

COYNE ENVIRONMENTAL LTD

**Bowers Place
Crawley Down
RH10 4HY**



PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT August 2024

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INTRODUCTION

Coyne Environmental Ltd has been instructed by Worth Parish Council (WPC) to carry out an ecological study of Bowers Place, Crawley Down, RH10 4HY, to establish the potential presence or absence of protected ecological features of significance. It is proposed to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA). A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in accordance with the Environment Act 2021, will also be conducted. These are both in preparation of the submission of a planning application to the Mid Sussex District Council.



Figure 1. An image showing the site boundary, highlighted in red, via google maps satellite view.

The completed PEA and BNG will enable the local planning authority (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, with over 35 years' experience in the environmental field. This includes being a license bat worker (Bat License 2015-15943-CLS-CLS). The PEA Survey was carried out on the 3rd of September 2024 by Assistant Ecologist, Luke Davenport. This was conducted in the daytime, in good weather (17C), damp, calm (1 Beaufort), cloudy (95%) conditions.

LOCATION

The site is located at Grid Reference TQ 34629 37625, which is a semi-rural area surrounded by urban residential buildings. The closest wildlife trust nature reserve is Hedgecourt, roughly three kilometres northeast of the site, with the next closest being >5km away. Outside of the small town of Crawley Down, there is mostly arable farmland, with a few patches of woodland. With only one ecological site within five kilometres, and considering the surrounding landscape, it has been determined that the site and surrounding area has a low – moderate ecological value.



Figure 2. 3 photos showing the footpath, verge and urban greenspace. Taken by Luke Davenport on the 3rd of September 2024.

Bowers Place is connected to Station Road, and ends at the Crawley Down Health Centre. Along Bowers Place is many residential houses on one side and a small urban greenspace with mowed amenity grass on the other side. The road is fairly narrow and busy. Due to this, cars are often made to park on the verge of the footpath which runs along the boundary of the urban greenspace to the west. This paired with foot traffic has led to degradation of parts of the footpath and, in particular, the kerb. It is therefore proposed by PBA Design that footpath be modified to allow for additional parking. This will be done by pushing the footpath back and laying an asphalt surface over the current footpath and verge to allow for more parking space.

AREA DESIGNATIONS

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. 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 considered BS 42020 (2013) Biodiversity -Code of Practice for Planning and Development.

SITE:

A full Phase 1 Habitat Survey was not deemed necessary due to the lack of ecological features, therefore, only a Walkover Ecological Survey (WES) was deemed necessary for this PEA. 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 habitats were recorded on site are as follows:

Developed land – sealed surface – Road – Children’s Play Space (UKHAB code; u1b – 800 – 823)

Bowers Place is a residential road, along which many cars are parked, with a verge on both sides. Next to the road, on the west side is a public footpath, with an asphalt surface. There is also a children’s playground at the south end of Bowers Place Road, however only a part of this is within the site boundary.

Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface – Road Verge or Island (UKHAB code; u1c – 801)

The west side of Bowers Place Road is within the site boundary. It is a verge of mostly bare ground, with some vegetation in areas. This is due to frequent parking and foot traffic along the verge.

Modified Grassland – Frequently Mown (UKHAB code; g4 - 108)

Adjacent to Bowers Place Road is a small urban greenspace of frequently mown amenity grass, comprised of mostly meadow grass (*Poa trivialis*) and white clover (*Trifolium repens*), with some greater plantain (*Plantago major*) and common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) present.

Built Linear Feature (UKHAB code; u1e)

A somewhat overgrown wooden fence is situated at the south end of Bowers Place Road. It acts as a barrier between the playground and the asphalt footpath.

CONDITION

The site is situated in a semi-rural area, with urban residential buildings and an urban greenspace along the road. Due to the proposal increasing parking along Bowers Place Road there is limited ecology on site. The playground, some trees and the urban

greenspace will be affected by the proposals and therefore a PEA was undertaken to assess the species on site.



Figure 3. 3 photos showing the playground at the south end of Bowers Place, the road and condition of the verge and kerb. Taken by Luke Davenport on the 3rd of September 2024.

Species found along Bowers Place Road include, mainly meadow grass (*Poa trivialis*) and white clover (*Trifolium repens*), with yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), greater plantain (*Plantago major*) and common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) also present throughout.

Near the south end of Bowers Place is a playground, the footpath currently runs along the boundary of the playground, with a wooden fence in between. Species found along the wooden fence include, ash sapling (*Fraxinus excelsior*), stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*), sycamore maple sapling (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), common dandelion, ground ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*), patches of grass (*Poa. sp.*) and white clover.

