

# 71 CARDIFF ROAD, NEWPORT

## Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

*February 2024*



Report Control Sheet

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

|                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Site Address</b>                                 | 71 Cardiff Road, Newport, NP20 2EN                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Grid Reference</b>                               | ST 30884 87050                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Approximate Site Area</b>                        | 0.126ha                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Current Site Use</b>                             | The site consists of vacant unused land with a former petrol station, carwash and associated building.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Designated Sites within Zone of Influence</b>    | <p>The site is located within a B-line zone.</p> <p>Designated sites were located within 5km of the site boundary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• River Usk (Lower Usk) Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) located approximately 1.1km east.</li> <li>• Gwent Levels SSSI – St Brides located approximately 1.9km south.</li> <li>• Usk Estuary SSSI, SAC and Special Protection Area (SPA) located approximately 3km south.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Notable Habitat Features</b>                     | There were no notable habitat features within the site boundary, a line of trees ran adjacent to the southern aspect of the site.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Notable Species Applicable to the Assessment</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bats (Potential roosting, foraging and commuting)</li> <li>• Breeding birds</li> <li>• Amphibians</li> <li>• Reptiles</li> <li>• Badger</li> <li>• Hedgehog</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Mitigation Recommendations</b>                   | Precautionary Working Methods have been recommended for bats, breeding birds, amphibians, reptiles, badger and hedgehog. A Construction Environmental Management Plan has been recommended.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Recommended Further Surveys and Assessment</b>   | No further surveys are deemed necessary.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Recommended Ecological Enhancements</b>          | The site is to be used as a petrol station with associated carwash, providing limited opportunities for ecological enhancements.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. SCOPE & PURPOSE

1.1.1. Collington Winter Environmental Ltd was commissioned by ADS Design to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) at 71 Cardiff Road, Newport, NP20 2EN. This report has been prepared to inform the planning application to create a newly developed petrol station, with new associated access roads, jet wash and shop.

1.1.2. The author of this report is Katie Brewer BSc (Hons) Ecological Project Manager at Collington Winter Environmental. This report has been overseen by Katie Bird MEnvSci, ACIEEM Associate Director at Collington Winter Environmental Ltd. Katie is highly experienced managing schemes and has produced many ecological reports to inform planning management plans.

### 1.2. LOCATION

1.2.1. Please refer to Figure 1.1 for the site location. The site is located within a predominantly residential area of within the southern area of the Newport City Centre.

*Figure 1.1 Site Location*



### 1.3. OBJECTIVES

1.3.1. The objectives of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal are as follows:

- Identify the major habitats present
- Ascertain the presence or potential presence of any legally protected or notable species or habitats
- Identify any mitigation or further survey required and opportunities for strategic wildlife enhancements and long-term management.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. DESK STUDY

2.1.1. An initial desk-based assessment of the site was undertaken to collate baseline data. The desk study included:

- Obtaining local records of notable species and locally designated sites within 1 km of the site from The South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBRC), obtained on the 01/02/2024.
- Review of Magic.gov.uk website for details of any designated sites, notable habitats and presence of European Protected Species Licences.
- Review of aerial and OS maps for habitat information, as well as determining locations of potential waterbodies to be considered in the assessment.
- Review of potential habitat links on and off site, to determine the potential zone of influence of the proposed development.
- On site consultation with the landowner which provided valuable information regarding historic land use and known species and habitats present within the site.

2.1.2. Please note, a lack of records for a species does not confirm absence. Instead, local surveys may not have been undertaken or records not submitted to SEWBRC.

### 2.2. VEGETATION AND HABITAT ASSESSMENT

2.2.1. An Ecological Appraisal of the site was undertaken by Emma Anderson MSc. The survey was undertaken on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024. The weather was moderate precipitation, (8/8 oktas), wind speed 2 and 11°C.

2.2.2. The walkover survey was undertaken broadly in line with standard UK HAB Methodology, Version 2 (2023). The assessment is undertaken with consideration of methodology as per "Preliminary Ecological Appraisal" (CIEEM, 2018).

2.2.3. A UK HAB Plan has been produced and is presented in the Appendix of this report. Standard methodology has been used, though adjustments have been made based on judgement to demonstrate habitats in a clearer manner, or where standard guidance does not fit the conditions found on site.

### 2.3. FAUNA ASSESSMENT

2.3.1. A search for signs of protected and notable species of fauna was undertaken during the site walkover. This included both field signs of species, as well as potential for species to be present based on habitat availability.

2.3.2. The searches broadly included the following:

- Assessment of waterbodies on site and within 250m of the site boundary, and terrestrial habitats for suitability to support notable amphibians.
- Searches for field signs of, and habitat suitability for bats.
- Suitability of habitats to support reptiles, and searches for incidental field signs.
- Searches for field signs of badger (*Meles meles*), including setts, mammal paths, snuffle holes, badger hair and latrines to indicate activity.
- Searches of watercourses for signs of water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*), white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) and otter (*Lutra lutra*), and assessment of habitat availability for the species.
- Assessment of the suitability of habitats to support notable birds and recording any field sightings of birds during the walkover.
- Assessment of the sites ability to support notable invertebrates and flora.
- Searches for non-native invasive species.

