

2 Site and Local Context

2.1 Introduction & Background

- 2.1.1 This chapter provides a description of the Site and its setting. Further details of the existing baseline relevant to the proposed scope of the technical assessments are provided in Chapters 6 and 7.

Planning History

- 2.1.2 Prior to the Site's current use as an industrial and logistics Site, it was previously the Glaxo Smith Kline (GSK) offices.
- 2.1.3 The previous use of the Site was granted consent in 1984, under ref. 27951/B/81/1955 for the creation of a science and commercial park comprising multi-purpose general and light industrial buildings. Subsequent Reserved Matters applications were submitted and approved pursuant to the original outline application, with the most relevant approval under ref. 37601/A/89/0778. This Site was occupied by GSK from c.1990 until they vacated the Site in c.2019/20.
- 2.1.4 In the intervening period, Prologis secured planning permission, in 2015, for the redevelopment of Stockley Park, adjacent to the western boundary, under ref. 37977/APP/2015/1004 to provide up to 45,000 sqm of floorspace over both phases. Phase 1 completed in 2016/17 and Phase 2 completed in 2020 and are in operation as industrial and logistics units, conveniently positioned on the doorstep of London Heathrow Airport. The four buildings to the west were originally constructed and designed for industrial or logistic use and have since been converted to data centres through internal modifications and external plant room deck extensions. The service yards of these neighbouring data centres have been adapted to include new plant and chiller deck extensions, elevated above external generators placed at ground level. These extensions are enclosed with screen louvres to provide visual screening and maintain design coherence.
- 2.1.5 Subsequently, Prologis secured planning permission, in 2020, for the redevelopment of the Site to provide a further two industrial units providing industrial floorspace (Use Class B1c (now E(g))/B2/B8) and ancillary offices under ref. 39207/APP/2020/2188. Condition 20 of this permission allows the floorspace to be used flexibly within Class E(g), Class B2 and Class B8. Recent decisions made by the Secretary of State confirm that a 'data centre' operation falls within Use Class B8¹.
- 2.1.6 These units were completed in 2023/24 and is the extant use on Site. The relevant planning history is included within the endnotes of this Chapter¹.

¹ See appeal decisions Land off Bedmond Road, Abbots Langley (Ref. APP/P1940/W/24/3346061); Court Lane Industrial Estate, Court Lane, Iver (Ref. APP/N0410/W/24/3337981); and, Woodlands Park Landfill Site, Land South of Slough Road, Iver (Ref. APP/N0410/W/24/3347353) which were called into the Secretary of State and confirm that data centres sit within Use Class B8.

