

COYNE ENVIRONMENTAL LTD

**Unit 13
Bondor Business Centre
Crabtree Lane
Baldock
SG7 6HP**



Preliminary Ecological Assessment October 2025

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INTRODUCTION

Coyne Environmental Ltd has been instructed by Jeremy William Leroy Architects, to undertake an ecological assessment of Business Unit 13, Bondor Business Centre, Crabtree Lane, Baldock, SG7 6HP. This is for planning permission of a new unit, to North Herts District Council (NHDC). It is proposed to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the site.

This will enable the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to discharge its legal obligations under the "Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations" (2018) and any Outline Mitigation and Compensation Strategy` if required. I am a qualified Ecologist, with over 40 years' experience in the environmental field. This includes being a licence bat worker (Bat Licence 2015-15943-CLS-CLS). The initial ecological survey was undertaken by assistant Colin Carpenter on 26th June 2025 in weather conditions to comply with CIEEM guidelines.



LOCATION

Baldock is a historic market town in north Hertfordshire with the River Ivel running through the area. It has been continuously occupied since Palaeolithic times, with an Iron Age hillfort at Arbury Banks. It has the largest oppidum (fortified settlement) site in Britain, which became a Roman town. Baldock was founded by the Knights Templar, as a medieval market town in the 1140s on land in the Manor of Weston.

Due its location, on the Great North Road and the Icknield Way, the town was a major staging post between London and the north, many old coaching inns still operate as pubs and hotels. The High Street is very wide, a typical feature of medieval marketplaces. Since the 16thC Baldock has been a centre for malting. In 1850 the station was built, now with fast trains to London and Cambridge, and the town expanded, with new industries.

SITE

Bondor Business Centre is part of the industrial area of Baldock, located in the southeast of the town. The site is behind the old large factory, which is now a Tesco warehouse and is surrounded by housing estates. This extends west to the A1(M) motorway, with countryside

beyond. Unit 13 consists of a derelict section between a large hedge and the existing buildings. It is very overgrown with brambles (*Rubus fruticosus*) and nettles (*Urtica dioica*). Access to the site is through the existing Unit on to the road.



LEGISLATION

Management and protection of ecology and biodiversity within the UK planning system is set out through European and UK legislation. The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) is the main protection for wildlife, including bats (European Protected Species) under Schedule 5. However, since 2007 the effective protection for bats is Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 1994, and Outline Mitigation and Compensation Strategies must be considered in any application that may affect bats.

The Hertfordshire Biodiversity Partnership has developed a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) for the county, as a 50-year Vision for wildlife and natural habitats of Hertfordshire, along with the Hertfordshire Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan 2010. There is also legislation for specific species, Protection of Badgers Act 1992, EU Habitats and Birds Directive and more general guidance, EU Biodiversity Strategy 2011-2020. These all are aimed at ensuring the environment of Hertfordshire and its wildlife is adequately protected.

There are no designated NNR, RAMSAR sites, SSSI's or County Wildlife Site (CWS) in the study area. This study and report have also considered BS 42020 (2013) Biodiversity -Code of Practice for Planning and Development.

ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

A full Phase 1 Habitat Survey was not deemed unnecessary, as this is a site that appears to have limited ecology. A Walkover Ecological Survey was therefore undertaken. However, if this identifies any wildlife of significance, measures will be taken as set out in the JNCC guidance Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Surveys (2010) and CIEEM Guidelines (2017).



The derelict section of the site has potential as a habitat for birds. On inspection no active nests or nest building was observed including in the ivy in the hedgerow. The following birds were noted on the survey, house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), dunnock (*Prunella modularis*), and wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*). In accordance with the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) guidelines the site is considered only medium as a habitat for Avifauna.

As this study does not affect any current buildings, an inspection for bats (European Protected Species) was not required. However, the adjacent Units roof, along the soffit boards, windowsills, doorways and other openings were studied for any droppings, urine stains and signs of any potential entry points (scratchings) or meals (insect wings) but nothing was found. Using binoculars, the roof was studied for any potential holes and signs of entry, but nothing was found.

