ALCA ecology

63 Heath Lane, Earl Shilton

Biodiversity Net Gain Statement and Bat Report

Mr M Smith

September 2025

The advice within this document has been produced in accordance with guidance from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

Revision	Prepared by	Date	Checked by
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1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Alca Ecology were commissioned to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment and Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at a site located at 63 Heath Lane, Earl Shilton. This included a site survey and condition assessment, the data of which was then used to undertake a BNG assessment using the Statutory BNG Metric.

1.2 The assessment shows that a 10% net gain in BNG units is not achievable on-site, and that off-site units must be sourced in order to achieve an overall 10% net gain.

2.0 Introduction

Background / Site Context

2.1 Alca Ecology were commissioned to undertake a BNG assessment and PRA at a site located to the rear of 63 Heath Lane, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire (central grid ref SP 45798 97654), hereafter referred to as 'the site'.

2.2 A desk study and site walkover were undertaken to categorise present habitats and to determine their strategic significance. The Statutory BNG Metric was then used to calculate the baseline and post-development unit value.

2.3 The site, approximately 0.024 hectares in extent, lies within the western extent of Earl Shilton and consists of a small area garden space and single-storey garage building. The site is located within a built-up, residential setting.

2.4 Proposals for the site include the demolition of the existing building and construction of a single residential dwelling, with associated garden / driveway.

Legislation

2.5 BNG is a statutory requirement under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as part of the Environment Act 2021. This legislation came into effect on the 12th February 2024, meaning any applications submitted after this date (with certain exceptions) must demonstrate a measurable 10% net gain in biodiversity post-development. If a sufficient on-site gain is not achievable, off-site biodiversity units must be purchased.

2.6 This report has been produced in order to show that a BNG assessment has been completed and that the proposals will be compliant with the Environment Act 2021.

3.0 Methods

3.1 All stages of the BNG assessment were undertaken in accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide[1].

Desk Study

3.2 A consultation exercise was undertaken whereby baseline ecological information was collected from Natural England via the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website[2]. Any designated sites, including statutory and non-statutory designations, were recorded, as well as any Priority Habitats under the Priority Habitat Inventory.

3.3 The Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)[3], including the accompanying Local Habitat Map, was consulted to determine the site's strategic significance.

Habitat Survey

3.4 A walkover of the site was undertaken on the 9th September 2025 by an experienced ecologist with a Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC) level 4. Survey methods broadly followed the UKHab survey methodology. The purpose of the walkover was to classify present habitats and assess their condition in line with guidance using Statutory Condition Assessment sheets. The abundance of species was quantified using the DAFOR scale, ranging from Dominant (>75%), through Abundant (75-51%), Frequent (50-26%) and Occasional (25-11%) to Rare (10-1%).

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment

3.5 A BNG assessment was undertaken based on the most up-to-date proposals (Drawing ref: 02-2429_00, StuArch). The UKHab data was inputted to GIS software, analysed, and the Statutory Metric Tool[4] was used to calculate the change in biodiversity unit value between the baseline habitats and proposed habitats.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

3.6 A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken on the single on-site building on the 9th September 2025 by a licenced bat worker (Natural England Class Licence Registration Number: CL18 Bat Survey Level 2 - 2024-12510-CL18-BAT). This involved an internal and external assessment of all potential roost features and their suitability to support bats. A search was also carried out for any evidence of roosting bats. The buildings suitability to support roosting bats was then classified as either negligible, low, moderate or high potential. The site itself and the

[1] Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, 2024. *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide.*
[2] https://magic.defra.gov.uk/
[3] https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/local-nature-recovery-strategy/leicestershire-leicester-and-rutland-local-nature-recovery-strategy
[4] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides

immediate surroundings of the site were assessed, with particular regard to hedgerow / treelines / features that may provide good connectivity and foraging habitat for local bats.

3.7 The PRA was carried out based on most recent BCT[5] and JNCC[6] guidance, as well as statutory guidance[7].

4.0 Results / Conclusion

Biodiversity Net Gain

Strategic Significance

4.1 No statutory / non-statutory designated sites or Priority Habitats were recorded within or adjacent to the site.

4.2 The nearest designated site was over 2.2km away (Burbage Common and Woods Local Nature Reserve (LNR)) and the nearest Priority Habitat recorded was over 1.5km away (floodplain grazing marsh).

4.3 As a LNRS has been published for Leicestershire, in accordance with Statutory Guidance all baseline habitats were assigned low strategic significance ('Area/compensation not in local strategy/no local strategy').

4.4 Proposed habitats include only urban type habitats (vegetated garden, unvegetated garden and developed land; sealed surface). The site does not fall within any mapped areas within the LNRS Local Habitat Map that are targeted for improvement. In light of the above, the proposed habitats have been assigned low strategic significance.

