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16th December 2025

Ref: L251216 McDonalds Wrexham, LL13 8HF

To Whom It May Concern,

The Site

Practical Ecology Ltd were commissioned to undertake a Site walkover and to produce a letter report of the proposed McDonald's restaurant at Tesco, Wrexham (postcode: LL13 8HF, OS grid reference: SJ 34135 50466), hereafter referred to at the 'Site'. The red line boundary is shown in **Figure 1** below. The proposed development is for a McDonald's drive-thru restaurant which will be constructed in the carpark of Tesco and a disused carpark. A proposal plan has been included in **Appendix 1** (Drawing number: 7611-SA-2543-P1004E Site Layout Plan - As Proposed (NG100).

This report presents ecological information gathered during a desk study and an ecological walkover survey of the Site undertaken on Tuesday 2nd December 2025.

To the Author's knowledge, no previous ecological surveys have been undertaken at the Site.

Ecological baseline information for the Site is crucial to ensure that the potential effects of the development on flora and fauna can be suitably managed.

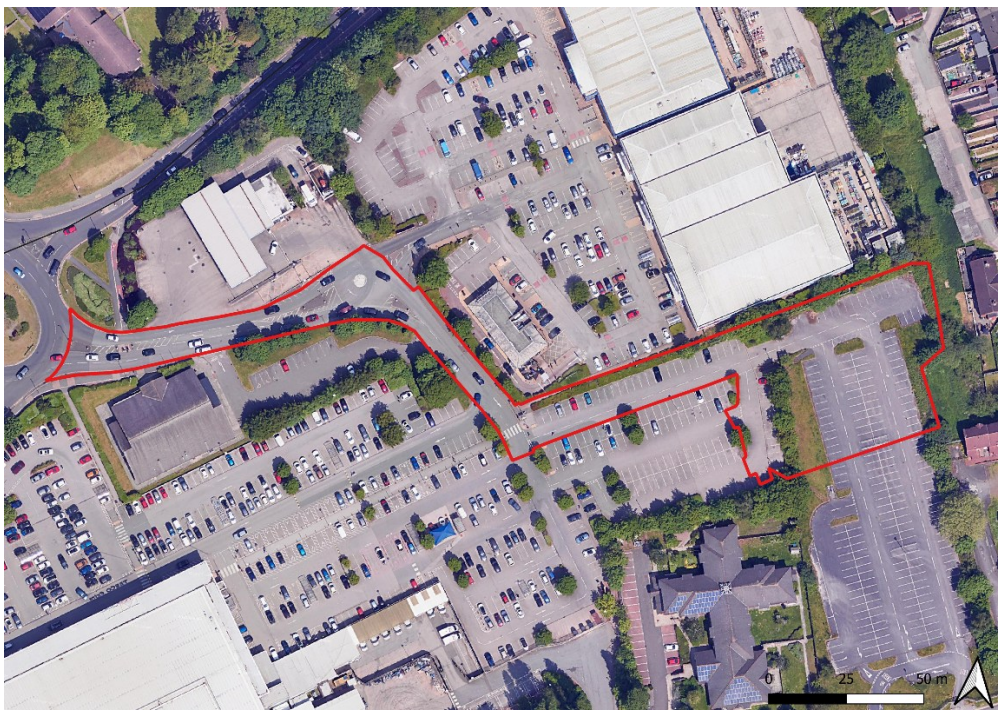


Figure 1: Site Boundary (Google Earth, 2025).

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Desk Study

A search for Statutory Sites of Nature Conservation Value and Priority Habitats[1] within 1 km of the Site was undertaken using the Multi Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)[2] and DataMap Wales[3]. The Local Planning Portal, Wrexham County Borough Council[4], was checked for any adjacent or relevant planning applications to the Site and for local planning policy requirements.

Records of protected species, notable species, invasive species, and non-statutory sites from within 1 km of the Site were procured from Cofnod (The Home of Wildlife Data for North Wales)[5] as part of this desk-based study and are presented in this report where relevant. Records provided by the record centre that are more than ten years old are only reported on if they are deemed to still be relevant.