Surrounding trees were inspected using binoculars, in the adjacent gardens for evidence of urine stains and entry/exist scratch marks in potential fissure and holes (woodpecker) on tree trunks, and no evidence of bats were found. The vegetation, particularly the ivy (*Hedera helix*), often used as a roost site, was inspected but nothing was found. In accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidelines, the site has a **negligibly** potential as a bat roosting site.

The unit would appear to have only minimum ecological potential for most wildlife. No evidence of runs, excavations (burrows), droppings or prints were found, including any signs of badger sett building. As there is no water on the site, opportunities for Great crested newts (EPS) and other reptiles were not evident. The site is therefore assessed to have only minimum potential for wildlife.

Within the vegetation on site the following flora was found

Abundant

Agropyron repens (Couch Grass)

Allaria petiolate (Hedge Garlic)

Arrhenatherum elatior (Tall false oat Grass)

Bromus sterilis (Barren Brome)

Convolvulus arvensis (Field bindweed)

Hedera helix (Ivy) mainly along fence line forming a hedgerow.

Poa trivialis (Rough Meadow Grass)

Urtica dioica (Stinging Nettle)

Frequent

Glechoma hederacea (Ground Ivy)

Heracleum spondylium (Hogweed)

Lapsana communis (Nipplewort)

Rubus fruticosus (Bramble)

Sambucus nigra (Elder)

Sonchus oleraceus (Smooth Sow-thistle)

Taraxacum officinale (Dandelion)



This indicates that although there is considerable vegetation on the site, due to its abandoned condition, none of this is of ecological value. Birds will use the site for potential nesting, forage for berries and butterflies, bees and other invertebrates for nectar feeding. Small mammals, particularly hedgehogs (Priority Species), may use the understorey for shelter and breeding sites (burrows).

ECOLOGICAL REVIEW

The evaluation of the site has shown that it is a vacant plot of mainly invasive vegetation. No European Protected Species were found on the site or other wildlife. Birds are the main beneficiary of the wild nature of the area, although no nesting was observed. When works are being considered, the breeding season March -August, must be avoided. The site has been assessed to have only limited ecological value. The more interesting ecological areas are in the residential development around this industrial centre.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

The Environment Act 2021 has a mandatory requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on most developments of a minimum of 10%. The standard Statutory Biodiversity Metric will be used on this project and will probably require mitigation enhancements.

These can be incorporated into the ecological and landscape design. This can include native species of planting, selected wild flora mixes and habitat creation in the form of bat and bird boxes and other features for fauna. Areas of wildflower meadow and rain gardens (damp areas) could form part of the proposals along with SuDS design

CONCLUSION

Coyne Environmental Ltd has been instructed to undertake an ecological assessment of Unit 13, Bondor Business Park, Baldock SG7 6HP for a planning application to extend the existing unit. A PEA has been undertaken, and no ecology of significance has been found, including EPS.

Therefore, in my professional opinion, with the results of the BNG metric, no further environmental studies should be required to satisfy the LPA on ecology and biodiversity enhancements. On this basis the application can be determined by North Herts District Council

