

VICTORIA AVENUE EAST, MANCHESTER

Preliminary Roost Assessment and Ecological Appraisal Report

August 2020



Report Control Sheet

Project Name: Victoria Avenue East, Manchester
Project Reference: CW20-030
Report Title: Preliminary Roost Assessment and Ecological Appraisal
Report Reference: CW20-030 RPT 001
Printing Instructions: Print at A4 Portrait, Double Sided.

<i>Rev</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Prepared</i>	<i>Reviewed</i>	<i>Approved</i>
/	12/08/2020	Draft report sent to Client for comment.	OC	JW	OC

Collington Winter Environmental Ltd disclaims any responsibility to Aldi Stores Ltd and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of this report. This report has been prepared with reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with Aldi Stores Ltd and according to the proposed plans supplied by the client or the client's agent upon commencement of the project.

The contents of this report are valid at the time of writing. As the ecological value of a site is constantly evolving and changing, if more than twelve months have elapsed since the date of this report, further advice must be taken before reliance upon on the contents. Notwithstanding any provision of the Collington Winter Environmental Ltd Terms & Conditions, Collington Winter Environmental Ltd shall not be liable for any losses (howsoever incurred) arising as a result of reliance by the client or any third party on this report more than twelve months after the report date.

This report is confidential to Aldi Stores Ltd and Collington Winter Environmental Ltd accepts no responsibility of whatsoever nature to third parties to whom this report or any part thereof is made known. Any such party relies upon the report at their own risk.

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	6
1.0	SCOPE & PURPOSE.....	6
1.2.	LOCATION.....	6
1.3.	OBJECTIVES.....	7
1.4.	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.....	7
2	METHODOLOGY	8
2.1.	DESK STUDY	8
2.2.	VEGETATION AND HABITAT ASSESSMENT	8
2.3.	PROTECTED AND NOTABLE SPECIES ASSESSMENT	8
2.4.	PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT.....	8
2.5.	SURVEY LIMITATIONS	9
3	SURVEY RESULTS.....	10
3.1.	SITE CONTEXT.....	10
3.2.	DESIGNATED SITES	10
3.3.	HABITATS.....	10
3.4.	SPECIES	14
	<i>BIRDS</i>	14
	<i>BATS</i>	14
4	RECOMMENDATIONS AND MITIGATION	20
4.1.	HABITATS.....	20
4.2.	DESIGNATED SITES	20
4.3.	SPECIES	20
	<i>BIRDS</i>	20
	<i>BATS</i>	20
5.1.	WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENTS.....	21
5	BIBLIOGRAPHY	22