There are also eight trees present along Bowers Place, these species include, European ash, two sycamore maple trees, silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*), horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), English oak (*Quercus robur*), sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) and a non-identifiable dead tree covered in common ivy (*Hedera helix*) and brambles (*Rubus fruticosus*) at the north end of the urban greenspace along Bowers Place.

ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

The proposal is to create new parking space on the west side of Bowers Place Road. The modification of the current footpath and verge is highly unlikely to affect any surrounding flora and fauna of ecological significance. With the main area of interest for wildlife being birds within the trees that run along the footpath and potentially any bat roosts being disturbed by construction.

Bats. There are no buildings on site and therefore any possibility of bats roosting is within the trees along the footpath. External inspection of the trees, using visual methods with binoculars, to look for signs of bats was therefore undertaken. **No signs**

of bats (EPS) such as urine stains, entry or exit marks, bat droppings or discarded meals were found. As such Coyne Environmental Ltd conclude that in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations' (2018) this site has a **low potential as a bat roost** and that no further bat (EPS) surveys are required.

Birds. Birds have the possibility to nest within the trees on site. On inspection, **no nests or evidence of nest building was found**. while it is possible bird species could be nesting nearby, the removal of any trees or shrubs should have an inspection beforehand and be done under supervision, if done within the breeding season (March – August). No evidence of birds commuting in and out of the site was observed with a few far away calls from a couple of species such as European robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) and common pigeon (*Columba livia*) being heard. Due to the grass being frequently mowed, there is a **low - negative chance for any ground nesting species** being present. Using the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) guidelines this site has a **low avifauna value**.

GCN. There are no watercourses on site or nearby with a few scattered ponds outside of the main town. Due to urban infrastructure such as roads and buildings surrounding the site being barriers to entry, paired with the much more attractive habitat outside of the main urban area and no watercourses being present on site, a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) for Great Crested Newts (GCN) was not deemed necessary as the site is one of **negative value for GCN** and other amphibians such as toads and frogs. Inspection for amphibians such as toads and frogs weren't required due to the lack of refugia such as debris, wood, and other vegetation. CEL therefore concludes that this site has a **negative probability for GCN** due to limited ecological features and therefore no further surveys such as an HSI is required.

Mammals. The site has no hedges with limited vegetation. The surrounding area is mostly urban, with sealed surface roads, these act as a barrier to entry for most mammals such as badgers. There is therefore a **negative probability badgers** would typically dig setts here, no trails, passages (footprints), latrine areas (droppings), discarded meals etc. were found.

No evidence of footprints or droppings for rabbits and other mammals like red foxes were observed. While unlikely, they may pass through the site, the vegetation is too limited for any foraging and/or den making to take place. Most of the site is frequently mown amenity grass and no burrows or signs of burrowing were observed. These areas appear to have limited refuges for small mammals like hedgehogs with no signs of mole activity though the area.

Reptiles. The main opportunity for reptiles is within the surrounding area and not within the site due to the much more attractive vegetation such as longer grass or increased debris, outside the site. It would appear to be a site of **negative value for reptiles** like grass snakes and common lizards. Inspections for reptiles wasn't required due to the lack of refugia (stones, wood etc.). Coyne Environmental Ltd therefore

concludes that this site has a **negative probability for reptiles** due to limited ecological features and therefore no further surveys are required.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN (BNG)

The Environment Act 2021 has a mandatory require for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on most new development, of a minimum of 10%. Within this scheme it is proposed that the BNG will be undertaken as part of this study and included in the planning application. Suitable mitigation or enhancement required to meet the Statutory Net Gain could then be incorporated into an 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 habitat creation. Areas of wildflower meadow and rain gardens (damp areas) could form part of the proposals, along with SuDS design for drainage areas.

CONCLUSION

Coyne Environmental Ltd. has been instructed to carry out an ecological study of Bowers Place, Crawley Down, RH10 4HY, and a PEA survey has been carried out. The site holds little ecological value with limited vegetation. 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 but mitigations from the BNG should be included in design proposals. The site is within a semi-rural area where birds and bats may use the site for passing over and commuting but no wildlife was found on the survey.

Therefore, in my professional opinion I assess that the proposal of new parking space 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 the proposal can be determined by Mid Sussex District Council, on this basis.

