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BIODIVERSITY GAIN PLAN

At

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Author and qualifications

This report is compiled and written by Daniel Smith BSc MScRes ACIEEM, UES Senior Ecologist for United Environmental Services Ltd (UES). Daniel holds a level 3 Botanical Society for Britain and Ireland (BSBI) field identification skills certificate (FISC), which certifies him as competent to undertake phase 1 habitat and UKHab surveys.

It has been verified by Toby Hart BSc MCIEEM PIEMA, UES Managing Director. Toby holds a level 6 Botanical Society for Britain and Ireland (BSBI) field identification skills certificate (FISC). Level 6 is only awarded in exceptional circumstances where the surveyor is a very competent professional field botanist and is of national status.

1.2 Proposed development

The development proposals include the demolition of three apartment blocks and the construction of new residential units.

1.3 Document objectives

This Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) sets out how the project will comply with the biodiversity net gain (BNG) requirements established under the Environment Act 2021 and associated secondary legislation. The objectives of this BGP are to:

- Demonstrate how the development will achieve a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity units, in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Summarise the baseline ecological conditions and quantify the biodiversity losses and gains using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric.
- Explain the approach to on-site habitat creation and enhancement, including how long-term management has been secured.
- Set out the governance, monitoring, and legal mechanisms that will secure BNG delivery for a minimum of 30 years.

2 PLANNING POLICY

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2026) sets out national planning policy relating to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. In England, BNG is mandatory under the statutory framework established by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021.

Under the statutory framework, subject to applicable exemptions, planning permission is granted subject to the Biodiversity Gain Condition. This requires the biodiversity gain objective to be met, whereby the post-development biodiversity value of the development must exceed the pre-development biodiversity value by at least 10%.

Mandatory BNG applies to relevant planning applications submitted on or after 12 February 2024, with the requirements applying to non-major development from 2 April 2024.

The Environment Act 2021 sets out the following key components to mandatory BNG:

- Minimum 10% gain required calculated using DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric & approval of net gain plan
- Habitat secured for at least 30 years via obligations / conservation covenant
- Habitat can be delivered on-site, off-site or via statutory biodiversity credits
- There is a national register for net gain delivery sites
- The mitigation hierarchy still applies of avoidance, mitigation and compensation for biodiversity loss
- Also applies to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs)
- Does not apply to marine development
- Does not change existing legal environmental and wildlife protections

3 METHODOLOGY – ONSITE HABITATS

3.1 Baseline assessment

The BNG assessment has been undertaken using the DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric. The Metric was used to calculate baseline habitat, hedgerow and watercourse units.

An extended UKHab survey and habitat condition assessment were undertaken as part of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the site by Alasdair Grubb and Josh Howard on 9th August 2024. Surveyors present included:

- Alasdair Grubb BSc ACIEEM, UES Sub-contractor. Alasdair holds a level 5 Botanical Society for Britain and Ireland (BSBI) field identification skills certificate (FISC), which certifies him as competent to undertake UKHab and national vegetation classification (NVC) surveys.

- Josh Howard BSc, UES Field Ecologist. Josh holds a level 3 Botanical Society for Britain and Ireland (BSBI) field identification skills certificate (FISC), which certifies him as competent to undertake phase 1 habitat and UKHab surveys.

In accordance with CIEEM guidance (Advice Note, April 2019, *On the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys*), an updated walkover survey and habitat condition assessment were undertaken on 21st April 2026 by Daniel Smith to review the previous survey findings and identify any changes in site conditions.

Habitat clearance had taken place within parts of the site between the 2024 and 2026 surveys, resulting in changes to the habitats present and their condition. The 2024 survey data and associated habitat condition assessments have therefore been used to establish the baseline habitat types, extents and conditions within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. This represents the higher pre-clearance biodiversity value of the site and ensures that the subsequent habitat clearance does not result in a reduced baseline biodiversity value or an artificial increase in the calculated biodiversity net gain.

The 2026 survey was used to identify subsequent changes in site conditions and provide an updated assessment of the habitats present. However, where habitats had been subject to clearance or deterioration since the 2024 survey, the 2024 habitat data and condition assessments have been retained for the purposes of calculating the baseline biodiversity value.

Habitats forming the baseline assessment are mapped on the UKHab plan provided at Appendix 1. Full details of the habitats recorded onsite are provided within the PEA reports (references UES04587/01 and UES04587/12).

