

Biodiversity Statement & Baseline Assessment

October 2025

Project Reference: PR-25-0252

Wyndhowe
Sea Mill Lane
St. Bees
CA27 0BD

National Grid Reference: NX 9712 1113



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Executive Summary

A part of a proposed planning application with Cumberland Council (Copeland) concerning a development at a plot of land at Wyndhowe, Sea Mill Lane in St. Bees, Tyrer Ecological Consultants were commissioned to assess the site in relation to the Biodiversity Gain pre-commencement planning condition and undertake a baseline condition assessment of the habitats present on site. This process follows on from an Inspection & Assessment in relation to Bats & Breeding Birds carried out at the site in August 2025, which identified, mapped and assessed the habitats present within the red line boundary.

This report does not aim to fully satisfy the biodiversity gain pre-commencement planning condition, but rather to provide information to decision makers regarding the 'baseline value' of the site, and to supply the required information under national guidelines pertaining to validation in relation to the condition. Where necessary, a full Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (BNG) must be completed prior to the determination of this application.

The exact scope of proposals is unknown, but is likely to involve demolition of the existing structures with subsequent development of the site.

Strategic Significance

The Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy is currently formed only of a Draft Habitat Map, and thus has been used in combination with the Cumbria Habitat Map and Habitat Network Maps and the Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan (Cumbria BAP) to determine the strategic significance of habitats. Based upon these, the site does not lie within any layers designated specially designated for nature or biodiversity.

Irreplaceable Habitats

The site does not host any irreplaceable habitats as outlined under The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024.

Habitat Degradation

No habitat degradation has taken place within the red line boundary of the site since the relevant date of 30th January 2020. As such the baseline value of the site has been gathered from the site visit on 14th August 2025.

Baseline Habitats

The site is host to the following biodiversity value at the baseline stage:

- **Area Habitat:** 0.87
- **Hedgerow:** 0.04

Intended Approach

Currently, no post-development plans have been provided to the author. It is therefore unknown whether the site will meet any of the listed exemptions, and thus on the precautionary principle, it is assumed not. The key habitats present on site are the bramble scrub and the individual trees; the development should aim to retain these habitats in full.

Should the above not be possible, then the applicant will need to utilise off-site habitat enhancement or creation, either on land under the applicant's ownership or through a habitat bank / provider.

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1.0 Introduction & Scope

- 1.1 A part of a proposed planning application with Cumberland Council (Copeland) concerning a development at a plot of land at Wyndhowe, Sea Mill Lane in St. Bees, Tyrer Ecological Consultants were commissioned to assess the site in relation to the Biodiversity Gain pre-commencement planning condition and undertake a baseline condition assessment of the habitats present on site. This process follows on from an Inspection & Assessment in relation to Bats & Breeding Birds carried out at the site in August 2025, which identified, mapped and assessed the habitats present within the red line boundary.
- 1.2 This report does not aim to fully satisfy the biodiversity gain pre-commencement planning condition, but rather to provide information to decision makers regarding the 'baseline value' of the site, and to supply the required information under national guidelines pertaining to validation in relation to the condition. Where necessary, a full Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (BNG) must be completed prior to the determination of this application.
- 1.3 The survey was commissioned by McDonald Wilkinson Tonge (MWT) Planning on behalf of their client Mr. Harry Hill; the exact scope of proposals is unknown, but is likely to involve demolition of the existing structures with subsequent development of the site. See **Figure 1.1** for a location plan.