### 2.4. PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT AND BAT ACTIVITY ASSESSMENT

2.4.1. A Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) and Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) of the site was undertaken by Katie Brewer and Katie Bird who holds a Class 2 Bat Survey Licence from Natural England (Reference 2020-48950-CLS-CLS).

- 2.4.2. The survey was undertaken following guidance set out in Collins (2023). This includes undertaking a detailed internal and external inspection of any features to compile information on potential and actual bat entry/ exit points, roosting locations and evidence of bats.
- 2.4.3. The commuting and foraging assessment methodology is based on information contained within the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Collins 2023).
- 2.4.4. The GLTA and Potential flightpaths and foraging habitats were assessed as per categories listed in Table 4.1, 4.2 and 6.2, demonstrated below (Collins 2023).

**Table 4.1. Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement.**

| Potential suitability | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Potential flight-paths and foraging habitats                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| None                  | No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines, or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Negligible*           | No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Low                   | A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions <sup>2</sup> and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats <sup>3</sup> ). | Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.                                                                                                    |
| Moderate              | A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions <sup>2</sup> and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).                                                                 | Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| High                  | A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions <sup>2</sup> and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.                                                                                                       | Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts. |

Assessment Criteria for Bat Roosting Potential

**Table 4.2. Guidelines for assessing the suitability of trees on proposed development sites for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.**

| Suitability | Description                                                              |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NONE        | Either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any                  |
| FAR         | Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree |
| PRF         | A tree with at least one PRF present                                     |

**Table 6.2. Guidelines for categorising the potential suitability of PRFs on a proposed development site for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.**

| Suitability | Description                                                                                                                         |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PRF-I       | PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats. |
| PRF-M       | PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.                                                  |

## 2.5. SURVEY LIMITATIONS

- 2.5.1. This survey does not constitute a full botanical survey. Key species for each habitat type have been identified to give a broad representation of habitats present within the site.
- 2.5.2. It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no investigation can ensure the complete characterisation of the natural environment. This survey does not constitute a full botanical survey. Plant species may have been under-recorded, unidentifiable or not visible due to a number of factors including the time of year the survey was carried out.

- 2.5.3. February is a suboptimal time for carrying out a Habitat Surveys due to being outside of the optimal plant growing season. Therefore, it is likely that some plants are present on the site but were not evident at the time of the survey and were not recorded. This is not considered to be a significant constraint due to the size and location of the site and limited extent of the habitats; it is considered very unlikely that any rare or priority plant species were missed.
- 2.5.4. The protected species assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species occurring on the site. This is based on the suitability of the habitat, known distribution of the species in the local area (provided by data searches) and any direct evidence within the survey area.
- 2.5.5. The findings of this report represent the professional opinion of qualified ecologists and do not constitute professional legal advice. The client may wish to seek professional legal interpretation of the relevant wildlife legislation cited within this document.

## 2.6. PROPORTIONALITY

- 2.6.1. Collington Winter Environmental Ltd provide recommendations in line with the British Standard for Biodiversity (BS42020). Within BS42020, proportionality is encouraged for both ecologists and Local Authority Decision Makers and Consultees. Please refer to the below extract from Section 5.5 of BS42020.

*“The work involved in preparing and implementing all ecological surveys, impact assessments and measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development. Consequently, the decision-maker should only request supporting information and conservation measures that are relevant, necessary and material to the application in question. Similarly, the decision-maker and their consultees should ensure that any comments and advice made over an application are also proportionate.”*

*NOTE 1 This approach is enshrined in Government planning guidance, for example, paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework for England [41].*

*NOTE 2 The desk studies and field surveys undertaken to provide a preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) might in some cases be all that is necessary.”*

### 3 SURVEY RESULTS

#### 3.1. SITE CONTEXT

3.1.1. The site is located within a predominately residential area on the outskirts of Newport city centre. The site is located on the southern side of the B4237 separating the site from Belle Vue Park. The park consists of grassland habitats with trees and bodies of water, this area is expected to provide suitable habitats for local fauna and flora populations. A railway line runs adjacent to the southern aspect of the site with associated lines of trees and connecting habitats. This feature is anticipated to provide commuting and foraging features for local fauna populations including bat and reptile populations.

