



**ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT  
VOLUME 1**

**THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS 2017**

**TO ACCOMPANY A FULL APPLICATION FOR:**

- 1. *Alterations and enlargement of existing service yard to provide additional spaces for car and van parking, new access point to van parking and dispatch area, new access to staff parking area;***
- 2. *Built development, comprising buildings and plant, associated with the proposed occupation of Ocado comprising: Vehicle Maintenance Unit (VMU); Technical Services Block (TSB); Vehicle Inspection Hub (VIH); Comms Container (CCR); Sprinkler Tanks and Pump House; Vehicle wash (with underground waste water tank) and Van Fuel Station (with canopy over); smoking and vaping shelter; compaction area (with canopy over) and cycle store;***
- 3. *Site fencing enclosure with electricity supply substation; standby generator; enclosed storage units and pallet stack;***
- 4. *Realignment of existing cycle and footpath between A41 and Site boundary with Wretchwick Green, including landscaping; and***
- 5. *Minor realignment of existing storm water drains and installation of storm water attenuation tanks.***

**AT  
UNIT B, SYMMETRY PARK, BICESTER**

**APPLICANT:  
TRITAX SYMMETRY (BICESTER REID) LTD**

**NOVEMBER 2020  
PF/10249**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Application

- 1.1.1 An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken on behalf of the Applicant Tritax Symmetry (Bicester Reid) Ltd, in relation to the alterations and extension of the services yard of Unit B, Symmetry Park, Bicester, to facilitate the operation of an Ocado distribution centre (Class Use B8) known as an Ocado Customer Fulfilment Centre (CFC). The extent of the Site is edged red on **(Appendix 1.1)**.
- 1.1.2 The Site forms part of an extant outline planning permission at Symmetry Park, Bicester (16/00861/HYBRID November 2016). The principle of development for employment (Class use B8) at the Site has been established through Planning Policy Bicester 12: South East Bicester strategic allocation of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1, and the extant planning permissions.
- 1.1.3 As some elements of the design for the recently completed Unit B fell outside of the Parameters Plan approved as part of the Hybrid planning permission, a full planning application was submitted in January 2018 (18/00091/F) and approved on the 12<sup>th</sup> July 2018.
- 1.1.4 The planning application included: 14,200m<sup>2</sup> of logistics Class B8 use and 105m<sup>2</sup> of B1 office space, together with external service yard, lorry parking, landscaping and a 10m green corridor with 3m footpath and cycle link to the wider Bicester 12 allocation, and associated drainage infrastructure. The planning application was approved on the 12<sup>th</sup> July 2018. Unit B, Symmetry Park, Bicester, and associated works have now been constructed and ready for occupation.
- 1.1.5 The EIA Hybrid application (16/00861/HYBRID) considered the whole Site as a single project, with effects considered for the combined Zones 1 and 2 to ensure that the full environmental effects of the development could be considered in the determination of the planning application.
- 1.1.6 An ES accompanied the 2018 full planning application for Unit B that assessed only those elements that fell outside of the approved Parameters Plan. This ES assesses proportionally the impact of the proposed changes to the service yard, associated works and the Ocado use on the baseline of the 2016 HYBRID planning application, and the changes to the Baseline as set out in the 2018 ES.
- 1.1.7 This ES has considered up-to-date environmental information being available, and whether there are any new or different likely significant effects arising from the Proposed Development, as a result of the following:
- Likely significant environmental impacts not identified in the 2016 ES. This particularly assesses the impact of new topics included on the EIA Regs 2017: Climate Change, Waste, Lighting and Human Health Effects.
  - Changes to the baseline condition identified for the environmental assessments undertaken for the 2016 ES.
  - Changes to planning policy, guidance, standards, etc; and
  - Change to committed major developments in the vicinity of the proposed development.

