Former Sipson Garden Centre

Daylight, Sunlight & Overshadowing Assessment

VIRTUS Data Centres

PGF-ACM-XX-XX-ZZ-050000

October 2026

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Quality information

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Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Authorized	Name	Position
0	2026-09-22	Draft	-	-	-
1	2026-10-15	Final	KT	Kach Theeprawat	Technical Design Lead

Distribution List

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

VIRTUS Data Centres have identified the Former Sipson Garden Centre and associated land within the Grey Belt for redevelopment. An outline planning application (with all matters reserved except for access) for the redevelopment of the former Sipson Garden Centre site to provide a data centre facility, including associated energy infrastructure, security measures, landscaping, and access arrangements will be submitted for the design of development to the London Borough of Hillingdon (LBH).

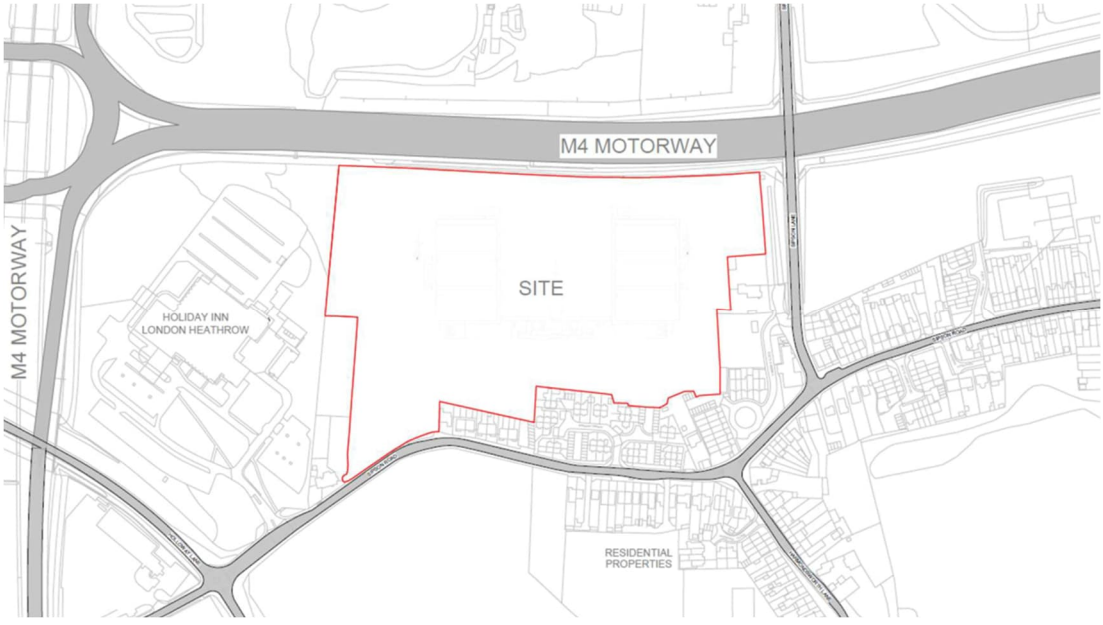
The Site is situated on the eastern side of Sipson Road, to the northeast of Sipson village, within the administrative area of the London Borough of Hillingdon. It lies approximately 1 km north of Heathrow Airport and is immediately adjacent to the M4 Spur Road connecting Junction 4 of the M4 to the airport. The Site is also located approximately 2.5 km east of the M4/M25 interchange.

The current Site conditions are a mix of the existing garden centre and hardstanding toward the north and is predominantly open field toward the south. The Site boundaries are largely populated by established landscaping, and the proposals seek to retain the majority of existing trees and shrubs.

The redevelopment proposals address the full Site area and comprise the erection of a 2-storey Data Centre building, 2-storey offices alongside plant equipment, ancillary office uses and car parking within an approximate Site area of 6.9 ha. The proposals also introduce a managed landscape plan with particular focus of plantings around the boundaries of the Site.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the Site location in plan. Figure 2 provides a conceptual illustration of the architecture and landscape proposals.

Figure 1. Site Plan



Source: extract of drawing PGF-ACM-00-XX-DR-AR-100000 - Site Location Plan rev P1

Figure 2. Site Illustration



Source: AECOM Architectural Render, October 2026

Due to the proximity of the proposed development to existing, neighbouring properties, there is potential to impact the current daylight and sunlight amenity experienced to them and the LBH Local Planning Validation Checklist (2024) advises that "*a daylight and sunlight assessment should be submitted to illustrate that the development does not cause unacceptable loss of amenity to adjacent occupiers by reducing the amount of daylight or sunlight*" [to them].

AECOM have been appointed to undertake the daylight and sunlight assessment. This report presents an overview of the potential daylight and sunlight effects of the proposed scheme resulting from the new data centre campus on the amenity of existing adjacent properties, and evaluation of the outcomes against recommendations set out in the Building Research Establishment (BRE) design guide 209 *'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight'*, 2022.

1.2 Scope of Assessment

A daylight and sunlight assessment is required to determine daylight and sunlight performance as a result of the Proposed Development. It should both identify and examine the impacts upon existing properties and sites with extant planning permissions.

In addition to assessing impacts on existing properties and consented schemes, the LBH Local Planning Validation Checklist also advises that final daylight and sunlight values achieved within the proposed scheme should also be assessed. Data Centre buildings would not typically have a requirement for daylight or sunlight access, although many modern offices would have an expectation of daylight access in occupied spaces. This situation is most likely to arise in association with the Admin Block and be considered as part of design development. As the current application will be in outline, and details of the buildings have not been finalised, only impacts on existing development are included in the assessment.

The assessment is focused on:

- Change in the direct daylight available to neighbouring buildings;
- Change in the direct sunlight available to neighbouring buildings; and
- Change in direct sunlight available to exterior amenity space.

This report provides the following:

- An overview of existing site and context conditions;
- Identification of sensitive receptors;
- An overview of the Proposed Development and new massing in the context of the surrounding area, including details of the development scale and location;
- Technical assessment of the potential effects to daylight and sunlight access arising from the Proposed Development against existing conditions and good practice guidance target criteria; and
- Commentary on the predicted performance of daylight and sunlight conditions against benchmark criteria set out within the BRE guide.

1.3 Reference Documentation

1.3.1 Legislation, Policy, Standards and Guidance

Relevant legislation, policy, standards and guidance that are referenced regarding design and assessment of daylight and sunlight performance include.

1.3.1.1 Legislation

- Localism Act, 2011

1.3.1.2 Planning Policy

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2026

1.3.1.3 Local Policy

- Hillingdon Council Local Planning Validation Checklist, 2024
- Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 – Strategic Policies (LPP1), adopted 2012
- Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2 - Local Plan (LPP2) Part 2 Development Management Policies and Site Allocations and Designations, adopted 2020

1.3.1.4 Standards and Guidance

- British Standard BS EN 17037:2018 + A1:0221 Daylight in buildings
- Building Research Establishment guidance (BRE) BR 209: Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight, a Guide to good practice, 3rd edition, 2022

1.3.2 Drawings and Models

The following drawings and models were used to inform the development of the daylight model:

1.3.2.1 Drawings

- PGF-ACM-00-XX-DR-AR-100000 revision P1 - Site Location Plan
- PGF-ACM-00-XX-DR-AR-100100 revision P1 - Proposed Masterplan

1.3.2.2 Models

- PGF-ACM-ZZ-XX-M3-AR-000001 – Proposed Development model

2. Assessment Approach

2.1 Overview of Methodology

Technical analysis of potential daylight and sunlight performance impacts references recommendations and methodology set out within the current daylight standard, BS EN 17037:2018+A1:2021 *Daylight in Buildings*, and the industry standard good practice guidance BRE BR 209 *Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight, a guide to good practice,* 2022.

The BRE guide is intended to be used as the basis for assessing change to daylight and sunlight conditions, however the overall outcome depends on a number of factors, and the guide consistently advises that there is no simple rule of thumb that can be applied.

