



# Thames Valley Park Data Centre

## Design & Access Statement

**Twelve Architects | On Behalf of FH Trustees**  
Revision 02 | September 2026

ISSUE REGISTER

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# 1.0 Introduction

# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Twelve Architects on behalf of the applicant, in support of an outline planning application to Wokingham Borough Council. It provides a summary of our site and context analysis, design development and various strategies incorporated within the design of a new data centre located at Thames Valley Park to the east of Reading.

The Design and Access Statement sets out the key principles in the approach to design at this site.

## 1.2 Supporting Documentation

This document should be read in conjunction with a number of documents that are submitted with the outline planning application, including:

### Existing Drawings:

- 259904-12A-AR-DR-PL-EX-0000-R2-02-EXISTING LOCATION PLAN
- 259904-12A-AR-DR-PL-EX-0001-R2-02-EXISTING SITE BLOCK PLAN
- 259904-12A-AR-DR-PL-EX-0400-R2-02-EXISTING BUILDING ELEVATIONS

### Demolition Drawings:

- 259904-12A-AR-DR-PL-DM-0000-R2-02-DEMOLITION SITE PLAN

### Illustrative Drawings:

- 259904-12A-AR-DR-PL-IP-0000-R2-03-ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PROPOSAL DRAWINGS
- 259904-12A-AR-DR-PL-IP-0001-R2-03-SITE PLAN (33kV SUBSTATION)
- 259904-12A-AR-DR-PL-IP-0002-R2-03-SITE PLAN (132kV SUBSTATION)
- 259904-12A-AR-DR-PL-IP-0100-R2-03-ILLUSTRATIVE GROUND FLOOR PLAN
- 259904-12A-AR-DR-PL-IP-0101-R2-03-ILLUSTRATIVE FIRST FLOOR PLAN
- 259904-12A-AR-DR-PL-IP-0102-R2-03-ILLUSTRATIVE SECOND FLOOR PLAN
- 259904-12A-AR-DR-PL-IP-0103-R2-03-ILLUSTRATIVE ROOF PLAN

### Parameter Drawings:

- 259904-12A-AR-DR-PL-PP-0001-R2-03-PARAMETER GROUND FLOOR LEVELS PLAN
- 259904-12A-AR-DR-PL-PP-0002-R2-03-PARAMETER BUILDING HEIGHTS PLAN
- 259904-12A-AR-DR-PL-PP-0003-R2-03-PARAMETER DEVELOPMENT ZONE
- 259904-12A-AR-DR-PL-PP-0100-R2-03-PARAMETER GROUND FLOOR PLAN
- 259904-12A-AR-DR-PL-PP-0101-R2-03-PARAMETER FIRST FLOOR PLAN
- 259904-12A-AR-DR-PL-PP-0102-R2-03-PARAMETER SECOND FLOOR PLAN
- 259904-12A-AR-DR-PL-PP-0103-R2-03-PARAMETER ROOF PLAN
- 259904-12A-AR-DR-PL-PP-0300-R2-02-PARAMETER TYPICAL SECTIONS

## 1.3 Project Team

|                               |                           |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Client/Applicant              | FH Trustees               |
| Project Manager               | BCS Consultancy           |
| Architect                     | Twelve Architects         |
| Planning Consultant           | Arup                      |
| Stakeholder Engagement        | Alpaca Communications     |
| MEP Engineer & Sustainability | Hilson Moran              |
| Transport                     | SK Transport              |
| Landscape                     | Radcliffes Environmental  |
| Archaeology                   | Prospect Archaeology      |
| Arboriculture                 | CBA                       |
| Fire Consultant               | OFR                       |
| CDM Advisor                   | Owl Safety                |
| Geotechnical Consultant       | Onyx Geo                  |
| Civil & Structural Engineer   | Cube Consulting Engineers |



# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.4 Project Overview & Brief

The proposed development at Thames Valley Park will deliver a data centre campus with associated power generation infrastructure, responding to the growing demand for secure, high-capacity digital facilities. This investment aims to strengthen regional and national digital resilience, supporting cloud services, artificial intelligence (AI) applications and business continuity.

