



TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

COMBINED PLANNING AND DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

TO ACCOMPANY A FULL PLANNING 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 building 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

SYMMETRY PARK, BICESTER

APPLICANT:

TRITAX SYMMETRY (BICESTER REID) LTD

NOVEMBER 2020

PF10249

This page has been left blank intentionally.

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 The Site and its Context
- 3.0 The Proposed Development
- 4.0 Relevant Planning Policy
- 5.0 Planning Assessment
- 6.0 Design & Access
- 7.0 Conclusion

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Site Location Plan

Appendix 2: Schedule of all additional Ancillary Buildings/Structures

TABLES

Table 1: Schedule of Reports and Drawings

Table 2: Shift Patterns

Table 3: Car, Van and Cycle spaces

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Symmetry Park, Bicester, extends to 16.42ha and was granted outline planning permission in 2016 (16/00861/HYBRID) for 62,709m² of Class Use B8 floorspace, with ancillary B1(c) floor space. The majority of Symmetry Park has now been constructed, with Units A1 and A2 occupied by Bentley Designs and Medline Services respectively, and Unit B complete and ready for occupation. The remaining land to the west of Unit B, accommodating Unit C was granted planning permission in July 2019 (19/00388/F) for 30,043m² of logistics floor space.
- 1.2 The extent of the application site area is edged red on the attached **Appendix 1** (the Site). The Site forms part of an extant outline planning permission at Symmetry Park, Bicester (16/00861/HYBRID November 2016). The principle of development 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.
- 1.3 The Site is located within land that is part of the outline planning permission (Zone 2) referred to as Unit B, Symmetry Park, that was granted full planning permission in January 2018 (Planning Ref: 18/00091/F)¹ and partly within the area of land shown for Unit C subject of Planning Permission 19/00388/F. In accordance with the approved plans, Unit B and associated works have been built out.
- 1.4 Ocado was established in the UK in 2000 and listed on the London Stock Exchange in July 2010 and is the world's largest dedicated online grocery retailer with over 1.5 million shopping customers. Ocado now seek to operate one of its Customer Fulfilment Centres from Unit B.
- 1.5 To facilitate the Ocado operation, changes are required to the yard area approved for Unit B under planning ref 18/00091/F. The application is for the engineering and building works required as a result of the extension and alterations to the yard area, and associated works. The description of the development is as follows:
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 building 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.*

¹ Full planning permission was required as elements of the design fell outside the approved Parameters Plan of the 2016 HYBRID approval.

- 1.6 The purpose of this Planning Statement, as an overarching document, is to explain the planning background of the proposals for the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and the surrounding community, and to consider the national, and local planning policy framework within which the application will be assessed.
- 1.7 The Ocado use requires minor alterations to the north-west and south-west elevations of Unit B. These alterations are not included in this planning application and will be subject to a separate Non- Material Amendment application.
- 1.8 An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) assessed the environmental effects of the Hybrid application (16/00861/HYBRID). To ensure that the full environmental effects of the development could be considered in the determination of the planning application, the EIA considered the whole Site as a single project. An ES accompanied the 2016 HYBRID planning application.
- 1.9 An ES accompanied the 2018 full planning application for Unit B that assessed only those elements that fell outside of the approved Parameters Plan. An ES accompanies this planning application and assesses proportionally the impact of the proposed changes to the service yard and associated works on the baseline of the 2016 HYBRID planning application, and the changes to the Baseline as set out in the 2018 ES.
- 1.10 The ES has concluded that the proposed changes to the yard and the Ocado operation will not give rise to any significant environmental effects when assessed against the topics included in the baseline established by planning permission (16/00861/HYBRID), and those further topics that required assessment under the EIA Regulations 2017.
- 1.11 The planning application is supported by the following plans and Technical Notes:

Table 1: Schedule of Reports and Drawings
Planning Statement
Environmental Statement Volume 1 Main Text
Environmental Statement Volume 2 Appendices
Appendix 1.1 Site Location Plan
Appendix 5.1 Transport Assessment
Appendix 5.2 Air Quality Technical Note
Appendix 5.3 Ecology Technical Note
Appendix 5.4 Landscape Technical Note (Including Landscape Plans)
Appendix 5.5 Drainage Technical Note
Environmental Statement Volume 3 Non- technical Summary
Schedule of all additional Ancillary buildings/ structures P2 (4036-BC)
Drawings
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
Symmetry Park Bicester Unit B External Luminaire Schedule (Rev C) 25-09-19
Dwg no: 19-096-EX-001 PL3 Lighting Plan
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

2.0 THE SITE AND ITS CONTEXT

2.0 The Site is located within Unit B and part of Unit C of the approved Symmetry Park, Bicester employment site, located to the south east of Bicester. The Site lies within the administrative area of Ambrosden Parish Council.

2.1 The 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 west 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 Bicester 12 strategic allocation, known as Wretchwick Green 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

2.2 Adjoining the existing yard's 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 remaining parcel of land. 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.

2.3 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.

2.4 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 A4; 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.

2.5 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 5th June 2020 and is currently being built out.

3.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 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 orders, the goods will then be delivered by one of Ocado's temperativer controlled vans to their home.
- 3.2 Ocado is a 24-hour operation. Customers complete their online shopping list and are given a 1-hour delivery time from 6am to midnight, 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 dliver to customers who live within a drive time radius of 1.5hrs, with deliveries being made via 3.5t Mercedes Sprinter vans.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 The Personal Shoppers are aided by robotics that pick items to 'give' to the Personal Shoppers, who then transfer to the individual customer shopping tote. In essence, the Personal Shoppers hand pick all the items. Once the individual customer shopping tote(s) are 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

Table 2: Shift Patterns		
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

- 3.5 As well as the Personal Shoppers, and Customer Services Team Members, the Ocado operation employ skilled IT and Robotic professional staff to design its internal warehouse operations.
- 3.6 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 Valery Road leading into the car park area enclosed by internal fencing;

- 1 x new van vehicle access and egress, with barriers off Valery Road 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 car park access;
- Boundary and internal fencing and 3 x sets of turnstiles for staff access;
- There will be minor realignment of the storm water drains due to the yard extension and additional attenuation tanks.

3.7 **Appendix 2** lists the ancillary buildings and their function that are required to facilitate the Ocado operation.

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

Table 3: Car, Van and Cycle spaces		
Staff/Visitor Car Parking Spaces	Front of Unit (existing)	83
	Disabled	7
	Elec charging	12
	Total front (existing)	102
	Rear of Unit (additional)	107
	Disabled	4
	Elec charging	8
	Total rear (additional)	119
	Total	221
Bicycle spaces	Front of Unit (existing)	52
	Rear of Unit (additional)	32
	Total	84

3.9 The layout plan (Dwg no: 4036-B10-103 –P8) 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 the detailed specification is available.

3.10 Adjoining 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 remaining parcel of land (19/00388/F). The proposed changes to the yard extend into the approved Unit C boundary, as such the form of the approved for Unit C cannot be provided.

3.11 A further planning application is being prepared for 2 smaller Units (Unit C1 and C2) on the remainder of the 'Unit C' land after the land take for the extended yard for Unit B, that will

ensure that both the proposed Ocado use of Unit B, and the remainder of the land for the Units C1 and C2 will be deliverable.

