Former Sipson Garden Centre

Design and Access Statement
Final

VIRTUS Data Centres
Outline Planning Application

Delivering a better world

Quality information

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this report
1.2 Proposed Scheme Summary
1.3 Project Concept

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Report

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of the proposed data centre development at Former Sipson Garden Centre, London Borough of Hillingdon (LBH). The report accompanies the outline planning application and sets out and sets out the design principles, site context, access strategy and development proposals that have informed the scheme.

The proposed development comprises a data centre campus on a brownfield site, including a two-storey data centre building, office accommodation, electrical and mechanical plant, backup generators, a dedicated substation, parking, drainage infrastructure and associated landscaping. The scheme is designed to deliver approximately 54MW of IT capacity while supporting long-term operational resilience and sustainable growth.

Located adjacent to the M4 corridor and close to Heathrow Airport, the site benefits from excellent strategic connectivity and established utility infrastructure. The design has evolved through the pre-application process in response to planning, environmental and technical considerations.

This statement demonstrates how the proposed development responds to its setting through a landscape-led approach that integrates green infrastructure, biodiversity enhancements, sustainable drainage systems and high-quality building design. It also explains how the proposed access, servicing, circulation and security arrangements have been incorporated into the masterplan.

Overall, this document provides the planning and design justification for the proposed development and demonstrates how the scheme will deliver a sustainable, resilient and future-ready digital infrastructure facility.



1.0 Introduction

1.2 Proposed Scheme Summary

The proposed development comprises a hyperscale data centre campus on the Former Sipson Garden Centre site, delivering approximately 54MW of IT capacity within a high-quality, landscape-led masterplan. The application is submitted in outline planning form, with all matters reserved except for access, providing flexibility for the detailed design to evolve while establishing the key development parameters for the site.

The proposed facility will form a strategically important component of the UK's digital infrastructure network and is intended to operate as Critical National Infrastructure (CNI), supporting secure and resilient digital services at both a national and international level.
The scheme includes:

- A two-storey data centre building comprising two data hall wings and associated plant infrastructure.
- A dedicated 132kV/33kV electrical substation and supporting utility infrastructure.
- Ancillary office, welfare and operational accommodation to support day-to-day facility management.
- Secure vehicular, pedestrian and servicing access from Sipson Lane.
- Staff and visitor parking, including accessible spaces and electric vehicle charging facilities.
- Internal circulation routes designed to accommodate operational, maintenance and emergency vehicles.
- Integrated sustainable drainage infrastructure and water management features.
- Extensive landscape planting, ecological enhancements and biodiversity measures around the site perimeter.
- A comprehensive security strategy incorporating secure fencing, controlled access points and CCTV surveillance.

The development has been carefully designed to respond to its surroundings, balancing the operational requirements of a modern data centre with high-quality architecture, environmental performance and landscape integration. The proposals will facilitate the regeneration of a previously developed brownfield site, delivering a resilient, secure and sustainable digital infrastructure asset. As a future Critical National Infrastructure facility, the development will make a significant contribution to the continued growth, security and resilience of the UK's digital economy while supporting increasing demand for cloud computing, data storage and digital services.



1.0 Introduction

1.3 Project Concept

The proposed development establishes a high-quality hyperscale data centre campus that responds to both the operational requirements of critical digital infrastructure and the characteristics of the surrounding landscape. The design has evolved through a detailed assessment of site opportunities and constraints, resulting in a coordinated approach that prioritises functionality, sustainability and visual quality.

The site layout has been carefully organised to accommodate the data centre building, supporting infrastructure, servicing requirements and landscape buffers within a secure and efficient operational environment. The massing and architectural treatment have been developed to reduce visual impacts, create a coherent identity and integrate the development into its wider setting.

A landscape-led design approach is central to the proposal, incorporating extensive perimeter planting, green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancements. These measures help soften views of the development, strengthen ecological connectivity and provide a high-quality setting for the facility.

The development seeks to transform a previously developed brownfield site into a resilient and future-ready digital infrastructure asset. Through the integration of sustainable design principles, high-quality architecture and enhanced landscaping, the proposal delivers a contemporary data centre development that contributes positively to the local environment and supports the continued growth of the UK's digital economy.





2 Site Context

2.1 Site Location
2.2 Existing Land Uses
2.3 Site Historical Development
2.4 Site Photos
2.5 Site Connectivity
2.6 Site Constraints and Opportunities

2.0 Site Context

2.1 Site Location

The application site is located at Sipson, in the London Borough of Hillingdon, approximately 20 km west of Central London and immediately north of Sipson Lane. The site occupies a strategically important location within West London's established digital and logistics corridor, benefiting from proximity to major transport, utility and communications infrastructure. The site extends to approximately 7 hectares and comprises previously developed land currently occupied by industrial and storage uses.

The site is bounded by the M4 motorway to the north, the Holiday Inn Heathrow Hotel and associated commercial uses to the east, Sipson Lane to the south, and a combination of industrial and commercial premises to the west. The site's location provides excellent regional connectivity whilst maintaining separation from the principal residential areas of Sipson and Harmondsworth.

The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of strategic infrastructure, airport-related development, industrial estates, logistics facilities and emerging data centre development. The site lies within close proximity to Heathrow Airport, one of the UK's most significant economic and transport hubs, and forms part of a wider cluster of digital infrastructure facilities that have been attracted to the area by the availability of power, telecommunications infrastructure and strategic transport links.

Vehicular access to the site is provided from Sipson Lane, with direct connections to the strategic highway network including the M4, M25 and A4 corridors. The site benefits from excellent accessibility for operational traffic, maintenance personnel and construction activities while avoiding reliance on local residential roads.

The site is also well served by public transport. West Drayton Railway Station, located approximately 2.5 km to the west, provides Elizabeth Line and Great Western Railway services with direct connections to Central London, Reading, Heathrow Airport and the wider South East. Numerous local bus services operate within the surrounding area, enhancing accessibility for employees and visitors.

The site's location within an established employment area, combined with its access to strategic infrastructure and utility networks, makes it particularly suitable for the development of a data centre facility. The proposed development will optimise the use of brownfield land while supporting regional economic growth and enhancing the resilience of the United Kingdom's digital infrastructure network.



2.0 Site Context

2.2 Existing Land uses

The site comprises a brownfield parcel of land currently occupied by a mix of industrial, storage and commercial uses, including warehouses, open storage areas, vehicle servicing facilities and ancillary office accommodation. Existing buildings are generally low-rise and utilitarian in character, reflecting the site's employment and logistics function.

The surrounding area is characterised by a range of infrastructure and employment uses. The M4 motorway lies to the north, with commercial and industrial premises located to the east and west. A hotel and airport-related uses are situated nearby, whilst the wider area contains logistics, distribution and data centre developments associated with the Heathrow and West London employment corridor.

Residential areas are located to the south of Sipson Lane and are separated from the site by existing road infrastructure, landscaping and intervening development. The site therefore forms part of an established employment area with strong links to the strategic road, utility and telecommunications networks.

The existing land uses make the site well suited for redevelopment as a hyperscale data centre, representing the efficient reuse of previously developed land within a strategic digital infrastructure location.



Residential

Commercial

Infrastructure

2.0 Site Context

2.3 Site Historical Development

Historic aerial imagery illustrates the evolution of the site from agricultural land to a brownfield development site within an established commercial and infrastructure corridor. Early photographs show the site as open farmland, while later imagery records the expansion of transport infrastructure, including the M4 motorway, and surrounding employment-related development.

Between 2010 and 2021, the site underwent progressive clearance and redevelopment, transitioning from predominantly open land to its current brownfield condition. The imagery demonstrates how the site has evolved alongside the growth of Heathrow-related commercial, industrial and infrastructure uses, establishing a suitable context for future data centre development.



1945



1999

Site Boundary



2010



2015



2020



2021

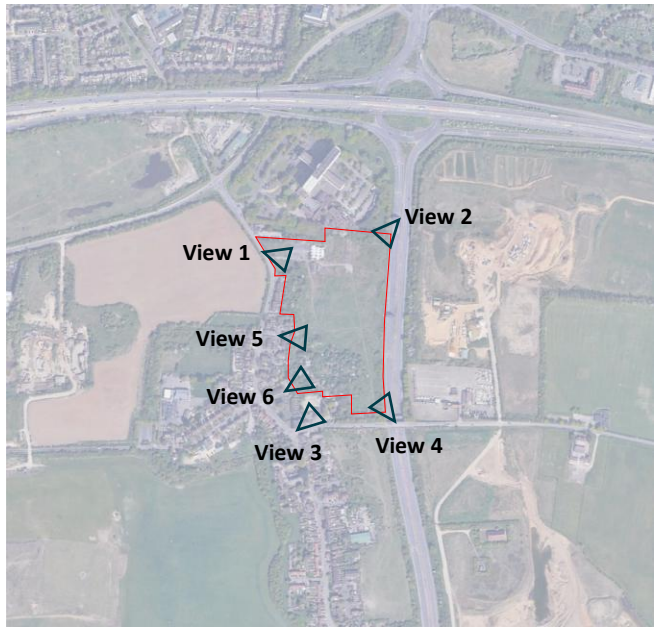
2.0 Site Context

2.4 Site Photos

The photographs illustrate the existing character of the site and its surrounding context. The site is currently occupied by a mixture of industrial and storage uses, comprising warehouse buildings, open storage areas, access roads and utility infrastructure. Existing development is generally low-rise and utilitarian in appearance, reflecting the site's established employment function.

The images also highlight the site's relationship with key surrounding features, including the M4 motorway, adjacent commercial and industrial premises, electricity infrastructure and areas of undeveloped vegetation. Views into the site are primarily limited to local roads and operational areas, with existing boundary treatments and vegetation providing varying levels of screening.

The following pages showcases views of the buildings and industrials business onsite



Key Plan



View 1 from the North-West from Sipson Road Towards Site Entrance



View 2 from North-East from the M4 Motorway



View 3 from the South from Sipson Lane Towards Secondary School



View 4 from South-East from Sipson Lane Motorway Bridge



View 5 from the West from Sipson Road through Residential Properties

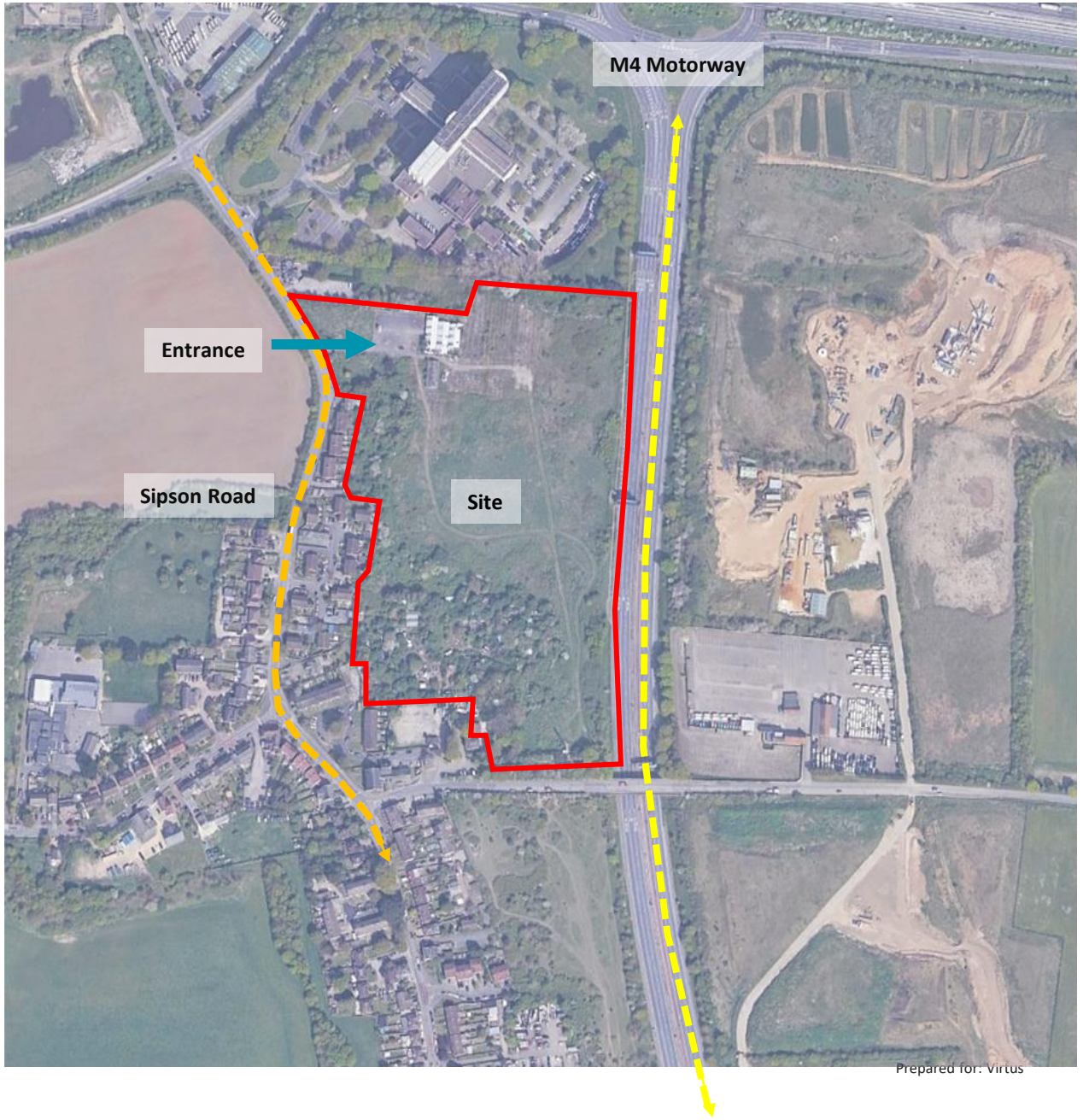


View 6 from the South-West from Vineries Close through Residential Properties

2.0 Site Context

2.5 Site Connectivity

The site is located in the town of Sipson, approximately 2km north of Heathrow Airport and 2km south of West Drayton. The subject site is located along the M4 motorway (which is immediately east of the site), however, there is no direct access to the site from the M4. Direct access is provided to the site from Sipson Road, which in located along the western boundary of the site.



Key

- Site Boundary
- Main Site Car Access
- Motorway

2.0 Site Context

2.6 Site Constraints and Opportunities

The following diagrams analyse the planning and design considerations of the site. They identify constraints and opportunities that have informed the site layout and building design.