#### 3.2. DESIGNATED SITES

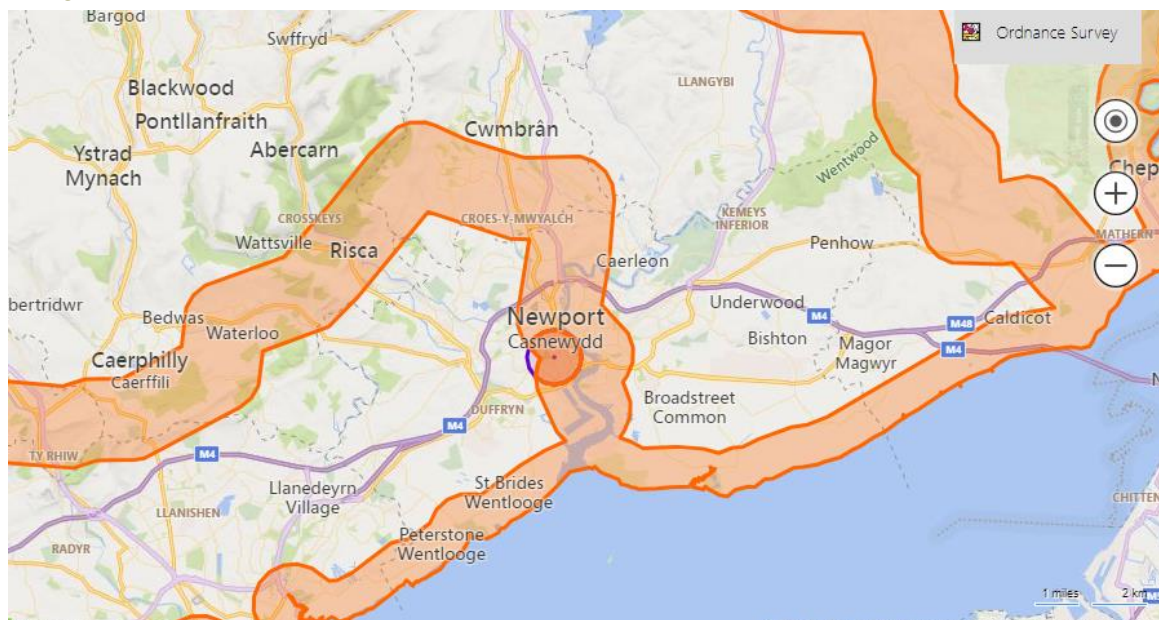
3.2.1. The following Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) were located within 5km of the site boundary based on consultation with Natural Resources Wales:

- River Usk (Lower Usk) SSSI and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) located approximately 1.1km east from the site boundary. This site acts as an important wildlife corridor of for an essential migration route and key breeding area for many nationally and internationally important species. The Usk is of special interest as a fine example of a river running over sandstones and for its associated plant and animal communities. The River Usk is one of the largest rivers in Wales. From its source to its confluence, the main channel is over 120 kilometres long, and drains a catchment of 1358 km<sup>2</sup>. The main plant communities present are those that are characteristic of rivers running over hard and soft sandstones with changing base status merging into brackish waters in its lowest reaches. The invertebrate fauna is characteristic of a large lowland river. Of special interest are the craneflies associated with silty river margins in the vicinity of Newbridge on Usk. The fish fauna is of international significance including several rare and scarce species and there is an expanding population of otters (*Lutra lutra*). The frequent tree cover provides valuable feeding and roosting habitats for several bat species including Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*). It supports a wide range of riverside breeding birds such as sand martin (*Riparia riparia*) and kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) nesting in eroding earth cliffs. Yellow wagtail (*Motacilla flava*), grey wagtail (*M. cinerea*) and dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*) occur with increasing frequency above the tidal limit at Newbridge. In addition marsh warbler (*Acrocephalus palustris*) breeds in riparian habitat along the river banks. The cut-off meander at Llanfihangel Gobion is an important area for wintering and passage migrants. The rare mayfly (*Potamanthus luteus*) can be found in the river and there are also localised populations of the Atlantic stream crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*), an endangered species in Europe.
- Gwent Levels SSSI – St Brides located approximately 1.9km south from the site boundary. The Gwent Levels constitute the lowlands between Cardiff and Chepstow and are drained by an ordered network of drainage ditches. They are an example of one of the most extensive areas of reclaimed wet pasture in Great Britain. The Gwent Levels reens are rich in plant species and communities, many of which are rare or absent in other Levels systems. The regular maintenance of some reens provides conditions for submerged species such as hairlike pondweed (*Potamogeton trichoides*) and open water emergents such as arrowhead (*Sagittaria sagittifolia*) an opportunity to flourish. The aquatic invertebrate fauna is very diverse and the Gwent Levels compares well with similar areas in Britain. Many nationally rare or notable species are present such as *Haliphus mucronatus* and *Hydrophilus piceus*. The St Brides area also supports rich invertebrate communities with a number of nationally notable and notable marshland species, e.g. the true fly (*Chrysogaster macquarti*) and the beetle (*Hydaticus transversalis*). It is the only area on the Gwent Levels where the rare fly (*Stenomicrocogani*) has been recorded.
- Usk Estuary SSSI, SAC and Special Protection Area (SPA) located approximately 3km south from the site boundary. The Severn Estuary lies on the southwest coast of Britain at the mouth of four major rivers (the Severn, Wye, Usk and Avon) and many lesser rivers. The immense tidal range (the second highest in the world) and classic funnel shape make the Severn Estuary unique in Britain and very rare worldwide. The estuarine fauna includes: internationally important populations of waterfowl; invertebrate populations of considerable interest; and large populations of migratory fish, including the nationally rare and endangered Allis Shad (*Alosa alosa*). Seven species of migratory fish move through the Estuary between the sea and rivers. There are particularly large numbers of Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*) and Common Eel (*Anguilla anguilla*). The SSSI is of international importance for wintering and passage wading birds, with total winter populations averaging about 44,000 birds. Numbers can be considerably higher during severe winters when owing to its mild climate, the Severn supports wader populations that move in from the colder coasts of Britain. The SSSI holds most of the estuary's internationally important Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) and Redshank (*Tringa tetanus*) populations, and most of its nationally important Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) and Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) populations. The SSSI is internationally important for Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) and supports about 7.5% of the British wintering population of this species. The estuary as a whole supports about 10.5% of the British wintering population and is the single most important wintering ground of Dunlin in Britain.