Site Walkover

An ecological walkover was undertaken on 2nd December 2025 by Chris King; a Senior Ecologist with twelve years of experience in ecological consultancy.

This survey assessed the value of the vegetation onsite and adjacent habitats, and their potential to support protected or notable species and habitats following the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal[6] published by the Chartered Institute for Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

Limitations

Due to the seasonal behaviour of animals and the seasonal growth patterns of plants, ecological surveys may be limited by the time of year in which they are undertaken. Many animals in the UK have variable detectability throughout the year due to seasonal behaviour, including hibernation and migration. Some plant species are not readily identifiable in December as distinguishing flowers and fruits may not be visible. Therefore, this survey may not provide a complete list of the plants and animals present, or which may utilise the Site throughout the year.

As part of standard practice, a data search has been undertaken from the local biological record centre. This is not considered to be a complete list of species present and is better considered to be a list of species recorded, with many species known to be under-recorded.

These limitations are not considered to have affected the accuracy of the assessment or the recommendations provided in this report, and, where considered necessary, recommendations for further surveys have been made to overcome these limitations.

This letter report presents conditions and recommendations for the Site based on the state of the Site during the survey visit. Any changes in the management of the Site habitats will therefore potentially invalidate this letter report and its recommendations.

Results and Assessment of Effects

Habitats and Designated Sites

Habitats

No priority habitats were present within 1 km of the Site. The majority of the Site lies within tarmac hardstanding in the form of the current Tesco carpark with access roads and part of it is a disused carpark. A metal palisade fence was

[1] Maddock, A. ed., 2008. UK Biodiversity Action Plan; Priority Habitat Descriptions. [pdf] Available at: http://archive.jncc.gov.uk/PDF/UKBAP_PriorityHabitatDesc-Rev2011.pdf

[2] https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx

[3] https://datamap.gov.wales/layers/geonode:gwc21_priority_habitat_high_sensitivity
[4] https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/residents
[5] https://www.cofnod.org.uk/
[6] CIEEM, 2017. Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal: Second Edition. December 2017.

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located along the northern boundary parallel to the adjacent store building and extending along the eastern boundary. These habitats are of negligible ecological importance. Other habitats within the red line boundary include introduced shrub, dense scrub, ruderal vegetation and scattered trees. See **Appendix 2** for Site photos of the habitats. The introduced shrub is present mainly along the northern Site boundary alongside the existing and disused carpark. The dominant species was cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster* spp.) with occasional laurel (*Laurus* sp.) and butterfly bush (*Buddleja*). This habitat is of negligible ecological importance.

Areas of dense scrub are present in the eastern areas of the Site, and a patch is present on the northern boundary within the introduced shrubs. This comprises bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*), dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and buddleia (*Buddleja* sp.). The dense scrub is considered to be of up to local ecological importance. There are individual broadleaved scattered trees situated among the dense scrub. The species recorded include pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*) and sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). All of the trees are young to semi-mature and are of up to local ecological importance. An area of tall ruderal vegetation is located in the western section of the disused carpark. Due to the lack of recent management, this area now represents ruderal vegetation, however it is likely that it was previously modified grassland. The species recorded include cock's-foot grass (*Dactylis glomerata*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), fescue (*Festuca* sp.), clover (*Trifolium* spp.), crane's-bill (*Geranium* spp.), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), broadleaf dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*) and dandelion (*Taraxacum* sp.). It has negligible ecological importance.

The habitats within the disused carpark appear to have little to no recent management, as the vegetation is dense and has grown over some car parking spaces. The habitats within the main carpark appear to have recent management, as the introduced shrubs have a tidy appearance. Adjacent habitats include an extension of the carparks, with commercial development and roads surrounding the Site, and houses and gardens to the east and south of the Site.

The majority of the habitats to be removed are common and ubiquitous, or have no ecological value in their own right, with the exception of the scattered trees and dense scrub (See **Appendix 1** for a plan of vegetation removal).

