

# Planning Statement

Section 73 Application for Variation of Approved Drawings

Revised proposals for the **Estate Management Building (EMB)** and **Landscape Masterplan** at the Stowdes Estate, Culham Lane, Remenham

December 2025

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Appendix I Site Location Plan

**Report title:** Planning Statement

**Prepared by:** David Williams (Associate)

**Reviewed by:** David Williams (Associate)

**Status:** Final

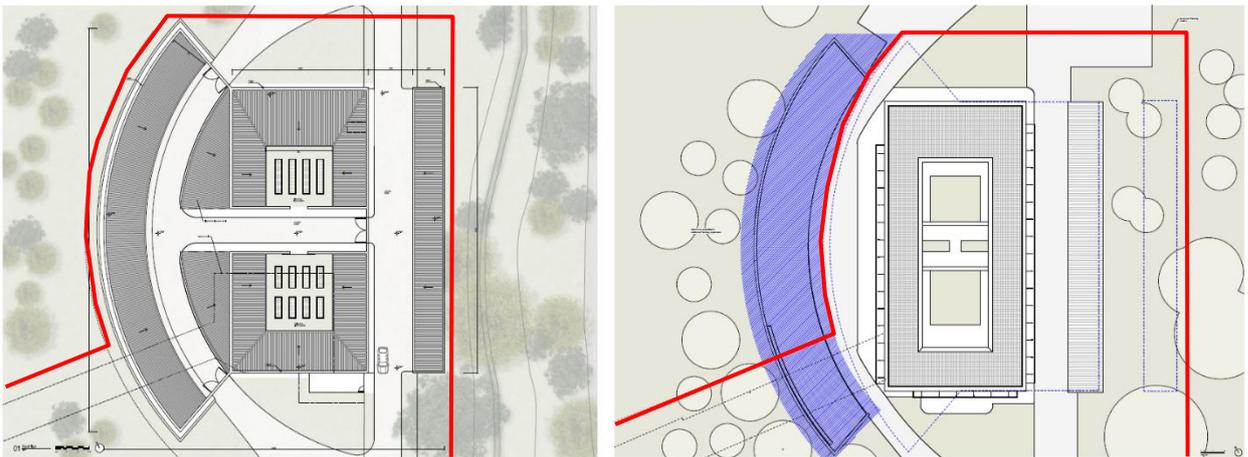
**Draft date:** 1 December 2025

**For and on behalf of Avison Young (UK) Limited**

# 1. Introduction

## Application Procedure

- 1.1 This planning statement is submitted by Avison Young on behalf of Imperium Trust Company ('the Applicant'), the owner of the Stowdes Estate, Culham Lane, Remenham ('the site').
- 1.2 It forms part of a Section 73 Variation of Condition application, which seeks to amend the approved documents as listed under Condition 2 of the planning permission 213610 for "erection of a 2 storey Estate management buildings including gardeners accommodation and underground tunnel linking the estate buildings and ancillary to the main house on Stowdes estate, following demolition of 3No dwellings, 1No pool house, garages and outhouses, stables and hay barn", as approved on 15 September 2023.
- 1.3 The proposals closely align with the approved iteration of the Estate Management Building (EMB) scheme and principally cover a re-siting of the complex approx. 12m to the west. This amendment application is submitted under the planning portal reference PP-14543596.
- 1.4 A concurrent full application is also to be submitted to cover the re-siting of the western single storey open fronted parking/storage building, since this cannot be accommodated within the original red line application site.



**Figure 1. Extract from PB&Co Design Statement, showing approved scheme to the left and re-sited proposed scheme to the right.**

## Site Context

- 1.5 The application site covers elements of the Stowdes Estate, north-east of the River Thames, east of Park Place, and west of Culham Lane and Kenton's Lane. The Estate extends to approx. 70 hectares and measures approx. 1.8km from the northern tip (the Estate's main entrance) to the southern corner (junction between Wargrave Road and Kenton's Lane). The Estate is relatively flat within the northern and central areas, before a significant downwards slope to the south and east, towards the riverbank.
- 1.6 The Stowdes Estate is set within the wider historic Park Place Estate, which extends over a large area to the north-west, towards White Hill. Stowdes benefits from five recent planning consents obtained by the previous owner between 2023 and 2024 (see below table), which sought to create a self-contained masterplanned private residential estate including a main house and several ancillary buildings, in line with earlier planning permissions dating from 2008 as part of a programme of enhancements to Park Place. Other new private Estates have also been established within Park Place, including Hamilton to the west.

Area	Ref	Location
Main House	213587	sited centrally within the Estate
Ancillary Gatehouse	213588	to the north of the Estate
<b>Estate Management Building</b>	<b>213610</b>	close to the eastern boundary with Kentons Lane
Staff Village Complex	240847	within the existing walled garden at the southern corner of the site
Riverside Buildings	240832	within the south-western part of the estate, west of Wargrave Road.

### Aspirations

- 1.7 The new owner and design team are conscious of this rare opportunity to restore an active estate function to this parkland setting, and aim to provide an enhancement over the approved position, in terms of architecture, landscape, and biodiversity, while also ensuring that the scheme is both deliverable in the short-term, and operationally fit for purpose in the long-term.
- 1.8 At the same time, it is acknowledged that this is a sensitive environment in terms of its location entirely within the Green Belt, the majority of the Estate's location within the Park Place Registered Park and Garden (which is a statutory heritage asset), the surrounding wider landscape character of this semi-rural portion of the Borough and Region, and the existing on-site features including areas of woodland and a number of trees subject to tree protection orders.
- 1.9 Proposals across the Estate, including those subject to this application, are therefore being advanced as refinements and evolutions of the previous proposals, rather than wholesale changes.