Site Constraints

- Adjacent Land Uses
  - Residential areas
  - Hotel
  - School
  - Motorway
- Landscape
  - Existing trees
  - Prominent frontages
  - Separation distances from residential buildings
  - Green buffer zones
  - Water mains
- Flood Risk and Drainage
  - The Site requires a robust drainage strategy to manage surface water and foul water sustainably.
- Green Belt Designation

Site Opportunities

- Landscape
  - Opportunity to strengthen green areas by introducing new areas of vegetation
  - Habitat creation
- Flood Risk and Drainage
  - Incorporation of SuDS features
- Ecology
  - The site provides opportunities for new habitat creation via landscaping and SuDS features
- Local Economic and Employment Uplift
- High-Quality Design
  - Prominent frontages provide an opportunity to create high-quality and aesthetically pleasing facades

Key

- Site Boundary
- Primary Vehicle route to site
- Motorway
- Close Proximity to neighbouring residential
- Potential green buffer zones
- Sun Path
- Potential noise concerns to neighbouring residential



3 Design Proposal

3.1 Design Concept
3.2 Design Evolution
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3.5 Illustrative Sections
3.6 Appearance and Materials
3.7 Elevational Treatment

3.0 Design Proposal

3.1 Design Concept

The design concept is driven by the need to deliver a data centre that responds sensitively to its context while meeting the client's operational and capacity requirements. The proposed layout organises the development into a series of clearly defined functional zones, with data halls positioned to optimise operational efficiency and ancillary buildings arranged to create a stepped-building form at the site's edge. The massing strategy focuses on breaking down the scale of the development, integrating generous landscape buffers, and orienting plant and service areas away from neighbouring residential properties. This approach ensures an architectural composition that balances technical performance with landscape led design, resulting in a development that is both operationally efficient and environmentally considerate.

3.2 Design Evolution

3.2.1 Site Masterplan

The masterplan design has been informed by a series of iterative site test fits. Six layout options were developed and assessed to understand how different configurations of data halls and ancillary accommodation could respond to the site constraints, client and operational requirements, and massing considerations. The options explored were:

Site Test-Fit Option 1: Single 2 storey data hall building
Site Test-Fit Option 2: Two 2 storey data hall buildings
Site Test-Fit Option 3: Two 3 storey data hall buildings
Site Test-Fit Option 4: Three 3 storey data hall buildings
Site Test-Fit Option 5: Single 2 storey data hall building with ancillary office block
Site Test-Fit Option 6: Two 2 storey data hall buildings with ancillary office block

The initial site-test fits were assessed against a defined set of early constraints, comprising both operational requirements and site-specific limitations. These parameters shaped the development envelope and informed the feasibility of each configuration.

Client Requirements:
- 54MW development capacity
- Data halls sizes (length, width, etc.)
- Office accommodation provisions
- Client storage provisions
- Car and cycle parking provisions
- Security zoning requirements

Operational Requirements:
- Data hall heights
- Equipment service areas
- External plant requirements (heights, sizes, type, quantity, etc.)
- Substation and other ancillary building requirements
- Service road and service yard requirements
- Site access provisions from Sipson Road

Site Constraints:
- Retention of existing trees, including associated root protection zones
- Minimum 12.5m landscaped green buffer around the site perimeter
- Minimum 21m separation between neighbouring residential properties and any site infrastructure
- Compliance with noise thresholds at the site boundary to safeguard nearby sensitive receptors
- Urban greening factor requirements

The site test-fit optioneering and assessment of the early constraints resulted in Option 6 as the most preferable solution. Option 6 was determined as the most preferable option as it delivered the client's capacity and accommodation requirements, whilst maximising the urban greening factor and delivering all the required operational capabilities.

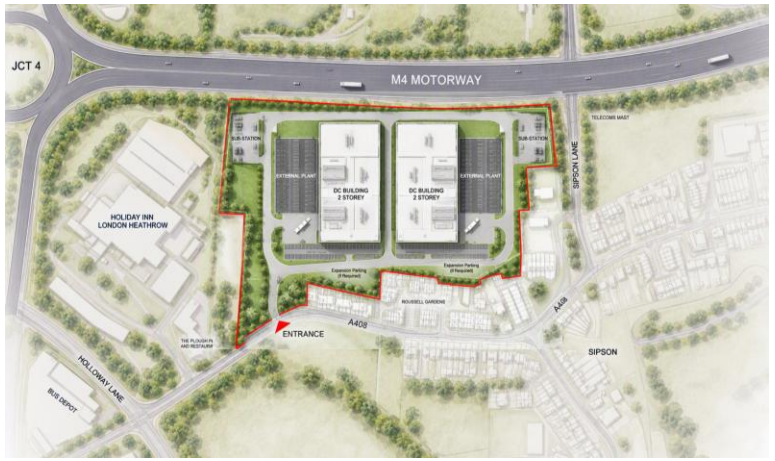
3.0 Design Proposal

3.2.1 Site Masterplan

The following site test-fit masterplans were developed during the design evolution stage to inform the selection of the most appropriate option for the development:



Site Test-Fit Option 1



Site Test-Fit Option 2



Site Test-Fit Option 3



Site Test-Fit Option 4



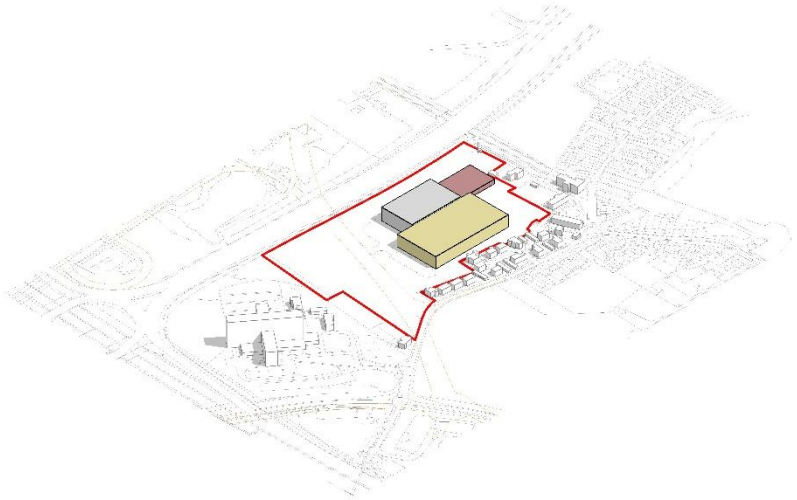
Site Test-Fit Option 5



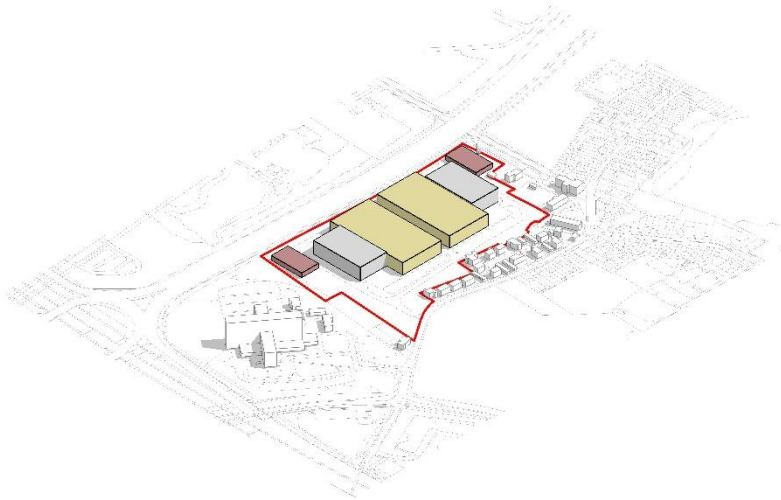
Site Test-Fit Option 6

3.0 Design Proposal

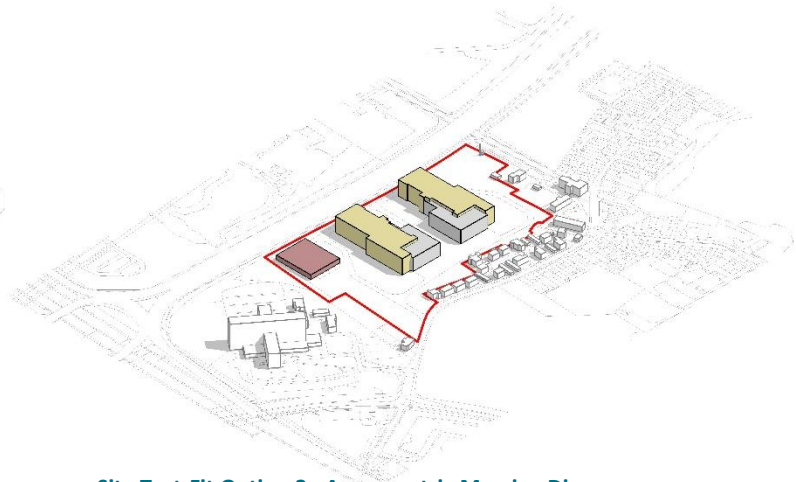
3.2.1 Site Masterplan



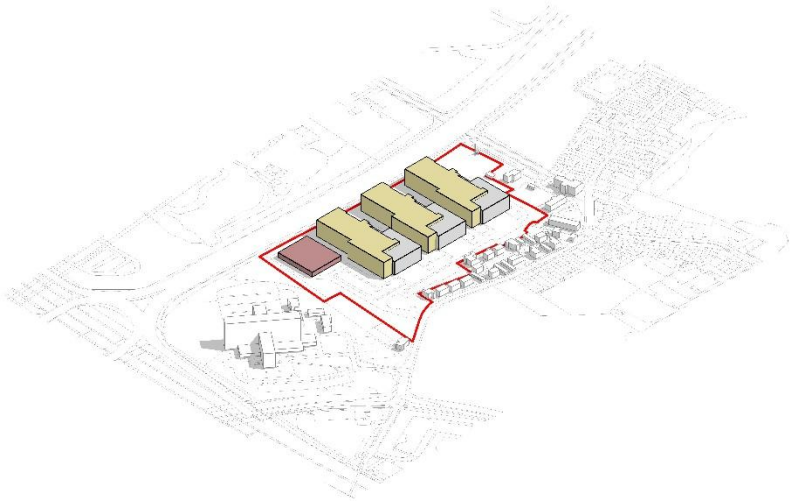
Site Test-Fit Option 1 - Axonometric Massing Diagram



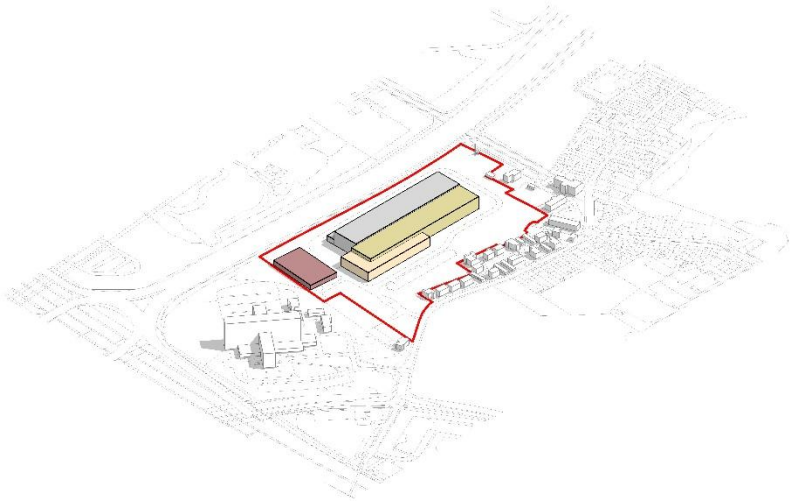
Site Test-Fit Option 2 - Axonometric Massing Diagram



Site Test-Fit Option 3 - Axonometric Massing Diagram



Site Test-Fit Option 4 - Axonometric Massing Diagram



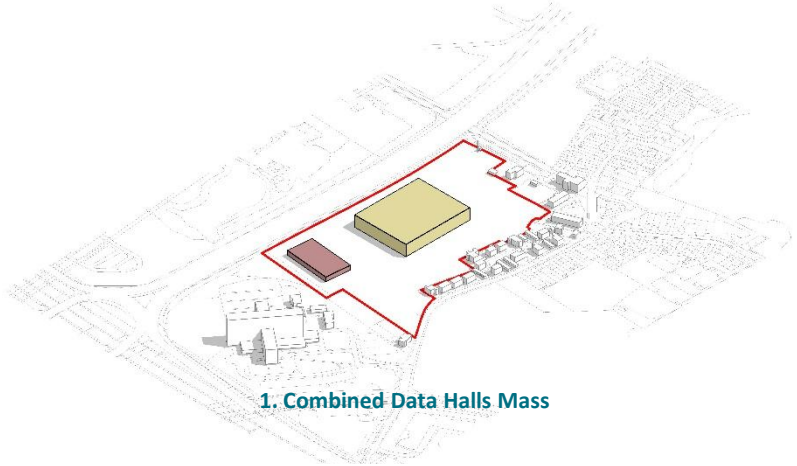
Site Test-Fit Option 5 - Axonometric Massing Diagram

3.0 Design Proposal

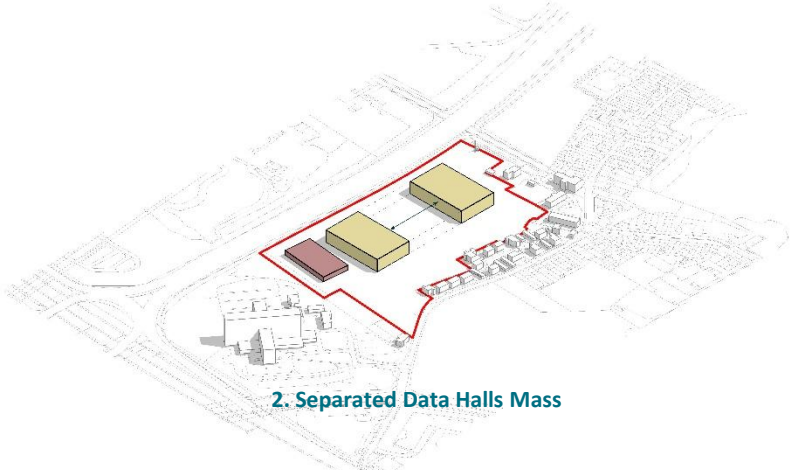
3.2.2 Building Massing

The evolution of the building's massing and form has been guided by several key architectural principles:

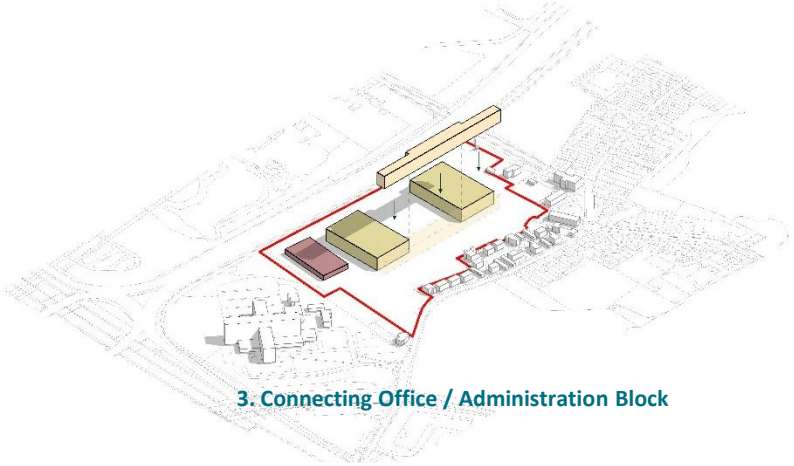
- Articulating the data halls as two distinct volumes to break down the overall mass and avoid a single monolithic block.
- Introducing an ancillary office and administration block to provide a clear connective element between the two data hall wings.
- Locating and concealing external plant within the envelope of the building, ensuring it is visually contained and integrated into the overall form.
- Reducing the height of the office/administration block along Sipson Road to create a more sensitive transition in scale towards neighbouring residential properties.
- Stepping the building envelope to reinforce the reading of separate volumes and prevent the appearance of a continuous, uninterrupted mass.



