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**PROPOSED TESCO FOODSTORE
AT THE BRETT WORKS SITE,
HADLEIGH, SUFFOLK**

LANDSCAPE REPORT

February 2008

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Novell Tullett has been appointed by Tesco Stores Limited to carry out a landscape appraisal and advise on the landscape masterplan for a Tesco foodstore on the Brett Works site in Hadleigh, Suffolk.
- 1.2 This report is intended to support a planning application for a Tesco foodstore, associated access and parking and landscaped areas.
- 1.3 In developing a development strategy and landscape masterplan for the Brett Works site, particular care has been taken to ensure that the development does not have an adverse impact on the character and quality of the adjacent Riverside Walk, the Hadleigh Conservation Area and the River Brett Special Landscape Area. The Secretary of State pointed out the need for this approach in his decision relating to the 2000 inquiry. The Secretary of State also agreed that the development scheme presented to the inquiry would “continue to provide an appropriate setting for the Conservation Area” (paragraph 30) and that the proposed layout and planting “would in time integrate the Tesco development into the landscape” (paragraph 33).
- 1.4 The Secretary of State at that time decided that the access arrangement previously proposed would have an unacceptable adverse effect on the character of the High Street; this access from the High Street has been omitted in favour of access via Bridge Street to the north. The Bridge Street access route (Figure 4) necessitates the reconfiguration of the District Council car park and the relocation of several existing allotments.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

(With reference to photographic viewpoints shown in Figures 1 and 2 and Photographs in Appendix 1.)

2.1 Site Description

2.1.1 The proposed store is situated to the rear of Nos. 93 to 111 High Street, Hadleigh. The southern half of the site is currently occupied by the 'Brett Works', a collection of unsightly, poor-quality workshops, industrial sheds and associated hardstandings of various condition and size. (Photographs 1).

2.1.2 With the exception of the access road and council car park most of the proposed development is excluded from the Hadleigh Conservation Area which lies around the edge of the existing Brett Works.

2.1.3 The remaining land to the north is rough meadow and, although most of it is in floodplain it is no longer wet. This area contains old caravans, scrap, piles of spoil, bonfire sites and rusting agricultural machinery. (Photograph 3 & 4).

2.1.4 The eastern boundary of the site is partly defined by the rear curtilages of properties fronting onto the High Street, and partly by the boundary of Red House and its garden.

2.1.5 The northern portion of the site consists of meadows, allotments, and a council car park. The site boundary here is formed by the River Brett, beyond which lies countryside within the Special Landscape Area and a small informal park in front of the council offices (Photograph 8.) The field boundaries of the meadows and allotments are defined by broken fence lines, interspersed along their lengths by single trees and tree groups. The meadow's strongest landscape features are a number of mature native trees clustered alongside the River Brett.

2.1.6 The site's south-eastern boundary is partly defined by the walls of an existing workshop unit. The larger portion of this boundary is formed by the wall to the gardens of Hadleigh House and Deanery Lodge to the south of the site.

2.1.7 The western boundary of the proposed foodstore site is formed by the attractive

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River Brett and the adjoining River Brett Riverside Walk. The river and woodland Riverside Walk on its west bank are County Wildlife sites. The woodland Riverside Walk is also a Local Nature Reserve and within a designated Special Landscape Area. There are filtered views of the existing dilapidated Brett Works buildings from the footpath (Photograph 2.)

- 2.1.8 Further to the west of the site, beyond the Riverside Walk, the land gently rises up to Broom Hill / Constitution Hill at an elevation of 50-60m AOD, approximately 35-40m above the River Brett, where public footpaths offer a vantage point over the town.
- 2.1.9 The proposed vehicular access route for both service vehicles and customers would approach the foodstore from the north along a new road from Bridge Street. This would pass over part of the District Council car park (Photograph 11), the northern edge of an area of allotments (Photograph 9) and the northern end of a rank meadow area. (Photograph 3)
- 2.1.10 The boundary between the meadow and the allotments is defined by a broken post and wire fence line interspersed along its length by a number of small individual trees and large shrubs. (Photograph 10)
- 2.1.11 The allotments have an 'L-shaped' configuration wrapped around the Council car park to the north and bounded to the west and north by the River Brett. The allotments total approximately 14,000m² in area. Allotment owners access the area via a gated entry point at the south-eastern corner of the car park to the south of No.17 Bridge Street.
- 2.1.12 The allotments are sub-divided into individual plots separated by a combination of grass or gravel footways and roads. Scattered across the allotments are numerous wooden tool sheds (Photograph 7).
- 2.1.13 The allotments' eastern boundary is formed by a close-boarded timber fence beyond which lies to the rear of the garden of No. 17 Bridge Street.
- 2.1.14 The District Council car park is situated alongside the River Brett, Bridge Street and

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Bridge House, a Victorian property now used by Babergh District Council for storage purposes. (Photograph 11) The windows of this property have been boarded –up.