### Application Scope

- 1.10 The proposals seek minor refinements and updates to the Estate Management Building (EMB) complex, as originally approved in 2017, and subsequently re-submitted and approved in 2023. This existing planning permission covers the construction of a two-storey (basement and ground level) ancillary complex of buildings to the east of the Main House.
- 1.11 The main central element is supplemented by single storey open fronted parking and storage structures to the west and east. These buildings as previously approved provide functional space including plant, storage, offices and security rooms, general staff communal facilities (amenity areas, dining area, and kitchen) and a staff (gardener's) apartment. The basement of the building also provides access to a service tunnel which connects to the Main House set centrally within the Estate and to the west of the EMB complex.
- 1.12 All of the proposed changes are considered very minor in nature, with the most significant being a re-siting of the footprint of the buildings 12m to the west. In the context of the c.70 hectare Estate, this is not considered to introduce any additional amenity or environmental issues. Indeed it would move the buildings further away from the adjacent wooded area, the boundary with Kenton's Lane, and the neighbouring residents further to the east of the road.
- 1.13 The specific proposed changes are summarised below, together with the proposed updates to the approved Landscape Masterplan.

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## Proposed Amendments

### EMB

- **Re-siting of Building Footprints 12m west**, to facilitate construction with more separation to constraints to the east.
- **Reduction in Height of Main Element and Eastern Car Port/Storage Building**, as part of design rationalisation.
- **Subtle revisions to façade, window articulation and detailing**, including additional fenestration and elevational details.
- **Minor changes to basement alignment and configuration**, for structural efficiency.
- **Minor changes to tunnel alignment and below ground tunnel storage area**, necessitated by the relocation of the buildings and detailed design work.

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### Landscape Masterplan

- **More naturalistic approach to the landscape design of the northern part of the estate**, ensuring gradual contouring, and a less formal estate road layout, better reflecting the historic setting.
- **Revised approach to tree planting**, including relocation of planted Allée trees, an increase in overall tree planting, and establishment of new woodland areas around the main house.
- **Provision of a single and larger pond** in place of the approved split ponds, which will create opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, and water management.

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Note: the Masterplan indicates an aspiration for a new main entrance to the Estate from Culham Lane, and a relocated Gatehouse, however these elements are subject to separate approval.

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- 1.14 These proposed changes are highlighted within the accompanying design documentation, and assessment reports, and are discussed further in subsequent sections.
- 1.15 Ultimately, it is considered that the majority of the proposed changes have a neutral to positive impact on planning considerations.
- 1.16 In terms of visual impact (relevant to landscape character and Green Belt openness), and spatial impact on Green Belt openness, the proposals are considered to have a minor positive impact, through the reduction in height (and mass) of the car port and main buildings. There are some minor increases to the envelope of the basement and tunnel storage facility. However, these will be imperceptible, and are also balanced by reductions in mass as a result of the reduced tunnel length and above ground massing, through reduced building heights.
- 1.17 By relocating the buildings c.12m west, there is also a greater degree of separation to the wooded site boundary to Kenton's Lane, and in particular the large mature Oak Tree, immediately to the south-east of the eastern parking storage structure as approved. While a 'no-dig' methodology was included as part of the 2023 permission in this area, more recent structural due diligence highlighted a preferable approach that would reduce any risk of any damage to roots, through a minor change to the footprint of the buildings.
- 1.18 It is considered that all other planning and environmental considerations can be resolved within the scope of the existing conditions, some of which have already been progressed in preparation for initial enabling and construction work (archaeology, construction environmental management and ecology, drainage, and landscape details).

### Submitted Documentation

1.19 This application is submitted under the Section 73 Variation of Conditions procedure, and therefore proposes substitution of documents approved under Condition 2 of the planning permission for the Estate Management Building (213610):

Document	Approved Reference	Proposed Reference
<b>Drawings for Approval</b>		
Location of Demolished Buildings	SK903 P1	N/A
Site Location Plan	0001 PL1	PCY-PBC-EM-ZZ-DR-A-1001
Block Plan	0002 PL1	PCY-PBC-EM-ZZ-DR-A-1002
Basement Plan	P-F-001-XX-030 Rev 00	PCY-PBC-EM-B1-DR-A-1009
Façade Detail	P-F-007-XX-010 Rev 00	PCY-PBC-EM-ZZ-DR-A-1024
Basement Plan including Tunnel	P-F-001-XX-008 Rev 00	PCY-PBC-EM-B1-DR-A-1008
Tunnel Section	N/A	PCY-PBC-EM-ZZ-DR-A-1025
West Elevation	P-F-004-XX-030 Rev 00	PCY-PBC-EM-ZZ-DR-A-1023
Ground Floor Plan	P-F-004-XX-020 Rev 00	PCY-PBC-EM-00-DR-A-1010
East Elevation inside the courtyard	P-F-004-XX-040 Rev 00	PCY-PBC-EM-ZZ-DR-A-1021
East West Section	P-F-003-XX-020 Rev 00	PCY-PBC-EM-ZZ-DR-A-1016
North Elevation	P-F-004-XX-010 Rev 00	PCY-PBC-EM-ZZ-DR-A-1020
South Elevation	P-F-001-XX-020 Rev 00	PCY-PBC-EM-ZZ-DR-A-1022
Roof Plan	P-F-001-XX-010 Rev 00	PCY-PBC-EM-RF-DR-A-1013
Proposed Landscape Masterplan	051_1101 (APART FROM THE PROPOSED POND IN THE LOCATION OF 'PIT CLUMP', WHICH IS NOT APPROVED)	PCY-MBS-ZZ-PL-DR-L-1001