3.2 Post-development assessment

The post-development habitat assessment for the onsite Metric calculation was derived from the detailed landscape design provided to UES within the document prepared by DEP Landscape Architecture (Job number: 6008 – Drawing number 01 – Revision D). This document sets out the proposed soft-landscaping scheme, including habitat types, planting mixes and species compositions.

Habitat areas were calculated by digitising the scaled landscaping drawings. Target condition scores were assigned using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric habitat condition criteria and the management intentions set out in the landscape specification. Only condition criteria that are realistically achievable within the required timeframes and supported by the proposed management regime were passed.

All post-development habitat parcels were entered into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric as either:

- Habitat creation - new habitats replacing existing habitats; or
- Habitat enhancement - where an existing habitat is to be retained and improved in condition or distinctiveness.

A UKHab plan illustrating all proposed on-site post-development habitats is provided at Appendix 4.

3.3 Strategic significance

Following publication of the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), strategic significance scores for all proposed habitat creation and enhancement areas have been assigned using the LNRS spatial priorities and the criteria set out in Table 7 of the BNG User Guide.

3.3.1 Baseline habitats

In accordance with the following wording within the BNG User Guide, baseline scores for all onsite habitats have been assigned low strategic significance, i.e. 'Area / compensation not in local strategy / no local strategy':

"Once an LNRS has been published, the baseline strategic significance values for habitat parcels in that area should always be scored as low."

3.3.2 Post-development habitats

The proposed habitats onsite were assessed individually against the Greater Manchester LNRS spatial data and the criteria set out in Table 7 of the BNG User Guide.

The proposed development site lies outside the Core Local Nature Sites (Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity) and Nature Recovery Opportunity Areas (Areas that Could Become of Particular Importance for Biodiversity) identified within the Greater Manchester LNRS Nature Network. As such, all proposed onsite habitat creation and enhancement has been assigned low strategic significance, i.e. 'Area / compensation not in local strategy'.

3.4 Limitations

No significant limitations were identified that would affect the robustness of the BNG assessment or the surveys used to inform it.

4 BNG METRIC CALCULATION

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric has been used to assess the biodiversity losses and gains associated with the proposed development. Table 1 shows that the development will result in a net loss of habitat units, whilst hedgerow units will remain unchanged. Watercourse units are not considered within this report as no watercourses are present within the baseline habitat assessment.

Table 1 – Onsite biodiversity metric outcomes

Unit type	Baseline units	Onsite units post-development	Post development net change	Post development net change (percentage)	Trading rules satisfied?
Habitat	4.93	3.21	-1.72	-34.87%	No
Hedgerow	0.07	0.07	0.00	0.00%	Yes
Watercourse	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

The majority of onsite habitats that will be lost to facilitate the proposed development comprise modified grassland, which is a low-distinctiveness habitat typically recorded in low condition; other neutral grassland and mixed scrub, both of which are in poor condition; and urban trees, a medium-distinctiveness habitat recorded in moderate or good condition.

The onsite proposals result in a net loss of 1.72 habitat units (-34.87%), while the baseline value of 0.07 hedgerow units is retained, resulting in no net change in hedgerow units. As the onsite proposals do not achieve the statutory 10% biodiversity gain objective for either habitat or hedgerow units, additional biodiversity units will need to be secured offsite. Based on the rounded figures presented within Table 1, approximately 2.21 habitat units and 0.01 hedgerow units will be required to achieve a 10% net gain, subject to confirmation using the final Statutory Biodiversity Metric and satisfaction of the applicable trading rules.

All habitat creation and enhancement measures included within this BGP meet the eligibility requirements of the BNG Regulations and the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. No habitats have been counted towards more than one statutory or non-statutory obligation, and none of the proposed measures are required solely to meet protected species licensing, nutrient neutrality, flood mitigation or other regulatory requirements. The biodiversity units generated by the proposed habitat creation and enhancement measures are therefore eligible for inclusion within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric and comply with the requirements relating to unit eligibility and non-duplication.

5 LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT & MONITORING

Long-term management and monitoring are essential components of delivering the biodiversity outcomes set out within this draft BGP. All significant onsite habitat creation and enhancement measures relied upon to deliver BNG will be appropriately managed and monitored for a minimum period of 30 years to ensure that they achieve and maintain their target condition.

A Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) for the onsite habitats will be prepared to accompany the final BGP. The HMMP will set out the management objectives, prescriptions, monitoring indicators and success criteria for all significant onsite habitat creation and enhancement measures contributing towards BNG.

Monitoring of significant onsite habitat creation measures will be undertaken at scheduled intervals to assess progress towards target condition and will include:

• Condition assessments using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric criteria;

• Checks on establishment success, including tree and shrub survival and grassland species composition; and

• Review of management effectiveness.

Monitoring results will be used to inform adaptive management, ensuring that interventions remain effective and habitats continue to develop towards their intended condition.

6 LEGALLY SECURING BNG

Significant onsite habitat creation and enhancement measures relied upon within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric will be appropriately secured for a minimum period of 30 years through a planning condition, Section 106 agreement or conservation covenant, as appropriate. The mechanism for securing these habitats will be agreed with the Local Planning Authority (LPA). An HMMP will be prepared for the significant onsite habitat creation and enhancement measures. The HMMP will set out the management prescriptions, monitoring requirements, success criteria and adaptive management measures necessary to ensure that the habitats achieve and maintain their target condition for the required 30-year period.

The onsite proposals are not sufficient to achieve the statutory 10% biodiversity gain objective for habitat or hedgerow units. The residual habitat and hedgerow unit deficits will therefore need to be addressed through appropriate offsite biodiversity gains. This may comprise the purchase of biodiversity units from a third-party habitat bank or the delivery of appropriate habitat creation or enhancement on other land available to the applicant. Where sufficient offsite biodiversity units cannot be secured, statutory biodiversity credits may be purchased as a last resort.

Any offsite habitat creation or enhancement used to meet the biodiversity gain objective will be legally secured for a minimum period of 30 years through an appropriate Section 106 agreement or conservation covenant and registered on the Biodiversity Gain Site Register. The required habitat and hedgerow units will subsequently be allocated to the development through the register.

The location of any offsite biodiversity gains will be taken into account when completing the final Statutory Biodiversity Metric. Where offsite habitat compensation is located outside the relevant LPA area or National Character Area (NCA), the appropriate spatial risk multiplier will be applied in accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric.

The information presented within this draft BGP is considered sufficient to demonstrate the proposed approach to achieving the biodiversity gain objective. Following the grant of planning permission, a final BGP will be prepared to discharge the Biodiversity Gain Condition. This will incorporate the finalised habitat proposals, updated Statutory Biodiversity Metric, details of the offsite habitat and hedgerow units to be secured and evidence of the relevant legal and registration arrangements.

7 SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

This BGP sets out the approach to delivering biodiversity net gain for the proposed development at 232–236 Palatine Road, Didsbury. An up-to-date ecological baseline has been established for the onsite habitats through UKHab mapping and habitat condition assessment, informed by the original habitat survey and subsequent validation survey.

The post-development assessment is based on the latest landscape design, with proposed habitat creation and enhancement measures assigned appropriate target conditions in accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. Strategic significance has been assessed with reference to the Greater Manchester LNRS. The development site lies outside the Core Local Nature Sites and Nature Recovery Opportunity Areas identified within the Greater Manchester LNRS Nature Network and, therefore, all onsite habitats have been assigned low strategic significance.

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculates a baseline value of 4.93 habitat units and 0.07 hedgerow units. Following implementation of the proposed development and onsite habitat creation and enhancement measures, the site will provide 3.21 habitat units and retain 0.07 hedgerow units. This represents a net onsite loss of 1.72 habitat units (-34.87%), while hedgerow units remain unchanged.

As the statutory 10% biodiversity gain objective cannot be achieved solely through onsite measures, additional habitat and hedgerow units will need to be secured offsite. Based on the rounded figures presented within Table 1, approximately 2.21 additional habitat units and 0.01 additional hedgerow units will be required to achieve a 10% net gain, subject to confirmation using the final Statutory Biodiversity Metric and satisfaction of the applicable trading rules.

The required offsite biodiversity units will be secured through an appropriate third-party habitat bank or other suitable offsite biodiversity gain site. Statutory biodiversity credits may be used as a last resort where sufficient offsite biodiversity units cannot otherwise be secured. Details of the selected offsite provision, together with the associated legal agreements, Biodiversity Gain Site Register information and final Metric calculations, will be provided within the final BGP.