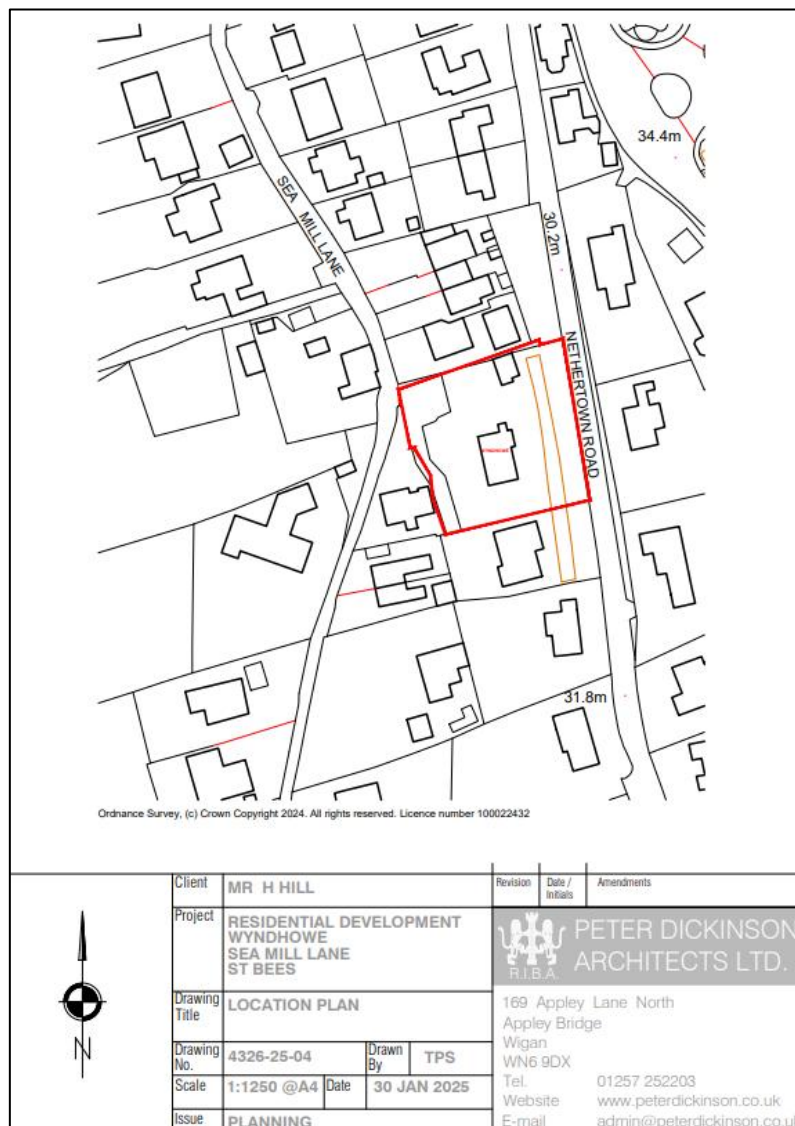


Figure 1.1 – Location plan (© Peter Dickinson Architects Ltd)

- 1.4 This baseline assessment relies on information gathered during the site survey (see **External Appendices**) as well as from third-party plans associated with the scheme (see **Point 2.7** of this report for key third-party data sources).
- 1.5 This assessment uses 'The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool' (as published on 3rd July 2025) as this is the most recent and most appropriate metric for the proposed scheme versus alternatives available. This metric can be used or specified by any development project, consenting body or landowner that needs to calculate biodiversity losses and gains for terrestrial and / or intertidal habitats and has been extensively tested.

National Policy

- 1.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), revised in December 2024, legislates net gain in biodiversity through paragraphs 8(c), 187(d), 192(b) and 193(d). An effort should be made, therefore, through the development design to provide ecological enhancement in order to deliver an overall increase in biodiversity, and opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.
- 1.7 The Environment Act 2021 ('The Act') came into force in November 2021. Aspects of the Act relating to BNG came into force on 12th February 2024, whereby the biodiversity gain objective is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).
- 1.8 The Act is supported by secondary legislation, consisting of six statutory instruments¹ laid within law, of which the relevant legislation includes:
- The Environment Act 2021 (Commencement No. 8 and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2024,
 - The Biodiversity Gain Site Register Regulations 2024,
 - The Biodiversity Gain Site Register (Financial Penalties and Fees) Regulations 2024,
 - The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024,
 - The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024),
 - The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024.
- 1.9 Other legislature considered for the purposes of this report includes the following:
- Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice principles for development (2019),
 - Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) Section 41.