Where weather data is required, the daylight and sunlight assessment uses an approximate latitude of 51.46 N and longitude of -0.45 W, and weather data is established using a weather data tape created for London (Heathrow Airport, Greater London).

2.2 Study Area and Assessment Buildings

BRE guidance recommends that sensitive buildings within 3x the height of new development, less 1.5 m to accommodate for window height, should be considered for assessment. It further advises that effects on existing buildings outside of this range need not be analysed. Based on a worst-case modelled development height of approximately 20.0 m for the new data centre facility, existing properties within approximately 55.5 m of it are assessed using angular analysis.

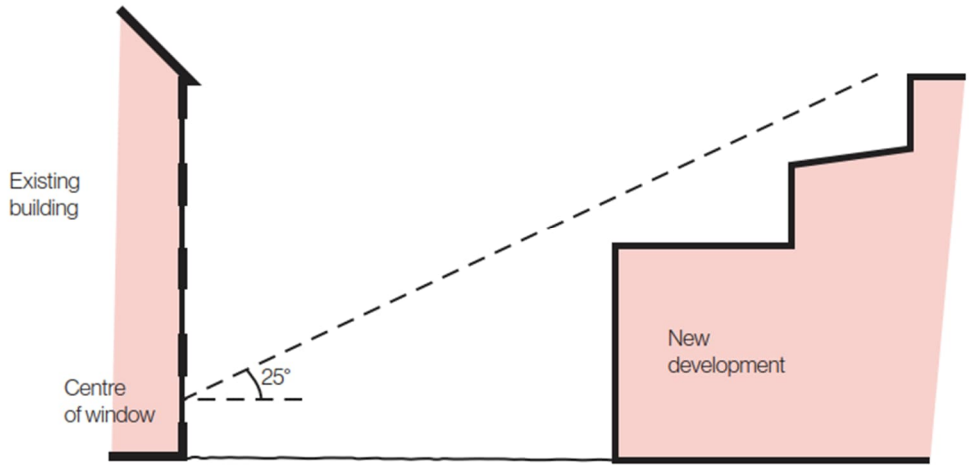
Once the extent of the study area is identified, the next step is undertaking a modified form of the assessment procedure using an angular analysis to determine if the existing building will still receive enough skylight.

This is done by placing a notional plane to the centre of an existing ground floor window and angling it up by 25-degrees. If the angled plane is found to have an intersection with an obstruction (the Proposed Development), then guidance advises daylight and sunlight could be affected and a more detailed assessment is needed.

If the proposed development does not have an intersection with the 25-degree plane for the whole of the development, it is unlikely to have a significant effect on existing skylight (daylight) conditions and further assessment does not need to be undertaken.

An example section showing the 25-degree angular analysis is set out below in Figure 3.

Figure 3. 25-degree angular assessment example



Source: BRE BR 209 (2022) daylight guidance figure 14

2.3 Daylight Analysis

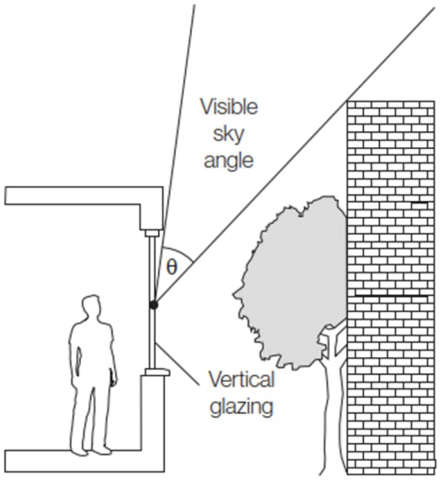
2.3.1 Vertical Sky Component

Vertical Sky Component (VSC) is a measure taken at façade level from the centre of a window. This represents a percentage of visible sky to that window / room, expressed as a ratio of unobstructed / existing conditions to obstructed / proposed conditions using a CIE overcast sky. CIE (Commission Internationale de l´Eclairage) is an international body that has developed a standardised set of sky models widely used as consistent, scientifically validated representations of real sky conditions.

A VSC of 27% or greater is generally recommended as a threshold for providing adequate natural light in a room, although good practice recognises that VSCs below 27% can still provide for good interior daylight. A VSC of 27% is equivalent to the 25-degree angular plane used to confirm which buildings are likely to have an impact to skylight. Additionally, the BRE guide advises that a greater than 20% change between an existing and new daylight condition is likely to be noticeable by room occupants.

Figure 4 demonstrates the concept of VSC.

Figure 4. Angle of Visible Sky example



Source: BRE BR 209 (2022) daylight guidance figure 1

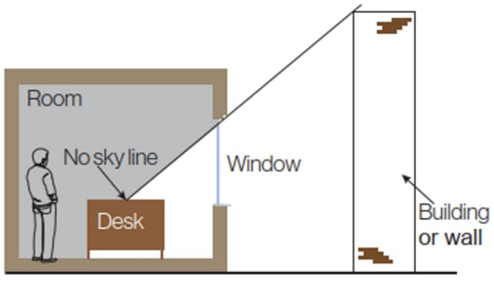
2.3.2 No Sky Line

No Sky Line (NSL) represents the area of a room that can see the sky and thus receive direct daylight.

The BRE guide advises that supplementary electric lighting is likely to be needed where 20% or more of the room area lies beyond the NSL. While this indicates that 80% of the room area should be able to see the sky, it should be noted that 50% threshold is often used when considering a minimum access to adequate interior light. Further, if there is a greater than 20% change between an existing and new daylight condition, daylight is likely to be significantly affected.

Figure 5 demonstrates the concept of VSC.

Figure 5. No Sky Line example



Source: BRE BR 209 (2022) daylight guidance figure 15

2.4 Sunlight Analysis

2.4.1 Annual Probable Sunlight Hours

Annual Probable Sunlight Hours (APSH) is a measure that represents the number of hours of direct sunlight available to rooms via the centre of a window using recorded weather data over a one-year period.

The annual benchmark representing good sunlight access is set to 25%, while good sunlight access during winter months looks for 5% of available sunlight hours between 21 September and 21 March.

The BRE guide advises that if the overall annual loss of APSH is 4% or less, the loss of sunlight is small. If the windows are reduced to below their target values by more than 20%, losses are likely to be noticeable.

It should be noted that windows facing within 90-degrees of north are usually excluded from assessment as they would typically be subject to self-shading by the building to itself as the sunpath will follow a southerly path from east to west, meaning shadows are cast toward the north throughout the year.

Additionally, if a window wall faces within 90-degrees of due south and has no obstruction, where it does not have an intersection with the 25-degree angular plane, then the requirement for APSH is considered to be met.

2.5 Overshadowing Analysis

2.5.1 Sunlight Hours on the Ground

Sunlight Hours on the Ground (SHG) is a measure used to determine the quantity of sunlight hours available to an exterior amenity space on 21 March. The benchmark is to receive a minimum of 2 hours of direct sunlight on the test date for at least 50% or more of the garden area.

The BRE guide also advises that the change between existing and new sunlight conditions should be limited to 20%.

2.5.2 Transient Overshadowing

Transient overshadowing images are provided for the proposed development for three key dates that cover periods of low angle sun, mid-angle sun and high angle sun. These moment-in-time renders present an overview of solar conditions throughout the year that are likely to result from introduction of the Proposed Development.

Images are rendered for every two hours between sunrise and sunset to show the predicted shadow patterns with the Proposed Development in place.

Dates provided include:

- 21 March - mid-angle sun and also the BRE test date
- 21 June – high angle sun
- 21 December – low angle sun

Please note the following:

- 21 September presents a similar mid-angle sun to that of 21 March but with a 1-hour offset to accommodate for British Summer Time.
- that as the existing condition presents a majority ‘empty’ site with the exception of the existing garden centre building and hardstanding, only proposed conditions are included in the transient overshadowing study.

