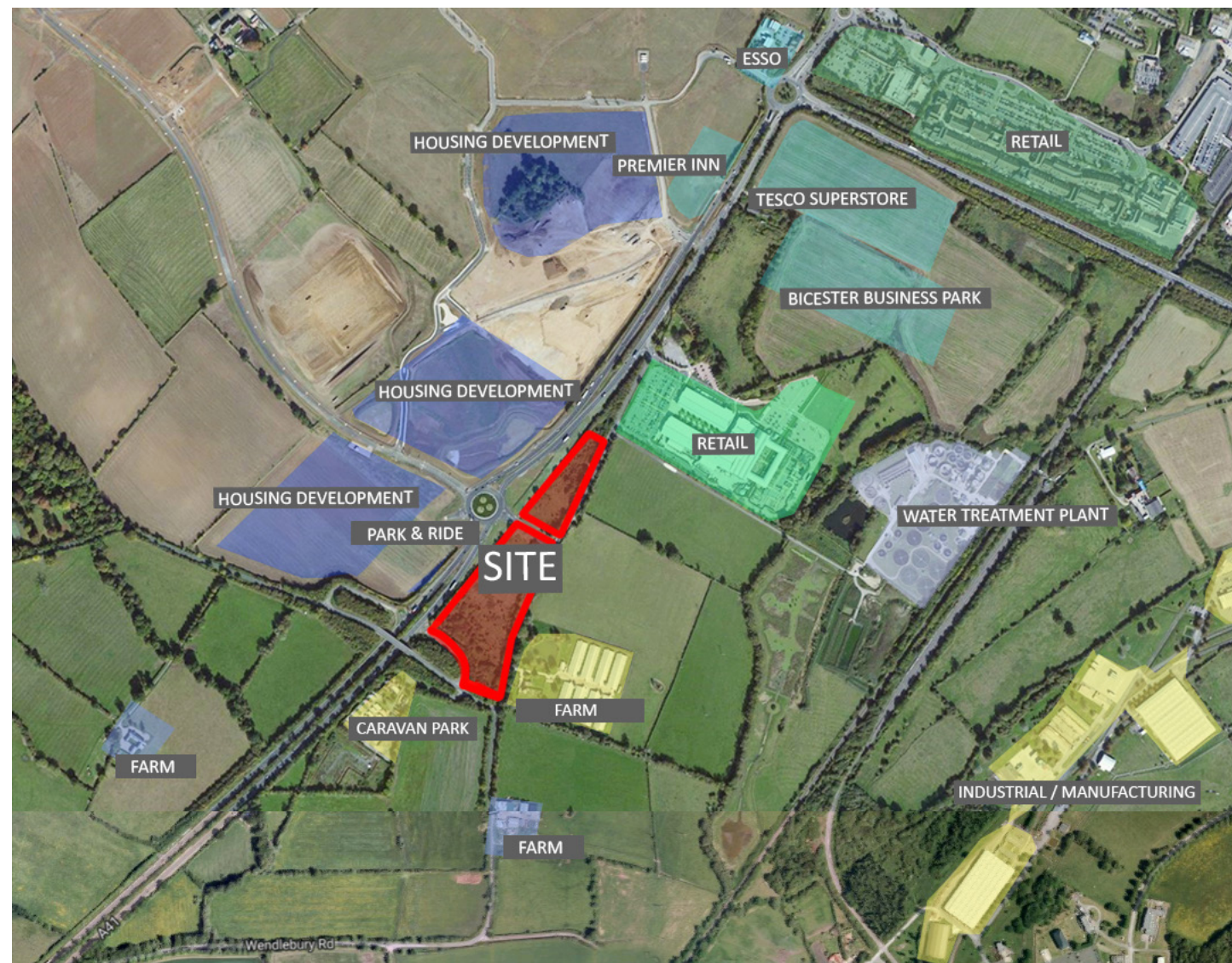


# 03 | Site Appraisal

## 3.2 Land Use

The site is currently vacant grassland with perimeter hedgerows and trees.  
The topography is level across both tranches of land with Vendee drive at a slightly raised height.

The plan below indicates the local predominance of commercial buildings around the proposed site and it is a very strong aspiration of Cherwell to see Bicester continue to expand and grow, providing the range of facilities and a cultural offer to attract high quality employment.