1.20 The following updated assessments are also provided:

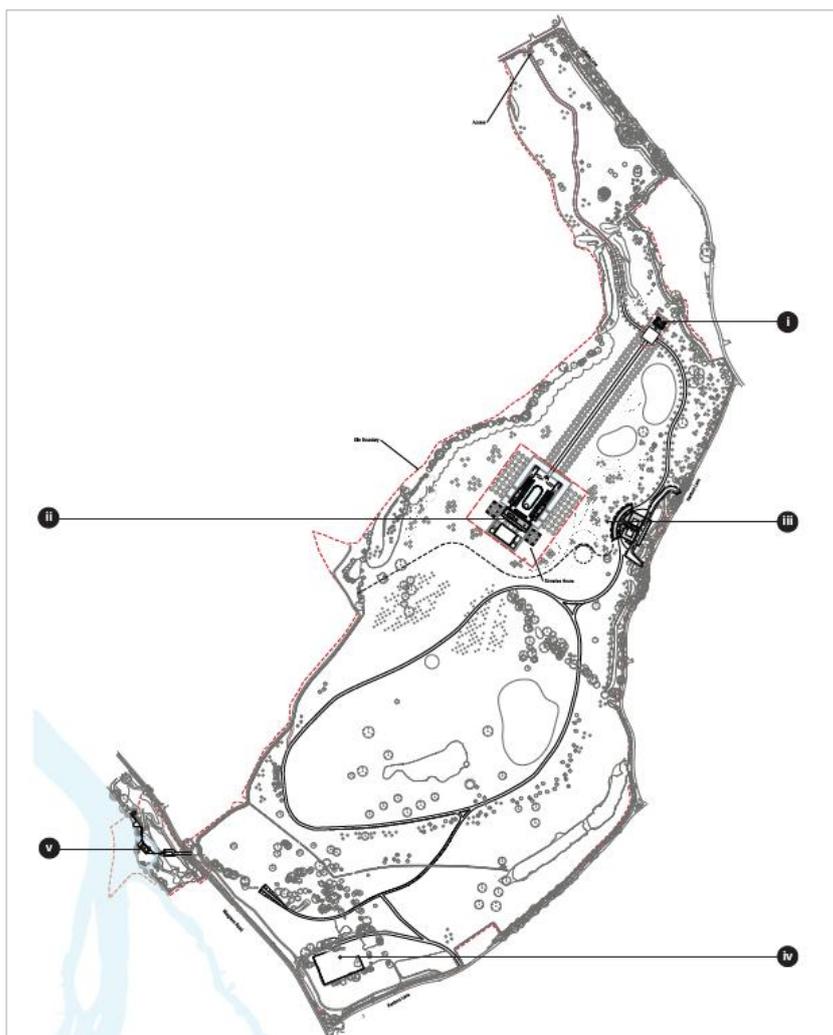
Document	Author	Date
<b>Assessment / Information</b>		
Planning Statement	Avison Young	December 2025
Design Statement (update)	PB&Co	December 2025
Landscape Visual Appraisal	BHSLA	October 2025

1.21 The remainder of this Statement is set out as follows:

- **Section 2** provides a summary of the site and wider Estate planning history
- **Section 3** sets out the application proposals;
- **Section 5** considers the proposed changes and any resulting impacts in the above context;
- **Section 6** provides a summary and conclusion.

## 2. Site Context and Planning History

- 2.1 The application site is located within the Strowdes Estate, north-east of the River Thames, east of Park Place, and west of Culham Lane and Kenton's Lane. The Estate extends to approx. 70 hectares and measures approx. 1.8km from the northern tip (the Estate's existing main entrance) to the southern corner (junction between Wargrave Road and Kenton's Lane). The Estate is relatively flat within the northern and central areas, before a significant downwards slope to the south and east, towards the riverbank.
- 2.2 Planning permissions granted in 2023/4 cover construction of the five built elements (shown on the below diagram):



**Figure 2. Site Location showing approved scheme** (i) Gatehouse, (ii) Main House, (iii) Estate Management Building, (iv) Staff Village, and (v) Riverside Pavilion.

- 2.3 The site is subject to the following key constraints and designations which have been material in the design of the approved and proposed schemes:
- Predominantly within Grade II\* Registered Park and Garden – the boundary of which broadly runs along the eastern estate boundary, excluding the majority of the Estate Management Building and Staff Village/Walled Garden sites;
  - Within the Green Belt;

- The site's landscape is predominantly characterised as part of the wider wooded chalk slopes (south) and arable chalk plateau (north);
- Significant levels changes across the wider site, with the open southern half of the site sloping upwards from the riverside, to the northern part of the site which is flatter and more enclosed.
- Arboricultural and ecological infrastructure, including ancient woodland and protected trees; and
- Land adjacent to the River Thames is within Flood Zones 2 and 3.

2.4 Notwithstanding the above, the EMB application site is located centrally within the Estate, within a predominantly flat and clear portion of the site, and within Flood Zone 1. The approved EMB complex also largely avoids the designated RPG. It is set within an excluded area at the eastern edge of the designation. Limited parts of the buildings (the northern and north-western portions) encroach within the area, together with tunnel and underground storage area to the west.