2.6 Assumptions and Limitations

- Analysis does not take into account the effects of landscape screening or other changeable vegetative obstruction, such as deciduous trees, unless it forms a normally continuous, dense ‘wall’ effect such as with hedgerows or closely planted treeline.
- Any changes to landscape, whether it is retention of trees or shrubs, removal of the same, or recommendations for additional plantings to be made, may allow for a localised variable increase or decrease to daylight and sunlight access. Landscape elements are considered within the analysis, where present, but effects are not quantified.
- Overshadowing analysis assume clear sky conditions only.
- The following approximate sunrise and sunset times are referenced:
  - 21 March: sunrise ~6.01, sunset ~18.15
  - 21 June: sunrise ~4.43, sunset ~21.21
  - 21 December: sunrise ~8.03, sunset ~15.53

3. Proposed Development Overview

3.1 Existing Context

The Site is situated on the eastern side of Sipson Road, to the northeast of Sipson village, within the administrative area of the London Borough of Hillingdon. It is adjacent to the M4 Spur Road connecting Junction 4 of the M4 to the airport.

The northern part of the Site was previously occupied by Sipson Garden Centre until 2011. The existing building and hardstanding have been retained. It is noted that the Site was converted into Airside Support Vehicle servicing and repair in 2024. Existing buildings that are currently on Site are between 1 – 1.5-storeys.

The north and western boundaries are predominantly delineated by trees and shrubs to the rear of residential gardens to the west. An established tree belt is present along the southern boundary, near Sipson Lane with some instances of residential and educational development between. The M4 Spur Road at the eastern boundary has a few trees along the boundary. The northern boundary is also predominantly populated with trees and shrubs, with the Holiday Inn London Heathrow hotel located slightly above the existing landscape. The proposals will retain the majority of existing trees and shrubs.

Existing development local to the Site include the Holiday Inn hotel to the north, the M4 Spur Road to the east, Sipson Lane and Lady Nafisa Secondary school for girls to the south and residential properties to the west.

The Holiday Inn is approximately 12 storeys in height, while other local properties are in the region of 2 – 2.5 storeys. These properties have little in the way of built obstruction to daylight and sunlight access under existing conditions due to the minimal amount of development within the Site boundary, although many properties have some exposure to shadowing from neighbouring buildings and existing landscape.

Figure 6 provides an overview of the existing Site and context area.

Figure 6. Existing Site and Context Area



Source: Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital map data © Crown copyright 2026. All rights reserved. Licence number 100031673. © Maxar, Microsoft

3.2 Proposed Development

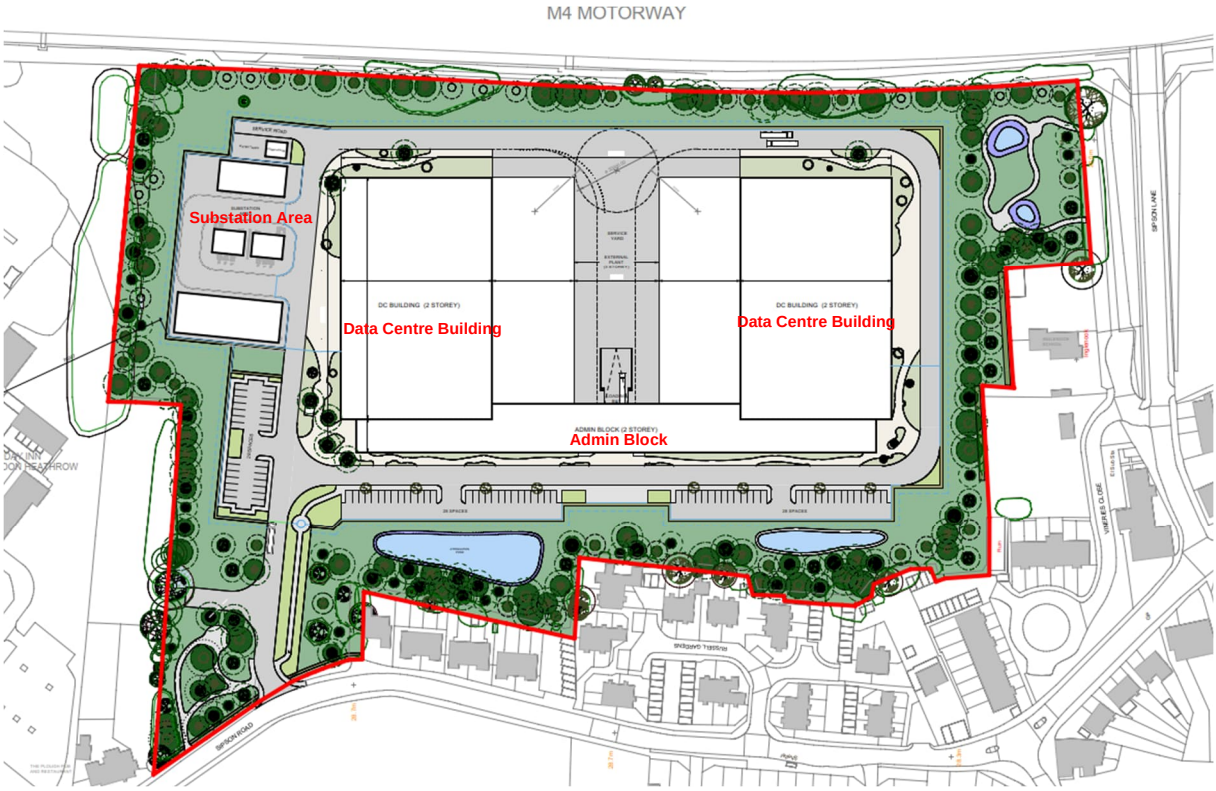
The Proposed Development will comprise the erection of a data centre facility with an anticipated operational capacity of approximately 54MW within the 6.9 hectare (ha) former Sipson Garden Centre Site, including a 2-storey Data Centre building, 2-storey offices and associated energy infrastructure, security measures, landscaping and access arrangements. The development would provide approximately up to 54,000 sqm of gross internal floorspace, including data halls, administration block, plant, and associated ancillary infrastructure. As such, the key elements to be considered are:

- Demolition of existing structures on the Site;
- Data Centre (DC) building (54MW Capacity), approximately up to 25,810sqm max floor area;
- Ancillary Office accommodation (approximately 6,2600sqm), external plant (approximately 17.340sqm) and substation (approximately 3,990sqm);
- Car Parking provision of 84 spaces and
- Maximum building height up to 20.0 m.

The main data centre building is located toward the centre of the Site, with office space and Back of House (BOH) operations situated to the north and west of the main building. A substation is envisaged to be located on the northern boundary and be enclosed by a 3.0 m fence.

Figure 7 shows an extract of the proposed masterplan including building locations, access routes, parking, and landscape proposals. These proposals are modelled for daylight, sunlight and overshadowing assessment.

Figure 7. Proposed Masterplan Arrangements



Source: extract of drawing PGF-ACM-00-XX-DR-AR-100100 rev P1 - Proposed Masterplan