2.1.15 The asphalt car park is approximately 2,000m² in extent and provides parking for 103 cars. The car park's southern and western boundaries with the allotments are formed by a 1.8m high clipped hedge which in parts contains a chain-link fence (Photograph 11). Motorists enter and exit the car park via a one-way system off Bridge Street, entering along the roadway between No. 17 Bridge Street and Bridge House and exiting to the west of Bridge House. (Photograph 12)

2.1.16 Council workers and/or visitors using the car park are afforded direct access to the nearby Council offices via a footbridge situated along the car park's northern boundary with the River Brett (Photograph 6). Pedestrians crossing the footbridge towards the Council offices then cross a small and attractive informal riverside park which fronts the Council's offices. (Photograph 8)

2.2 Topography

2.2.1 The foodstore site slopes gently, and with a fairly consistent grade, from its eastern boundary near to Pound Lane at a level of approximately 20.70m AOD down to 18.25m AOD at the River Brett, which flows along the western boundary. As indicated in Figure 2, the lower two thirds or so of the site falls within the one hundred year floodplain of the River Brett.

2.2.2 The bridge over the River Brett sits at an elevation of approximately 20.25m AOD and the adjoining car park at an elevation of approximately 19.00m AOD.

2.3 Access

2.3.1 There are no public footpaths across the foodstore site.

2.3.2 Private access to the meadowland to the north and east of the foodstore site is via No. 123 and No.109 (The Cinch) High Street respectively.

2.3.3 Cars access the District Council car park via Bridge Street and a short length of

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single-carriageway road between Bridge House and No. 17 Bridge Street (Photographs 11 and 15). Pedestrians can also approach the car park via a footbridge over the River Brett located half way along the car park's northern, River Brett boundary.

2.3.4 The allotments are accessed via a chain-link metal gate situated to the rear and south of No. 17 Bridge Street.

2.2.5 Public access and access to property within the Brett Works site is currently restricted to Pound Lane. (Photographs 13 and 16)

2.4 Ecology

2.4.1 The first Ecological assessment of the proposed foodstore allocation site was undertaken in June / July 1999. These ecological surveys covered the Brett Works site and looked at flora, birds, certain invertebrate groups and a search for signs of specifically-protected species such as Bats, Otters, Voles and Great Crested Newts. As a result of these surveys, a more specialised bat survey was undertaken.

2.4.2 In consideration of a vehicular access route to the foodstore site from Bridge Street, an additional ecological survey of the meadow to the north of the foodstore site, the District Council car park and the adjacent River Brett was undertaken in July 2002.

2.4.3 Once the decision had been made on the access road alignment, an updated general ecological survey of the whole site was conducted in 2004. A bat survey of Bridge House was undertaken in January of this year. The 2004 ecological report and the 2007 bat survey are attached as Appendix 2.

2.4.3 The existing meadow areas, allotments and car park are devoid of any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations.

2.4.5 The River Brett and the adjoining riverside woodland area to the west are designated as County Wildlife Sites. This woodland is also a Local Nature Reserve.

2.4.6 The ecological assessments found that the bulk of the area studied is of limited

nature conservation value and does not support any nationally, regionally or locally rare or uncommon species of flora or fauna.

2.4.7 There is however, evidence of water voles using the river banks on the opposite side of the River Brett close to the site and the ecological survey did find several locations within the foodstore site and the meadows to the north where areas of ecological interest could be significantly enhanced. These areas are primarily concentrated on land alongside the River Brett with an additional area of ecological interest found in a patch of wetland around the remains of a former drainage channel situated immediately to the north of the foodstore site. The potential value of these areas is discussed more fully in section 4.5 of this report.

2.5 Existing Trees

2.5.1 The majority of the trees within the site are found along the eastern bank of the River Brett. These trees are covered by a Woodland TPO running along both sides of the river for some distance both upstream and downstream of the site. The majority of other trees on site are protected by legislation associated with Hadleigh Conservation Area. There are few trees within the hinterland areas of the foodstore allocation site.

2.5.2 An arboricultural assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 3. This report reveals that there are very few trees of any individual merit within the foodstore site. However, collectively the riverside group covered by TPO do, *en masse*, form an important landscape feature.

2.5.3 An alder and willow-dominated copse and a tree-studded hedgerow provide good definition to the foodstore's northern boundary.

2.5.4 There are some trees within properties to the east of the foodstore site. There are also a number of semi-mature trees within the District Council car park.

2.5.5 Outside the foodstore site the most prominent trees are those found scattered alongside the River Brett to the north and west and in the Church Yard and gardens to the south.

2.6 Landscape Character

2.6.1 The study area can be divided into the following seven landscape character areas:

(i) Brett Works and Associated Industrial Development

2.6.2 The existing industrial development on the site is of poor quality (Photograph 1). It has an uncomfortable relationship with the river and its riparian landscape (Photograph 2), and detracts from the character of Pound Lane to the south, and the surrounding landscape.

2.6.3 Brett Works is excluded from the Conservation Area. Redevelopment of the site with a carefully-considered scheme offers the opportunity for significant improvements to this part of Hadleigh.

(ii) The Meadowlands (Photographs 3 and 4)

2.6.4 The landscape quality of the meadowland deteriorates with distance from the river bank towards the urban edge, where tipping, storage and maintenance of machinery, parked caravans, bonfire sites and general neglect reduces its value to unsightly urban fringe land. The Local Plan Inspector noted this in his report (paragraph 41.99) (Photographs 3 (lower area) and 4 (upper area)). The Brett Works also detracts from the character of this area, particularly where it is contained only by a chain link fence.