- 1.1.8 The EIA Regulations require the assessment to consider the likely significant effects of the Proposed Developments in the context of other local developments to come forward, as well as the cumulative effects that may result from the Proposed Developments and these other developments.
- 1.1.9 A review of local development projects that may come forward and would require to be assessed cumulatively with the Proposed Development has been undertaken. The following applications were identified the ‘*Erection of Hotel and conference facility with associated access, parking and landscaping, Buckingham Road, Bicester*’ (18/01253/F) part of the allocated site Bicester 8: Former RAF Bicester; and ‘*OS Parcel 2200 adjoining Oxford Road north of Promised Land Farm, Oxford Rd, Bicester – 14,972sqm of B1 employment-based buildings, plus a hotel (up to 149 bedrooms) with associated infrastructure, car parking and marketing boards*’ (16/02586/OUT) part of the allocated in Bicester 10: Bicester Gateway, and the planning approval for Unit C, Symmetry Park, Bicester approved in July 2019 (19/00388/F).
- 1.1.10 A planning application was submitted by Tritax Symmetry to Cherwell District Council on a parcel of land to the north east of Symmetry Park, Bicester Site for a DPD parcel distributions centre. The application was approved on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and is currently being built out.
- 1.1.11 The planning approvals included in 1.1.9 form part of allocated sites within the Cherwell Local Plan (2015) and were assessed as part of the 2016 HYBRID ES. This EIA considers that the DPD Parcel Distribution Centre currently under construction is unlikely to give rise to any significant environmental impacts.
- 1.1.12 The Environmental Statement has concluded that there will be no significant environmental effects that arise from the Proposed Development with regard to the following environmental considerations when assessed against the baseline established by planning permission (16/00861/HYBRID):
- Transport and Access;
  - Air Quality;
  - Noise and Vibration;
  - Ecology;
  - Flooding and the Water Environment;
  - Socio Economics;
  - Cultural Heritage;
  - Ground Conditions and Geology;
- 1.1.13 This ES has assessed the following additional environmental topics; climate change; human health; lighting; and waste included in the 2017 EIA Regulations that were not assessed in the 2016 HYBRID ES. The assessment has concluded that there will be no additional significant environmental effects that arise from the Proposed Development with regard to these topics.
- 1.1.14 The ES is structured as follows:

### **Volume 1 – Main Report**

**Section 1:** Provides an introduction and description of the Site and the surrounding area;

**Section 2:** Describes the scope of the Proposed Development;

**Section 3:** Planning Policy Context

**Section 3:** Describes the environmental impacts by topic

**Volume 2** – Figures and Technical Appendices

**Non-Technical Summary**

1.1.15 Table 1 below schedules the plans and documents that have been submitted in support of the planning application.

<b>Table 1: Schedule of Reports and Drawings</b>
Planning Statement
Environmental Statement Volume 1 Main Text
Environmental Statement Volume 2 Appendices  Appendix 1.1 Site Location Plan  Appendix 5.1 13411-HYD-XX-XX-RP-TP-5001-P05 Transport Assessment  Appendix 5.2 Air Quality Technical Note  Appendix 5.3 edp2606_r029-B-Ecology Technical Note  Appendix 5.4 edp2606_r030-E-Landscape Technical Note  Appendix 5.5 Drainage Technical Note P02
Environmental Statement Volume 3 Non- technical Summary
Schedule of all additional Ancillary buildings/ structures P2 (4036-BC)
<b>Drawings</b>
Dwg No: 4036-B10-101-P9 Application Red Line
Dwg no: 4036-B10-102-P3 Site Plan As Existing
Dwg no: 4036-B10-103-P8 Proposed Site Layout Plan
Dwg no: 4036-B10-104-P8 Symmetry Park Proposed Masterplan
Dwg no: 4036-B10-105-P7 Proposed Site Fencing, Gates and Access
Dwg no: 4036-B10-106-P6 Proposed Refuse Area
Dwg no: 4036-B10-107-P7 Proposed Cycle and Smoking Shelters
Dwg no: 4036-B10-108-P6 Proposed Vehicle Maintenance Unit (VMU)
Dwg no: 4036-B10-109-P6 Proposed Technical Services Block (TSB)
Dwg no: 4036-B10-110-P7 Proposed Vehicle Inspection Hut (VIH)
Dwg no: 4036-B10-111-P7 Proposed Comms Enclosures (CCR)
Dwg no: 4036-B10-112-P6 Proposed Sprinkler Tanks and Pump House

Dwg no: 4036-B10-113-P5 Proposed LGV Yard Tracking
Dwg no: 4036-B10-115-P9 Proposed Yard Layout - Detail Plan
Dwg no: 4036-B10-116-P5 Proposed Van Wash & Fuel Area Canopies
Dwg no: 4036-B10-200-P4 Site Sections
Dwg no: 19-096-EX-001 PL3 Lighting Plan
Symmetry Park Bicester Unit B External Luminaire Schedule (Rev C) 25-09-19
Dwg no: edp2606_d151---Detailed Landscape Design
Dwg no: C-13482-HYD-00-ZZ-DR-C-7000_P03 - Proposed drainage strategy Sheet 1 of 2
Dwg no: C-13482-HYD-00-ZZ-DR-C-7001_P03 - Proposed drainage strategy sheet 2 of 2

## 1.2 Project Team

1.2.1 This EIA has been undertaken by a project team comprising:

**Framptons:** EIA coordination, planning policy;

**Hydrock:** Air quality, noise and vibration; hydrology and flood risk; transport and access, and ground conditions and geology;

