

Ecological Assessment



Aldi, Hedge End, Southampton
29th July 2021



**Tyler
Grange**

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Plan Title 14007/P01: Habitat Features Plan



Summary

- S.1. This report has been prepared by Tyler Grange Group Ltd for ALDI Stores Ltd to inform a planning application for the construction of an Aldi store on a parcel of land at Hedge End Retail Park in Southampton, Hampshire centred on National Grid Reference SU 48246 13230 (hereafter referred to as the 'site').
- S.2. The site comprises a building surrounded by amenity grassland, further buildings, hardstanding and introduced shrubs of negligible ecological importance and trees (young, semi-mature and a few mature) of local ecological importance outside the site boundary. There is also a broadleaved woodland of local ecological importance nearby.
- S.3. There are eight statutory and 18 non-statutory designated sites within the data search area. Due to the intervening habitats, type and scale of development, there are no anticipated significant impacts to statutory or non-statutory designated sites and therefore no specific mitigation is required.
- S.4. The 'Extended' Phase I habitat survey identified no potential for protected and/or priority species within the redline site boundary and limited potential for protected and/or priority species, such as bats and birds, directly beyond the redline site boundary.
- S.5. With the implementation of the mitigation strategy described, the proposed development would be in conformity with relevant planning policy and legislation, as set out at **Appendix 2**.



Section 1: Introduction, Site Context and Methodology

Introduction

1.1. Tyler Grange Group Ltd was instructed by ALDI Stores Ltd in April 2021 to undertake an Ecological Assessment of a parcel of land at Hedge End Retail Park in Southampton, Hampshire hereafter referred to as 'the site'. A planning application for a new Aldi store is to be submitted to Eastleigh Borough Council in Summer 2021 for development of the site. The site is centred on National Grid Reference SU 48246 13230 and the extent of the site is shown in **Figure 1**.

1.2. The purpose of this report is to:

- Using available background data and results of a field survey, describe and evaluate the ecological resources present within the likely 'zone of influence' (Zoi)¹ of the proposed development;
- Assess ecological issues and opportunities as a result of development; and
- Where appropriate, describe mitigation proposals, together with planning controls to ensure their delivery, to ensure conformity with policy and legislation.



Figure 1: Site Context and Boundary
Aerial image © Google 2021

Site Context

1.3. The site comprises an industrial unit building that is currently in use as a DFS store. It is the unit on the end of a building which also houses two other stores. The building is located in Hedge End Retail Park in the town of Hedge End to the east of Southampton in Hampshire. Directly outside of the red line boundary are the further two buildings connected to the onsite building alongside associated hardstanding with sections of introduced shrubs and young trees. There are also sections of amenity grassland, hedgerow and a treeline surrounding the store. To the south and southeast of the building is a section of broadleaved woodland with residential houses and gardens beyond. Further afield to the east is the rest of the retail park with residential houses and gardens beyond. To the north is the A334 road with a supermarket and a treeline and to the west is a ring road and the M27 motorway with sections of broadleaved woodland interspersed.

Methodology

1.4. Detailed methods are provided at **Appendix 1**. This Ecological Assessment has been informed by the following:

¹ Defined as the area over which ecological features may be affected by the biophysical changes as a result of the proposed project and associated activities (CIEEM, 2018. Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. Winchester).

- Detailed data search including purchase of biological records; and
- 'Extended' Phase I habitat survey² undertaken on the 29th April 2021 by Grace England, Assistant Ecologist and qualifying member of Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

1.5. The above scope of work has informed the description and assessment of importance of ecological features - in line with CIEEM guidelines³ - the consideration of opportunities and constraints to development, and mitigation and enhancement requirements to ensure conformity with legislation and policy (see **Appendix 2**).

Limitations

1.6. The survey was undertaken at a time when some plant species would not have been visible, though given the nature of the habitats that would be affected, this is not considered to have affected the evaluation of habitats or the proposed strategy to address impacts.

Quality Assurance

1.7. All ecologists at Tyler Grange Ltd are members of CIEEM and abide by the Institute's Code of Professional Conduct

² 2010, JNCC. Handbook for Phase I Habitat Survey – A technique for Environmental Audit.

³ CIEEM, 2018. Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. Winchester.



Section 2: Ecological Features

- 2.1 Ecological features within the site and wider study area (see **Appendix 1** for definition) are described below, together with an assessment of their importance using a geographical frame of reference advocated by CIEEM³.

Protected Sites

- 2.2 The site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory sites designated for nature conservation importance. There are four internationally and four nationally designated sites within the study area (defined in **Appendix 1**) and 18 non-statutory designated sites as set out in **Table 2.1**. No priority habitats⁴ were recorded on or adjacent to the site.

⁴ UK priority habitats and species are those subject to conservation action and referred to as Species of Principal Importance (SoPIs) or Habitats of Principal Importance (HoPIs). They are listed at Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. Section 40 of the NERC Act states that local planning authorities must have regard for the conservation of SoPIs and HoPIs.