1 INTRODUCTION

1.0 SCOPE & PURPOSE

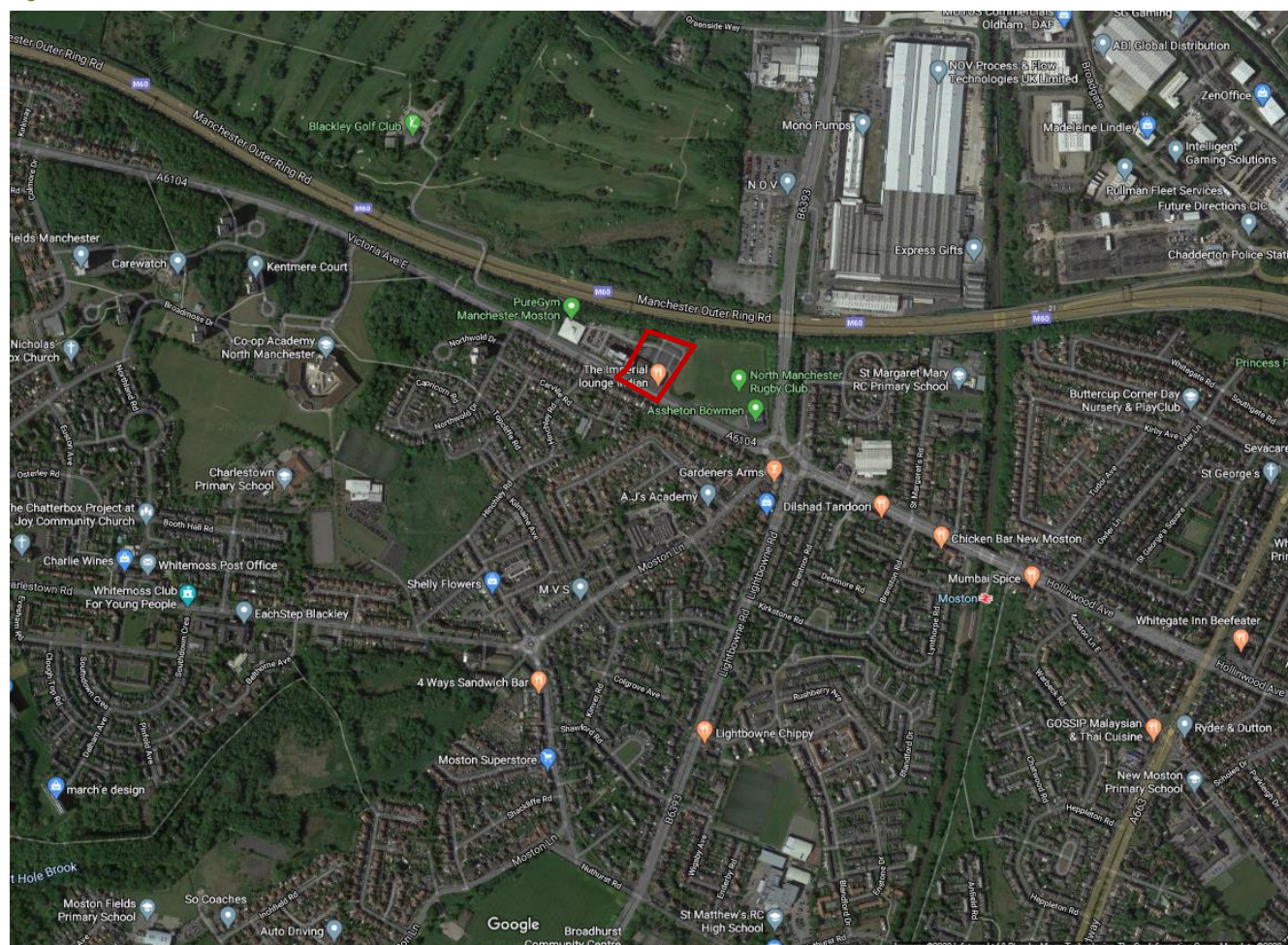
1.1.1. Collington Winter Environmental Ltd was commissioned by Aldi Stores Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) and Ecological Assessment of the site at Victoria Avenue East, Manchester. This report has been produced to inform a planning application at the site.

1.1.2. The author of this report is Olivia Collington BSc (Hons), ACIEEM, MEnvSc, CEnv, Director and Principal Ecologist at Collington Winter Environmental Ltd. Olivia is highly experienced managing schemes and has produced many ecological reports to inform planning permission. Olivia holds a Class 1 Natural England Bat Licence and is experienced assessing sites for bat roosting potential.

1.2. LOCATION

1.2.1. Please refer to Figure 1.1 for the site location. The site is located to the north west of Moston and is accessed from Victoria Avenue East. The Manchester Outer Ring Road (M60) is located adjacent north of the site, and Pure Gym Moston is located adjacent west.

Figure 1.1 Site Location



1.3. OBJECTIVES

1.3.1. The objectives of the 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 required and opportunities for strategic wildlife enhancements

1.3.2. The objectives of the Preliminary Roost Assessment are as follows:

- Identify any areas of bat roosting potential within the building
- Assess the value of the building for roosting bats
- Search for signs of bats
- Provide recommendations on any further surveys or mitigation required for bats

1.4. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

1.4.1. The proposed development includes the construction of a new Aldi store within the site. At the time of writing detailed development proposals were not available, however it is assumed development will result in the demolition of the existing building on site.

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:

- 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.