**The Environmental Dimension Partnership (EDP):** Ecology, landscape and visual, heritage, and agricultural land;

**pHp Architects:** Architects.



## 2.0 THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

### 2.1 The Site

- 2.1.1 The Site forms part of the approved Unit B and extends into the area of land identified as Unit C, Symmetry Park, Bicester employment site, located to the south east of Bicester. The Site lies within Ambrosden Parish Council. Unit B has been fully constructed, with the warehouse, service yard and 3m green corridor, and pedestrian and cycle path, being built out. No development other than ground contouring and the establishment of the landscape mound has been undertaken on the land identified for Unit C.
- 2.1.2 The application Site consists of the existing approved yard area extended to include a parcel of land to the west, together with the southern pedestrian access and front main vehicle access. To the south of the Site is the approved landscaped area within the employment park and the A41 beyond. Immediately to the north is land included within the wider Wretchwick Green strategic allocation, which has a resolution to grant planning permission subject to a S106 agreement (16/01268/OUT). The land contiguous with the Site's northern boundary is designated for employment use within the Wretchwick Green Masterplan.
- 2.1.3 Contiguous with the existing yards western boundary is the remaining land included within the 2016 Hybrid planning approval. A planning approval was granted in July 2019 for a single unit, known as Unit C on this parcel of land (19/00388/F). The proposed changes to the yard to serve Unit B, subject of this planning application, means that the approved scheme for Unit C cannot be undertaken in accordance with the existing planning permission.
- 2.1.4 A further planning application is being prepared for 2 smaller Units (Unit C1 and C2) on the remainder of the land (accommodating the approved Unit C) after the land take for the extended yard for Unit B. The revised Unit C1 and C2 will ensure that the proposed changes to the yard of Unit B, and the additional units can be delivered. The planning application for Units C1 and C2 will be submitted shortly.
- 2.1.5 To the west beyond the approved Unit C site, is a pair of two storey cottages, Wretchwick Farm Cottages, and approximately 400m the north of the Site, is Little Wretchwick Farm and associated farm buildings.
- 2.1.6 The Site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1, the lowest probability flood zone, where there is a lower than 0.1% annual probability of fluvial flooding. The Environment Agency (EA) Surface Water Flood Map indicates that the eastern part of the Site is subject to a medium to high likelihood of surface water flooding.
- 2.1.7 There are no designated heritage assets within the Site; within 1 km of the Site there is one scheduled monument and four listed buildings. These comprise:
- The scheduled monument of Wretchwick deserted medieval village 0.7km to the northwest of the Site;
  - Two Grade II listed buildings at Wretchwick Farm 100m to the southwest of the Site and on the opposite side of the A41, and
  - Two Grade II listed buildings, Wretchwick Lodge 0.8km to the northwest of the Site and Blackthorn Hill windmill 0.7km to the south east.

2.1.8 A planning application was submitted by Tritax Symmetry to Cherwell District Council on a parcel of land to the north east of Symmetry Park, Bicester Site for a DPD Parcel Distributions Centre. The application was approved on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and is currently being built out.

## 2.2 Environmental Setting

2.2.1 The landscape at and around the Site is not subject to any landscape designations. The character area falls within the 'The Character of England: Landscape, Wildlife and Natural Features' (Natural England). The Site falls within National Character Area (NCA) Profile 108 Upper Thames Clay Vales.

2.2.2 The Site is not within 10km of any internationally designated sites for nature conservation. The nearest statutory designated site is a seasonally waterlogged hay meadow and pasture - Arncott Bridge Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) - 2km to the southeast and there are a further two areas within 5km. These are the site of geological interest, Stratton Audley Quarries, 4.3km north and alluvial meadow grassland, Long Herdon Meadow, 4.6km east of the Site adjacent to the River Ray.

2.2.3 The nearest non-statutory designated wildlife site, Meadows NW of Blackthorn Hill Local Wildlife Site, is approximately 400m to the northeast, and comprises 21.9 ha of lowland ridge and furrow meadow supporting Red-list farmland bird species.

2.2.4 The Site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1, the lowest probability flood zone, where there is a lower than 0.1% annual probability of fluvial flooding. The Environment Agency (EA) Surface Water Flood Map indicates that the eastern part of the Site (already developed) is subject to a medium to high likelihood of surface water flooding.

2.2.5 The nearest CDC Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) is in Sheep Street located in the centre of Bicester, c2.5km away as the crow flies.

2.2.6 The main source of noise is vehicular movement on the A41.

2.2.7 There are no designated heritage assets within the Site. Within 1 km of the Site there is one scheduled monument and four listed buildings. These comprise:

- The scheduled monument of Wretchwick deserted medieval village 0.7km to the northwest of the Site;
- Two Grade II listed buildings at Wretchwick Farm 100m to the southwest of the Site and on the opposite side of the A41, and
- Two Grade II listed buildings, Wretchwick Lodge 0.8km to the northwest of the Site and Blackthorn Hill windmill 0.7km to the south east.

