



BJ Collins
PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEYORS

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN COVER REPORT

LAND AT 16 EQUITY ROAD EAST
EARL SHILTON
LEICESTERSHIRE

A report to:

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This specifies that after a period of 18 months from the date of the last relevant site survey, a professional ecologist will need to undertake a site visit and may also need to update desk study information (effectively updating the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal) to provide confidence that the ecological situation and status has not altered.

As a result, and given the transient nature of wildlife and habitats this report cannot be used in a formal "letter of reliance" beyond the period specified above.

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SUMMARY

This report has been prepared by BJ Collins – Protected Species Surveyors Ltd as a covering report, describing the calculations and results of the supporting Statutory Metric Calculation Tool for land associated with 16 Equity Road East, Earl Shilton.

The development proposal involves the construction of two detached bungalows within the existing garden landscape.

An ecological walkover and condition assessment was undertaken on the 20th of January 2026, to inform the production of the Metric (as published on the 12th of February 2024 by DEFRA). The Metric calculation tool has identified the following:

- The total area of the 16 Equity Road site is equal to 0.10 hectares, and the Total Habitat Units (Ecological Baseline) is equal to 0.17.
- The development works will lead to a 0.13 loss of units from the Ecological Baseline. The creation of Vegetated Garden within the design will provide 0.07 Habitat Units back toward the deficit.
- Overall, there is a -38.22% Net Change in Habitat Units, leaving the development in a **total deficit of 0.08 units to reach the mandatory 10% Net Gain for Habitats**.
- The total Hedgerow Length is equal to 0.052km, and the Total Hedgerow Units (Ecological Baseline) is equal to 0.05.
- The Hedgerows will be retained, leading to a 0% Net Change, and a deficit of **0.01 units to reach the mandatory 10% Net Gain for Hedgerow Units**.
- The total length of the Watercourse (Ditch) is equal to 0.011km, and the Total Watercourse Units (Ecological Baseline) is equal to 0.04.
- The Watercourse (ditch) will be retained, leading to a 0% Net Change, and a deficit of **less than 0.01 units to reach the mandatory 10% Net Gain for Watercourse Units**.

FINAL RESULTS				
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	-0.06		
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00		
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00		
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	-38.22%		
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00%		
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00%		
Trading rules satisfied?		No - Check Trading Summaries ▲		
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
<i>Habitat units</i>	10.00%	0.17	0.18	0.08
<i>Hedgerow units</i>	10.00%	0.05	0.06	0.01
<i>Watercourse units</i>	10.00%	0.04	0.05	0.00

With the development being constrained by its status as a residential garden there is no potential to deliver net gain on site. To that end, the developer should aim to acquire the required Units in an off-site location.

However, due to the requirement for all three unit types, we recommend the developer seek the acquisition of these 0.08 habitat units, 0.01 hedgerow units and 0.01 watercourse units from an external provider, such as one of the habitat banks.

NB: It is the decision of the developer on where and how to acquire these units, as there are a number of habitat banks and it is not the roll of the Ecologist to decide or recommend a specific service.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to Commission

BJ Collins Protected Species Surveyors Ltd was commissioned by Hayward Architects Ltd, on behalf of the site owners, to complete a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment for the development proposal of land at 16 Equity Road East, Earl Shilton (hereafter the “site”).

The site was subject to a preliminary ecological appraisal as detailed within the Survey Report¹, and condition assessments of the site habitats were undertaken to inform the production of a Statutory Biodiversity Metric, which is referenced within and submitted alongside this report².

1.2 Description of Project

The development proposal involves the construction of two detached bungalows within the existing garden landscape.

1.3 Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to assess the ecological impact of the proposed development with regards to Biodiversity Net Gain, to review the overall percentage change from the Ecological Baseline and further to provide recommendations for compensation where necessary, in line with the legislation for a requirement of at least 10% Gain in Biodiversity.