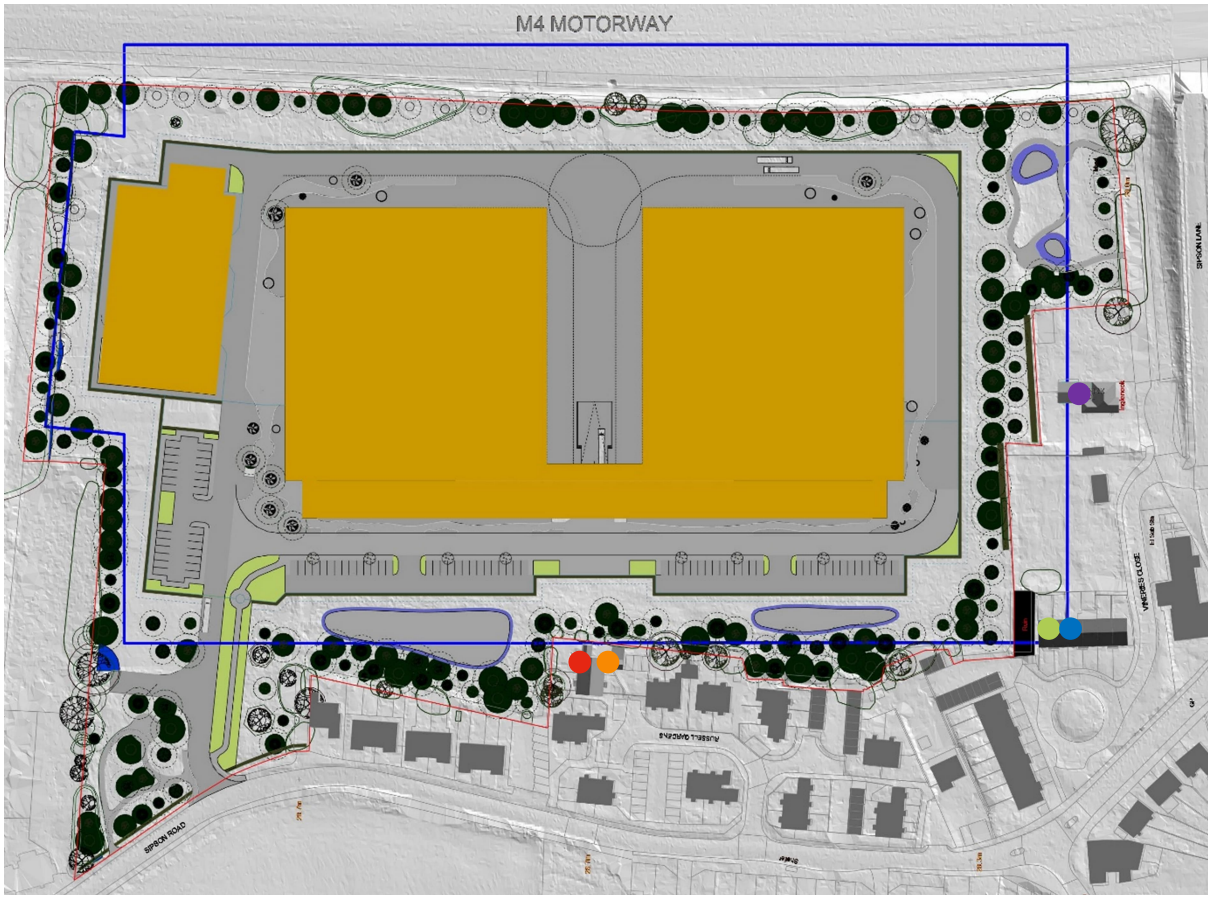
4. Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment

Current Site conditions present minimal to no built obstruction to existing properties (refer to Section 3.1); therefore, the assessment focuses on effects resulting from the Proposed Development. It is noted that there may be some shadowing provided by existing landscape such as established, mature trees. While not modelled, it is likely there will be some variable screening to properties throughout the year based on seasonal changes in tree canopy height and density.

4.1 Study Area

Figure 8 identifies the study area used for this assessment. Further detail of properties that fall within the study area that will be taken forward for angular analysis are listed in Table 1.

Figure 8. Study Area



Source: Daylight model

Table 1. Assessment Properties

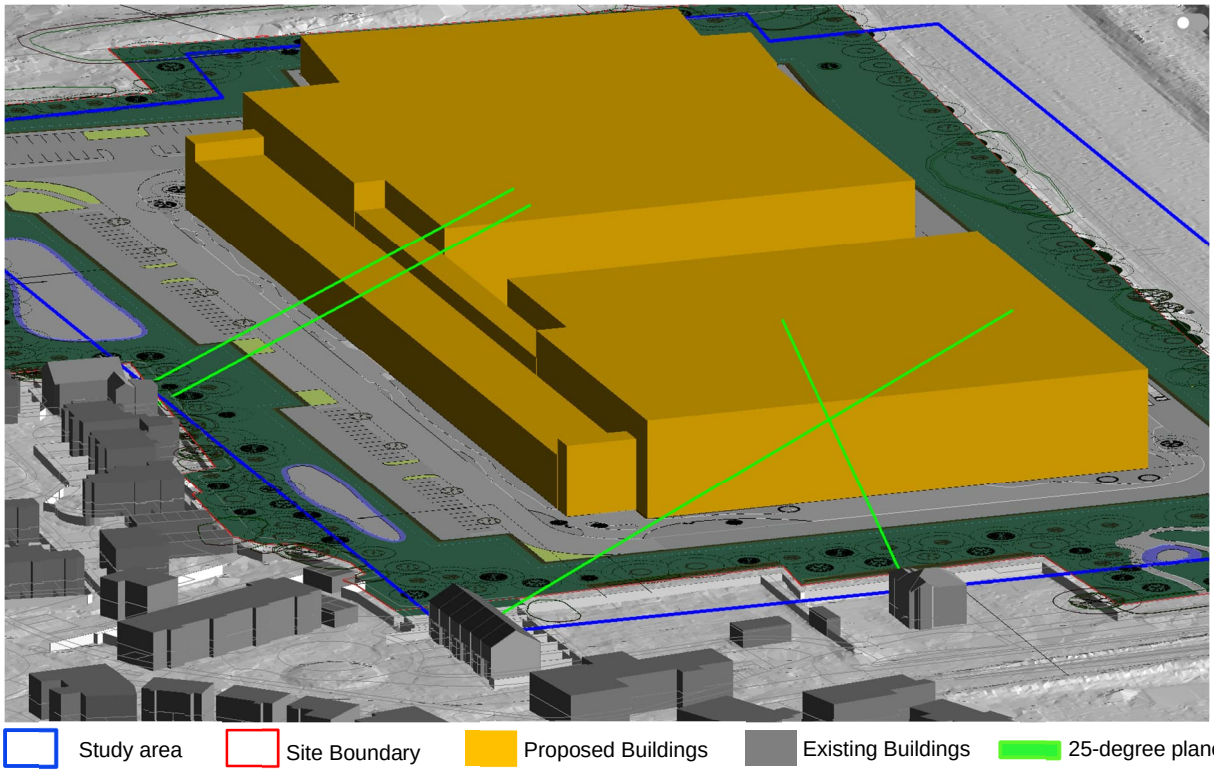
ID	Address	Observations
🔴	35A Russell Gardens	East façade facing the Proposed Development has some screening near the fenceline in the form of existing, established trees
🟠	33 Russell Gardens	East façade facing the Proposed Development has some screening near the fenceline in the form of existing, established trees
🔵	5 Vineries Close	East façade windows within the study area are perpendicular to the Proposed Development and do not directly face it
🟢	6 Vineries Close	North façade facing the Proposed Development is a blind wall and does not contain windows East façade windows within the study area are perpendicular to the Proposed Development and do not directly face it

ID	Address	Observations
●	Lady Nafisa School – Inglenook, Sipson Road	North façades are a mix of a blind wall directly facing the Proposed Development with a small number of windows facing it East and West façades also contain windows that are perpendicular to the Proposed Development and do not directly face it

4.2 25-degree angular plane

Figure 9 provides an overview of the 25-degree angular assessment used to confirm the properties within the study area (refer to Section 4.1) that are most likely to be affected.

Figure 9. 25-degree Angle Assessment



Source: Daylight model

4.3 Daylight

No intersections are found to occur as part of the 25-degree angular assessment for the five properties identified within the study area set out in Table 1. The BRE guide advises this outcome indicates daylight is unlikely to be significantly affected and the more detailed assessments as set out in Section 2.1.2 are not considered to be necessary.

4.4 Sunlight

5 and 6 Vineries Close and the Lady Nafisa School are located to the south of the Proposed Development and do not fall within the shadow path of new buildings. Sunlight access to these properties will therefore not be affected.

Windows to 33 and 35A Russell Gardens within the study area are oriented to within 90-degrees of south and are considered for sunlight assessment. No intersections are found to occur as part of the 25-degree angular assessment for these properties. Given the separation distances, building orientations and absence of direct overshadowing, a significant reduction in sunlight availability is not anticipated. The BRE guide advises this outcome indicates sunlight for eligible windows is unlikely to be significantly affected and the more detailed assessments as set out in Section 2.1.3 are not considered to be necessary.