2.1.2. Records were not obtained from the local environmental records centre due to the small scale of development and the habitats present within the site. It was assessed that obtaining records would not provide any additional information that could not have been gained from review of the above sources.

2.2. VEGETATION AND HABITAT ASSESSMENT

2.2.1. An Ecological Appraisal of the site was undertaken by Olivia Collington BSc (Hons), ACIEEM, MEnvSc, CEnv, Director and Principal Ecologist at Collington Winter Environmental. The survey was undertaken on 11th August 2020. Weather conditions were dry, warm and sunny with a light wind.

2.2.2. The walkover survey was undertaken broadly in line with standard methodology as detailed in “JNCC Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey” (2010). The assessment follows methodology as per “Preliminary Ecological Appraisal” (CIEEM, 2018).

2.2.3. A Phase 1 Habitat Plan has been produced and is presented in the Appendix of this report. The mapping is based on the “JNCC Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey” (2010), 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. PROTECTED AND NOTABLE SPECIES 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 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, including setts, mammal paths, snuffle holes, badger hair and latrines to indicate activity.
- Searches of watercourses for signs of water vole and otter, and assessment of habitat availability for the species.
- Assessment of the suitability of the site to support notable bird species and recording any field sightings of birds during the walkover.
- Assessment of the sites ability to support notable invertebrates.
- Searches for non-native invasive species.

2.4. PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

2.4.1. A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of the site was undertaken by Olivia Collington on 11th August 2020. Olivia holds a Class 1 Natural England Bat Licence (Reference 2020-46960-CLS-CLS).

2.4.2. The survey was undertaken following guidance set out in Collins (2016). 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 building was assessed as per categories listed in Table 4.1 Collins (2016) and reproduced in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 Assessment Criteria for Bat Roosting Potential

Bat Roosting Potential	Description
Negligible	Negligible features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/ or suitable surrounding habitats to be used on a regular basis by larger numbers of bats.
Moderate	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats, but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
High	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and for longer periods of time.

2.4.4. Any loft features were accessed by ladders where safe and appropriate. Lofts would only be entered where confidence can be given as to structural security. Where this is unknown, an assessment would be made from the loft hatch.

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. During the PRA, the loft hatches could be accessed however they were too high to enter. Therefore, an assessment was made by looking up through the loft hatch and extending the camera up to take pictures.

2.5.3. The upper storey of B1 could not be accessed during the survey and therefore a precautionary assessment has been made.

3 SURVEY RESULTS

3.1. SITE CONTEXT

- 3.1.1. The site is located to the north of Moston and to the immediate south of the M60 motorway. The surrounding area is predominantly residential to the south east and west, and commercial/ industrial to the north.
- 3.1.2. The M60 motorway is treelined and creates a significant linear feature within the wider landscape which could be used by a range of wildlife such as birds, bats and terrestrial mammals for commuting.
- 3.1.3. To the north of the M60, Blackley Golf Club is present which comprises grassland and woodland habitats which are anticipated to be of value to local wildlife.
- 3.1.4. Other features of potential value for wildlife in the local area include Boggart Hole Clough located approximately 1.2 km south west of the site boundary. This comprises grassland, waterbodies and woodland habitats.

3.2. DESIGNATED SITES

- 3.2.1. The site is located within the Impact Risk Zone of Rochdale Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The canal is located approximately 1.1 km north east of the site at its closest point and extends north to south through the landscape. The canal contains important habitats for submerged aquatic plants and emergent vegetation including nationally scarce SAC species floating water plantain.
- 3.2.2. Magic.gov.uk lists that all planning applications should be assessed for likely impacts on the SSSI, and Natural England may require consultation.
- 3.2.3. Boggart Hole Clough Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located approximately 1.2 km south west of the site boundary.
- 3.2.4. Alkrington Woods LNR is located approximately 2.3 km north west of the site boundary.

