

ARC, OXFORD | PLOT 4200

LANDSCAPE STATEMENT

Macgregor Smith

REVISIONS

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1.0 | INTRODUCTION

1.1 | PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report has been prepared by Macgregor Smith to describe and illustrate the landscape strategy for the application, drawing together the various elements of the landscape design proposals within the proposed development. The landscape strategy aims to integrate green space, enhance character, enrich connections and create a strong identity for the site. This is informed by ARC's wider ambitions at ARC Oxford.

Description of the Development

Plot 4200 occupies a 1.3 hectare plot within the southern part of ARC Oxford to the west of John Smith Drive. It currently comprises seven individual office buildings organised around areas of car parking and intermittent tree planting. Residential development lies to the west and an existing private footpath runs alongside the southern side of the site.

The proposals involve the demolition of all existing buildings on the site, making way for the redevelopment of a single laboratory-enabled office building. The ground plus two-storey building will contain internal ancillary amenity in the form of a café and gym on upper floors, with some ancillary servicing infrastructure will be provided in the landscape. The proposals will also deliver enhancements to the existing private footpath leading into the ARC Oxford site from Boswell Road, alongside 166 no. car spaces, 13 no. motorcycle spaces and 135 no. cycle parking spaces (internally and within a covered external shelter). There are an additional 3 no. Sheffield hoops for visiting cyclists within the Southern Terrace Plaza.

Project Scope

The scope of landscape design comprises a green framework for the development with distinct character areas. These include the retention and enhancement of all site boundary trees and the structural landscape zone bordering John Smith Drive, a central green plaza spanning the building frontage, vehicular access roads and car parking, well-defined pedestrian and cycle routes together with infrastructure for ancillary servicing and biodiversity roof. In addition, the landscape design will deliver enhancements to the existing private footpath bordering the plot's southern boundary and leading into the ARC Oxford site from Boswell Road. The design proposals includes both hard and soft landscape elements. All architectural, structural, drainage, lighting and MEP design is by others.

Drawings

This report should be read in conjunction with the technical reports developed by all consultants that have been involved in the design to date. It is accompanied by a set of planning application drawings which are listed below:

1389-001	<i>Landscape General Arrangement Plan</i>
1389-002	<i>Landscape General Arrangement Plan – Roof Level</i>
1389-003	<i>Vegetation Retention and Removal Plan</i>
1389-201	<i>Planting Plan – Ground Level 1 of 2</i>
1389-202	<i>Planting Plan – Ground Level 2 of 2</i>
1389-203	<i>Planting Plan – Roof Level</i>
1389-301	<i>Landscape Hardworks Plan – Ground Level</i>
1389-302	<i>Landscape Hardworks Plan – Roof Level</i>
1389-401	<i>Biodiversity Feature Plan</i>
1389-402	<i>Typical Detail – Tree Protective Fencing</i>
1389-403	<i>Typical Detail – Tree Pit in Soft Landscape</i>
1389-404	<i>Typical Detail – Biodiversity Roof</i>
1389-406	<i>Path Connection from Public Footpath – No-dig path</i>
1389-407	<i>Typical Section Through Western Boundary</i>
1389-501	<i>Boundary Sections</i>
1389-502	<i>Boundary Sections</i>

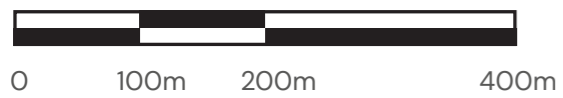
2.0 | CONTEXT

2.0 | CONTEXT
2.1 | WIDER CONTEXT



Key

- Plot 4200 application site
- Other land under ARC's ownership



2.0 | CONTEXT

2.2 | PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The landscape and public realm proposals have been developed in accordance with relevant national and local planning policy and guidance.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2021

Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- optimise the potential of the Site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

NATIONAL DESIGN GUIDE

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2021

Well-designed places have individual characteristics which work together to create its physical Character. The ten characteristics help to nurture and sustain a sense of Community. They work to positively address environmental issues affecting Climate. They all contribute towards the cross-cutting themes for good design set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

The ten characteristics of a well designed place are:

- Context – enhances the surroundings
- Identity – attractive and distinctive
- Built form – a coherent pattern of development
- Movement – accessible and easy to move around
- Nature – enhanced and optimised
- Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive
- Uses – mixed and integrated

- Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable
- Resources – efficient and resilient

Of particular importance to the landscape design are the following considerations:

Context

Well-designed places are:

- based on a sound understanding of the features of the Site and the surrounding context, using baseline studies as a starting point for design;
- integrated into their surroundings so they relate well to them;
- influenced by and influence their context positively; and responsive to local history, culture and heritage.

