

COYNE ENVIRONMENTAL LTD

**Trees
Gosmore Road
Hitchin
SG4 7QH**



Biodiversity Net Gain Report

April 2025

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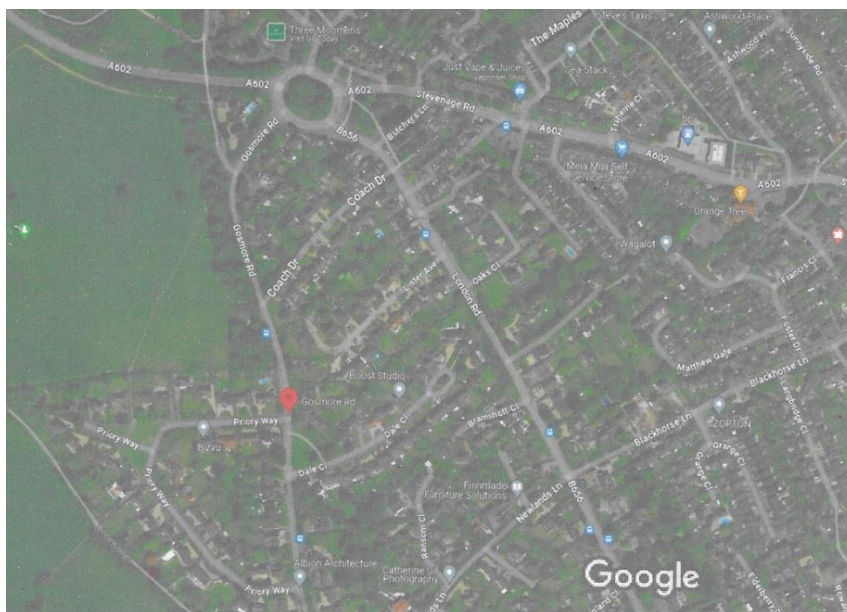
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INTRODUCTION

Coyne Environmental Ltd has been instructed by Pentangle Design Group to carry out an Ecological Assessment of Trees, Gosmore Road, Hitchin, SG4 7QH. This is to establish the potential presence or absence of protected ecological features of significance and carry out an assessment to obtain a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in accordance with the Environment Act 2021. A planning application is in preparation to be submitted to North Herts District Council (NHDC) for development of the site.

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 Assessment survey was carried out on the 23rd April 2024 and found no ecology of significance.

Following changes to the design, it is proposed to re-calculate the site, using the standard Statutory Biodiversity Metric, to obtain the new BNG for the proposal and put forward biodiversity and mitigation measures to obtain a minimum 10% gain. The BNG Metric assessment has now been carried out, as set out in the accompanying Excel Sheet.



HEAD LINE RESULTS

Total net unit change		
	Habitat Units	-12.86%
	Hedgerow Units	12.29%
Total net % change		
	Habitat Units	-12.86%
	Hedgerow Units	12.29%
Habitats units needed required to meet target		
	Habitat Units	00.00

	Hedgerow Units	00.00
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This indicates that the required BNG in the Environment Act 2021 cannot be achieved without off-site mitigation, to gain the mandatory overall 10% net gain. These are set out in the Detailed Results and in the Analysis results below.

ASSESSMENT RESULTS

On site Base Line				
	Habitat Units	0.76		
	Hedgerow Units	0.46		
On site post intervention				
	Habitat Units	0.66		
	Hedgerow Units	0.51		
On site net change	Habitat Units	-0.10	-12.86%	On site net gain is less than target set
	Hedgerow Units	0.06	12.29%	On site net gain is at the target set
Off-site Base Line				
	Habitat Units	0.00		
	Hedgerow Units	0.00		
Off-site post intervention				
	Habitat Units	0.00		
	Hedgerow Units	0.00		
Off-site net change				
	Habitat Units	0.00		
	Hedgerow Units	0.00		
Combined net unit change				
	Habitat Units	0.00		
	Hedgerow Units	0.00		
Total net % change				
	Habitat Units	0.00		
	Hedgerow Units	0.00		

DETAILED RESULTS

Type	Target	Baseline Unit	Unit Required	Unit Deficit	Note
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Habitat Unit	10%	0.76	0.84	0.17	Additional habitat units needed to meet target
Hedgerow Unit	10%	0.46	0.00	0.000	No additional habitat units needed to meet target

ANALYSIS

The Biodiversity Metric shows a Total Net % change habitat unit for the scheme of - **12.86%** and a Total Net % change hedgerow unit of 12.29 % so the overall BNG does not gain the minimum 10.00% required. This therefore does not meet the Environment Act 2021 mandatory requirement for information on biodiversity.

REVIEW

Following a revision of the BNG to reflect the updated site layout, the overall biodiversity impact of the proposed development has been improved. The original net loss of -27.64% in area habitat units has been reduced to a **-12.86%** net loss, primarily due to the incorporation of tree planting within communal areas.

As a result of these changes, the required biodiversity compensation has decreased from 0.29 units to **0.17** units, equating to the purchase of **0.34** Statutory Biodiversity Credits (SBC) to meet the 10% net gain requirement. Based on the current government rate this would result in an estimated cost of **£14,280** (excluding VAT).

However, if changes to the **communal areas** are made an on-site net gain can be achieved as follows:

- **10m lin.** mixed native hedge to include *Crataegus monogyna*, *Corylus avellana*, *Prunus spinosa*, *Acer campestre*, *rosa canina*
- This can achieve a BNG of **12.28%** net gain on site
- These areas must be legally secured and managed for a minimum of 30 years
- The applicant will need to have BNG conditioned as part of the planning permission.

