

Ecological Appraisal



Trees
Gosmore Road
Hitchin
SG4 9AN

On Behalf of:
Pentangle Design Group

September 2026

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28.06.26	V1	Draft	Ejaz Majoka BSc (Hon) CMEEIM
29.06.26	V2	Approved	Kenneth Coyne CMLI
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INTRODUCTION

Coyne Environmental Ltd has been instructed by Pentangle Design Group, to carry out an ecological study of Trees, Gosmore Road, Hitchin, SG4 9AN, for a new Planning Application to replace the existing house with three detached dwellings to North Herts District Council (NHDC). A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of the site ecology and bats, European Protected Species (EPS) in particular, has been undertaken and found no ecology of importance. Under the new BNG guidelines, this Application will now be exempt, as it is only 0.2 hectares in area.



I am a qualified Ecologist, with over 40 years' experience in the environmental field. This includes being a license bat worker (Bat License 2015-15943-CLS-CLS). The ecological survey was carried out in 2024. This was conducted in the day time, (8C) variable conditions, medium winds, dry but cloudy.

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 the environment. Wildlife conservation is set out in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). There is also legislation for specific species, Bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), Protection of Badgers Act 1992, EU Habitats and Birds Directive and more general guidance, Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994, which defines "European Protected Species" (EPS). EU Biodiversity Strategy 2011-2020 is also noted. Biodiversity -Code of Practice for Development has also been used in this study.

The Hertfordshire Biodiversity Partnership has developed the 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. This study and report have also taken into account BS 42020 (2013) Biodiversity -Code of Practice for Planning and Development.

The NHDC has various policies to protect the environment, particularly Policy 14 Nature Conservation and various Green Space strategies. There are no National Nature Reserves (NNR) within the study area. The nearest water course is the River Hiz (chalk stream) with Priory Fields country park to the west and the nearest HMWT Nature Reserve is Purwell Ninesprings, east of the search area.

LOCATION

Hitchin (named after the Hicce people) is a market town in north Hertfordshire, dating from at least the 7th century. It lies in the valley of the River Hiz at the north-eastern end of the Chiltern Hills, Area of Outstanding Natural beauty (AONB) . The population at the 2021 census was 35,220.

Hitchin grew around a market place and the adjoining parish church of St Mary (once a Minster).. Hitchin Priory,(Listed Building Grade 1) a former Carmelite friary date back to 1317. Following the Dissolution, it was partially rebuilt into a large country house. In 1770 this was re-modelled in the Palladian style by the Deime-Radcliffe family who only sold the estate in 1965. They also created the parkland (19 acres), by Nathaniel Richmond, now a private hotel.

The town is near the ancient Ichniold Way and the Hicca Way follows the line that Danes and the English used as trading routes. Hitchins's economy was historically agriculture, primarily arable with sheep farming. The wool trade became a major industry. Lavender has long been grown in the fields around the town with lavender distilleries and has recently been revived.

SITE

The site is a period detached property in the centre of a large garden. It is one of several similar residences on the main road to Gosmore. It would appear to be generally in good condition. This is on the southern outskirts of the town and part of a residential area. On the west side of the road is Priory Fields, a country park, leading out into the countryside. The period house with detached garage is white rendered and tiled roofs with the grounds, mainly lawns and trees on the boundary. On an initially inspection, the site would appear to have limited ecology.

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

A PRA assessment has been for bats (EPS) to ascertain what the current ecology on site is. Bats have been recorded in the area but not on this site. The building has been inspected, starting with roof space. The loft has been partly converted into bedrooms and storage areas with access stairs and fully lit. This is a traditional wooden roof structure with no insulation in the trusses but boarded over the rafter for access. Only a small portion of the original roof is still a loft space, all of which is in reasonable condition.

An assessment of the loft was conducted using visual methods, a powerful (1000 lumen) torch and bat detector (Echo Metre Touch 2 /Notepad) as detailed in the Bat Conservation Trusts Bat Surveys, Good Practice Guidelines, 4th. edition 2023. The internal roof spaces were thoroughly examined as were the whole of the external parts of the premises. Inspection of the rafters, boarding and all small spaces were thoroughly investigated. No bats were found on the inspection. Evidence for previous bat activity was investigated. No bat droppings on any of the surfaces or around stored

boxes and other items or evidence of discarded meals (insect wings) was found. Potential entry points, were inspected but no urine stains or entry scratching was found. Cobwebs (with no droppings in any of them) were noted as being undisturbed, indicating that no animal activity had recently occurred. The conclusion of the internal loft space inspection was that no evidence of a bat roost has been found

External areas of the house and grounds were surveyed. Inspection of all the front and back windowsills, door frames and opening and similar areas were reviewed. No evidence of bat droppings on any of these or discarded meal was found. Using binoculars, any potential cracks or other openings was observed for potential urine stains or entry scratching but nothing was found. The mature trees on site, in the garden, have no ivy growing on any of them (potential roost sites). No suitable holes (woodpecker) cracks or similar on the tree trunks, as potential roosting sites was found.

The PRA survey and assessment of the site and the building have been completed. The loft of the existing house has been thoroughly inspected for bats along with the external areas of the grounds. No bats or evidence of them was found. This was equally the same with the grounds. The site therefore has a low potential for bats and a **Negligible** potential as a bat roost and no further ecological studies are required.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

The Environment Act 2021 has a mandatory require for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on developments of a minimum of 10%. However, under the new regulations' small sites below 0.2ha are exempt from the requirement to undertake a BNG metric. The area of the site is 1987m².

However suitable mitigation or enhancement required to meet the requirement for biodiversity enhancements. This could 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.

