

COYNE ENVIRONMENTAL

**Glebe Road Industrial Estate
Glebe Road, Letchworth Garden City
Hertfordshire
SG6 1BT**



ECOLOGICAL APPRAISIAL

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INTRODUCTION

Coyne Environmental Ltd has been instructed by Pentangle Design to undertake an Ecological Appraisal (EA) of the Site at Glebe Road Industrial Estate, Glebe Road, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire, SG6 1BT (highlighted in the location plan map below) to find if there is any ecology of significance for a planning application to be submitted. The plans include for the proposed residential development of the site, following demolition of the existing industrial building.



To assess the ecology of the Site it is proposed that a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) assessment be prepared. This will assist the Local Planning Authority (LPA) on what environmental studies may be required when determining the application or which may be appropriately dealt with by a suitably worded planning condition.

From the survey and analysis, it will be possible to review the proposals to ascertain what ecological measures are needed to achieve a satisfactory result for the Site. The PEA will enable the LPA to consider the impact of the proposal on the environment. It can then 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, Associate of the Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management with over 35 years’ experience in the environmental field. The site

survey was carried out on the 6th of December 2024 by Deqa Mohamed BSc (Hons). This was conducted in the daytime, in cool weather (8C), calm, cloudy conditions.

LOCATION

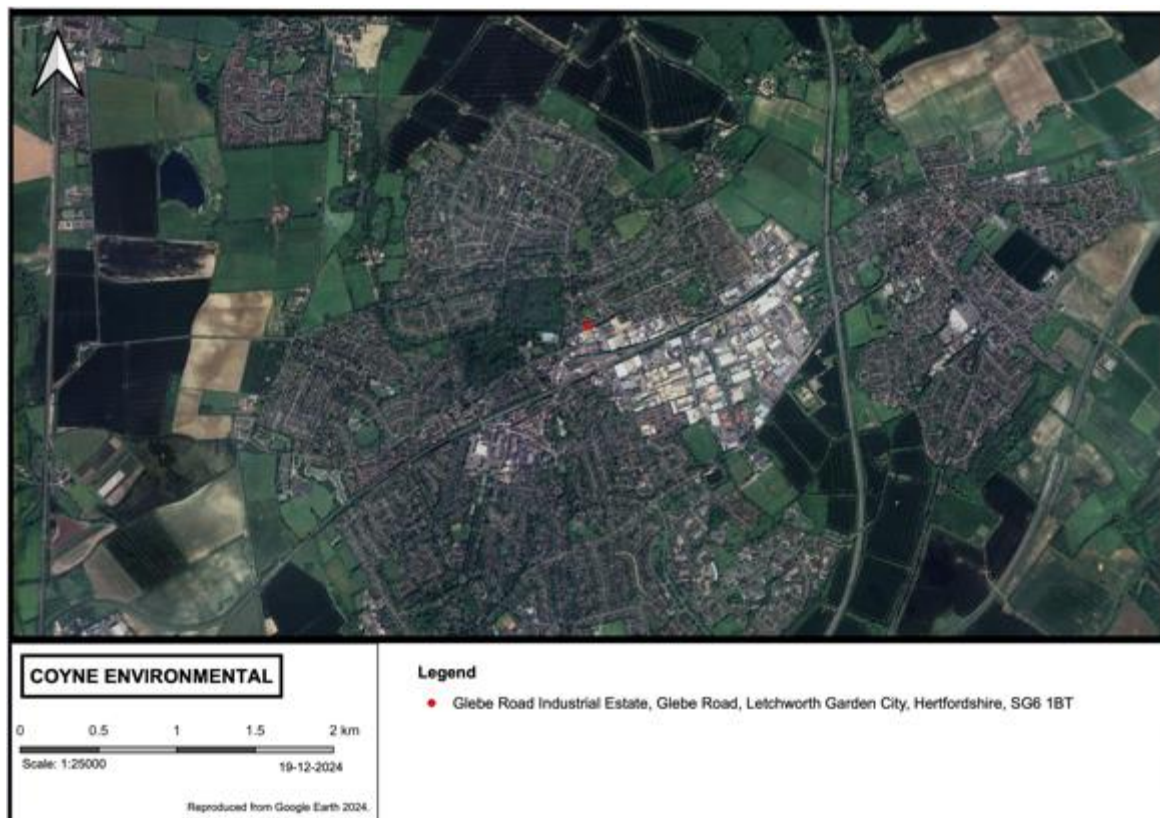
The survey site is located at Grid Reference TL 22295 33376 and is approximately 0.264 hectares in area. It is situated at the far south-western end of Glebe Road, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire, England. The site comprises of developed land; sealed surface [u1b], modified grassland [g4], lowland mixed deciduous woodland [w1f] and ruderal/ephemerals [H1] under the UK HAB classification system. A small ornamental, non-native hedge [h2NE3] is also present on the proposed development site, as are a few scattered trees. A map of the habitats described can be found within the appendices of this report.