- 3.12 The site wide masterplan (Dwg no: 4036-B10-104-P8) 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.
- 3.13 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 diesel to electric. In the current market, there are not a sufficient number of electrical refrigerated vehicles coming forward that have the required distance range without re-charging. In the interim, while the market catches up with demand, Ocado will be investing in replacing its diesel vehicles with petrol/hybrids.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) states that the determination of planning applications should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.3 The Development Plan comprises the: -

- Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1)
- 'Saved' policies Local Plan 1996 (November 1996)

4.4 'Material considerations' include:

- National Planning Policy Framework.
- Planning Practice Guidance

Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1)

4.5 The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 was adopted in July 2015. The primary planning policy in relation to this planning application is the 'Policy Bicester 12: South East Bicester' allocation. This is the dominant planning policy for the purpose of this application, with key policy elements being:

Employment

- *Land Area – Approximately 40 hectares*
- *Jobs created – Approximately 3,000*
- *Use classes – Mixed B1, B2 and B8 uses (primarily B8 uses)*

Infrastructure Needs

- *Access and Movement – contributes to improvements to the surrounding local and strategic road networks. Safeguarding of land for future highway capacity improvements to peripheral routes.*

Key site-specific design and place shaping principles

- *Proposals should comply with Policy ESD15.*
- *The development of a comprehensive masterplan for the allocated site in consultation with the Council, Oxfordshire County Council, English Heritage, the Local Nature Partnership (Wild Oxfordshire) and local communities.*
- *Commercial buildings with a high-quality design and finish, with careful consideration given to layout, architecture, materials, colourings and to building heights to reduce overall visual impact.*
- *Development proposals should protect cultural heritage and archaeology, in particular the Grade II listed Wretchwick Farmhouse and Wretchwick Deserted Medieval Settlement, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and incorporate an appropriate landscape buffer, to maintain the SAM's open setting. In consultation with Historic England, appropriate public access and interpretation facilities should be provided.*

- *Retention and enhancement of hedgerows and the introduction of new landscaping features that will ensure the preservation and enhancement of biodiversity, resulting in an overall net gain. Development should demonstrate the enhancement, restoration or creation of wildlife corridors.*

Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework 'The Framework'

- 4.6 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.
- 4.7 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'.
- 4.8 The NPPF introduces the presumption in favour of sustainable development and at Paragraph 10, states that this is "*at the heart of the Framework*". For decision taking Paragraph 11 explains that this means approving proposals, without delay, that accord with the Development Plan. Where the Development Plan is absent, silent or where relevant policies are out of date, permission should be granted unless:
- 'Adverse impact would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits' or "the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed'*
- 4.9 Paragraph 15 reaffirms that the planning system should be genuinely plan-led. Succinct and up to-date plans should provide a positive vision for the future, and that strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development and make sufficient provision for housing (including affordable), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial developments (Paragraph 20).
- 4.10 In the context of policy guidance relating to 'decision-taking', Paragraph 38 of the NPPF reinforces the Government's desire for the presumption in favour of development to be applied positively. It states that:
- 'Local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive and creative way' and 'Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible'.*
- 4.11 The NPPF is structured around a series of numbered thematic sections which provide policy on a range of planning and land-use related issues. The following paragraphs provide a summary of the contents of the NPPF in each of the key sections of relevance to the project.

- 4.12 Section 6 of the NPPF ('Building a strong, competitive economy') states that '*Planning policies and decision should help create the conditions in which business can invest, expand and adapt*' and further states that '*Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development*' (NPPF, Paragraph 80). Local planning policies are required to:
- Set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth;
 - Set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment;
 - Seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services, or housing; and
 - Be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan.
- 4.13 Section 9 of the NPPF ('Promoting sustainable transport') encourages patterns of development which, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport. It requires decisions to take account of:
- The opportunity for sustainable transport modes;
 - The need for a safe and suitable access;
 - Improvements to the transport networks that cost effectively limit significant impacts; and
 - Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual impacts of development are severe.
- 4.14 Paragraph 106 states that proposal for new or extended distribution centres should make provision for sufficient lorry parking to cater for their anticipated use.
- 4.15 Paragraph 102 states that '*Transport issues should be considered at the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that the potential impacts can be addressed*'. Paragraph 111 further states that a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment should support all developments that generate significant amount of vehicle movements.
- 4.16 Policies dealing with 'Climate change, flooding and coastal change' are set out in Section 14 and requires plans to take a '*proactive approach to mitigating climate change, taking into account long term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscape and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures*' (Paragraph 149).
- 4.17 Development should be directed away from areas at high risk of flooding, with new development planned to help improve resilience and reduce vulnerability as a result of climate change. Opportunities should be taken to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding where possible (Paragraph 157).
- 4.18 The need to take into account noise, air quality, and lighting is set out briefly in paragraphs 180-181 with an emphasis on minimising effects.
- 4.19 Guidance regarding air quality refers to complying with EU or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of any Air Quality Management Areas, with an emphasis on mitigating impacts through measures such as '*Traffic and travel management, and green infrastructure provision and enhancement*' (Paragraph 181).