Identity

Well-designed places, buildings and spaces:

- have a positive and coherent identity that everyone can identify with, including residents and local communities, so contributing towards health and well-being, inclusion and cohesion;
- have a character that suits the context, its history, how we live today and how we are likely to live in the future; and
- are visually attractive, to delight their occupants and other users.

Nature

Well-designed places:

- integrate existing, and incorporate new natural features into a multifunctional network that supports quality of place, biodiversity and water management, and addresses climate change mitigation and resilience;
- prioritise nature so that diverse ecosystems can flourish to ensure a healthy natural environment that supports and enhances biodiversity;
- provide attractive open spaces in locations that are easy to access, with activities for all to enjoy, such as play, food production, recreation and sport, so as to encourage physical activity and promote health, well-being and social inclusion.

Public Spaces

Well-designed places:

- include well-located public spaces that support a wide variety of activities and encourage social interaction, to promote health, well-being, social and civic inclusion;
- have a hierarchy of spaces that range from large and strategic to small and local spaces, including parks, squares, greens and pocket parks;
- have public spaces that feel safe, secure and attractive for all to use; and
- have trees and other planting within public spaces for people to enjoy, whilst also providing shading, and air quality and climate change mitigation.



2.0 | CONTEXT

2.2 | PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

OXFORD LOCAL PLAN 2036 – Relevant Extracts

Policy DH1 – High quality design and place – making

- Development must be of a high quality design that creates or enhances local distinctiveness. Proposals should meet key design objectives set out in Appendix 6.1.

Responding to site character and context

6.1

- Design should have a clear rationale and be informed by the unique characteristics of the site and its setting
- The design process must be clearly explained and justified
- The design evolution should follow a logical order of morphological layers, as set out below.

Contextual analysis of the site and its setting

6.2

- All new development should be informed and inspired by the unique characteristics of the site and its setting, and these considerations should go beyond the red line of the application site to adopt a truly placemaking approach
- This contextual analysis must be the starting point for designing new development
- The contextual analysis should consider the history and development of the site and surrounding area, landscape structure, biodiversity, the pattern, character and appearance of streets, buildings and spaces. The level of detail in the analysis should be proportionate to the scale and complexity of the development proposals

6.3

- Regardless of the scale of development, it is likely that the site and its setting will contain biodiversity or at least it should present the opportunity for enhancement of this resource.
- At the earliest stage the site's natural resources should be understood so that the placement of buildings later makes the most of these opportunities.
- Where possible, existing trees and planting should be retained, as this will help to establish character and provide interest more quickly.

Site layout informed by contextual analysis and movement needs

6.4

- New development should seek to provide a clear hierarchy and choice of routes as well as direct and convenient access and must be designed for different modes of transport and different users, particularly encouraging walking and cycling.
- Routes must be designed with all users in mind so that they are truly accessible.

6.5

- Depending on the street hierarchy, different streets will have different functions and require different designs and treatment, from a tree lined, formal, primary street to a calmer, narrower, tertiary street. Focal points and landmark buildings help aid people's understanding of a place and can create memorable routes as well as variety and interest.

Design of external areas

6.6

- Design should always be inclusive and the design of the public realm and outdoor spaces should cater for all potential users. Moreover, the design of external spaces should seek to create opportunities for people to engage with a place through their senses.

6.7

- Good quality landscaping is a fundamental part of successful outdoor spaces. It is essential that landscape schemes/designs are evolved alongside architectural designs to ensure that there is a strong relationship between buildings and spaces. Trees and plants are important elements of any landscape scheme as they provide visual interest, adding colours, shapes. The quality of all routes in terms of how different people will experience them must be a key consideration
- The careful choice of hard surface materials can have a big impact on the success and overall quality of outdoor spaces. In selecting materials for hard surfacing, thought should be given to their durability, compatibility with the local context, and relationship with the overall design vision.