Existing Land Usage Plan

## 3.3 Building Heights and Sun Path

The southern tranche of land has office buildings 3 storey in height, set out in a regular formation with the short elevations facing the A41.

The northern tranche of land has a hotel 5 storeys in height, located to address the roundabout junction with the A41 and Vendee Drive.

Mass (ie height) is key to creating the right sense of place at this gateway location.



Sun Path and Building Heights

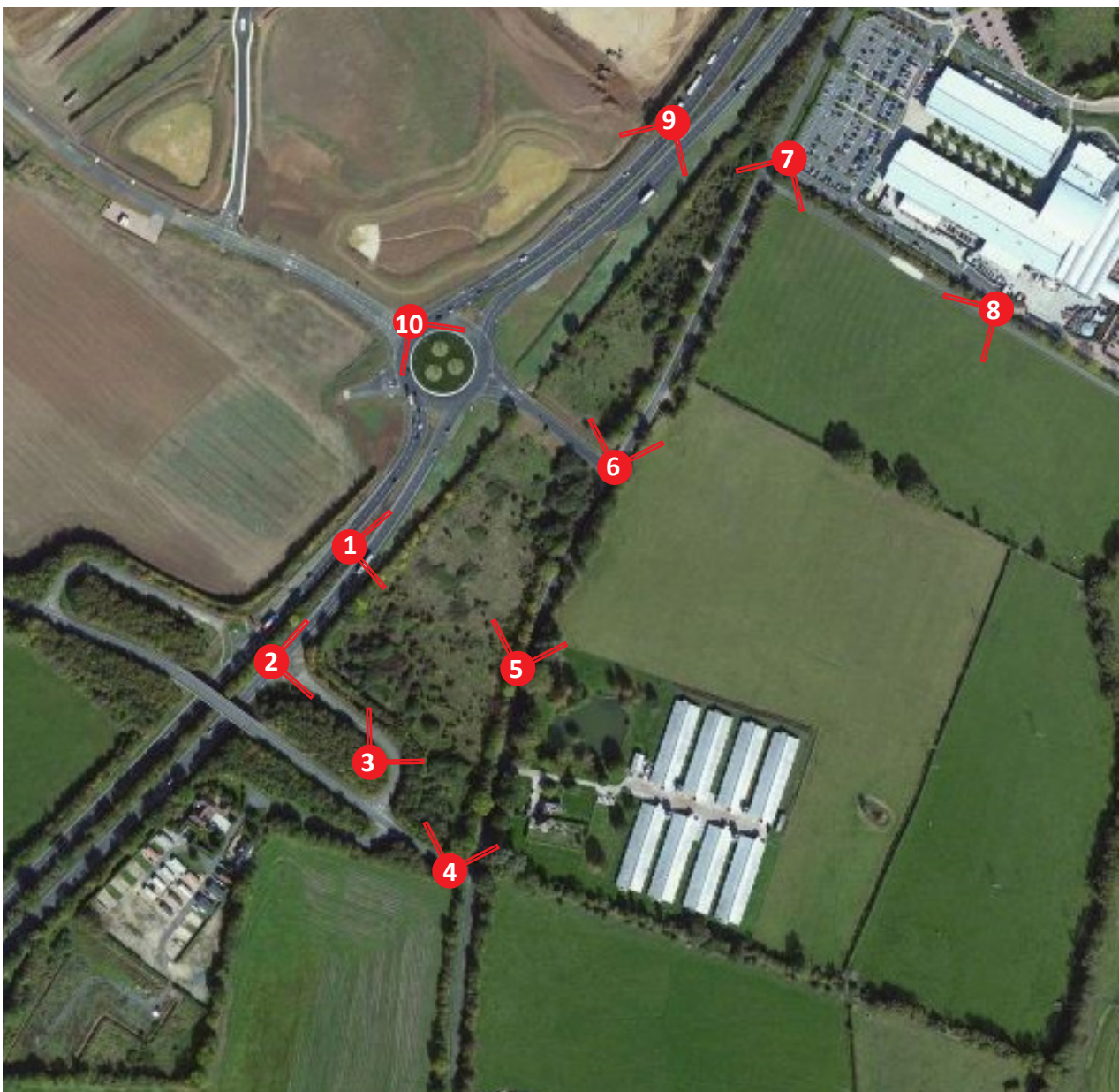
**3** Number of Floors



# 03 | Site Appraisal

## 3.4 Existing Site Photos - A41 / Wendlebury Rd / Bicester Avenue Centre

The existing photographs shown below were taken around the boundary of the site.