Table 2.1 Ecological Designations

Designation	Sites within Study Area	Ecological Importance
European Statutory	SOLENT MARITIME Special Area of Conservation (SAC); c.2.80km southeast of the site. This site is designated for its Annex I habitats of estuaries, <i>Spartina</i> swards <i>Spartinion maritimae</i> and Atlantic salt meadows.	International
	SOLENT AND SOUTHAMPTON WATER Ramsar Site, Special Protection Area (SPA); c.2.80km southeast of the site. The site is comprised of estuaries and adjacent coastal habitats including intertidal flats, saline lagoons, shingle beaches, reefs, saltmarsh, and reedbeds, damp woodland, and grazing marsh.	
	RIVER ITCHEN SAC; c.3.60km northwest of the site. This site is designated for its Annex I habitats of water courses of plain to montane levels and Annex II species of southern damselfly <i>Coenagrion mercurial</i> and bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i>.	
	NEW FOREST Ramsar Site, SAC, SPA; c.9.70km southwest of the site. The site is designated for its extensive complex of woodland, dry and wet heath and over 90 valley mires, associated seepages and peatlands situated on acidic and nutrient-poor soils. The site is important for breeding, feeding and roosting birds characteristic of the heathland environment and wintering raptors, with up to 15 hen harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i> feeding or roosting in the area. The site includes 13 Annex I habitats and three Annex II species.	
National Statutory	WILDERN Local Nature Reserve (LNR); c.0.12km southeast of the site. This site is designated for its wetland habitat featuring a mosaic of ponds, two flooded meadows, woodlands and a valley mire all linked by the streams which flow through the site.	National
	MOORGREEN MEADOWS Site of Special Scientific Interest; c.1km north of the site. Neutral meadows and alder <i>Alnus</i> wood flanking a small tributary of the River Hamble. The sward comprises at least 17 codominant herbs and grasses and is of exceptional scientific importance for its populations of marsh orchids <i>Dactylorhiza</i>. In particular the site includes a geographically isolated population of the Northern Marsh Orchid <i>D. purplella</i>, the nearest other localities being in Wales, Staffordshire and Yorkshire.	
	NETLEY COMMON LNR; c.1.3km southwest of the site. This site is designated for being the city's last remaining piece of open heathland including grassland with islands of scrub and gorse, surrounded by a mixed woodland fringe.	
	MANOR FARM LNR; 1.9km south-east of the site. The site encompasses the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar, the Solent and Southampton Water SPA, the Solent Maritime SAC and the Upper Hamble Estuary and Woods SSSI. It comprises woodland, grassland and rivers.	



Non-statutory	BRIDGET MARY GARDEN Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC); c.0.16km southeast of the site. Semi-natural woodland and neutral/acid/calcareous grassland site.	County
	HOGSTY CORNER SINC; c.0.19km south of the site. Ancient semi-natural woodland site with heathlands and fens.	
	WILDERN NATURE PARK SINC; c.700m east of the site. Ancient semi-natural woodland site with h=grassland and wetlands.	
	TELEGRAPH WOODS SINC; c.1.0km west of the site. Pasture woodland and heathland site.	
	WEST END COVERED RESERVOIR SINC; c.1.2km west of the site. Unimproved grassland site supporting notable species.	
	DUMBLETON'S COPSE SINC; c.1.2km south-west of the site. Heathland site.	
	NETLEY HILL HEATH SINC; c.1.3km south-west of the site. Heathland site.	
	MOORGREEN WOODLANDS SINC; 1.4km north of the site. Ancient semi-natural woodland site.	
	NETLEY COMMON, HOUND SINC; c. 1.5km south-west of the site. Agriculturally unimproved grassland site with heathland and wetlands.	
	HAREFIELD COPSE SINC; c.1.5km west of the site. Ancient semi-natural woodland site.	
	THORNHILL PARK PLANTATION SINC; c.1.6km west of the site. Unimproved grassland site with social value to local community.	
	PILAND'S COPSE SINC; 1.6km south-east of the site. Ancient semi-natural woodland site.	
	NETLEY COMMON, SOUTHAMPTON SINC; c.1.6km south-west of the site. Semi-improved grassland, heathland and wetland site.	
	PEEWIT HILL SINC; c.1.7km south-west of the site. Heathland site with notable species.	
	WINDHOVER (NETLEY COMMON SOUTH) SINC; c.1.9km south-west of the site. Heathland site.	
	DURNCOMB'S COPSE MEADOW SINC; c.2.0km south-east of the site. Semi-improved grassland site.	
	TANHOUSE MEADOW SINC; c.2.0km south-east of the site. Wetland site.	
	BOTTOM COPSE/BUSHY COPSE SINC; c.2.0km north-east of the site. Ancient semi-natural woodland site.	

2.3 Habitats present within the site and adjacent to it, along with their ecological importance³ are detailed in **Table 2.2**. This should be read in conjunction with **Appendix 3** for referenced site photographs and the Habitat Features Plan (**14007_P01**).

2.4 The site habitats include:

- Building and hardstanding; and

- Introduced shrubs and young trees.

2.5 Adjacent offsite habitats include:

- Amenity grassland;
- Broadleaved woodland;
- Buildings and hardstanding;
- Introduced shrubs and young trees;
- Species-poor hedgerow; and
- Treeline.