4.5 Overshadowing

4.5.1 Sunlight Hours on the Ground

Exterior amenity associated with 5 and 6 Vineries Close, and the Lady Nafisa School, are located to the south of the Proposed Development and do not fall within the shadow path of new buildings. Sunlight access to these properties will therefore not be affected.

A small area of garden amenity associated with 33 and 35A Russell Gardens does fall within the sun path and are considered for sunlight assessment. It is noted that transient overshadowing renders (see Section 4.5.2 below) show no new shadowing is likely to occur beyond the Proposed Development boundary from 09.00 on 21 March. This indicates that exterior amenity for these properties will be largely unchanged from existing conditions.

It is noted that new landscape may provide some new variable shading to gardens, however this is expected to be in keeping with effects created by existing trees or other taller plantings situated near the east fenceline of these properties.

4.5.2 Transient overshadowing

Transient overshadowing renders set out in Figure 10 - Figure 12 show shadow patterns created by the Proposed Development for key dates representing low-angle, mid-angle and high-angle sun which occur throughout the year. These point-in-time renders are made for every two hours from sunrise to sunset. Please note that renders from 21 December incorporate a slight offset so consistent times are used for all test dates.

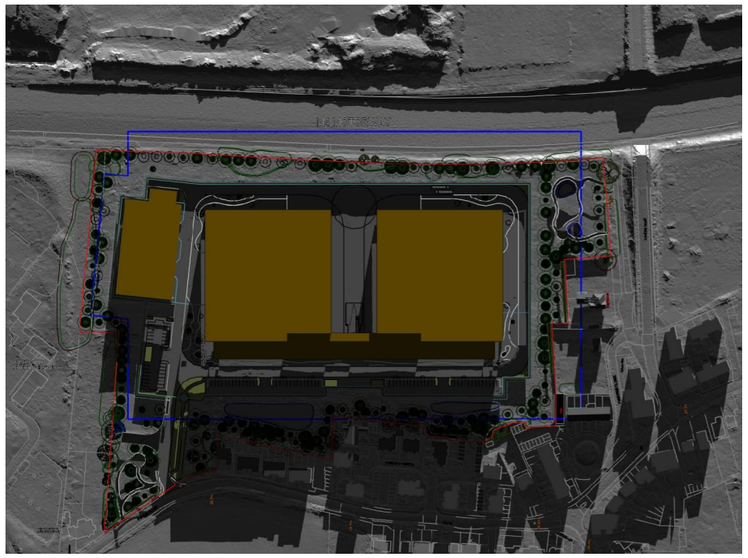
These images demonstrate that some new shadowing is likely to be present during early morning hours in spring, summer and autumn months toward the west of the Proposed Development, including properties 33 and 35A Russell Gardens that fall within the study area. All new shadowing is expected to clear within 2 – 2.5 hours of sunrise.

Winter months tend to have a later sunrise, earlier sunset and the sun casts longer shadows as it is at a lower relative angle in the sky and it is recognised that this effect is difficult to avoid. Figure 12 shows that while initial shadowing from the Proposed Development does extend further to the west, it is also expected to clear within 2 to 2.5 hours from sunrise in this period.

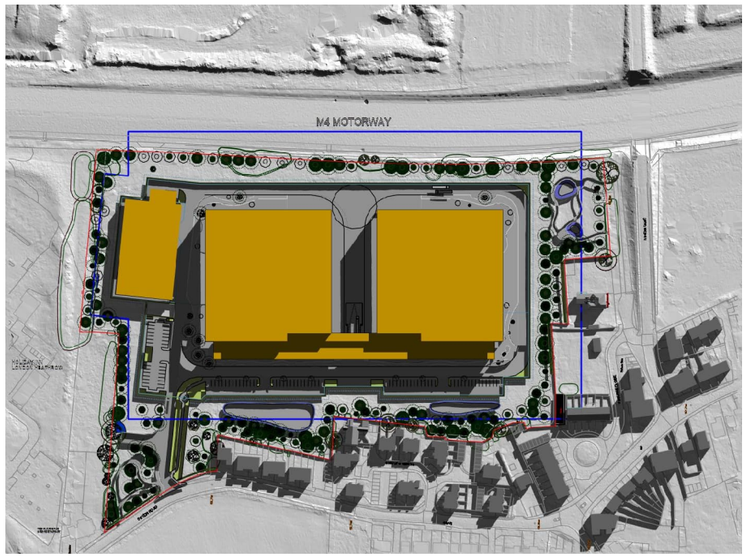
These performance indicators show that the Proposed Development does not significantly alter existing sunlight conditions experienced by neighbouring residential properties or amenity spaces. Accordingly, this is not considered to represent a significant overshadowing effect in the context of BRE guidance.