#### Planning History (Previous Ownership)

2.5 There are five separate planning consents for distinct new build elements across the estate, as set out below:

Element	Ref	Details
Main House	213587	Consent was granted on 15/09/2023 for the construction of a new, main residential property in the centre of the estate, with associated landscaping.
Gate House	213588	Consent was granted on 15/09/2023 for the construction of a gate house building to the north of the main house which would be located along and control the principal entrance route into the site.
<b>Estate Management Buildings</b>	<b>213610</b>	Consent was granted on 15/09/2023 for the construction of two-storey ancillary estate management buildings to the east of the site, including an underground tunnel that would link to the main house. This also gave consent for the demolition of dwellings, a pool house, and outbuildings.
Staff Village	240847	Consent was granted on the 13/09/2024 for the construction of 4no. single storey residential units with associated communal and welfare space to the south of the site. These would be ancillary to the main house, providing accommodation for staff who are employed at the estate.
Riverside	240832	Consent was granted on the 06/08/2024 for the demolition of an existing summerhouse along the River Thames and construction of a riverside pavilion offering ancillary residential accommodation to the main house. Consent was also given for an underground tunnel which would connect to the main house.

2.6 The above were resubmissions of previous consents for the same built elements originally approved in 2016 (staff village - 152499), 2017 (main house - 173097) and 2018 respectively (gate house - 173098, estate management buildings - 173100 and riverside - 180351), the principle of which was established under a 2008 outline consent approved under ref. O/2008/1353, covering the wider 220 hectare Park Place Estate.

2.7 Taking account of the site's location in the Green Belt, which provides a presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt, the approved developments were justified on the basis

that Very Special Circumstances exist due to the planning history of the site and previous masterplans that demonstrated an overall net loss of dwellings and built development across the wider Park Place estate (of which the Strowdes estate is a component part), the removal of unsympathetic buildings, and the restoration of the parkland.

- 2.8 To ensure the enhancements to the parkland, which weighed in favour of the consented schemes, are delivered, conditions were attached to the main house, gatehouse and estate management building consents which restrict development from taking place until full hard and soft landscape details are submitted to and approved by the LPA in accordance with the approved Landscape Masterplan (drawing no. 051\_1101).
- 2.9 An obligation was also included in the s106 agreement (dated 15 September 2023) that is associated with these three consents, requiring an Integrated Estate Management Plan ('IEMP') to be submitted to and approved by the LPA prior to commencement of development.
- 2.10 Reflecting their linked and ancillary function, the Section 106 also includes an owners Obligation that ensures that the Gatehouse and Estate Management Buildings are not to be used for any purpose other than ancillary to the Main House, and that the buildings are not to be sold, leased or disposed of separately.
- 2.11 The riverside and staff village consents are not required to implement the approved Landscape Masterplan, nor are they linked to the s106 Agreement and associated IEMP obligation. However, they are subject to various conditions regarding landscaping and other improvements.

Planning History and Strategy (New Ownership)

- 2.12 The new owner is committed to the delivery of the Estate's buildings and surrounding landscape enhancements as soon as possible, and is therefore planning to undertake initial enabling work and early phases of construction, to facilitate a streamlined and efficient delivery programme.
- 2.13 As such, the Applicant has submitted details pursuant to pre-commencement conditions and Section 106 Obligations with the aim to undertake key elements of enabling work. The main element of this is the basement excavation to the Main House.
- 2.14 A series of applications for amendments to the approved scheme have also been submitted since the Summer, to facilitate this work and update the proposals. These are summarised within the below table.

Ref	Submission	Scope	Rationale
Various Discharge of Condition Applications	March/April 2025	Covering key pre-commencement conditions	To allow early enabling works together with excavation of areas compatible with the approved scheme.
251666	July 2025	Section 73 Amendment to below ground basement envelope of Main House	To allow early excavation and construction work of the preferred basement envelope to proceed in line with planning permission
252489	October 2025	Section 73 Amendment proposing addition of a cut-away / sunken garden area to the west of the Main House	Once the main basement excavation is undertaken, to allow the excavation and structural work to include the sunken garden element

252721	October 2025	Section 73 Amendment consolidating the above amendments, together with above ground changes to the design of the house, garden/curtilage area, and landscape masterplan.	To secure permission for the full scope of proposed amendments, with the intention of building the house to this specification.
<b>PP-14543596 (this application)</b>	<b>December 2025</b>	Section 73 Amendment, covering minor re-siting of the Estate Management Building (EMB) complex 12m to the west, together with minor design refinements.	To secure permission for an updated and fit for purpose design, with greater separation to surrounding constraints, such as existing mature trees.
PP-TBC	December 2025	Minor scale 'drop-in' full application for re-sited EMB western storage building.	Approved red line application site area is not sufficient to accommodate the relocation of this building 12m to the west.

2.15 In addition to the proposed amendments subject to this application, proposals are being developed for further refinements to the approved proposals elsewhere on the estate, which will be submitted in due course.

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### 3. Application Proposals

3.1 This section of the statement sets out the proposed amendments to the planning permission 213610 (as approved on 15 September 2023) for:

*“erection of a 2 storey Estate management buildings including gardeners accommodation and underground tunnel linking the estate buildings and ancillary to the main house on Strowdes estate, following demolition of 3No dwellings, 1No pool house, garages and outhouses, stables and hay barn.”*

3.2 We note that the buildings on the application site referred to in the above description were demolished some time ago, with the exception of the Meter House – a small brick out-building, which is subject to a requirement for a Natural England Bat Licence prior to demolition.