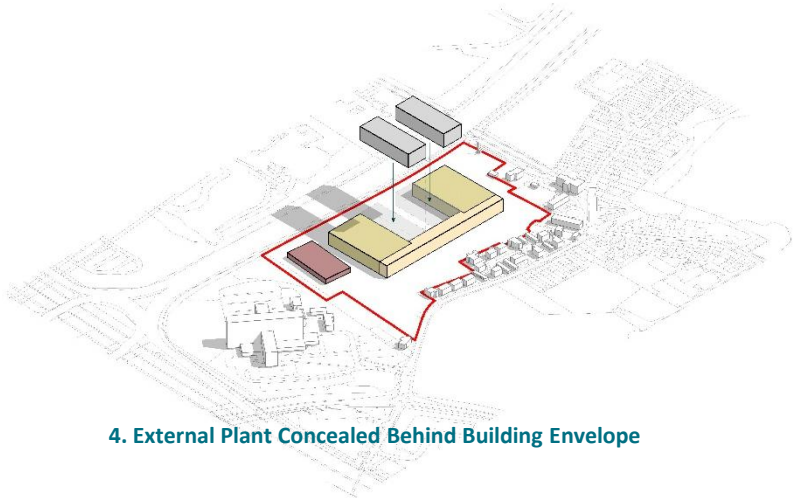
1. Combined Data Halls Mass



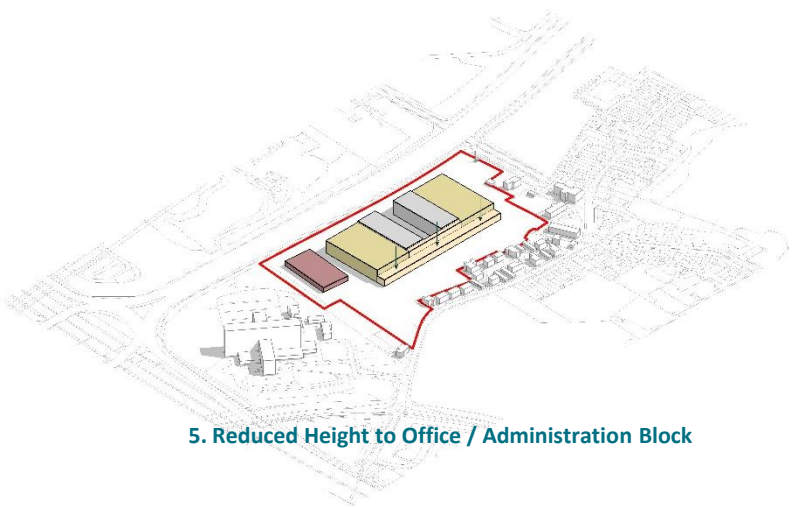
2. Separated Data Halls Mass



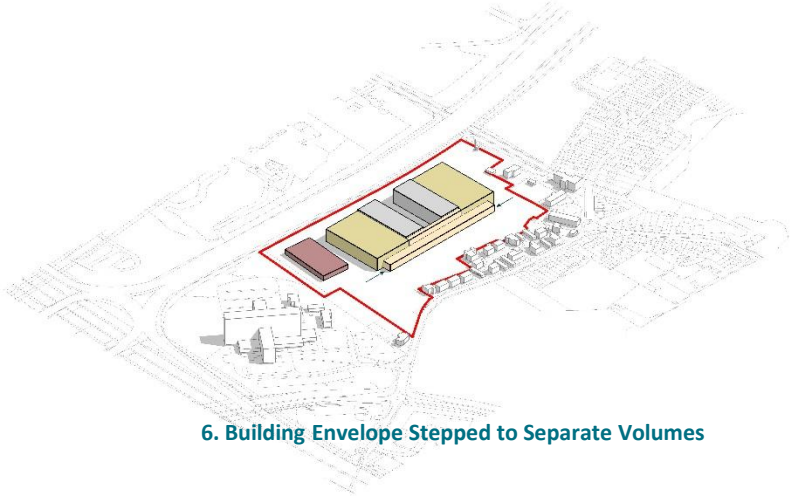
3. Connecting Office / Administration Block



4. External Plant Concealed Behind Building Envelope



5. Reduced Height to Office / Administration Block



6. Building Envelope Stepped to Separate Volumes

3.0 Design Proposal

3.3 Illustrative Masterplan

- Plot Boundary
- Impact Rated Fence - Palladin RCS ISO 22343 (Vehicle Rated 7.5 Tonne / 30MPH) Fence 3.0m
- Impact Rated Gate or Barrier - ISO 22343 (Vehicle Rated 7.5 Tonne / 30MPH)
- Attenuation Pond
- Proposed Asphalt Road / Concrete Hardstand
- Proposed Paving (as per Landscape Architect)
- Proposed Grass and Wildflowers (as per Landscape Architect)
- Proposed Hedgerow Mix (as per Landscape Architect) with Incorporated Acoustic Fencing where required
- Proposed Shrubs Mix (as per Landscape Architect) with Incorporated Acoustic Fencing where required
- Proposed Spring Bulb Mix (as per Landscape Architect)
- Proposed Wet Wildflower Mix (as per Landscape Architect)
- Proposed Trees (as per Landscape Architect)



3.0 Design Proposal

3.4 Parameter Plans

3.4.1 PGF-ACM-00-XX-DR-AR-051500 – Outline Planning – Demolitions Parameters Plan

- Site Boundary
- Site Area
- Existing Buildings to be Demolished



3.0 Design Proposal

3.4 Parameter Plans

3.4.2 PGF-ACM-00-XX-DR-AR-051501 – Outline Planning – Development Parcels Parameters Plan

- Site Boundary
- Site Area
- Development Parcel
- Deviation allowance for projecting building elements e.g. stair cores, external plant compounds etc.
- Deviation allowance for increase in external plant requirements
- Deviation allowance for increase in ancillary building area

FOOTPRINT AREAS

Data Halls
Indicative Footprint: 10,805sqm
Max. Deviation: 2,100sqm
Max. Footprint: 12,905sqm

Office / Administration Block
Indicative Footprint: 3,000sqm
Max. Deviation: 130sqm
Max. Footprint: 3,130sqm

External Plant
Indicative Footprint: 5,465sqm
Max. Deviation: 315sqm
Max. Footprint: 5,780sqm

Ancillary Buildings
Indicative Footprint: 3,145sqm
Max. Deviation: 845sqm
Max. Footprint: 3,990sqm

Ancillary buildings comprise of:

- Substation
- Pump House
- Water Tanks

Landscape design shown is indicative only.



3.0 Design Proposal

3.4 Parameter Plans

3.4.3 PGF-ACM-00-XX-DR-AR-051502 – Outline Planning – Building Heights Parameters Plan

Site Boundary

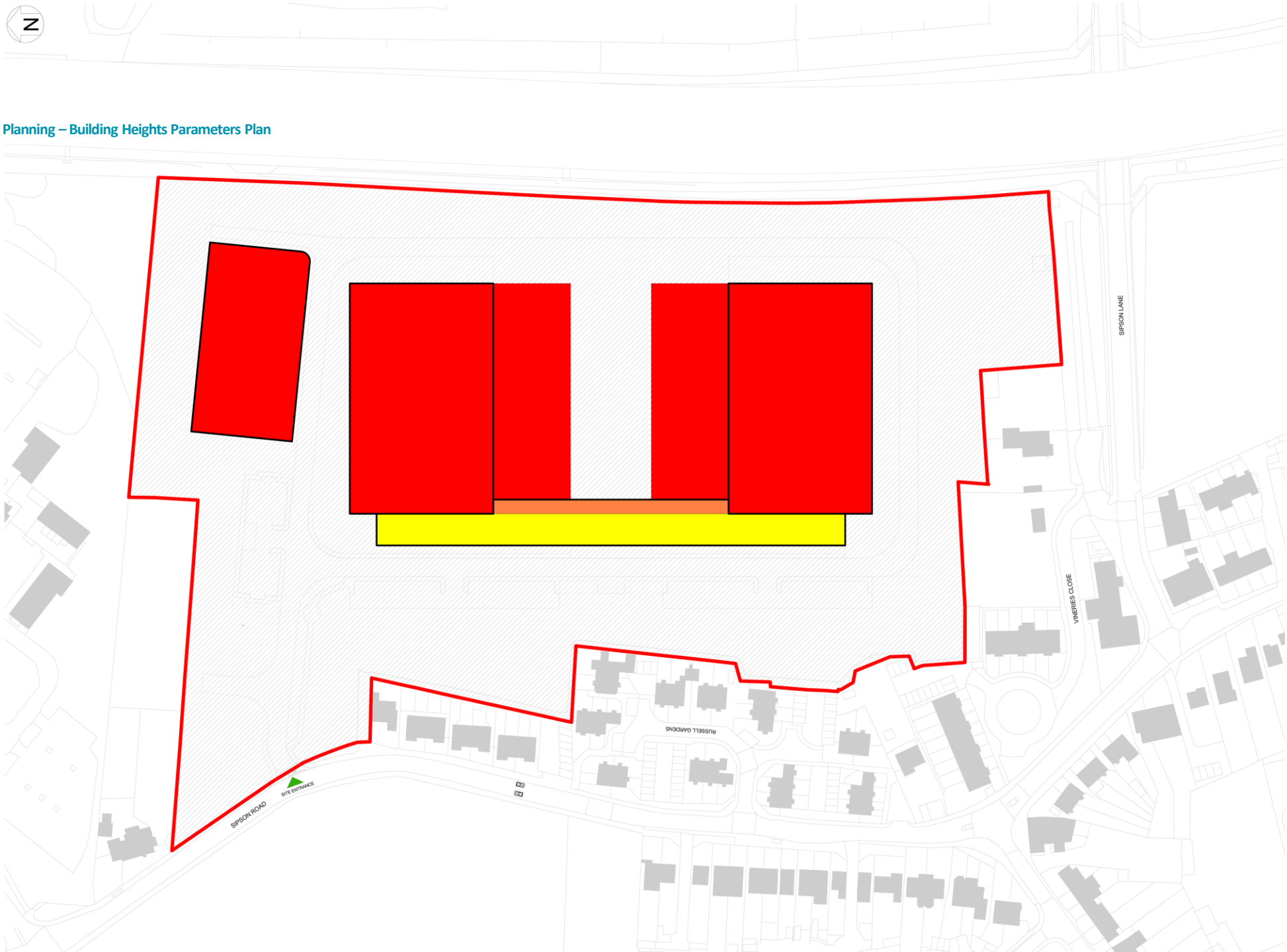
Height Zone 1:
Up to 5m (+34m AOD)
No building area other than perimeter landscape, roads, car parks, service yards, cycle parking, fencing and signage.

Height Zone 2:
Up to 10m (+39m AOD)

Height Zone 3:
Up to 15m (+44m AOD)

Height Zone 4:
Up to 20m (+49m AOD)

Landscape design shown is indicative only.