3.3. HABITATS

- 3.3.1. The site was predominantly comprised of hardstanding car park which appeared unmanaged and was colonised in places by common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), willowherb (*Epilobium* sp.), evening primrose (*Oenothera* sp.), black medic (*Medicago lupulina*) and ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*).
- 3.3.2. Small areas of ornamental shrub were present within the car park which included dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), and an unidentified ornamental shrub. Common centaury (*Centaureum erythraea*) and lesser centaury (*Centaureum pulchellum*) were also present within these areas.
- 3.3.3. Within the hardstanding, areas of grassland were present which are assumed to have previously been managed as amenity areas, however appeared to have been left without management for a period of time and at the time of survey comprised semi improved grassland. Species present within these areas included common dandelion, ragwort, bush vetch (*Vicia sepium*), creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), false oat grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), broad leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), common bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), common hawkbit (*Leontodon hispidus*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), willowherb, and yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*).
- 3.3.4. The area of semi improved grassland to the north west of the site comprised the above species with the addition of ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), timothy (*Phleum pratense*), meadow anemone (*Anemone canadensis*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*) and orange hawkweed (*Pilosella aurantiaca*).
- 3.3.5. An area of tall ruderal was present along the northern boundary of the site, located within the semi improved grassland. This area extended into the broadleaved treeline outside of the site boundary. Species present included ragwort, cotoneaster, hedge bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*) and willowherb. Scattered debris and rubbish piles

were present in this area.

- 3.3.6. Scattered trees were present within the grassland area at the north western corner of the site. They comprised semi mature silver birch (*Betula pendula*) and goat willow (*Salix caprea*).
- 3.3.7. The broadleaved treeline outside of the site boundary appeared unmanaged and separated the site from the M60 motorway. Species present included cotoneaster, silver birch, bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), hazel (*Corylus avellane*), rowan (*Sorbus subg. Sorbus*) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*).
- 3.3.8. An area of hardstanding was present to the south of the site which made up an outdoor seating area associated with the restaurant. This area was beginning to be colonised by species such as ragwort and butterfly bush.
- 3.3.9. Two adjoined buildings were present to the south of the site which comprised restaurants. The buildings were of red brick construction with pitched roofs and were generally well maintained and in a good state of repair. Please refer to Section 3.4 for full description of the buildings.

Table 3.1 Photographs of the Site

Feature	Photograph
The majority of the site comprised hard standing car park.	
Areas of ornamental shrubs were present within the car park.	

Debris and rubbish located within the area of tall ruderal to the north of the site.



Broadleaved tree line adjacent north of the site boundary.



Area of semi improved grassland to the north west of the site. Scattered silver birch and goat willow were present in this area.



B1 (left) and B2 (right) located to the south of the site.



3.4. SPECIES

- 3.4.1. The sections below detail an assessment of the sites value for wildlife. Only species which are relevant to the habitats on site are discussed, with any other species having been reasonably discounted from the assessment.

BIRDS

- 3.4.2. The site provides small areas of habitat for nesting birds by way of the scattered trees and ornamental shrubs. The majority of the site holds limited value for birds. Some foraging opportunities are present within the ornamental shrubs however this is limited and sub optimal.
- 3.4.3. The broadleaved treeline to the north of the site boundary provides good quality habitat for nesting and foraging birds.

BATS

- 3.4.4. The site predominantly comprised of hardstanding habitats which provide no value for bats. The semi improved grassland areas, ornamental shrub and scattered trees will provide limited foraging resources for bats in the local area.
- 3.4.5. The broadleaved treeline located adjacent to the northern site boundary, which lines the M60 motorway, is anticipated to contribute to the wider commuting resource of the M60, and therefore used by commuting bats in the local area. No commuting features were located within the site boundary.
- 3.4.6. The scattered trees within the site were found to be small and lacked features which could provide bat roosting potential such as cracked limbs or holes in the trunk. Therefore, the trees were assessed as providing negligible bat roosting potential.
- 3.4.7. The buildings on site were assessed for their bat roosting potential. This included an internal and external inspection of each building, searching for signs of the species and potential roosting opportunities.

Building 1

- 3.4.8. B1 was located at the south east of the site and comprised a restaurant which was in use at the time of survey. B1 was comprised of red brick construction with a pitched roof comprised of fabricated roofing tiles. In general, the building was in a good state of repair. Please refer to Table 3.1 for description of potential roosting features located on B1.

