

# **COYNE ENVIRONMENTAL**

**26 Beech Hill  
Hadley Wood  
EN4 0JN**



## **PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL**

**August 2023**

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## INTRODUCTION

Scott & Sampson has instructed Coyne Environmental to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of 26 Beech Hill, Hadley Wood, Enfield, EN4 0JN to establish the potential presence or absence of protected ecological features of significance. This is in preparation of the submission of a planning application. It is proposed to demolish the existing house and replace it with two new dwellings.

The completed PRA will enable the LPA to consider the impact of the proposal on wildlife. The authority 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. This includes being a licence bat worker (Bat Licence 2015-15943-CLS-CLS). The PEA survey was carried out on the 25<sup>th</sup> August 2023. This was conducted in the day time, (16 c) variable, light winds, dry.



## LOCATION

Hadley Wood is a suburb of north London on the borders with Hertfordshire but part of the London Borough of Enfield and only 11 miles north of the City of London. It has been part of the medieval Royal Forest of Enfield Chase since 1399 and parts of it are still owned by the Dutchy of Lancaster. The Act of Disentrancement 1777 divided much of the Chase for sale, supervised by Francis Dussel, who was allowed to purchase 152 acres which became Beech Hill Park where he built a mansion (Grade 11 Listed Building) in 1781, now the club house of the Hadley Wood golf club.

In the 1880`s the Great Northern Railway came across the Chase and Hadley Wood station built (where the name came from). This gave the impetus to develop round this



transport hub. The area has a large amount of greenery, open space and surrounding Green Belt (GB) in the farmland and mixed woodland. It is only a mile away from the M25 motorway to the north.

## **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.

The London Plan and the London BAP at a strategic level, are also considered, as well as the Mayors Biodiversity Strategy. At the local level Enfield Council has produced a number of documents relating to wildlife including in the Local Plan and its own BAP. Policy CS36 has surveyed local wildlife sites and there is a local Biodiversity Partnership .BS 42020 (2013) Biodiversity -Code of Practice for Development has also been used in this study.

The site is surrounded on three sides by the GB of Enfield Chase with Hadley Wood GC to the east and Monken Hadley Common (registered common), a Site of Borough Interest for Nature Conservation (Grade 1) and a Conservation Area (CA) to the south. There are no National Nature Reserves (NNR), RAMS or SSSI sites within the study area. The nearest HMWT Nature Reserve is Gobions Wood, outside the search area. The area is drained by Salmons Brook and tributaries. It is thus an area with important biodiversity.

## **SITE**

This is a residential area of large properties and extensive gardens with 26 Beech Hill backing onto Hadley Wood Golf Course. Many of these house's date from the development following the opening of Hadley Wood station and many are now being re-developed.

The property is a large three storey period house of traditional design, brick, pantiles and clay roof tiles with original windows. A detached garage with ornamental roof is to the side of the main dwelling. To the front of the site is a lawn with parking area of mature trees and shrubs along the boundary. The very large long rear garden is again mainly lawns near the house with trees and shrubs extending to the boundary which is wilder as it reaches the golf course.

The existing dwelling appears to be pre-war and due the underlying London Clay is subsiding with major cracks throughout the building. This is the main reason why it is to be demolished and replaced with a new dwelling

Lawns take up much of the garden. The front garden has several vintage cars parked on the grass, so that much of the lawn and surrounding vegetation is unkempt. This however is mainly ornamental trees and evergreens of no particular ecological value.

The rear garden has a well-managed lawn near the house with mixed herbaceous and shrub borders, mature hedges and ornamental trees around the site This leads out to an extensive area of rough grass surrounded by overgrown hedges, partly screening a disused swimming pool. The end of the garden is a fenced off rough area, possibly a former kitchen garden with views over into the golf course beyond. The application site is thus a typical suburban garden

where due to reduced management and minimal maintenance, a habitat of varying ecological value would appear to be evident.

## CONDITION

A full Phase 1 Habitat Survey was not deemed necessary, as this is a site that appears to have few natural features. However, if the survey 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 buildings were inspected first, starting with the roof space for evidence of bats, European Protected Species (EPS). It is un-used and not lighted. This is a typical roof of the period, wooden post and beam construction and generally in reasonable condition for its age. There did not appear to be much in the way of insulation between the rafters or under the beams / tiles and the whole of the loft was very dusty and had clearly not been entered for some time.



An assessment of the whole 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>. edition 2016. The internal roof spaces were thoroughly examined. Due to the amount of loose material and dust around the loft space it was not easy to see exactly what is present. No bats or specific evidence of bat droppings, discarded meals (insect wings) urine stains or entry scratching was found. Cobwebs were noted as being possibly disturbed, indicating that animal activity may have occurred and investigations of the few openings /cracks were looked for but nothing was found.

