Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report

PRESENTED TO

Ruislip Manor Cottage Society

2 and 4 Manor Way, Ruislip, HA4 8ND

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Applicant	Ruislip Manor Cottage Society
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1 INTRODUCTION

Growing Native was instructed by Bell Cornwell Town and Country Planning Consultants on behalf of Ruislip Manor Cottage Society to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment of land at 2 and 4 Manor Way, Ruislip, HA4 8ND, hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development' or 'Site', when referring to the application area.

The purpose of this assessment is to:

- Present the methodologies used in producing this BNG assessment;
- Summarise the results of the biodiversity metric calculation for the on-site's habitats ecological baseline in Biodiversity Units (BU) and Hedgerow Units (HU);
- Summarise the results of the biodiversity metric calculation for the on-site's habitats ecological baseline post-development value (in relation to BU and HU);
- Provide the total net gains or losses based on the results of the biodiversity metric calculation; and
- Demonstrate agreed compensation and enhancement measures in response to habitat loss within the Proposed Development.

1.1 Quality Assurance and Competence

All ecologists involved in the preparation of this report are members of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and follow the Institute's Code of Professional Conduct when undertaking ecological work. The competence of all field surveyors has been assessed by Growing Native with respect to the current best practice guidance.

This report has been prepared by a qualified ecologist with over 12 years experience and Full CIEEM member. Ben Lansbury (BL) has experience in preparing and managing the delivery of Ecological Impact Assessment, Habitats Regulation Assessments and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessments. The report has also been subject to a two-stage quality assurance review by appropriately experienced ecologists who are full members of CIEEM. Field surveys were undertaken by Kirk Hardes (KH), a professional ecologist with over nine years ecology experience, an associate member of CIEEM and experience preparing numerous BNG Reports.

1.2 Site Description and Proposed Development

The Site comprises approximately 0.101 ha and contains two semi-detached residential properties and associated vegetated garden and patio/pathways. The Site is located within the centre of Ruislip and is fully encompassed by an urban landscape.

The Proposed Development includes the erection of a two-storey rear extension across both dwellings and the subdivision of the two properties into four flats with associated gardens.

2 RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND POLICY OVERVIEW

2.1 The Environment Act

In England, biodiversity net gain is now required under statutory frameworks introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021). Under this framework, every grant of planning permission will be deemed to have been granted subject to a general biodiversity gain condition. This will require an objective for developments to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of all on-site habitats.

This forms a mandatory pre-commencement condition requiring the provision of a Biodiversity Gain Plan to be submitted and approved before works can be commenced, but after planning permission has been granted.

In principle, the grant of planning permission is not within the scope of BNG, however it is important to consider as part of the consenting body's decision-making process how a scheme will be able to demonstrate BNG after permission is granted. Therefore, this biodiversity net gain report presents the results of a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment that has been completed in order to demonstrate how the proposals will be compliant with the requirements of the Environment Act.

2.2 National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

The NPPF (MHCLG, 2024) in particular seeks to ensure that the planning system contributes to and enhances the natural and local environment and protects and enhances biodiversity. The NPPF guidance in relation to biodiversity is set out in Chapter 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

2.3 Biodiversity Net Gain Hierarchy

The statutory framework allows for the 10% biodiversity gain to be delivered through on-site biodiversity gains, registered off-site biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credits. However, as set out in Articles 37A and 37D of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, development must consider the biodiversity net gain hierarchy when designing the scheme proposals. This sets out a hierarchy of actions, as follows:

- First, for all medium, high, and very high distinctiveness habitats, the avoidance of any adverse effects.
- Where these can't be avoided, mitigating any adverse effects on medium, high and very high distinctiveness habitats.
- Then, for all on-site habitats (including low distinctiveness), adverse effects should be compensated for in accordance with the following hierarchy:
  A. Prioritising the enhancement of existing habitats; then
  B. Creation of on-site habitats;
  C. Allocation of registered off-site unit gains; then
  D. Purchase of biodiversity credits.