2.2 Site Description

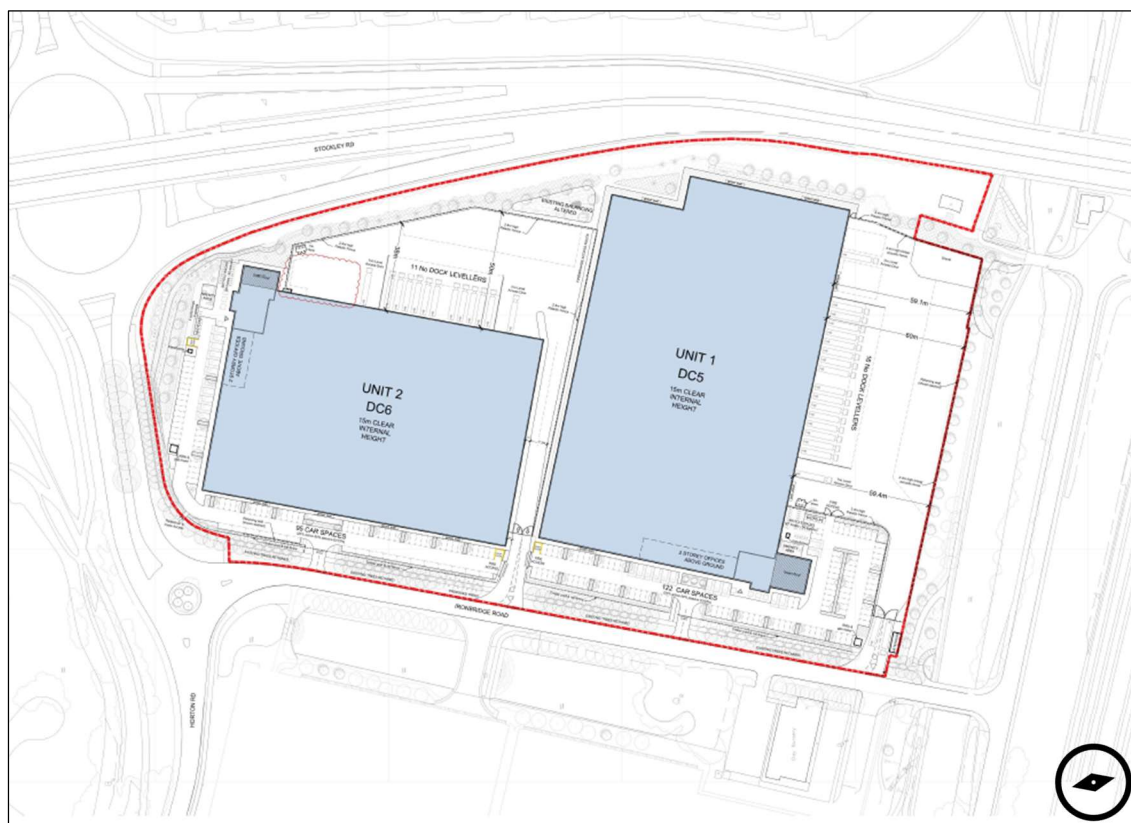
Site Location

- 2.2.1 The Site is located in Yiewsley within the London Borough of Hillingdon (LBH). It comprises approximately 6.3 hectares of previously developed land occupied by two large industrial and logistics units. The extent of the Site is delineated by the red line boundary shown in Figure 1.1.
- 2.2.2 Central London lies approximately 22 km to the east of the Site. Slough Town Centre is located around 10 km to the west, Hayes Town Centre approximately 1.2 km to the northeast, and Uxbridge Town Centre approximately 4.3 km to the northwest.
- 2.2.3 LBH is bordered by the London Borough of Harrow, located approximately 7.5 km northeast of the Site; the London Borough of Ealing, approximately 4 km to the east; and the London Borough of Hounslow, approximately 5.2 km to the southeast. Beyond the borough boundary, Beaconsfield lies approximately 2.3 km to the west and Windsor approximately 3.8 km to the southwest.
- 2.2.4 The Site is situated approximately 1.5 km north of Junction 4 of the M4 motorway (serving Heathrow Airport). The M25 motorway is approximately 3.3 km to the west, accessible via Stockley Road (A408) and the M4.
- 2.2.5 To the east of the Site lies the wider Stockley Park estate, comprising approximately 44.5 hectares of office and commercial uses. Beyond Stockley Park is the Stockley Park Golf Club and Lake Farm Country Park.
- 2.2.6 Immediately west of the Site are the Stockley Park industrial and logistics units (approved under planning reference 37977/APP/2015/1004). Further west, around 450 m from the Site, is a cluster of industrial units located along both sides of Horton Road.
- 2.2.7 To the south of the Site, between the Grand Union Canal and the Elizabeth Line / National Rail mainline railway, is an area of industrial yards including vehicle parking and storage facilities. Beyond this is the nearest residential neighbourhood. Approximately 300 m southwest of the Site is Drayton Garden Village, with further residential properties located within and surrounding West Drayton.

The Site

- 2.2.8 As set out in Chapter 1, the Site is predominantly hardstanding and comprises two vacant E(g) / B2 / B8 warehouse buildings.
- Unit 1 (DC5 - Distribution Centre 5); and,
 - Unit 2 (DC6 - Distribution Centre 6).
- 2.2.9 Unit 1, to the south consists of 18,063 sqm of floorspace whereas Unit 2, to the north, consists of 13,290 sqm of floorspace. Each building has a clear haunch height of 15m and an overall building height of 18m. Figure 2.1 shows the existing site layout.
- 2.2.10 The buildings are of steel construction with associated areas for car parking and service yards with heavy goods vehicle (HGV) turning areas, installed for the anticipated logistics operation that has yet to come forward. The Site is marked by its mature boundary trees along the northern, eastern and southern boundaries of the Site. Two lines of mature trees are present on the western boundary of the Site which line the footpath to the west of the Site.