External areas of the house and grounds were surveyed next. Inspection of the windowsills, door opening and similar areas were reviewed. No specific evidence of bat droppings, discarded meal, urine stains etc. was found. The trees and hedges on site have no ivy growing on these (or on the building) which are used as bat roost habitats. There were a number of suitable holes (woodpecker) cracks or similar on the tree trunks, as potential roosting sites.

The gardens nearest the property are generally maintained to a standard where wildlife is restricted to the boundary vegetation and birds will use these. On inspection no nests or evidence of nest building was found. A couple of rooks (*Corvus frugilegus*) and a starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*). were the only birds seen on the inspection. The lower end of the site with more native vegetation is of higher ecological value. Its proximity to the golf course will mean that wildlife will probably visit the garden and commute to other habitats as an ecological corridor.

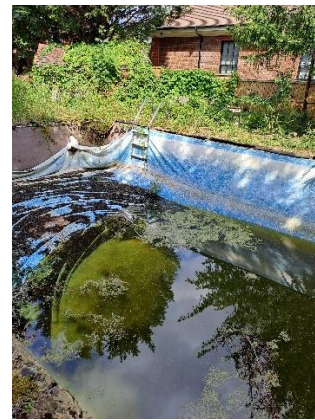
The swimming pool is the main area of concern. Being disused it currently only has a small amount of water in it and with steep sides is not likely to attract animals, newts in particular. However, this does not prevent wildlife falling into the pool, such as hedgehogs, (*Erinaceus europaeus*) which would not be able to escape. It is recommended this is first fully drained

/covered and either filled in or protective reptile fencing erected around it, to stop possible entry.

## ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

The grass areas near the house, are of amenity ornamental species including *Agrostis tenuis*, *Festuca ovina* and *Lolium perenne* with a few patches of hawkweed (*Herbarium vulgatum*), and curled dock (*Rumex crispus*) around the edges. There was no evidence of paths through the grass of passage by wildlife

The boundaries of mixed shrubs and trees including hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) is reasonably well managed but with no evidence of birds nesting. The range of trees, across the garden, are a mixture of ornamental species including conifers with oak (*Quercus robur*) birch (*Betula pendula*), hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), and limes (*Tilia spp.*). No specific evidence of bats using holes or other opportunities for bats to use on the trees was found.



An assessment of the garage was visually assessed and found to be unsuitable for bats, so a detailed survey was not considered necessary, in line with the Bat Conservation Trusts Bat Surveys, Good Practice Guidelines, 3<sup>rd</sup>. edition 2016. Guidelines. There are no other buildings in the grounds.

The main opportunity for wildlife is probably at the end of the garden. It would appear to be a site of value for reptiles like grass snakes (*Natrix natrix*) and common lizards (*Lacerta vivipara*), Inspections under possible refugia (stones, wood etc) was carried out but nothing was found.

The vegetated boundary, are similar to a typical native hedges No current or old bird nests were noted and the only avifauna observed were sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), and a passing flock of starling. The grass is unlikely to be used by skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) or similar species. Using the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) guidelines this site has a low avifauna value.

Within the site and along the boundaries there was limited refuges for small mammals like hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) with no signs of mole (*Talpa europea*) activity though the area. However, the areas detritus and scrub are possible refuges for invertebrates as well as a seasonal food source for a wide range of common garden birds.

There are opportunities for pioneer species to flourish and allow insects such as bees and butterflies to find food and shelter. The grass areas have limited use for insects to lay eggs as they usually require more tussocky vegetation. But species like

grasshoppers and crickets could be present, with ephemeral weeds useful for nectar seeking invertebrates.

Badgers (*Meles meles*), rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) and other mammals like red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) probably forage and pass through the site but no evidence, foot prints or droppings were observed. As this is adjacent to the golf course and open countryside beyond, the likelihood it is an ecological corridor for a wide range of species that range well beyond the site and area in general.

The only area of water, on site, is the disused swimming pool. So, the likelihood of Great Crested Newts (*Triturus cristatus*) EPS and other amphibians like frogs (*Rana temporaria*) and toads (*Bufo bufo*) using the site is doubtful. Using the GNC Suitability Index the site has a negative value.

No other significant ecological features were observed on the survey. This evaluation has shown that although the site has some wildlife value there are other areas of equal or greater value in the adjacent GB and golf course as well as surrounding gardens.

## **ANALYSIS**

The evaluation has shown that 26 Beech Hill is a typical sub-urban garden of mainly amenity grasses and non-native trees and shrubs but within an area of ecological potential. Parts of the grassland maybe used by a number of animals although no actual fauna was observed. The possibility of EPS being present is negative with regard to GCN but the building and garden do have potential for bats. Other more common species that may be displaced can translocate to the wider countryside beyond the site.