2.6.5 The value of this piece of land to nature conservation also deteriorates with distance from the river.

(iii) Pound Lane/Church Walk (Photographs 13 and 16)

2.6.6 This shared pedestrian/vehicular access, together with Church Walk (Photograph 14), provides small-scale, potentially-attractive access to the site from the High Street and adjacent residential areas towards St Mary's Church.

2.6.7 Its environmental quality deteriorates with increasing distance from the High Street,

largely because of poor-quality industrial premises and haphazard parking at its eastern end. It has considerable potential for improvement, and could, with investment, provide an attractive access to the site.

2.6.8 It also provides access to the residential property to the east of Brett Works.

2.6.9 Pound Lane and Church Walk are within the Conservation Area.

(iv) **Bridge Street and the District Council Car Park Area** (Photographs 11, 12 and 15)

2.6.10 The car park is situated at an important location alongside the River Brett and at the end of important vistas for motorists, approaching Hadleigh town centre from the north (Photograph 12) and leaving the town centre from the east (Photograph 15). Its location alongside the River Brett urbanises and detracts from an otherwise attractive riverside scene. (Photograph 6)

(vi) **The River Brett** (Photographs 2 and 5)

2.6.11 Generally, the area benefits from the attractive River Brett corridor. The river corridor is particularly attractive along the western and northern banks. This area is characterised by linear woodland with a footpath meandering through it. The landscape character and nature conservation value of this river corridor have been recognised in its designation as a Country Wildlife Site, a Local Nature Reserve and a 'Special Landscape Area'.

(v) **The Allotments** (Photographs 7 and 9)

2.6.12 By their nature, the allotments have an urban character. The sporadic and sometimes colourful collection of storage sheds, compost heaps, reflective bird-scarers, water butts and parked cars have an intrusive and adverse effect on the otherwise pleasant natural character of the adjoining River Brett. (Photographs 7 and 9)

(vii) **The Old Orchard** (to the rear of Barn End, High Street)

2.6.14 The Orchard is well contained, being surrounded on all sides by walls, hedgerows and mature trees. It's character and quality is now diminishing as most of the fruit trees have died and been removed and those remaining are in a very poor condition. The orchard's boundaries, although largely obscured by scrub, are badly dilapidated.

2.7 Visual Amenity

(i) Public

2.7.1 The proposed foodstore site is well contained from public viewpoints. Pedestrians moving between Pound Lane and Church Walk have a glimpse through to the Brett Works site.

2.7.2 Views of the foodstore site from the High Street are screened by those buildings on the western side of the road. When Cinch's, No. 109, have their side entrance gates open, motorists and pedestrians are afforded a distant glimpse down a narrow alleyway to the meadowland part of the site.

2.7.3 People walking along the River Brett Riverside Walk public footpath, approximately 50m to the west of the foodstore site, have broken views of the Brett Works site through the intervening alder scrub and trees (Photograph 2). As the Riverside Walk progresses northwards, its path moves away from the river's edge. As a result, the intervening trees and shrubs filter out views through to the meadow to the north of the foodstore site.

2.7.4 Further to the north, walkers have views between the riverside trees into the allotments. From this area, onlookers are afforded views of the allotments' numerous tool-sheds, water butts, parked cars, bird-scarers, compost heaps and rubbish piles (Photograph 7). The intrusive influence of the allotments detracts from the otherwise attractive visual amenity of the Riverside Walk.

2.7.5 Motorists and pedestrians travelling along Bridge Street are afforded views into the District Council car park (Photographs 11, 12 and 15), but intervening buildings,

walls and the car park's boundary planting screen views of the meadow and the proposed foodstore site beyond. Similarly, from within the car park, views of the allotments and meadow areas are obscured by the car park's ornamental hedgerow planting around its southern and western boundaries. (Photograph 11)

- 2.7.6 The District Council car park is prominent to staff and visitors outside the Council offices and to walkers on the adjacent Riverside Walk public footpath and parkland area. From these public viewpoints, the car park is an unsightly and intrusive element (Photograph 6).
- 2.7.7 Walkers on the Constitution Hill / Broom Hill public footpaths, several hundred metres to the west of the site, enjoy some distant views down and over Hadleigh; in these views, intervening trees and woodland conceal most of the foodstore site and the meadow and District Council car park to the north. (Photographs 17 and 18 show summertime and wintertime views from Constitution Hill).

(ii) Adjoining Properties

- 2.7.8 Some High Street properties overlook the foodstore site, the meadows or allotments to a certain degree. However, these views are from the first floor and above, they are distant and are frequently broken or partially screened by intervening trees, buildings, walls, etc.
- 2.7.9 Hadleigh Hall is well screened from the site by existing commercial premises on the west and south sides of Pound Lane. The foodstore site is screened from the gardens of Deanery Lodge and Hadleigh Hall by a wall and mature trees and scrub.