The proposed scheme comprises an administration building, data halls and the associated electrical, mechanical and standby generator infrastructure, together with a new local substation and fuel cell compounds. The fuel cell installation forms part of a phased energy solution required to facilitate initial occupation and operation of the facility prior to the delivery of permanent utility infrastructure, and could be deployed in stacked arrangements to optimise land use whilst ensuring resilience throughout the phased delivery of the project.

The scheme will involve the demolition of three existing office buildings, two of which are vacant and stripped back to shell and core, and a third remaining occupied under a lease until 2027.

The proposed development represents an efficient use of previously developed land and aligns with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework in supporting sustainable economic growth, digital infrastructure and technological innovation. It also represents a significant opportunity to reinforce the Thames Valley’s role as a nationally important hub for innovation, enterprise and digital infrastructure.

## 1.5 Design Drivers

The design of the proposed development has been informed by the following key principles:

- **Mission-critical digital infrastructure:** Delivering a high-capacity data centre with ancillary administration and office accommodation to support growing demand for secure digital infrastructure.
- **Operational resilience:** Integrating the electrical, mechanical and servicing infrastructure required to ensure the reliable and continuous operation of the facility.
- **Energy strategy:** Incorporating on-site fuel cells as a “bridge to grid” solution, alongside a safeguarded grid connection strategy.
- **Sustainable development:** Targeting BREEAM ‘Excellent’ to demonstrate a commitment to sustainable design, construction and operational performance.
- **Landscape and biodiversity:** Delivering a development that achieves a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and safeguards existing landscape assets.

# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.6 Pre-Application Engagement

The proposed development has been informed through an iterative programme of pre-application engagement with the Local Planning Authority. Three pre-application meetings were held during 2026, supported by ongoing technical assessment and design development in response to officer feedback.

At the first pre-application meeting in March 2026, two development options were presented: a two-storey and a three-storey data centre, both phased to align with the availability of grid power. Following officer feedback, further technical and design assessment was undertaken, resulting in the three-storey option being selected as the preferred development strategy.

A second pre-application meeting was held in May 2026 to present the refined proposals. Key amendments included repositioning the building to minimise impacts on protected trees and their root protection areas, together with further development of the landscape strategy. In parallel, the supporting technical information for the outline planning application was progressed.

The third pre-application meeting took place in July 2026. Officers welcomed the revisions to the scheme, particularly the ecological improvements resulting from the repositioning of the building, and no significant changes to the overall design strategy were requested. Discussions focused on technical matters, including noise, heat, ecology, opportunities for future heat reuse and parking provision, which have been addressed through the accompanying technical assessments. Details of the design development across all three pre-application meetings are provided throughout this document.

## 1.7 Stakeholder Engagement

Alongside the pre-application process, the proposed development has been informed by a programme of stakeholder engagement with local residents, undertaken to introduce the proposals, seek feedback and inform the evolution of the scheme.

A dedicated project consultation website was launched to provide a central source of information on the emerging proposals, providing stakeholders with the opportunity to review the scheme and submit feedback online.

A public consultation event was held on the 7th of July 2026. The consultation was well attended by local residents, stakeholders, local councillors and Parish Council representatives. The principal themes raised related to water use, biodiversity, heat impacts, noise and air quality. Feedback received through the consultation has been reviewed by the project team and has continued to inform the development of the proposals and supporting planning documentation.

## 2.0 Site Appraisal

# 2.0 Site Appraisal

## 2.1 Site Location

The site is located within Thames Valley Business Park, approximately 1.5 miles east of Reading town centre and around 40 miles west of Central London. It benefits from connectivity to the strategic road network via the A3290/A329(M), with Junction 10 of the M4 located immediately to the east, providing convenient access to London, the wider Thames Valley and Heathrow Airport.

Reading Railway Station, located approximately 2 miles to the west, provides frequent services to London Paddington, the Elizabeth Line and destinations across the South East. Thames Valley Business Park also benefits from sustainable transport infrastructure, including shuttle bus services to Reading Railway Station, together with pedestrian and cycle routes.

The site falls within the administrative area of Wokingham Borough Council. It is not located within a Conservation Area and does not lie within, or adjacent to, a National Landscape (formerly an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).



# 2.0 Site Appraisal

## 2.2 Existing Site

The application site comprises three 4-storey office buildings that formerly accommodated Microsoft's UK headquarters. Occupation of the campus has reduced significantly in recent years, with two buildings now vacant and stripped back to shell and core, and the remaining building partially occupied under an existing lease. Microsoft has confirmed that they do not intend to remain on the campus and will vacate entirely at the expiry of their lease in December 2027.