### 3.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1.1 A summary of the local and national planning policy against which the Proposed Development will be determined is set out within the Planning Statement accompanying the planning application. There has been no material change in local planning policy since the 2016 ES.
- 3.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) replaces the published NPPF in March 2012, and includes minor clarifications to the revised version published in July 2018. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied.
- 3.1.3 Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 explains that there are three objectives associated with sustainable development; economic, social and environmental. These three objectives are 'interdependent' and to be pursued in 'mutually supportive ways'.
- 3.1.4 Section 6 sets out the policy for '*building a strong, competitive economy*' and paragraph 80 has introduced the weight (significant weight) that should be placed on '*the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and other opportunities for development*'
- 3.1.5 Paragraph 20 states that strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for housing, employment, retail, leisure and other uses.
- 3.1.6 The Framework is to be read as a whole. The national planning policy relevant to this ES in the following sections:
- Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport;
  - Section 11 – Making effective use of land;
  - Section 12 – Achieving well designed places;
  - Section 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change;
  - Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment; and,
  - Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

#### 4.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1.1 Ocado is an online super market. Ocado now seek to operate one of its Customer Fulfilment Centre (CFC) in Unit B, Symmetry Park, Bicester. The constructed logistics building (Unit B) will receive chilled and ambient temperature goods, where they will be stored. Personal Shoppers will ‘pick’ goods, according to customers online shopping lists, the goods will then be delivered by one of Ocado’s refrigerated vans to their home.
- 4.1.2 Ocado is a 24-hour operation. Customers complete their online shopping list and are given a 1-hour delivery time from 6am to 11pm, 7 days a week. Customers can place an order anytime from 21 days ahead to the day before delivery, with some customers living close to the Site being offered same day delivery. The CFC will operate over a drive time radius of 1.5hrs, with deliveries being made via 3.5t Mercedes Sprinter vans.
- 4.1.3 The Bicester Ocado operation will employ 900 full time members of staff, including office staff, production staff (Personal Shoppers), inbound (warehouse) staff and drivers (Customer Service Team Members). Items are delivered to the Unit and received by the inbound warehouse staff who then store the items in the warehouse. Deliveries to the unit by HGV lorries occur over a 24-hour period.
- 4.1.4 The Personal Shoppers are aided by robotics that pick items to ‘give’ to the Personal Shoppers, who then transfer to the individual customer shopping box. In essence, the Personal Shoppers hand pick all the items. The efficiency of the operation is heavily dependent upon highly automated retrieval systems for the assembly of orders. Once the individual customer shopping box is complete, it is the transferred to an Ocado refrigerated van and a Customer Service Team Member delivers the goods to the customer. Table 1 below sets out shift patterns

<b>Staff</b>	<b>Shift Times</b>	<b>No of Shifts</b>
Office staff	09:00-17:00	Single shift
Production staff (Personal Shoppers)	06:00-15:00 & 20:30-06:00	2 x shifts
Inbound staff (warehouse)	06:00-14:00 14:00 – 22:00 22:00 – 06:00	3 x shifts
Drivers (Customer Service Team Member)	06:00-16:00 & 14:00-00:00	2 x shifts

- 4.1.5 The Ocado use requires the approved yard to be altered and extended; the works consists of:
- Extension of the existing yard to the west, which will accommodate the staff car park and internal ‘street’ for deliveries to access and egress;
  - 1 x new staff vehicular access and egress, with barriers off Morrell Way leading into the car park area enclosed by internal fencing;
  - 1 x new van vehicle access and egress, with barriers off Morrell Way leading to a vehicle wash, fuel station and onto a vehicle inspection area prior to movement into the main distribution area of the yard;
  - Barriers installed to the existing main access;
  - Boundary and internal fencing and 3 x set of turnstiles for staff access;

- There will be minor realignment of the storm water drains and additional attenuation tanks.

4.1.6 Table 3 schedules the proposed car/lorry and cycle parking provision.

<b>Table 3: Car, Van and Cycle spaces</b>			
<b>Staff/Visitor Car Parking Spaces</b>	Front of Unit (existing)	83	
	Disabled	7	
	Elec charging	12	
	<b>Total front (existing)</b>	<b>102</b>	
	Rear of Unit (additional)	4	
	Disabled	8	
	Elec charging	<b>119</b>	
	<b>Total rear (additional)</b>	<b>221</b>	
<b>Bicycle spaces</b>	Front of Unit (existing)	52	
	Rear of Unit (additional)	32	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	