Tables 2.2: Site Habitats

Habitat	Description	Ecological Importance
Onsite Habitat		
Building	There is a two-storey industrial unit (Photograph 1) onsite currently in use as a furniture store. It is brick built with metal cladding on the top half of the building, large glass windows and a metal roof. There is lighting on the north-eastern aspect of the building facing out towards the car park (Photograph 2). The building is in good condition with no holes or crevices seen.	Negligible
Introduced Shrubs and Young Trees	Within the redline site boundary in the car park are sections of introduced shrubs (Photograph 6) comprising barberry <i>Berberis vulgaris</i> , box hedge <i>Buxus sempervirens</i> , Japanese spindle <i>Euonymus japonicus</i> , Japanese spiraea <i>Spiraea japonica</i> and lavender <i>Lavandula angustifolia</i> and young trees comprising common pear <i>Pyrus communis</i> and silver birch <i>Betula pendula</i> .	Negligible
Offsite Habitats		
Amenity Grassland	Beyond the redline site boundary to the west of the building and car park is a section of amenity grassland (Photograph 3) that is regularly mown with a short sward of 2-3cm. It comprises mainly annual meadow grass <i>Poa annua</i> , lowland perennial rye grass <i>Lolium perenne</i> , clover <i>Trifolium sp.</i> , creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i> , daisy <i>Bellis perennis</i> , dandelion <i>Taraxacum officinale</i> and moss species as well as creeping cinquefoil <i>Potentilla reptans</i> , cut-leaf cranesbill <i>Geranium dissectum</i> , dove's-foot cranesbill <i>G. molle</i> , geranium sp., prickly sowthistle <i>Sonchus asper</i> , speedwell <i>Veronica sp.</i> , mouse-ear chickweed <i>Cerastium fontanum</i> and yarrow <i>Achillea millefolium</i> .	Negligible
Broadleaved Woodland	Offsite to the southeast of the site is a broadleaved woodland (Photograph 4) comprising mainly ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> , field maple <i>Acer campestre</i> , goat willow <i>Salix caprea</i> , hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i> , holly <i>Ilex aquifolium</i> , pedunculate oak <i>Quercus robur</i> , pine species <i>Pinus sp.</i> and silver birch.	Local
Buildings and Hardstanding	Beyond the redline site boundary of the site but connected to the onsite building are further industrial units (Photograph 5) currently in use as other furniture stores. They are the same style and made of the same materials as the onsite building.	Negligible
Introduced Shrubs and Young Trees	Beyond the redline site boundary in the car park are sections of introduced shrubs (Photograph 6) comprising barberry <i>Berberis vulgaris</i> , box hedge <i>Buxus sempervirens</i> , Japanese spindle <i>Euonymus japonicus</i> , Japanese spiraea <i>Spiraea japonica</i> and lavender <i>Lavandula angustifolia</i> and young trees comprising mainly ash, common pear <i>Pyrus communis</i> , goat willow and silver birch.	Negligible



Species-Poor Hedgerow	Beyond the redline site boundary to the west is a species-poor hedgerow (Photograph 7) comprising mainly blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i> with some hazel, bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> and ivy <i>Hedera helix</i> interspersed.	Site
Treeline	Beyond the redline site boundary to the west is a line of young, semi-mature and mature trees (Photograph 8) comprising alder <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> , field maple, goat willow, hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i> , horse chestnut <i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i> , pedunculate oak, pine species, rowan <i>Sorbus aucuparia</i> , silver birch and wild cherry <i>Prunus avium</i> . There is an understorey of field maple and hawthorn saplings as well as bramble, cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i> , dogrose <i>Rosa canina</i> , dogwood <i>Cornus sanguinea</i> , gorse <i>Ulex europaeus</i> , ivy, lowland perennial rye grass and stinging nettles <i>Urtica dioica</i> .	Local

2.6 For ease of reference, descriptions of the fauna with potential to be present within or surrounding the site have been described alphabetically in **Table 2.3** below.



Table 2.3: Protected and Priority Species.

Species/ Group	Records within 2km	Potential Onsite	Ecological Im- portance
Amphibians including great crested newt (GCN) <i>Triturus cristatus</i>	No records of amphibians were returned by Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre⁵ (HBIC) for within 2km of the site boundary. According to Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the countryside (MAGIC) website⁶ there are no EPS licence returns for GCN within 2km of the site boundary.	There is no potential for GCN foraging, sheltering or breeding within the redline boundary of the site, which consists solely of a building. There is a pond c.0.05km southeast of the site that is suitable breeding habitat for GCN. The surrounding broadleaved woodland habitat is suitable foraging and sheltering habitat for GCN and other amphibians.	N/A – considered absent.
Badger <i>Meles meles</i>	12 records of badger were returned from HBIC for within 2km of the site boundary, the closest being c.0.24km east of site from 2019.	There is no potential for badger foraging or sheltering onsite. The offsite broadleaved woodland southeast of site is suitable badger habitat.	N/A – considered absent.
Bats	Records of 10 bat species (<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>, brown long-eared bat <i>Plecotus auritus</i>, common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>, Nathusius' pipistrelle <i>P. nathusii</i>, Natterer's bat <i>Myotis nattereri</i>, noctule <i>Nyctalus noctula</i>, serotine <i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>, soprano pipistrelle <i>P. pygmaeus</i>, whiskered bat <i>M. mystacinus</i>) were returned from HBIC for within 2km of the site boundary. The closest being for brown long-eared c.0.08km south-east of the site in 2017. According to MAGIC there are three EPS licence returns for bats granted within 2km of the site boundary, with the closest being c.0.12km east of the site for the destruction of a resting place of a common pipistrelle in 2013.	The building onsite has negligible potential for supporting roosting bats. It is relatively new and in good condition with no lifted tiles or crevices. There is no potential for bats to enter the building and no loft space present. There are lights on the northern aspect of the building facing towards the car park. There is not currently any lighting facing the offsite treeline or broadleaved woodland. The offsite adjacent trees in the car park and treeline have negligible bat roosting potential. No features suitable for supporting roosting bats such as knot holes or lifted bark were recorded on trees. The offsite broadleaved woodland southeast of site has potential to supporting foraging, commuting and roosting bats. The offsite adjacent treeline to the west of the on-site building has low potential to support commuting bats.	N/A – considered absent.