The buildings are arranged within a landscaped business park setting and are surrounded by associated surface car parking, servicing areas, formal planting, mature trees, grassed open space and water features. Buildings 1 and 2 also benefit from basement car parking accessed via a shared vehicular ramp.

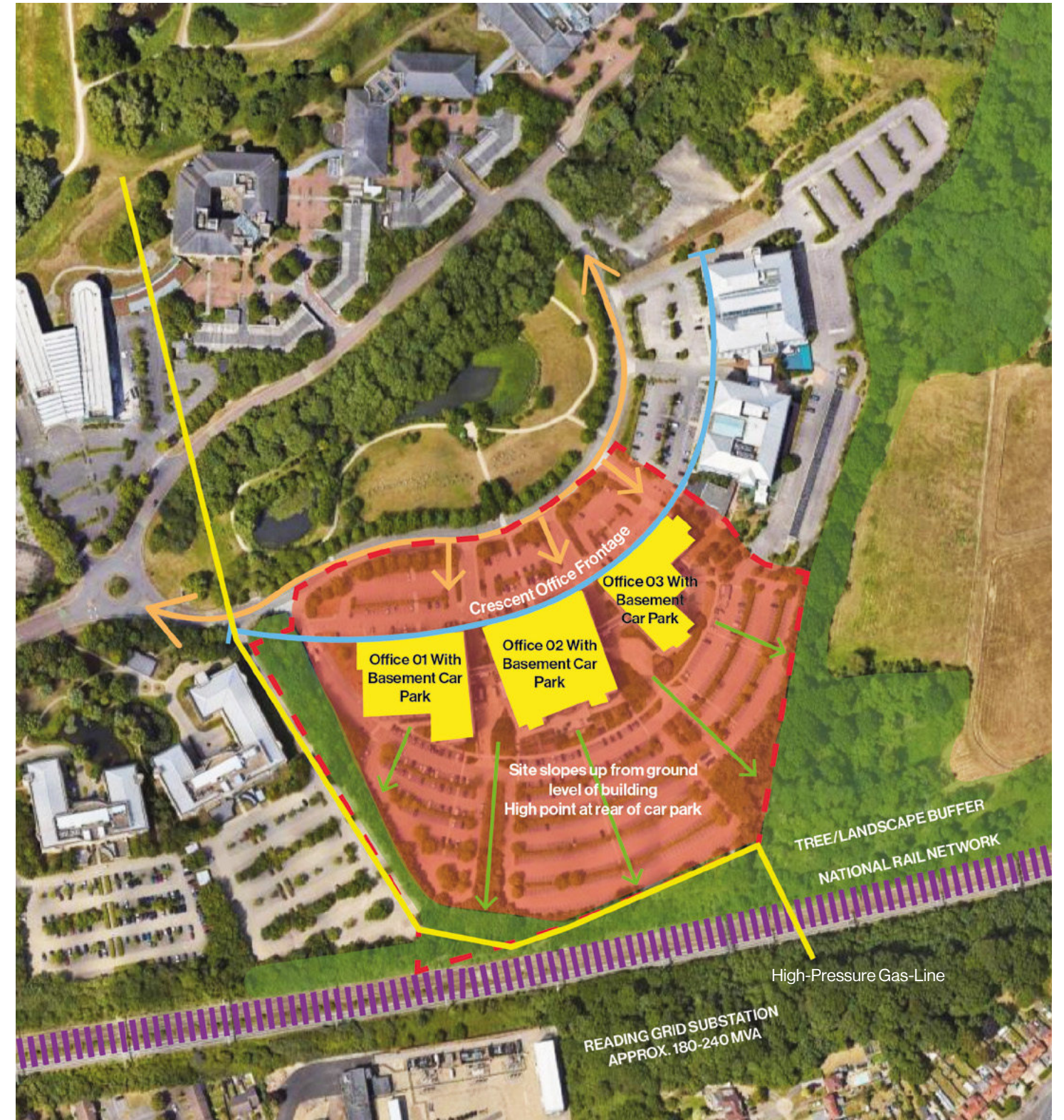
To the front of the site lies an area of landscaped open space comprising grassland, tree planting and water features. This forms part of the wider parkland setting of Thames Valley Business Park and provides visual and ecological separation from adjacent development. A Great Western Mainline railway line runs to the south of the site, beyond a belt of mature vegetation that provides effective screening between the rail infrastructure and the business park.