3.2.2. Natural Resources Wales does not provide the impact risk zone of the designated sites and it is unknown whether the site falls within these risk zones.

3.2.3. The data search returned records that the site is located within a B-line Zone. This zone identifies opportunities for restoring and connecting habitats and existing wildlife areas to create wildflower-rich networks throughout Wales (See Figure 3.1 for the B-line Zone)

*Figure 3.1 B-line Zone*



### 3.3. PRIORITY HABITATS

3.3.1. The data search returned records of Costal Saltmarsh located approximately 1km south from the site and runs along the River Usk (See Figure 3.2 for the Costal Saltmarsh location).

*Figure 3.2 B-line Zone*



### 3.4. HABITATS

- 3.4.1. Please refer to Drawing 20-1483 – 001 for the UK HAB Map for the site. Photographs of the site are presented in the Appendix.

#### VACANT OR DERELICT LAND

- 3.4.2. An area of derelict land was located on the eastern aspect of the site. It is anticipated that this was not used as a part of the historic petrol and any previous habitats within this area had been cleared. Species identified include orchard grass (*Dactylis glomerata*), ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), false mayweed (*Tripleurospermum inodorum*), bristly ox-tongue (*Helminthotheca echinoides*), common nipplewort (*Lapsana communis*), evening primrose (*Oenothera sp.*) and hairy bittercress (*Cardamine hirsuta*).
- 3.4.3. A soil mound was located within this area which consisted of the same species however the mound was more densely vegetated than the surrounding area.

#### DEVELOPED LAND; SEALED SURFACE

- 3.4.4. Much of the site comprised of developed land that was previously associated with the petrol station and car wash, the site has been left abandoned and minimal vegetation was located within any small gaps. Species identified within these areas included dandelion (*Taraxacum agg.*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus agg.*), common sowthistle (*Sonchus sp.*), herb robert (*Geranium robertianum*), forget-me-nots (*Myosotis sp.*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), bittercress (*Cardamine sp.*), common ivy (*Hedera helix*), saxifrage (*Saxifraga sp.*) and fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*).
- 3.4.5. A total of three building was also located on site which includes the historic petrol station with the associated shop and car wash area. All buildings were found to be vacant during the survey.

### 3.4. SPECIES

#### FLORA

- 3.5.1. The data search returned records of notable vascular plant species within 1km of the site. Species includes (not limited to) bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), lesser sea-spurrey (*Spergularia marina*), grey field-speedwell (*Veronica polita*) and bee orchid (*Ophrys apifera*).
- 3.5.2. The site consisted of limited florist diversity with common and widespread flora species recorded within the vacant land and small gaps within the developed land. The habitats onsite do not support any notable flora and provides limited opportunities for them to flourish. It is noted that the vacant land was cleared of flora and specimens may have been missed due to the loss of habitat.

#### INVERTEBRATES

- 3.5.3. The data search returned records of the notable invertebrates within 1km of the site boundary, species includes rustic (*Hoplodrina blanda*), buff ermine (*Spilosoma lutea*), dark brocade (*Mniotype adusta*), cinnabar (*Tyria jacobaeae*), ghost moth (*Hepialus humuli*), grayling (*Hipparchia semele*), garden tiger (*Arctia caja*) and buff ermine (*Spilosoma lutea*).
- 3.5.4. The site provides some opportunities for invertebrates as some flora is present onsite which could provide suitable resources for local invertebrate populations. The site is connected to the railways line along and associated line of trees along the southern aspect. This is likely to support local populations as it will provide foraging and commuting opportunities.
- 3.5.5. Overall, Invertebrates are likely to be present within the site and the surrounding habitats; however, due to the small scale of the site it is not considered to be of significance.

#### AMPHIBIANS

- 3.5.6. The data search returned no records of amphibians within 1km of the site boundary.