Figure 2.1 Existing Site Layout



Site Access, Public Rights of Way & Public Transport Accessibility

- 2.2.11 The Site is well located in terms of existing highway infrastructure and benefits from good connections to the local and strategic highway networks, notably the M4 (Junction 4), approximately 1.5km south of the Site.
- 2.2.12 Primary vehicular access to the Site is gained from Iron Bridge Road North to the west which itself is accessed from Horton Road.
- 2.2.13 Transport for London (TfL) has assessed each area of each London Borough as to how well connected the Site is by Public Transport. This measure is the Public Transport Access Level known as PTAL². PTAL rates accessibility to public transport from 0 (worst), 1a, 1b, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6a and 6b (best) and is calculated using a complex calculation method called the Access Index (seen on page 18 and 19 of the guidance). Although the guidance was published in 2015, the TfL WebCAT 3.0 tool was updated in 2023, and therefore, shows the Elizabeth Line access to stations at West Drayton and Hayes & Harlington.
- 2.2.14 The Site has a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) Rating of 1b and 2 which is on the lower end of public transport accessibility. The closest bus connections for the Iron Bridge Road stop (located on Horton Road) for routes U5 (Hayes - Uxbridge), 350 (Hayes – Heathrow Terminal 5) and A10 (Uxbridge - Heathrow Airport Central).

² Transport for London (2015) Assessing Transport Connectivity in London

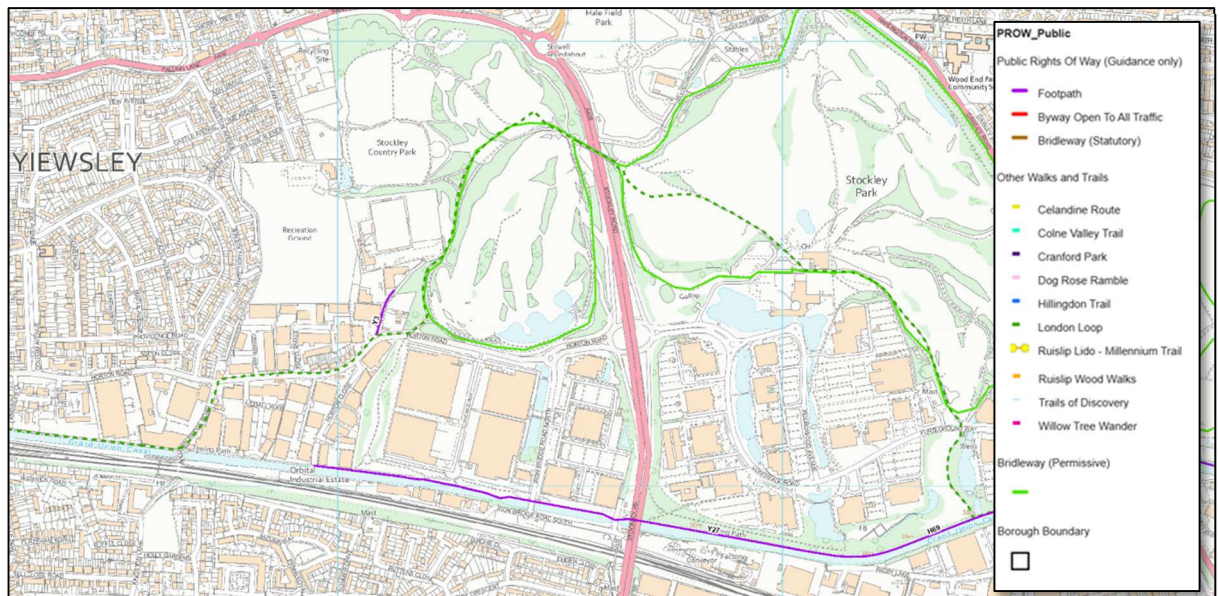
2.2.15 West Drayton Rail Station approximately 1.42km to the west of the Site serves the Great Western Railway lines: Abbey Wood - Maidenhead and Abbey Wood - Reading. The Elizabeth Line also provides services to and from Reading, Terminals 2, 3, 4 and 5 at Heathrow, into Central London (with Paddington, Bond Street, Tottenham Court Road, Farringdon, Liverpool Street and Whitechapel), and then on to either Abbey Wood, in the southeast, or toward Shenfield, in the northwest.