The site slopes upwards from the principal access on Campus Road, with ground levels rising by approximately 9 metres across the site. The existing buildings are arranged in a crescent formation, responding to the site's topography and internal circulation routes. Pedestrian and cycle routes pass through and around the site, connecting it to the wider Thames Valley Business Park.

## 2.3 Opportunities & Constraints

Several existing infrastructure constraints have informed the evolution of the proposed development. A high-pressure underground gas pipeline runs along the western and southern boundaries of the site, while electrical infrastructure, including a National Grid substation located beyond the railway corridor, lies in close proximity.

This proximity will support a direct grid connection for the project as capacity becomes available. The availability of this existing electrical infrastructure has informed the development proposals.



# 2.0 Site Appraisal

## 2.4 Surrounding Context

The surrounding context is characterised by large-scale commercial buildings set within landscaped grounds, including water features and green corridors associated with the River Thames corridor.

To the immediate north and west are further office buildings within Thames Valley Business Park. To the east of the site is an open, unvegetated area used for agricultural purposes (Sonning Meadows) and residential areas further afield. A Great Western Mainline railway line runs to the south of the site, beyond a belt of mature vegetation that provides effective screening between the railway corridor and the business park. Beyond the railway is a residential area and the Reading substation. To the south-west, the character transitions to a series of large-scale industrial and logistics warehouse buildings, reflecting the wider commercial context of the area.