This mitigation should be developed into a detailed landscape design, which can then be submitted as part any Reserved Matters in the Approval.

A Preliminary Ecological Analysis (PEA) has already been undertaken in a separate Report and found no ecology of significance. The requirement for information on Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) has now been undertaken, using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric and indicates that a **12.28%** net gain can be achieved with additional communal mitigation. The two Reports and the accompanying Excel Sheet form a joint proposal of the Ecological Assessment (EA) indicating that the development will have minimal effect on ecology and provide the opportunity to increase the areas biodiversity.

CONCLUSION

Coyne Environmental Ltd has been instructed to assess the potential presence or absence of protected ecological features of significance at Trees, Gosmore Road, Hitchin, SG4 7QH and carry out a re-assessment to obtain a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in accordance with the Environment Act 2021. This is part of a planning proposal to be submitted to North Herts District Council.

In accordance with BCT Guidelines and having regard to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, I conclude that this site does not contain evidence of areas of significance and high biodiversity value, including European Protected Species (EPS). I assess that no further surveys would be needed to confirm this absence.

Therefore, in my professional opinion the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report and this revised Biodiversity Net Gain Report with accompanying Excel spread sheet, satisfy the requirements in respect of ecology and biodiversity enhancement. I recommend that the application can be considered on this basis and that no further environment surveys are necessary to determine the application.

REFERENCES

Site Location Plan

Proposals Plan

Coyne Environmental Ltd PEA Report

Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981

Environment Act 2021



LAND SURVEYING
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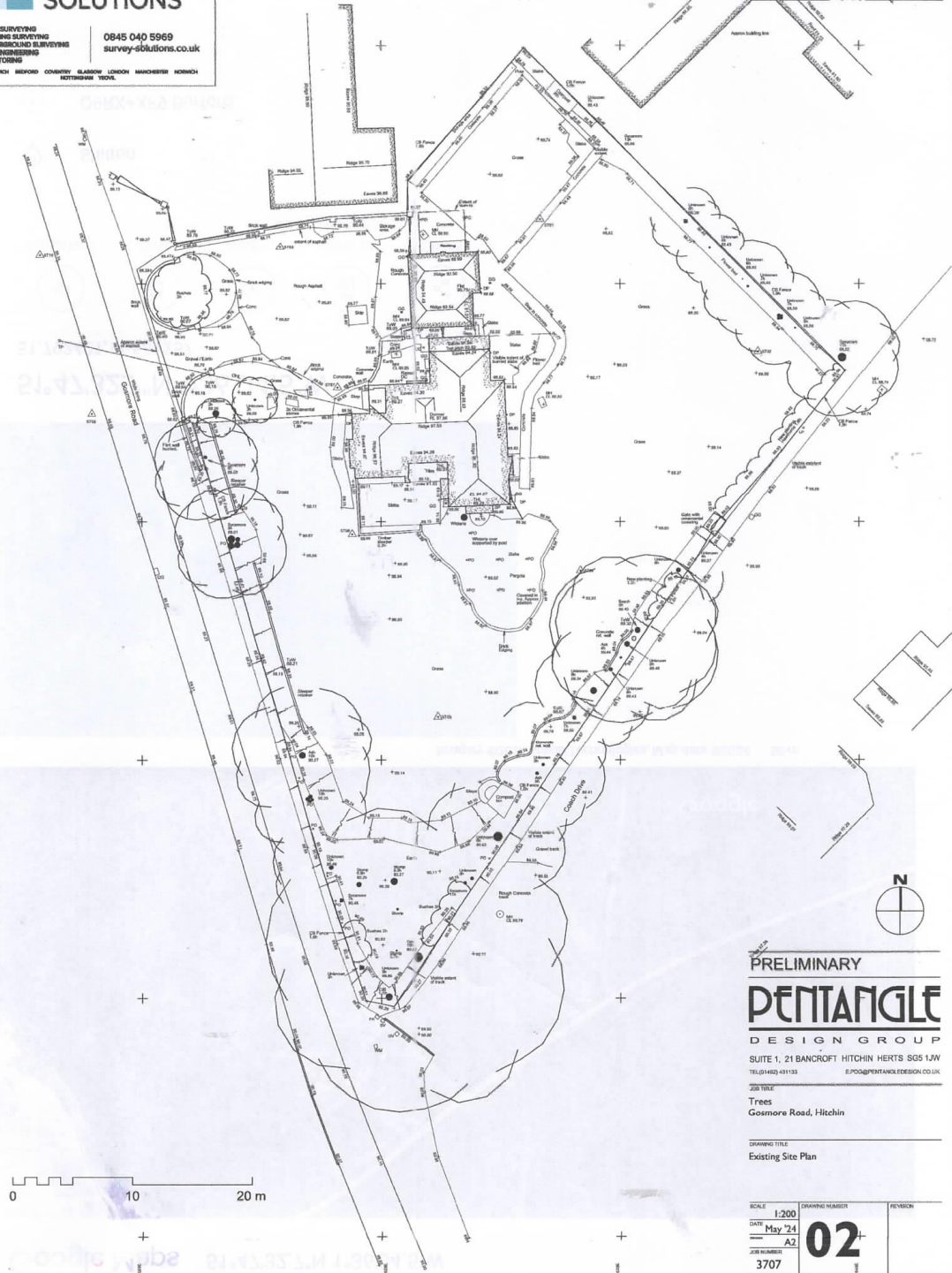
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