3.0 Design Proposal

3.4 Parameter Plans

3.4.4 PGF-ACM-00-XX-DR-AR-051503 – Outline Planning – Land Use Parameters Plan

- Site Boundary
- Data Halls
- Office / Admin Block
- External Plant
- Ancillary Buildings

FLOOR AREAS

Data Halls
Indicative GFA: 21,610sqm
Max. GFA: 25,810sqm

Office / Administration Block
Indicative GFA: 6,000sqm
Max. GFA: 6260sqm

External Plant
Indicative GFA: 16,395sqm
Max. GFA: 17,340sqm

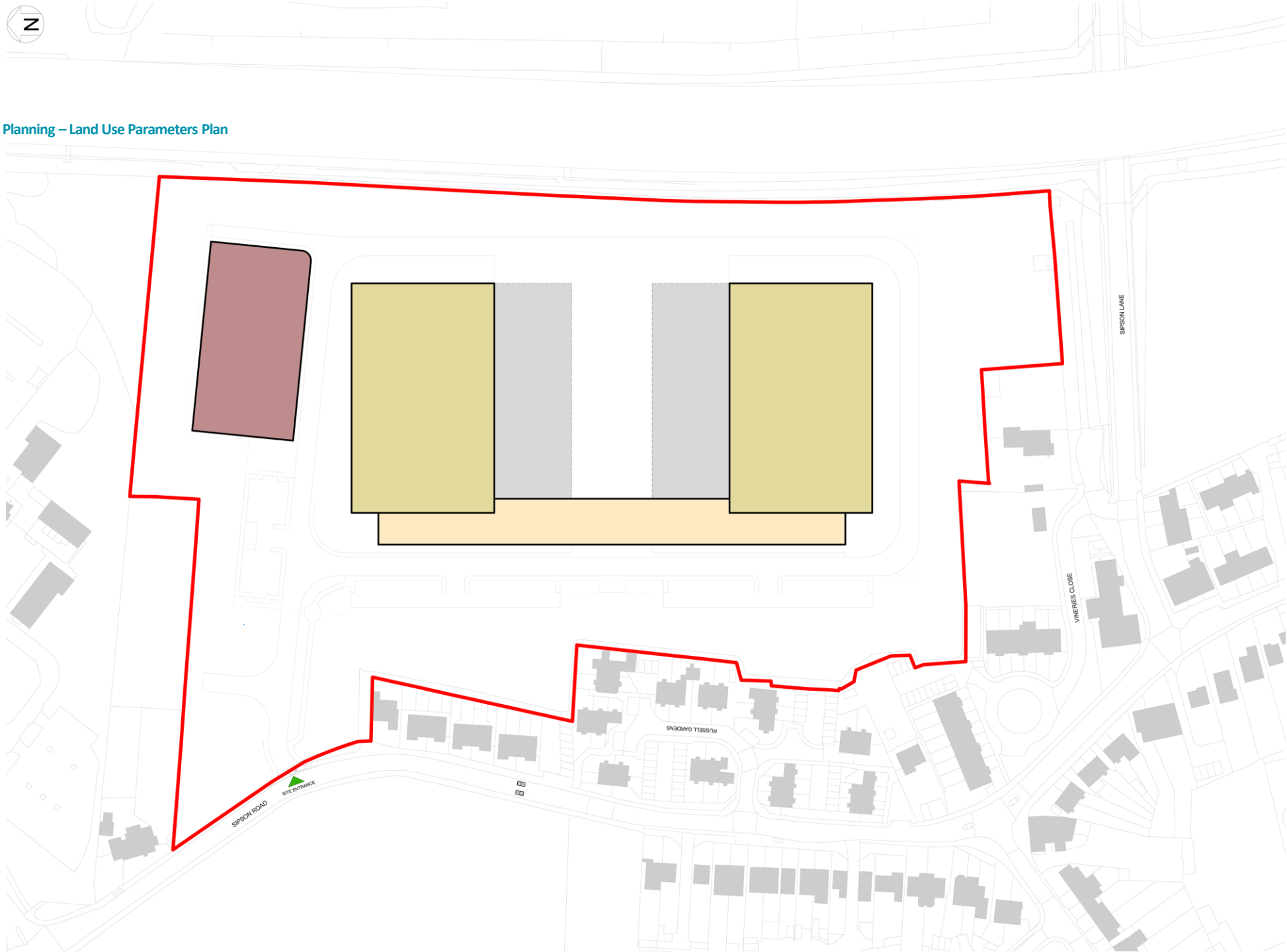
Ancillary Buildings
Indicative GFA: 3,145sqm
Max. GFA: 3,990sqm

Max. GFA figures shown above incorporate the full deviation allowances set out on drawing PGF-ACM-00-XX-DR-AR-051501 - Development Parcels Parameters Plan.

Ancillary buildings comprise of:

- Substation
- Pump House
- Water Tanks

Landscape design shown is indicative only.



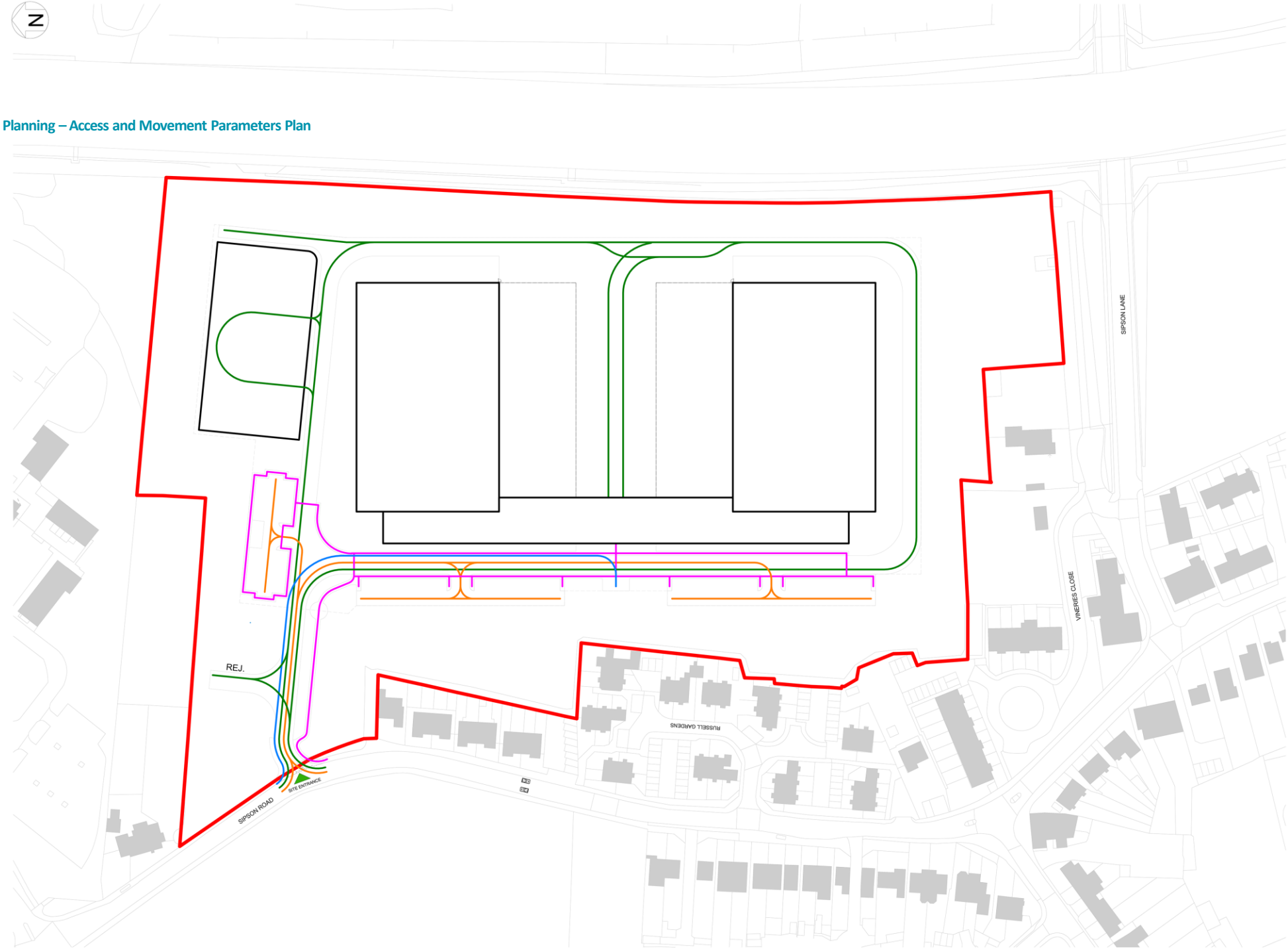
3.0 Design Proposal

3.4 Parameter Plans

3.4.5 PGF-ACM-00-XX-DR-AR-051504 – Outline Planning – Access and Movement Parameters Plan

- Site Boundary
- Development Parcel
- Pedestrian Routes
- Cycling Routes
- Light Vehicle Routes
- Goods Vehicle Routes

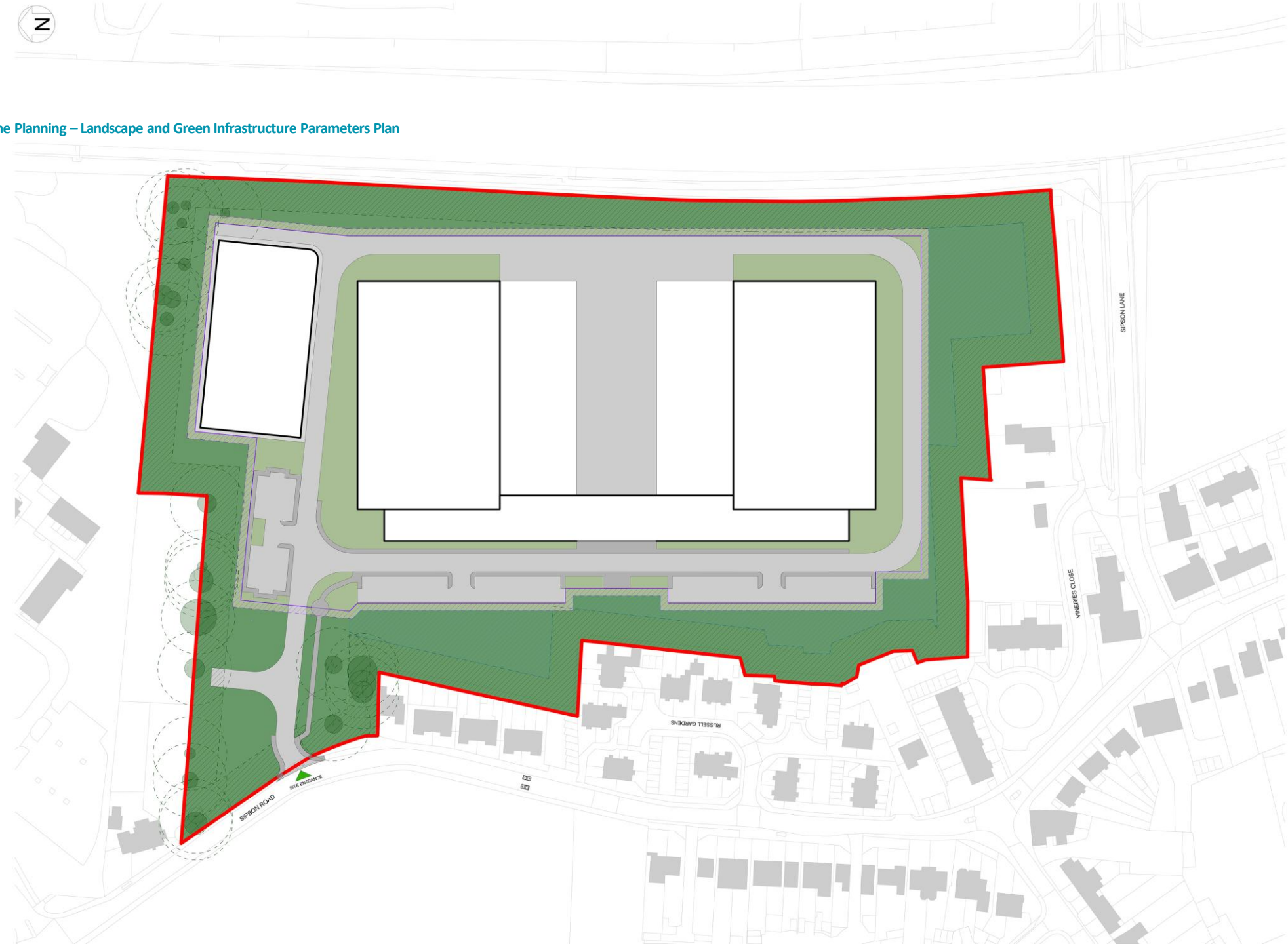
Landscape design shown is indicative only.



3.0 Design Proposal

3.4 Parameter Plans

3.4.6 PGF-ACM-00-XX-DR-AR-051505 – Outline Planning – Landscape and Green Infrastructure Parameters Plan



Site Boundary

Development Parcel

Soft Landscaping: Building zone amenity landscape to include low-level native hedge, shrub and bulb planting.

Hard Landscaping: To include roads, car parks, service yards and pedestrian footpaths.

Security Fence Line: Security fence line and 3m minimum offset zone from areas of high-level planting.

Green Buffer: Green buffer zone between security line and site boundary to include dense, high-level planting and trees, species rich grass and wildflowers, and attenuation ponds with wet wildflower mix.

Minimum Green Buffer: 12.5m minimum green buffer zone around site boundary.

Attenuation Ponds: Areas proposed for attenuation features integrated within the soft landscaping

Existing Trees Retained: Existing trees to be retained including 15m root protection

No high-level planting to be located in areas where 12.5m minimum green buffer zone and 3m security fence offset zone overlap. Low-level soft landscaping only.

Arboricultural survey information has been provided for the northern portion of the site only. Existing trees and planting to be retained elsewhere remains to be confirmed.

Landscape design shown is indicative only.

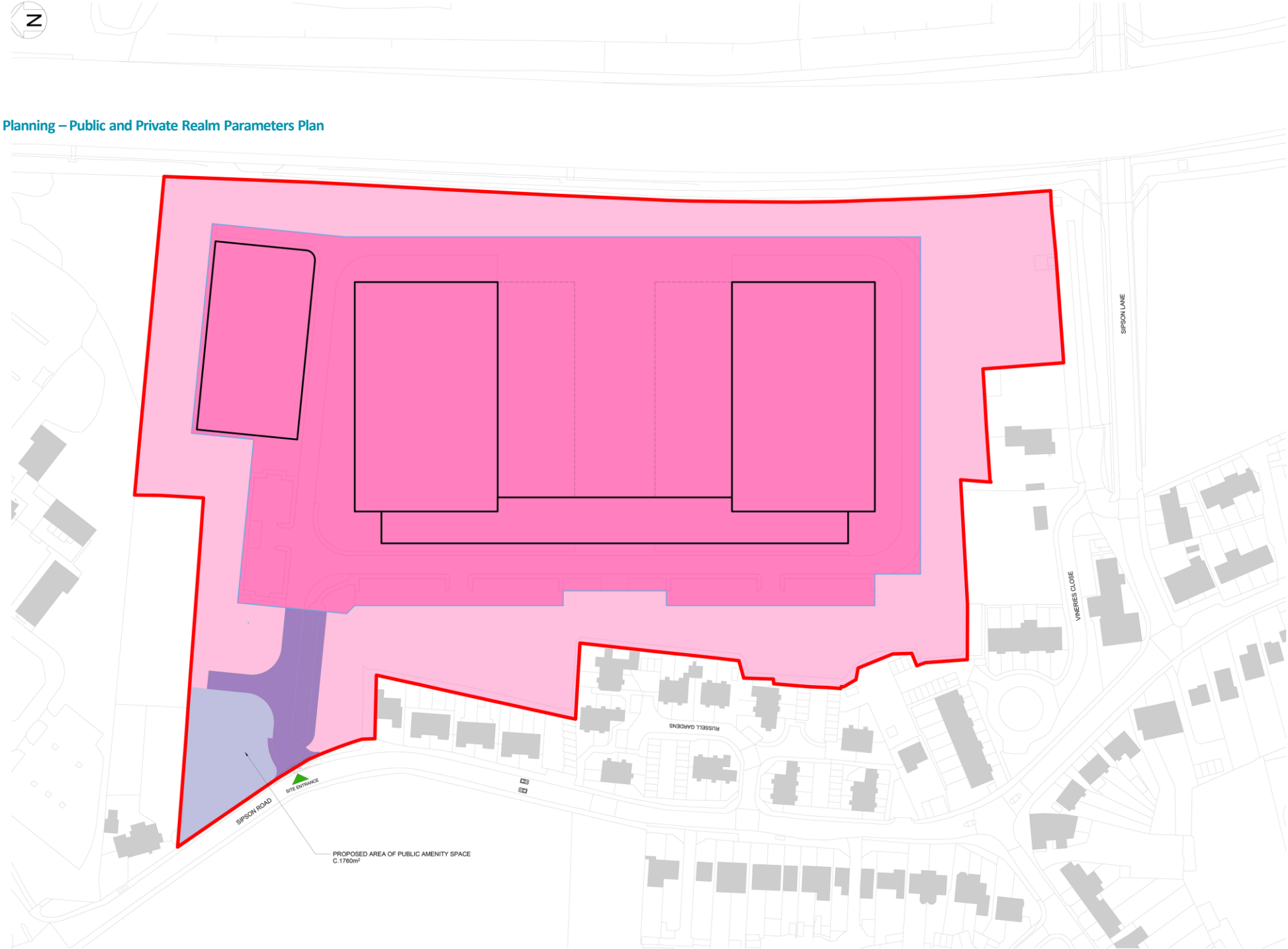
3.0 Design Proposal

3.4 Parameter Plans

3.4.7 PGF-ACM-00-XX-DR-AR-051506 – Outline Planning – Public and Private Realm Parameters Plan

- Site Boundary
- Development Parcel
- Private and Controlled
- **Private:** Not publicly accessible
- **Publicly Accessible:** Private roads and paths owned by Virtus
- **Publicly Accessible:** Public amenity spaces owned by Virtus
- Security Fence Line