3.3 The proposed changes are broken down into amendments to the Estate Management Building (EMB) complex, within the red-line application site, located centrally within the Estate, and amendments to the wider Landscape Masterplan for the Estate. The latter match those as already proposed under the Main House amendment application (25272) submitted in October 2025.

3.4 While this EMB area is connected to the existing main estate entrance off Culham Lane to the north via internal Estate roads, the 2024 permission and associated approved landscape Masterplan included re-establishment of previously used access points off Kenton’s Lane to the east. The updated proposal also brings forward this approach, making minor alterations to the connecting tracks to account for the re-siting of the complex slightly further to the west.

#### **Estate Management Building (EMB) Complex**

3.5 The proposed amendments carry forward the overall format of the 2023 approved scheme, which was for a low profile cluster of functional ancillary buildings to facilitate the day-to-day running of the Estate.

3.6 The principal central element of the facility provides offices and security rooms, general staff communal facilities (amenity areas, dining area, and kitchen) and a staff apartment, and storage space. The basement of the building also provides storage, plant space, and access to a service tunnel which would connect to the Main House.

3.7 The main element is supplemented by single storey open fronted parking and storage structures to the west and east.

3.8 The majority of proposed changes are very minor in nature, with the most noticeable being a re-siting of the footprint of the buildings 12m to the west, away from the boundary with Kenton’s Lane and the intervening trees.

3.9 Due to this, the proposals are ultimately covered by two planning applications:

- a S73 amendment to the main complex and eastern storage building; and
- a minor scale full application to cover the proposed new location of the western car port/storage area.

3.10 The proposed changes have principally been driven by a thorough review of the approved proposals, originally designed almost 10 years ago, from a useability, deliverability and construction feasibility/practicality perspective. This has included reviews of structural requirements, plant and servicing space requirements, fire safety, accessibility, and updated building regulation requirements.

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## Continuity with Approved Scheme

- 3.11 As noted above, the proposals maintain all of the broad principles and the majority of the specific properties of the approved scheme for the EMB complex. These continuity elements include:
- **Broad Location and Access** – the proposed complex is positioned in very similar location within the Estate as the approved version. It is located approx. 50m west of the eastern Estate boundary with Kenton's Lane, and approx. 120m east of the approved and proposed iterations of the Main House. The access points from Kenton's Lane to the north and south are as previously approved.
  - **Layout and Configuration** – The complex is comprised of an identical configuration of buildings: a single storey open fronted covered parking structure to the east, a central pair of management and staff facilities blocks arranged around a central courtyard, and a western single storey open fronted storage and parking structure with a curved footprint.
  - **Scale and Massing** – Both the approved scheme and the proposal are configured as single storey buildings with either flat or shallow pitch roof forms. The maximum height of the approved scheme was 4.75m or 96.75 AOD, and the proposed update fits within this established parameter.
  - **Basement Space** – Both approved and proposed iterations include a basement area below the southern part of the main element, accommodating plant, storage and a tunnel connection to the Main House to the west. The tunnel element also includes a central storage section, below the landscaped amphitheatre feature to the west of the EMB complex.
  - **Design and Materials** – The overall design ethos is carried forward with the simple contemporary forms to be clad in a combination of brick, stone, and timber.

## Proposal Summary

- 3.12 Beyond these core similarities, this Section 73 application proposes the following amendments from the approved EMB scheme (213610 approved 15/09/2023).
- 3.13 The accompanying design document by PB&Co presents a side-by-side comparison of the 2023 approved version of the EMB complex and the updated proposed version, illustrating the scope of these changes.
- **Re-siting of Building Footprints 12m west.** The proposal does not alter the spacing between the buildings or move them to the north or south. It simply 'slides' the complex of buildings to the west. By relocating the buildings and the access tracks in this way, a greater degree of separation to the wooded site boundary to Kenton's Lane, and in particular the large mature Oak Tree, immediately to the south-east of the eastern parking storage structure is achieved. While a 'no-dig' methodology was included in this area as part of the 2023 permission, more recent structural due diligence highlighted a preferable approach that would reduce any risk of any damage to roots, through a minor change to the footprint of the buildings.
  - **Reduction in Height of Main Element and Eastern Car Port/Storage Building.** The proposal now includes a simplified lighter-weight eastern car port element with a shallow pitched roof, between 1.25m and 1.5m lower than the approved version. It also includes a reduction in the parapet height of the main element by approx. 0.6m across both northern and southern parts.
  - **Subtle revisions to façade, window articulation, and detailing.** These elements include additional fenestration and elevational details to improve natural lighting and better respond

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to human scale. High-level lightweight external shelter/shade features also extend from the facades to enhance external pedestrian circulation areas. The larger overhanging areas of the main roof to the west, have been removed and replaced with roof overhangs that connect the northern and southern elements of the main building.

- **Minor changes to basement alignment and configuration.** The approved scheme included an offset below ground element, that extended beyond the envelope of the above ground structure. The amended proposal provides an exact alignment with the above ground external envelope, which is more structurally efficient. As a result, the basement is 4m wider (east-west) and 4m wider (north-south).
- **Minor changes to tunnel alignment and below ground tunnel storage area.** The tunnel re-alignment by approx. 1.75 degrees is necessitated by the relocation of the buildings. The tunnel storage area is expanded in width by approximately 8m. though a significant portion of this is increased external retaining structure requirements.