3.0 COMMON PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

(With reference to Fig 3)

3.1 Agricultural Land

3.1.1 The northern part of the proposed foodstore allocation is rough meadowland, a proportion of which falls within the River Brett floodplain. The eastern portion of the meadow has been used for sporadic tipping, and the storage and maintenance of machinery and vehicles. The western area of the site has been used for some storage of building material, but has remained largely untouched probably because of its poor drainage characteristics being so close to the River Brett. The proposed vehicular access will pass across the easternmost side of the meadow to the north of the proposed foodstore site. Both of these fields appear not to have been in agricultural use for some time.

3.1.2 The meadows are considered to be urban fringe in character, bounded on two sides by allotments and rear gardens. These fields are also small in size and have poor drainage characteristics. They are not in open countryside and they are considered of little agricultural value.

3.1.3 Development of the foodstore site would involve the construction of a short length of the access road, car park and service yard within the meadow area immediately to the north of the Brett Works site. The remaining two thirds of this area would be improved, either as wildlife habitat or replacement allotments.

3.2 Conservation Area

3.2.1 The Brett Works which forms the larger part of the site is not within the Hadleigh Conservation Area. The rough meadowland, allotments and District Council car park to the north, however, are within the Conservation Area.

3.2.2 In landscape terms, the Conservation Area affords tree protection to some 20 to 30 trees within and around the meadowlands area, two trees within the District Council car park and approximately 25 trees within the old orchard. Of the many trees within the meadow immediately to the north of the Brett Works, all except one

would be retained as part of a considered landscape scheme. The one tree that may be removed is a semi-mature goat willow of average condition and no great visual importance.

3.2.3 An additional group of three multi-bole Ash trees and some scrub would be removed from the eastern end of the boundary between the two meadows to make way for the access road. Of the three trees in the District Council Car Park, the two smallest would be removed for the proposed access road.

3.2.4 A substantial amount of new tree planting is proposed to offset the loss of any existing vegetation.

3.3 Nature Conservation

3.3.1 The proposed foodstore site and the meadow, allotments and car park to the north are not covered by any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations. These areas do not support any nationally, regionally or locally-rare or uncommon species of flora or fauna.

3.3.2 However, the ecological assessments found areas within the proposed development site and the access to the north where ecological interest could be significantly enhanced. These areas of ecological interest would be retained and significantly enhanced, as described in Section 4.4 - 4.6 of this report

3.4 Woodland Tree Preservation Order

3.4.1 An area Tree Preservation Order has been placed on the trees and woodland situated along both the western and eastern banks of the River Brett.

3.4.2 An arboricultural assessment of the trees has shown that individually these trees are of no particular merit. A significant proportion of the trees are poor in form and condition, and have a short useful life expectancy. However, collectively they form an attractive group providing some continuity to those trees found within the adjoining County Wildlife Sites, Special Landscape Area and Local Nature Reserve.

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- 3.4.3 As discussed in more detail later in this report, all TPO'd and the majority of all other trees under the control of the applicant will be retained and reinforced by additional tree planting to protect and enhance the amenity and nature conservation value of the riverside trees.

4.0 THE PROPOSED TESCO FOODSTORE

4.1 Siting of the Development

4.1.1 The proposal would see the foodstore located in the south-eastern corner of the site, an area currently occupied by two large single-storey workshops and their associated hardstandings. This would place the building within the Hadleigh 'Built-up Area' and tuck it up alongside the town's urban edge. Existing dilapidated buildings closer to the River Brett would be removed. A new car park would provide parking for 209 cars

4.1.2 This siting follows that considered by the Secretary of State following the 2000 inquiry. He found that "The change from the present rural character of the meadows would be unavoidable, but the river and the countryside to the west would continue to provide an appropriate setting for the Conservation Area". (Paragraph 30)

4.1.3 With regards to the Riverside Walk and the adjacent Special Landscape Area the Secretary of State accepted "that the new buffer landscaped area to the south would in time integrate the Tesco development into the landscape and it too could become an established addition to the town" (paragraph 33). The Inspector considered that, given the range of landscaping measures proposed, the proposed development would be adequately buffered from the Riverside Walk and the Special Landscape Area, the landscape qualities of which would remain largely unharmed.

4.2 Access Road

4.2.1 The proposed vehicular access road would run from east of the bridge on Bridge Street then south along the eastern side of the meadow. Native buffer planting will flank the road with an informal native hedgerow with standard trees down to the food store. New access would be provided to the District Council Car Park and secure gated access will provide entry and exit to the allotments and the orchard.

4.3 Town Centre Links

4.3.1 A large proportion of the store's customers are expected to link their trips to the existing town centre and the applicant is proposing environmental improvements to the adjoining Pound Lane and Church Walk routes (see Fig 6) which pedestrians would use. The patchwork of tarmac surfaces along these routes is uncomplimentary to the attractive historical character of the Conservation Area. It is also proposed to upgrade and open the existing path past the 109 High Street for pedestrian use during the day.

4.3.2 These routes are both within the Conservation Area and so would be substantially upgraded through enhancement of their character and appearance using, attractive natural materials such as York stone and granite setts to match those in the surrounding area.