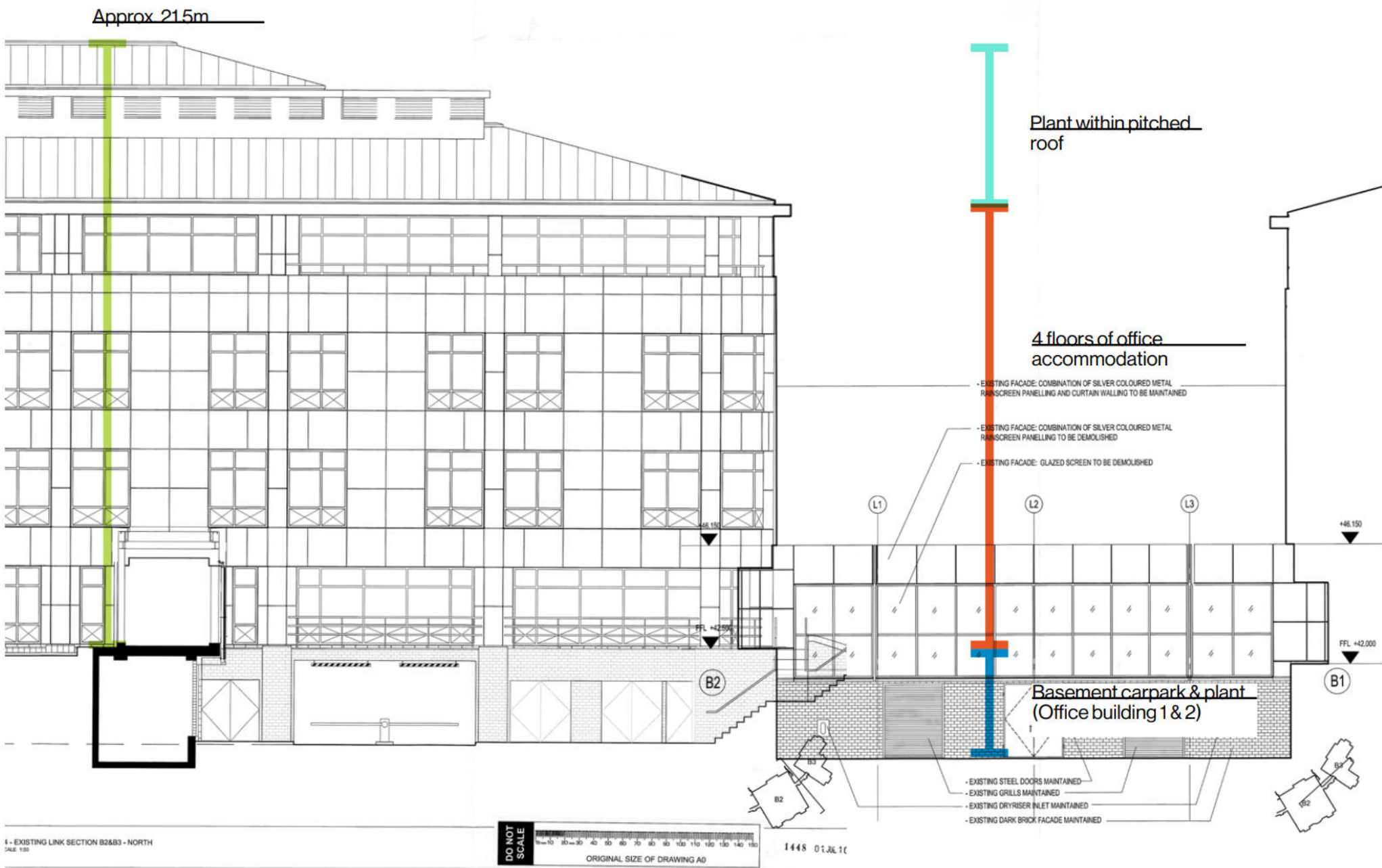
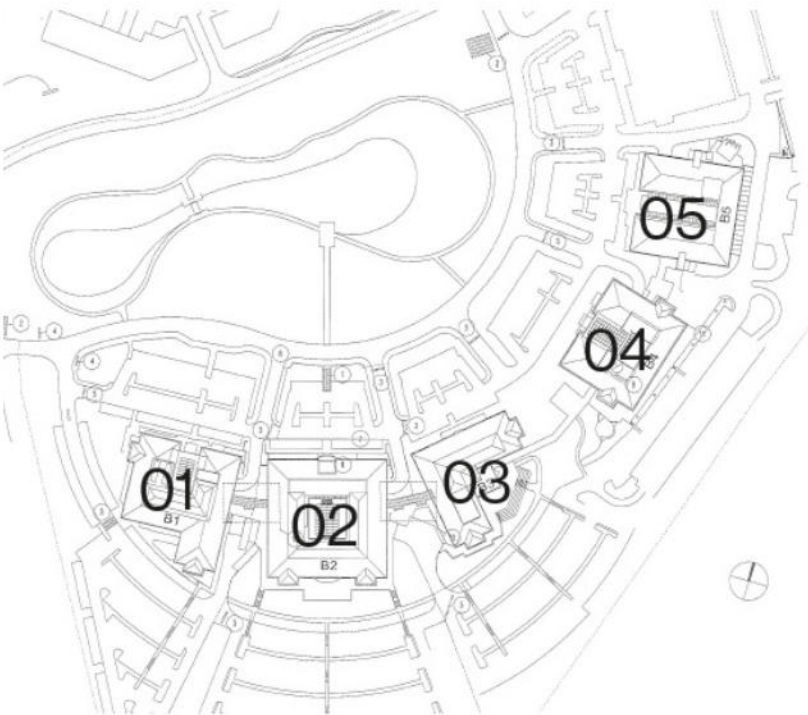
- ① Thames Corridor
- ② Thames Valley Park Nature Reserve
- ③ Thames Valley Park Business Park
- ④ Sonning Meadows
- ⑤ Great Western Mainline Railway
- ⑥ Mature Vegetation
- ⑦ Residential Areas
- ⑧ Reading Substation