Table 3.1 Bat Roosting Potential on B1

Feature	Photograph
A small area of lifted lead flashing was present on the northern elevation of the building which could provide minor opportunities for crevice dwelling bats on a transitional basis.	 A photograph of the northern elevation of a brick building. A red arrow points to a small gap above the dark brown door frame, indicating a potential bat roosting site. Two blue bins are visible to the left of the door.
A small crevice was present on the northern elevation where mortar was missing from between two bricks. It is anticipated this would form a small crevice which could support crevice dwelling bats on a transitional basis.	 A photograph of the northern elevation of a brick building, showing a gable end. A red arrow points to a small crevice between two bricks, indicating a potential bat roosting site. A yellow warning sign is visible on the wall below the arrow.

The end of the soffit box on the southern elevation was missing which could provide access or roosting opportunities for crevice dwelling bats.



Some ridge tiles were found to be missing on the roof at the south western corner of the building. It is unknown if these provided any access into the building.



Internally, B1 comprised an active restaurant which was clean and well maintained. The main rooms were painted and plastered providing no opportunities for bats.



Two loft spaces were checked during the survey. They were too high to climb into and as such an inspection was made from the loft hatch. They were found to be comprised of timber beams with insulated walls. They were clean and well maintained. No signs of bats could be observed, though the lofts were not fully accessed.

Light gaps were present at the ridge of the loft, which could indicate that access is available into the space.



3.4.9. B1 provided several potential roosting opportunities on the external. No signs of bats were observed externally or internally, though the upstairs could not be accessed, and the loft voids could not be fully inspected.

3.4.10. Based on the opportunities present, it is anticipated that at best the building could support a series of day or transitional roosts for common crevice dwelling bat species such as pipistrelle. Therefore, B1 was assessed as providing low bat roosting potential.

Building 2

3.4.11. B2 was adjoined to B1 and constructed in much the same fashion. It too was also found to be in a good state of repair generally. B2 was not in use at the time of survey, though was previously used as a restaurant/ bar. Please refer to Table 3.2 for details of bat roosting features within the building and photographs.

Table 3.2 Bat Roosting Potential on B2

Feature	Photograph
B2 was found to be generally well sealed with roller shutters over doors and windows.	
Soffit boards were generally found to be well intact, other than a small section on the north western corner of the building which could provide access or roosting opportunities for crevice dwelling bats.	

A small area of soffit boarding on the north eastern elevation of the building provided a gap underneath the wood which could provide opportunities for crevice dwelling bats.



Internally, no loft voids were present, and the corrugated roof was exposed within the restaurant. No opportunities for bats were present internally.



3.4.12. A small number of opportunities for crevice dwelling bats on a transitional/ day roost basis were observed externally on B2. No internal opportunities were located. No signs of bats were located during the survey.

3.4.13. B2 was assessed as providing **low bat roosting potential**.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS AND MITIGATION

4.1. HABITATS

- 4.1.1. The habitats on site were found to be of low value for wildlife in general, being largely comprised of hardstanding. The habitats were found to have value for birds and bats.
- 4.1.2. It is recommended that the development, where possible, include landscaping with native fruiting and flowering species to provide opportunities for wildlife.
- 4.1.3. The offsite treeline to the north of the site was found to have the highest value and connect the site with offsite habitats. Therefore, this feature should be appropriately protected using Root Protection Fencing during construction. If possible, soft landscaping could be used within the development to help protect this feature.

4.2. DESIGNATED SITES

- 4.2.1. The site is located within the Impact Risk Zone of Rochdale Canal SSSI and SAC. Given the small scale of the proposed development, distance from the site and presence of intervening habitats, it is not anticipated any direct or indirect impacts will be present on the SSSI.
- 4.2.2. Two LNRs are present within 3 km of the site. Due to the distance from the site, intervening habitats and small-scale development proposals, no impacts on the LNRs are anticipated. No increase in visitor numbers will be caused by development of this nature.