Figure 10. Transient Overshadowing - 21st March

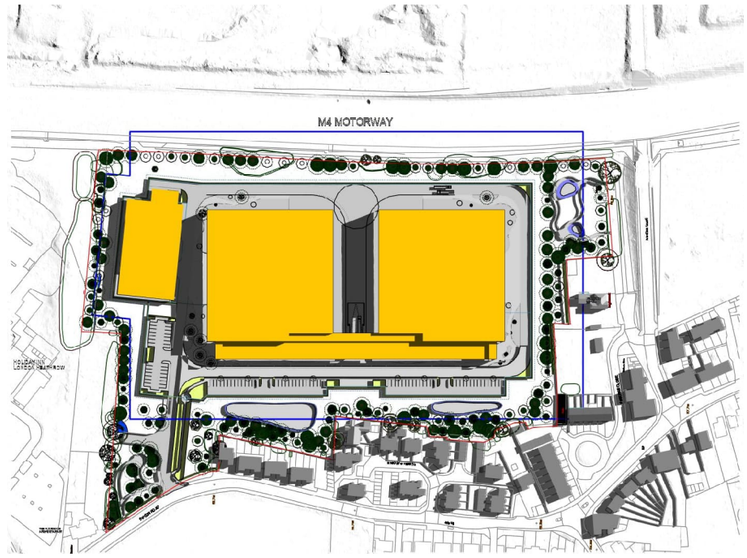
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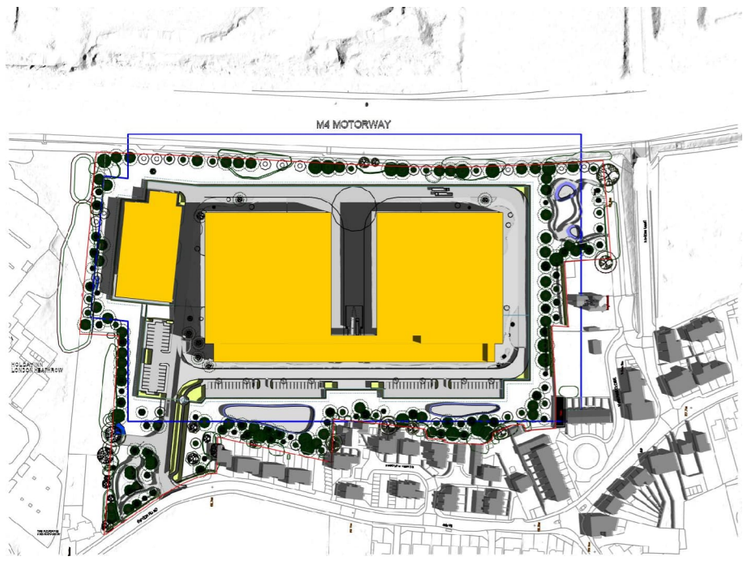
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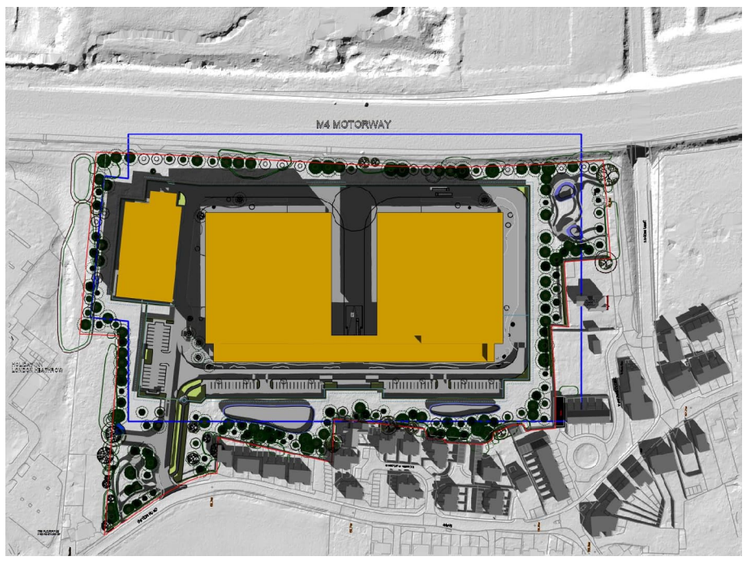
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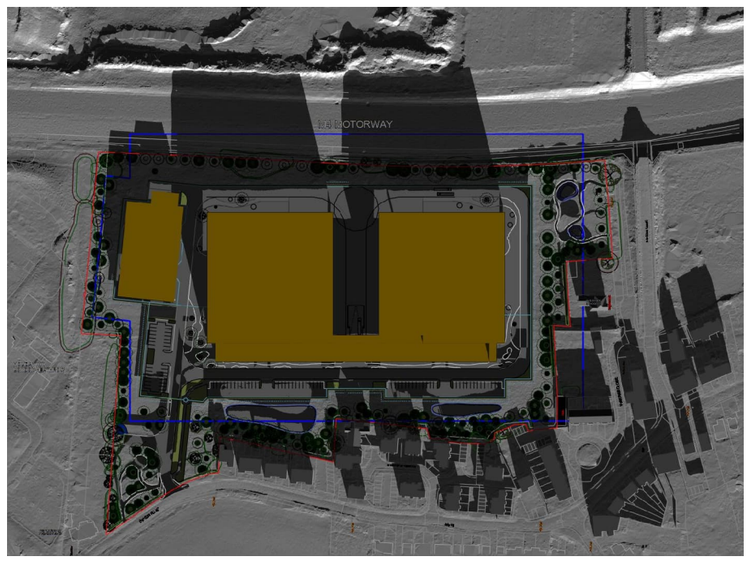
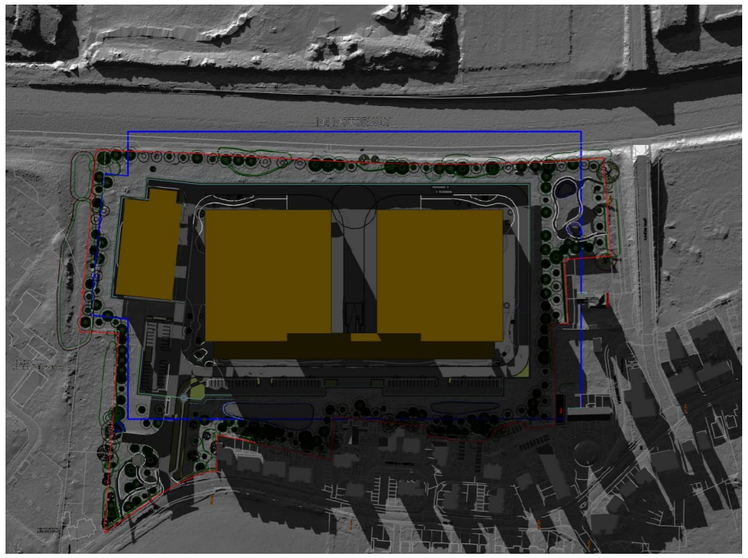
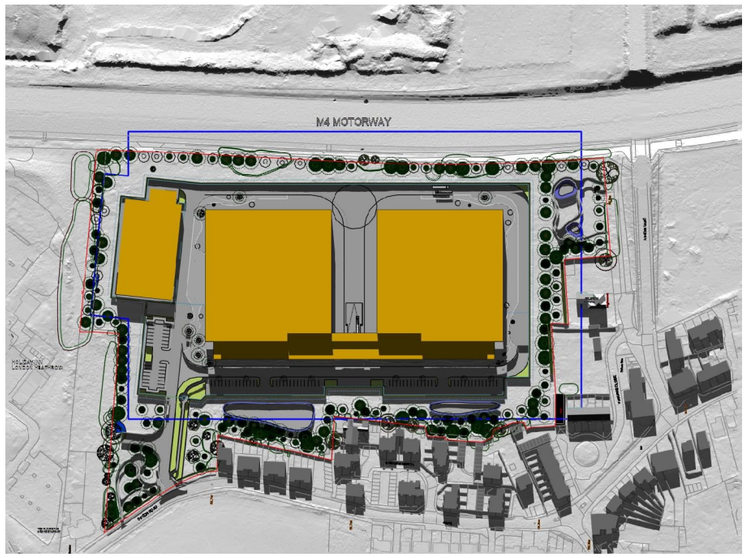


