



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

Tesco, Didsbury

Reference: 80-541-R1-3

Date: January 2022



PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL REPORT

Tesco
Didsbury

Prepared for:
Dandara Living

Report Ref: 80-541-R1-3
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QUALITY ASSURANCE

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Certificate Number 11890



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Site Address	Tesco Car Park, Parrs Wood Lane, East Didsbury, Manchester, M20 5NP
Coordinates	E 385459, N 390489
Site Area	Approximately 0.2 ha
Current Site Use and Adjacent Site Use	The site comprises a small section of a hardstanding car park, associated with Tesco Superstore. The A5145 defines the south-west boundary of the site, with an access road to Tesco located immediately west of the site. An active railway line and residential housing is located beyond the access road. Commercial units associated with Parrs Wood Entertainment Centre are located south-west of the site.
Designated Sites	The site does not fall within the Impact Risk Zone of any Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
Survey Results	The site was found to comprise a hardstanding, scattered trees and introduced shrub. The site was found to have the following potential ecological constraints: - Opportunities for nesting birds within the treelines. - Badger and hedgehog are anticipated to be present within the surrounding area. - Invasive plant species wall cotoneaster and small-leaved cotoneaster were present on-site.
Conclusions	No further surveys are required for the development to proceed. The following mitigation is recommended: - If any vegetation requires removal, it should be removed outside of the breeding bird season (March to September inclusive). If this is not possible, a nesting bird check should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist up to 24 hours before works commence. If a nest, or nest in construction, is located, then a stand-off distance should be maintained until the young have fledged. - Precautionary Working Methods for badger. - Eradication of wall cotoneaster and small-leaved cotoneaster prior to works commencing on-site. A gain in biodiversity will likely be required on-site. If this cannot be achieved on-site, a conservation offset payment, or off-site compensation may be required.



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

E3P were commissioned by Dandara Living to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal at Tesco Car Park, Parrs Wood Lane, East Didsbury, Manchester, M20 5NP, hereafter referred to as “the site”.

This report has been prepared by Huw Morgan BSc (Hons) ACIEEM, Senior Ecologist at E3P, who has seven years professional experience as an ecological consultant. Huw has undertaken multiple Preliminary Ecological Appraisals and condition assessments for various projects across the UK. Huw also holds a class 2 great crested newt Natural England licence, class 1 bat licence, a Natural England barn owl survey class licence and has key experience with birds and plants.

1.2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Erection of a 6 storey residential building (Use Class C3) comprising 75 new homes together with ground floor flexible community space, car parking, cycle parking as well as landscaping, highways and other associated works.

1.3. SITE LOCATION

The site is located in Parrs Wood, south Manchester. The site forms the southern section of Tesco Superstore car park. East Didsbury Metrolink is situated approximately 180 m north of the site, beyond Tesco Superstore. East Didsbury railway line is located approximately 20 m west of the site, at its closest point. The site is accessed via the A5145, which defines the south-west boundary of the site. Parrs Wood Entertainment Centre is located approximately 80 m south-east of the site. Please refer to Figure 1.1 for the approximate site location.

FIGURE 1.1 APPROXIMATE SITE LOCATION



1.4. OBJECTIVES

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 species and habitats.
-  Recommend any further surveys or mitigation that may be required.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal comprises a desk study and site walkover. This survey has been completed as a baseline assessment of the site, and as such please see the end of the report for further surveys and mitigation proposed.



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. DESKTOP STUDY

The following sources of information and ecological records were consulted:

-  MAGIC – A web-based interactive mapping system, on which geographic information regarding key environmental schemes and designations are collated, including details of statutory conservation sites, consulted in August 2021.
-  Aerial mapping and ordnance survey maps.
-  Local data records, including The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) – the biodiversity information system for Greater Manchester, received on 12th August 2021.

A 1 km search area was utilised for the data search, with this being deemed an appropriate distance for the zone of influence of the site, due to the size of the site and the developed nature of the surrounding habitat, which includes residential and commercial units.

The data search included a request for details of protected and notable species of flora and fauna within 1 km of the central grid reference of the site. In addition, a request was made for any non-statutory designated sites within 1 km of the site boundary.

Please note that a lack of up-to-date records does not confirm absence of a species from the area. Lack of records may simply be a result of a lack of protected species surveys being undertaken within the local area.