⁵ <https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/environment/biodiversity/informationcentre>

⁶ <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>



Birds	Several notable bird species were returned from HBIC for within 2km of the site boundary. Red listed birds returned included fieldfare <i>Turdus pilaris</i>, grey wagtail <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>, house sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>, lesser redpoll <i>Acanthis cabaret</i>, lesser spotted woodpecker <i>Dryobates minor</i>, linnet <i>Linaria cannabina</i>, mistle thrush <i>T. viscivorus</i>, pied flycatcher <i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>, redwing <i>T. iliacus</i>, ring ouzel <i>T. torquatus</i>, spotted flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i>, song thrush <i>T. philomelos</i>, starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>, tree pipit <i>Anthus trivialis</i>, whinchat <i>Saxicola rubetra</i> and yellow wagtail <i>M. flava</i>. Amber listed bird records returned included Dartford warbler <i>Sylvia undata</i>, hobby <i>Falco Subbuteo</i>, peregrine <i>F. peregrinus</i>, red crossbill <i>Loxia curvirostra</i>, redstart <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i> and reed bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>.	There is no potential for bird foraging and very limited potential for bird nesting on the onsite building. The offsite adjacent treeline, hedge-row and introduced shrubs onsite may offer potential foraging and nesting habitat for common and widespread garden bird species. Some declining species such as house sparrows or starlings would be expected although none were noted during the survey. No potential for ground nesting or farmland birds. The offsite adjacent broad-leaved woodland may offer potential for red listed species such as lesser spotted woodpecker. Other red and amber listed species are not expected onsite due to the lack of tree, density and disturbance.	N/A – considered absent.
Dormouse <i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>	Eight records of dormouse were returned from HBIC for within 2km of the site boundary, the closest being c.0.35km northwest of site in 2011. According to MAGIC there are three EPS licence returns for dormouse granted within 2km of the site boundary, the closest being c.0.4km west of site for destruction of a resting and breeding site in 2015.	There is no potential habitat onsite for dormouse. The offsite broadleaved woodland may offer potential habitat however it is relatively small and disconnected with a large barrier to dispersal from the wider woodland northwest of the site where dormouse is currently found.	N/A – considered absent.
Invertebrates	125 records were returned from HBIC for stag beetle <i>Lucanus cervus</i>, a notifiable invertebrate species, within 2km of the site boundary. The closest being c.0.28km south-west of the site.	There is no potential for stag beetle onsite. The offsite broadleaved woodland southwest of site provides potential habitat for stag beetle.	
Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i>	Five records of otter were returned from HBIC for within 2km of the site boundary, the closest being c.0.44km east of the site from 2011.	There are no watercourses on or adjacent to the site and no suitable habitat onsite with potential to support otter.	N/A – considered absent.
Reptiles	Records of five reptile species (adder <i>Vipera berus</i>, common lizard <i>Zootoca vivipara</i>, common toad <i>Bufo bufo</i>, grass snake <i>Natrix helvetica</i> and slow worm <i>Anguis fragilis</i>) were returned from HBIC within 2km of the site boundary. The closest being for grass snake c.0.14km east of the site from 2017.	There is no grassland or other habitat onsite with potential to support reptile foraging, commuting or sheltering. The offsite broadleaved woodland has potential to support reptiles.	N/A – considered absent.
Water vole <i>Arvicola amphibius</i>	No records of water vole were returned from HBIC for within 2km of the sit boundary.	There are no watercourses on or adjacent to the site and no suitable habitat onsite with potential to support water vole.	N/A – considered absent.

West European hedgehog <i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	59 records of west European hedgehog were returned from HBIC for within 2km of the site boundary, the closest being 0.38km south of the site from 2019.	There is no potential for west European hedgehog onsite. The offsite hedgerow and broad-leaved woodland adjacent to site do offer potential to support west European hedgehog.	N/A – considered absent.
Other Protected/ Priority Species	No other records for protected or priority species were returned.	No potential to support any other protected or priority species onsite or adjacent to the site.	N/A – considered absent.



Section 3: Impacts and Mitigation Strategy

Site Proposals

- 3.1. The proposals for the site include the repurposing of the current store to house an ALDI food store. The current building is not due to be demolished. There are no proposals to remove or change any of the onsite young trees or offsite habitats adjacent to and surrounding the site (see **Appendix 4** for site proposals).

Potential Impacts and Requirements for Mitigation

- 3.2. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006 gives the importance of conserving biodiversity a statutory basis, requiring government departments (which includes Local Planning Authorities) to have regard for biodiversity in carrying out their obligations (which includes determination of planning applications) and to take positive steps to further the conservation of listed species and habitats. These articles of legislation require Eastleigh Borough Council to take measures to protect species or habitats from the adverse effects of development, where appropriate, by using planning conditions or obligations.
- 3.3. Where there are potential impacts in the construction and operational stages of the development to the ecological features described in **Section 2**, these are described below in **Table 3.1**, together with their potential significance. No protected species are due to be affected by the proposed works and are therefore not included in **Table 3.1**. The baseline lighting currently on the building is not due to change and therefore bats will not be affected. There are no changes proposed to the offsite adjacent habitats and so no impact to protected species is anticipated. Where impacts would trigger legislation or planning policy (as set out in **Appendix 2**), mitigation is noted.



Table 3.1: Summary of potential impacts, significance, mitigation and enhancement.