Local Policy

- 1.10 This national policy mandating Biodiversity Net Gain is reflected in the Copeland Local Plan 2021-2039² (see **Table 1.1** overleaf):

¹ See: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/primary+secondary?title=The%20Biodiversity%20Gain>

² See: https://www.copeland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/copeland_local_plan.pdf

Table 1.1 – Relevant policies as summarised from the Copeland Local Plan

Policy Title	Summary
Strategic Policy N1: Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Potential harmful impacts of any development upon biodiversity and geodiversity must be identified and considered at the earliest stage. Proposals must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Council, that the mitigation hierarchy has been followed.
Strategic Policy N3: Biodiversity Net Gain	All development, with the exception of that listed in the Environment Act 2021 and any documents which may supersede it must provide at least 10% biodiversity net gain over and above existing site levels, following the application of the mitigation hierarchy set out in Policy N1 above.

2.0 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool

- 2.1 Biodiversity Net Gain is specified as “an approach to development which aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than before”. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool is a quantitative tool used to calculate how development projects impact upon the biodiversity value of a site and allows for the scale of mitigative / compensatory measures to be calculated by a suitably qualified individual.
- 2.2 Using the available baseline ecological information gathered and supported by the design information as has been communicated, the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool was completed by the following assessor (see **Table 2.1** below):

Table 2.1 – BNG Assessor credentials

Name	Description of most relevant credentials
Mr. B. Richards ACIEEM	• Senior Ecologist with 3 years of professional training and experience, • MBiolSci in Biological Sciences (Zoology), • FISC Level 3 Botanist (2023), • Undertaken a large number of BNG assessments, utilising both the SSM Beta's and full BNG tool, v3.0, v3.1, v4.0 & Statutory, • Meets the requirements of CIEEM's Competency Framework Section S (Surveying) to Capable level or higher.

- 2.3 Application of use follows the Biodiversity Net Gain Principles and Rules (DEFRA, July 2025) covered in the most recent User Guide³ (see **Tables 2.2 – 2.3**), whilst also taking into account the Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice principles⁴, developed by **CIRIA** (Construction Industry Research and Information Association), **CIEEM** (Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management) and **ISEP** (Institute of Sustainability & Environmental Professionals, formerly IEMA).
- 2.4 It is a legal requirement that the four BNG Rules are met, whilst the nine BNG Principles provide guidance for application of use.

³ See:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6866779ee134dfbc2e9e6d39/The_Statutory_Biodiversity_Metric_-_User_Guide_-_July_2025.pdf

⁴ See: <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Biodiversity-Net-Gain-Principles.pdf>

Table 2.1 – Biodiversity Metric Rules

Rule Number	Rule Detail
1	The trading rules of this biodiversity metric must be followed.
2	Biodiversity unit outputs, for each type of unit, must not be summed, traded, or converted between types. The requirement to deliver at least a 10% net gain applied to each unit type.
3	To accurately apply the biodiversity metric formula, you must use the biodiversity metric calculation tool or small sites biodiversity metric tool (SSM) for small sites. The tools remove the need for a user to manually calculate the change in biodiversity value. The tool will summarise the results of the calculation and inform a user whether the biodiversity net gain objective has been met.
4	In exceptional circumstances, deviation from this biodiversity metric methodology may be permitted by the relevant planning authority.

Table 2.3 – Biodiversity Metric Principles

Principle Number	Principle Detail
1	The metric assessment should be completed by a competent person.
2	The use of the biodiversity metric does not override existing biodiversity protections, statutory obligations, policy requirements, ecological mitigation hierarchy or any other requirement. This includes consenting or licencing processes, for example woodlands.
3	The biodiversity metric should be used in accordance with established good practice guidelines and professional codes.
4	The biodiversity metric is not a complex or comprehensive ecological model and is not a substitute for expert ecological advice.
5	Biodiversity units are a proxy for biodiversity and should be treated as relative values.
6	This biodiversity metric is designed to inform decisions in conjunction with locally relevant evidence, expert input, or guidance.
7	Habitat interventions need to be realistic and deliverable within a relevant project timeframe.
8	Created and enhanced habitats should seek, where practical and reasonable, to be local to any impact and deliver strategically important outcomes for nature conservation.
9	The metric does not enforce a minimum habitat size ratio for compensation of losses. However, proposals should aim to: - maintain habitat extent (supporting more, bigger, better and more joined up ecological networks) and - ensure that proposed or retained habitat parcels are of sufficient size for ecological function