- 4.20 Paragraph 183 focuses planning policies and decisions on whether the proposed developed is an acceptable land use, rather than the control of processes or emissions, and that, planning decisions should assume that these regimes will operate efficiently.
- 4.21 Section 16 of the NPPF provides policy with regard to 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment', and refers to the need for the submission by Applicants of appropriate desk-based assessments, and potentially other information, in support of applications on sites which are of potential archaeological interest (Paragraph 189). Assessments also requires consideration of the potential for effects on heritage assets or features off-site, or their 'setting'.
- 4.22 The extent and nature of the evidence required is directly related to the likely importance of the assets affected, and the likely impact upon those assets, with much of the emphasis on the importance of designated assets.
- 4.23 The Government has recently published the Planning for the Future White Paper (August 2020). An underlying objective of the reforms is to make the planning system more efficient, effective and equitable.
- 4.24 As this objective aligns with the economic objective for sustainable development (Framework 8) requiring the planning system to be 'responsive 'to changing economic circumstances, the objective to enable business to access the space it needs more easily should be given weight in the decision-taking. This is particularly significant at a time of rising unemployment and a fragile economy as a consequence of the C-V19 health pandemic.

5.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

5.1 The principle of the proposed use (Class Use B8) has been established in the original 2016 Hybrid planning approval (2016/00861/HYBRID) and the full 2018 planning application for Unit B (2018/00091/F). The principle of the extension of the yard as a service and distribution area for Unit B is acceptable. Other planning issues that have been identified are as follows:

- Impact on Climate Change:
 - Impact on the local highway network
 - Impact on air quality
 - Impact on flooding
- Visual impact of the additional buildings on the local landscape;
- Impact on the ecology of the Site;
- Impact on heritage assets; and
- Impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers:
 - Noise
 - Lighting
 - Air Quality
 - Visual impact

Impact on Climate Change

Impact of the extension to the yard and associated works and the Ocado Use on the local highway network.

5.2 This planning application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment (TA). The TA concludes that the application is in a sustainable location with good access to bus and rail facilities.

5.3 The Bicester Ocado operation will employ 900 FTE staff. The peak number of staff on the site at any one time will be around 300 (with around 135 of staff being drivers). It is essential for the smooth running of Ocado's operation that the level of car parking reflects the staff levels and shift patterns and allows for an efficient overlap of staff finishing and those starting their shift, as well as staff working split shifts. The number of car parking spaces included in the scheme reflects this. There is a total of 84 cycle spaces, over and above the cycle standards.

5.4 The additional assessments of the impact of this increase in traffic generation on the local highway network junctions as included in the TA has provided a robust analysis of the impact of the Ocado use on the highway network. The TA concludes that the increase in trip generation as a result of the Ocado use is not significant and will not result in an adverse impact on the local highway.

5.5 Each Ocado customer spends on average just over £100. This scale of shopping would require the customer to travel to a supermarket by car, to be able to transport such an amount of shopping home. Ocado delivery vans leaving the site, deliver to approximately 20 customer deliveries per route, which will reduce customers private car journeys. In essence, one Ocado van delivery will remove 20 individual shopping trips by car.

- 5.6 The proposed Ocado use will contribute to sustainable development and complies with both local and national planning policies relating to transport.