Statutory and Non-statutory Sites of Nature Conservation Value

The desk study returned no records for statutory or non-statutory sites within 1 km of the Site. The Site lies in an Impact Risk Zone (IRZ), which are used by local planning authorities (LPA) to assess whether developments are likely to impact statutory sites, including internationally designated sites as well as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Details of the relevant sites are shown in **Table 1**, below. The Site lies in the IRZ for River Dee and Bala Lakes (SSSI and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)) and does not require consultation with Natural England.

Table 1: Statutory Site Descriptions

Name	Designation	Distance (km)	Direction	Notable Features
IRZ – Statutory Sites				
Afon Dyfrdwy (River Dee) and Bala Lake	Special Areas of Conservation (Wales and England) (SAC), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (Wales and England) (SSSI)	7.7	E	The main channel of the River Dee lies within both Wales and England and is notified as two separate SSSIs – the Afon Dyfrdwy (River Dee) SSSI in Wales and the River Dee (England) SSSI in England. Afon Dyfrdwy (River Dee) is of special interest for its fluvial geomorphology, Carboniferous geology, range of river habitat types, saltmarsh transition habitats, populations of floating water plantain (*Luronium natans),* slender hare's-ear (*Bupleurum tenuissimum*), sea barley (*Hordeum marinum*), hard-grass (*Parapholis strigose*), otter (*Lutra lutra*), salmon

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Name	Designation	Distance (km)	Direction	Notable Features
				(*Salmo salar*), bullhead (*Cottus gobio*), brook lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*), river lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*), sea lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*), club-tailed dragonfly (*Gomphus vulgatissimus*) and other aquatic invertebrates.

Protected and Priority Species

Bats

The desk study returned records for common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), pipistrelle species (*Pipistrellus* sp.), noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) and brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*) within 1 km of the Site. No records of roosts or granted mitigation licences pertaining to the Site were returned.

The Site provides limited foraging and commuting habitat for bats in the form of the dense scrub and scattered trees on the northern and eastern boundary. The eastern boundary vegetation is likely to provide a 'dark corridor' for commuting and foraging bats in the local area as it is connected to the wider landscape by the vegetation extending north and south from the Site, however it is unlikely that any species would be reliant on the Site alone. This is because the Site is surrounded by urban development with limited vegetation. Also, it is well lit by streetlights and security lighting, therefore it is likely to only be suitable for more light tolerant species. All the trees within the red line boundary were assessed as having *'none' suitability*[7] for roosting bats. The majority of the Site is currently likely subject to light spill from the car park.

The scattered trees and dense scrub on the northern boundary are to be removed, along with part of the dense scrub on the eastern boundary. Therefore, the habitat for foraging and commuting bats will be reduced. As the trees were assessed to have *'none' suitability*[7] for roosting bats, no impacts on roosting bats are anticipated as a result of the development. However, increased lighting from the development may light up retained vegetation, such as the scattered trees on the eastern boundary and 'dark corridor' adjacent to the Site.

Great Crested Newt

No records for great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) were returned in the data search and no European Protected Species Mitigation licences (EPSML) for great crested newt were identified during the desk study. No ponds were identified within 500 m of the Site.

The Site offers low suitability for foraging and commuting amphibians, such as great crested newt, however the Site is isolated, surrounded by urban development and there are no nearby waterbodies. Because of these reasons, it is considered that great crested newt are highly unlikely to be present within the Site and no effects are anticipated on great crested newt as a result of the development.

Birds

A wide assemblage of bird species records were returned in the data search. Red and amber listed species[8] in the data search most likely to be impacted by the development, as they may utilise the Site, include dunnock (*Prunella modularis*), swift (*Apus apus*), woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*), wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) and house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*). No birds or bird nests were noted during the Site visit.

The dense scrub, introduced shrubs, and scattered trees provide suitable nesting and foraging habitat for birds. The

[7] Collins, J. ed., 2023. Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th ed). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

[8] Stanbury, A., Eaton, M., Aebischer, N., Balmer, D., Brown, A., Douse, A., Lindley, P., McCulloch, N., Noble, D., and Win I. 2021. The status of our bird populations: the fifth Birds of Conservation Concern in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man and second IUCN Red List assessment of extinction risk for Great Britain. British Birds 114: 723-747.