- 2.5 Assessment of baseline / post-development Area Habitat / Hedgerow / Watercourse units have been carried out and assessed separately in accordance with the guidance, principles, and rules – where present on site. Any revisions required following the issue of this report will use The Statutory Biodiversity Metric in accordance with the rules of use for that version.
- 2.6 Measurement of habitats was carried out using a combination of desktop software – QGIS, Google Earth and MAGiC Maps 2025, whilst physical habitat measurements were also taken in the field during ground truthing, where necessary.
- 2.7 Key third-party data sources and / or information used to help inform this BNG assessment include:
- **Location Plan** (Drawing No. 4326-25-04) – Peter Dickinson Architects Ltd (January 2025).
- 2.8 The results, conclusions and recommendations of this report have been assessed by Mrs. K. Wilding, Director of Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd, and her assessment concurs with the findings and recommendations of Mr. B. Richards, as well as with other senior consultants within the company.

3.0 Limitations

- 3.1 Third-party information was utilised in the completion of the Biodiversity Net Gain assessment (see **Point 2.7**); therefore, Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd cannot be held accountable for any possible discrepancies within supporting information.
- 3.2 The habitat codes of UK Habitats are not, at present, fully aligned with the Biodiversity Metric Calculator. Translations have, therefore, been made between the two categorisations by the assessor, who aims to most accurately represent the biodiversity value of the site and the habitats present.
- 3.3 Measurements have been calculated utilising software such as 'QGIS' (a Geographic Information System or GIS), aerial imagery and third-party plans provided by the applicant, all of which may have varying levels of inaccuracy, and as such Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd cannot be held accountable for any discrepancies between habitat areas (ha) or linear features (km) stated in this report and other documentation pertaining to the site.
- 3.4 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric allows for an area / length accuracy to any number of decimal places, however 'Total area' / 'Total length' is displayed to two decimal places, this may result in small rounding discrepancies on large sites with many small parcels of habitat. However, the metric uses the true value entered into each row to calculate the overall unit change of the site, thus while rounding discrepancies may be displayed under 'Total area' / 'Total length' these discrepancies do not impact the results of the calculation tool; these discrepancies should be taken into account by both the practitioner and reviewer in line with the above.
- 3.5 In considering possible limitations, no significant constraints were experienced which might adversely influence the results, conclusions, and recommendations of this BNG assessment, the results of which have been presented in accordance with the rules and principles of use to the satisfaction of the assessor.

4.0 Strategic Significance & Irreplaceable Habitats

- 4.1 The Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy⁵ is currently formed only of a Draft Habitat Map⁶, and thus has been used in combination with the Cumbria Habitat Map and Habitat Network Maps⁷ and the Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan⁸ (Cumbria BAP) to determine the strategic significance of habitats.
- 4.2 Based upon the Draft Habitat Map and the Habitat Map and Habitat Network Maps, the site does not lie within any layers designated specially designated for nature or biodiversity.
- 4.3 The Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan (CBAP) was also accessed to assist with determining the strategic significance of on-site habitats; none of the habitats listed as being of local importance are present at the baseline.
- 4.4 The site was not host to any irreplaceable habitats, as evidenced in **Table 6.1** and the site visit undertaken by Tyrer Ecological Consultants in August 2025.

⁵ See: <https://cumbrialnrs.org.uk/homepage-0>

⁶ See: <https://www.cbdc.org.uk/about-us/projects/cumbria-lnrs-interactive-map/>

⁷ See: <https://cumbria.gov.uk/elibrary/Content/Internet/538/18033/4445310227.pdf>

⁸ See: <https://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachment/5897.pdf>

5.0 Habitat Degradation

- 5.1 No habitat degradation has taken place within the red line boundary of the site since the relevant date of 30th January 2020. As such the baseline value of the site has been gathered from the site visit on 14th August 2025.