# 2.0 Site Appraisal

## 2.5 Site Character

### 2.5.1 Existing Buildings

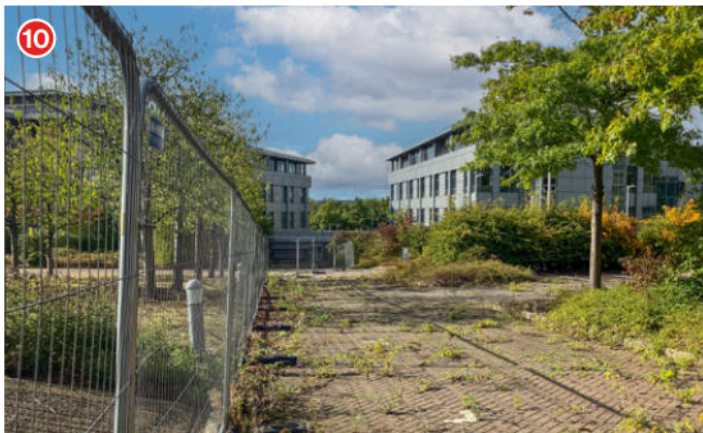
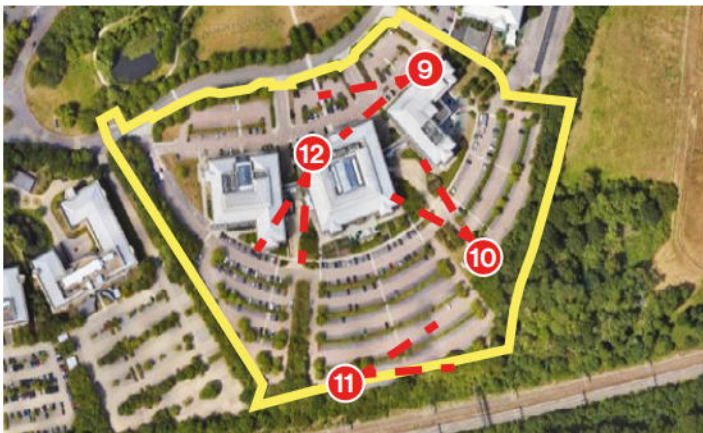
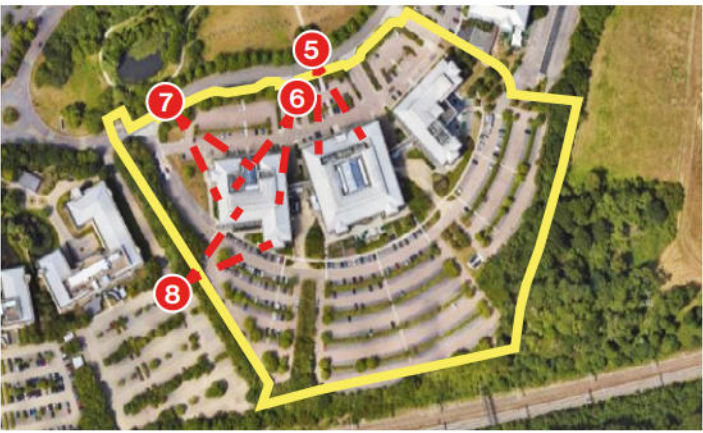
The site comprises three office buildings (Buildings 1-3), each providing 4-storeys of office accommodation with an additional plant room located within the pitched roof. The buildings are approximately 21.5 metres above their respective ground levels. Buildings 1 and 2 also incorporate basement car parking beneath the building footprint.



# 2.0 Site Appraisal

## 2.5.1 Existing Buildings

The office buildings were designed as part of the original Thames Valley Business Park masterplan, with their principal frontages arranged in a crescent formation. They share a consistent façade treatment typical of the period in which they were constructed. The ground floor and third floor are set back in plan, whilst the pitched roofs project towards the principal elevations.



# 2.0 Site Appraisal

## 2.5.2 Built Form

Development within Thames Valley Business Park is characterised by corporate office buildings rather than industrial or warehouse typologies. Buildings typically sit within generous setbacks from the street, with calm, ordered massing and a consistent architectural language that prioritises clarity, proportion and legibility.



## 2.5.3 Landscape Structure

Landscape is a defining element of Thames Valley Business Park, providing a structured setting that shapes streets, plots and views. Formal avenues and groupings of ornamental trees define the public realm, while planted buffers, woodland belts and areas of open space soften building edges and infrastructure. Landscape is also used to define boundaries and accommodate changes in level, ensuring that development is integrated within its wider setting.



## 2.5.4 Boundaries and Security

Boundary treatments throughout Thames Valley Business Park are generally discreet and landscape-led. Low-level post-and-rail fencing is integrated with hedgerows and tree planting, while chain-link fencing is used primarily along rear boundaries adjacent to woodland. Secure access points are limited and comprise height-restriction barriers and mesh gates, with only a single isolated use of palisade fencing within the business park. Security measures are present where required, but are not a defining feature of the park's principal frontages or overall character.