1.4 Legislation

Under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021), Developers must deliver a Biodiversity Net Gain of 10%. This means a development will result in more or better-quality natural habitat than there was before development.

1.5 Site Description

The site (roughly indicated by the yellow boundary in Figure 1 below) is located off Equity Road East in Earl Shilton (central Ordnance Survey Grid Reference – SP 4659 9715). The site comprises a residential garden with lawns, shrubberies and trees, with a band of trees surrounding agricultural land immediately east of the site, extending further to a Local Wildlife Site.



Figure 1: The site roughly encircled in yellow, in relation to the surrounding landscape, courtesy of Google Earth.

¹ 16 Equity Road East, Earl Shilton – Preliminary Ecological Appraisal – B J Collins PSS Ltd (2026)

² 16_Equity_Rd_East_Statutory_Metric_V1_02.26 – B J Collins PSS Ltd (2026)

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Ecological Walkover and Condition Assessments

To inform the BNG calculations, a preliminary ecological appraisal and condition assessment was undertaken on the 20th of January 2026.

This involved systematically walking over the site and classifying habitats, utilising the UK Habitat Classification survey methodology (UKHab Ltd, 2023), on the basis of vegetation, into one of approximately 47 habitat types (Level 4) alongside a list of secondary codes which give information on the environment and management of those habitats.

Each habitat is then subject to a Statutory Metric condition assessment³, downloaded from the Gov.uk website, which uses a series of criteria representing key physical characteristics of each habitat type to assess whether the habitats are in favourable condition.

Habitats were assessed as either poor, moderate or good condition.

2.2 Biodiversity Net Gain Calculation

The “Biodiversity Metric – QGIS Template” was downloaded from the Natural England publications webpage⁴ to accurately map the findings of the habitat survey, and to map the proposed development utilising plans provided by the client.

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool was downloaded from the Gov.uk webpage⁵ to calculate the total habitat units for the Baseline and Proposed sites, and the Total Unit Net Change overall.

2.3 Minimum Mapping Units

The minimum mappable area used is equal to or greater than 25 m², and the minimum mappable length of a linear feature is equal to or greater than 5 m.

2.4 Limitations

The surveyor did not encounter any significant constraints upon the survey effort.

2.5 Personnel

The survey took place on the 20th of January 2026 by Mr. Barry Collins MSc MCIEEM, an ecologist qualified to FISC level 3, with over 20 years of experience in the ecological sector.

The QGIS mapping and subsequent BNG calculations were completed by Mr Patrick A Collins BSc (Hons), who has completed formal training for the Statutory Metric and the use of QGIS.

³ Statutory_Biodiversity_Metric_Condition_Assessments_-Feb24 – Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides>

⁴ <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6049804846366720>

⁵ The_Statutory_Biodiversity_Metric_Calculation_Tool_-_Macro_enabled_02.24 – Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides>

3. ECOLOGICAL WALKOVER AND CONDITION ASSESSMENT RESULTS

The ecological walkover identified three habitat types:

- Vegetated Garden (u828) – Modified Grassland within the confines of a garden landscape
- Introduced Shrub (u847) – Shrub planting within the confines of a garden landscape
- Non-native and Ornamental Hedgerow (h2b)
- Ditch (r50) – Not completely associated with a hedgerow or tree line

3.1 Vegetated Garden (u828)

The grassland habitat within the landscape is considered a Modified Grassland, but for the purpose of BNG, it is categorised as Vegetated Garden, due to its situation within the confines of a private property boundary.

The grass is dominated by perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*) and Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*). A full list of species is available within the PEA report.

There are sections of the garden that were categorised as Tall Ruderal vegetation, which are essentially unmanaged areas of garden that have become overgrown by Nettles. These are also in the confines of a private residence and are classed as Vegetated Garden for the purpose of BNG.

For the consideration of Biodiversity Net Gain Calculations, the Vegetated Garden is an “Urban” broad habitat type. This habitat type is not applicable for a Condition Assessment.