Air quality

- 5.7 The planning application is accompanied by an Air Quality Technical Note. The nearest AQMA is located within Sheep Street, to the north of the Site. The TA has confirmed that the Ocado use will result in an increase in the annual average daily traffic (AADT) which will not have a significant impact on the local air quality.

Impact on flooding

- 5.8 A Drainage Technical Note accompanies this planning application. The proposed as built drainage for the consented scheme, is to remain with minor diversions to avoid the new buildings across the Site. Surface water attenuation is provided in the form of an offline tank located within the proposed system. The additional impermeable area as a result of the yard extension can be accommodated within the natural valley/low point of the proposed car park above ground.
- 5.9 The Proposed Development also includes a swale that will collect runoff from the footpath area. The proposed yard extension and Ocado use will not increase the risk of flooding across the Site or in the wider area.

Visual impact of the additional buildings on the local landscape

- 5.10 A Landscape Technical Note accompanies this planning application. In order to review the landscape baseline a further field assessment and photographic survey of the character and fabric of the site and the surroundings was prepared.
- 5.11 The field assessment confirmed that there were no additional visual receptors identified, other than those included in the ES accompanying the approved 18/00091/F. The assessment has retained these viewpoints. A review of these viewpoints 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.
- 5.12 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.
- 5.13 The impact of the Proposed Development on the existing landscape of the Site 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.
- 5.14 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 any adverse visual impact.

- 5.15 It is considered that the mitigation measures delivered as part of the consented Unit B scheme (18/0091/F) serve to *'Partially buffer the Proposed Development and assimilate it into the existing landscape'* as set out in the baseline of the 2016 HYBRID ES, and the additional landscape mitigation outlined in paragraph 5.15 above, will ensure that the proposed extension to the yard and associated works will not adversely impact the visual amenity of the local area.

Impact on the ecology of the Site

- 5.16 An Ecology Technical Note (TN) accompanies this planning application, that was prepared following a site visit in September 2019. 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.
- 5.17 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. The Proposed Development will not adversely impact this.
- 5.18 The TN confirmed that the Proposed Development would not result in any additional significant ecological effect beyond those already assessed and mitigated for.

Impact on Heritage Assets

- 5.19 The ES submitted with the Hybrid scheme (16/00861/HYBRID) assessed the likely archaeological and heritage impacts for the wider 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. The ES found no likely significant effects of the proposed development on designated heritage assets.
- 5.20 The assessment, in particular, considered potential impacts on the *Wretchwick Deserted Medieval Village* (SM 1015549), which lies 600m to the north-west of the Site. The assessment concluded that there will be a low level of harm, caused by views of the proposed development through gaps in the surrounding vegetation. The low level of harm of the wider Symmetry Park development was considered temporary, and that there would be no permanent harm to the heritage's asset.
- 5.21 It is considered that the scale and nature of the works to the yard will not alter the findings of the ES. The Proposed Development will preserve the significance that contributes to the setting of *Wretchwick Deserted Medieval Village*.

Impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers

- 5.22 It has already been established by the planning approval of the wider Symmetry Park, Bicester (2016/00861/HYBRID), and the approval of Unit B (18/00091/F) that a logistics use is acceptable in planning terms and will not adversely impact the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