4.5 No irreplaceable habitats are present within the site and there does not appear to have been any significant habitat degradation.

Baseline Habitats

4.6 The vegetated area of the garden consisted of a mosaic of mown lawn areas and a small area used as an allotment. Children's garden toys were present, indicating regular use as a garden. Species recorded within the lawn included perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne,* false oat grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, white clover *Trifolium repens* and creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*. Towards the edges, species such as nettle *Urtica dioica*, fat hen *Chenopodium album*, smooth sow thistle *Sonchus oleraceus*, common field speedwell *Veronica persica*, scarlet pimpernel *Lysimachia arvensis* and cat's ear *Hypochaeris radicata* were present.

[5] Collins, J. (ed.), 2023. *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, Good Practice Guidelines* (4th Edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London
[6] JNCC, 1999. Mitchell-Jones, A.J, & McLeish, A.P. Ed. *Bat Workers Manual.*
[7] Mitchell-Jones, A.J., 2004. *Bat Mitigation Guidelines.* English Nature, Peterborough.

4.7 All vegetated areas within the site were therefore considered to constitute 'vegetated garden'. The condition assessment for this habitat type is automatically set to N/A.

4.8 The remaining areas of the site consisted of the single garage and a small hardstanding patio / slabbed area. These areas were considered to constitute 'developed land; sealed surface' and 'unvegetated garden', respectively. The condition assessments for these habitat types are automatically set to N/A.

4.9 Two small apple trees *Malus domestica* were present in the southwest. These trees were assessed as being in moderate condition. Condition assessments are provided in Appendix 1.

4.10 Baseline habitats are detailed in Table 1 and shown in Figure 1.

Table 1: Baseline Habitat Value

Habitat Type	Area (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Baseline Habitat Score
Developed land; sealed surface	0.0038	Very low	N/A	0
Vegetated garden	0.0188 (of which 0.0122 retained)	Low	N/A	0.04 (of which 0.02 retained)
Unvegetated garden	0.001	Very low	N/A	0
Urban tree	0.0081*	Medium	Moderate	0.06 (all of which retained)
Total	**0.02**			**0.1 (of which 0.09 retained)**

** Individual tree area is calculated within the metric and corresponds to the number of trees within each category. These areas are not included in the total habitat area.*

Values are taken directly from the Statutory Metric, any rounding errors relate to the internal calculations within the metric workbook.

Proposed Habitats

4.11 The existing garage is proposed to be lost and replaced with a new dwelling. The overall layout will remain broadly the same, consisting of a mix of developed land; sealed surface, vegetated garden and unvegetated garden. The two individual trees will be retained. Proposed habitats are shown in Figure 4.

Table 2: Proposed Habitat Value

Habitat Type	Area (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Proposed Habitat Score
Developed land; sealed surface	0.0059	Very low	N/A	0
Vegetated garden	0.0007	Low	N/A	0
Unvegetated garden	0.0048	Very low	N/A	0
Total	**0.02**			**0**

Assessment Results

4.12 The assessment shows an overall loss of 0.01 habitat units (-11.57%).

Table 3: Headline Results from Statutory Metric

Baseline Habitats Score	Post-Development Habitats Score	Unit Difference	Percentage Difference
0.1	0.09	-0.01	-11.57%

4.13 The completed Statutory Metric demonstrates that a 10% gain in biodiversity units is not achievable within the site. This is not unexpected for a site of this small size that is entirely under private ownership, as habitat creation that would provide BNG uplift cannot be achieved within privately owned areas.

4.14 In order to achieve a 10% gain in BNG units, off-site units will need to be purchased from a third-party biobank. It is estimated that 0.02 units will be required in order to achieve an overall 10% increase.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

4.15 A single building is present within the site. This is a single-storey garage formed of concrete, with a single skinned composite corrugated roof with a steel frame. No roof void is present. No barge boards or soffits are present on the exterior. There are large gaps between the roof and the wall which allow light into the building on all aspects.

4.16 The building is currently used as a storage area, with access consisting of a metal garage door and a wooden side access door.

4.17 No evidence of bats (such as droppings or urine staining) were observed.

4.18 The single on-site building was considered to be of **Negligible** potential for roosting bats. Therefore nocturnal surveys are not required and works may proceed.