- 4.1.7 The layout plan (Dwg no: 4036-B10-103 -P7) includes locations for mechanical plant. At this stage of the design it is not possible to include details and specification of all the plant such as the stand-by generator, refrigeration equipment and the CCR. If required by the Council, further detail can be submitted at a later date, when available
- 4.1.8 The site wide masterplan (Dwg no: 4036-B10-104-P7 Symmetry Park Proposed Masterplan) shows the relationship between the extended yard, subject of this planning application, and the proposed layout for the remaining undeveloped parcel of land, which will accommodate 2 logistics units, C1 and C2 and associate infrastructure. A planning application for Units C1 and C2 will be submitted shortly.
- 4.1.9 It is Ocado's strategy to be carbon neutral by 2030. A major hurdle for OCADO in achieving this will be the replacement of its fleet of vans from petrol/diesel fuel to electric power. In the current market, there are not a sufficient number of electrical refrigerated vehicles coming forward with the distance range that is required. In the interim, while the market catches up with demand, OCADO will be investing in replacing its diesel vehicles with petrol/hybrids

## 5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES WHICH DO NOT HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO GIVE RISE TO SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

### 5.1 Transport and Access

- 5.1.1 The ES is accompanied by a Transport Assessment (TA) (**Appendix 5.1**). The TA concludes that the application is in a sustainable location with good access to bus and rail facilities.
- 5.1.2 As the Ocado use is 24-hour, the TA includes an assessment of the trip generation based on the known requirements of other Ocado sites. The TA concluded that the proposed Ocado use will generate 43 more two-way trips at AM and 39 two-way trips at the PM peak times, above that included in the trip generation for whole of employment site.
- 5.1.3 Further assessments on the local highway junctions of the impact of this increase in trips concluded that the highway network has capacity to accommodate this uplift.
- 5.1.4 The level of car parking reflects the staff levels and shift patterns and allows for an overlap of staff finishing and those starting their shift and those on split shifts, as shown in Table 2. The layout of the car parking and pedestrian access routes across the Site facilitate safe vehicle and pedestrian movements.
- 5.1.5 Each Ocado customer spends on average just over £100 per delivery. Customers will be required to drive to and from a supermarket to facilitate that scale of order. Ocado delivery vans leaving the site, deliver approximately 20 customer drops per route. The proposed Ocado use will contribute to sustainable development and complies with both local and national planning policies relating to transport.
- 5.1.6 In summary, the Proposed Development will not result in any significant environmental effects with regard to traffic generations and effects on the local highway network.

### 5.2 Air Quality

- 5.2.1 The Environmental Statement submitted with the Hybrid scheme (16/00861/HYBRID) assessed the likely air quality impacts for the symmetry park scheme Zone 1 and 2. Air quality pollutants can be as a result of emissions from traffic generation and from construction.
- 5.2.2 The Air Quality Technical Note (**Appendix 5.2**) that has assessed the likely effect of the Proposed Development on the local air quality confirmed that the increase in traffic will have a negligible impact on the concentration of NO<sub>2</sub><sup>and</sup> will not exceed the national air quality objectives.
- 5.2.3 The approved Unit B and the service yard has been built out. The construction phase air quality conclusion included in the 2016 HYBRID ES stated that the increases in NO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>20</sub> were negligible. The small scale of the yard extension and the proposed works is unlikely to have a significant effect in terms of dust and air quality.
- 5.2.4 In summary, the Proposed Development will not result in any significant environmental effects with regard to air quality.

### 5.3 Noise and Vibration

- 5.3.1 The Environmental Statement submitted with the Hybrid scheme (16/00861/HYBRID) assessed the likely noise and vibration impacts for the symmetry park scheme Zone 1 and 2. It is not anticipated that the scale and nature of the engineering works will result in significant impacts during the construction phase.
- 5.3.2 Noise can be generated by increases in traffic movements, activities taking place on the Site, and noise from plant. The TA has confirmed that there will be a minimal increase in traffic movements at peak times, when compared to the approved scheme. It is unlikely that the proposed changes to the yard will generate any significant noise levels.
- 5.3.3 The grant of planning approval for Unit B (18/00091/F) imposed Condition 12 relating to noise. It is anticipated that the same condition will be imposed on any grant of planning approval for the works to the yards.
- 5.3.4 Condition 12 states that *Cumulative noise output from any mechanical ventilation or fixed plant associated with the development shall be noise attenuated or mitigated so that it achieves the following level at 1m from the nearest receptors (listed below):*
- a) Daytime (0.700-23.00)*
    - i) Wretchwick Farm Cottages and Wretchwick Farm: 43dB LAeq*
    - ii) Little Wretchwick Farm: 34dB LAeq*
  - b) Night time (23.00-07.00)*
    - i) Wretchwick Farm Cottages and Wretchwick farm: 31dB LAeq*
    - ii) Little Wretchwick Farm: 28dB LAe*
- 5.3.5 It is anticipated that any approval for the works to the service yard and the Ocado use will have such a planning condition to control noise as above.
- 5.3.6 The Site is located between the proposed Unit C1 and C2 (subject of a separate planning application, with C1 already having planning consent) to the west and occupied Units A1 and A2 to the east. A Noise Survey that accompanies the planning application as a stand-alone report confirms that the Ocado operation can be brought forward without any adverse impacts due to noise to neighbouring occupiers.
- 5.3.7 The Proposed Development will not result in any significant environmental effects with regard to noise and vibration.