Feature	Impacts	Potential Significance Before Mitigation (* denotes legal obligation)	Mitigation
Designated Sites			
European Statutory, National Statutory and Non-Statutory Sites	Given the size of the site and the habitats within, it would not be expected that the proposals would cause a direct or indirect impact upon the European statutory sites.	Negligible.	None required.
Habitats			
Building	Repurposing of current store into ALDI food store.	Negligible.	None required.
Offsite Treeline	Possible damage to offsite trees in adjacent treeline.	Local.	Appropriate best practice construction measures in line with an arboricultural report to protect the retained offsite adjacent trees during the construction phase. Additionally, no machinery or materials should be within fenced Aldi, Hedge End areas, either passing through or for storage. All retained vegetation will be protected in accordance with BS 5837:2012; Trees in relation to design, demolition, and construction and the appropriate arboricultural method statement followed.

- 3.4. No enhancement measures have been described due to limited opportunities within the redline boundary, which consists of solely a building and given the minimal impact of proposed works to any protected species. It is considered that the mitigation measures described alone will ensure compliance with local planning policies (see **Appendix 2**).

Section 4: Conclusion

- 4.1 With the implementation of the mitigation measure described in **Section 3**, the proposed development would be in conformity with relevant planning policy and legislation (see **Appendix 2**).
- 4.2 The mitigation strategy could be controlled through appropriately worded planning controls devised to secure the mitigation and enhancement strategy outlined in **Section 3** of this report to avoid impacts to retained offsite adjacent habitats, namely the treeline.



Appendix 1: Survey Methodology

- A1.1. A desk-based study was conducted in May 2021 whereby records of designated sites and records of protected and priority species were purchased and interrogated for the site and the surrounding landscape. The following resources were consulted/contacted:
- Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the countryside (MAGIC) website⁵;
 - Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre⁶
 - Eastleigh Borough Council⁷;
 - Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) website⁸;
 - Natural England (NE) designated sites website⁹;
 - UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP), now Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services¹⁰;
 - The Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) known as 'Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan'¹¹;
 - Ordnance Survey mapping; and
 - Google Maps, including aerial photography.
- A1.2. The following areas of search around the boundary of the site boundary were applied, as features within these study areas could be within the ZoI¹ of the proposed scheme:
- 2km for protected and priority species;
 - 2km for non-statutory and statutory designated sites; and
 - 10km for European statutory sites.
- A1.3. A site walkover survey was conducted on the 29th April 2021 by Grace England, Assistant Ecologist and qualifying member of CIEEM. This survey methodology was based on guidance set out in the 'Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey'¹² and entailed recording the main plant species and classifying and mapping broad habitat types present.
- A1.4. Note was taken of the more conspicuous fauna and any evidence of, or potential for the presence of protected or notable flora and fauna. A basic inventory of the habitats and a representative species list was produced. Where access allowed, adjacent habitats were also considered in order

⁷ <https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/>

⁸ <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/ProtectedSites/>

⁹ <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/>

¹⁰ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69446/pb13583-biodiversity-strategy-2020-111111.pdf

¹¹ biodiversity-action-plan-2012-22.pdf (eastleigh.gov.uk)



to assess the site within the wider landscape and to provide information with which to assess possible impacts within the context of the site boundary.

A1.5. A preliminary roost assessment was also conducted during the site walkover. The survey followed standard methodologies set out in the Bat Mitigation Guidelines¹², the Bat Workers Manual¹³ and Bat Surveys - Good Practice Guidelines³ and comprised:

- Building Preliminary Roost Assessment (Building PRA) – External building inspection survey to assess potential of buildings on site to support roosting bats;
- Tree Preliminary Roost Assessment (Tree PRA) – Ground level inspection of trees to assess potential of trees on site to support roosting bats;

Preliminary Roost Assessment

A1.6. A PRA was undertaken on all buildings and trees within and adjacent to the site. The assessment was undertaken on 29th April 2021 by Grace England, qualifying member of CIEEM. All surveys were daytime inspections and the conditions for all surveys was considered optimal. The location of the building at the site is shown on **Plan 14007_P01**. All buildings and trees were inspected from the ground using binoculars and a torch (Clulite - 1,000,000 candle light).

A1.7. In relation to buildings, such signs may include bat droppings, urine splashes, staining and features suitable for allowing bats access to roost (e.g. gaps behind soffits/hanging tiles/ridge tiles, lifted slates/flashing). In relation to trees, such features may include woodpecker holes, frost cracks, deadwood, knot holes and limb wounds.

A1.8. The potential of the buildings and trees to support roosting bats was assessed using the criteria shown in **Table A1.1** below.

Table A1.1: Building/Structure Assessment Criteria - adapted from Collins, 2016³.

Suitability	Description of Roosting Habitat
Negligible	Negligible habitat 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 habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e., unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation). A tree of sufficient size and age to contain Potential Roost Features (PRFs) but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited potential.
Moderate	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only).
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 potentially for longer periods of time.

¹² Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004) Bat Mitigation Guidelines English Nature, Peterborough

¹³ Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (eds). 2004., 3rd Edition Bat Workers' Manual, JNCC, Peterborough



- A1.9. The weather conditions during the survey were dry, 40% cloud cover and no wind with a temperature of 14°C.

Assessment of Importance

- A1.10. The Assessment of Importance of habitats and species is defined in accordance with published guidance. The level of importance of specific ecological features is assigned using a geographic frame of reference, with international being most important, then national, regional, district, local and lastly, within the site boundary only.
- A1.11. Evaluation is based on various characteristics that can be used to identify ecological features likely to be important in terms of biodiversity. These include site designations (such as SSSIs), or for undesignated features, conservation status (locally, nationally or internationally), and the quality or extent of habitats, habitat/species rarity, extent to which they are threatened throughout their range, or to their rate of decline. In terms of the quality of ecological features, this can refer to habitats (for instance if they are particularly diverse, or a good example of a specific habitat type), other features (such as wildlife corridors or mosaics of habitats) or species populations or assemblages.