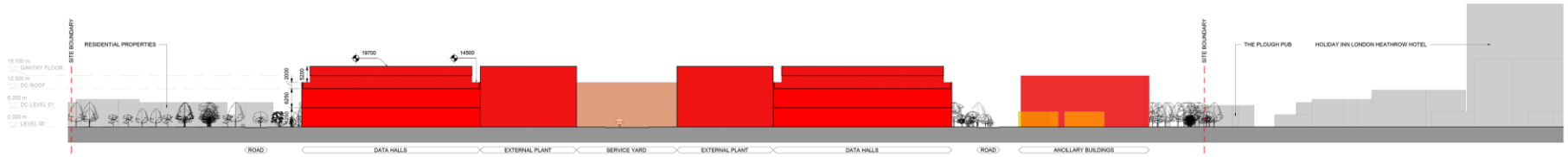
Landscape design shown is indicative only.



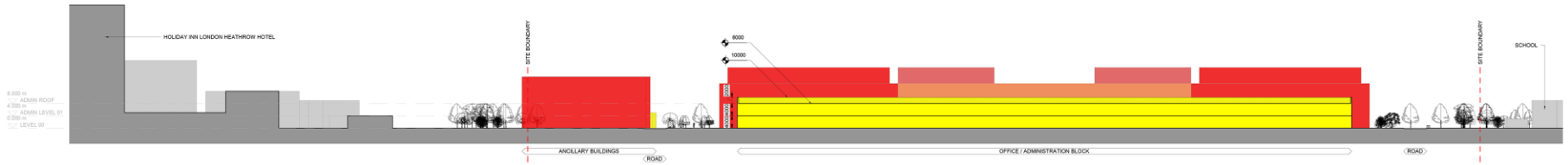
3.0 Design Proposal

3.5 Illustrative Sections

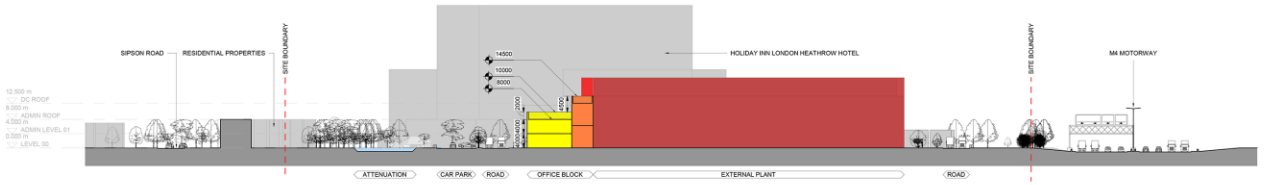
- Site Boundary
- Existing Building
- **Height Zone 2:** Up to 10m (+39m AOD)
- **Height Zone 3:** Up to 15m (+44m AOD)
- **Height Zone 4:** Up to 20m (+49m AOD)
- **Open Air Spaces:** Parapets, Gantries, etc.



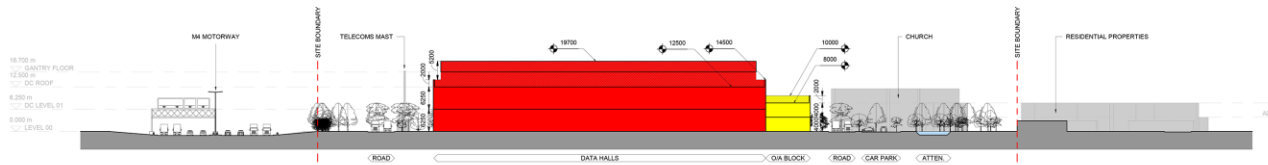
Outline Planning - Illustrative Site Section A
SCALE: 1 : 500



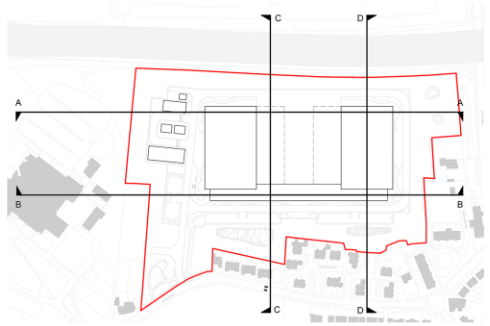
Outline Planning - Illustrative Site Section B
SCALE: 1 : 500



Outline Planning - Illustrative Site Section C
SCALE: 1 : 500



Outline Planning - Illustrative Site Section D
SCALE: 1 : 500



Keyplan

3.0 Design Proposal

3.6 Appearance and Materials

The design has focused from the outset on integrating the large-scale data centres into their surroundings to minimise visual impact while meeting all technical and operational requirements.

The proposal is guided by key architectural principles which shaped the overall design strategy:

- Breaking down the overall massing through horizontal and vertical articulation to avoid the appearance of a single, continuous volume.
- Subdividing the façade into a defined base, middle and top, helping to humanise the scale and introduce visual order to create a more balanced and legible building form while responding appropriately to the semi-urban character of the site.
- Using contrasting colours strategically to visually subdivide large surfaces, reduce perceived scale, and prevent monotony.
- Establishing a strong landscape buffer around all site boundaries to address the proximity of the residential buildings and adjacent land uses, soften views of the building, reduce its visual prominence, and create a more considerate edge condition.
- Screening ground-level technical equipment with colour-coordinated façade panels to minimise visual intrusion and support the building's integration within the landscape.

Collectively, these measures ensure the development responds sensitively to its context, complementing rather than competing with the surrounding landscape.



3.0 Design Proposal

3.7 Elevational Treatment

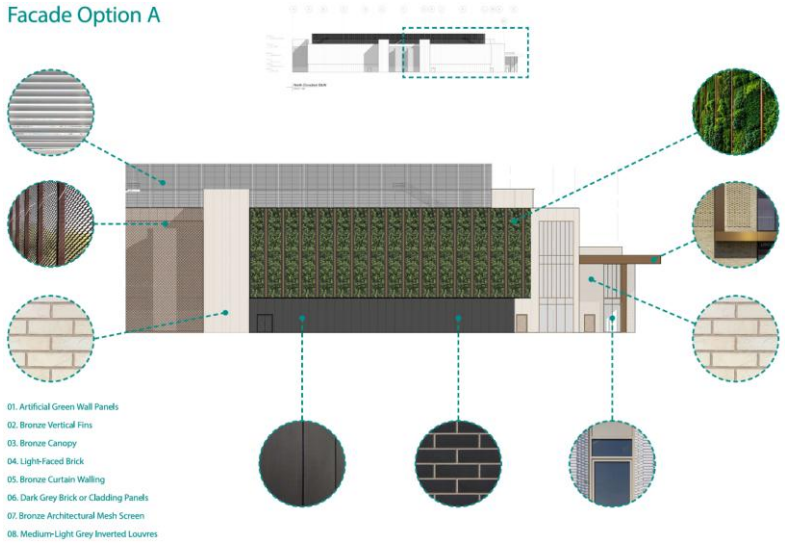
A series of façade strategies were developed to establish an architectural language appropriate to the data centre's scale, context and operational requirements. The studies explored different combinations of colour, materiality and greening to understand how the building could be visually moderated and integrated within its landscape setting.

The initial options tested a restrained, contemporary palette of dark grey to black cladding, chosen to blend with the darker tones of the proposed landscape buffer. Green wall panels were introduced to soften the massing and strengthen the relationship with the surrounding planting. Light-coloured brick was applied to the office and administration block to create a contrasting, more civic expression, with bronze detailing used to deliver a high-quality frontage to sensitive boundaries.

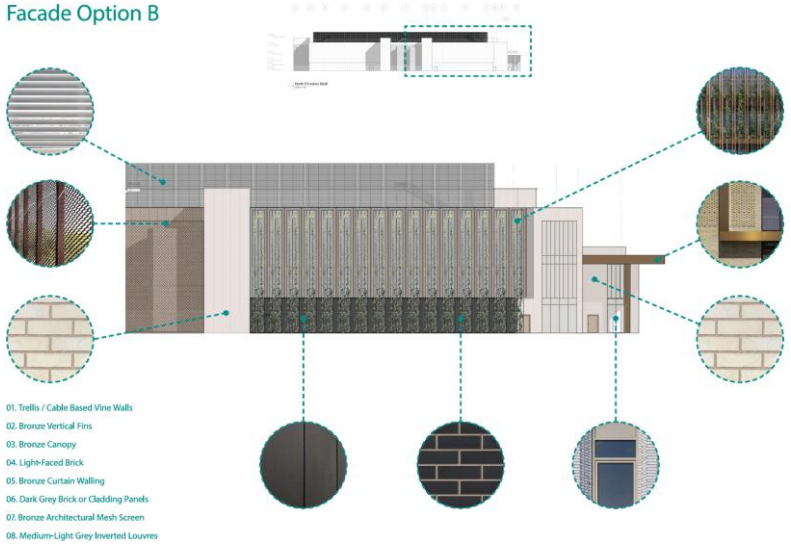
Subsequent studies explored a broader tonal range, combining dark, mid-tone and lighter cladding colours to break down the building's scale and introduce greater variation across the elevations. These options reduced reliance on green walls and instead tested alternative forms of articulation and colour modulation to provide visual relief and harmonise the building with its surroundings.

The final series of studies investigated a lighter palette supported by a set of façade articulation strategies. Architectural fins and perforated mesh panels were integrated to introduce rhythm and depth, while natural tones were incorporated through the use of brick combined with green and bronze metallic finishes to create a cohesive and visually refined elevational treatment.