Key Plan



# 03 | Site Appraisal

## 3.5 Landscape Character

The full tree survey for the site reveals that there are no trees of first quality upon the site or within the site boundaries. The landscape design and management for the site is to manage the exterior boundary as a large traditional hedgerow with standards around the north, east and southern sections of the perimeter. In these areas, the hedgerows will be coppiced, laid and restocked as appropriate to restore them to full health and integrity. New standard trees will be planted within the hedgerows and managed / protected to encourage clear stemmed trees with strong leaders to create well-formed and balanced, branching canopies. Quercus robur, will be a preferred species with a mix of other site natives to include, Lime, Field Maple and Cherry.

The tree management will conform to this overall design by seeking to increase the number and quality of the hedgerow standards, either by selecting to protect and encourage the development of existing stocks where possible, or else through the gradual replacement of trees with poor form / vigour or irreversible damage by creating space for and protecting new stocks with a strong, upright habit (apical dominance).

There are no trees of first quality ( Grade A ) upon the site or within its boundaries. Where possible Grade B & Grade C trees will be encouraged through pruning and the provision of enough space and protection, to develop in the direction of Grade A trees. However, where replacement with more appropriate species / healthier or undamaged plants or more vigorous stocks is deemed a better route to achieving Grade A boundary trees in the long term, then this latter approach will be favoured.



Fig 1 Boundary Oaks on the side of Vendee Drive ( Kingsmere Section )



Fig 2 : More Boundary Oaks on Vendee Drive near to the Park and Ride

- T1 Retain
- G1 Develop this boundary back towards a dense managed hedge with standards via Individual Tree Selection / Coppice / Restock.
- T2 Retain with a view to allowing replacement over time
- G2 Remove as required for permanent access
- T3 Remove / Dismantle as unsound
- T4 Retain
- T5 Remove to release T4 which has a better future prospect once competition is removed
- G3 Develop this boundary back towards a dense managed hedge with standards via Individual Tree Selection / Coppice / Restock.
- ( T6 )
- ( T7 )
- ( T8 )
- ( T9 ) This group of trees occupy and obscure one of the key views into the business park of the site. Removal on aesthetic grounds for the benefit of the wider landscaping, and because the trees, whilst being of reasonable health are not spectacular examples vital to the preservation of landscape character in the locale.
- T10 Retain- with a view to allowing replacement over time as part of an expanded planting group.
- G4 Manage as hedge with standards
- T11 Retain- with a view to allowing replacement over time as part of an expanded planting group.
- ( T12 )
- ( T13 )
- ( T14 ) Manage as group and expand planting. Increase space for T13 which has best prospect.
- ( T15 )
- ( T33 )
- G5 Over stocked thicket stage woodland. Thin via Individual Tree Selection to favour trees with best future - restock understorey with native shrubs such a thorns and crab apple.

# 03 | Site Appraisal

## 3.5 Landscape Character

T16	Retain. Field Maple. Fair Condition. Formative Pruning and encourage to develop canopy.
T17	Retain. Pending Replacement. No Protective Measures.
T18	Retain. B1 class. Fair Condition. Formative Pruning and encourage to develop canopy.
T19	Retain. Pending Replacement. Fork w included bark. No Protective Measures.
T20	Retain. Pending Replacement. No Protective Measures.
T21	Retain. Pending Replacement. No Protective Measures.

( T22 )  
 ( T23 ) T22 & T23 are 'twins' (of different species Ash & Sycamore). They each provide 50% of a domed canopy and neither one will appear balanced if the other is removed. They may also be inter-reliant in terms of stability although they are not of sufficient size to expect that windthrow will be a problem unless there other factors at play. These trees to be removed as they sit amidst the foreground landscaping area of the hotel. Also, they will set seed prodigiously into the landscaping and create a weed nuisance.