REFERENCES

Site Plan

Baseline Habitat Map

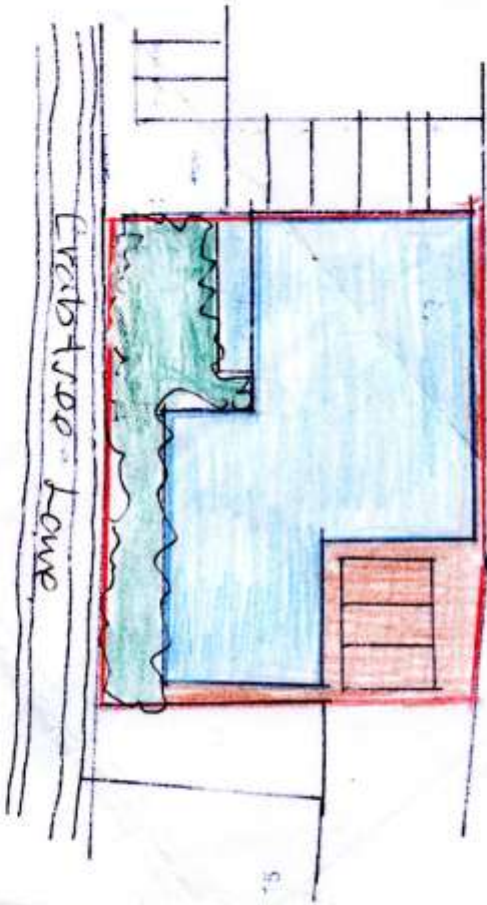
Post Habitat Map

Coyne Environmental Ltd BNG Report

Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981

Environment Act 2021

DO NOT SCALE



Notes

Map is to be used in conjunction with the data sheets and other information provided.

The information on this map is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to be used for any other purpose.

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KEY

red line
boundary

Building

Hard
Surface

Scrub
(pear
condition)

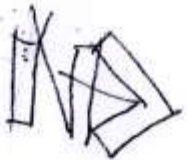
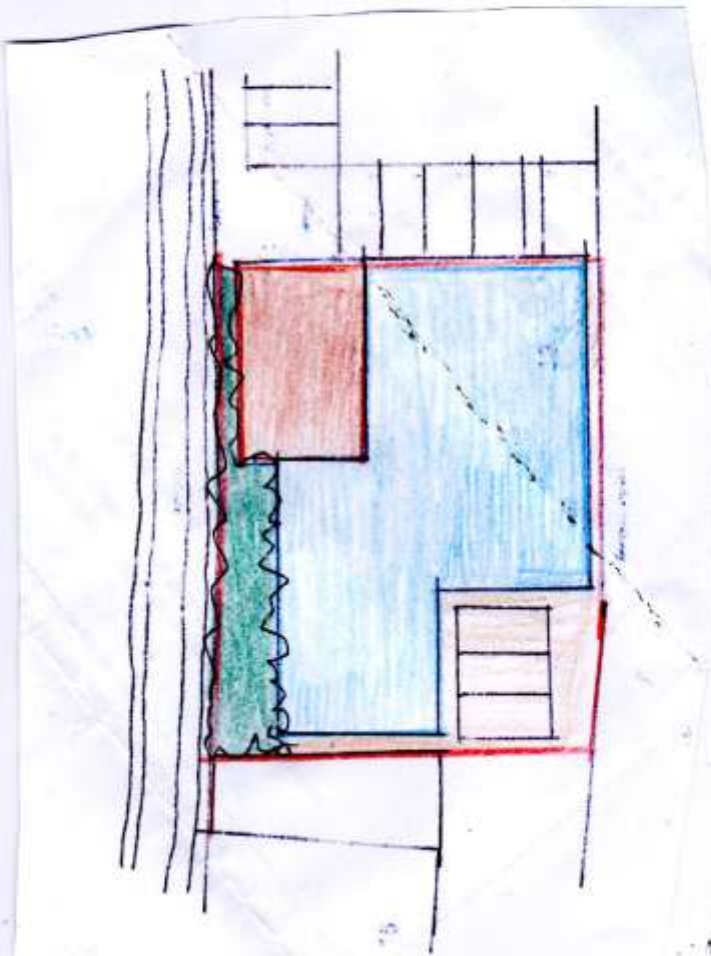
CORINE ENVIRONMENTAL

BRDA, B.C.
Paddock
Biodiversity Habitat

CORINE ENVIRONMENTAL
CLASSIFICATION
OF LAND USES

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DO NOT SCALE



Map to be used in conjunction with the site design and other related landscape drawings.
 The map is intended to be used as a guide only.
 It is not intended to be used as a legal document.
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KEY

red line
existing building

blue line
proposed building

red line
proposed building

orange line
proposed building

green line
proposed building

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 Post Habitat

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