6.0 Baseline Habitats

- 6.1 The reader is referred to the 'Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool' (hereafter referred to as the Metric)⁹, which will accompany this report when issued and should be read in conjunction with this section. See **Tables 6.1 – 6.2 & Figure 6.1** below for **baseline habitat information** as extracted from the Metric. Trees 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6 are small in size, and following BNG User Guide these have been excluded from the baseline calculations.
- 6.2 Please refer to **Appendix I** for specific scoring of the condition analyses carried out at the site on a per-habitat basis.

Table 6.1 – Baseline Habitat information for Area habitats

Habitat Type	Area (hectares)	Condition	Assessor comments	Habitat Units
Habitat Ref.: 1 h3d Bramble scrub	0.0298	N/A	An area of dense scrub to the north-east of the site, dominated by bramble (<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>) but with rare incidences of other woody species such as blackthorn (<i>Prunus spinosa</i>) and hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>). Other species present include male-fern (<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>), common nettle (<i>Urtica dioica</i>), red campion (<i>Silene dioica</i>), common knapweed (<i>Centaurea nigra</i>), meadow vetchling (<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>) and ground-elder (<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>), alongside the INNS montbretia (<i>Crocsmia x crocosmiiflora</i>).	0.12
Habitat Ref.: 2 u1 828 Built-up areas & gardens; vegetated garden	0.0489	N/A	Several parcels of previously managed lawn are present across the site; whilst these have now been left to grow rank with numerous anthills, it is evident that they once formed the garden space of the property and thus meet u1 828. Species density is around 7 sp/m ² . Graminoids present include false oat-grass (<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>), Yorkshire-fog (<i>Holcus lanatus</i>), cock's-foot (<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>), perennial rye-grass (<i>Lolium perenne</i>) and red fescue (<i>Festuca rubra</i>), whilst forbs include taller species such as hogweed (<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>), spear thistle (<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>), common nettle, prickly sow-thistle (<i>Sonchus</i>	0.10

⁹This section of the report should be read in conjunction with the site-specific Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool – external Appendix.

Habitat Type	Area (hectares)	Condition	Assessor comments	Habitat Units
			<i>asper</i>), hedge woundwort (<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>) and broad-leaved dock (<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>). Additionally present are shorter species such as selfheal (<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>), common bird's-foot-trefoil (<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>), dandelion (<i>Taraxacum</i>), common ragwort (<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>), redshank (<i>Persicaria maculosa</i>), red dead-nettle (<i>Lamium purpureum</i>), herb-Robert (<i>Geranium robertianum</i>), common vetch (<i>Vicia sativa</i>), ribwort plantain (<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>) and meadow buttercup (<i>Ranunculus acris</i>).	
Habitat Ref.: 3 u1 847 Built-up areas & gardens; introduced shrub	0.0395	N/A	Areas of shrubbery dominated by non-native, planted species are present around the site, featuring cultivated species such as fatsia (<i>Fatsia japonica</i>), garden privet (<i>Ligustrum ovalifolium</i>), tutsan (<i>Hypericum androsaemum</i>), hydrangea (<i>Hydrangea macrophylla</i>), butterfly-bush (<i>Buddleja davidii</i>), a cypress (<i>Cupressus sp.</i>), hosta (<i>Hosta sp.</i>), a rose (<i>Rosa sp.</i>), a crocosmia (<i>Crocosmia sp.</i>) and pampas-grass (<i>Cortaderia selloana</i>), alongside the INNS montbretia & wall cotoneaster (<i>Cotoneaster horizontalis</i>).	0.08
Habitat Ref.: 4 u1b5 Buildings Metric: <i>Developed land; sealed surface</i>	0.0231	N/A	Three buildings are present within the site boundary; see site-associated daytime report for further information.	0.00
Habitat Ref.: 5 u1b6 Other developed land Metric: <i>Developed land; sealed surface</i>	0.0442	N/A	Large portions of the site are formed of sealed surface, including paved areas as well as tarmac.	0.00