- 3.5.7. One pond was identified within 250m of the site boundary and is located in Belle Vue Park, approximately 130m northwest from the site boundary (Refer to Figure 3.3 for the pond location). It is anticipated that this may provide suitable foraging resources, cover and breeding habitats for common amphibians and potentially great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*). The pond is disconnected from the site by the B4237 and it is understood that a large brick wall runs along the southern aspect of Belle Vue Park. As such, it is considered that these features create a significant dispersal barrier, should great crested newts be present within the pond. This pond was discounted from the assessment and great crested newts are not considered further within the assessment.
- 3.5.8. As great crested newts' upper dispersal limit is generally considered to be up to 250 m from a waterbody (though occurrence of greater distances does exist), ponds beyond this distance were not assessed due to limited connectivity (English Nature, 2001).

Figure 3.3 Pond within 250m



- 3.5.9. The site did not include any notable habitat features that could support amphibians. A railway track runs adjacent to the southern aspect of the site with associated lines of trees, this connects to further habitats. These adjacent features are anticipated to provide commuting and foraging features for local amphibian populations and provides access into the site.
- 3.5.10. Amphibians are not anticipated to utilise the site due to the limited features however, they could be present in small numbers.

## REPTILES

- 3.5.11. The data search returned records of reptiles within 1km of the site boundary. Species included slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*) and common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*).
- 3.5.12. The site provides limited value for local reptile populations as the habitats on site consist of vacant land with associated developed land and buildings. The habitats on site lack the structure and habitat quality to support reptile species as it does not provide foraging opportunities or suitable cover.
- 3.5.13. The adjacent railway track and trees are anticipated to provide commuting and foraging opportunities, the associated habitats are likely to create cover for reptiles. These adjacent habitats provide connectivity into the site. It is considered that the vacant and developed land on site could create opportunities for basking reptiles but

not considered to be of significant value.

- 3.5.14. Overall, it is anticipated that basking reptiles could be present onsite however due to the limited habitat features they are not expected to be present in significant numbers.

### BIRDS

- 3.5.15. The data search returned records of birds within 1km of the site boundary. Species included (not limited to) redwing (*Turdus iliacus*), herring gull (*Larus argentatus*), black redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*), song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*), tree pipit (*Anthus trivialis*), kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*), barn owl (*Tyto alba*), ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*), black-headed gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*), red kite (*Milvus milvus*), marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*), kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*) and dunnock (*Prunella modularis*).
- 3.5.16. There were no habitats on site that could support breeding birds due to comprising vacant land and developed land. A line of trees runs adjacent to the southern aspect of the site, these trees and connecting habitats are anticipated to support local breeding bird populations.
- 3.5.17. There was one main building (B3) present onsite which was found to be in a state of despair as the roof had fallen through and there were broken windows which provided internal access into the building. The building was found to be affected by rainfall due to the large gaps in the roof allowing for flooding. However, there were some areas which were covered and could be used by nesting birds considering the adjacent habitats to the site (Please refer to the Table 3.1 for further details of the building). There were no further nesting opportunities identified.
- 3.5.18. Overall, a total of one building provided opportunities for nesting birds and is not considered to be of significant value for breeding birds.

### BATS

- 3.5.19. The data search returned records of bats within 1km of the site boundary. Species includes unidentified myotis (*Myotis sp.*), whiskered myotis (*Myotis mystacinus*), noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), nathusius's pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*), common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*).
- 3.5.20. The adjacent railway track is anticipated to provide a linear commuting feature for bats and Belle Vue Park is also anticipated to support bat populations. These habitats are likely to attract bats into the local area. The vacant land onsite could provide foraging opportunities for bat populations as the flora is anticipated to attract invertebrate prey into the site.
- 3.5.21. There was one canopy (B1), one carwash (B2) and one main building (B3) located within the site as a part of the historic station, these were subject to a PRA and are detailed in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 PRA Summary

| Building Ref | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Photograph                                                                           |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Canopy (B1)  | <p>This consisted of a single layer canopy which was made up of a corrugated metal roof with supporting metal beams. These features were open to external weather conditions and are anticipated to rise and fall in extreme temperatures. There were no PRF's identified within the canopy.</p> <p><b>The canopy was assessed as providing None bat roosting potential.</b></p> |  |