2.2. VEGETATION AND HABITATS

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the proposed development site was undertaken by Huw Morgan on 16th August 2021. The weather was overcast with light precipitation.

The walkover survey was undertaken to the standard methodology as detailed by the JNCC Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey, 2010. The assessment follows the methodology as per “Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal” (CIEEM, 2017).

A vegetation and habitat plan has been produced for the proposed development site and the immediate surrounding area (please refer to Appendix I). The mapping is based on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee Phase I Habitat Survey Methodology (JNCC, 2010).

Searches were made for uncommon, rare and statutorily protected plant species, those species listed as protected in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and species which are indicators of important and uncommon plant communities. All plant nomenclature follows Stace (2019).

Searches were carried out for the presence of invasive species, including those listed on the revised (April 2010) Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) including but not limited to, Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*).



2.3. FAUNA

A thorough search of the site for signs of protected species of fauna was undertaken during the site walkover. These searches considered the following:

- ✚ Suitability of any ponds to support notable amphibians, and the suitability of the site's terrestrial habitats to support amphibians.
- ✚ Suitability of the site to support reptiles by way of habitat structure and refuge piles, as well as links to the wider landscape.
- ✚ Signs of badgers, by way of setts, mammal paths, foraging signs or latrines to indicate usage of the site by the species.
- ✚ Search of any watercourses for signs or suitability for water vole and otter by way of burrows, resting places, holts and foraging signs.
- ✚ Suitability of the site to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats.
- ✚ Suitability of the site to support notable bird species.
- ✚ Suitability of the site to support notable invertebrates.
- ✚ Search of the site for any invasive species.

2.4. PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

The Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken by Huw Morgan on 16th August 2021. Huw holds a valid Natural England Class 1 Survey Licence (2021-53691-CLS-CLS).

The survey involved undertaking a systematic search of the trees, searching for signs of bats, or spaces where bats would be able to access. The methodology followed that described in Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, 3rd Edition (Collins, 2016).

The trees were categorised for their bat roosting potential as described in Table 2.1 in accordance with Collins (2016).



TABLE 2.1 BAT ROOSTING POTENTIAL CLASSIFICATION OF TREES

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
NEGLIGIBLE	A tree with no roosting features present or of an age/species that would not support roosting bats.
LOW	A tree with one or more potential roost site. However, the potential roost sites do not provide suitability for large numbers of bats (i.e. for maternity or hibernation) and would only be used on an occasional basis.
MODERATE	A tree with one or more potential roosting feature which could support bats but is of a suitability meaning that it would be unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
HIGH	A tree with several potential roosting features which could support large number of bats on a regular basis and for longer periods of time. The tree or structure would have suitability to support maternity or hibernation roosts.

The survey was undertaken utilising suitable binoculars and ladders to access all areas where safe to do so.

2.5. SURVEY LIMITATIONS

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal does not constitute a full botanical survey. Instead, key species are identified to give a representative description of each habitat type.

This survey was undertaken in August, which is an appropriate time of year to undertake ecological surveys. However, it is possible that some species of flora may have been missed or misidentified. It is possible that some invasive/non-native species could have been missed during the survey. Due to the habitats present on-site, this is not considered to be a major constraint.

A survey within 30 m of the site for evidence of badger (*Meles meles*) was unable to be carried out as East Didsbury railway line was located approximately 20 m west of the site...



3. SURVEY RESULTS

3.1. SITE CONTEXT

The site comprises the southern section of a Tesco Superstore hardstanding car park. Due to the developed nature of the site it is likely to hold little value for local wildlife. However, the scattered trees within and adjacent to the site may offer potential nesting and roosting sites for birds and bats.

A traditional orchard is located approximately 150 m east of the site, the habitat is expected to provide a number of essential foraging opportunities for wildlife within an urban area. East Didsbury railway line, an active treelined railway, is located approximately 20 m west of the site. This feature is anticipated to provide commuting and foraging opportunities for a variety of fauna through the wider environment. The railway line also provides connectivity to valuable habitat including the River Mersey, located approximately 1.1 km south of the site. The River Mersey is expected to offer resources for species that utilise aquatic habitats for foraging including waterfowl, amphibians and bats. Furthermore, it is anticipated to act as a wildlife corridor, providing links to the surrounding habitat located further south-east and south-west of the site.

Fletcher Moss Park is located approximately 660 m south-west of the site. The habitats within this area include deciduous woodland and lowland fens, which are anticipated to support an array of fauna including invertebrates, birds and terrestrial mammals.