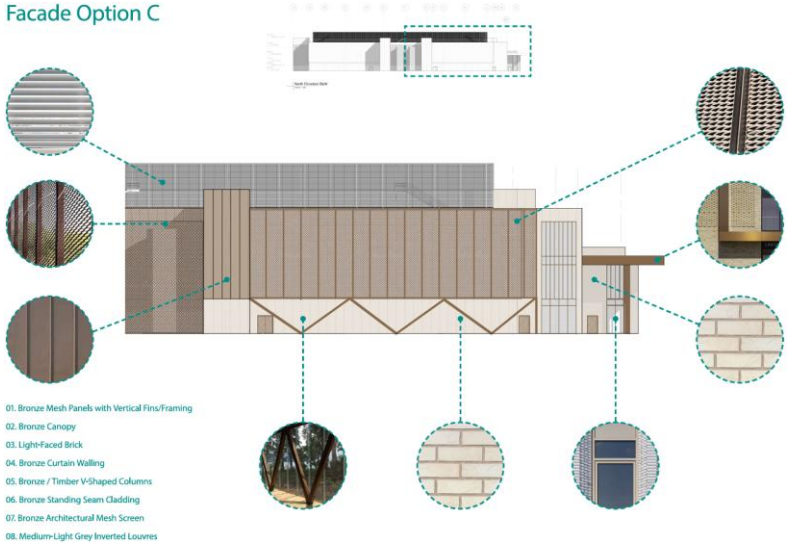
Facade Option A



Facade Option B



Facade Option C



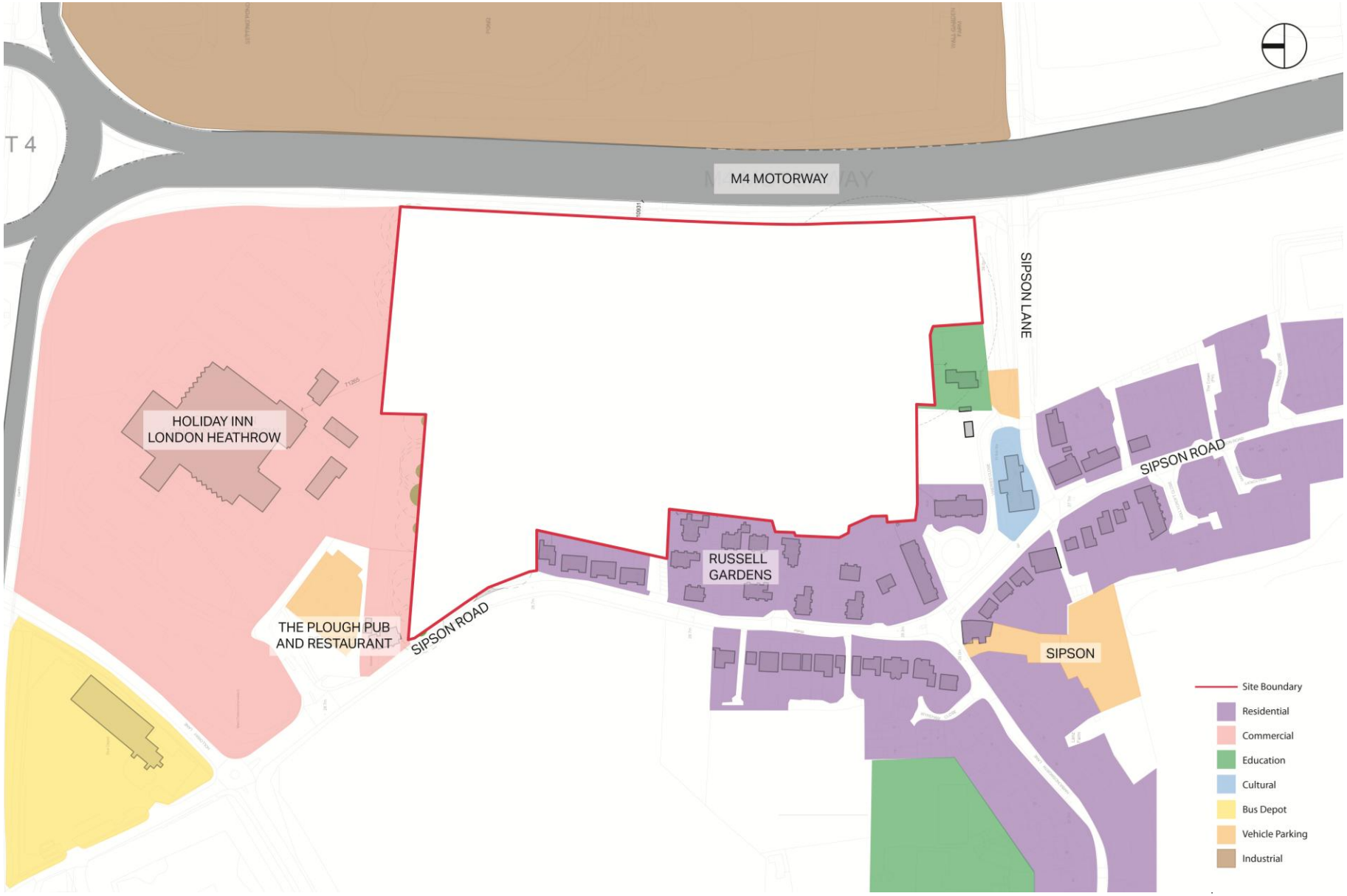
4 Landscape

4.1 Landscape Context Assessment
4.2 Landscape Site Analysis
4.2.1 Zoning
4.2.2 Hardscape, Softscape and Trees
4.3 Existing Site Boundary Conditions
4.4 Landscape SWOT Analysis
4.5 Landscape Strategy
4.5.1 Proposed Softscape Strategy
4.6 Landscape Typologies
4.7 Proposed Hardscape Strategy
4.8 Ecological Enhancement Opportunities
4.9 Urban Greening Factor

4.0 Landscape

4.1 Landscape Context Assessment

The site is located in the London Borough of Hillingdon close to the M4, 15km away from Heathrow Airport. There are several different uses within the surrounding landscape; green space, residential area, education, business and transport (see the figure to the right).



4.0 Landscape

4.2 Landscape Site Analysis

4.2.1 Zoning

The existing land use map for Hillingdon classifies the site as ‘General Surface – Natural’ surrounded by ‘General Surface – Mixed’, ‘General Surface – building structure’ and ‘General Surface – Path, Roads, Tracks’ in the Hillingdon Plan - Integrated Impact Assessment Scoping Report.

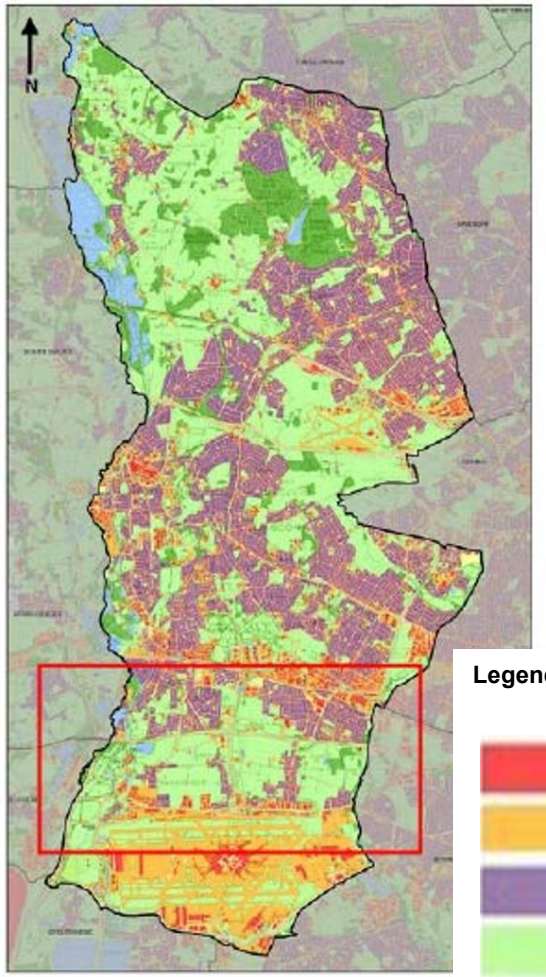


Zoning for the area showing the proximity to Heathrow runways



Site boundary showing the zoning

Figure 22. Land use map of Hillingdon



Hillingdon Land Use Zoning

Map sourced from the Hillingdon Plan - Integrated Impact Assessment Scoping Report: Preliminary Consultation Draft (2024)

4.0 Landscape

4.2 Landscape Site Analysis

4.2.2 Hardscape, Softscape and Trees

The site has Grade 1 agricultural soil; there are areas of tree groups and trees at the edges of the site (see below). The rest of the site is grass, wildflowers and small shrubs. There is minimal hardscape onsite with a small area of hardscape at the entrance





4.0 Landscape

4.3 Existing Site Boundary Conditions

The site has several boundary conditions, the site has a green boarder of shrubs and incomplete lines of trees. There are a number of fencing types, show in the figure to the right, with several land uses, such as residential buildings and motor ways, bordering the site with varying sensitivity to the proposed development.







4.0 Landscape

4.4 Landscape Swot Analysis

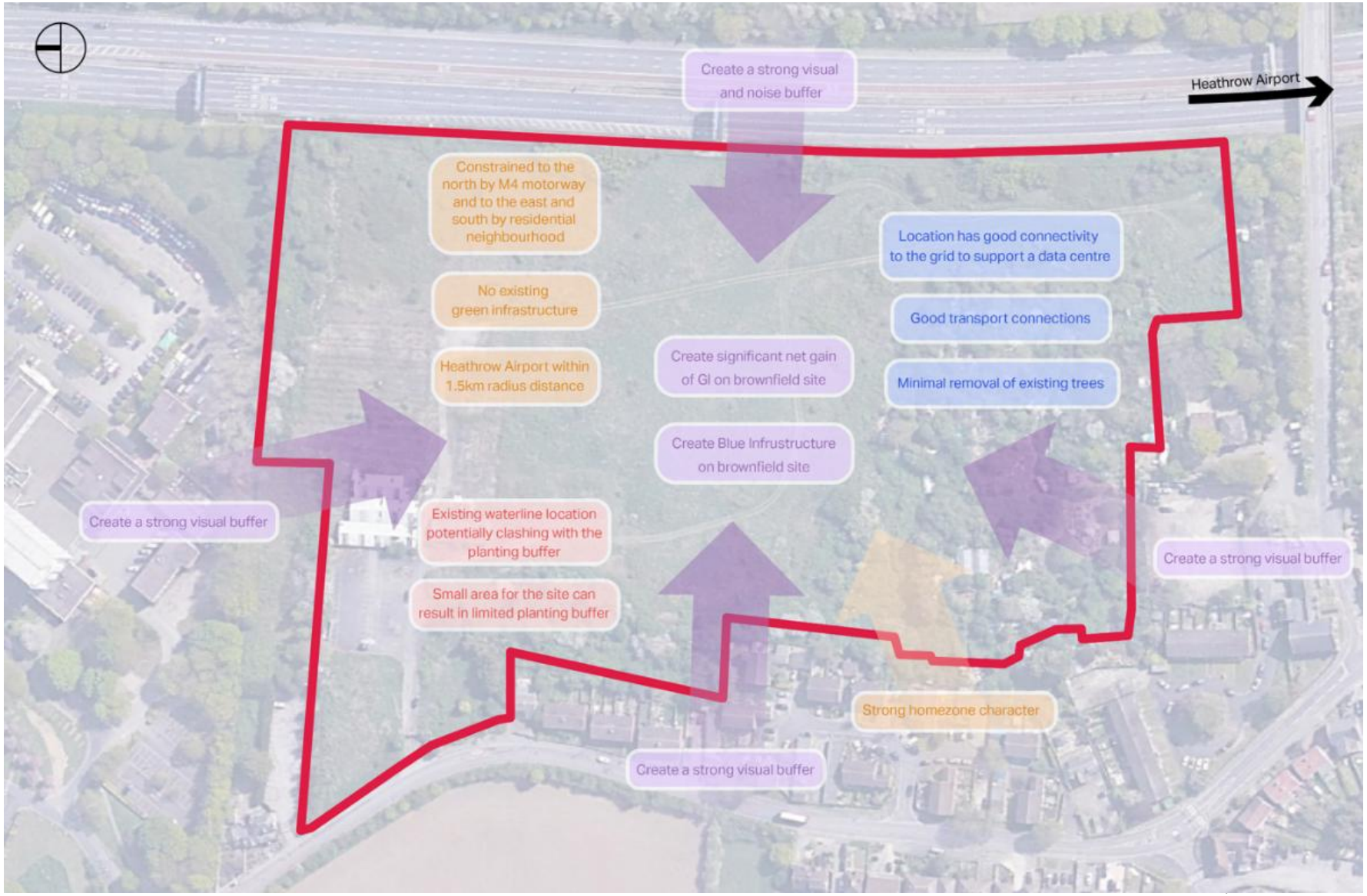
The site has a number of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Strengths
- The site has good transport connectivity.
- Location had good connectivity to the grid to support a data centre.
- Minimal removal of existing trees.

Weaknesses
- M4 to the east of the site creates noise.
- Residential area to the west and south
- Heathrow Airport is located with a 1.5km radius to the south of the site.
- There's no existing Green Infrastructure present on site.

Opportunities
- As there is only a sparse level of existing vegetation, the proposed works will offer a significant net gain to GI.
- The site will incorporate Blue Infrastructure (BI) in the proposed works, such as SuDS, attenuation ponds etc.
- There's a strong desire to introduce visual vegetation buffer for the home zones and M4 motorway to help reduce the noise levels

Threats
- The site has a small area, which can result in a limited planting buffer.
- Existing waterline may clash with planting buffer.



4.0 Landscape

4.5 Proposed Softscape Strategy

4.5.1 Landscape Strategy

The development of the overall Site plan places an emphasis on an integrated design approach. The Site masterplan brings together the built environment, utilities and services, security, and landscape to create a cohesive development that fits within the surrounding context and functions internally. The landscape works in conjunction with security and services to provide a design that maintains space for native planting and a dense green buffer to strengthen the surrounding landscape character.

The proposal has used an integrated approach involving all disciplines and followed key principles to inform the design:

- Create distance to the new built development using a densely vegetated berm and visual buffer planting along the eastern boundary, adjacent to the M4, and the western boundary, adjacent to the residential areas and Sipson Road. This will enhance the current visual and physical buffers to the Site providing greater opportunities to create wildlife corridors. The use of hedgerows and buffer planting will be used along the western site boundary to aid in concealing the built form from other aspects, while blending the landscape design into the local landscape character. The eastern part of the site outside of the secure boundary will contain planting chosen to suit the proposed wet and dry basins, while also aiding in the screening of the buildings.
- Maintaining areas for habitat and visual buffers, the soft landscape balances the security needs of the Site as well as the ecological and biodiversity aspirations of the area.
- Integrate water attenuation into the landscape via several wet and dry basins, with associated wetland and emergent planting, as well as trees chosen to suit these conditions
- Set development back from the northeastern boundary at least 15m to assist in hiding the built form from the adjacent elevated road
- Include planting within the interior of the Site to visually break up massing, create habitat, and enhance the ecological aims of the Site.
- Complement the boundary vegetation outside of the Site boundary using hedgerows and native trees.
- Consider opportunities for biodiversity enhancements through new deciduous woodland habitat.
- A carefully selected material and colour palette, informed by the tones of the surrounding landscape, creates a sense of place while ensuring the development sits comfortably within its wider setting.
- Consider low impact lighting solutions.

Landscape Rationale:
The landscape proposal has been designed in such a way as to minimise the visual impact of the proposed development, while also integrating with the existing surrounding landscape and enhancing the biodiversity, landscape and green infrastructure value of the development.

Some key objectives are to:
- Screen views of the proposed structures using berms, tree buffers and mature specimen trees
- Use plant species which complement the local environment, while also achieving biodiversity goals under the Urban Greening Factor and the Biodiversity Net Gain assessment process.
- Create multiple habitat types throughout the Site
- Integrate security, utilities, and architectural needs into the landscape
- Avoid the use of lawn and promote more biodiverse options such as wetland shrub, perennial and grass planting
- Include pollinator species throughout the Site

Soft Landscape:
- Plant species have been chosen with the above key objectives in mind, primarily using native species, as well as species found in the local area. Trees have been selected which should achieve a height and form suitable for screening, as well as conforming to security requirements where applicable. A variety of shrubs and perennials have been included to provide a dense groundcover of varying height and form within the tree buffers, ornamental value within the secure boundary, while also promoting pollinators across the whole Site.
- Species have also been chosen with consideration for their ability to handle damp ground conditions due to the high-water table, and to adapt to acidic soil due to the local soil pH.

Southern and Northern Boundaries
- The southern and northern boundaries aims to introduce native hedgerow tree and shrub species along the outside of the secure fence and adjacent to the redirected stream, in order to better screen the built form from the hotel and residential areas.