|                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Historic Carwash (B2)</p>                | <p>It was made up of single storey brickwork with glass located along the side, the ends wall consisted of breezeblock and there were no gaps identified. All brickwork was found to be in good condition with no gaps or crevices identified that could support a roosting bat. Corrugated plastic sheets ran across the top of the walls, these did not provide access into the internal aspect of the building. There were small gaps located within the plastic sheets which led to the brick wall behind. These were identified as a sub-optimal PRF. The roof was flat which provided limited view to the top of the building. The lip of the roof overlapped the corrugated plastic sheets where small gaps were identified these were identified as a PRF.</p> <p>The plastic sheets were of limited value for bats as they are expected to be impacted by external weather conditions and temperatures. These were identified as a PRF and provides sub-optimal roosting opportunities for bats.</p> <p><b>The carwash was assessed as providing Low bat roosting potential.</b></p> |      |
| <p>Main Building (B3)</p>                   | <p>The building was found to be in a state of despair with holes identified along the roof and smashed windows, these provided access points into the building. The majority of the roof was made up of plywood and was found to be fallen through and crumbling during the survey. There were leaks along the roof due to the rainfall, the internal aspect of the building was impacted from external weather conditions, creating limited opportunities for bats. Most of the brickwork found to be in good condition however one area was found to be lifted where the roof had collapsed, the lifted bricks created small gaps and were identified as a PRF. There were soffit boards which ran over the broken windows with small gaps located along the top, these were also identified as a PRF.</p> <p><b>The main building was assessed as providing Low bat roosting potential.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                            |   |
| <p>Brick Wall (under private ownership)</p> | <p>A brick wall was located the northern aspect of the site, this was found to be in moderate condition with gaps within the mortar identified. The gaps did not lead into a cavity within the brickwork and there were no further features identified. These gaps were identified as a sub-optimal feature for roosting bats due to the shallow depth of crevices are anticipated to provide limited protection from external weather conditions. It is understood that there are no works to be taken place of the wall as this is under private ownership of an adjacent dwelling. Therefore, there are no works to be undertaken on the wall. If works are to be taken place on the wall, the</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                      |

|  |                                                                           |  |
|--|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|  | precautionary working methods stated in point 4.3.12. should be followed. |  |
|--|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

- 3.5.22. Overall, the habitats on site provide some features to support local bats and two buildings within the site provide some bat roosting potential. It is anticipated that bats could be present onsite.

#### BADGER

- 3.5.23. There were no records of badger (*Meles meles*) returned within 1km of the site boundary.
- 3.5.24. There were no signs of badger presence recorded within the site and the habitats on site provide limited opportunities to support badger populations. It is anticipated that badger will be present within the connecting habitats of the site which includes the lines of trees and railway track.
- 3.5.25. Overall, badgers are anticipated to be present within the local area however they are deemed unlikely to be present onsite.

#### OTHER TERRESTRIAL MAMMALS

- 3.5.26. The data search returned records of west European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) within 1km of the site boundary. The site provides limited value for hedgehog however, the adjacent habitat is anticipated to support local populations. It is anticipated that hedgehog will be present within the surrounding area and individuals could be present onsite.
- 3.5.27. There were no records of brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*) recorded within 1km of the site boundary based on the data search. The site does not provide any value for brown hare populations due to the lack of suitable habitat as there are no features that could support the species.

#### NON-NATIVE INVASIVE SPECIES

- 3.5.28. The data search returned records of non-native species within 1km of the site. Species includes japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Himalayan honeysuckle (*Leycesteria formosa*) and Canadian goose (*Branta canadensis*).
- 3.5.29. No non-native invasive species were observed during the survey. However, February is a sub-optimal period for identification, and it is possible specimens may have been missed. Due to the habitats present onsite it is considered unlikely that non-native species will be present due to the limited opportunities.

#### SPECIES DISCOUNTED FROM ASSESSMENT

- 3.5.30. Water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*), otter (*Lutra lutra*), beaver (*Castor fiber*) and white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) have been discounted from assessment as no aquatic habitats are located on site or within proximity. The habitats present on site do not provide suitability to support these populations and therefore they have been discounted from the assessment.
- 3.5.31. Hazel Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) are known to occur in the Cardiff area and it is anticipated that they could be present within the local area. However, the site does not provide any suitability for hazel dormice as there is no woodland or scrub present within the site. As such, the species are reasonably discounted from the site.
- 3.5.32. Red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) has been discounted from the assessment. Red squirrel populations are limited to small areas of Wales and are not known to be within the area, with no previous records returned in the data search. It is anticipated that grey squirrels will be present within the Newport areas, this species will displace red squirrel through competition as well as cause increase red squirrel mortality through the spread of squirrel pox (The Mammal Society, 2020).