No waterbodies were identified within 250 m of the site boundary.

3.2. DESIGNATED SITES

The site is not located within the Impact Risk Zone of any Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The site is located within 1 km of the following Local Nature Reserves (LNR):

- ✿ Stenner Woods and Milgate Fields, Didsbury, located approximately 800 m south-west of the site. This site is an area of wet woodland, dominated by crack willow (*Salix fragilis*) trees support a range of species including invertebrates and birds such as great spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*) and treecreeper (*Certhia familiaris*).
- ✿ Mersey Vale Nature Park, located approximately 845 m south-east of the site. This contains wildflower meadows creating valuable habitat for a variety of species.
- ✿ Heaton Mersey Common, located approximately 850 m north-east of the site. This site comprises woodland, grassland and a waterbody supporting a range of flora and fauna.

Three Sites of Biological Interest (SBI) lie within 1 km of the site, comprising Parrs Wood located approximately 375 m south-east, Fletcher Moss located approximately 745 m south-west and Mersey Valley Nature Park located approximately 845 m south-east of the site.

3.3. HABITATS

The main habitats encountered during the survey are described in the following subsections. Please refer to Appendix I or the Phase 1 Habitat Plan.



3.3.1. HARDSTANDING

Large areas of hardstanding made up the majority of the site, comprising a car park and walkways used for the Tesco Superstore.

PLATE 1 SHOWING HARDSTANDING CARPARK



3.3.2. INTRODUCED SHRUB

Areas of introduced shrub were present within the site, planted in small areas around the car park along with a larger area present along the southern site boundary. Species present comprised firethorn species (*Pyracantha* sp.), small-leaved cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster microphyllus*), wall cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*), common lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*), cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), holly-leaved barberry (*Mahonia aquifolium*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*).



PLATE 2 SHOWING INTRODUCED SHRUB



3.3.3. SCATTERED TREES

Scattered trees were present within the site, around the areas of hardstanding. The trees had been planted for ornamental purposes and comprised London plane (*Platanus x hispanica*) and wild cherry (*Prunus avium*).

PLATE 3 SHOWING SCATTERED TREES



3.4. PROTECTED AND NOTABLE SPECIES

3.4.1. SPECIES DISCOUNTED FROM ASSESSMENT

White-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) has been discounted from assessment as no suitable aquatic habitats were located on-site or within proximity to the site.

Hazel Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) mainly occur in southern counties, especially in Devon, Somerset, Sussex and Kent. There are few recorded localities north of the Midlands, though they are present in parts of the Lake District and in scattered Welsh localities (Matthews et al, 2018). The species are not generally known to be present within the East Didsbury area and as such, the species are reasonably discounted from assessment.

3.4.2. AMPHIBIANS

No records of great crested newt were identified within the 1 km search area. Consultation with MAGIC did not identify any great crested newt European Protected Species Licences within the 1 km search area. The closest licence was located approximately 4.3 km south-east of the site, effective from 2014 to 2020 for the destruction of a great crested newt resting place.

Consultation with GMEU returned numerous records of common toad (*Bufo bufo*), with the closest record located approximately 135 m east of the site. The majority of records were associated with Parrs Wood and Mersey Vale Nature Park.

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 where habitat connectivity is of high quality) (English Nature, 2001). As such, the presence of great crested newts on-site is reasonably discounted as no waterbodies were located on-site or within 250 m of the site. Furthermore, as the site largely comprised hardstanding and scattered trees the site does not provide any suitable terrestrial habitat for great crested newts and common amphibians. Their presence on-site is therefore reasonably discounted.

3.4.3. BATS

Numerous records of bats were located within 1 km of the site boundary during the data search. Records included common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), pipistrelle species (*Pipistrellus sp.*), brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), noctule bat (*Nyctalus noctule*) and Myotis species (*Myotis sp.*). The closest record, a common pipistrelle, was recorded approximately 80 m north-east of the site. The closest bat roost was recorded approximately 130 m south-east of the site comprising a brown long-eared bat maternity roost.

Consultation with MAGIC did not identify the presence of a Natural England Bat Mitigation Licence within the 1 km search area. The closest licence was located approximately 1.1 km north-west of the site boundary, active between 2011 and 2014 for the destruction of a soprano pipistrelle and common pipistrelle non-breeding roost.