CONCLUSION

Coyne Environmental Ltd has been instructed to carry out ecological studies at Trees, Gosmore Road, Hitchin, SG4 9AN. A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of the site and subsequent desk top studies indicate that this is not in an area of high risk for any specific species or sensitive habitats.

In my professional opinion I assess that the proposal for new dwellings on the site will have minimal impact on the overall ecology of the area and bats (EPS) in particular. I conclude that no further environmental studies are required and that East Herts District Council can determine the Application on this basis.

REFERENCES

Photographic Gallery
Site Survey Plan
Existing Site
Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981

PHOTOGRAPHIC GALLERY



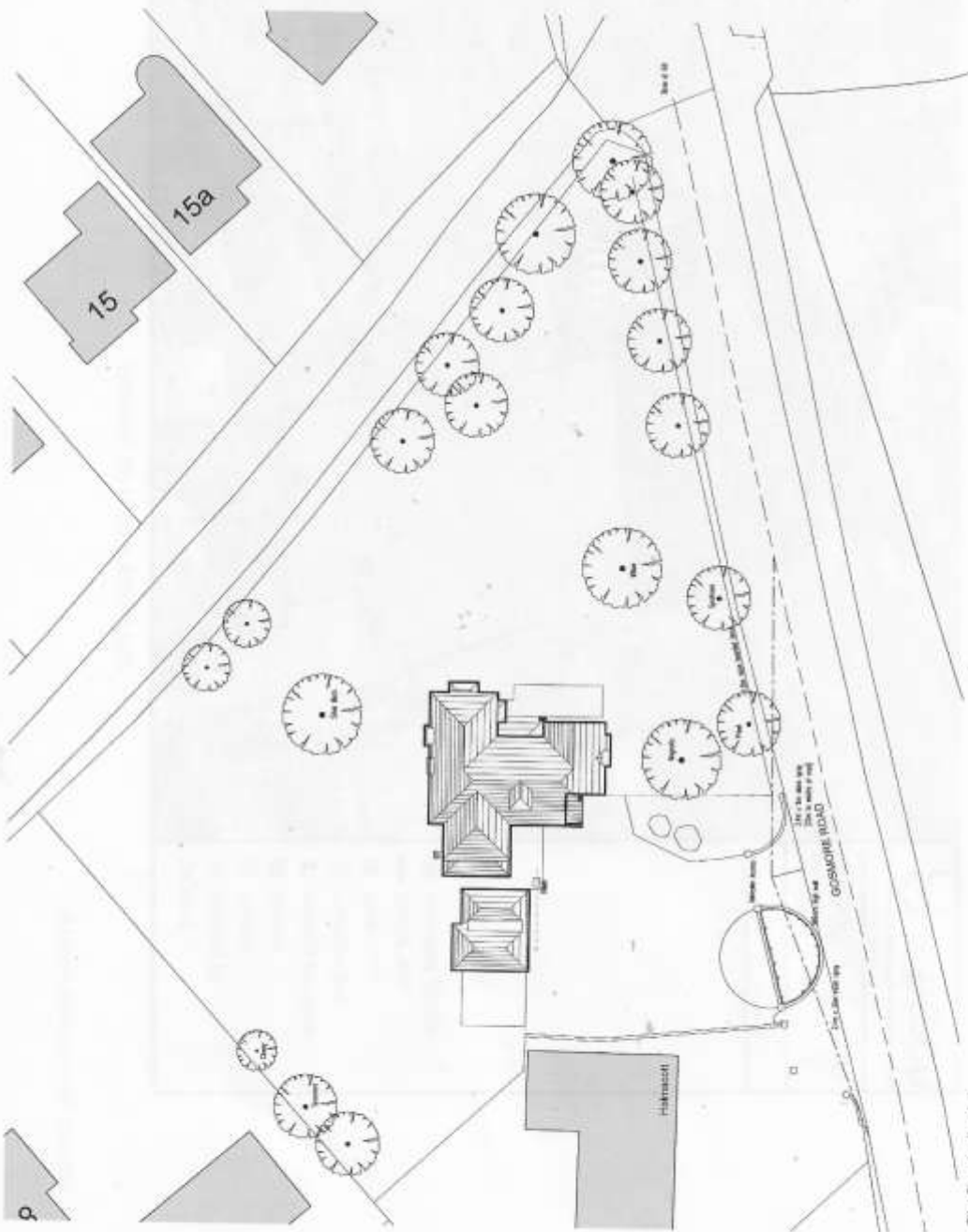
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PROJECT TITLE
 Location Plan and Site Plan for Existing

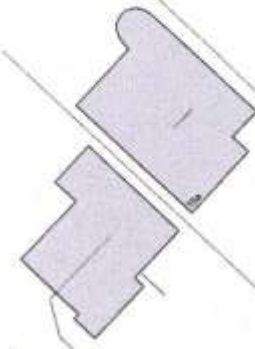
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DATE	30/10/2010
BY	30/10/2010
REV	30/10/2010



Site Plan As Existing

1:500 scale





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PLANNING

PENTANGLE

DESIGN GROUP

SUITE 1, 37 NEWSCOTT AVENUE, APTS 203-204
HARTFORD, CT 06103
860/525-0000

Proposed Residential Development
Trans. Gopuram Road, Hsinchu

Proposed Site Plan

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ARCHITECTS & INTERIOR DESIGNERS

AREAS FOR BNC	
BLK DRUGS	
WASTING - Assets	278,7e2
WASTING - Paving	303e2
WASTING - Assets	143,38e2
WASTING - Assets	100,9e2
WASTING - Assets (BNC)	422,35e2
TOTAL	278e2

5. *reaching inside the world*