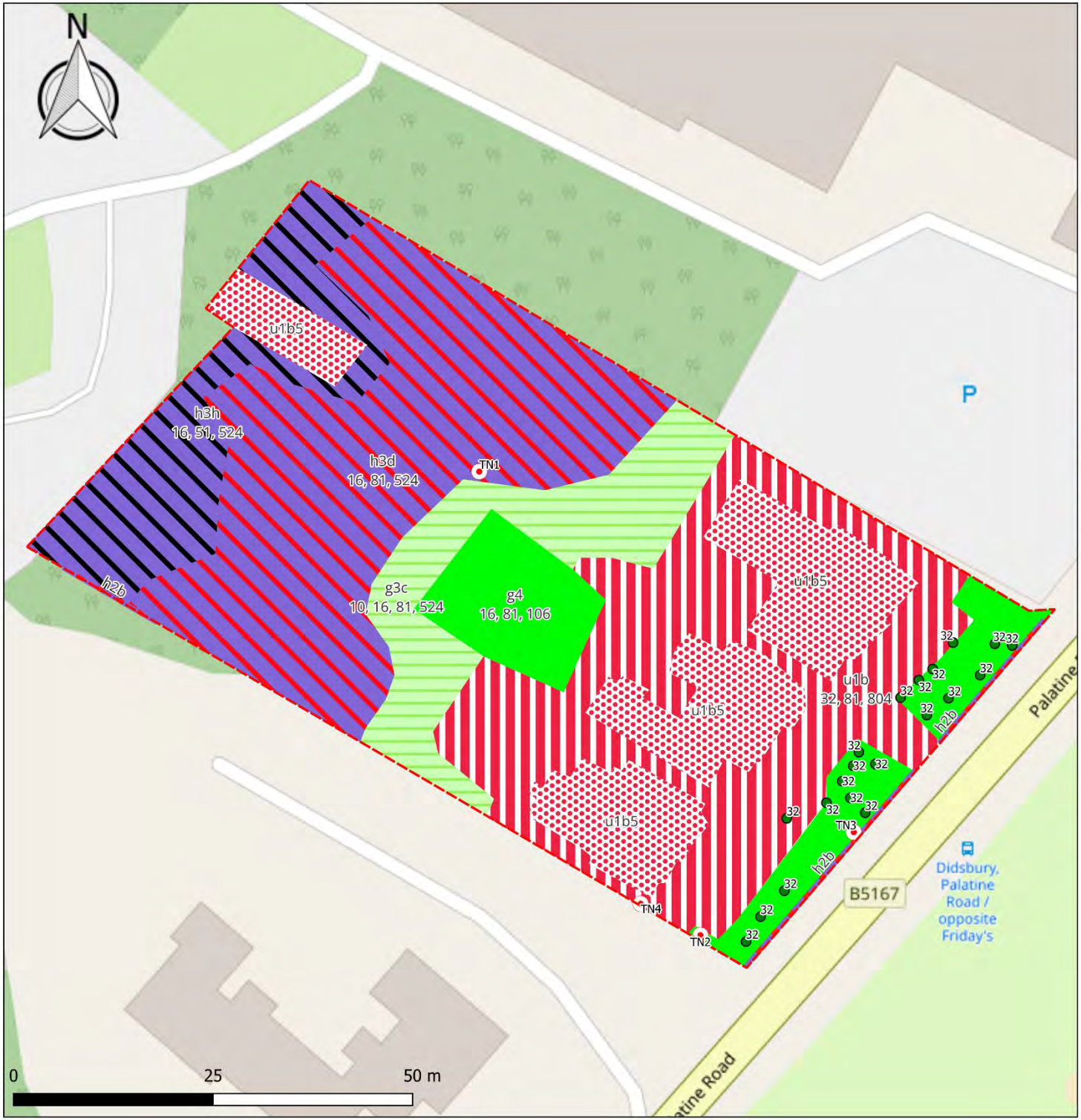
Overall, this draft BGP demonstrates how the development can achieve the statutory biodiversity gain objective through a combination of onsite habitat creation and enhancement and appropriately secured offsite biodiversity gains. Long-term management, monitoring and legal mechanisms will ensure that significant habitat measures relied upon to deliver BNG are secured for the required minimum 30-year period.