The general vegetation has some value for wildlife and where retained should be enhanced in the proposed development as part of the ecological mitigation. With appropriate management these can form ecological corridors linking the site to the wider areas beyond and increasing its overall biodiversity.

The treatment of the external spaces of the proposal is the key to ensuring the existing biodiversity although limited, is retained. A managed programme of conserving as much of the existing ecology as practical, together with habitat creation, should be implemented as part of the approval. In order to ensure the site is managed in an environmentally controlled way as practical, a Precautionary Working Method Statement (PWMS) is proposed. This identifies the probable wildlife and habitats that may be affected by a development and the method that needs to be taken to ensure these species are protected and their habitats are not affected or if necessary trans-located to alternative safe areas

## **PRECAUTIONARY WORKING METHOD STATEMENT**

The following works are recommended to be undertaken to ensure the existing ecology and wildlife of the site is managed to conserve as much as practical:

- 1 The site has a number of mature trees that may be affected by the proposal. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) may be necessary to ensure the roots in particular are protected, in accordance with BS 5837(2012) Trees in Relationship to construction
- 2 As the existing trees and shrubs may be used by birds as possible nesting sites, no work to the existing vegetation should be undertaken in the bird

- breeding season (Mar-Aug) and particularly important for House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) which are in steep decline (Red Listed).
- 3 If this is necessary the vegetation should be inspected to see if nest sites are present and active. If this is the case the ecologist should be contacted for advice.
  - 4 When carrying out removal of the vegetation, care should also be taken to ensure small mammals, like hedgehogs are not present in the undergrowth. It is also important to ensure that if clearance does involve wood fires these are inspected to ensure animals like hedgehogs have not temporarily taken refuge here.
  - 5 Although the likelihood of wildlife being present on the site has not been found, as a precautionary measure, works to prepare the land should be timed to minimise the potential impact on possible wildlife.
  - 6 Any scrub or similar vegetation clearance should ideally be removed in winter (Dec-Feb) to within 20cm of ground level to ensure that any possible foraging / migrating between areas are not affected
  - 7 Ground level vegetation clearance can be undertaken during the spring/summer (mid Mar-mid Jun) when activity is more dispersed. This precautionary approach can be relaxed if no wildlife has been detected on site.
  - 8 Much of the site comprise grassland and if it is to be removed, vegetation clearance and soil stripping works should progress in a systematic method working towards the site boundaries. This will encourage any potential reptiles / animals present to disperse to the surrounding gardens /green belt beyond the site.
  - 9 Soil stripping should ideally be undertaken during the active season, between March to October and in suitable weather conditions. Given that wildlife is potentially likely to visit the site, simple precautions will be sufficient to ensure that they do not exploit more attractive or useful habitats created during the works by keeping the site tidy and storing materials off the ground. Any soils stacking should be smoothed to prevent potential cavities and covered in tarpaulin.
  - 10 If in the unlikely event that animals are found on site, they should be left to disperse of their own accord. Any that need assistance should be gently placed in a clean bucket and moved on to a safe location away from the development.

## **BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN**

The Environment Act 2021 has a mandatory require for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on developments of a minimum of 10%. Within this scheme it is proposed that the BNG should be undertaken as part of the planning permission with suitable mitigation or enhancement required to meet the Statutory Net Gain incorporated into the ecological and landscape design proposals.

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 has been instructed to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of 26 Beech Hill, Enfield. The site survey and subsequent desk top study of the site indicates that this is not in an area of high risk for any specific species



or sensitive habitats. The only area of concern is for bats (EPS). Although none were found on the survey and inspection of the buildings, it was not possible to completely confirm that they are not using the loft.

It is therefore recommended, on the Precautionary Principal that one dusk bat activity survey (BAS) be undertaken to confirm the presence or absence of bats at this location. BAS can only be carried out between May and September. This has now been undertaken. Although bats were observed foraging in the grounds no exits or emergences was observed on the survey.

The design and location of the proposal will also have a bearing on the details of the recommendations for BNG measures. This PEA is flexible enough to accommodate such changes by incorporating mitigating measures into the external building design. With ecological planting proposals this should ensure any retained ecology will be part of the final submission.

Therefore, in my professional opinion I assess that the proposal of two new dwellings at 26 Beech Hill, will have minimal impact on the overall ecology of the area. I conclude that, no further environmental studies are required to satisfy the requirement for ecological /biodiversity assessments and that the proposal can be submitted on this basis.