2.2.16 There are no Public Rights of Way in the Site boundary however, the following routes are in close proximity:

- Footpath Y27, immediately to the south following the route of the Grand Union Canal Walk, which then connects to footpath H69 to the east;
- Footpath Y3, approximately 400m to the northwest;
- Permissive Bridleway Route, Stockley Park which routes around Stockley Country Park and Stockley Park Golf Course, approximately 50m north;
- Section 11 of the London Loop – Hayes to West London, partially follows the route of the Stockley Park Bridleway Route, approximately 350m northwest.

2.2.17 Figure 2.2 shows an extract from LHB's PRow map setting out the key footpaths and Bridgeways around the Site.

Figure 2.2 Extract from Hillingdon Public Rights of Way Map³



³<https://lbhillingdon.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=e30fff96e11041118cf8980e4e49040d>

Air Quality

- 2.2.18 The Site lies within the Hillingdon Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), designated on 1 September 2003, which covers approximately the southern two-thirds of the Borough.
- 2.2.19 Transport for London (TfL), through the London Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (2019), has identified a series of Air Quality Focus Areas (AQFAs) where reductions in vehicle-related emissions of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀) are particularly required. The Site is not located within any of these AQFAs.
- 2.2.20 Despite this, the Site is situated in an area of elevated NO₂ emissions, typically in the range of 25–30 µg/m³. Under the London Plan, the Greater London Authority (GLA) requires certain developments—based on their scale—to demonstrate how they will be Air Quality Positive (AQP). Owing to its size, the Proposed Development is required to submit an AQP Statement.
- 2.2.21 The Draft Air Quality Action Plan 2025–2030 identifies additional AQFAs in the Borough where high levels of PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ have been recorded. The south-western part of the Site falls within the West Drayton / Yiewsley AQFA.
- 2.2.22 Further detail regarding air quality conditions and the assessment undertaken is provided in Chapter 7: Air Quality.

Noise

- 2.2.23 There are several notable noise sources within the vicinity of the Site, including Stockley Road to the east, the railway line immediately to the south, the M4 motorway approximately 1.5 km to the south, and Heathrow Airport approximately 3.0 km further south. The nearest noise sensitive locations are:
- Residential properties to the south along Emden Close and the wider housing estates across the railway line, some 200 metres.
 - There is a day nursery across Iron Bridge Road north (Busy Bees)
 - There is the Travelodge circa 500m to the east across Stockley Road, and houses along Horton Road at a similar distance to the west.

Ecology and Nature Conservation

- 2.2.24 There are no statutory nature conservation designations within the Site or within 5 km of its boundaries. However, a number of statutory designated sites are located beyond this distance.
- 2.2.25 Eleven non-statutory Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) are located within 1 km of the Site. The nearest of these is the Grand Union Canal SINC, which forms part of the wider London's Canal SINC and directly adjoins the Site's southern boundary.
- 2.2.26 The Site is of limited ecological value, comprising largely hardstanding and previously developed land. Existing soft landscaping is limited and comprises recently planted ornamental trees, hedgerows and shrubs located around the car park and Site perimeter.
- 2.2.27 Surveys of habitats and species present on the Site identified green roofs and green walls incorporated within the warehouse buildings, along with areas of newly planted trees, hedgerows and ornamental shrubs. Two bird and bat boxes were recorded within the north-east and south-east corners of the Site. All construction plant and machinery is confined to areas of hardstanding, ensuring that no habitats are subject to direct disturbance.