Habitat Type	Area (hectares)	Condition	Assessor comments	Habitat Units
Habitat Ref.: 6 Individual trees Urban tree	0.0163	Moderate	A single, medium sized sycamore (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>) present to the eastern side of the site.	0.13
Habitat Ref.: 7 Individual trees Urban tree	0.0366	Good	A single, large sized ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>) present to the centre north of the site.	0.44
Total Habitat Area (excl. urban trees)	0.19		Total Habitat Units (incl. urban trees)	0.87

Table 6.2 – Baseline Hedgerow information for Linear habitats

Hedgerow Type	Length (kilometres)	Condition	Assessor comments	Hedgerow Units
Hedge Ref.: 1 h2b Ornamental and non-native hedgerow	0.0411	Poor	Two identical hedgerows are present along part of the northern boundary and part of the south-western boundary; these are dominated by garden privet.	0.04
Total Hedgerow Length	0.04		Total Hedgerow Units	0.04

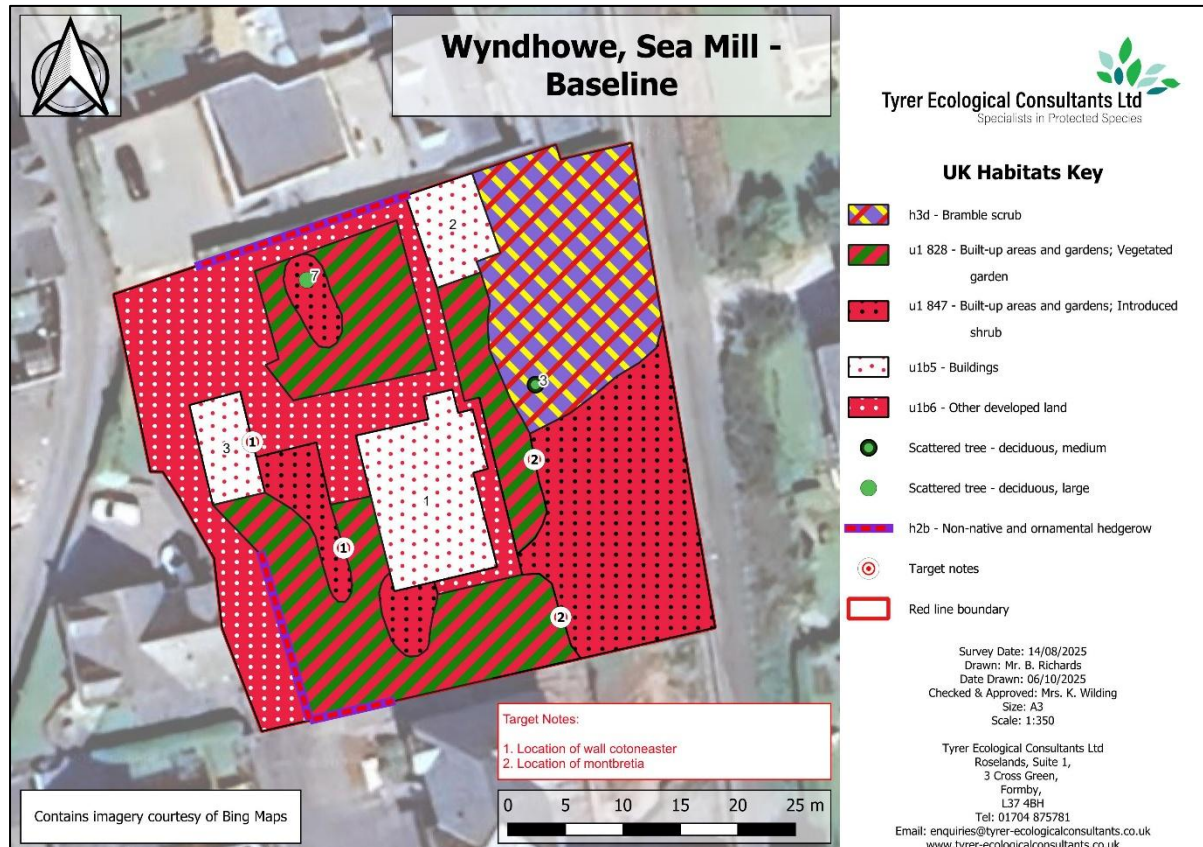


Figure 6.1 – Baseline UK Habitats Map

7.0 Intended Approach

- 7.1 Currently, no post-development plans have been provided to the author. It is therefore unknown whether the site will meet any of the listed exemptions, and thus on the precautionary principle, it is assumed not.
- 7.2 The key habitats present on site are the bramble scrub and the individual trees; the development should aim to retain these habitats in full.
- 7.3 Should the above not be possible, then the applicant will need to utilise off-site habitat enhancement or creation, either on land under the applicant's ownership or through a habitat bank / provider.
- 7.4 Onsite units will be finalised upon the completion of landscaping drawings following consultation with the ecologist prior to the completion of the habitat creation/enhancement tabs within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool.
- 7.5 The client will use the finalised metric tool in order to generate quotes from respective unit banks/providers, starting within the local planning authority (where available).

8.0 Bibliography

- **CIEEM**, 2019. *Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice principles for development*. Available from: www.cieem.net/data/files/Publications/Biodiversity_Net_Gain_Principles.pdf (amended August 2020).