4.0 Landscape

4.6 Landscape Typologies

The landscape typologies for the site show a variety of different types of planting and landscape characters around the site



Boundary Planting
Screening hedges and trees 2m offset



Wildflowers
Species rich planting mix, good



SuDS
Ponds and retention basins that retain



Under Solar Panels
Semi-shaded mixes under solar panels



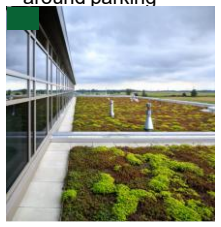
Car Park
Low level planting around parking



Plaza
Paved hardscape area with planters and seats



Green garden space
Green spaces to the sides of the building with pathways



Green Roof
Green roof on the building to increase biodiversity



Public Green Space
Paved hardscape area with planters and seats



4.0 Landscape

4.7 Proposed Hardscape Strategy

Interior roads will comprise of warm mixed asphalt surfacing and provide a 20- year design life. Surface course will be 40mm thick. Roads adjacent to generator equipment to be a minimum 12m total width. Other roads to be 6.5m.
Interior sidewalks / footpaths will be 1.5m wide and comprise 200mm thick concrete surfacing.
Slopes for accessible routes will be restrained to 1% - 5% longitudinally and 2.5% cross sectionally.



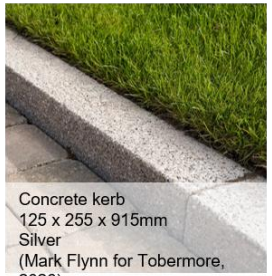
Concrete block paving with exposed aggregate
300 x 200 x 80mm
Mid grey
(Andy Whitfiled for Tobermore, 2026)



Concrete setts with exposed aggregate
208 x 173 x 50mm
Mid grey
(Kevin McFeely for Tobermore, 2026)



Asphalt surface



Concrete kerb
125 x 255 x 915mm
Silver
(Mark Flynn for Tobermore, 2026)

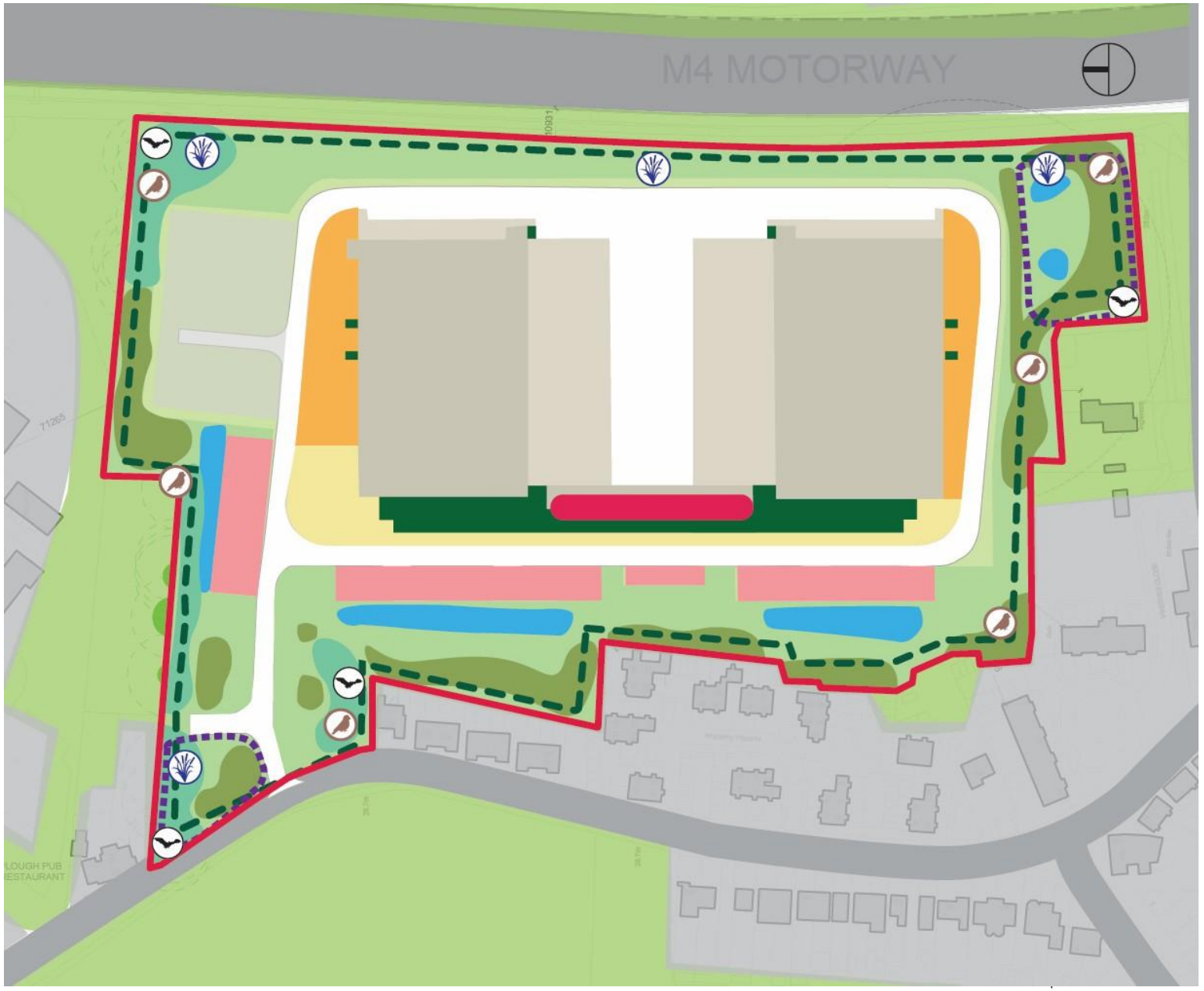


Aluminium edge
6mm THCK
Silver
(Kinley, 2026)

4.0 Landscape

4.8 Ecological Enhancement Opportunities

There are a number of habitat enhancement opportunities across the site that aim to make the site more habitable to different species, low level flying animals, small fauna and insects, see below.



4.0 Landscape

4.9 Urban Greening Factor (UGF)

The Urban Greening Factor for the site come to 0.46, over the minimum requirement of 0.3 for commercial sites required in the London Plan

Total site area (m²) (include all land within the red line boundary)	69716.55

Urban Greening Factor Calculator

Symbol	Surface Cover Type	Factor	Area (m²)	Contribution	Notes
	Semi-natural vegetation (e.g. trees, woodland, species-rich grassland) maintained or established on site.	1	24,421	24421	Wildflowers and species rich grass land around the site, general wildflower and wet wildflower mixes
	Intensive green roof or vegetation over structure. Substrate minimum settled depth of 150mm.	0.8	1111	888.8	Semi-intensive green roofs with shrubs
	Standard trees planted in connected tree pits with a minimum soil volume equivalent to at least two thirds of the projected canopy area of the mature tree.	0.8	627	501.6	Trees within hardscape or near to hardscape
	Extensive green roof with substrate of minimum settled depth of 80mm (or 60mm beneath vegetation blanket) – meets the requirements of GRO Code 2014.	0.7	680	476	Extensive green roofs under solar panels
	Flower-rich perennial planting.	0.7	1906	1334.2	Ornamental planting around the main building
	Rain gardens and other vegetated sustainable drainage elements.	0.7	1232	862.4	SUDS attenuation basins
	Hedges (line of mature shrubs one or two shrubs wide).	0.6	2026	1215.6	Hedges surrounding the main site roads and at the entrances
	Standard trees planted in pits with soil volumes less than two thirds of the projected canopy area of the mature tree.	0.6	3971	2382.6	Proposed tree planting 3971m2, existing trees account for 453m2 of canopy after
	Groundcover planting.	0.5	1010	505	Bulbs planting low to the floor planting allowing for visibility splays
	Sealed surfaces (e.g. concrete, asphalt, waterproofing, stone).	0	18,739	0	The area of paths, roads, shared surfaces are 18,739m2, the area of the buildings are 17625m2
	Total contribution			**32587.2**	
	Urban Greening Factor			**0.467424163**	



5 Environmental Design

5.1 Sustainability

Delivering a better world

5.0 Environmental Design

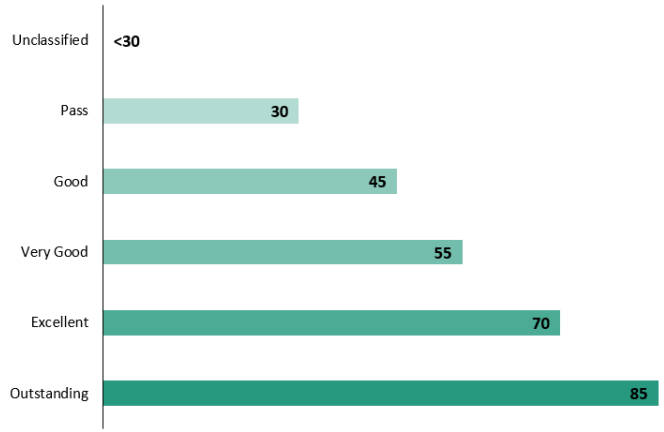
5.1 Sustainability

The proposed development is designed to meet targets based on BREEAM standards. In accordance with guidance by the Building Research Establishment (BRE), the most appropriate BREEAM scheme to assess a new data centre in the UK, is the BREEAM Data Centres (DC) 2010 v1.21. The aim of this pre-assessment is to establish the BREEAM score and rating that is achievable by the proposed development, based on its current design. The information provided by the project team was used to confirm the BREEAM credits that can be considered achievable and to inform the BREEAM targeted rating.

BREEAM seeks to minimise the adverse effects of new buildings on the environment at global and local scales, whilst promoting healthy indoor conditions for the occupants. Building projects are assessed at the design and post-construction stages using a system of environmental issues grouped within the following ten categories:

- Management (Man)
- Health and Wellbeing (Hea)
- Energy (Ene)
- Transport (Tra)
- Water (Wat)
- Materials (Mat)
- Waste (Wst)
- Land Use & Ecology (LE)
- Pollution (Pol)
- Innovation (Inn)

Credit Category	Available Points	Targeted at Stage 2
Management	12	9
Health& Wellbeing	13	7
Energy	25	22
Transport	10	4
Water	8	8
Materials	15	8
Waste	7	4
Land Use& Ecology	10	3
Pollution	11	5
Innovation	10	3
Total score %		73.09%
BREEAM Rating	-	Excellent



The assessment of a building results in a final online report being produced by the BREEAM Assessor and a BREEAM certificate is produced by the BRE to validate the rating and score. The building's performance is expressed as a BREEAM rating based on the scale and percentages of awarded credits presented in Figure 5.

A BREEAM 'Pass' rating requires a total percentage score of at least 30% and a few minimum standard credits to be awarded. Similarly, BREEAM 'Good', 'Very Good', 'Excellent' and 'Outstanding' ratings require % scores of 45, 55, 70 and 85, respectively and further minimum standards to be achieved. AECOM recommends that a buffer of 4-5% above the target rating should be incorporated as part of the pre-assessment to mitigate against any loss of credits as the development progresses.

In addition to a certain score, each BREEAM rating also has to meet certain minimum standards by complying with specific credit requirements. These also have to be considered as part of the assessment as they set minimum standards of performance in focus areas that BRE see as fundamental environmental aspects that need to be met before any rating can be achieved.

A BREEAM pre-assessment has been undertaken at pre-application stage, based on the BREEAM Data Centres 2010 1.2 scheme. The Applicant's target is to achieve BREEAM Excellent rating (minimum 70%). The pre-assessment, which is summarised in Table 1, indicates that the project can target 73.09% points, which is above the Excellent rating threshold.

Several early-stage studies requiring specialist appointments have been identified and should be considered prior to the commencement of RIBA Stage 3. This includes the Low or Zero Carbon Feasibility Study, which is a minimum standard requirement for achieving a BREEAM Excellent rating.

6 Access Strategy

6.1 Access and Inclusivity

6.2 Security Strategy

6.0 Access Strategy

6.1 Access and Inclusivity

The proposed development has been designed to provide safe, convenient and inclusive access for all users whilst meeting the operational and security requirements of a hyperscale data centre. This outline planning application seeks approval for access only, with all other matters reserved for future consideration. The access strategy has therefore been developed to establish the principal means of vehicular, pedestrian, cycle, servicing and emergency access to the site, demonstrating that the development can be safely and effectively accommodated. The strategy has been prepared in accordance with relevant planning policy and inclusive design principles to ensure the site is accessible to employees, visitors, maintenance personnel and emergency services.

Vehicular Access
Primary vehicular access will be provided from Sipson Lane via a new secure site entrance located on the western side of the development. Access arrangements have been designed to accommodate staff vehicles, deliveries, servicing vehicles and emergency access while maintaining appropriate security measures and operational resilience.

Pedestrian and Cycle Access
Pedestrian access will be provided via dedicated routes from the site entrance to the main office and welfare facilities. Safe pedestrian circulation will be maintained throughout the development with clearly defined walkways separated from operational vehicle movements where practicable.

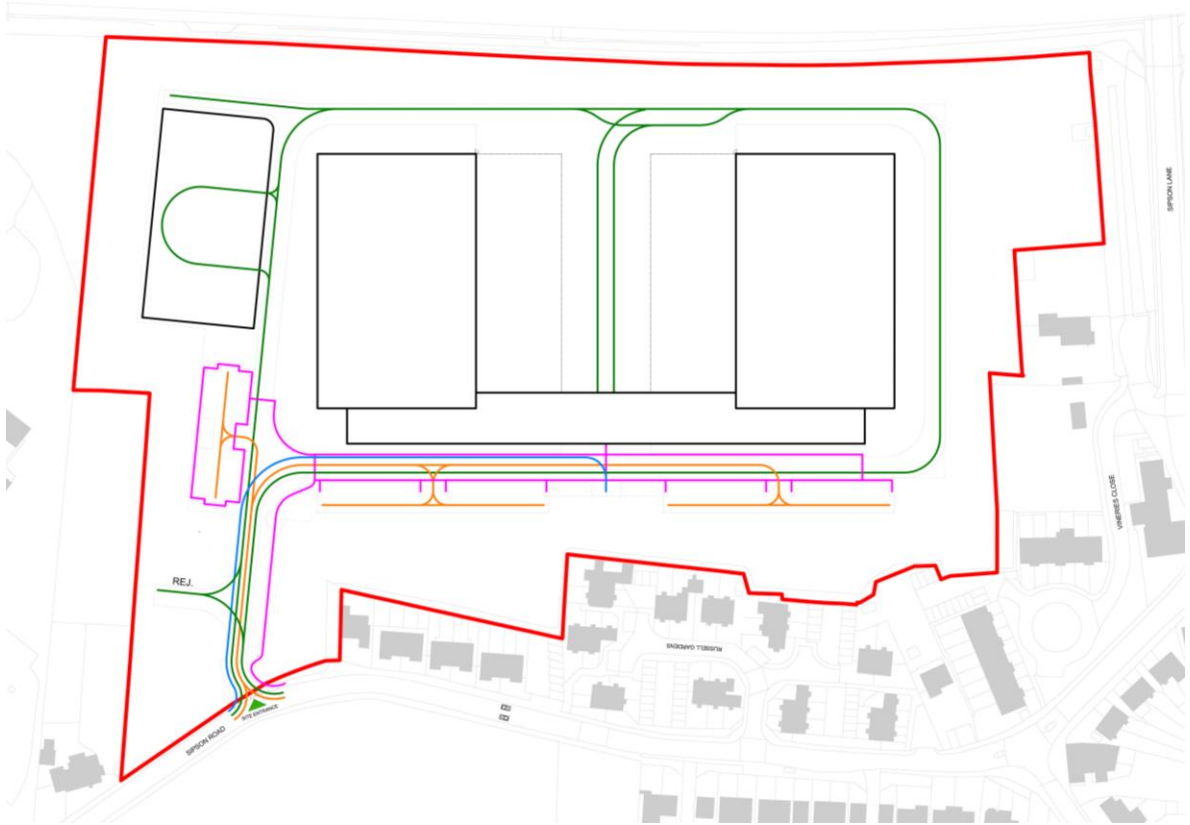
Cycle parking facilities will be provided adjacent to the main entrance areas to encourage sustainable modes of travel for staff and visitors.