Public art

6.10

- Public art is an excellent way to add interest, create a sense of place and provide a focal point. The public art could contribute to creating local distinctiveness, by saying something about the place it is in. It might reflect a historic use or event of the area, or the purpose of the new development.

Secure by design

6.11

- High quality design means creating places that are safe for all, and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience. New developments should be designed to meet the principles and physical security standards of the police's Secure by Design scheme.

Design review and the pre-application process

6.12

- Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and allowing for the opportunity for creative ideas and problem solving to add value.

Policy G2 – Protection of biodiversity and geo-diversity

- Any development must demonstrate an overall net gain in biodiversity through the use of a recognised biodiversity calculator. The calculator must demonstrate an improvement of 5% or more from the existing condition

Oxford City Council Technical Advice Note (TAN) 8 Biodiversity

- TAN 8 Outlines Oxford City Council's requirements for information on biodiversity to be supplied in support of planning applications. It summarises the approach developers are expected to take in avoiding, mitigating and compensating for biodiversity impacts in Oxford together with guidance on how to enhance and make space for nature within new developments. It includes specific requirements for the provision of artificial habitat features.

Oxford City Council Technical Advice Note (TAN) 9 Green Spaces

- If it is shown not to be feasible to retain trees on site then replacement tree canopy cover should be provided. The level of detail in the assessment to show that adequate tree canopy cover is proposed to compensate for any loss of trees should be proportionate to the size of the proposed development. Appendix 1 sets out when assessments will be required and the varying level of detail in the assessments.

2.0 | CONTEXT
2.3 | LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

Local Designations

The site is located approximately 4km south-east of Oxford City Centre, within the wider campus of ARC Oxford. There are no landscape designations in the immediate vicinity of the site.

There are a number of diverse designated sites around Oxford providing rich reference points for the landscape character within the site and wider campus, including Shotover Country Park and SSSI to the north east, Iffley Meadows Nature Reserve and SSSI to the west and the ancient woodland of Bagley Wood to the south west.



- Key**
- Greenbelt
 - Ancient Woodland
 - Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
 - Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 - Local Nature Reserves (LNR)





0km 1km 2km 3km

2.0 | CONTEXT
2.4 | SITE CONTEXT WITHIN ARC OXFORD



Key

-  Plot 4200 application site
-  Other land under ARC's ownership



2.0 | CONTEXT
2.5 | LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

Contextual analysis of the site informs the design and development of the landscape strategy with the scheme seeking to integrate references to local landscape features. This includes plant species and mixes found in Oxford Botanic Garden which inspire a diverse planting palette in the proposed scheme, with rich meadow roof planting inspired by the local ecology. The colours and tones of Oxford's street paving and building materials are also drawn into the scheme's floorscape.



2.0 | CONTEXT
2.6 | INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE

William Morris developed the first Morris Minor factory when he moved his car company to the site in 1912, where he pioneered mass production of cars including the Morris Oxford, MG Midget and Mini. The proposed scheme seeks to draw inspiration from this industrial heritage articulated through its green spaces, planting and structural interventions to create a unique sense of place.