Proposals must demonstrate how the biodiversity hierarchy has been applied to or provide the reasons for any deviation.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

The following steps were followed in the preparation of this BNG assessment:

- Classification of habitats at the application Site in accordance with the UK Habitats Classification Survey (UKHab);
- Assessment of baseline habitat conditions using the condition assessment sheets of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric; and
- Strategy and/or assessment of the target conditions of proposed habitats and their extents based on current Site design.
- Calculation of Biodiversity Net Gain with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool.

The following sections outline the methods for each of the steps listed above.

3.2 Baseline Survey

A habitat survey was conducted on the 3rd December 2025, during a period of suitable weather. The field survey method was based on the UK Habitats Classification Survey (UKHab) as per the UKHab User Manual (UKHab, 2023).

The survey involved a walkover of the Site and assessment of key habitats, land use and ecological features, particularly focusing on areas of natural interest which may be affected by the Proposed Development. The main habitats present were recorded using standard UKHab habitat survey methodology as described in the UK Habitat Classification User Manual (UKHab, 2023) and mapped as per the Natural England (2023) QGIS Biodiversity Net Gain template in Coreo (Natural Apptitude). Target notes were used to record habitats and features of particular interest, where relevant.

3.3 Condition Assessment

3.3.1 Existing Habitat Conditions

A condition assessment has been undertaken on the habitats present on-site via the completion of a habitat condition assessment sheet of The Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Defra, 2024). This process evaluates criteria and characteristics for each habitat and provides guidance on an assessment of habitat condition (which can be ‘good’, ‘fairly good’, ‘moderate’, ‘fairly poor’, ‘poor’ or not requiring a condition assessment). The assessment criteria considered is varied for each habitat type but includes criteria such as the presence of undesirable species, habitat extent, habitat health and vegetation structure.

For any habitats present on-site for which condition assessment criteria are not available, professional judgement has been used.

3.3.2 Proposed Habitat Conditions

Proposed habitat conditions have been assigned to newly created habitats as it is anticipated that the majority of habitats will initially be lost to facilitate development. This has been achieved by reviewing the criteria characteristics for each habitat, set out in the guidance, or by using professional judgement after discussions with relevant parties, and the current soft landscaping proposals to determine a realistic, likely achievable condition once the habitats have established and are subject to appropriate management.

3.4 Biodiversity Net Gain Calculations

The baseline units of the Site has been determined using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool (Defra, 2024).

This calculation tool was developed to provide a standardised methodology for completing a BNG assessment. Baseline BU have been established using the findings of:

- The UK Habitat Classification (UK Habs, 2023);
- The measuring of both on-site baseline and proposed post development intervention habitats;
- Details from within the landscape plan; and
- Professional judgement.

3.5 Limitations

Baseline and post development maps were provided from pdf block plans and therefore there may be a small discrepancy in areas between the BNG report and architects plans. This has been minimised as far as possible via the architects providing exact areas from existing CAD plans and is not deemed significant.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Baseline Conditions

Based on the baseline survey map (Appendix I – Figure 1) and Site photographs (Appendix II), Table 1 below summarises the units for the baseline habitats on-site. The assessment calculates the baseline value of the Site at 1.45 BU and 0.06 HU.

The Site is formed by two semi-detached residential buildings (u1b5) and associated developed land which is primarily devoid of vegetation (u1b6). The vegetated garden (u1d) to the front and rear of the property is formed by amenity grassland, with small ornamental trees/shrubs, including bay laurel (*Laurus nobilis*), and bounded by ornamental leylandii (*Cupressus* × *leylandii*) and garden privet (*Ligustrum ovalifolium*) dominant hedgerows. A habitats of note present on site includes a single mature pollarded ash tree at the rear of the properties.