- 2.2.28 The buildings on Site were assessed as having low potential to support roosting bats due to the modern construction and limited access points. However, the adjacent Grand Union Canal is likely to function as a commuting and foraging corridor for bats and other wildlife species.
- 2.2.29 No evidence of current or historical nesting bird activity was recorded during the survey. Nevertheless, the trees and hedgerows within the Site, together with the installed bird boxes, provide suitable nesting opportunities for breeding birds.
- 2.2.30 An Ecological Appraisal has been prepared by FPCR in support of the planning application.
- 2.2.31 An Arboricultural Assessment has been undertaken by FPCR (reference PLON01-FCP-XX-XX-RP-N-00002). There are a total of 50 individual trees (9 Category U trees and 41 Category C trees) and 10 groups of trees and hedgerows (1 Category U, 6 Category B and, 3 Category C) within the Site boundary.

Flood Risk and Hydrology and Ground Conditions

- 2.2.32 The topography of the Site is relatively flat with a slight fall from c.34.5m AOD in the north to c.33.4m AOD in the south.
- 2.2.33 The Site is located within Flood Zone 1, at the lowest level of flood risk as defined by the Environmental Agency. There is no Climate Change flood risk on the Site.
- 2.2.34 There are pockets of surface water flood risk on the Site, which does not follow the patterns of the existing built form. These pockets of surface water flood areas are located where the existing buildings are and in the parking areas proposed.
- 2.2.35 The existing development is drained by a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) in line with the approved drainage strategy associated with the 2021 Permission. This includes;
- Surface water discharge restricted to 12.5l/s for all storms up to 100yr + 40% climate change allowance (equivalent to 2l/s/ha)
 - Below ground surface water attenuation storage
 - Surface water discharge into the Grand Union Canal
- 2.2.36 The previous FRA for the 2021 permission confirms all surface water up to the 100yr + 40% climate change event will be managed and contained on the Site, effectively removing surface water flood risk from the development.
- 2.2.37 Source Protection Zones (SPZs) identify areas of land through which water infiltrates into a groundwater borehole, well or spring that is used for public drinking water supply. The Site is not located within a SPZ.
- 2.2.38 An assessment of geological ground conditions was undertaken as part of the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Strategy submitted with the planning application, focusing on the potential movement of groundwater through Made Ground, Drift Geology and Solid Geology. The Site is considered to present a medium-high risk of groundwater vulnerability.
- 2.2.39 The underlying bedrock comprises the London Clay Formation (clay, silt and sand), deposited between approximately 56 and 47.8 million years ago. Overlying this are superficial deposits of the Lynch Hill Gravel Member (sand and gravel), formed between approximately 362,000 and much of the Site consists of Artificial / Made Ground associated with previous development.

Archaeology and Built Heritage

Archaeology

2.2.40 The Site is not located within an Archaeological Priority Area identified in the Hillingdon Local Plan. The Site has been subject to development for approximately 40–50 years, making it likely that any archaeological remains would have been previously disturbed or removed. As such, the potential for surviving archaeological assets is considered low.

Built Heritage

2.2.41 The Site is within the Stockley Park: Business Park Phases I and II and country park and golf course (Park and Garden Grade II). There are no other designated heritage assets on the Site.

2.2.42 There are a number of built heritage assets within 1km of the Site:

- A collection of three Grade II Listed heritage assets, all approximately 1km north of the Site:
 - 'Large Barn to East of Hubbards Farmhouse';
 - 'Outbuildings at Hubbards Farm'; and,
 - 'Walls to West and South of Hubbards Farm Garden'.

2.2.43 There are also a number of locally listed buildings within 1km of the Site:

- Stockley Park, to the immediate east of the Site, consisting of: The Arena; Stockley Park (A1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.3); and, Stockley Park (B3);
- The Stables, approximately 800m northeast;
- Church of St Jerome, with the associated St Jeromes Church War Memorial, approximately 900m northeast;
- Dawley Wall, approximately 1km northeast.

Utilities

2.2.44 The Site contains various utility infrastructure installed as part of the previous consent.

Power / Electricity

2.2.45 The Site is served by a privately owned high-voltage (HV) network, connected via a Distribution Network Operator ring main unit located at the Site boundary.