The survey Site is bounded by Glebe Rd to the north, residential dwellings and their associated landscaping to the immediate eastern direction and commercial/public buildings and car parking areas to the southern and western directions. The immediate landscape is largely urban with several major road networks within proximity to the Site, such as Baldock Rd, A505 (~1.33km south) and the A1 motorway (~1.57km east). Letchworth Garden City is located just ~800m south-west of the survey Site. Also present within the locale are open green spaces and woodland copses of varying sizes, such as Norton Common (~166m west) and Radwell Meadows Country Park (~1.82km north-east), which provide vital commuting, foraging and resting grounds for wildlife alike.

The proposed development Site itself is not situated within, or adjacent to a statutory designated site and/or priority habitat. Through a search of the MAGIC database, a total of two statutory designated sites were found within a ~2km search radius of the proposed development Site. These were Norton Common and Ivel Springs Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and are located ~166m west and ~1.86km north-east of the Site. No previously granted European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) were identified within a ~2km search radius of the survey site. The following priority habitats were identified within a ~2km search radius of the proposed development Site: Deciduous Woodland (~179m west), Woodpasture and Parkland (~552m south-west), Traditional Orchards (~717m north-east) and Lowland Meadows (~1.92km north-east).

There are no ponds present on the proposed development Site itself, and within a ~500m search radius of the Site, as seen through a search via the MAGIC database. No previously granted EPSL's in regard to Great Crested Newts (GCN) were identified within a ~2km search radius of the Site.



AREA DESIGNATIONS

Management and protection of 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. 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. This study and report have also

taken into account BS 42020 (2013) Biodiversity -Code of Practice for Planning and Development.

SITE

A full Phase 1 Habitat Survey was not deemed necessary as the Site appeared to be one with average habitats for the area or ecology of significance. A Walkover Ecological Survey has therefore been undertaken using the methodology set out in UK Habitat Classification User Manual. However, if the survey identifies any wildlife of significance, measures will be taken as set out in the UK Habitat Classification User Manual (2018) and CIEEM Guidelines (2017). Images taken on the site visit have been included within the appendices section of this report.

1. Developed land; sealed surface [u1b]:

Situated at the centre of the proposed development Site is a disused industrial building, labelled B1 within the habitat survey plan provided in the appendices. Most of the survey Site is also formed of hardstanding, including the western and southern ends of the Site.

B1 is a single-storey, brick-built, detached structure hosting several industrial units within which have been disused for a considerable amount of time. B1 features a gabled roof structure laid with corrugated metal sheets which as are well sealed, as are the uPVC soffit boxes and bargeboards. The timber framed windows and doors, and metal shutters, all fit flush against the built exterior, though some have been boarded with timber boards. A single potential roosting feature was identified along the structure's western elevation in the form of a hole leading into the structure's cavity walls. This could potentially be utilised by crevice-dwelling bats such as common pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*). A full inspection of all sections of the interior was also not carried out and therefore was a limitation to the survey effort. However, no evidence of bats was identified externally.

2. Lowland mixed deciduous woodland [w1f]:

Located along the north-eastern end of the survey Site, and extending towards the eastern site boundary, is lowland mixed deciduous woodland. The trees (including a few scattered trees across the Site) were small to medium in size, with some dead wood present within the woodland patch. Species identified included: ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), elder (*Sambucus nigra*), birch (*Betula* sp.), beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*). The understorey consisted of brambles (*Rubus fruticosus*), firethorn (*Pyracantha coccinea*) and holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) whilst the ground flora was dominated by common ivy (*Hedera helix*).

3. Modified grassland [g4], Ruderal/Ephemerals [H1] & Hedge ornamental non-native [h2NE3]:

At the north-western end of the survey Site, at the entrance, is a small patch of modified grassland. This has been well managed and included perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*) alongside the following forbs: dead-nettles (*Lamium purpureum*), common yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), common daisy (*Bellis perennis*), common chickweed (*Stellaria media*), bulbous buttercup (*Ranunculus bulbosus*), fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*) and rough chervil (*Chaerophyllum temulum*).

Also located at the north-western end of the Site is a small ornamental, non-native hedge. This hedge has been well maintained. Species included privet (*Ligustrum* sp.) and cotoneaster, with the understorey/ground flora being dominated by common ivy (*Hedera helix*).

Scattered across the southern end of the survey Site, and within a caged area located at the south-eastern corner, were ruderals. Species identified included fringed willowherb (*Epilobium ciliatum*), butterfly bush (*Buddleja davidii*) and herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*).

4. Survey site boundaries:

The survey Site is open accessed at its northern end, barring the Site entrance which is fenced off with temporary heras fencing. Palisade fencing lines most of the western site boundary, which then meets a brick-wall at the Site's south-western corner. The southern site boundary is mostly bounded by a chain-link fence which is then followed on by vegetation/hedge (off-site). The western end of the southern site boundary features timber panelled fencing whilst the eastern site boundary is lined with a smaller timber-built fence.

ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

The industrial building B1 was assessed to have a **low value** to support roosting bats (crevice-dwellers) due to the presence of a single roosting feature (hole into cavity walls at the western elevation) and the lack of an internal inspection. Subsequently, in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trusts Bat Surveys, Good Practice Guidelines, a single bat emergence survey (with night vision aid) is recommended to establish presence or absence of bats within the structure B1. This survey should be carried out during the optimal survey period (mid-May to August inclusive) and should be conducted by a total of two surveyors. The visit should be conducted in suitable weather conditions (> 10 °C) with no strong prevailing winds and heavy rain. If bats are discovered roosting in the building, two additional survey visits will need to be conducted, followed by an application for a licence from Natural England to permit the building's demolition.

The overall suitability of the Site for foraging and commuting bats is low, thus any new site lighting should be designed to minimise the impact on bats and the Site should be further enhanced to accommodate for bats i.e., inclusion of bat boxes on the proposed residential dwellings. Although no evidence of nesting birds was

identified during the site visit, nesting birds may utilise the vegetation (woodland/scattered trees) during the nesting season. Therefore, if any works are proposed for any vegetation, it should be carried out outside of the nesting season (March to August inclusive).

Given the nature of the proposed development plans, as well as the results from the site visit, there were no further ecological concerns identified. The site was deemed unsuitable to support water voles, otters, badgers, reptiles, amphibians including GCN and dormice. Habitats found on site are unlikely to support species of principle importance such as hedgehogs although permeable fencing will be suggested as an ecological enhancement for the site.

No statutory designated sites and/or priority habitats are present on the proposed development Site or adjacent to it. Through a search of the MAGIC database, a total of two statutory designated sites were found within a ~2km search radius of the proposed development Site. These were Norton Common and Ivel Springs Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and are located ~166m west and ~1.86km north-east of the Site. No previously granted European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) were identified within a ~2km search radius of the survey Site. The following priority habitats were present within a ~2km search radius of the proposed development Site: Deciduous Woodland (~179m west), Woodpasture and Parkland (~552m south-west), Traditional Orchards (~717m north-east) and Lowland Meadows (~1.92km north-east). Given the nature of the proposed development plans, as well as the distance from the aforementioned sites, no impacts are anticipated on these sites as a result of the development.

PRECAUTIONARY WORKING METHOD STATEMENT

The following works are recommended to be undertaken to ensure any existing ecology and wildlife of the Site (and surrounding) is managed and conserved as much as practical:

- 1 Any works on vegetation (trees) on Site will be scheduled for during the winter months to ensure the likelihood of encountering nesting birds is reduced as much as possible.
- 2 If it is necessary to do work, in the season, the vegetation should be inspected, to see if nest sites are present and active. If this is the case, an ecologist should be contacted for advice.
- 3 Vegetation/dead wood and scattered building materials present across the Site should be carefully removed to ensure wildlife, if present, are not harmed.
- 4 Heras fencing (or similar) will be erected around the working area/s to limit encroachment.
- 5 Excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.

- 6 Rubble piles should be dismantled by hand and debris stored on pallets or removed from the Site to prevent wildlife, including hedgehogs, from utilising these areas.
- 7 Any chemicals/pollutants used or created should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
- 8 Contractors will be made aware of all recommendations outlined within this statement to make them aware of the possible presence of any species of wildlife.

RECOMMENDED ENHANCEMENTS

- 1 Four bird and four bat boxes should be erected onto the proposed dwellings and/or trees across the Site. The bat boxes should be placed 3 – 5 metres high, bird boxes ideally approximately 3 metres high and small-hole boxes between 1 – 3 metres above ground. These should be placed with consideration to prevailing wind and strong sunlight and must provide clear access routes for bats and birds.
- 2 Gaps within any new proposed boundary fencing will also be of use to wildlife such as hedgehogs attempting to commute across the locale.
- 3 The plantation of native trees, shrubs and hedgerows, especially fruit bearing trees, will be of great benefit to wildlife.

CONCLUSIONS

Coyne Environmental has been instructed to undertake an ecology study of the Site at Glebe Road Industrial Estate, Glebe Road, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire, SG6 1BT to find if there are any potential for protected species or sensitive habitats on Site, prior to assessing the application for development.

In conclusion, the concern lies with roosting bats and therefore a single bat emergence survey has been recommended to determine presence/absence of bats roosting within the structure, B1. There were no other major ecological concerns with the survey Site. However, a host of precautionary working methods, and ecological enhancements, have been recommended so that the likelihood of encountering any protected species (i.e., nesting birds) is reduced.

With these recommendations I consider this Report would satisfy the LPA requirement for information on biodiversity and the impact on wildlife, EPS in particular and mitigation recommendations in relation to BNG.

REFERENCES

Location Plan

Baseline Site Survey Plan

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981)

BS 42020 (2013) Biodiversity -Code of practice for planning and development.

Habitat Survey Plan Map:



Images:



Photos 1 & 2. B1's N elevation. Images taken facing NE and SW respectively.



Photo 3. B1's E elevation.



Photo 4. B1's W elevation.



Photo 5. B1's S elevation.



Photo 6. B1's interior.



Photos 7 & 8. Images taken from inside woodland.



Photo 9. Image of woodland, taken from Glebe Rd.



Photo 10. Eastern end of Site.



Photos 11 & 12. Rear (S) end of Site, images taken facing SWW and NEE respectively.



Photo 13. Northern end of Site, entrance.