Appendix 2: Planning Policy and Legislation

Legislation

- A2.1. Specific habitats and species receive legal protection in the UK under various pieces of legislation, including:
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended);
 - The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended);
 - The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000;
 - The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006;
 - The Hedgerows Regulations 1997; and
 - The Protection of Badgers Act 1992.
- A2.2. The European Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna, 1992, often referred to as the 'Habitats Directive', provides for the protection of key habitats and species considered of European importance. Annexes II and IV of the Directive list all species considered of community interest. The legal framework to protect the species covered by the Habitats Directive has been enacted under UK law through The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).
- A2.3. In Britain, the WCA 1981 (as amended) is the primary legislation protecting habitats and species. SSSIs, representing the best examples of our natural heritage, are notified under the WCA 1981 (as amended) by reason of their flora, fauna, geology or other features. All breeding birds, their nests, eggs and young are protected under the Act, which makes it illegal to knowingly damage or destroy the nest site during nesting season. Schedules 1, 5 and 8 afford protection to individual birds, other animals and plants.
- A2.4. The CROW Act 2000 strengthens the species enforcement provisions of the WCA 1981 (as amended) and makes it an offence to 'recklessly' disturb a protected animal whilst it is using a place of rest or shelter or breeding/nest site.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), February 2019

- A2.5. The updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in February 2019 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It replaces the first National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012. Paragraph 11 states that:
- "Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development."
- A2.6. Section 15 of the NPPF (paragraphs 170 to 177) considers the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment.
- A2.7. Paragraph 170 states that planning and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:



- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; and
- minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures”

A2.8. Paragraph 171 states that plans should distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.

A2.9. Paragraph 174 states that in order to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- a) “Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.”

A2.10. When determining planning applications, Paragraph 175 states that local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles:

- a) “if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons⁵⁸ and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.”



- A2.11. As stated in paragraph 176 the following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:
- a) "potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
 - b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and
 - c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites."
- A2.12. Paragraph 177 states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment because of its potential impact on a habitats site is being planned or determined.
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System*
- A2.13. ODPM Circular 06/05 was prepared to accompany PPS9, however continues to be valid, and material in the consideration of planning applications since PPS9's replacement by the NPPF.
- A2.14. ODPM Circular 06/05 provides guidance on applying legislation in relation to nature conservation and planning in England. Part I considers the legal protection and conservation of internationally designated sites (namely candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs), SACs, potential Special Protection Areas (pSPAs), SPAs and Ramsar sites) and Part II considers the legal protection and conservation of nationally designated sites, namely Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).
- A2.15. Part III considers the protection of habitats and species outside of designated areas (particularly UK Biodiversity Action Plan species and habitats, which it states are capable of being a material consideration in the preparation of local development documents and the making of planning decisions.
- A2.16. Part IV considers species protected by law and states that the presence of a protected species is a material consideration in the consideration of a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat and that it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted.

Local Planning Policy

Draft Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2029¹⁴

Strategic policy S5, Green infrastructure

- A2.17. Through new development and other initiatives the Borough Council will seek to achieve the provision, retention and/or enhancement of the following forms of multi-functional green infrastructure:
- i. strategic links to and between the borough's settlements and the major areas of open space including the country parks and the coast (see strategic policy S8);

¹⁴<https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/media/2244/draft-eastleigh-borough-local-plan-2011-2029-document-february-2014.pdf>



- ii. publicly accessible open space including formal sports facilities and informal amenity space (see policies DM31-DM33, Chapter 5 and detailed proposals in Chapter 6) which include:
 - a. playing fields south of M27 junction 5, Eastleigh, to replace those that will be lost to the residential allocation south of Chestnut Avenue (policy E1 Chapter 6 section 6.6);
 - b. playing fields west of Woodhouse Lane, Hedge End (policy HE1, Chapter 6 section 6.9);
 - c. public open space within the proposed development, west of Horton Heath (policy WE1, Chapter 6, section 6.11);
 - d. open space east of Long Lane, Bursledon (policy BU6, Chapter 6 section 6.4); and
 - e. on-site open space and allotments associated with residential development proposals (see proposed residential allocations in Chapter 6);
- iii. urban green infrastructure including amenity spaces, private gardens, landscape schemes, street trees, green roofs and walls, and links to and between areas of public open space and accessible countryside (see policy DM1, Chapter 5);
- iv. areas of nature conservation value (see strategic policy S11 below and policy DM9, Chapter 5);
- v. historic landscapes, including historic parks and gardens (see strategic policy S12 below and policy DM10, Chapter 5); and
- vi. opportunities for local food growing including allotments (see policies DM31 to DM33, Chapter 5 and detailed proposals in Chapter 6).

Strategic policy S11, Nature conservation

A2.18. The Borough Council will work with statutory and voluntary agencies and developers to:

- i. Protect, conserve and enhance areas subject to international, European, national and local nature conservation designations;
- ii. Assist in achieving national, county and local biodiversity targets as set out in Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs);
- iii. Protect, conserve and enhance networks of natural habitats and features, including the Priority Biodiversity Areas and Priority Biodiversity Links Revised Pre-submission Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2029 | February 2014 Chapter 4: Strategy for new development 62 identified in the Eastleigh Borough Biodiversity Action Plan 2012-2022, and watercourses, trees and hedgerows important to biodiversity and local character;
- iv. On new development sites seek enhancement of biodiversity through the provision of new habitats and features compatible with the native biodiversity characteristics of the borough; and
- v. Encourage and develop public understanding of biodiversity, enabling access where this does not harm nature conservation interests. (See policy DM9, Chapter 5).