Each habitat has been presented within an individual polygon (Appendix I – Figure 1). No condition assessments for habitats present on Site were required.

No habitats recorded were considered to be of high strategic significance as the Site is not located within a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) or within another formally designated

site of ecological merit. All habitats within or adjacent the Site boundary are of ‘low’ strategic significance.

No irreplaceable habitats were present and no signs of activities being carried out prior to the date of application or initial Site visits, that resulted in loss of on-site biodiversity value was noted within the Site boundary or adjacent habitats.

Table 1: On-site baseline habitat area assessment results.

Habitat Type	Area (ha) / Length (km)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Strategic Significance	Biodiversity Units (BU)	Area Retained (ha)
Habitats						
Developed land	0.0291	V. Low	N/A	Not in local strategy	0.00	-
Vegetated garden	0.0723	Low	N/A	Not in local strategy	0.14	0.70
Individual tree	0.163	Medium	Moderate	Not in local strategy	1.30	0.163
Total	**0.101***	**-**	**-**	**-**	**1.45**	**-**
Hedgerows						
Ornamental hedgerow	0.0553	V. Low	Poor	Not in local strategy	0.06	0.05494
Total	0.0553	**-**	**-**	**-**	**0.06**	**-**
* excludes individual tree area as provided by the tree helper tool						

5 POST-DEVELOPMENT HABITATS ASSESSMENT

The proposed scheme includes the reconfiguration of 2 and 4 Manor Way and construction of a two-storey rear extension across both dwellings and the subdivision of the two properties into four flats with associated garden.

The proposed rear extension is largely situated within the area of existing patio/hardstanding at the rear of the existing properties and will result in the loss of 23m^2 of vegetated garden habitat and 3.6m of ornamental hedgerow.

New habitat creation on-site includes the creation of introduced scrub and short hedge like sections of linear planting, however, as per current guidelines this is categorised as vegetated garden.

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following baseline habitat assessment, consultation with the project manager and design team, it was determined the Proposed Development footprint would result in the loss of 23m^2 of vegetated garden and 3.6m of ornamental hedgerow.

The results of the assessment demonstrates that the Proposed Development affects an area less than 25m^2 and less than 5 linear hedgerow metres. Therefore, it has been concluded that the Proposed Development falls below the BNG requirement threshold under the de minimis exemption as defined below (Defra, 2025):

"(1) The biodiversity gain planning condition does not apply in relation to planning permission for development which meets the first and second conditions.

(2) The first condition is that the development does not impact an onsite priority habitat.

(3) The second condition is that the development impacts—

> *(a) less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero; and*
>
> *(b) less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat.*

(4) For the purposes of this regulation—

> *(a) 'priority habitat' means a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006;*
>
> *(b) a habitat is impacted where the habitat is lost or degraded such that there is a decrease in the biodiversity value of that habitat;*
>
> *(c) 'linear habitat' means the types of hedgerow habitat or watercourse habitat identified for the purposes of the biodiversity metric (which are measured by length (expressed in kilometres) rather than area)."*

It can be concluded that sufficient information has been provided to support a planning application, in that the proposed development is exempt from the statutory BNG requirements.