REFERENCES

Habitat Map

Existing Site Plan

Proposed Site Plan

Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981)

UKHab Ltd. Vers. 2.0 (2018-2023)

The Wildlife trusts



Key:

Bowers Place - Crawley Down

Site Boundary

Play Ground - u1b - 823

Modified Grassland - g4 - 108

Verge - u1c - 801

Asphalt Footpath - u1b

Tree

Bowers Place Road - u1b - 800

Fence - u1e



0 15 30 m



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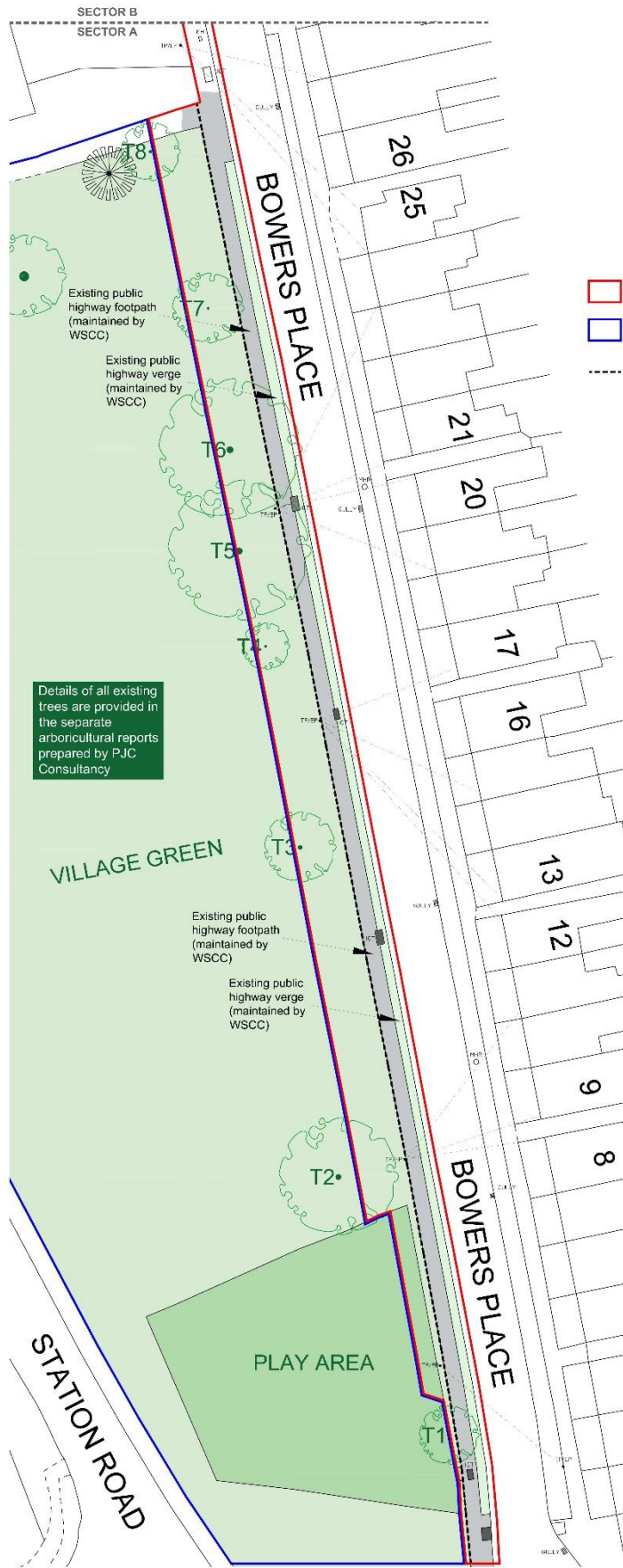
Bowers Place

Habitat Plan

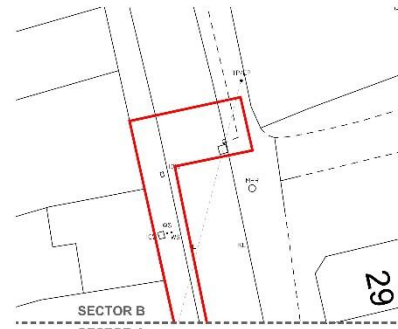
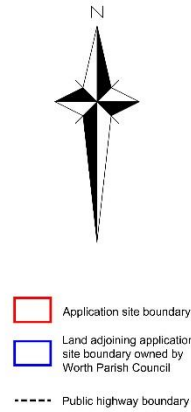
24143

03/09/2024

TITLE	SURVEY
Bowers Place	Habitat Plan
24143	
03/09/2024	
DATE	REVISION



EXISTING SITE PLAN - 1:200



SECTOR B - 1:200

Project:		
Additional Village Parking		
at		
Bowers Place, Crawley Down, West Sussex, RH10 4HY		
Drawing Title:		
Existing Site Plan and Location Plan		
Client:		
Worth Parish Council		
Prepared by:		
PBA Planning		
Mereworth Shipley Bridge Lane Copthorne West Sussex RH10 3JL Tel: (01342) 718827		
Date:	22/11/2023	Drawn:
		PB
		A
Drawn:	WPC23-01	Scale:
		1:200 and 1:1250 on A1