A2.19. In order to prevent any adverse effects / impacts from development upon European sites within and outside the borough including the Solent European marine sites, the Council will work with PUSH, Natural England, the Environment Agency and other wildlife organisations to develop and implement a strategic approach to the protection of European sites from the direct and indirect



effects of development including recreational disturbance. Within Eastleigh borough this will include:

- a) implementing a suite of detailed mitigation proposals for the borough's coast as recommended by the Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project;
- b) contributing to major elements of the PUSH Green Infrastructure Strategy including the proposed Forest Park in Test Valley borough and the provision and enhancement of recreational green routes (see policy S8);
- c) the provision and enhancement of amenity open space with new development, including the provision of new biodiversity assets; and
- d) enhancement of the borough's existing recreation, open space and biodiversity assets.

Policy DM9, Nature conservation

A2.20. Development which is likely to adversely affect the integrity of an international or European nature conservation site will not be permitted. Development which is likely to have a direct or indirect adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) will not be permitted, unless the Borough Council is satisfied that the reasons for the development clearly outweigh the harm to the nature conservation value of the site. Development will not be permitted if it is likely to have a direct or indirect adverse effect on a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) or Local Nature Reserve as shown on the policies map (or on a more recent plan provided by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre), or on protected or priority habitat or species, or on any other feature of importance for wild fauna and flora, unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Borough Council that:

- i. the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the adverse effects on the nature conservation value of the site;
- ii. the adverse impacts are unavoidable; and
- iii. measures can be taken to mitigate or, if this is not possible, compensate for the adverse effects, such that the development will result in at least no net loss of biodiversity. In determining planning applications, the Borough Council will:
 - a. seek opportunities to create or enhance habitats and features of nature conservation interest, having regard to local geodiversity and soils;
 - b. have regard to the need to protect, and opportunities to enhance the Priority Biodiversity Areas and the Priority Biodiversity Links set out in the Council's Biodiversity Action Plan 2012-2022; and
 - c. require mitigation measures in connection with new residential development as identified by the Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Borough Council that individually, or in combination with others, the development is not likely to have significant adverse impacts on the integrity of the Solent European marine sites.



Policy DM19, Retail development

A2.21. Retail development will be permitted in the defined centres provided that it:

- i. is compatible with the role and retail character of the centre; and
- ii. it accords with policies for Eastleigh town centre set out in Chapter 6 (policies E6 – E8, Section 6.6).

A2.22. Retail development will only be permitted outside these centres subject to a sequential test demonstrating that, having shown flexibility on store format and the scope for disaggregation, there are no suitable, viable and available sites or premises for the proposed use within, or failing that adjoining, an existing centre. In addition, the proposed development must:

- a. be within the urban edge (as defined on the policies map);
- b. not by itself or cumulatively with other proposals undermine the vitality and viability of any existing centre. A retail impact assessment will be required for proposals equal to or greater than 2,500sq.m of net additional retail floorspace; and
- c. be sustainably located in terms of accessibility by modes of transport other than the private car and its connections to one or more existing centres.

A2.23. Conditions restricting the range of goods sold, the sub-division of units or internal alterations that would increase floorspace may be applied. The relief of conditions that restrict out-of-centre stores to the sale of specific goods will not be permitted where this would conflict with criteria (b) and (c) above.



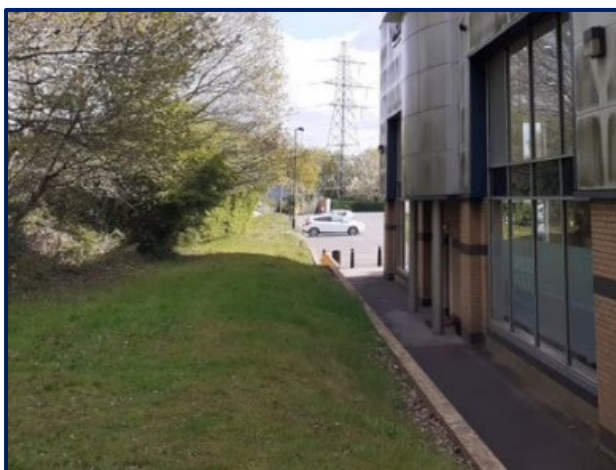
Appendix 3: Site Photographs



Photograph 1: Current DFS store onsite.



Photograph 2: Current offsite DFS car park adjacent to site.



Photograph 3: Offsite amenity grassland to west of DFS store and car park.



Photograph 4: Offsite broadleaved woodland southwest of site.



Photograph 5: Offsite industrial unit connected to onsite building.



Photograph 6: Offsite introduced shrubs and young trees in car park to north of site.





Photograph 7: Offsite species-poor hedgerow to northwest of site adjacent to car park.



Photograph 8: Offsite treeline of young, semi-mature and mature trees adjacent to west of onsite building.