Appendix 1: BNG Condition Assessments

Individual Trees

Criteria		Tree Ref	
		T1	T2
		Pass / Fail	
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	Pass – Apple tree	Pass – Apple tree
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	Pass	Pass
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature)1.	Pass	Pass
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	Pass	Fail – Heavily pollarded
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	Fail – no such features	Fail – no such features
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Fail – Oversails tarpaulin sheet	Pass
Total passes		4	4

5-6 passes: Good condition; 3-4 passes: Moderate Condition; 1-2 passes: Poor condition

Appendix 2: Site Photos

Photo 1: Vegetated garden

Photo 2: Vegetated garden

Photo 3: Building

Photo 4: Building

Photo 5: Tree T1

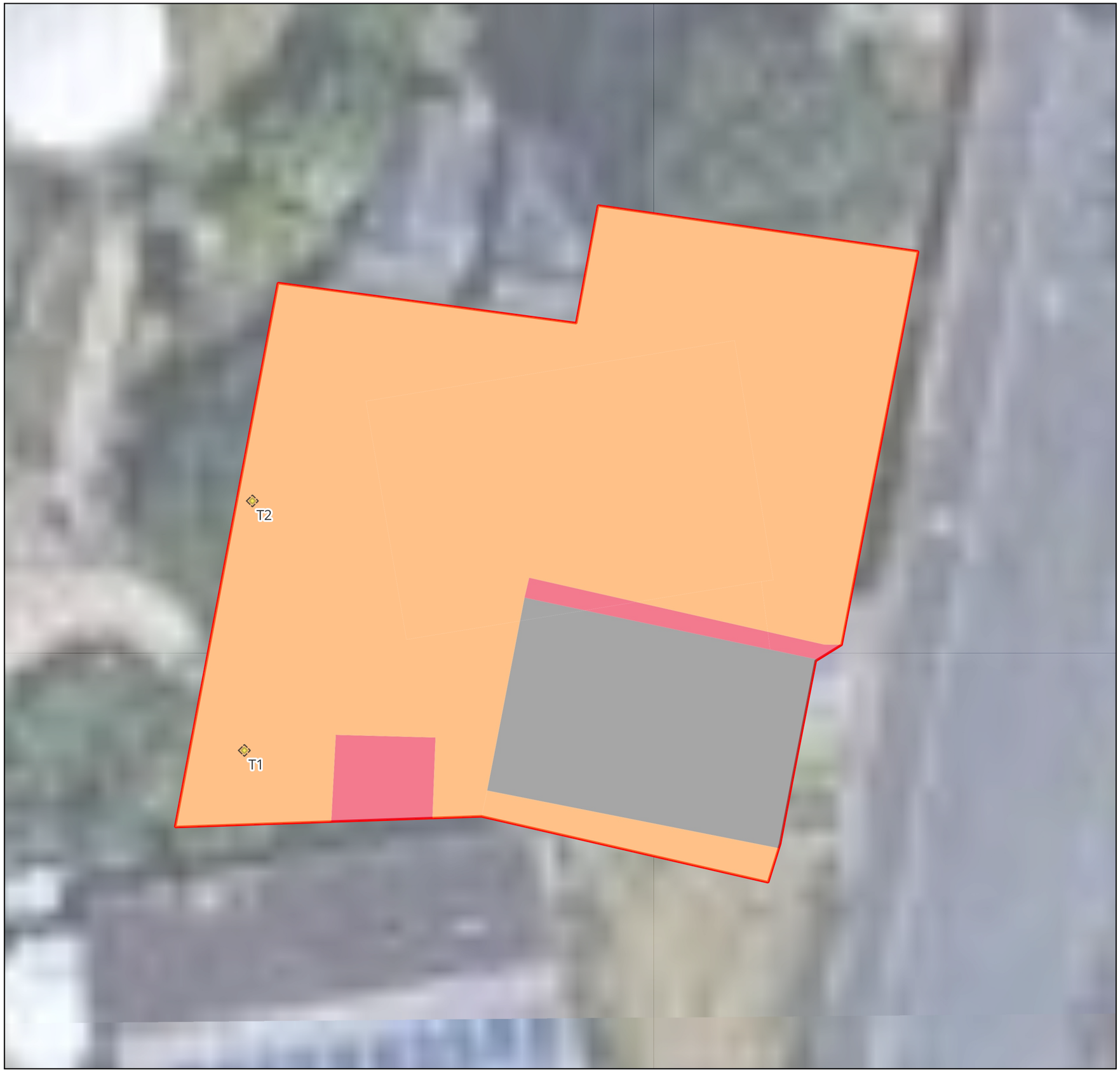
Photo 6: Tree T2

Photo 7: Wall / roof gap

Photo 8: Wall / roof gap

Photo 9: Building interior

Photo 10: Building interior



Key

- Site Boundary

Habitats Baseline

- Developed land; sealed surface
- Unvegetated garden
- Vegetated garden

Individual Tree Baseline

- Existing Small Urban Tree

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0 — 5 m

client
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title
Baseline Habitat Plan

title
FIGURE 1

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date
24/09/25

drawn by
BRJ

scale
1:100 @ A3

rev
-

Key

Site Boundary

Baseline Habitat Condition

Condition Assessment N/A

Baseline Habitat Distinctiveness

Low

V.Low

Baseline Individual tree Condition

Moderate

Baseline Individual Distinctiveness

Medium

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title
Baseline Habitats Condition/Distinctiveness