## Landscape Masterplan

- 3.14 The Main House, Estate Management, and Gatehouse planning permission approved drawings include a Landscape Masterplan (051\_1101), covering the wider Strowdes Estate. This ties together the approved areas of built form with a network of Estate tracks, areas of new planting, waterbodies, and landscape contouring.

### Continuity with Approved Scheme

- 3.15 The proposed Landscape Masterplan (PCY-MBS-ZZ-PL-DR-L-100) retains and adapts a number of the approved elements including the feature waterbody within the northern area of the site, a generally similar arrangement of internal tracks and access points, retention of existing trees and wooded areas, supplemented with substantial new planting, and retaining the open and undeveloped southern sloped portion of the Estate.

### Proposal Summary

- 3.16 The proposed Masterplan includes the following main revisions:
- **More naturalistic approach to the landscape design of the northern part of the estate,** ensuring gradual contouring, and a less formal estate road layout, better reflecting the historic setting.
  - **Revised approach to tree planting,** including relocation of planted Allée trees, and establishment of new woodland areas around the main house.
  - **Provision of a single and larger pond in place of the approved split ponds,** which will create opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, and water management benefits.
- 3.17 The Masterplan also indicates an aspiration for a new main entrance to the Estate from Culham Lane, and a relocated Gatehouse, however these elements are subject to separate approval.

### Naturalistic Approach

- 3.18 The Applicant recognises that any works to alter the landscape must be carefully designed due to the majority of the site being designated within the wider Grade II\* Registered Park and Garden, the remainder being within the setting of the asset, and the entire site being within the Green Belt.

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- 3.19 During determination of the extant consents, it was established that the sloping lower half of the estate (south of the main house) is more sensitive to change than the relatively flat upper half (north of the main house).
- 3.20 Consequently, the amended Landscape Masterplan seeks to contain the proposed works and amendments primarily to the northern half of the site, with a view to preserving the most sensitive elements of the Registered Park and Garden and the openness of the Green Belt.
- 3.21 The revised Masterplan for the Estate, is a modern interpretation of the design principles established by landscape architect Lancelot "Capability" Brown in the mid to late 18th Century, moving away from more formal and ornamental 17th Century landscapes and towards more natural, practical (manageable), and functional English estates of the later period.

#### Waterbodies

- 3.22 The need for multiple waterbodies to the north of the main house in the form of two substantial ponds/lakes was required due to the location of underground services which run east to west across the site. The design team have since agreed a diversion strategy for these services, creating the opportunity for a single waterbody which will provide significant ecological and drainage benefits, while being better integrated within a more naturalistic landscape strategy.
- 3.23 The proposed enlarged lake is sited in the centre of the northern half of the site, similar to the approved position. However, the proposed form extends further to the west, and is combined with a revised main approach to the house that follows the organic plan form of the lake and reinterprets the allée approach as less rigid and formal.

#### Trees and Woodland

- 3.24 The approved landscape scheme would necessitate the replanting of the formal allée of trees due to the previous planting locations being mis-aligned with the approved Main House footprint and closer to the western site boundary.
- 3.25 This provides an opportunity to transplant and disperse the allée trees throughout the site and to introduce a revised, more naturalistic planting strategy which is considered to deliver a landscape enhancement beyond the approved scheme.
- 3.26 This will be supplemented with additional areas of denser woodland planting to the east and west of the main house, and to the east of the lake, which would be similar in scale and coverage to the existing ancient woodland clumps within the southern slopes. Further tree planting is provided along the Estate tracks and boundary areas.

#### Access

- 3.27 As noted above, the Estate tracks are proposed to be reconfigured, but following a similar functional hierarchy, including a curved main access drive to the house from the north, routing to the west of the lake, and joining the red line application site for the Main House in the same location as the approved. This is proposed to replace the approved formal allée configured in a straight line.
- 3.28 A proposed eastern management/maintenance track, broadly follows the eastern Estate boundary in a similar alignment to the approved. It joins the as approved Estate management access points on Kenton's Lane, with a minor amendment to the alignment at the northern site boundary of the Estate Management Building.

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- 3.29 There is an aspiration to relocate the as approved gatehouse (located within the 'pinch point' between the northern and central areas of the Estate) to establish a new main Estate access from Culham Lane to the north, which is considered to be logical and will better reflect the gatehouse's role from an estate security perspective. This is indicated on the amended Masterplan, however, it is made clear that this both these elements will need to be separately approved.

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## 4. Planning Assessment

- 4.1 This Section considers the key planning considerations, in the context of the Development Plan Framework, and the baseline provided by the 2023 planning permission for the Estate Management Building and Landscape Masterplan.
- 4.2 The relevant policy framework includes the Wokingham Borough Development Plan, formed by the 2010 Core Strategy (CS), and the 2014 Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan. Consideration is also given to the emerging Local Plan Update, which was submitted to the Secretary of State in February 2025, and is to be subject to Examination from November 2025. It is therefore afforded some weight in decision making. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), last subject to a significant update in December 2024, and accompanying Planning Practice Guidance is also an important material consideration.