Potable Water & Drainage

2.2.46 The Site is currently served by a utility main provided by Affinity Water. Four incoming water supplies support existing buildings. Each supply enters the Site via Iron Bridge Road North, where utility meters and demarcation points are located with each unit being routed with a 63mm MDPE mains cold water supply and a 160mm HDPE fire water supply.

2.2.47 Existing connections from the Site to Thames Water public sewers in Bullsbrook Road and Uxbridge Road will be used.

Gas

2.2.48 The Site is served by a gas governor kiosk and associated infrastructure, comprising a twin gas booster set and below-ground pipework. Since installation in 2023, the gas supply has remained unused, and the associated utility connection has been dormant.

2.2.49 Full details of the existing utilities on and around the Site are provided within the Utilities Statement (See Appendix 3.6).

2.3 Sensitive Receptors

2.3.1 Aspects of the Site and adjacent areas considered in the design and assessment of the proposals can be identified as:

- Occupiers of existing dwellings and commercial premises in proximity to the Site;
- The local population in respect of local services, employment opportunities, etc.
- Users of local roads, transport services and public rights of way both on and in proximity to the Site;
- Climate change in terms of greenhouse gas emissions and resilience;
- Ecological habitats and species present in proximity to the Site;
- Surface and groundwater regimes both on or in close proximity to the Site, including the drainage characteristics of the Site;
- The townscape character of the Site and the surrounding area;
- Sensitive receptors that would be introduced to the Site as a result of the Proposed Development including site workers, occupiers and other site works who would be present during later phases of construction.

ⁱ The planning history for the Site comprises the following:

- **27951/B/81/1955** - Reclamation of land and comprehensive development as: (i) golf course and club house, amenity, sporting and recreational facilities; (ii) science and commercial park comprising multi-purpose general and light industrial buildings related to high technology operations including laboratories and training facilities and uses falling within sub-paragraphs (a) and (b) of Section 66(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 with ancillary offices and/or warehouse buildings with ancillary offices, bank, clinic and daycare centre, restaurant and public house shops, lake, amenity, sporting and recreational facilities at land east and west of Stockley Road, West Drayton, Hayes (outline application)

Approved 20 December 1984

- **37601A/89/0778** – Whereas in pursuance of Condition No. 3 of planning permission Ref. No. 27951/B/81/1955 dated 20 December 1984 for the development of land situated at Stockley Park, Yiewsley. For erection of buildings B9, B10 and B11. Details were submitted on 5.4.89, 10.5.89, 18.9.89, 7.2.90 and 13.2.90.

Approved 1 May 1990

- **37977/APP/2015/1004** - Hybrid Application for the phased comprehensive redevelopment of the site to provide an overall maximum gross floorspace of 45,000sqm of light industrial uses (Use Class B1c and/or Use Class B2) and/or storage and distribution uses (Use Class B8) and ancillary offices, together with servicing, parking, access roads and open space. Full planning permission is sought for Phase 1 containing 18,900sqm of floorspace in two buildings up to 16.2 metres in height (to ridge), together with associated highways works, open space, hard and soft landscaping, car parking and associated infrastructure. Outline planning permission is sought for Phase 2 for up to 26,100sqm of floorspace with all matters, except for access, reserved for later determination

Approved 19 September 2015

- **37977/APP/2019/1453** - Full planning application for proposed attached tiered gantry structure to unit DC4 to provide no.47 plants and erection of no.16 generators within the loading area, alongside associated green wall screening, landscaping and security fencing

Approved 16 October 2019

- **39207/APP/2020/2188** - Redevelopment of the site to provide two industrial units providing industrial floorspace (Use Class B1c/B2/B8) and ancillary offices together with associated parking, access arrangements, landscaping and infrastructure

Approved 8 December 2020

- **39207/APP/2021/3065** - Redevelopment of the site to provide a last mile delivery centre (Use Class B8) and ancillary offices together with associated van storage deck and parking, access arrangements, landscaping and infrastructure.

Approved 22 October 2021 (*not built out*)