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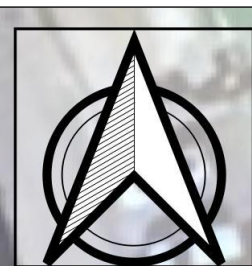
Appendix I: Condition Assessment Tables

Condition Assessment Score – Individual Trees (Habitat Ref.: 6)

Condition Assessment Criteria		Habitat references			
		T1	T2	T3	T4
		Criterion Passed (Y/N)			
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	-	-	N	-
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).			Y	
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).			Y	
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.			Y	
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.			N	
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.			Y	
Total Score				4	
Condition Assessment Result		Condition Assessment Score			
Passes 5 or 6 criteria		Good			
Passes 3 or 4 criteria		Moderate		Y	
Passes 2 or fewer criteria		Poor			

Condition Assessment Score – Individual Trees continued (Habitat Ref.: 7)

Condition Assessment Criteria		Habitat references			
		T5	T6	T7	
		Criterion Passed (Y/N)			
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	-	-	Y	
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).			Y	
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).			Y	
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.			Y	
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.			Y	
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.			Y	
Total Score				6	
Condition Assessment Result		Condition Assessment Score			
Passes 5 or 6 criteria		Good	-	-	Y
Passes 3 or 4 criteria		Moderate			
Passes 2 or fewer criteria		Poor			



Wyndhowe, Sea Mill - Baseline



Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd
Specialists in Protected Species

UK Habitats Key

-  h3d - Bramble scrub
-  u1 828 - Built-up areas and gardens; Vegetated garden
-  u1 847 - Built-up areas and gardens; Introduced shrub
-  u1b5 - Buildings
-  u1b6 - Other developed land
-  Scattered tree - deciduous, medium
-  Scattered tree - deciduous, large
-  h2b - Non-native and ornamental hedgerow
-  Target notes
-  Red line boundary

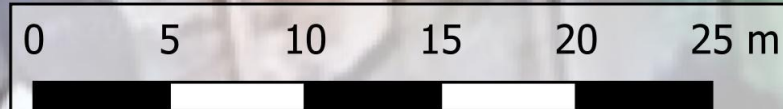
Survey Date: 14/08/2025
 Drawn: Mr. B. Richards
 Date Drawn: 06/10/2025
 Checked & Approved: Mrs. K. Wilding
 Size: A3
 Scale: 1:350

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Target Notes:

- 1. Location of wall cotoneaster
- 2. Location of montbretia



Contains imagery courtesy of Bing Maps