Appendix 4: Site Proposals





- KEY**
- Application Boundary
 - Landlord Boundary
 - Existing Tree
 - Block paving
 - Soft Landscaping
 - Tarmacudum
 - Concrete Surface
 - Tactile paving
 - HDB Heavy Duty Bollard
 - PF Palisade Fence
 - Denotes EVCP (Electronic vehicle charging point)
 - Denotes provision for future EVCP

NOTES:
Based on topographical survey by Berry Geomatics Drawing no. 37/22 dated April 2021
Refer to 200698-1301 for Proposed unit layout
200698-1500 for Proposed elevations

Proposed Parking Space Numbers		- 248
Standard		- 211
Disabled Spaces		- 8
Parent & Child		- 8
Click & Collect		- 2
EVCP		- 4
Staff		- 15



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Project: Southampton, Hedge End Retail Park
Former DFS
Client: Aldi Stores Ltd

Project Number	Drawing Number	Revision
200698-1300	P3	

Date: 08/06/21
Drawn by: JAC
Checked by: MW
Project Status: PLANNING

Drawn by: JAC
Date: 08/06/21
By: JAC
Notes: Check all dimensions and levels in situ

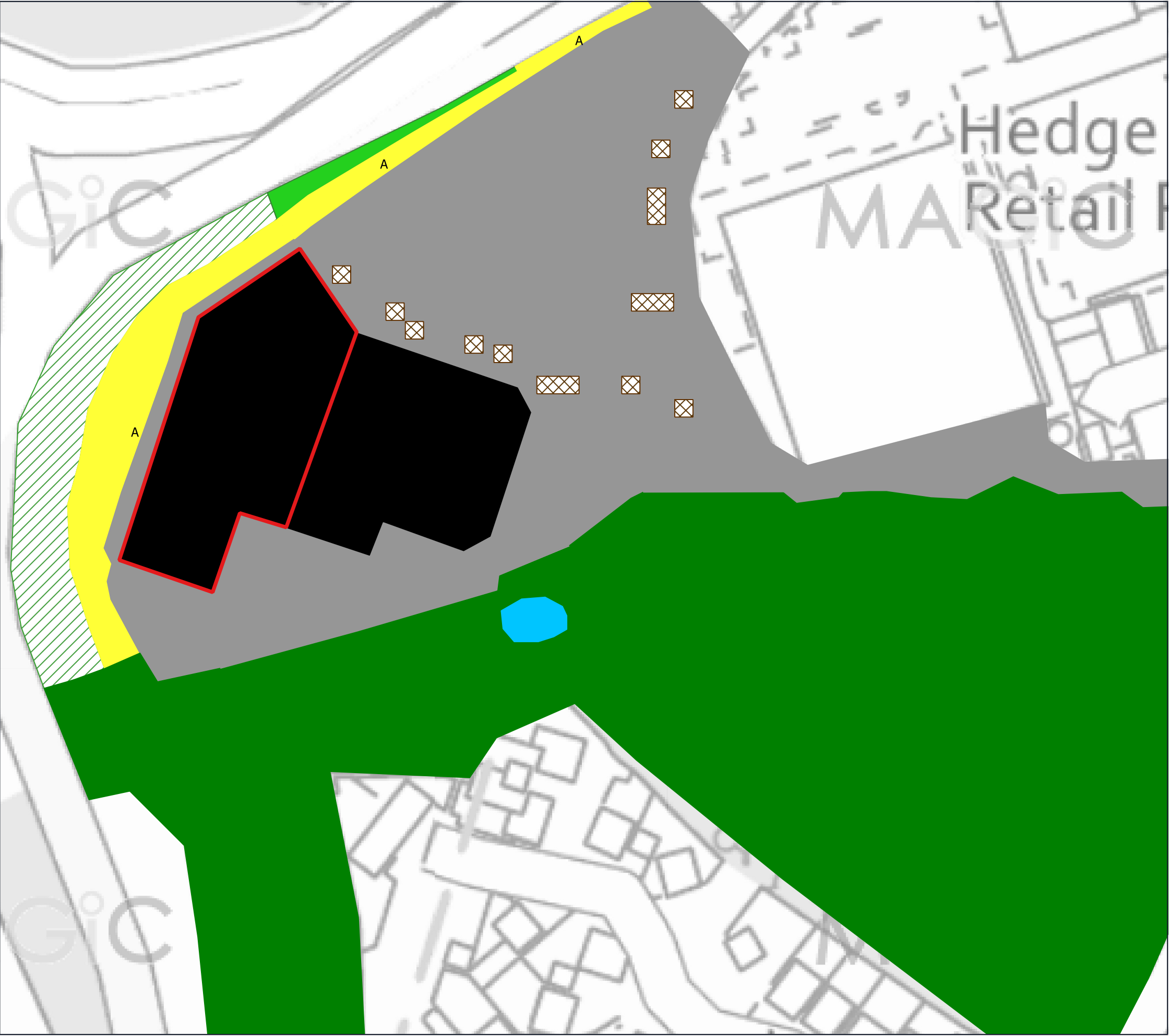
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P3 07/07/2021 KH MW DRS added. Parking adjusted accordingly.
P2 21/06/21 JAC/MW ESDR windows omitted. Landlord boundary updated in line with Title HP250201
P1 08/06/21 JAC/MW Drawing Issue
Rev: Date: By: App: Notes

Plans: Habitat Features Plan

Plan 1: 14007_P01





- Site Boundary
- Habitat Features
 - Offsite Broadleaved Woodland
 - Building
 - Offsite Amenity Grassland
 - Offsite Hardstanding
 - Offsite Species-Poor Hedgerow
 - Offsite Pond
 - Offsite Treeline
 - Offsite Introduced Shrubs and Young Trees



Project	Aldi, Hedge End, Southampton
Drawing Title	14007_Habitat Features Plan
Scale	Not To Scale
Drawing No.	14007/P01
Date	19th May 2021
Checked	GE/DM



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