4.3. SPECIES

BIRDS

- 4.3.1. If any vegetation removal is required within the breeding bird season (March – September inclusive), a nesting bird check should first be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist. If any nests, or nests in construction are located, a suitable stand off should be maintained until the young have fledged. The vegetation should be removed within 48 hours of the nesting bird check.
- 4.3.2. It is recommended that any landscaping within the scheme provide fruiting and flowering species to provide foraging opportunities for birds within the site.
- 4.3.3. Post development, a series of bird boxes could be installed within the site to provide new nesting opportunities for nesting birds. It is recommended five bird boxes be installed along the northern boundary of the site.

BATS

- 4.3.4. The buildings were assessed as having low bat roosting potential as per criteria set out in Table 4.1 in Collins (2016). Therefore, in accordance with best practice, it is recommended that one dusk or dawn emergence/ re-entry survey be undertaken to determine presence/ likely absence of roosting bats. The survey should be undertaken between May – October within suitable weather conditions.
- 4.3.5. If bats are found to be roosting within the buildings, a further two nocturnal bat surveys could be required to inform a Natural England Bat Licence.
- 4.3.6. It is recommended a Sensitive Lighting Strategy be provided which details lighting levels within the proposed development and provision of “Dark Zones”. Proposed “Dark Zones” would be located along the northern boundary of the site to ensure this treeline can continue to be used by commuting and foraging bats. Lighting within the car park and externals of the proposed store should be limited and sensitive wavelengths for bats used if possible:

-
- Warm white tones are preferable to blue toned lights (3000k)
 - LED light will be used where applicable as they produce less UV.
 - Lights will be downward facing and positioned to avoid light spill skywards.

4.3.7. Proposed construction lighting is to follow the protocols outlined in the Institute for Lighting Engineers document “Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Lighting” (2005) and BCT’s “Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK” (2018) to minimise disturbance and sky-glow off site.

4.3.8. It is recommended that post development, multipurpose bat boxes be installed within the site to enhance the site for roosting bats. It is anticipated four boxes would be appropriate for the size of the site.

5.1. WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENTS

5.1.1. The proposed development has scope for a range of enhancements to benefit wildlife. These include:

- Provision of native fruiting and flowering plants throughout the development.
- Installation of bat and bird boxes throughout the site.
- Retention and protection of the northern boundary treeline.

5.2. CONCLUSION

5.2.1. The site comprises habitats which are of limited value for wildlife, being predominantly comprised of hardstanding. The offsite treeline was found to comprise the highest value for wildlife, and this should be retained and protected through development.

5.2.2. The site has limited value for birds and bats. Further nocturnal bat surveys on B1 and B2 are recommended to determine usage of the site by bats and inform any further mitigation required.

5.2.3. It is not anticipated that development of the site will cause any long-term negative impacts on the conservation status of birds or bats within the site.

5 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bat Conservation Trust (2018). Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK: Bats and the Built Environment Series.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2018). Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.
- CIEEM (2018). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine.
- Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd edition. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- Environment Alliance (2007). PPG5: Pollution Prevention Guidelines; Works and Maintenance In or Near Water; PPG5.
- English Nature (2001). Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines.
- Froglife (2001). Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook.
- Froglife (2009). Just Add Water: How to Build a Wildlife Pond. Sixth Edition.
- Institute of Lighting Engineers (2005). Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light.
- JNCC (2010). Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey: A technique for environmental audit. English Field Unit, Nature Conservancy Council.
- Mitchell-Jones (2004). Bat Mitigation Guidelines: Working Today for Natura Tomorrow. English Nature.
- Mitchell-Jones and McLeish (2004). Third Edition Bat Workers' Manual.
- Oldham, R. S., Keeble J., Swan, M. J. S. & Jeffcote, M. (2000). Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*). Herpetological Journal 10 (4), 143–155.
- Wildlife and Countryside Act (2010) Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981



Victoria Avenue East, Moston

Phase 1 Habitat Plan

Client: Aldi Stores UK

Date: 12th August 2020

Drawing 20-030 -001 Version: 1

Not to Scale

Drawn: OC

Key:



THIS PAGE HAS BEEN LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