## 4 MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1. DESIGNATED SITES

- 4.1.1. Coastal Salt Marsh Priority Habitat is located approximately 1km from the site and is located in association with the River Usk SSSI. The proposed development includes the reinstatement of the site's historic use. Due to the small scale of the development and the anthropogenic barriers from the designated site and priority habitat, the proposed development is not anticipated to impact these designated areas.
- 4.1.2. The site is located within a B-line zone based on the results of the obtained data search. It is anticipated that this is in reference to the surrounding habitats of the site which is of value for local fauna and flora populations such as the railway line and the River Usk SSSI. The site provides limited opportunities for local species. It is understood that the site was previously used as a petrol station and associated car wash and the proposed development includes the reinstatement of this, as such the site is to be used for the same purposes. Therefore, it is not considered that there are any significant impacts on local designated sites.
- 4.1.3. The habitats which run adjacent to the southern aspect of the site are considered to be of value for local flora and fauna populations and it is understood that the site is located within the B-line zone. Therefore, it is recommended that a detailed Construction and Environment Management Plan (CEMP) specific to the proposed development is created (and adhered to throughout the course of construction works) to avoid, minimise and mitigate for negative impacts resulting from construction practices on all habitats surrounding the site.
- 4.1.4. This plan will detail measures to avoid, minimise or mitigate any potential negative effects caused by construction practices on the environment on and surrounding the site including:
- The control of run-off from areas of arisings to prevent any pollutants/contaminants entering nearby waterbodies.
  - Appropriate measures to suppress dust during hot, dry and/or windy conditions.
  - Excavations should be sealed overnight or should have at least one shallow-sloping side to allow any animals that may fall in to escape.
  - An ecologist should be contacted for advice should any protected species be discovered during construction.

### 4.2. HABITATS

#### *ADJACENT LINE OF TREES*

- 4.3.1. Generally, the protection measure of the adjacent line of trees will be through the use of temporary protective demarcation fencing to protect the adjacent habitats. The fencing must remain in position until all works have been completed to ensure that it is provided during the construction phase.
- 4.3.2. The fencing will be in accordance with BS 5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction: Recommendations.

### 4.3. SPECIES

#### *AMPHIBIANS*

- 4.3.3. It is recommended that consideration of amphibian presence during habitat removal is considered. Any debris is to be cleared by hand, and any common amphibians located moved carefully, by hand, to outside of the impacted area. In the unlikely event that a great crested newt is identified, all works should cease. Contractors are not to handle great crested newts unless informed to do so by a suitably qualified ecologist.

#### *REPTILES*

- 4.3.4. It is anticipated that reptile populations could be present within the adjacent habitats of the site. The site provides opportunities for basking reptiles, this leaves a possibility that reptiles could occur onsite.
- 4.3.5. It is recommended that a consideration of reptile presence during habitat removal is considered. Any debris is to be cleared by hand, if any reptile species are identified then a suitably qualified ecologist should be contacted and all works should halt. Contractors are not to handle reptiles unless informed to do so by a suitably qualified

ecologist.

## BREEDING BIRDS

4.3.6. Any works on the main building (B3) should be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season (March to September, inclusive). If this is not possible, a suitably qualified ecologist should undertake a nesting bird check no more than 48 hours prior to removal. If nesting activity is observed, the nest(s) should be left in situ until the young have fledged. A suitable buffer will be maintained and determined by the ecologist.

## BATS

4.3.7. The historic carwash (B2) and the main building (B3) on site was assessed as providing **low bat roosting potential** due to the sub-optimal features on site. This is defined as:

*“A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions, and suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by a larger number of bats” (Collins, 2023).*

4.3.8. As both of these buildings have sub-optimal features for local bats it isn't possible to confirm the absence of roosting bats with full confidence and the causation of an offence to be committed by the way of disturbance or damage to bats or their roosts under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (As Amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (As amended).

4.3.9. The Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Reason and Wray, 2023) details that a non-licensable approach to works can be adopted in cases of buildings assessed as maximum 'low potential' with no evidence of use, but where the presence of a bat (or very low numbers of bats) cannot be ruled out. As such, it is considered that these measures can be adopted for this development.

4.3.10. A non-licensable approach includes the implementation of Precautionary Working Methods (PWM's) as detailed below:

- All contractors working on the site will be briefed with a Toolbox Talk by the licenced ecologist, on the legal protection afforded to bats and their roosts, and on how to proceed if a bat is discovered during the course of the works as well as background on why bats are legally protected.
- The licenced ecologist will attend site on the day of the scheduled works to undertake a search for bats in relation to the PRFs identified during the PRA (2024) prior to the works commencing. This includes the inspection of the PRF's identified in B2 and B3 (See table 3.1.).
- If any bats and/or field signs of roosting bats are located under the external features such as the corrugated plastic, the stated features will be carefully put back in place, all works will cease.
- If there are signs of a bat roost present onsite or a bat is identified onsite, then a Bat European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) will be required from Natural England before any works can continue to the buildings. This licence can only be applied for once planning consent has been given and a required bat emergence survey has been undertaken.
- Soft stripping of external features should not be undertaken in cold or rainy conditions or in high winds, this includes autumn and winter months as bats will be hibernating at this time.
- Although deemed highly unlikely, if a bat was found and needed to be rescued then this will be done by the licenced bat ecologist only always following best practise guidelines by Natural England. The ecologist will have equipment on them so a bat can be rescued and retained temporarily in a draw bag before releasing or if it needs to be assessed by a registered bat carer.