Photograph 1: The grassland landscape within the Vegetated Garden.

3.2 Introduced Shrub (u847)

The garden landscape contains areas of overgrown shrub planting, around the boundaries and with a central planting line that almost dissects the garden.

Shrub planting within the confines of a private property is considered Introduced Shrub in the process of Biodiversity net Gain Calculations, which is also part of the “Urban” broad habitat type.

These areas comprised species such as Apple (*Malus domestica*), Privet (*Ligustrum* sp.), Ivy (*Hedera* sp.), Geranium and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.).

This habitat type is not applicable for a Condition Assessment.



Photograph 2: The introduced shrubs within the centre of the Vegetated Garden.

3.3 Non-native and Native Hedgerow (h2b and h2a)

The hedgerows that run along the northern and southern boundaries are dominated by Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), interspersed with some Non-native and Native species.

Condition assessment not applicable to non-native hedgerow.



Photograph 3: Non-native hedgerow along the northern boundary.

There is a small, interrupted section of Native hedgerow that has been planted on the neighbouring property.

Using Condition sheet 8a, the hedgerow is considered to be in Poor condition as it fails both criterion in group A and group B.



Photograph 4: The small section of Native hedgerow on the northern boundary.

A1.	Height	>1.5 m average along length	The average height of woody growth estimated from base of stem to the top of the shoots, excluding any bank beneath the hedgerow, any gaps or isolated trees. Newly laid or coppiced hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice). A newly planted hedgerow does not pass this criterion (unless it is >1.5 m height).	N
A2.	Width	>1.5 m average along length	The average width of woody growth estimated at the widest point of the canopy, excluding gaps and isolated trees. Outgrowths (such as blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i> suckers) are only included in the width estimate when they are >0.5 m in height. Laid, coppiced, cut and newly planted hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice).	N
B1.	Gap - hedge base	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length	This is the vertical 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow, and its distance from the ground to the lowest leafy growth. Certain exceptions to this criterion are acceptable (see page 65 of the Hedgerow Survey Handbook).	N
B2.	Gap - hedge canopy continuity	Gaps make up <10% of total length; and No canopy gaps >5 m	This is the horizontal 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow. Gaps are complete breaks in the woody canopy (no matter how small). Access points and gates contribute to the overall 'gappiness' but are not subject to the >5 m criterion (as this is the typical size of a gate).	N
C1.	Undisturbed ground and perennial vegetation	>1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length: · Measured from outer edge of hedgerow; and · Is present on one side of the hedgerow (at least).	This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedgerow. Undisturbed ground is present for at least 90% of the hedgerow length, greater than 1 m in width and must be present along at least one side of the hedgerow. This criterion recognises the value of the hedgerow base as a boundary habitat with the capacity to support a wide range of species. Cultivation, heavily trodden footpaths, poached ground etc. can limit available habitat niches.	Y
C2.	Nutrient-enriched perennial vegetation	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground.	The indicator species used are nettles <i>Urtica</i> spp., cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i> and docks <i>Rumex</i> spp. Their presence, either singly or together, does not exceed the 20% cover threshold.	Y
D1.	Invasive and neophyte species	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ³) and recently introduced species.	Recently introduced species refer to plants that have naturalised in the UK since AD 1500 (neophytes). Archaeophytes count as natives. For information on archaeophytes and neophytes see the JNCC website⁴, as well as the BSBI website⁵ where the 'Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora'⁶ contains an up-to-date list of the status of species. For information on invasive non-native species see the GB Non-Native Secretariat website⁷.	Y
D2.	Current damage	>90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities.	This criterion addresses damaging activities that may have led to or lead to deterioration in other attributes. This could include evidence of pollution, piles of manure or rubble, or inappropriate management practices (for example, excessive hedgerow cutting).	Y

3.4 Ditches (r50)

There is a short ditch at the eastern end of the garden, which is more than 2m from the adjacent tree line so is considered a stand-alone feature. At the time of survey, the ditch was wet, but it is understood that for approximately ¾ of the year, the ditch will be dry.