Figure 11. Transient Overshadowing - 21st June

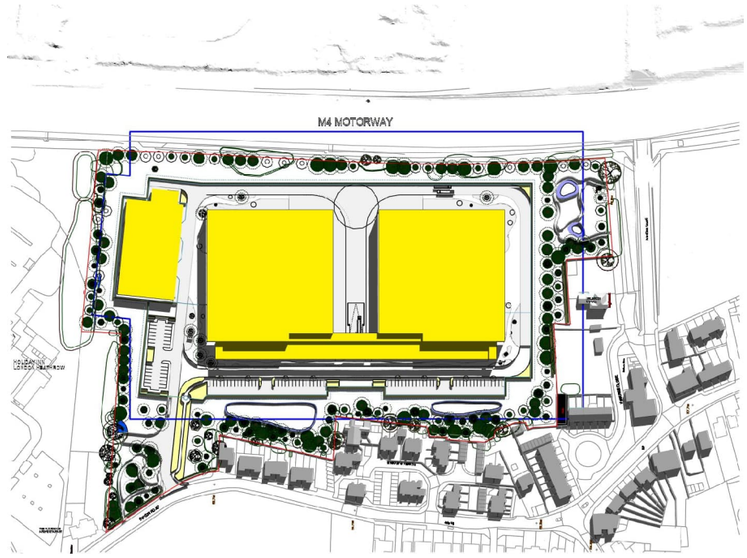
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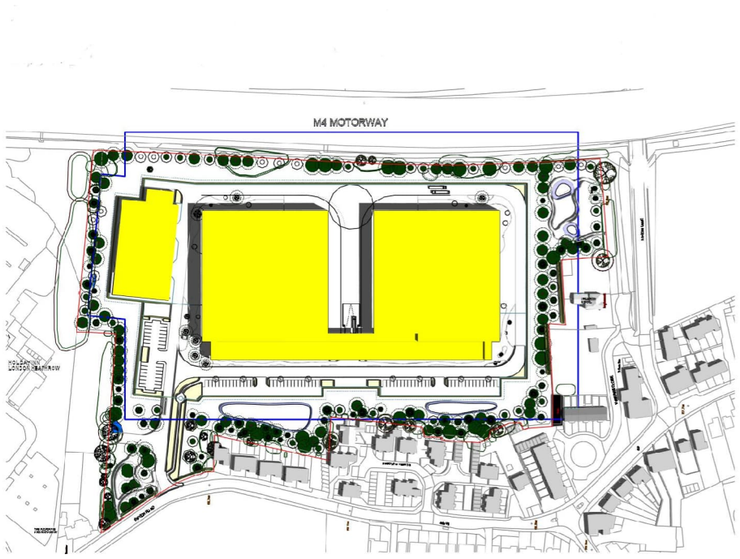
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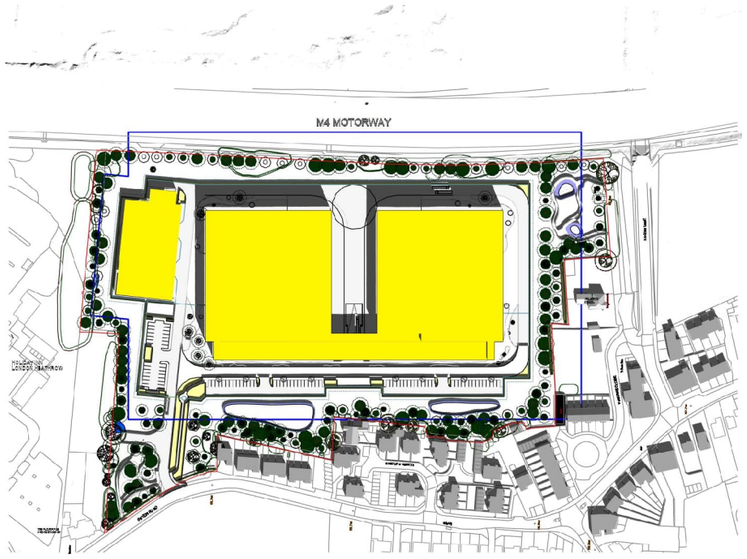
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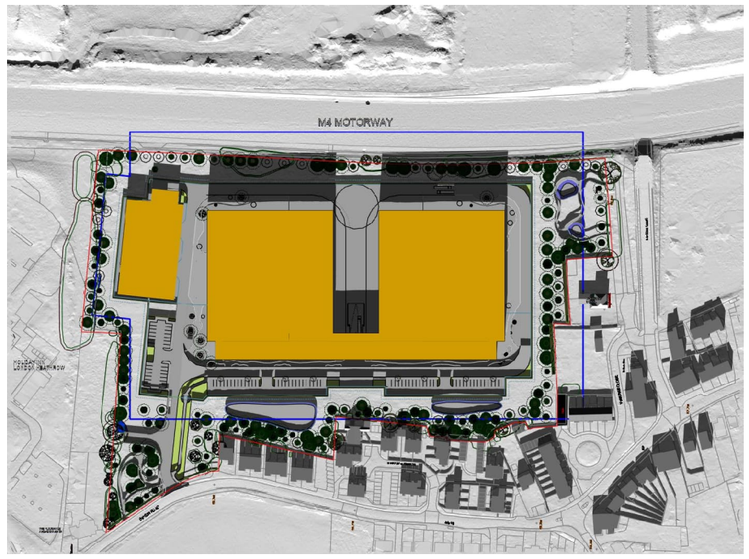
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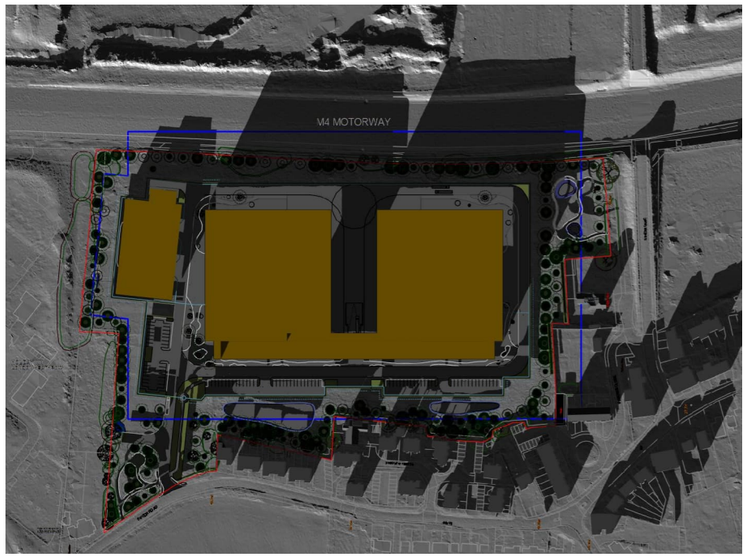


17:00



Transient Overshadowing - 21st June continued.

19:00



21:00

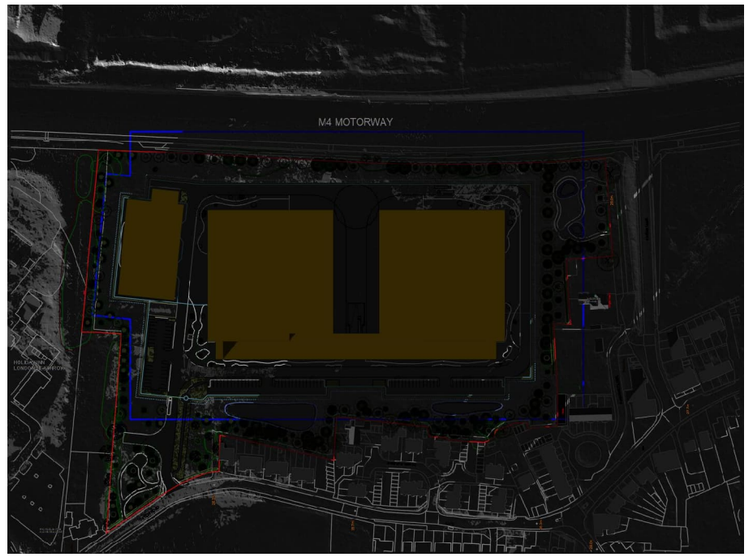
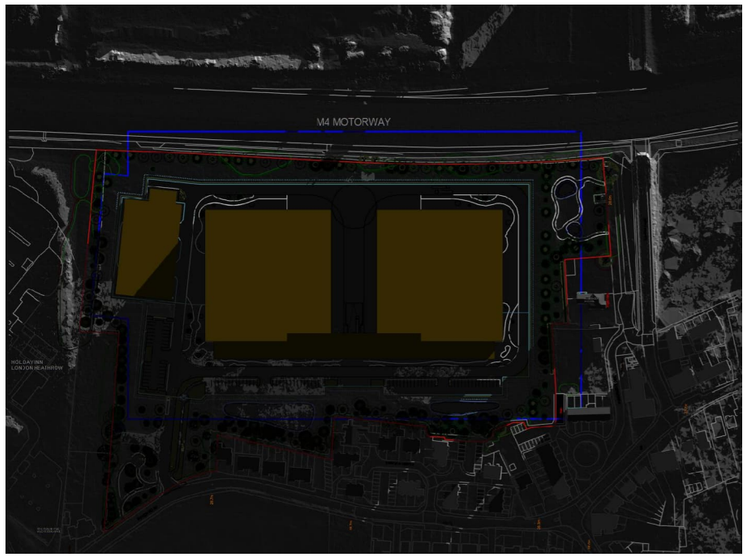
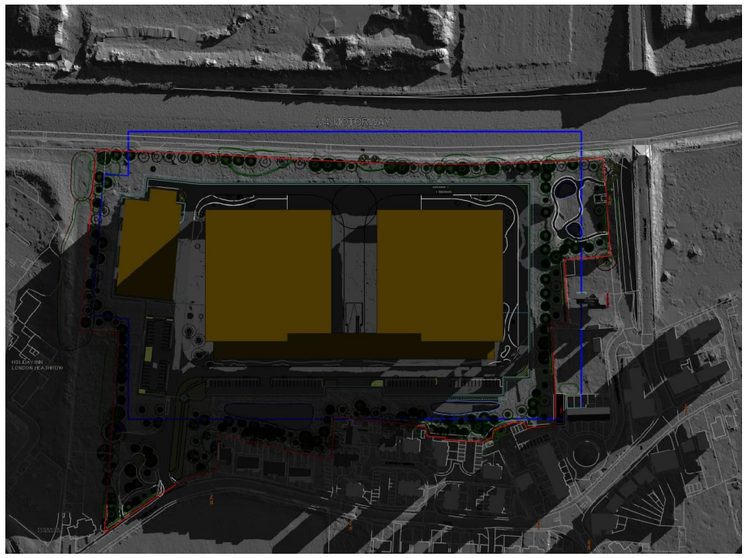