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majority of these habitats are to be removed during the development, and the retained vegetation, such as some retained trees, may still be affected by the development through the use of machinery. Therefore, if Site clearance is undertaken during the nesting bird season (which is considered to run from March to September, inclusive, but does vary depending on weather) could see the damage or destruction of active nests.

Reptiles

The data search returned no relevant reptile records. The Site offers low suitability for foraging and commuting reptiles in the form of the dense scrub, introduced shrubs and ruderal vegetation. There is low suitability for hibernating reptiles in the form of the dense scrub, as they may utilise root balls.

The Site is surrounded by urban development so is relatively isolated by roads and other carparks from vegetation further away. It is unlikely that a reptile would be reliant on the Site alone, but there is a low risk that they may be transiently present. There was no evidence of reptiles during the Site visit however, if present, there is a risk of injuring or killing individual reptiles during Site clearance and the removal of the dense scrub, introduced shrubs and ruderal vegetation.

Badger

One record for badger (*Meles meles*) was returned in the data search within the last 10 years, located 756 m south and dated 2023. Some mammal paths were noted passing through the dense scrub in the east of the Site, likely linking to adjacent vegetated habitat to the east and north of the Site. However, no clear evidence of badger such as footprints, hairs, latrines or snuffle holes were identified during the Site walk-over.

There are no clear signs of badger onsite, however if badger are present within the wider area, they could be transiently present onsite. If transiently present, there could be a risk of entrapment if any excavations or holes made during the construction phase are left uncovered overnight.

Hazel Dormouse

No records or licences for hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) were returned in the data search. There are no known populations of hazel dormice in the area[9]. The scrub onsite and adjacent to the Site has limited suitability for hazel dormice, however it is isolated and surrounded by urban development. It is considered highly unlikely that hazel dormice are present within the Site, therefore no impacts are anticipated.

Other Notable and Priority Species

Twenty-five records of hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) were returned in the data search within 1 km of the Site within the last 10 years. The closest record was c.130 m south of the Site, dated 2017.

The mammal runs noted were too large to have been created by hedgehog, however it is considered reasonably likely that hedgehog, if present utilise them. The dense scrub and introduced shrubs provide suitable foraging, refuge and commuting habitat for small mammal species such as hedgehog.

There is a risk of injury or killing of hedgehog, if present within this vegetation if the works are undertaken during the hibernation period.

Invasive Non-native Species

There were five records of invasive non-native species within 1 km of the Site, that may occur onsite, returned in the data search. These species included buddleia and Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*). The closest record of an invasive non-native species was buddleia located 344 m south of the Site, dated 2019.

[9] https://records.nbnatlas.org/occurrences/search?q=lsid:NHMSYS0000080214&fq=occurrence_status:present&nbn_loading=true#tab_mapView

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There were two invasive non-native species noted onsite in the introduced shrubs and dense scrub, which were cotoneaster and buddleia. Cotoneaster is also listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended)1981[10]. Without mitigation the development could cause further spread of buddleia and cotoneaster into the wider landscape.

Requirements

An ecological Method Statement is required to enable safe vegetation clearance (which includes the removal of the dense scrub, ruderal vegetation, introduced shrubs and scattered trees) to mitigate against the low perceived risk to nesting birds, reptiles, badger, invasive and non-native species, tree roots, bats and small mammals such as hedgehog.