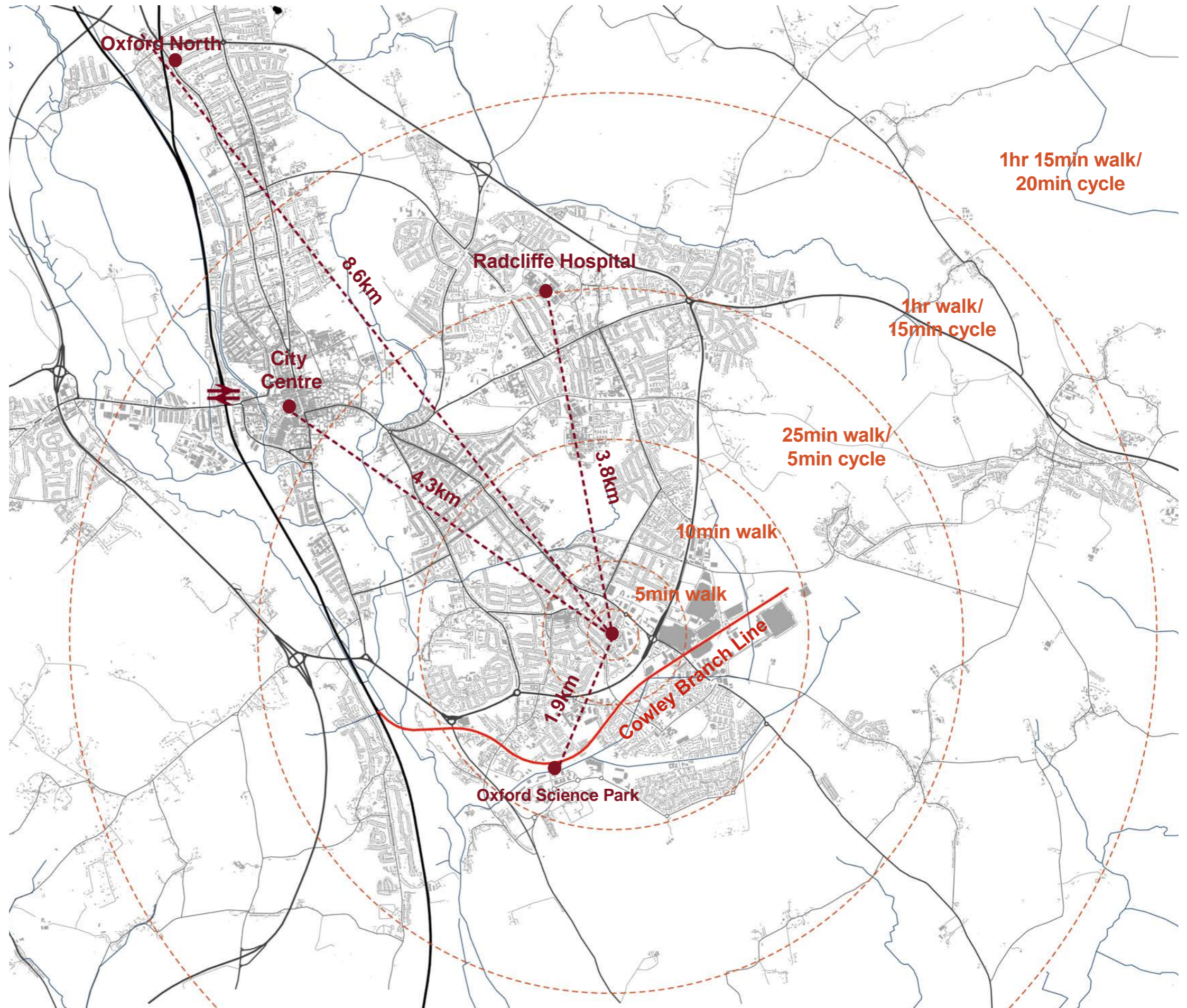
2.0 | CONTEXT

2.7 | WIDER CONNECTIVITY

Wider Connectivity

Currently, existing public transport provision for ARC Oxford is poor, resulting in a high dependency on private vehicles. ARC Oxford lies within a 20-minute cycle distance from Oxford rail station.

The sustainability of the site is planned to improve, with the provision of the Eastern Arc bus route, as well as the potential for re-opening of the Cowley Branch Line to commuter traffic. The latter could include a new rail station at ARC Oxford to the south-east. This would introduce more convenient and accessible walking and cycling opportunities.



Macgregor Smith

2.0 | CONTEXT

2.8 | WIDER CYCLE ROUTES

Sustrans Cycle Routes

ARC Oxford sits adjacent to a long-distance off-road cycle route that runs parallel to the Eastern Bypass, which in turn connects with a strategic cycle link to the centre of Oxford, offering opportunities to connect with Headington to the north, and to Botley to the west.

Further cycle networks provide good access to the site from the City Centre and north-east of the site.