Servicing and Deliveries
Dedicated loading and servicing facilities are incorporated within the development to accommodate routine maintenance activities, plant replacement and operational deliveries. Vehicle movements within the site have been designed to ensure safe circulation and efficient access to all operational areas.

Parking Provision
Car parking is located adjacent to the main building entrance and includes accessible parking spaces in accordance with relevant standards. Electric vehicle charging infrastructure will be incorporated to support low-emission transport and future operational requirements.

Emergency Access
Emergency vehicle access will be available via the main site entrance, with circulation routes designed to provide access around the building perimeter and to all critical operational infrastructure.

Inclusive Access
The development will be designed in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and Approved Document M of the Building Regulations. Step-free access will be provided to all principal entrances, with accessible sanitary facilities, lifts and parking spaces incorporated throughout the development. The site layout has been designed to ensure safe, inclusive and convenient access for all building users.



Landscape design shown is indicative only.

6.0 Access Strategy

6.2 Security Strategy

Security has been a fundamental consideration in the development of the proposed data centre and has informed the site layout, access arrangements and landscape design from the outset. The security strategy has been developed to provide an appropriate level of protection for critical digital infrastructure whilst maintaining a high-quality external environment.

1 **Site Entry**
Access to the site will be achieved via a single secure point of entry from Sipson Lane. The principal access arrangement has been developed to enable effective management and monitoring of all vehicular and pedestrian movements entering the site. The access road alignment, boundary treatments and landscape design have been considered to support security objectives whilst maintaining a high-quality arrival experience.

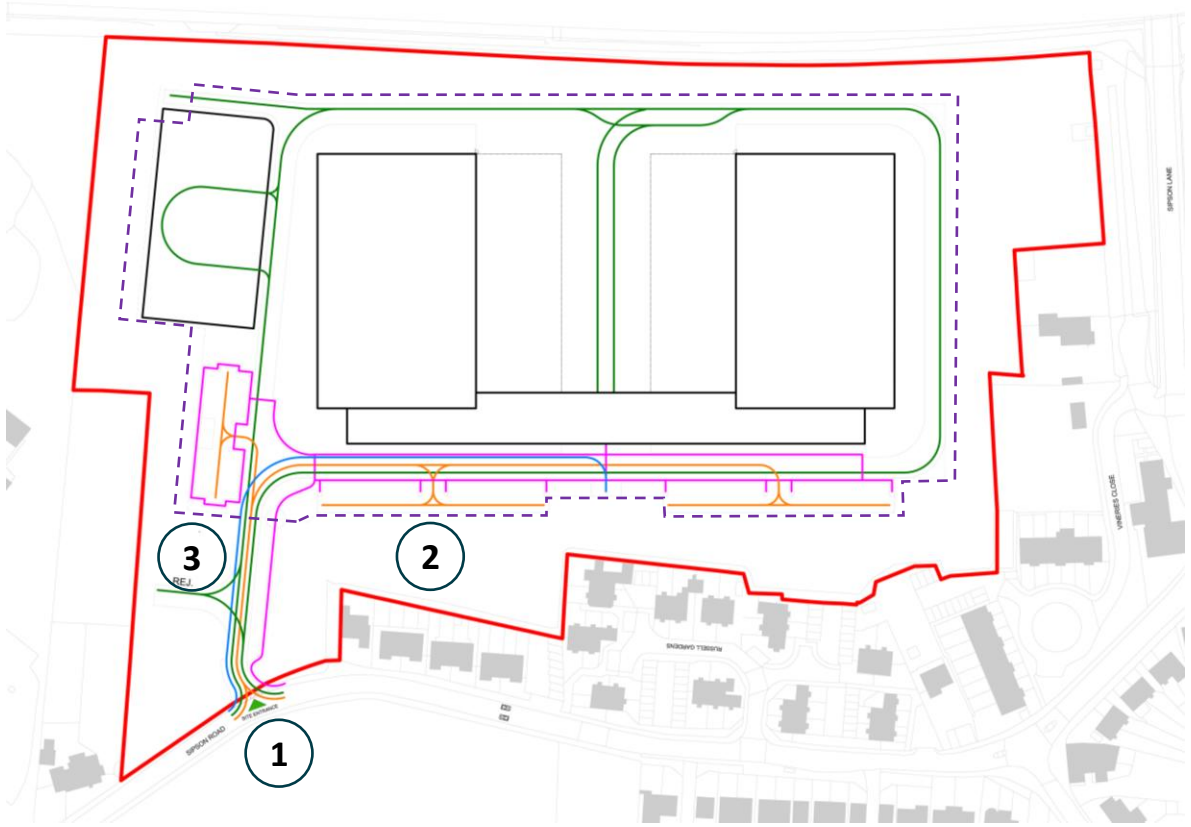
2 **Secure Perimeter**
A continuous security perimeter will be established around the site boundary, comprising security fencing, controlled access points and associated landscape buffers. The perimeter treatment will provide clear territorial definition and protect operational areas from unauthorised access. Detailed perimeter specifications and associated security infrastructure will be developed as part of the detailed design process.

3 **Operational Security**
Access to the facility will be controlled through secure vehicle and pedestrian entrances located at the primary site access point from Sipson Lane. Automated security gates, electronic access control systems and visitor management procedures will regulate access to authorised personnel, contractors and visitors.

A dedicated pedestrian entrance will be provided alongside the main vehicle access, incorporating controlled entry arrangements and secure access systems consistent with the operational requirements of the facility.

3 **Surveillance and Monitoring**
Comprehensive CCTV coverage will be provided across the site, including the main entrance, building perimeter, parking areas and critical infrastructure locations. Surveillance systems will be integrated with the site security management systems to provide continuous monitoring of operational and secure areas.

Appropriate security lighting will be incorporated throughout the development to support surveillance, safe movement around the site and operational activities while minimising impacts on neighbouring land uses and ecological receptors.



Landscape design shown is indicative only.

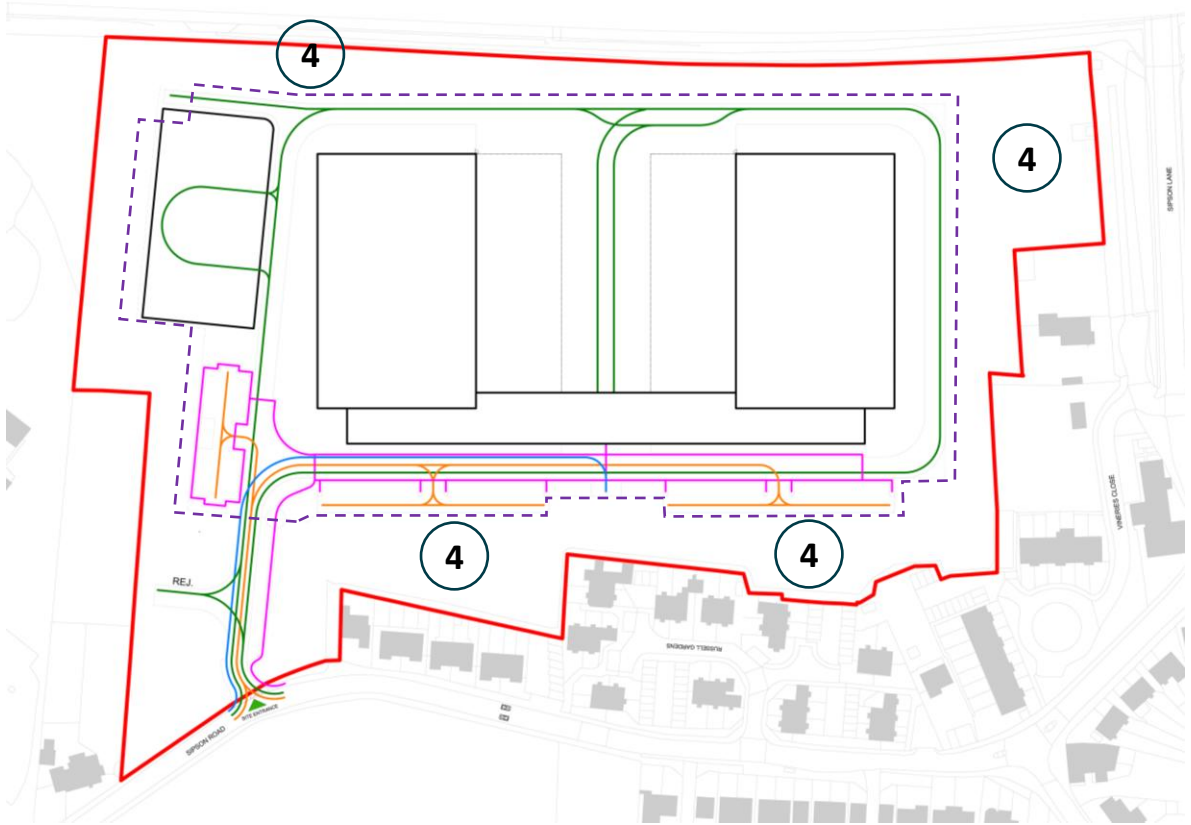
6.0 Access Strategy

6.2 Security Strategy

4

Natural Security

The proposed site benefits from a contained location and incorporates landscape design measures that contribute to the overall security strategy. Boundary planting, open sight lines and carefully managed circulation routes have been integrated into the masterplan to minimise concealed areas and support natural surveillance. The development has been designed in accordance with the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), ensuring that security considerations are embedded within the overall layout and landscape framework from the outset.



- Site Boundary
- Development Parcel
- Pedestrian Routes
- Cycling Routes
- Light Vehicle Routes
- Goods Vehicle Routes

Landscape design shown is indicative only.

7 Servicing and Maintenance Strategy

7.0 Servicing and Maintenance Strategy

The servicing and maintenance strategy has been developed to demonstrate that the proposed hyperscale data centre can operate efficiently throughout its lifecycle while ensuring safe access for servicing vehicles, maintenance personnel and specialist equipment. As this is an outline application with all matters reserved except access, the strategy establishes the principles for servicing and maintenance that will be refined during subsequent design stages.

Servicing Strategy

The development has been designed to accommodate regular servicing requirements associated with data centre operations, including deliveries, plant maintenance, equipment replacement, facilities management and waste collection activities. Vehicular access will be provided from Sipson Lane via the primary site entrance, enabling secure and controlled access to all operational areas.

An internal perimeter road network is proposed around the data centre buildings, providing access for maintenance vehicles, emergency services and operational traffic. The circulation route has been designed to facilitate safe vehicle manoeuvring throughout the site, allowing servicing activities to occur without impacting the day-to-day operation of the facility.

Dedicated service yards and loading areas are proposed adjacent to the central operational zone of the development, enabling the efficient delivery, installation and replacement of plant and equipment. Sufficient space will be maintained within these areas to accommodate specialist vehicles and operational requirements associated with the long-term management of the facility.

Plant and Equipment Maintenance

The data centre buildings and associated utility infrastructure have been arranged to enable safe and efficient access for routine inspection, servicing and maintenance activities. Mechanical and electrical plant, including cooling equipment, standby power infrastructure and associated utilities, will be located to allow maintenance to be undertaken with minimal disruption to operational activities.

Regular maintenance procedures will be undertaken in accordance with established operational protocols, ensuring continued resilience and reliability of the facility. Access routes around the buildings have been designed to facilitate both routine maintenance and periodic replacement of major plant components.

Major Equipment Replacement

Provision has been made within the site layout to facilitate the replacement of significant mechanical and electrical equipment throughout the operational life of the development. The central service yard and surrounding hardstanding areas provide suitable access and operational space for specialist lifting equipment and crane operations where required.

Large plant components, including generators, cooling equipment, transformers and associated infrastructure, can be delivered, removed and replaced using the site's internal servicing network. Detailed equipment replacement procedures will be developed as part of the operational management strategy for the facility.



8 Visualisation







9 Conclusion

8.0 Conclusion

The proposed development represents the transformation of a strategically located brownfield site into a data centre facilitythat will support the continued growth of the UK's digital infrastructure network.

The design has evolved through a comprehensive assessment of the site's opportunities and constraints, resulting in a development that balances operational functionality, security, sustainability and environmental integration. The proposed masterplan responds to its context through a landscape-led approach that incorporates substantial green infrastructure, biodiversity enhancements and sustainable drainage measures alongside critical digital infrastructure.

The building form, scale and architectural treatment have been carefully developed to create a coherent and contemporary identity while reducing visual impact and integrating with the surrounding landscape. The use of high-quality materials, varied façade treatments and extensive planting helps to break down the scale of the development and establish a strong sense of place.

The landscape strategy reinforces the site's green framework through extensive perimeter planting, ecological enhancements and habitat creation. These measures will contribute to biodiversity net gain, strengthen ecological connectivity and provide long-term environmental benefits for the site and its surroundings.

The proposed access, servicing and security arrangements have been designed to support the operational requirements of the facility while ensuring safe and inclusive access for employees, visitors, maintenance personnel and emergency services.

Overall, the proposed development delivers a sustainable, resilient and future-ready data centre facility that makes efficient use of previously developed land. Through the integration of high-quality architecture, landscape design and environmental measures, the scheme will create a significant digital infrastructure asset that contributes positively to the local area and supports the long-term growth of the UK’s digital economy.