### Principle of Development (Green Belt)

- 4.3 The MMD Policy TB01 (Development within the Green Belt) essentially defers to the NPPF's Green Belt policy under Chapter 13, which seeks to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development (most types of development aside from a limited range of exceptions), unless there are very special circumstances, and maintain the key facets of the Green Belt including its open character. Emerging Local Plan Update Policy SS6 does not fundamentally alter the LPA's policy approach to the Green Belt.
- 4.4 The principle of development of a new house at the Estate has been established through a number of previous planning permissions, including the original outline permission 0/2008/1353, and a further proposal that secured planning permission in 2018, which was re-submitted in 2023, forming the basis of the most recent permission. This was supplemented by permissions for ancillary buildings including the Estate Management Building (EMB) complex, most recently in 2023 (213610).
- 4.5 The revised proposals for the EMB complex do not fundamentally alter the form, scale, or nature of the development. The principal change from the 2023 approved iteration is to the siting, approx. 12m to the west of its originally approved location. This proposed change is not considered to alter the impact of the development from a Green Belt Policy perspective.
- 4.6 Other proposed changes are less perceptible. However, the reductions in height to the central (0.6m) and eastern buildings (1.25-1.5m), will have some relative positive impact in Green Belt Policy terms, reducing visual impact and massing above ground level, when compared to the approved baseline. There are some minor changes proposed to the below ground elements, including minor increases to the basement areas, though these are predominantly driven by structural efficiencies, and re-alignment of the tunnel as a result of the above ground re-siting.
- 4.7 In the context of the approved proposal, which provides a baseline for consideration, the proposed changes to the building are considered to be relatively minor, and in the majority of cases, provide enhancements that will reduce physical and visual impact. The amended proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with Local and National Green Belt Policy.

### Landscape and Visual Impact

- 4.8 The NPPF 187 part (a) requires that valued landscapes are protected and enhanced. The MDD Policy TB21 (Landscape Character) echoes this requirement, while also referencing the need to address the Council's Landscape Character Assessment. Emerging Local Plan Policy NE6 (Valued Landscapes) also seek to ensure that within the Borough's valued landscapes development should have regard to its key attributes, including quality and rarity.

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- 4.9 The amended proposal is accompanied by an updated Landscape Character Assessment and Visual Appraisal by Bradley-Hole Schoenaich Landscape Architects (BHSLA). The document summarises the appraisal methodology as: a review of policy and designations; analysis of topography and establishment of a zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) informed by a desk based assessment and desk-based appraisal and site visits in September and October 2025; assessment of landscape character of the site and its sensitivity to change; identification of viewpoints and their sensitivity; and consideration of potential likely landscape and visual effects that might result from the development.
- 4.10 The document considers the site context, acknowledging the location within the Grade II\* Listed RPG, and within the Chiltern Chalk Valued Landscape, an area recognized for its high scenic and historic landscape quality. It highlights that the Valued Landscape incorporates two Landscape Character Areas (LCA), which are: D1 'Remenham Wooded Chalk Slopes' and E1 'Remenham Arable Chalk Pasture' as categorised in the Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (WBLCA) (2019).
- 4.11 The appraisal highlights that the Estate is enclosed behind a well-maintained 3.5m high beech hedge, set within a mature landscape of deciduous and evergreen trees that provide substantial enclosure. Considered in the context of the local topography, the site is very well screened from surrounding public and private viewpoints, including the road network and public rights of way, together with the remainder of the RPG.
- 4.12 Moving on to evaluation of the proposals, the LVA concludes that:
- there is very limited visual connection between the Site and the surrounding landscape character area. It considers that construction activities are expected to result in some temporary adverse noise effects within areas closest to the Site. However, at greater distances, these effects would diminish significantly due to the minimal visual and acoustic connectivity.
  - the development will slightly reduce openness in the midsection of the parkland from the pre-development scenario, but this area is visually contained within the Estate and already has a more enclosed character.
  - The development will not affect the Registered Parks and Gardens of Park Place and Temple Combe.
  - The proposed Landscape Masterplan will safeguard and enhance the Valued Landscapes, aligning with the requirements of NPPF Paragraph 174(a).
- 4.13 On the above basis, it is considered that the proposed amendments mean that the scheme remains in accordance with the requirements of Policy TB21 (Landscape Character), and the relevant sections of the NPPF.

#### Other Matters

- 4.14 The red line application site is centrally located within the wider Estate ownership, and while there are physical environmental constraints in the wider estate area (including existing and protected trees, ecological habitats, neighbouring dwellings, flooding and drainage, and interaction with the surrounding highways network), the specific application site is relatively unconstrained in these terms, as open grassland.
- 4.15 The proposed relocation of the buildings c.12m west increases the degree of separation to the wooded site boundary to Kenton's Lane, and in particular the large mature Oak Tree, immediately to the south-east of the eastern parking storage structure as approved.

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- 4.16 The documentation accompanying the 2023 planning permission for the EMB complex prescribed a 'no-dig' structural methodology for the eastern car port structure and parallel eastern access track, which are both aligned north/south adjacent to the site boundary, due to these elements encroaching within the likely root protection area of the adjacent Tree.
- 4.17 More recent structural due diligence by the new owner's project team highlighted a preferable approach that would reduce any risk of any damage to roots, through a re-siting of the footprint of the buildings.
- 4.18 The proposed re-siting of buildings is not considered to create any additional impacts any other amenity or environmental factors, many of which are already covered by conditions to ensure that these elements are adequately mitigated or managed.
- 4.19 A written scheme of archaeological investigation has already been agreed with the Council, which involves trenching of the broader site, while other conditions cover detailed drainage, and tree protection measures. Similarly, construction management documentation has been submitted to ensure that transport, amenity and ecological impacts can be appropriately managed as the development progresses.
- 4.20 The proposal is therefore considered to satisfy Wokingham Managing Development Delivery DPD Policies CC03 (Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping), CC09 (Development and Flood Risk), TB23 (Biodiversity and Development), and TB25 (Archaeology), and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