### 5.4 Ecology

- 5.4.1 A Technical Note (**Appendix 5.3**) accompanies this ES, that was prepared following a site visit by an EDP Ecologist in November 2020. The impact of the Proposed Development on the ecological value of the Site is limited to the extension of the service yard along the Sites western boundary, which currently supports a narrow strip of wildflower grassland of low ecological value along with recently planted young trees.
- 5.4.2 A Biodiversity Method Statement and Management Plan was submitted with the original 2016 HYBRID planning application that included mitigation measures to protect the ecological value of the wider site during construction, together with a range of new proposed habitats to provide appropriate enhancements to the local biodiversity.

5.4.3 The Proposed Development would not result in any additional significant ecological effect beyond those already assessed and mitigated for.

## 5.5 Flooding and the Water Environment

5.5.1 The Environmental Statement submitted with the Hybrid scheme (16/00861/HYBRID) assessed the likely water resource impacts for the symmetry park scheme Zone 1 and 2. The Drainage Technical Notes (**Appendix 5.5**) confirms that the proposed changes to yard and the Ocado use will have no material impact upon flood risk or water pollution controls.

5.5.2 The Proposed Development will not result in any significant environmental effects with regard to flooding and the water environment.

## 5.6 Cultural Heritage

5.6.1 The Environmental Statements (ES) relating the Site's existing planning permissions (Refs: 16/00861/HYBRID and 18/00091/F) assessed the likely archaeological and heritage impacts for the symmetry park scheme Zone 1 and 2, including both the potential for direct impacts on assets within the Site and indirect impacts on assets outside the Site, as a result of changes to their setting. This ES chapter has been updated in light of the proposed reconfiguration of the yard and the addition of new built form.

5.6.2 The original ES, for the hybrid planning permission (16/00861/HYBRID), was based on an *Archaeological and Heritage Assessment* (EDP, 2016), which incorporated the results of archaeological geophysical survey of the hybrid planning permission site (submitted as Appendix H1 to the original ES).

5.6.3 In terms of direct effects on archaeological remains, two archaeological conditions were imposed on the hybrid planning permission: Condition 39, requiring the agreement of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological works; and Condition 40, requiring a programme of archaeological evaluation, investigation and recording on the hybrid planning permission site.

5.6.4 Pursuant to this, a trial trench archaeological evaluation of the site was undertaken according to a WSI agreed with the Oxfordshire County Archaeology Service (OCAS), acting on behalf of the LPA. The evaluation identified two areas of Roman activity within the overall symmetry park, although the central part of symmetry park containing Unit B, which includes of the Site for the purposes of this application - was largely devoid of archaeological interest. The evaluation therefore confirmed the low archaeological value of remains within Symmetry Park and that there are no likely significant effects on archaeological remains.

5.6.5 It was consequently agreed that no further archaeological mitigation was required within the Unit B area; although a programme of archaeological investigation, comprising the archaeologically controlled stripping of the site, detailed hand investigation and recording of archaeological features; was undertaken within Unit C1 and C2, according to a WSI agreed with OCAS. This identified the remains of a Roman vineyard, the extent of which was more or less contained within Unit C1 and Unit C2 (and apparently extending outside the Unit B and Unit C) The report on this archaeological investigation (Ref. MK 141/18; CFA Archaeology, 2018) has been approved by OCAS and submitted to CDC to secure the partial discharge of Condition 40; full discharge pending the submission of a publication to the journal *Oxonien*, the contents of which have also been agreed with OCAS. The results of the completed



archaeological investigation, and the nature of current proposals, do not change the conclusions of the approved ES chapters and no further archaeological work is required.