4.3.3 At the junction with Church Walk and Pound Lane an elevated table top traffic calming measure would be introduced to give priority to pedestrians crossing from Church Walk to access the store. This feature would be highlighted by continuing the Yorkstone paving across the end of Pound Lane to meet the store, and street lighting would be introduced to provide a well-lit and safe route for both pedestrians and the very small number of vehicles expected to use this route to access the remaining employment premises. Extending west from the end of Pound Lane, A proposed new space would form an attractive and formal setting to the store whilst providing shoppers with a pleasant 'rest-a-while' opportunity. This space would be divided into three distinct subspaces:

- Brett Walk – Paved in Yorkstone and complete with contemporary timber and stainless steel furniture and formal street trees this area provides a generous pedestrian-only setting to the store
- Brett Court – This is a small formal square paved in hogin and granite with bespoke feature seating and lighting. It would provide a quiet and restful space for shoppers and have a softer feel than the surrounding hard landscape. Specimen trees with formal hedge and shrub planting would help define this

space

- Forecourt to the existing building – This space functions as a service yard and car parking area for use by the occupiers of the existing building. It would be paved simply in grey granite setts to match the treatment proposed for Pound Lane. There would be a formal Hornbeam hedge and bollards separating this space from Brett Walk. (These spaces are described in more detail in section 4.4 below)

4.3.4 Two sets of six Sheffield covered cycle racks will be provided. This would provide cycle parking for up to 24 cycles at any one time.

4.3.5 Disabled access will be provided to the store and car park. The use of carefully designed paving with no abrupt level changes along the main pedestrian routes will ensure safe and convenient access.

4.3.6 Lockable gates would be introduced at the store end of the proposed access road to prevent vehicular access to the store outside operating hours. Bollards and retractable bollards restrict vehicular access to the existing buildings from Pound Lane. A further three lockable gates will prevent pedestrian use of the path past 109 High Street during the hours of darkness.

4.4 Pound Lane and Brett Walk

(See Figure 5)

4.4.1 Areas of York stone crossed by bands of granite would pave the pedestrian walkway from the foodstore entrance to Pound Lane and along Church Walk. This high quality natural stone paving would be used in this area to reflect the attractive character of the High Street. A line of bollards, street furniture and a tree would link the walkway to a small square (Brett Court) adjacent to the food store's southern entrance whilst separating pedestrian and vehicular zones. Bollard lighting and feature seats with down lighting are proposed to give this space a more intimate feel, whilst two lamp posts would give a well lit and safe route for pedestrians. Covered cycle parking would be provided near the foodstore entrance.

- 4.4.2 The forecourt area of the retained existing building would be paved with granite setts highlighting it as a different space from the pedestrian walkway and linking it with Pound Lane. It would be bordered by shrub planting and existing trees and physically separated from the pedestrian walkway by a clipped hornbeam hedge reinforced with a post and wire fence. Retractable bollards, controlled electronically by the occupier would allow vehicular access to and from the area and to parking for three vehicles. There would be a further exit through the hedge, also with retractable bollards, for emergency and refuse vehicles. Lighting would be provided by two lamp posts.
- 4.4.3 Brett Court, adjacent to the store's southern entrance, would afford users space for passive recreation. Feature seating made of reclaimed red brick filled gabions topped with timber would line the edges of the area. In the centre, a specimen tree would stand within a raised timber deck, under-lit around its edges and complimented by subtle down lighting from within the tree itself. Brett Court would be paved in hoggin punctuated by lines of granite setts tying it into the surrounding area. Formal tree and shrub planting would create a live backdrop to the south of the space and a clipped hornbeam hedge with a line of standard trees to the west would provide a formal green barrier between Brett Court and the main store car park.

4.5 Landscape and Visual Impact

- 4.5.1 The River Brett and the associated Riverside Walk are attractive and well-used recreational and nature conservation assets to the character setting of Hadleigh. Their attractive natural character and nature conservation value is recognised in their designation as a County Wildlife Site, a Local Nature Reserve and a Special Landscape Area.
- 4.5.2 The current location of the District Council car park and the allotments close to the River Brett results in some detracting from the riverside environment when viewed from the northern part of the Riverside Walk.
- 4.5.3 The redesign of the car park layout has provided an opportunity to improve the landscape character, and visual amenity of the River Brett and Bridge Street area –

an important gateway into Hadleigh for motorists approaching from the north. This would be achieved with hedgerows and specimen tree planting.

- 4.5.4 The Brett Walk proposals would improve the landscape character and visual amenity of this area both for pedestrians and the users of the existing building. This would be achieved by creating three small adjoining spaces using traditional materials in a contemporary manner. These spaces are designed to fulfil their individual functions whilst complimenting the character of the Conservation Area.
- 4.5.5 The derelict nature of the Brett Works detracts from the southern part of the riverside walk, with dilapidated buildings and rubbish clearly visible across the river. The layout and design of the new Tesco store and car park will provide an opportunity to improve the character and visual amenity of this part of the walk.
- 4.5.6 The vehicular access road would run along the eastern side of the meadow some distance away from the River Brett. This alignment, coupled with the proposed belt of informal indigenous buffer planting along the route, would help to absorb the road into Hadleigh's urban edge and in the short to medium term screen out already limited views of the road from the Riverside Walk and Constitution Hill beyond. The existing boundaries to the east of the access road will be protected and retained in their current condition. Overgrown vegetation will be left in order to maintain the informal character of this area. The existing dilapidated field gate at the end of the eastern access off the proposed road will be replaced with a new metal field gate.
- 4.5.7 The majority of existing trees within the site would be protected and retained. Most of the existing trees along the river, are covered by Tree Protection Orders. The majority of the remaining trees on site are protected under the Conservation Area designation. This belt of riparian woodland filters out views into the site from the River Walk along the west bank of the river and from elevated viewpoints further west on Constitution Hill. However, seven of the trees that would be removed are within the Conservation Area. Consent is sought as part of this application to remove these trees. Over 100 deciduous trees would be planted as part of the proposals. All but 16 of these proposed trees are native.
- 4.5.8 The river and the woodland corridor to the west have been recognised for their

value in their designation as Special Landscape Area.