## **REFERENCES**

Location Plan

Topographical Plan

Proposals Plan

Hertfordshire Biological Records

Bat Conservation Handbook

BTO Guidelines

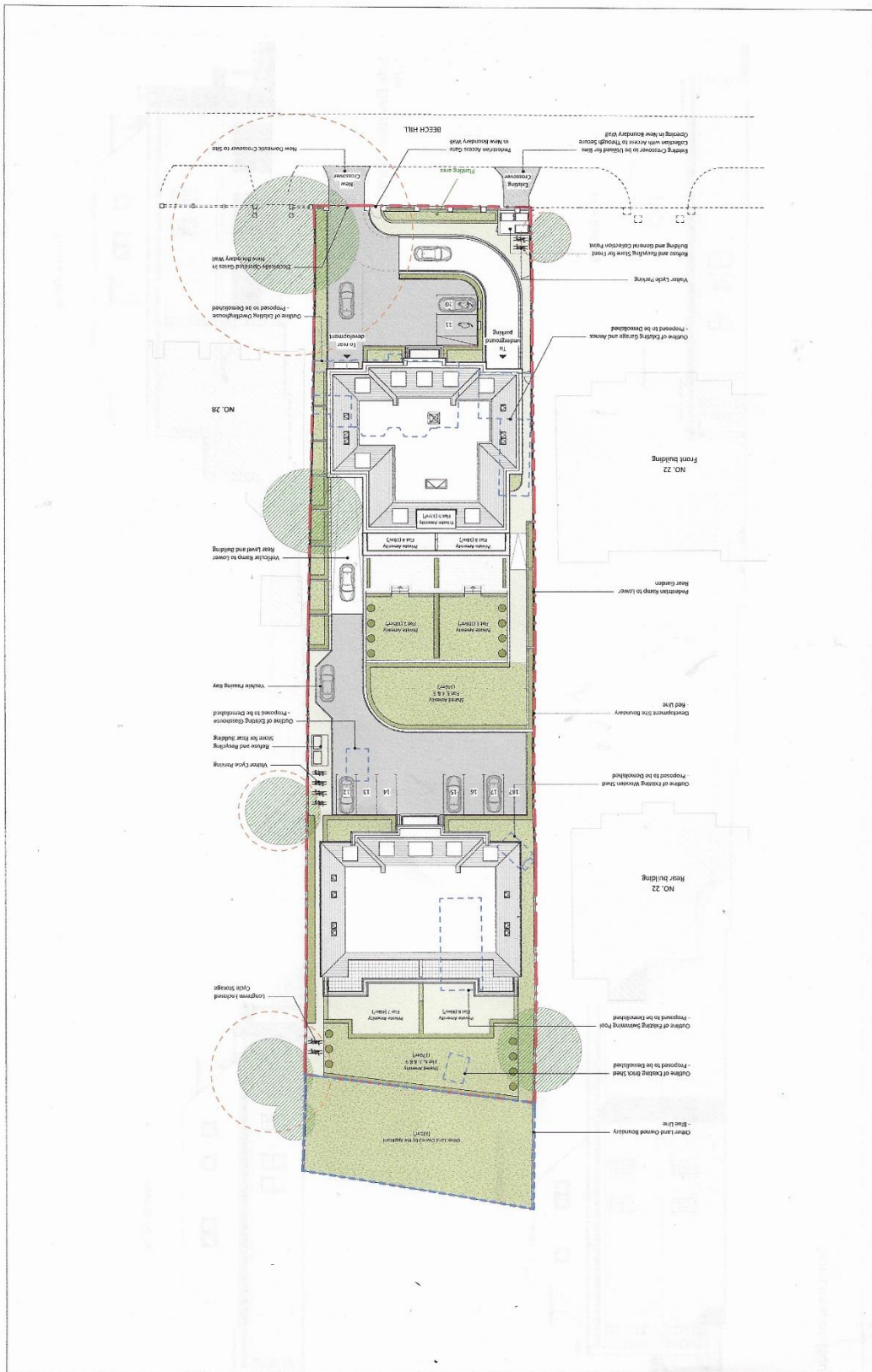






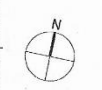






Project: 26 Essex Hill, New Wood, Elm DP  
 Drawn: BD / PH  
 Client: G.C. Edwards Residential Limited  
 Date: 11/10/2023  
 Scale: A1: 1:200  
 Status: Planning  
 Drawing No: 1/16 of 02  
 Revision:

40m  
 10m  
 12m  
 1m  
 0m  
 VISUAL SCALE 1:200 @ A1



**PRELIMINARY**

This plan is a preliminary drawing and is not to be used for construction purposes. It is subject to change without notice. The client is responsible for ensuring that the plan is accurate and complete. The architect is not responsible for any errors or omissions in the plan.

**Scott & Sampson**  
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