Key (National Sustrans Cycle Routes)

- 5
- 51
- 57
- Other quiet cycle routes
- Connecting routes
- Pedestrian and cycle crossing



0km 1km 2km 3km

2.0 | CONTEXT

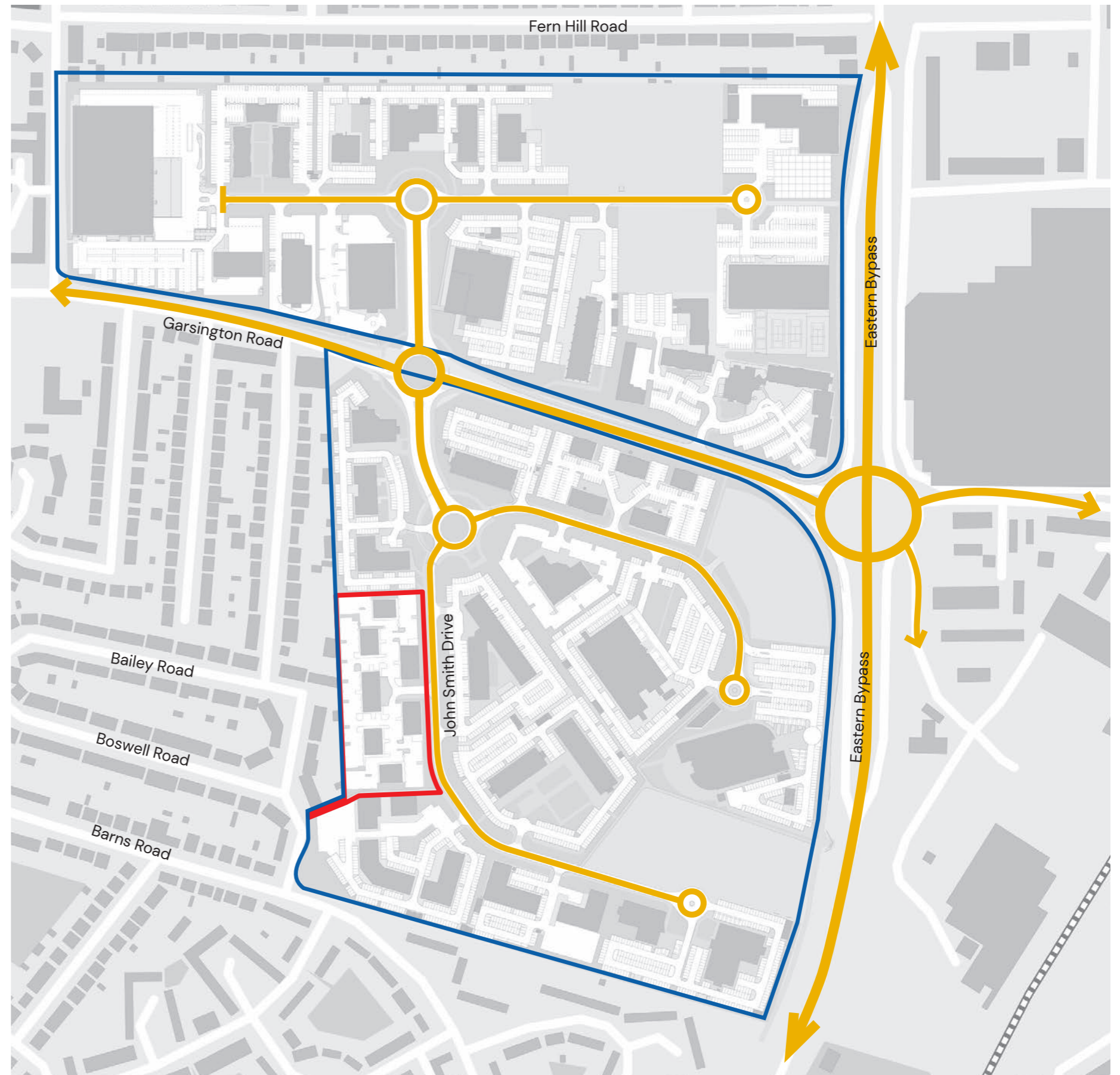
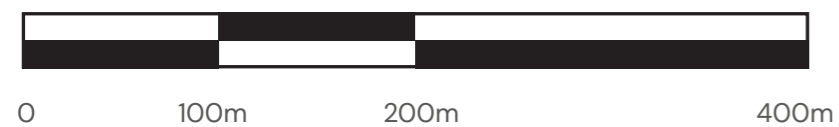
2.9 | ARC OXFORD CONNECTIVITY | VEHICULAR

Vehicular Connectivity

Currently, ARC Oxford is predominantly accessed by car, with a sequence of roundabouts from the eastern bypass, Garsington Road, and within the northern and southern portions of the campus, characterising the sense of arrival.