The ditch is considered to be in Poor condition, as per the Table figure below, for Condition Sheet 4A.

Condition Sheet: DITCH Habitat Type		
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)
A	The ditch is of good water quality, with clear water (low turbidity) indicating no obvious signs of pollution.	No
B	A range of emergent, submerged and floating-leaved plants are present. As a guide >10 species of emergent, floating or submerged plants present in a 20 m ditch length.	No
C	There is less than 10% cover of filamentous algae and or duckweed <i>Lemna</i> spp. (these are signs of eutrophication).	Yes
D	A fringe of aquatic marginal vegetation is present along more than 75% of the ditch.	No
E	Physical damage is evident along less than 5% of the ditch, with examples of damage including: excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, or any other damaging management activities.	Yes
F	Sufficient water levels are maintained - as a guide a minimum summer depth of approximately 50 cm in minor ditches and 1 m in main drains.	No
G	Less than 10% of the ditch is heavily shaded.	Yes
H	There is an absence of non-native plant and animal species ¹ .	Yes
Number of criteria passed		4
Condition Assessment Result (out of 8 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x1/
Passes 8 criteria	Good (3)	
Passes 6 or 7 criteria	Moderate (2)	
Passes 5 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)	Poor

Figure 2: Snapshot of the condition assessment sheet for the Ditch.

4. BASELINE – ON-SITE HABITAT, HEDGEROW AND WATERCOURSE UNITS

The habitats located on-site were mapped using QGIS and entered into the Statutory Metric submitted alongside this report. Figure 3 below displays the layout of the baseline.