The Method Statement will outline measures including timings to avoid vegetation clearance during the nesting bird season (the nesting bird season is considered to run from March to September, inclusive, but does vary depending on weather). If this is not possible and clearance is undertaken during the during nesting season, then it should only be undertaken within 24-48 hours of a nesting bird check undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist. Should nests be encountered then clearance around the nest will be paused, and a reasonable buffer installed until young have fledged the nest. Also, it should avoid vegetation clearance during the reptile hibernation season (which typically runs from October to March inclusive) and there should be staged cutting of dense scrub and ruderal vegetation whilst under supervision by a suitably experience ecologist acting as an Ecological Clerk of Works (EcCOW) to allow small mammals and reptiles to flee of their own volition or be relocated outside of the work areas. The staged cutting will also allow for the presence and identification of any Schedule 9 plant species (dependant on time of year and plant visibility) and the best practice guidelines of removing the cotoneaster and buddleia should be adhered to. Advice from a specialist contractor may be required to ensure the invasive species are carefully removed and disposed of, to avoid spreading into adjacent habitats. Regarding bats, the method statement will include measures to reduce unnecessary light spill onto retained vegetation onsite and adjacent to the Site.

The ecological method statement will also include measures to prevent entrapment of species in excavations, such as badger and hedgehog, the safe storage of materials, protection of retained trees from accidental damage including root and tree/hedgerow protection measures (in line with the British Standard for trees in relation to construction BS 5837:2012) which must be installed in the pre-construction phase and maintained throughout the construction phase. Any excavations or holes made during the construction phase should be covered or fenced off overnight, or if not possible then roughened planks should be placed inside to provide a means of escape. In the unlikely event a European protected species or protected/notable species is found, works must immediately cease and a suitably experienced and qualified ecologist must be contacted for advice.

The trees on the eastern boundary in the dense scrub must be retained. The trees which are to be removed (6-8 mature silver birch trees and 6 young to semi mature pedunculate oak trees) should be compensated for by planting the same number of native trees within the retained vegetation. Additional screen planting on the boundaries of the Site should include mixed scrub planting using native species, such as hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and elder (*Sambucus nigra*).

The loss of nesting habitat for birds, in the form of the dense scrub, introduced shrubs, and scattered trees, should be compensated by installing 3 bird boxes onto the retained trees. They should be open fronted bird boxes suitable for common passerine birds. They should be north or east facing and c. 1 m high.

The proposals will be required to show a net benefit for biodiversity within the landscape planting and faunal features, in accordance with Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, 2024)[11]. To contribute to a Net Benefit for Biodiversity, the habitats onsite could be enhanced by planting of seed and fruit bearing plants with known value to wildlife and pollinators. This should include a range of plant types that provide a range of resources across different seasons, with

[10] Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended (*SI 1981 c.69*) Available online at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69
[11] https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024-07/planning-policy-wales-edition-12.pdf

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shrub species such as holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*) or English lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*). Overall, this will provide habitats not currently present onsite.

Enhancements

Landscape proposals could incorporate night scented plants or those species beneficial to bats.

Conclusion

Providing the recommendations outlined in this report are implemented, including securing the production and implementation of a Method Statement and Net Benefits for Biodiversity, the works will be in accordance with policy and legislation.