- 5.6.6 With regard to the potential for effects on off-site heritage assets, the former ES chapters found no likely significant effects of the proposed development on designated heritage assets. The *Archaeological and Heritage Assessment* considered the potential for impacts on the heritage significance of off-site heritage assets, as a result of changes to their setting, in detail. In particular, the assessment considered potential impacts on the *Wretchwick deserted medieval village* (SM 1015549), which lies 800m to the north-west of the site. The assessment concluded that some effect would be caused as a result of views of the proposed development through gaps in the surrounding vegetation, namely along the PRow adjacent to the monument. However, it further concluded that the effect would be minimal, resulting in a very low level of harm and that this would be temporary, owing both to proposed planting measures and the allocation and development of the intervening land. Consequently, it was judged that there would be no permanent harm to the heritage significance of the monument.
- 5.6.7 The assessment and former ES chapters also considered the character of intervening land to the east of the Site, which is set to change from open agricultural land to suburban development as a result of its allocation, notwithstanding any proposed buffer zone. Intervening residential development of just two stories (or less), would be expected to entirely screen the Proposed Development.
- 5.6.8 Therefore, the conclusion reached was that while the Proposed Development would temporarily be seen as part of the experience of the setting of the scheduled monument, it is judged to have little bearing on its setting, where it would not be entirely out of character with, and at a far greater distance than, other modern elements currently seen as part of the experience of the monument. It was judged that this would have no effect on the primary archaeological and associative heritage interests of the monument.
- 5.6.9 This current ES chapter also considers the findings of the Landscape and Visual Note on the current proposals (Doc. ref. edp2606\_r030b; EDP, 2019). This finds that alterations to the landscape mitigation measures at the southern boundary as part of current proposals would be barely perceptible and generally only perceived from the site boundary (illustrated by Photoviewpoint EDP 6; Appendix EDP 4 to the above cited document) and largely limited to the immediate setting of the site adjacent to the A41. With the consideration of mitigation measures already delivered within the site, the proposed development would not be considered to result in and fundamental changes to those views relevant to *Wretchwick deserted medieval village*, and the changes proposed would be barely perceptible in these views.
- 5.6.10 The findings of the approved ES chapters (16/00861/HYBRID and 18/00091/F) therefore stand: The effect on the experience of the scheduled monument as a result of current proposals would be minimal, resulting in a very low level of harm, which would not be EIA significant. The effect will also be temporary, owing both to proposed planting measures and the allocation and development of the intervening land; consequently, it is judged that there will be no permanent harm to the heritage significance of the monument.
- 5.6.11 For archaeology, a trial trench archaeological evaluation of the Site did not identify any potential for significant archaeological remains within it and, subsequently the Unit B area, of which the Site is a part, was omitted from further archaeological mitigation. Archaeological excavation of the adjacent Unit C1 and C2 areas to the west did not suggest that archaeological remains associated with Roman vineyards extended eastwards into the

Site. As such, it is not considered that any further archaeological mitigation would be required within the Site prior to the implementation of the proposed development.

5.6.12 In summary, no significant environmental effects will arise with regards to archaeology and heritage considerations.

## 5.7 Ground Conditions and Geology

5.7.1 The Environmental Statement submitted with the Hybrid scheme (16/00861/HYBRID) assessed the likely ground conditions and geology impacts for the symmetry park scheme Zone 1 and 2. The proposed extension to the yards will have no effect on ground conditions and geology and will give rise to no significant environmental effects.

5.7.2 The Proposed Development would not result in any additional significant ground conditions and geology effects beyond those already assessed and mitigated for.

## 5.8 Landscape and Visual

5.8.1 A Landscape Technical Note underpins the finding of the ES (**Appendix 5.4**). In order to review the landscape baseline EDP undertook a further field assessment and photographic survey of the character and fabric of the site and the surroundings.

5.8.2 EDP confirmed that there were no additional visual receptors identified other than those included in the approved 18/0091/F ES, as such these viewpoints have been retained and used in this further assessment. A review of the previous viewpoint assessment included in the approved 2016 HYBRID and the 2018 application, concluded that the Proposed Development would not give rise to any additional effects to those previously stated, and there would be no material effect upon the existing baseline conditions.

5.8.3 Being smaller in scale to the main warehouse units, the extension of the yard and the additional buildings would result in some intervisibility with the immediate surroundings, but would be barely perceptible in local views, with the main focus being the larger units.

5.8.4 The likelihood of these views of the additional buildings set within the yard would be mitigated by the measures delivered as part of the consented Unit B scheme (18/0091/F) that serve to *'partially buffer the Proposed Development and assimilate it into the existing landscape'* as set out in the baseline of the 2016 HYBRIS ES.

5.8.5 The changes required to the landscaping provision are restricted to the loss of the small slither of landscaping to the southern boundary a result of the new fence and maintenance access; the relocation of a break in the hedgerow to realign the green corridor and pedestrian/cycle way that runs north-south across the Site, together with the relocation of trees that line the current green corridor.

5.8.6 Trees planted at a higher density at the start of the green corridor and pedestrian/cycle way at the Junction with the A14, together with the extension of the landscape bund at this location, will further mitigate impact of the Proposed Development.

5.8.7 The Proposed Development will not give rise to any additional or significant environmental effects with regards to landscape and visual impact.