# 2.0 Site Appraisal

## 2.6 Topography

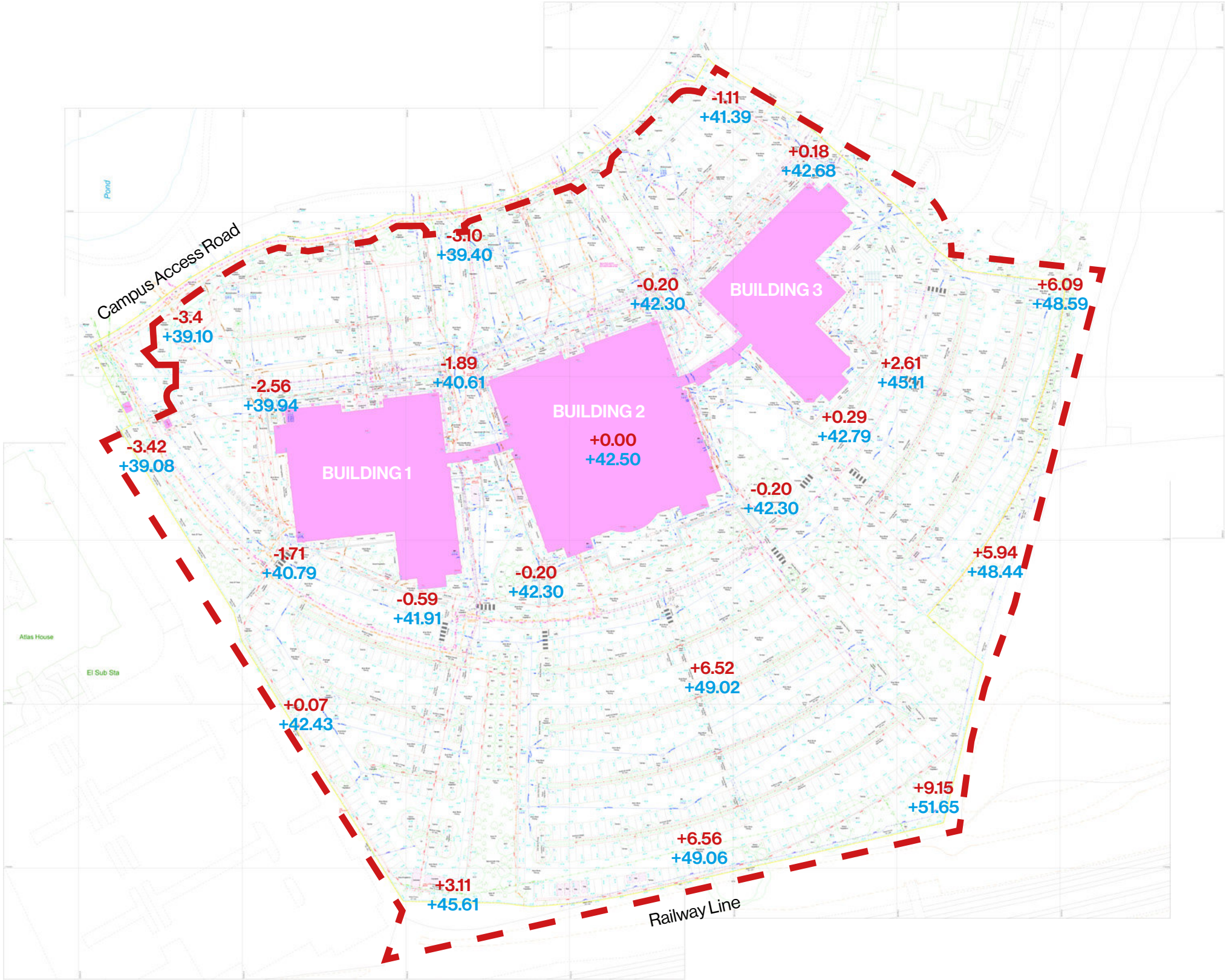
A topographical survey was undertaken to inform the development proposals.

The site's lowest point is located at the principal vehicular entrance from Campus Road, adjacent to Building 1, at approximately +39.00m AOD. Campus Road rises gradually towards Building 3, reaching approximately +40.00m AOD.