During the site survey, an inspection of trees was undertaken as per guidance set out in Collins (2016), to assess the features for suitability for roosting bats. All on-site trees were found to have Negligible bat roosting potential, as no Potential Roosting Features were identified.



The hardstanding present on-site will have negligible value for bats, whereas the introduced shrub and scattered trees may act as a foraging resource, due to the attraction of invertebrate prey. However, it is anticipated that bats within the local area will utilise the habitat of greater value in proximity to the site rather than that present on-site, such as the railway east of the site. It is therefore considered that the site has limited value for bats and does not contain important foraging and commuting habitat for bats within the local area.

3.4.4. BADGERS

Numerous records of badger (*Meles meles*) were located within the 1 km search area. A search for signs of badger was completed within the 30 m buffer from site and no signs of badger were recorded.

The wider landscape to the west of the site was assessed as having suitability for the species, due to the presence of the railway and embankment with associated vegetation. As such, badger may be present in the surrounding area. However, the species is not expected to utilise the site, as the majority of the site comprised hardstanding, with small areas of introduced shrub and scattered trees which provides limited sett building or foraging opportunities for the species.

3.4.5. OTTER AND WATER VOLE

Consultation with GMEU identified one record of otter (*Lutra lutra*) located approximately 615 m south-east of the site, associated with the River Mersey. No records of water vole (*Arvicola amphibious*) were identified within the 1 km search area.

No aquatic habitats were identified on-site or within close proximity to the site. Therefore, due to the lack of suitable habitat for otter and water vole within proximity to the site and the urban nature of the site, these species can be reasonably discounted from further assessment.

3.4.6. OTHER TERRESTRIAL MAMMALS

Five records of European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) were located within 1 km of the site boundary, the closest located approximately 500 m south-west of the site. The species is anticipated to be present within the wider area with nearby residential gardens and adjacent treelined railway providing suitable habitat for the species. However, due to the lack of shelter on-site as a result of the large areas of hardstanding and scattered trees in addition to the presence of major roads bordering the site, the presence of hedgehog within the site is reasonably discounted.

3.4.7. NESTING BIRDS

Consultation with GMEU identified numerous records of notable birds within the 1 km search area, including bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), barn owl (*Tyto alba*), dunnoek (*Prunella modularis*), herring gull (*Larus argentatus*), house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), lesser redpoll (*Carduelis cabaret*), lesser spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopos minor*), linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*), reed bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*), skylark (*Alauda arvensis*), song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) and starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*).

During the site walkover, woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*), starling, magpie (*Pica pica*) and black-headed gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) were recorded.



The habitats within the site are common within the local area and are anticipated to support passerine bird species within the scattered trees and introduced shrub. The site is assessed as having negligible value for ground-nesting birds due to the lack of suitable habitat provided by the hardstanding and the urban and disturbed nature of the site.

3.4.8. REPTILES

No records of reptiles were identified within the 1 km search area. The site was found to provide limited value for reptiles, given the site comprised hardstanding, introduced shrub and scattered trees, which lack the structure and habitat quality to support the species group. As such, the presence of reptiles within the site is reasonably discounted.

3.4.9. INVERTEBRATES

The data search identified records of white ermine (*Spilosoma lubricipeda*), cinnabar moth (*Tyria jacobaeae*) within the 1 km search area. The site comprised hardstanding, scattered trees and introduced shrub, due to the lack of floristic diversity, notable invertebrates are not anticipated to be present on-site.

3.5. INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES

No records of invasive species were recorded within the 1 km search area.

During the survey, wall cotoneaster and small-leaved cotoneaster were recorded within the areas of introduced shrub.



4. ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS AND MITIGATION

4.1. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

Erection of a 6 storey residential building (Use Class C3) comprising 75 new homes together with ground floor flexible community space, car parking, cycle parking as well as landscaping, highways and other associated works.

4.2. DESIGNATED SITES

The site is not located within the Impact Risk Zone of any SSSIs.

Several LNRs are located within proximity to the site, including Stenner Woods and Milgate Fields, Didsbury LNR located approximately 800 m south-west, Mersey Vale Nature Park LNR located approximately 845 m south-east and Heaton Mersey Common LNR situated approximately 850 m north-east. Due to the small scale of the development, and as the habitat between the site and the LNR's is not considered functionally linked land, it is anticipated that there will be no negative impact on the LNRs, as a result of development. Furthermore, the small scale of development will not create increased visitor pressure on these LNRs.