7 REFERENCES

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APPENDIX I – FIGURES

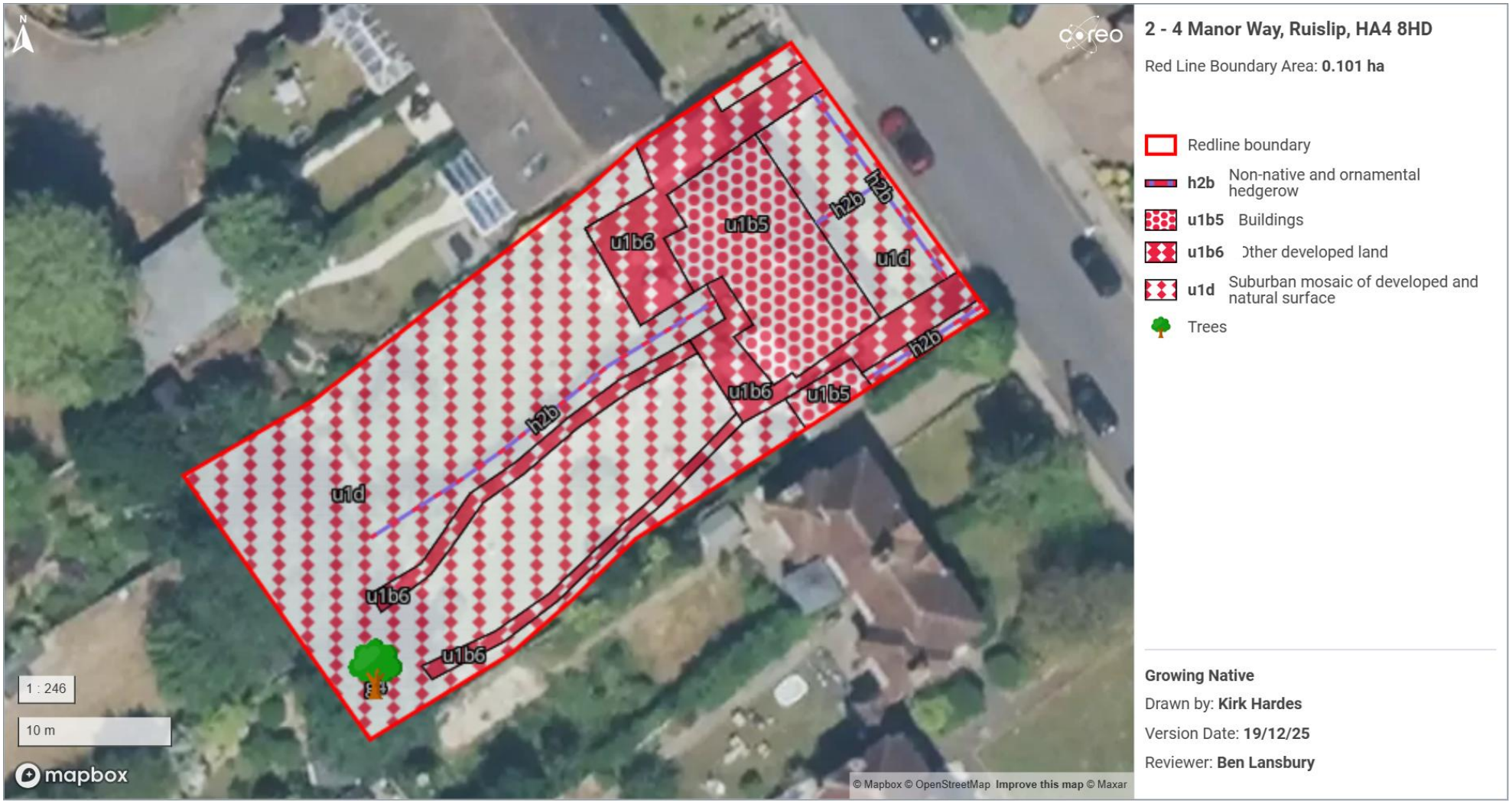

Figure 1: Baseline Habitat Map

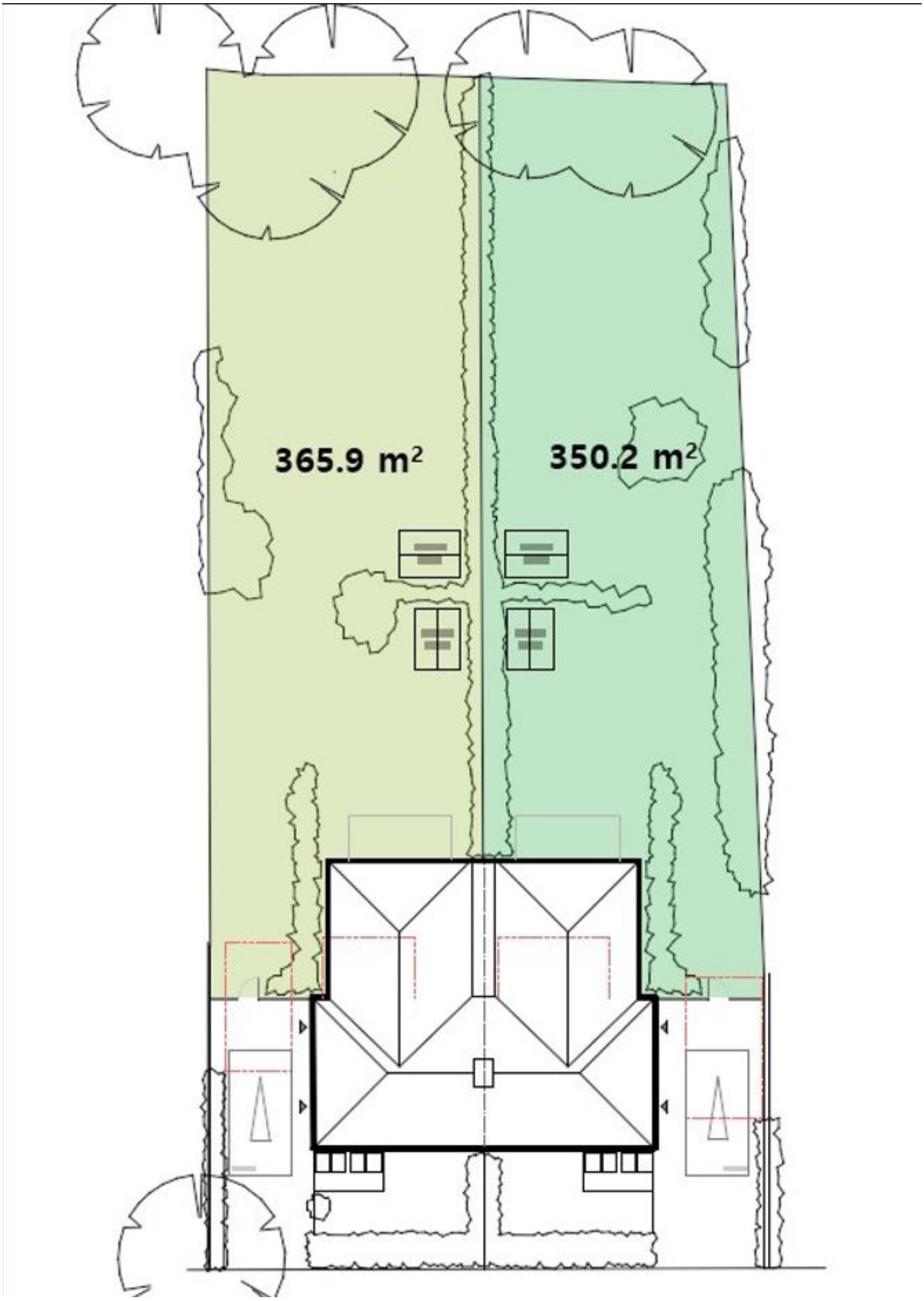

Figure 2: Proposed Site Plan.

APPENDIX II – SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

Plate 1. Front of 2 Manor Way.

Plate 2. Front of 4 Manor Way.

Plate 3. Rear of 2 Manor Way.

Plate 4. Rear garden of 2 Manor Way.

Plate 5. Rear of 4 Manor Way.

Plate 6. Rear garden of 4 Manor Way.

Plate 7. Mature ash trees at end of rear garden of 4 Manor Way.

Plate 8. Two mature ash trees at end of rear garden of 4 Manor Way.

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