The existing office buildings are set on raised platforms, with ground floor levels approximately 3 metres above Campus Road. Ground floor levels are approximately +42.00m AOD for Building 1, +42.50m AOD for Building 2, and +42.90m AOD for Building 3.

Beyond the buildings, the site continues to rise through the existing surface car parks towards the southern boundary. The highest ground levels occur along the southern perimeter, where the site meets the elevated embankment of the Great Western Mainline railway, reaching approximately +49.00m to +51.65m AOD.

This change in topography has been an important consideration in the development of the proposed scheme, informing the positioning of buildings, external infrastructure and landscape proposals.



# 2.0 Site Appraisal

## 2.7 Key Views

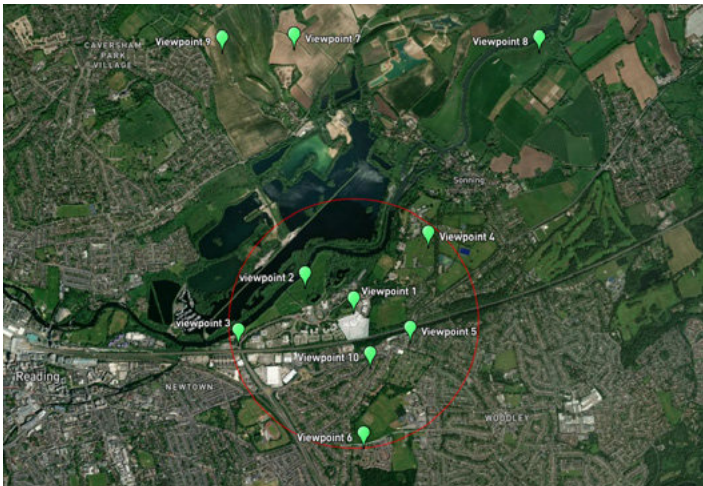
A series of representative viewpoints were identified to inform the design process. The views are illustrative only and are based on the massing proposals from Pre-App 2. The red dashed line shown on each image indicates the approximate extent of the proposed development.

### View 1

View 1 illustrates the proposed data centre within its immediate context, showing its relationship to the surrounding office buildings and immediate landscape setting. This is considered the primary assessment viewpoint for testing the proposed massing, scale and façade composition. The building has been designed to continue the existing crescent building line, responding to the landscape character and ecological setting of Thames Valley Business Park.

### Views 2-5

Views 2 to 5 indicate that the proposed development is likely to be screened by existing mature trees and variations in topography, resulting in limited visibility from these locations.



### View 1



### View 2



### View 3



### View 4



### View 5



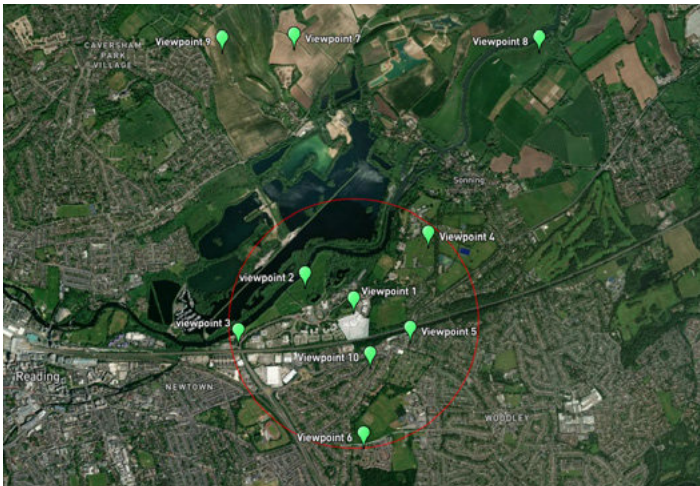
# 2.0 Site Appraisal

## Views 6-9

The more distant viewpoints represented by Views 6 to 9 similarly indicate that the proposed data centre will be largely screened by existing vegetation and landform. Visibility is expected to remain limited, and these locations are therefore considered to have relatively low visual sensitivity.

## View 10

View 10 is located closer to the site on the opposite side of the railway line. Although in relatively close proximity, the preliminary assessment indicates that the proposed development will be substantially screened by the railway embankment and intervening vegetation, resulting in limited visibility.



View 6



View 7



View 8



View 9



View 10