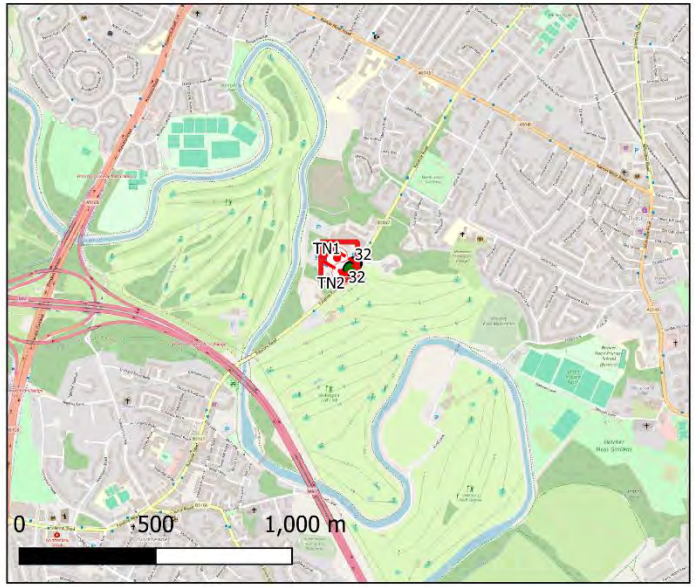
APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Baseline Site UKHab Plan

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Site: 232 - 236 Palatine Road, Didsbury
NGR: SJ 83560 90980
Author: Daniel Smith
Date: 09/10/2024





- g3c - other neutral grassland
- g4 - modified grassland
- h2b - non-native and ornamental hedgerow
- h3d - bramble scrub
- h3h - mixed scrub
- u1b - developed land. sealed surface
- u1b5 - buildings
- Survey boundary
- 32 - scattered trees
- Target Notes

MAP DATA FROM © OpenStreetMap

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Appendix 2 – Photographs 2024



Photograph 1 – Modified grassland in the eastern section of the site.



Photograph 2 – Modified grassland in the western section of the site.



Photograph 3 – The tall ruderal vegetation within the western section of the site, including the presence of Himalayan balsam.



Photograph 4 – Large abundance of Himalayan balsam and the dense mixed scrub to the rear.



Photograph 5 – Area of hardstanding onsite.

Appendix 3 – Photographs 2026



Photograph 1 – Area of other neutral grassland on the south-eastern boundary of the site.



Photograph 2 – Other neutral grassland on the western side of the site.



Photograph 3 – Himalayan Balsam, an invasive species of the schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.



Photograph 4 – Rhododendron, an invasive species of the schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.



Photograph 5 – Modified grassland onsite.



Photograph 6 – Montbretia, an invasive species of the schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.



Photograph 7 – Hedgerow 1.



Photograph 8 – Hedgerow 2.



Photograph 9 – Hedgerow 3.



Photograph 10 – Western elevation of the three residential buildings.



Photograph 11 – Exterior of Building 4.



Photograph 12 – Interior of Building 4.



Photograph 13 – Sparsely vegetated land on the western side of the site.



Photograph 14 – Sparsely vegetated urban land in the eastern side of the site.



Photograph 15 – Front drive on the south-eastern area of the site.