( T24 ) Poor Condition.  
 ( T26 )  
 ( T27 )  
 ( T28 ) Poor Condition.  
 ( T29 ) B1- Better Quality- Retain and manage as a mature hedgerow standard.  
 ( T30 )  
 ( T31 )  
 ( T32 ) Most of the trees in this group are overgrown coppice stools with a poor prognosis for longevity as standards. We will aim to encourage hawthorn and field maple as the main components of the lower hedge. These trees currently provide an important landscape function. Restock the hedgerow line including with some Q.robur standards (possibly in protective basket planters) with a view to removing the Ash over time as their removal becomes justified to favour their growing replacements.

T33 ( is in the group with T12-15 (above) and will be treated the same).

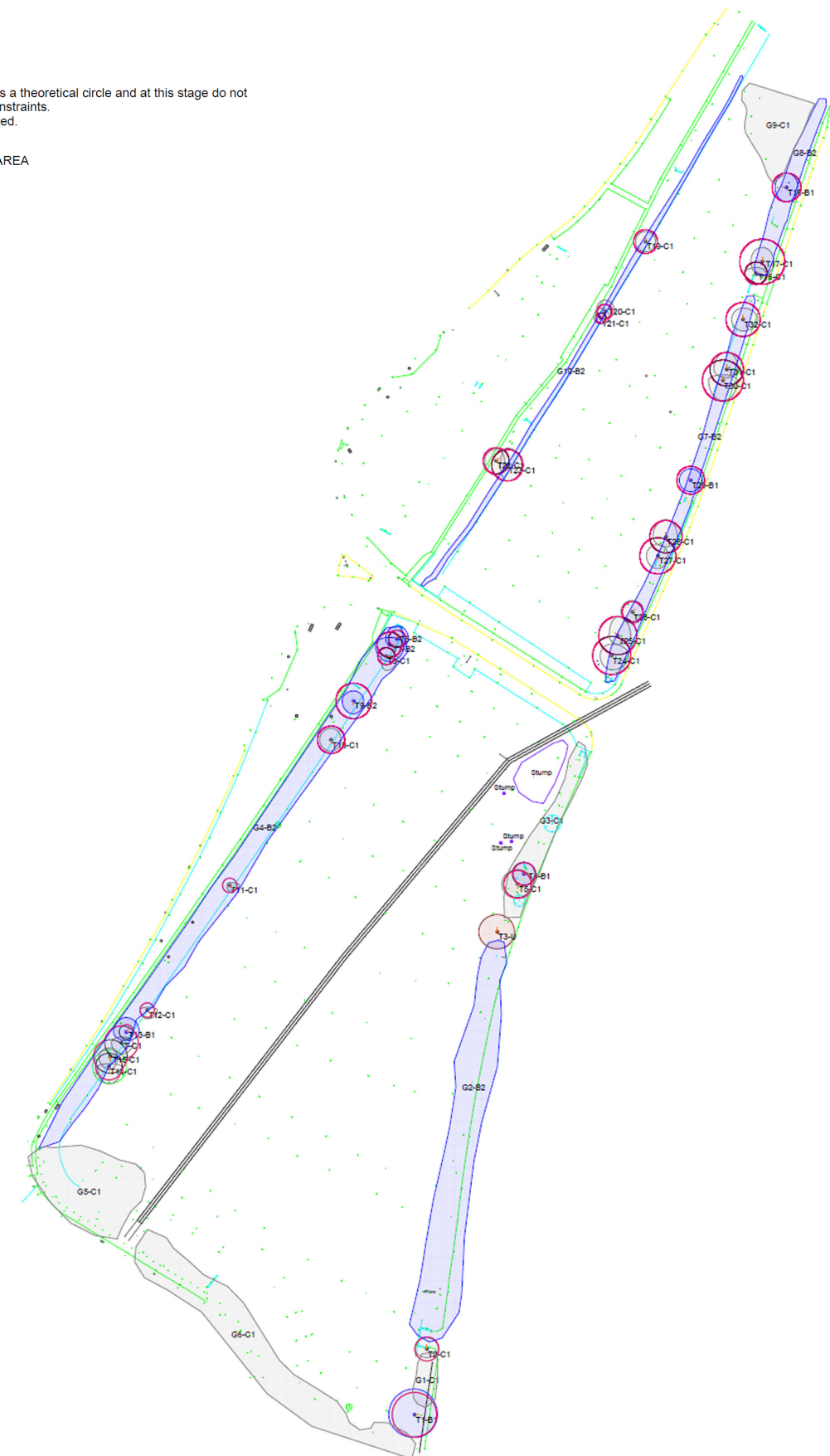
**CBA Trees** have undertaken a full tree survey and the results are reflected in the master plan and landscape strategy. On the evidence of the ecological surveys undertaken by Ecology Solutions, the application site is not considered to be of particularly high intrinsic interest from an ecology and nature conservation perspective.