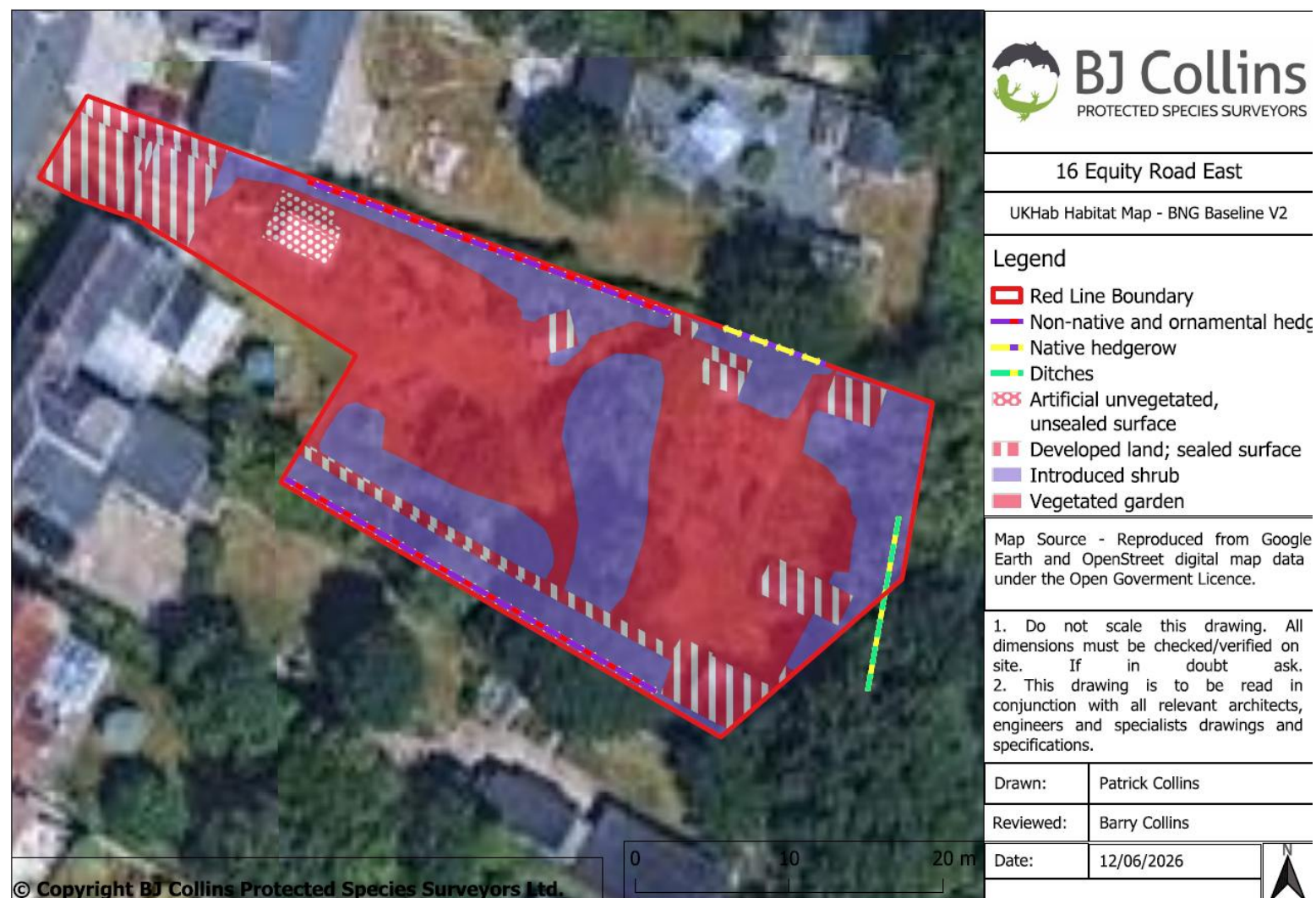


Figure 3: The baseline habitat map of the land at 16 Equity Road East.

A-1 On-Site Habitat Baseline

The total site area is equal to 0.1 hectares, and with the array of habitat types in their respective conditions, the Total Habitat Units (Ecological Baseline) is equal to 0.17. See tab "A-1 On-site Habitat Baseline" on the Statutory Metric for more information.

B-1 On-site Hedgerow Baseline

The northern and southern boundary comprises Non-native hedgerow, with a length of 0.025km and 0.027km respectively. There is a 0.007km section of Native hedgerow. All are assessed as in Poor condition, therefore the Total Hedgerow Units (Ecological Baseline) is equal to 0.07. See tab "B-1 On-site Hedgerow Baseline" on the Statutory Metric for more information.

C-1 On-Site Watercourse Baseline

The ditch on site is mapped as a linear watercourse feature. The total length is equal to 0.011km, and in a Poor condition, the Total Watercourse Units (Ecological Baseline) is equal to 0.04. See tab "C-1 On-site Watercourse Baseline" on the Statutory Metric for more information.

5. PROPOSED – ON-SITE HABITAT, HEDGEROW AND WATERCOURSE

The post-intervention habitats were mapped using the proposed drawings provided by the client, as seen below.



Figure 4: The proposed development of land at 16 Equity Road East, as provided by Hayward Architects.

A-2 On-Site Habitat Creation

The proposed development will retain 0.02 hectares of habitat, comprising an area of Artificial Unvegetated, Unsealed surface, an area of Developed Land and areas of the Vegetated Garden. The loss of the remaining habitat areas will lead to a **loss of 0.13 habitat units from the Ecological Baseline**.

There will be creation of Artificially Unvegetated Surface, Developed Land and Vegetated Garden as part of the development. This will return 0.07 Habitat Units.

The Net Change for On-Site Habitats is equal to **-38.22%**.

On-Site Hedgerow Units

The development proposal will retain the existing hedgerow on site.

Therefore, there is a **0% Net Change** for On-Site Hedgerow Units.

On-Site Watercourse Units

The development proposal will retain the existing ditch on site.