4.3.11. Once the selected features have been removed under supervision, works can proceed in the absence of the licenced ecologist, at their discretion. If a bat is discovered at any unsupervised time, work must cease immediately, and a licenced bat handler must be called for advice. Builders and contractors are explicitly forbidden from handling bats except in the case of finding a trapped or injured bat. In which case the bat may be moved into a safe and secure place (e.g. a box) and the licenced ecologist must be contacted immediately.

4.3.12. The habitats of highest potential value for commuting and foraging bats include the line of trees and railway line which runs adjacent to the southern aspect of the site. This habitat is anticipated to support commuting,

foraging and potentially roosting bat populations. These habitats will not be impacted by the development, as such no habitat loss for foraging and commuting bats will incur.

- 4.3.13. Slow-flying species such as brown long-eared, which are anticipated to be in the local area, are sensitive to lighting and may be impacted by the proposed development, should no mitigation for lighting be considered.
- 4.3.14. Any proposed lighting/existing lighting should follow the guidance outlined in the Institute for Lighting Engineers document “Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Lighting” (2005) and BCT’s “Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night” (2023).
- 4.3.15. An External Lighting Scheme had not been produced on the writing of this report. As such, the following recommendations are to be considered within the scheme during its condition, to minimise impacts of lighting. The recommendations are as follows:
- Keep site lighting to minimum levels.
  - Luminaries should lack UV elements and preferably LED lighting with a warm white light should be used over cool white light (ideally <2700Kelvin).
  - Lighting should feature peak wavelengths greater than 550nm.
  - Light placement should be downward facing to prevent excess horizontal or vertical light spill.
  - The use of integrated fittings such as cowls, shields, louvres and hoods, that effectively contain light spill from unintended areas.
  - The use of hard landscaping features to block light and create dark corridors.
  - Avoid illuminating habitats of value (adjacent line of trees).
  - Use of timed security lights should be set on motion-sensors and using short, 1-minute timers, to minimise light use.
  - Column heights of lighting can be considered to minimise light spill.

#### BADGERS

- 4.3.16. No badger setts were identified during the survey; however, they are likely present within the local area. The following Precautionary Working Methods will be adhered to during the construction phase to ensure that no badgers are impacted by the proposed development (Badger Trust, 2023):
- A pre-commencement of work badger survey should be conducted by a suitably qualified ecologist to ensure the current badger situation is known and that the recommendations are correct.
  - All site personnel should be fully briefed concerning the method statement, the presence of badgers, the mitigation measures to be followed, the relevant legislation, the penalties imposed and who to contact should they need to.
  - Ensure excavations or trenches left overnight are covered or have an escape route such as a shallow gradient at one or both ends.
  - Ensure excavations or trenches are inspected each morning and evening to ensure no badgers have become trapped.
  - Open pipework with a diameter of more than 120mm should be properly covered or capped at the end of the working day to prevent badgers from entering and becoming trapped.
  - During the work, the storage of any chemicals should be contained in such a way that they cannot be accessed or knocked over by any roaming badgers.
  - The storage of topsoil or other “soft” building materials within the site should be given careful consideration. Badgers will readily adopt such mounds and dig setts which would then be afforded the same protection as established setts. To avoid the adoption of such mounds, they should be subject to daily inspections before work commences or alternative measures put in place, such as being fenced off for higher-risk areas.
  - Litter, tools and potentially dangerous materials on site should be cleared at the end of the working day. Care should be taken that there are no sharp metal objects or pointed protrusions on the ground which could seriously injure a badger due to their poor eyesight.
  - Ensure no dogs are brought to the work site.
  - Security lighting should be kept to a minimum and away from setts to avoid disturbance to any badgers on site.
  - Fires should be lit only in secure compounds away from areas of badger activity and should be fully extinguished at the end of the working day.
  - Badger paths must not be blocked to ensure access to foraging areas is maintained.
- 4.3.17. Adherence to these measures should be confirmed to planners at regular intervals by the project ecologist.

### *TERRESTRIAL MAMMALS*

- 4.3.18. European Hedgehog are anticipated to be present within the surrounding areas of the site and are a Species of Principal Importance. During habitat management, any areas of dense vegetation should first be carefully hand searched to check for the species. If identified during the construction phase, should be relocated carefully by hand to a location away from the working area. If any injured either species are located they should be taken to a local vets.

## **5 CONCLUSION**

### **5.1. FURTHER SURVEYS**

5.1.1. No further surveys are deemed necessary to inform the proposed planning application, should the following mitigation measures be completed.

### **5.2. CONCLUSION**

5.2.1. The site was found to provide limited features to support local fauna and flora populations. It is understood that the habitats within the surrounding area of the site such as Belle Vue Park and the adjacent railway track is likely to support local biodiversity. Further recommendations (RAM's and PWM's) have been included for species that could potentially be present within the site or the surrounding area. Species include bats, birds, amphibians, reptiles, badger and terrestrial mammals.

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| Description                                            | Photographs                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vacant / Derelict Land with mound.                     |     |
| Developed land with some vegetation within the cracks. |    |
| Adjacent railway line with associated trees.           |  |

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