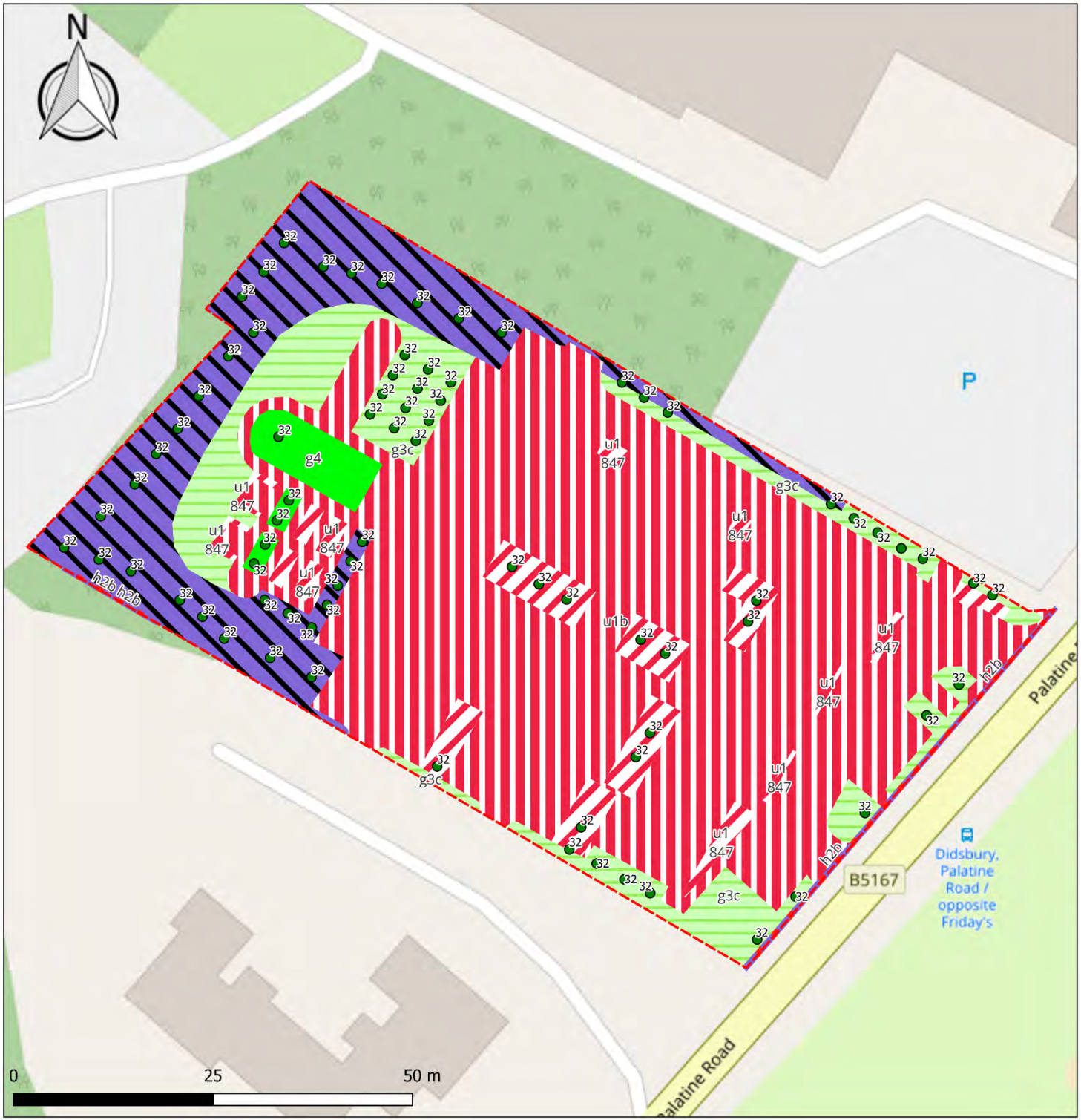


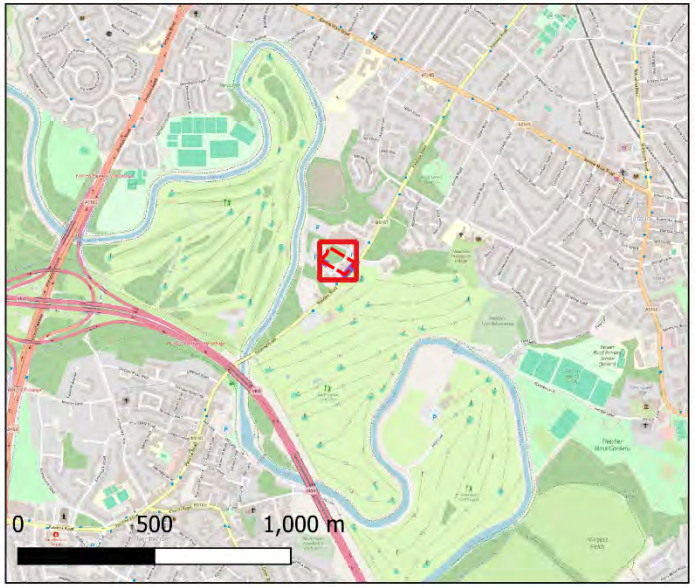
Photograph 16 – Scattered trees within the other neutral grassland to the east of the site.

Appendix 4 – Post-development Site UKHab Plan

Post Development UKHab Plan

Site: 232 - 236 Palatine Road, Didsbury
NGR: SJ 83560 90980
Author: Daniel Smith
Date: 18/09/2026





Key

- g3c - other neutral grassland
- g4 - modified grassland
- h2b - non-native and ornamental hedgerow
- h3h - mixed scrub
- u1 - built-up areas and gardens
- u1b - developed land. sealed surface
- Survey boundary
- 32 - scattered trees

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