Figure 12. Transient Overshadowing - 21st December

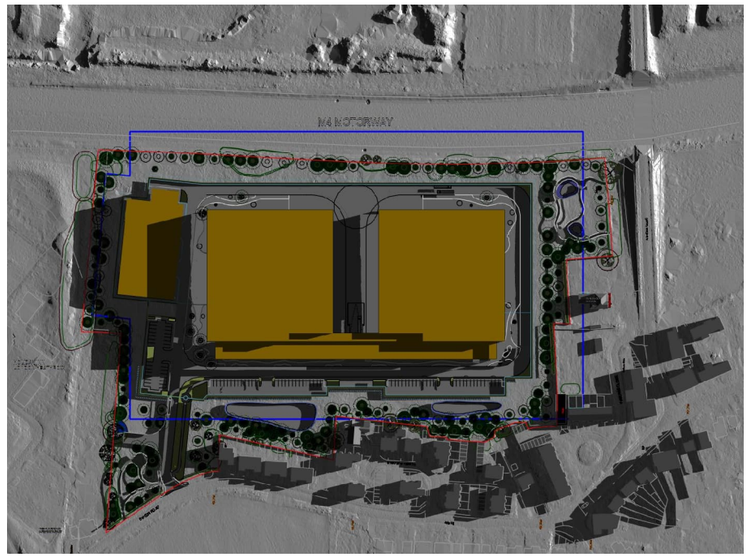
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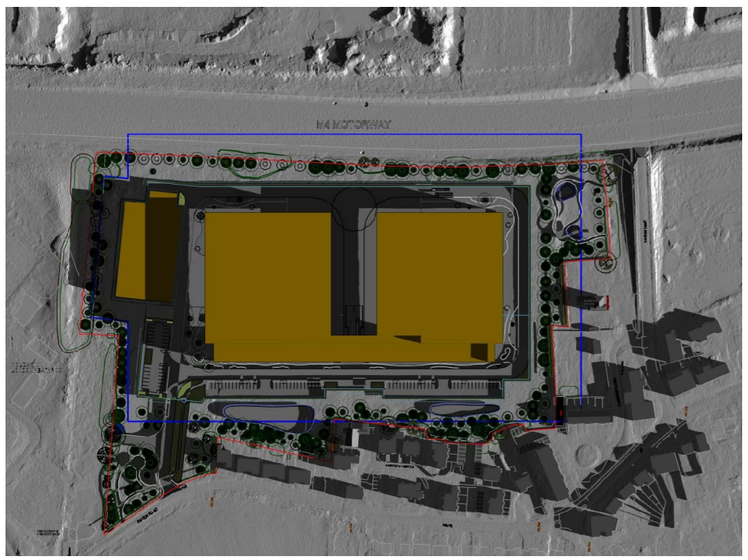
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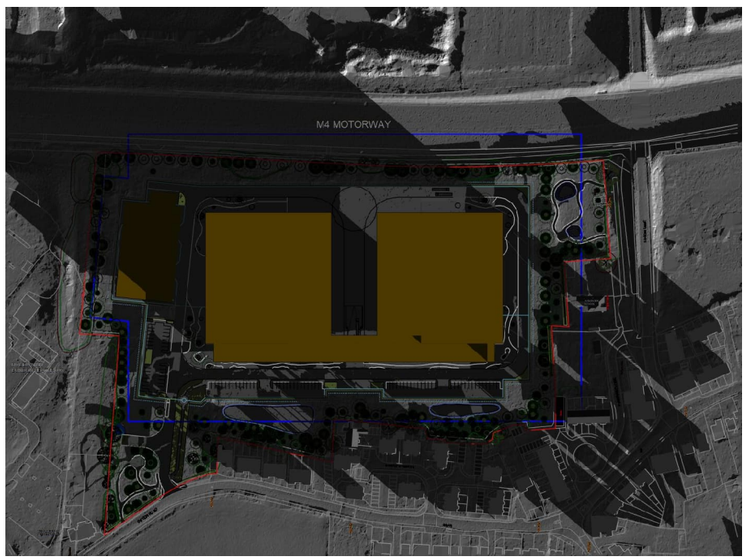
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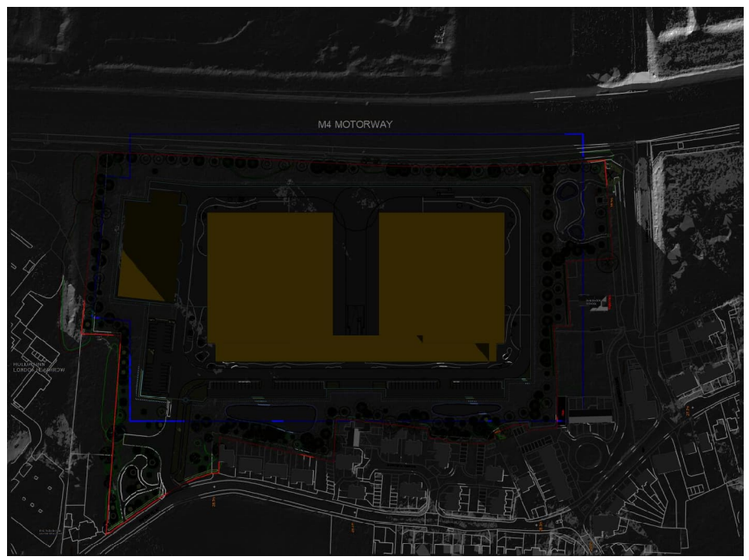
13:00



15:00



17:00



5. Summary and Conclusions

VIRTUS Data Centres have identified the Former Sipson Garden Centre and associated land on Sipson Road for redevelopment to provide a data centre campus including associated energy infrastructure, security measures, landscaping and access arrangements. This report supports the outline planning application for design of development submitted as part of an outline planning application to the London Borough of Hillingdon (LBH).

A Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing assessment has been undertaken to evaluate the potential effects of the development on neighbouring residential properties and amenity spaces.

The assessment findings demonstrate that the Proposed Development is unlikely to result in significant daylight or sunlight effects to adjacent occupier amenity as daylight and sunlight access are likely to remain largely unchanged.

It is noted that there may be some variable effects created by new landscaping, however this is expected to be in keeping with effects created by existing, mature landscape along the individual property boundaries.

5.1 Daylight

Assessment of Site conditions with the Proposed Development in place indicates that neighbouring properties within the study area are unlikely to experience a significant change in their daylight access.

Initial review the 25-degree angular assessment shows no intersections with the plane. The BRE guide advises this would be equivalent to a VSC of 27% or greater, which is considered to provide for adequate daylight, therefore daylight levels to windows serving habitable rooms are expected to remain both consistent with the existing situation and be in alignment good practice guidance recommendations.

5.2 Sunlight

Assessment of Site conditions with the Proposed Development in place indicates that neighbouring properties within the study area are unlikely to experience a significant change in their sunlight access.

The Proposed Development sits to the north of properties on Vineries Close and the Lady Nafisa School, therefore sunlight conditions will be unchanged.

Results of the initial 25-degree angular assessment show that east facing windows of 33 and 35A Russell Gardens would not experience a significant new obstruction from new buildings and structures, therefore sunlight to windows serving habitable rooms are expected to remain both consistent with the existing situation and be in alignment good practice guidance recommendations.

5.3 Overshadowing

No new shadowing will be introduced to properties south of the Proposed Development and sunlight access to exterior garden amenity will be consistent with existing sunlight performance. A minor increase in new shadowing is expected in early morning hours to properties west of the Site as a result of the Proposed Development, however this is expected to clear within 2 – 2.5 hours of sunrise throughout the year. Sunlight access to existing exterior amenity is otherwise unchanged.

This indicates that gardens will receive 2 hours or more direct sunlight on 21 March, the standard BRE test date and as such it is expected that all assessed gardens continue to benefit from good levels of sunlight access throughout the year, including during the winter months.

The assessment therefore concludes that the Proposed Development will have a neutral effect on sunlight availability and overshadowing, with no significant adverse effects identified for neighbouring residential properties or their associated amenity spaces.