- 4.5.9 The proposed foodstore and access road will have a minimal effect on the character and visual amenity of the Riverside Walk as seen from across the river to the west.
- 4.5.10 The position of the store within the site has been carefully considered in terms of aesthetics and function. The strategy has been to locate the store up against Hadleigh's urban fringe, proposing a building of relatively small scale elements in context with the surrounding area.
- 4.5.11 The elevations and roof treatment of the proposed building will be of contemporary design with a palette of traditional local materials. The highest point of the roof is 7.95m above ground level, with a much lower eaves line – only 4.0 m high along Pound Lane for example. (See Fig 5 Landscape Masterplan)

4.6 Landscape Design

- 4.6.1 Under-storey woodland planting is proposed to reinforce the screening function of the river corridor buffer zone for users of the riverside walk whilst enhancing the local landscape character. This will improve views from the river, and enhance the existing habitat for nature conservation.
- 4.6.2 An informal native hedgerow with standard trees is proposed along the whole length of the proposed access road. This will be reinforced along most of its length by a belt of woodland planting. This will provide an informal landscape structure to help assimilate the new road into the landscape whilst screening views of the traffic using it. (Figure 6)
- 4.6.3 A substantial belt of screen planting in the form of dense shrub and woodland with specimen trees is proposed around the periphery of the store car park to soften and break up the built form and provide an attractive setting for the store.
- 4.6.4 The meadow area between the store and the allotments would be enhanced through habitat creation and managed according to the Nature Conservation Management Plan in Appendix 5.

- 4.6.5 As discussed in Section 4.2, the pedestrian links to the store from the town centre would be upgraded to enhance the character of the Conservation area (see Figure 5.) This would take the form of high quality hard landscape schemes that tie in with the character of the area.
- 4.6.6 The existing boundaries with the High Street properties to the east consist of dilapidated close boarded fencing, deteriorating brick walls and scrub. These boundaries would be re-formed with a 2.0m close boarded fence set on a red brick base with red brick piers. The north eastern boundaries with no 17 and no 7 Bridge Street will be retained. The existing southern boundary consists of an unattractive 1.5-2.0m concrete block wall. The last 2.0m at the western end of this wall is a make-shift fence to prevent pedestrian access into the grounds of Hadleigh Hall and Deanery Lodge. An appropriate boundary treatment is to be agreed with the adjoining landowners. This is likely to take the form of a 1.8-2.0m acoustic-grade red brick wall.
- 4.6.7 Parking provision for 209 cars including provision for disabled and parent and toddler spaces is located close to the store entrance. Two existing mature Ash trees would be retained within the car park.

4.7 Nature Conservation

- 4.7.1 The ecological surveys undertaken in support of this report (Appendix 2) found the area which would be affected by the foodstore to be of limited nature conservation value. However, the River Brett and the adjoining woodland to the west are rich in flora and fauna and are designated County Wildlife Sites and a Local Nature Reserve. Several protected species, such as Otter and Water Vole, have been recorded close to the site along the River Brett in these designated areas.
- 4.7.2 The surveys also identified several areas outside the proposed 'build areas' where existing areas of some local interest could be enhanced. These areas of particular ecological potential consist of the riparian strip of land approximately 20m wide alongside the river and an old drainage channel/depression, within the neglected meadows to the north of the foodstore site. The surveys identified several plant

species in the meadow flora that indicate this area may once have been good quality wet meadow.

- 4.7.3 A nature conservation strategy has been developed through close consultation with Suffolk Wildlife Trust. This has evolved throughout the design process and has informed the Nature Conservation Management Plan (see appendix 5.)
- 4.7.4 The existing woodland buffer zone, scrub and meadowland are potentially valuable wildlife resources. Through sensitive planting design and careful long term management of this land, the proposals would diversify and improve the quality of these habitats.
- 4.7.5 The proposed scheme safeguards around half of the existing meadow area between the Brett Works site and the allotments and the area of mature woodland between the River Brett and the proposed car park. These areas will be protected from construction activities during the development and from public access during operation of the site by the use of impenetrable planting and fencing. Controlled access will be available via a lockable field gate off the access road. This access will be used primarily for maintenance access, but this nature conservation area may be used for educational purposes by agreement.
- 4.7.6 The boundaries of the nature conservation area will be reinforced with mixed native woodland, hedgerow and shrub planting. This planting would be designed to link and enhance existing habitats and, where possible, would be of local provenance.
- 4.7.7 The existing overgrown hedgerow along the ditch running east from the river that divides the meadow area would be protected along most of its length. To make way for the proposed road, the eastern most end of this hedge consisting of scrub and 3 mature ash trees would be lost. Proposed planting of a mixed native hedge and trees along the road would re-link this hedgerow with other woodland.
- 4.7.8 The existing meadow area between the allotments and the Brett Works will be partially given over to replacement allotments and a portion of the access road. The remaining half of the meadow protected from public access would be managed under a careful mowing regime to restore its full potential as grassland habitat.