Therefore, there is a **0% Net Change** for On-Site Watercourse Units.

Figure 5 below is taken from the Headline Results tab, showing the percentage of Net Change.

On-site baseline	Habitat units	0.17	
	Hedgerow units	0.05	
	Watercourse units	0.04	
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.10	
	Hedgerow units	0.05	
	Watercourse units	0.04	
On-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	-0.06	-38.22%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%

Figure 5: An extract from the Headline Results tab showing the Baseline and Post-intervention (proposed) units with the overall -38.22% Habitat Unit loss and 0% change to the Hedgerow and Watercourse units.

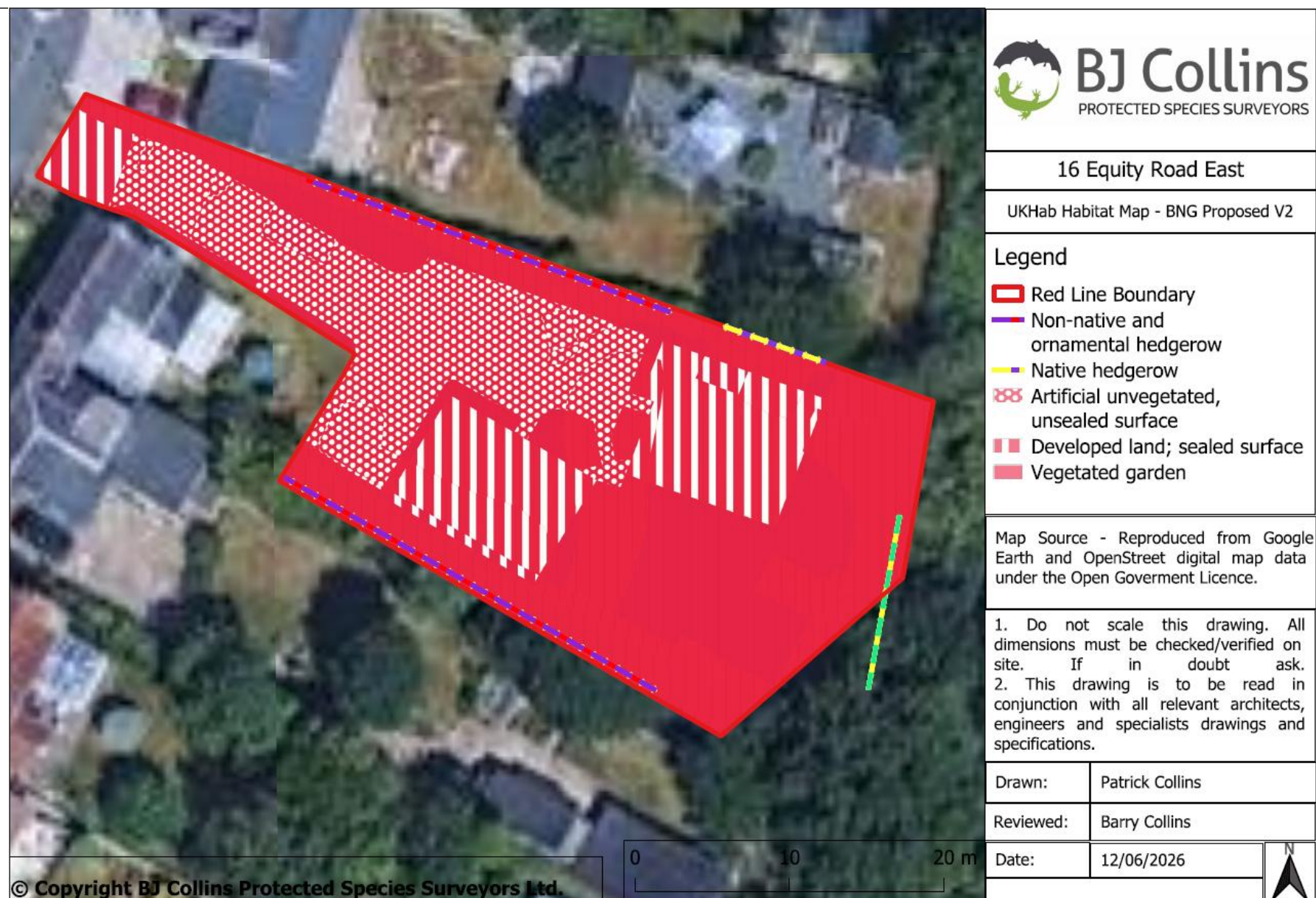


Figure 6: The proposed habitat map of the land associated with 16 Equity Road East.

6. CONCLUSION

The Metric calculation tool produced for this development project has identified the following:

- The total area of the 16 Equity Road site is equal to 0.10 hectares, and the Total Habitat Units (Ecological Baseline) is equal to 0.17.
- The retained habitats are equal to 0.02 hectares, but the removal of Vegetated Garden and Introduced Shrub will lead to a 0.13 loss of units from the Ecological Baseline.
- There will be creation of Artificially Unvegetated, Unsealed Surfaces and Developed Laned, Sealed Surfaces within the final design, which provide no value to the Habitat areas. There will be 0.0345 hectares of Vegetated Garden creation, which will provide 0.07 Habitat Units back toward the development.
- Overall, there is a -38.22% Net Change in Habitat Units, leaving the development in a **total deficit of 0.08 units to reach the mandatory 10% Net Gain**.
- The total Hedgerow Length is equal to 0.06km, and the Total Hedgerow Units (Ecological Baseline) is equal to 0.07.
- The Hedgerows will be retained, leading to a 0% Net Change, and a deficit of **0.01 units to reach the mandatory 10% Net Gain for Hedgerow Units**.
- The total length of the Watercourse (Ditch) is equal to 0.011km, and the Total Watercourse Units (Ecological Baseline) is equal to 0.04.
- The Watercourse (ditch) will be retained, leading to a 0% Net Change, and a deficit of **less than 0.01 units to reach the mandatory 10% Net Gain for Watercourse Units**.