- 5.23 The nearest residential properties to the Site are a pair of two storey cottages, Wretchwick Farm Cottages to the west, and approximately 400m the north of the Site, is Little Wretchwick Farm and associated farm buildings. The future residents of the wider Wretchwick Green mixed-use development also have to be taken into account when assessing the potential for nuisance.
- 5.24 It is acknowledged that nuisance to neighbours could arise due to, lighting, changes to air quality, noise, as well as potential impact due to changes to the visual amenity of the local area.
- 5.25 The planning application is accompanied by a Lighting Layout (Dwg no: 19-096-EX-001 PL3) and a full specification of the light fittings to be used. The light fitting has 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 demonstrates that the lighting of the Site will not cause any adverse impacts to neighbouring occupiers.
- 5.26 The planning application is accompanied by an Air Quality Technical Note. The nearest AQMA is located within Sheep Street, to the north of the Site. The TA has already confirmed that the Ocado use will result in a slight increase in traffic generation, this slight increase will not impact the existing air quality.
- 5.27 The planning application will be accompanied by Noise Assessment. 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 non-significant increase in traffic movements, into and out of the Site and therefore will not generate any significant noise levels.
- 5.28 The grant of planning approval for Unit B (18/00091/F) imposed a condition relating to noise. 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 LAeq'*
- 5.29 The Ocado operation can satisfy this condition. Further, 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. The existing and proposed buildings will create an 'enclosure' for the proposed yard, that will further mitigate the potential for noise pollution.
- 5.30 The landscape appraisal has demonstrated that the proposed physical changes to the yard and the additional buildings will not result in any adverse visual impacts. Dwg no: edp2606_d151-Detailed Landscape Design demonstrates that the additional landscaping and planting to the bund at the junction of the relocated green corridor and the A41 will further reduce any impact of the Proposed Development on the surrounding area.

5.31 The analysis of the Ocado operation and the accompanying Technical Notes, have not identified any activities that will impact the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

6.0 DESIGN AND ACCESS

6.1 The Site area of the Proposed Development is 2.58ha. As the Site is a major development over 1ha in size, the Planning Statement incorporates a Design and Access Statement (DAS). The level of detail in a DAS should be proportionate to the complexity of the application. The detail included in this DAS reflects the nature of the Proposed Development, an extension to an existing serve yard, with associated buildings and structures associated with a B8 Class Use.

Access

6.2 There are 2 vehicular access points to the staff car park in the extended yard; an existing access to the front of Unit B and a second new access to the rear of the service yard off Morrell Avenue. The existing access off Morrell Avenue is to be retained for HGV arrivals and departures. There is a separate pedestrian access off Morrell Avenue to the south of the Site. Pedestrian routes across the Site are marked out to ensure staff are able to access the yard in a safe and secure manner.

6.3 The existing 3m green link footpath is to be re-aligned to follow the rear boundary of the Site and is included within this application.

Layout, Scale and Materials

6.4 The extension to the existing service yard extends to 6,742sq.m.

6.5 The layout of the service yard reflects the Ocado operation with a clear central area where most of the activities will take place, with associated building and structure on the yard perimeter. The main yard area is separated from the staff car and cycle parking areas by a by a 2.4m high Paladin fence which extends around the south west perimeter of the yard and building. This separation allows for safe areas for staff to arrive and leave work and to access the smoking and vaping shelters.

6.6 Appendix 2 Schedule of all additional Ancillary Buildings/Structures lists the building and structures included in the Proposed Development. The schedule describes the use, areas, dimensions and materials.

Landscape

6.7 The Soft Landscape Scheme proposed include the removal of a narrow strip of wildflower grassland aligning the southern edge of Unit B, the relocation of a break in the hedgerow at the northern boundary of the site and the relocation of a number of trees to align the redefined public footpath which runs north-south through the site.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 Planning law requires that the determination of planning applications should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The principle of the Proposed Development is established within the approved Symmetry Park, Bicester planning approval 2016/00861/HYBRID.
- 7.2 The land is allocated for employment use (Class use B8) under the local plan policy, Bicester 12: South East Bicester. The Proposed Development is in accordance with Policy Bicester 12. The Technical Notes that accompany this planning application have concluded that the proposed extension and alterations to the yard are acceptable in planning terms, and there is no reason why the development should not proceed.
- 7.3 Ocado will bring to Bicester a company of international reputation together with significant long-term investment to the town, as well as generating 900 FTE jobs in a variety of roles for the local population. Significant weight should be given to this in the planning balance.
- 7.4 The Proposed Development is in accordance with the development plan, when read as a whole. In line with Paragraph 11 of the NPPF, which applies a presumption of sustainable development, developments that accord with the an up to date development plan should be approved without delay.

Cherwell District Council is respectfully requested to approve this planning application.