There will also be 2 new balancing ponds created. These balancing ponds would be sensitively excavated and managed to allow natural regeneration of the existing seed bank, and encourage plants which would have been present when the area was wet grassland/fen.

4.8 Sustainable Drainage

- 4.8.1 These balancing ponds would clean and attenuate surface water runoff from the building, car parks and road during construction and operation. The ponds will have small areas of permanent open water with a freeboard designed to accommodate a 1 in 100 year storm event according to the new PPS 25 standard.
- 4.8.2 The inlets to both ponds would be equipped with silt traps and petrol interceptors. The ponds would also have reedy margins to ensure that the quality of water at the outflow into the River Brett is of a high standard.
- 4.8.3 There would be three small areas of permanent open water the margins of which would be planted with a range of submergent and emergent aquatic species complimentary to the River Brett. This planting would optimise the pond's wildlife value and stabilise the pond margins against erosion. The construction, planting and management would be carefully implemented in order to provide high quality habitat. The proposed plants would be native, non-invasive species and, where possible, would be of local provenance.
- 4.8.4 This planting would take place after the construction phase is complete and the ponds have been prepared for their use as permanent storm water balancing ponds.
- 4.8.5 The remaining areas of disturbed ground resulting from excavation of the ponds will be allowed to regenerate naturally from the existing species rich seed bank. This process would be managed by selective weeding and mowing as necessary until it can be included in the adjacent meadow mowing regime.
- 4.8.6 This treatment and continual management of these ponds would provide a significant benefit to wildlife through creating a range of new habitats based around this seasonally fluctuating aquatic environment. They would become an integral

part of the nature conservation area.

4.9 Allotments

(To be read in conjunction with information in Appendix 4)

- 4.9.1 The road alignment through the District Council car park would necessitate reconfiguration of the car park. The proposed road and redesign of the council car park would displace 18 of the 64 existing allotments. The affected plots would be replaced on a like-for-like basis within the adjacent meadow to the south. The proposed road and allotments occupy the north and east portions of the existing meadow which are the best drained and least species rich parts of the existing meadow habitat.
- 4.9.2 The existing boundary between the allotments and meadow would be removed and replaced with a new post and rail fence and mixed native thorn hedge proposed to define and secure the new allotment area. This boundary and the meadow itself were surveyed by Wessex Ecological Consultancy in 2002. The boundary was found to be an old fence with a few small Elder and Hawthorn. Inspection of this boundary in November 2006 confirmed this. This boundary consists of a dilapidated fence on a slight bund (about 1m high) supporting a line of overgrown ruderal species such as bramble and nettle with the occasional small Elder and Hawthorn. It appears to have little wildlife value.
- 4.9.3 The new plots would be provided on ground of similar quality and elevation to that which they currently enjoy. If, after sampling, and consultation with allotment holders, the topsoil from the existing plots is deemed to be of good quality, it would be carefully stripped and stored separately to be re-spread on the new plots.
- 4.9.4 Three areas of reinforced grass for nine new car parking spaces would be incorporated in the new allotment area. Two mains water stand pipes would be provided for the use of the allotment holders. One would be located close to the southwest corner of the council car park, the other adjacent to the single car park space, to the south of the proposed allotments.
- 4.9.5 The new boundaries to the allotment around the council car park to the north east

and along the proposed access road to the east would be formed by 2.0m security fencing and native hedgerows. This is to prevent unauthorised access. 4m wide, 2 leaved, lockable vehicular gates along with reinforced grass would form the only access into the allotments and would be located off the access road between the council car park and the foodstore. See Figure 2, Proposed Allotment Layout.

4.10 Lighting

(A Lighting Report and scheme are included in this report as Appendix 6.)

4.10.1 The objective is to reduce the impact of light pollution from the site by the use of low-level directional light units shrouded so as to direct light down and in towards the development.

4.10.2 Along the access road, low-level, non-standard columns with shrouded light units are proposed to reduce light pollution. It is intended that the access road beyond the entrance to the District Council car park would not be adopted and will remain in private ownership.

4.10.3 The potential impact of light spillage on wildlife foraging in the river corridor woodland area would be mitigated by low-level downward car park lighting directed away from the river.

4.11 Construction Period

4.11.1 Prior to development commencing on site the conservation areas would be fenced off from the construction site to prevent encroachment by vehicles and staff. A buffer zone of 20m back from the river bank will be protected.

4.11.2 Prior to any construction activities a site walk over search will be conducted. Any reptiles found will be carefully translocated to an unaffected part of the site.

4.11.3 The excavations and pipe laying for the balancing ponds would be conducted during the site set up and establishment phase of the works in order that the ponds can be used to store and intercept runoff from the construction site. Pipe work would be

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carefully positioned and, if necessary, trenches dug by hand to mitigate any potential impact on the existing mature trees between the Brett Works and the fen-meadow area.