Figure 7 below is taken from the Headline Results Tab, highlighting the Unit Deficit for each Unit Type, to reach the 10% Uplift in Net Gain.

FINAL RESULTS				
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	-0.06		
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00		
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00		
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	-38.22%		
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00%		
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00%		
Trading rules satisfied?	No - Check Trading Summaries ▲			
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
<i>Habitat units</i>	10.00%	0.17	0.18	0.08
<i>Hedgerow units</i>	10.00%	0.05	0.06	0.01
<i>Watercourse units</i>	10.00%	0.04	0.05	0.00

Figure 7: The Final Results from the Headline Results Tab showing the Unit Deficit for each Unit Type to reach the required 10% net gain for the development.

With the development being constrained by its status as a residential garden there is no potential to deliver net gain on site. To that end, the developer should aim to acquire the required Units in an off-site location.

This is equal to a small amount of compensation, which could be done through providing the local authority with tree planting, hedgerow planting and maintenance of local watercourse, however, entering into this agreement results in a requirement for a formal arrangement, such as section 106, which can be costly, or alternatively a planning condition or conservation covenant.

However, due to the requirement for all three units types, we recommend the developer seek the acquisition of these 0.08 habitat units, 0.01 hedgerow units and 0.01 watercourse units from an external provider, such as one of the habitat banks.

It is the decision of the developer to acquire these units, as there are a number of habitat banks and we as Ecologists cannot suggest a specific one.

7. REFERENCES

B J Collins PSS (2026) **16_Equity_Rd_East_Statutory_Metric_V1_02.26**, B J Collins PSS Ltd, Nottingham.

B J Collins PSS (2026) **Equity Road East, Earl Shilton – PEA 2026 13.2.26**, B J Collins PSS Ltd, Nottingham.

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