Kind regards,

Bethany

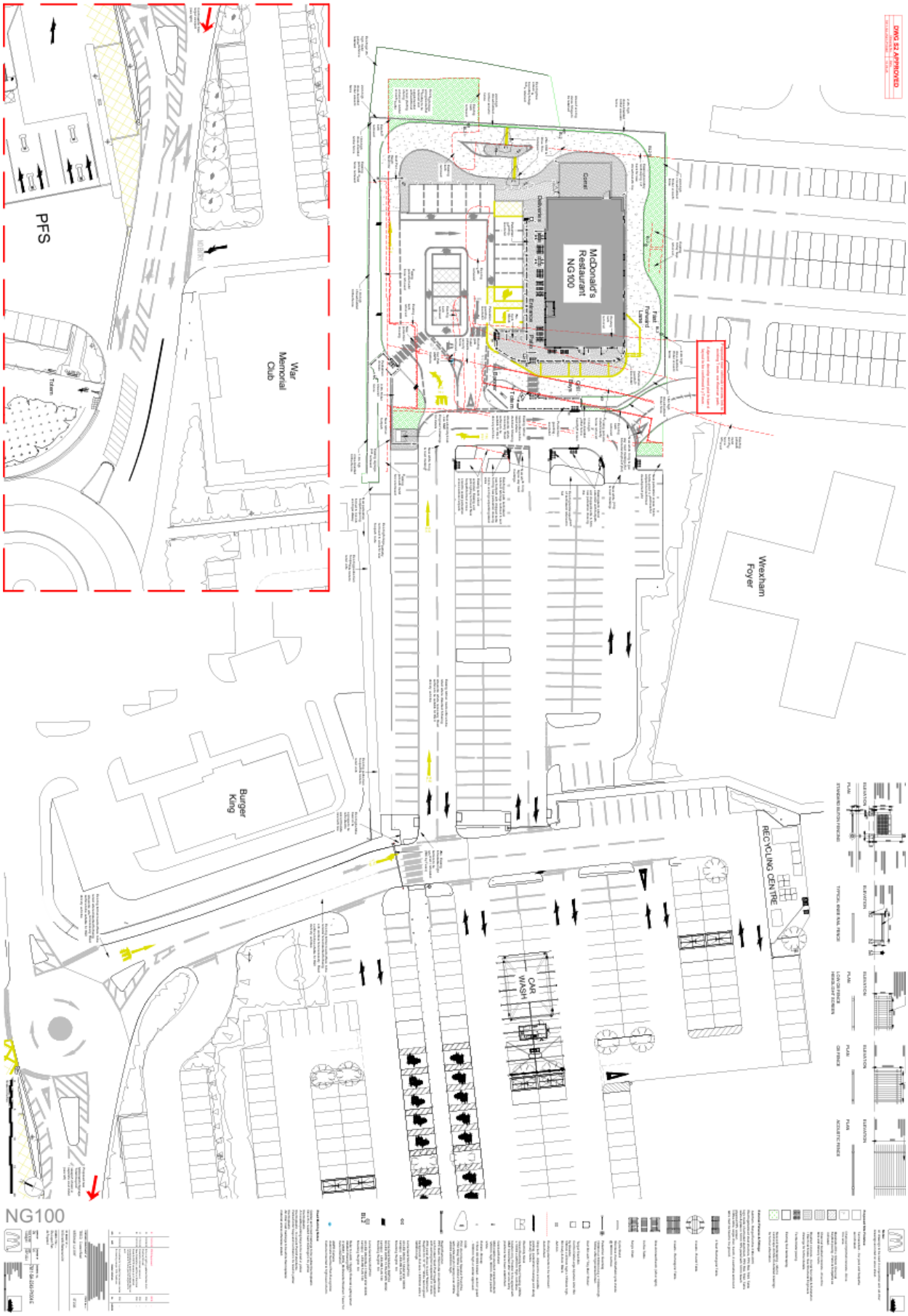
Bethany Donoghue BSc, Assistant Ecologist

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Appendix 1 – Proposed Site Layout



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Appendix 2: Site Photos



Photo 1: View of the Site from the Southern Boundary.



Photo 2: Scattered Trees in Dense Scrub on Northern Boundary.



Photo 3: Introduced Shrub.

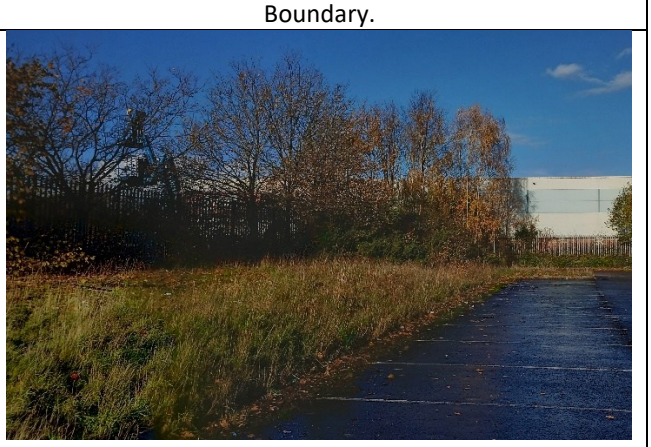


Photo 4: Ruderal Plant Growth.



Photo 5: Access Road and Introduced Shrubs.



Photo 6: Northern and Eastern Boundary.

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