4.11.4 Access for construction of the southernmost balancing pond would be via the northwest corner of the proposed store car park. Construction access to the larger northern pond would be via the proposed allotment area. These measures are intended to reduce the disturbance to the fen-meadow area.

4.11.5 Once construction is complete the ponds would be cleared and re-profiled as necessary and planted. The seasonally dry slopes would be allowed to naturally regenerate from the existing seed bank to encourage quick establishment of a species rich sward of local provenance.

5.0 SUMMARY

- 5.1 This report considers the landscape issues and the resulting landscape development strategy for a proposed Tesco foodstore on the Brett Works site in Hadleigh.
- 5.3 The proposal is based on a foodstore with an associated service yard and car park, generally laid out as presented to the 2000 inquiry. The car park will provide customer and staff parking for 209 cars.
- 5.4 The development strategy locates the store close to Hadleigh's built edge and retains and reinforces a generous landscape buffer alongside the foodstore site boundary with the River Brett. The Secretary of State accepted that similar development proposals presented to the 2000 inquiry would "continue to provide an appropriate setting for the Conservation Area" (paragraph 30) and that "the layout and planting would integrate the Tesco development into the landscape" (paragraph 33).
- 5.5 The proposed access road is aligned along the eastern most areas of the District Council car park, the allotments and the meadow area, some distance to the east of the River Brett and the well-used River Brett Riverside Walk (See Figure 4). The proposed foodstore and access road would knit the road into the town's urban fabric, minimise land-take and have a minimal effect on the character and visual amenity of the Riverside Walk some distance to the west.
- 5.6 Pedestrian access would be via Pound Lane and Church Walk which would be improved. The patchwork of Tarmac surfaces along these routes is uncomplimentary to the attractive historical character of the Conservation Area. A large proportion of the store's customers are expected to link their trips to the existing town centre. The applicant would contribute to a range of environmental improvements to the adjoining Pound Lane and Church Walk routes (see Fig 6). It is also proposed to upgrade and open the existing path past 109 High Street for pedestrian use during the day.
- 5.7 The River Brett and its associated woodland to the west have been recognised for

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their attractive natural character and nature conservation value in their designation as County Wildlife Sites, a Local Nature Reserve and a Special Landscape Area.

- 5.8 The majority of the trees within the proposed foodstore site would be retained and reinforced with a significant number of additional trees for both landscape character and nature conservation value.
- 5.9 The Landscape and Visual impact of the development has been carefully considered and mitigation measures to reduce any adverse impacts have been integral throughout the design process.
- 5.10 Intervening woodlands along the River Brett largely screen views of the site from the Riverside Walk and more distant public viewpoints on Constitution Hill / Broom Hill to the west. This existing vegetation would be retained and reinforced with new planting.
- 5.11 A large number of indigenous trees and shrubs would be planted in groupings along the eastern banks of the River Brett. This planting will largely filter out views of the proposed development and more-distant access road. It would significantly enhance the landscape character, visual amenity and nature conservation value of the River Brett corridor.
- 5.12 The access road alignment through the District Council car park and allotments would displace 18 allotments and a large part of the car park. The re-siting and redesign of the District Council car park in this sensitive and visible location is an opportunity to significantly improve the landscape character and visual amenity of the River Brett and Bridge Street area – an important gateway into Hadleigh for motorists approaching from the north.
- 5.13 The replacement allotment plots would be provided on a like for like basis displacing part of the meadow area in an extension to the south of the existing area. If possible, dependent on soil condition, the topsoil from the present allotment plots would be removed, stored and re-spread on the proposed plots. Additional parking spaces and two mains water stand pipes would also be provided for use by the allotment holders.

- 5.14 The ecological assessment of the foodstore site and the area to the north found no nationally, regionally or locally-rare or uncommon species of flora or fauna. Those areas considered of some local ecological interest will be retained and enhanced through management and additional indigenous planting. These conservation areas would be fenced to protect them from construction activities and public access.
- 5.15 In order to further mitigate impact on the adjacent conservation areas, light pollution from the foodstore car park will be reduced by the use of low-level white-light units shrouded so as to direct light down and into the car park. Similarly, low-level, non-standard columns with shrouded white-light units could also be used in the reconfigured District Council car park and along the access road.
- 5.16 The proposals are designed to provide a new and improved use of a derelict brown-field site which currently detracts from its important riverside setting. The landscape scheme will ensure that the development is well integrated into the town centre, without adverse effect on the High Street whilst enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The River Brett Special Landscape Area to the south of the site would also be significantly enhanced by the landscape proposals. This area would benefit from both the improved landscape structure and the habitat creation proposals within the scheme.

Ben Oakman
February 2008

FIGURES

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APPENDIX 1

PHOTOGRAPHS

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APPENDIX 2

ECOLOGICAL REPORT

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APPENDIX 3

ARBORICULTURAL ASSESSMENT

APPENDIX 4

ALLOTMENTS REPLACEMENT METHOD STATEMENT

APPENDIX 5

NATURE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

APPENDIX 6

LIGHTING SCHEME

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APPENDIX 7

PLANTING DETAILS