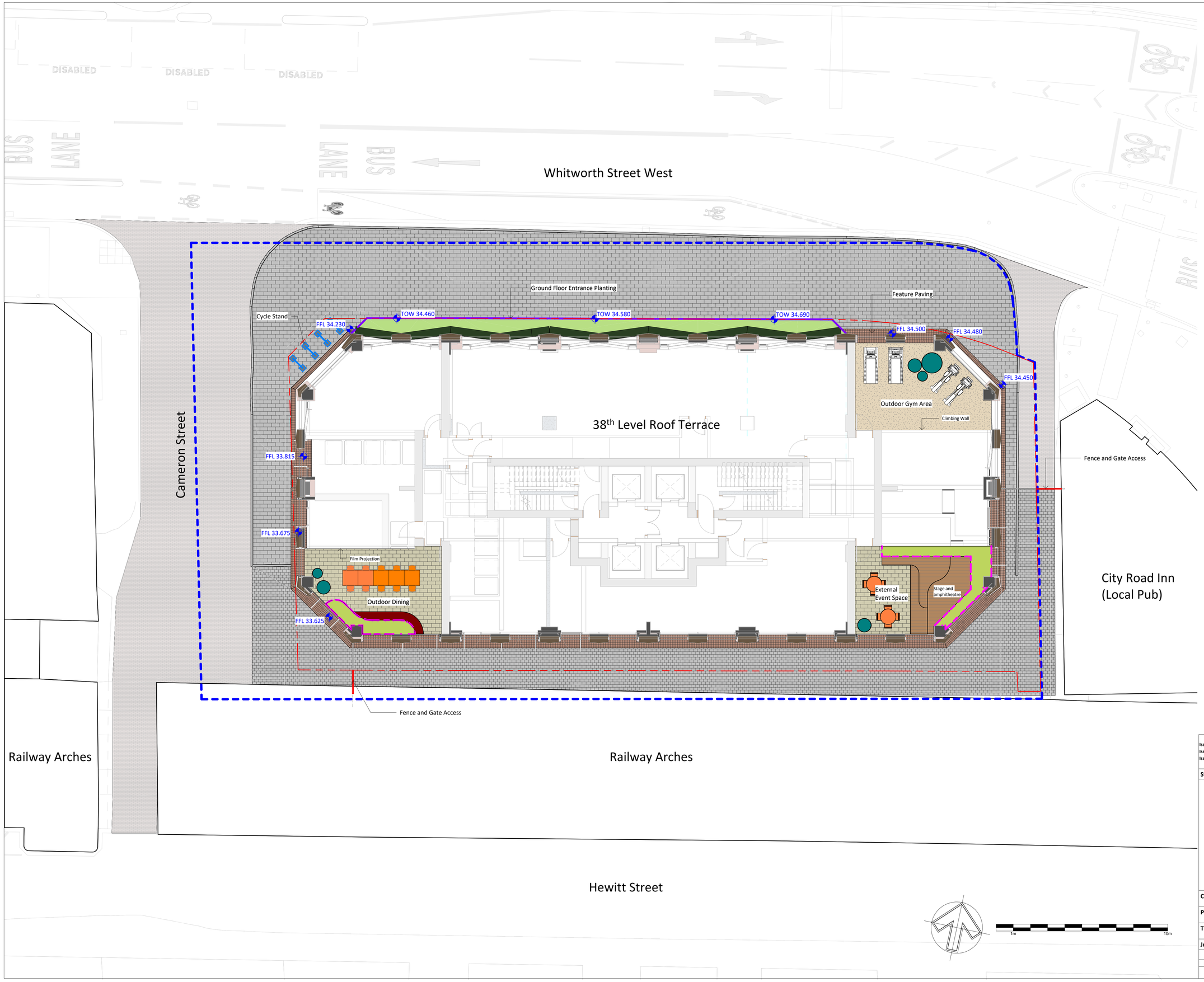
APPENDIX 3

8585-PHL-XX-00-DR-L-2000 - Combined Ground and 38th Floor Landscape Plan

Copyright. All Rights Reserved.
This work is copyright and cannot be re-produced or copied in any form or by any means (graphic, electronic or mechanical including photocopying) without the written permission of the originator. Any license, express or implied, to use this document for any purpose whatsoever is restricted to the terms of the agreement or implied agreement between the originator and the instructing party.

Unless otherwise stated all dimensions are in millimeters. Where dimensions are not given, drawings must not be scaled and the matter must be referred to the Landscape Architect. If the drawing includes conflicting details/dimensions the matter must be referred to the Landscape Architect. All dimensions must be checked on site. The Landscape Architect must be informed, by the Contractor, of any discrepancies before work proceeds.

THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH RELEVANT CONSULTANT'S DRAWINGS.



Legend

- Site Ownership Boundary
- Proposed Application Boundary
- **PAV01 - PC Concrete Paving**
  Material: Pre-Cast Concrete
  Colour: To Match Exisitng
  Size: To Match Exisitng
- **PAV02 - Permeable PC Concrete Paving**
  Material: Pre-Cast Concrete
  Colour: TBC
  Size: TBC
- **PAV03 - Paving Setts To Building**
  Material: Sandstone Setts (Sawn)
  Colour: Mira Sandstone
  Size: 100x100x100
- **PAV04 - Paving Setts**
  Material: TBC
  Colour: TBC
  Size: 100x100x100
- **PAV05 - Composite Decking**
  Material: Composite Decking
- **PAV06 - PC Concrete Paving**
  Material: Pre-Cast Concrete
  Colour: Salt
  Size: 200x100x80mm
- **PAV07 - Outdoor Gym Flooring**
  Material: Rubber Fitness Flooring Tiles
  Size: TBC
- **KED01 - Concrete Kerb**
  Material: TBC
- **KED02 - Upstand Edging to Planting**
  Material: Steel Edging
  Size: 250(H)x2.5(T)mm
- **KED03 - Upstand Edging to Planting**
  Material: Steel Edging
  Size: 750(H)x2.5(T)mm
- **FCS01 - Cycle Stand**
  Product: Sheffield Stand (Root Fixed)
  Material: Stainless Steel
  Finish: Brushed Satin
- Hedge
- Decorative Pots
- Movable Furnitures
- **Bench**
  Product: Mount Bench
  Material: Iroko Steel Base
  Size:500(W) x 450(H)
- Ornamental Shrubs & Perennials Planting

DRAFT

Revision Notes	By/Chk	Date	Rev
Issue for information	NY/AM	10/04/26	P03
Issue for information	NY/AM	01/04/26	P02
Issue for information	NY/AM	26/03/26	P01

Status: INFORMATION

Park Hood
Chartered Landscape Architects
Hawarden House, 163 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3HZ
T: +44 (0) 28 9029 8020 **E:** info@parkhood.com **parkhood.com**

Client: FUSION

Project: Whitworth Street
2-4 Whitworth Street, Manchester

Title: Combined Ground and 38th Floor Landscape Plan

Job No: 8585 **Scale@A1:** 1 : 100 **Date:** October 2025

Drawing Number

Project	Originator	Volume	Level	Type	Role	Number	Revision
8585	PHL	XX	00	DR	L	2000	P03