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## 5. Summary and Conclusions

- 5.1 This Section 73 Variation of Condition application principally seeks to amend the approved documents as listed under Condition 2 of the planning permission 213610 for *“erection of a 2 storey Estate management buildings including gardeners accommodation and underground tunnel linking the estate buildings and ancillary to the main house on Stowdes estate, following demolition of 3No dwellings, 1No pool house, garages and outhouses, stables and hay barn”*, as approved on 15 September 2023.
- 5.2 The new owner and design team are aiming to restore an active estate function to this parkland setting, and provide an enhancement in terms of architecture, landscape, and biodiversity, while also ensuring that the scheme is both deliverable in the short-term, and operationally fit for purpose in the long-term.
- 5.3 Rather than wholesale changes, the proposed amendments include a re-siting of the complex 12m west and a series of minor refinements to the design of the buildings, together with an update to the Estate-wide Landscape Masterplan, which proposes a more naturalistic approach to the design of the Estate grounds.
- 5.4 Continuity is provided by: similar siting centrally within Estate to the east of the as approved Main House and connection to the as approved access points on Kenton’s Lane; configuration as central block with single storey storage buildings to the west and east; broadly similar design, scale and massing as a single storey contemporary and functional building; similar configuration of underground elements including the basement, tunnel, and tunnel storage area; together with a landscape masterplan that includes a prominent waterbody, retention of existing trees and woodland, supplemented with substantial new planting, and retention of the open and undeveloped southern sloped portion of the Estate.
- 5.5 Beyond these core similarities, this Section 73 application proposes the following amendments with reference to the approved EMB scheme:

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## Proposed Amendments

### EMB

- **Re-siting of Building Footprints 12m west**, to facilitate construction with more separation to constraints to the east.
- **Reduction in Height of Main Element and Eastern Car Port/Storage Building**, as part of design rationalisation.
- **Subtle revisions to façade, window articulation and detailing**, including additional fenestration and elevational details.
- **Minor changes to basement alignment and configuration**, for structural efficiency.
- **Minor changes to tunnel alignment and below ground tunnel storage area**, necessitated by the relocation of the buildings and detailed design work.

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### Landscape Masterplan

- **More naturalistic approach to the landscape design of the northern part of the estate**, ensuring gradual contouring, and a less formal estate road layout, better reflecting the historic setting.
- **Revised approach to tree planting**, including relocation of planted Allée trees, an increase in overall tree planting, and establishment of new woodland areas around the main house.
- **Provision of a single and larger pond** in place of the approved split ponds, which will create opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, and water management.

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Note: the Masterplan indicates an aspiration for a new main entrance to the Estate from Culham Lane, and a relocated Gatehouse, however these elements are subject to separate approval.

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- 5.6 Ultimately, it is considered that the majority of the proposed changes have a neutral to positive impact on planning considerations.
- 5.7 In terms of visual impact (relevant to landscape character and Green Belt openness), and spatial impact on Green Belt openness, the proposals are considered to have a minor positive impact, through the reduction in height (and mass) of the car port and main buildings. There are some minor increases to the envelope of the basement and tunnel storage facility. However, these will be imperceptible, and balanced by the shortening of the tunnel and above ground reductions in height/mass.
- 5.8 By relocating the buildings c.12m west, there is a greater degree of separation to the wooded site boundary to Kenton's Lane, and in particular the large mature Oak Tree, immediately to the south-east of the eastern parking storage structure. While a 'no-dig' methodology was included as part of the 2023 permission in this area, more recent structural due diligence highlighted a preferable approach that would reduce risk of any damage to roots, through a minor change to the footprint of the buildings.
- 5.9 It is considered that all other planning and environmental considerations can be resolved within the scope of the existing conditions, some of which have already been progressed in preparation for initial enabling and construction work (archaeology, construction environmental management and ecology, drainage, and landscape details).
- 5.10 On the above basis, the proposed amendments sought under this Section 73 application are considered to result in no material impacts over and above those already considered acceptable when permission 213610 was granted in September 2023.

# Appendix I

## Site Location Plan

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**Avison Young**

St Catherine's Court, Berkeley Place, Bristol BS8 1BQ

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Main House

Hatch signifying separate application

Proposed Estate Management Building

Outline of approved scheme

Amphitheatre Storage Location

Revisions

No.	Description

Date:      Rev:      Description:      App. by:



**pb+co.**  
Pexon Bradbury + Co Architects

**Project Title:**  
Project Conway

**Drawing Title:**  
Planning EMB Location Plan

**Scale:** 1:2500  
**Code:** PCY

**Drawing No.:** PCY-PBC-EM-ZZ-DR-A -1001

- General Notes:**
- All dimensions are to be checked on site prior to construction.
  - Use figured dimensions only. Do not scale from drawings.
  - Discrepancies between drawings are to be reported to the Site Agent / Contract Administrator immediately.
  - All Levels unless stated otherwise are above Ordnance Datum (AOD).



# Contact details

## Enquiries

David Williams  
07920822663  
[david.williams@avisonyoung.com](mailto:david.williams@avisonyoung.com)

Janet Jones  
07780277464  
[janet-sarah.jones@avisonyoung.com](mailto:janet-sarah.jones@avisonyoung.com)

## Visit us online

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### Avison Young

St Catherine's Court, Berkeley Place, Bristol BS8 1BQ

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