## 5.9 Climate Change

5.9.1 The 2016 HYBRID and the 2018 full planning applications did not include the impact of climate change in the accompanying ES. A proportionate assessment has been undertaken on the impact the proposed works to the service yard and the Ocado use will have on climate change. The following issue have been identified:

- Traffic generation
- Drainage and Flooding

5.9.2 The Transport Statement (**Appendix 5.1**) confirms that the proposed changes to yard and the Ocado use will have a negligible effect upon traffic generation and potential for any increase in NO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

5.9.3 The Drainage Technical Note (**Appendix 5.5**) confirms that the proposed changes to yard and the Ocado use will have no material impact upon flood risk considerations.

5.9.4 It is considered that the potential effects on climate change during the construction phase will be temporary. In response to Condition 19 of the Hybrid application, a Construction Management Plan has been produced and agreed with CDC.

5.9.5 The plan sets out measures during the construction phase to manage and minimise impacts, and include; construction traffic management, dust strategy, noise strategy, vibration strategy, storage of materials, waste management, site environmental controls, pollution prevention and ecology protection.

5.9.6 The Proposed Development will not give rise to any additional or significant environmental effects with regards to climate change.

## 5.10 Human Health

5.10.1 The 2016 HYBRID and the 2018 full planning applications did not include the impact of climate change in the accompanying ES. A proportionate assessment has been undertaken on the impact the proposed works to the service yard and the Ocado use will have on human health. The following issue have been identified:

- Air Quality
- Noise

5.10.2 The Air Quality Technical Note (**Appendix 5.2**) has confirmed that the increase in traffic will have a negligible impact on the concentration of NO<sub>2</sub><sup>and</sup> will not exceed the national air quality objectives.

5.10.3 Noise can be generated by increases in traffic movements, activities taking place on the site, and noise from plant. The TA has confirmed that there will be minimal increase in traffic movements, into, around the site, and out again and therefore will not generate any significant noise levels, above existing. It is anticipated that any grant of planning permission will include a condition to control noise levels at sensitive receptors, such as nearby residential land uses.

5.10.4 The Proposed Development will not give rise to any additional or significant environmental effects with regards to human health.

## **5.11 Lighting**

- 5.11.1 The ES that accompanied the 2018 full planning applications assessed the potential effect of lighting on the surrounding area and concluded that the lighting effects arising as a result of the proposed development are no different to the residual impacts discussed in the approved Environmental Statement (16/00861/HYBRID).
- 5.11.2 The planning application is accompanied by a Lighting Layout (Dwg no: 19-096-EX-001 External lighting (002) and a full specification of the light fittings to be used. The light fittings have been chosen to deliver the appropriate light levels for the tasks across the Site, and designed to avoid the potential for light pollution. The illumination plot drawing demonstrates that the lighting of the Site will not cause any adverse impacts to neighbouring occupiers.

## **5.12 Waste**

- 5.12.1 The 2016 HYBRID and the 2018 full planning applications did not include the impact of waste in the accompanying ES. It is not considered that the proposed Class B8 use will generate any significant amounts or types of waste in either the construction or operational phase of the development. An onsite waste management plan will be implemented, which will minimise the quantity of waste that will be disposed of to landfill. Waste will be handled and disposed of in a way that prevents negative impacts such as water pollution, odour nuisance or hygiene issues.
- 5.12.2 The Proposed Development will not give rise to any additional or significant environmental effects with regards to waste.

## **5.13 Summary**

- 5.13.1 When assessed against the current baseline conditions, the proposed development would not increase the predicted residual significant effects to those found within the approved ES (16/00861/HYBRID) or those found in the approved ES (18/00019/F).
- 5.13.2 With consideration of the current baseline conditions, which includes newly built forms within Zone 1, Units a1 and A2, and Zone 2 Unit B and new landscape features that positively contribute to the wider landscape resource, the proposed development would not be considered to be a new element in views from the local context. As such, there would be no additional significant effects as a result of the proposed development.

## **6.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES WHICH DO HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO GIVE RISE TO SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS**

### **6.1 Socio Economic**

6.1.1 The proposed extension and alterations to the yard together with the other associated works will create jobs at both the construction and operational phases. The small-scale nature of the construction works will result in a similar scale of jobs during the construction phase.

6.1.2 At the operational phase Ocado will create 900 FTE jobs. The generation of 900 jobs for the local community will give rise to a significant beneficial impact.

## **7.0 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS**

7.1.1 As established in the above sections, there will be no adverse significant impacts due to the proposed engineering and associated works to the service yard. There will be a significant beneficial impact arising from the Ocado operation of the units. It is concluded that, overall, there will be no cumulative impacts from the Proposed Development.