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FIGURE 2

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0 5 m

Key

- Site Boundary

Habitat Retention

- Retained
- Lost

Individual Tree Retention

- Retained

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Retention Plan

title
FIGURE 3

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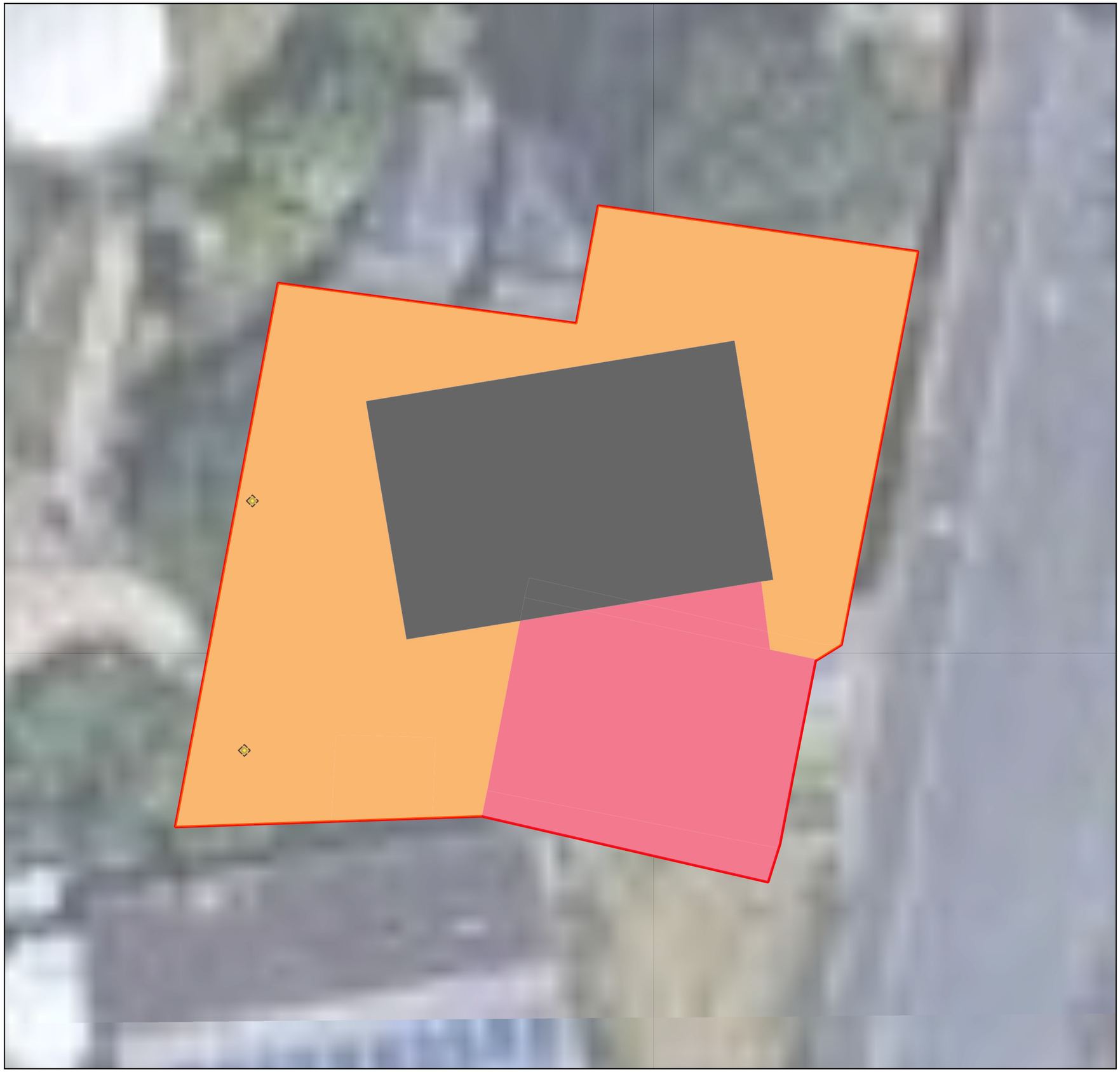

Key

- Site Boundary

Habitats Proposed

- Building
- Unvegetated garden
- Vegetated garden

Individual Tree Proposed

- Retained Small Urban Tree

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Proposed Habitats Plan

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FIGURE 4

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Key

- Site Boundary

Proposed Habitat Condition

- Condition Assessment N/A

Proposed Habitat Distinctiveness

- Low
- V.Low

Proposed Individual Tree Condition

- Moderate

Proposed Individual Tree Distinctiveness

- Medium

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FIGURE 5