4.3. HABITATS

The site comprised habitats that were found to be widespread within the local area; however, they did contain value for wildlife such as bats and birds. Badger and hedgehog are also anticipated to be present within the local area. The hardstanding is of lowest value for wildlife, with the scattered trees comprising the areas of highest value.

4.3.1. SCATTERED TREES

It is recommended that, where possible, trees are retained and protected through development. It is anticipated that some trees may require removal to facilitate development, and where this is needed, new landscape planting will be introduced to mitigate the loss.

It is recommended that the landscape planting comprises native species and species known to be of value for the attraction of wildlife. This will include fruiting and flowering species. Species deemed suitable for this development could include berry-bearing native species such as:

- ✿ Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*).
- ✿ Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*).
- ✿ Holly.
- ✿ Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*).
- ✿ Spindle (*Euonymus europaea*).
- ✿ Dog rose (*Rosa canina*).
- ✿ Guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*).



 Elder (*Sambucus nigra*).

All planting should be from a trusted pest-free source and, where possible, be of local provenance.

It is understood that all trees within the site boundary will require removal to facilitate development. However, trees adjacent to the site boundary, to be retained, are to be appropriately protected during the construction phase. Temporary protective demarcation fencing will be used to protect the trees. The fencing must extend outside the canopy of the retained trees and must remain in position until the end of development to ensure protection is provided throughout the construction phase.

The fencing will be in accordance with BS 5837:2012 *Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction: Recommendations*.

4.4. PROTECTED AND NOTABLE SPECIES

4.4.1. BREEDING BIRDS

The site was assessed as having value for passerine species within the scattered trees and introduced shrub.

If any vegetation requires removal, it should be removed outside of the breeding bird season (March to September inclusive). If this is not possible, a nesting bird check will be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist up to 24 hours before works commence. If a nest, or nest in construction, is located then a stand-off distance will be maintained until the young have fledged. The ecologist will advise on suitable stand off and provide a toolbox talk to all site contractors regarding their working limits and legal implications.

Post-development, landscape planting, as detailed in Section 4.3.1, should be introduced to mitigate the loss of any trees removed to facilitate the development. Bird boxes could also be installed throughout the development to enhance the site's value for the species group.

4.4.2. BADGERS

No badger setts were identified on-site, and the site was assessed as providing limited sett building and foraging resources for the species. However, the species are anticipated to be present within the wider area.

The following Precautionary Working Methods will be adhered to during construction phase to ensure that no badgers within the local area are impacted by the proposed development:



- ✚ All site operatives will be inducted to the presence of the species and their working limits and legal responsibilities.
- ✚ All site operatives will be inducted as to identifying potential badger setts, and should be vigilant if they suspect they locate a new sett during works and inform the project ecologist immediately.
- ✚ All excavations will be battered at a 45-degree angle to allow escape should animals become trapped.
- ✚ All site machinery and materials will be appropriately stored to avoid harm to the species, notably between July and November each year when extra care is needed to avoid potential impacts on pregnant females.

It is not anticipated that the development will have a negative impact on badgers within the local area.

4.4.3. INVASIVE SPECIES

Wall cotoneaster and small-leaved cotoneaster was identified during the site walkover. As such, it is recommended, prior to the development, that these species should be eradicated following the most current guidance set out by a qualified contractor.



5. FURTHER SURVEYS

No further surveys are required for the development to proceed.



6. DESIGN ADVICE FOR BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

The scheme should strive to achieve biodiversity net gain, as per “Biodiversity Net Gain; Good Practice Principles for Development” CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA (2016). Full details of this and a calculation of net gain could be completed after detailed landscape plans have been prepared. It is likely that a 10% gain in habitats will be a mandatory requirement in the near future. To aid in the achievement of 10% net gain, it is recommended that the project ecologist is consulted during the design stage.



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END OF REPORT



APPENDIX I

PHASE 1 HABITAT PLAN

Key:

- Red Line Boundary
- Scattered Trees
- Introduced Shrub
- Hardstanding

Notes



Wall Cotoneaster



Small-leaved Cotoneaster

Issue 1	Revision 1	Date August 2021	Drawn HM	Authorised CB
Client: Dandara			Job No. 80-541	Date August 2021
			Drawing No. 001	Scale 1:800
Job title: Tesco, Didsbury			Drawing title: Phase 1 Habitat Plan	



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