The master plan picks up all relevant trees and ecological issues, with further details being left to detailed design and planning conditions, where necessary.

### NOTES:

1. Root Protection Areas are shown as a theoretical circle and at this stage do not take into account site features and constraints.
2. Group outlines are indicatively plotted.

- ROOT PROTECTION AREA
- CROWN SPREAD
- CATEGORY 'B'
- CATEGORY 'C'
- CATEGORY 'U'



Tree Survey Plan

# 03 | Site Appraisal

## 3.6 Archaeology Report

Cotswold Archaeology have undertaken a comprehensive Heritage Impact Assessment and this has been used to interpret two further stages of archaeological investigation: a geophysical survey of the whole site, and trial trenching based on a scheme of investigation approved by the County Archaeologist. The site is generally clear of archaeology, save for the area shown in red on the Archaeological Report Map, which will comprise a 'no ground disturbance' zone (ie no foundations). Phase 1 has been assessed in heritage and landscape terms as not impacting Alchester, the Scheduled Ancient Monument to the south.

The survey recorded an array of probable ditches and pits adjacent to the mid-eastern boundary of Area 1, to the immediate west of Wendlebury Road (Fig. 3.6: red lines). A small group of relatively strong magnetic responses at the northern edge of this group might reflect some form of industrial activity (hatched red/annotated). Conceivably, these date from at least the Iron Age/Romano-British Periods, given the close proximity to similarly-dated settlement remains that were exposed during excavations of land to the immediate south/south-west (Cotswold Archaeology 2016). It seems likely that the construction of the modern Wendlebury Road and (possibly) earlier road will have partially/wholly eradicated traces of any continuation of occupation remains to the immediate east of the site boundary.

Elsewhere, (for the most part over the same geology) there is minimal geophysical evidence of further potential pits and ditches, although an isolated curvilinear anomaly recorded in the mid-southern part of Area 2 exhibits some potential as buried ditch.

The survey registered slight traces of former ridge and furrow cultivation in Area 1 (dotted orange lines). Its minimal resolution in the final 'destriped' processed data is largely the result of its shared alignment with the survey traverse direction. It should be noted that the cultivation does not appear to significantly mask/truncate underlying features, thus reinforcing the relative absence of archaeological remains across the surveyed area.

For the most part, a west-north-west to east-south-east linear array of anomalies in the central part of Area 2 almost certainly relate to a recently removed field boundary (ibid, yellow line).

Elsewhere, stronger responses (pink and blue) include those induced by a relatively widespread zone of likely modern debris in the south-east corner of Area 2 (partially buried heavy duty polythene was visible on the surface) and the site of a recent bonfire in the mid northern part of the field (both annotated on Fig 3.6 ).

More isolated examples probably signify iron objects (ploughshares, horseshoes, etc) or fragments of brick and tile, all contained within the ploughsoil.

The described anomalies were recorded against a backdrop of predominately uniform natural geology (greenscale).

The survey has successfully identified linear and discrete anomalies in the south-eastern part of the site that exhibit potential as archaeological remains in the form of short ditches and pits also including a possible site of industrial activity. These probably date from at least the prehistoric period, situated in close proximity to known Iron Age and Romano-British settlement remains. Elsewhere, the majority of the site appears to be relatively clear of geophysical indicators of further remains, with a possible isolated curvilinear ditch recorded in the northern region. However, it seems likely that traces of archaeological features might survive at the southern edge of the site that was not surveyed due to the presence of dense vegetation.

In summary, the archaeological potential of the site has been fully investigated and the master plan responds appropriately to the constraints identified by Cotswold Archaeology, leaving planning conditions to be applied where further caution or work is required.





3.6 Archaeology Report Map