These roundabouts provide access to two principal spine routes, Alec Issigonis Way on the northern site and John Smith Drive on the southern site. Plot 4200 is located to the west of John Smith Drive, with a single vehicular access point in the centre.

- Key**
- Plot Boundary
 - Primary Vehicular Routes
 - ARC Oxford boundary

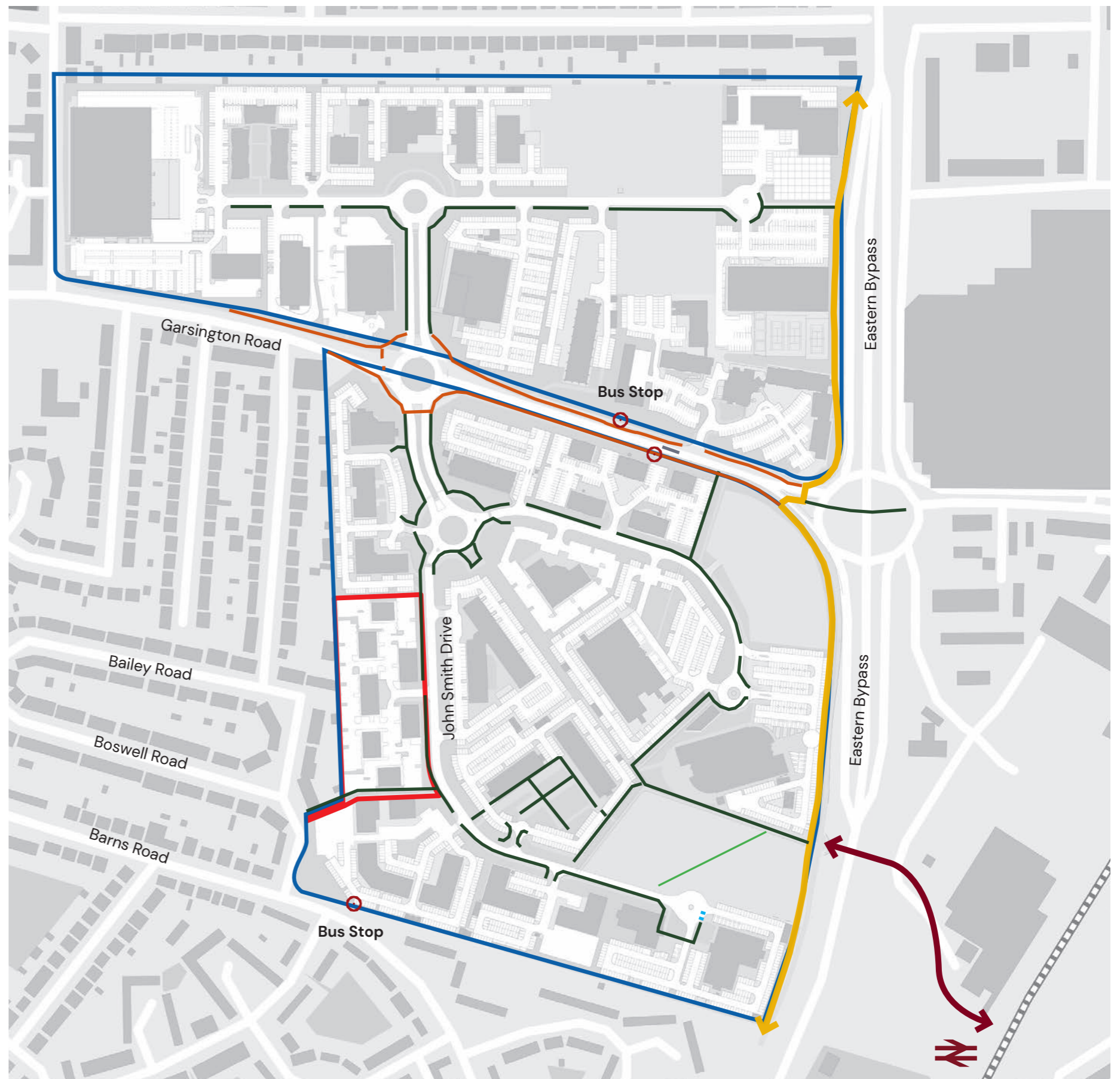
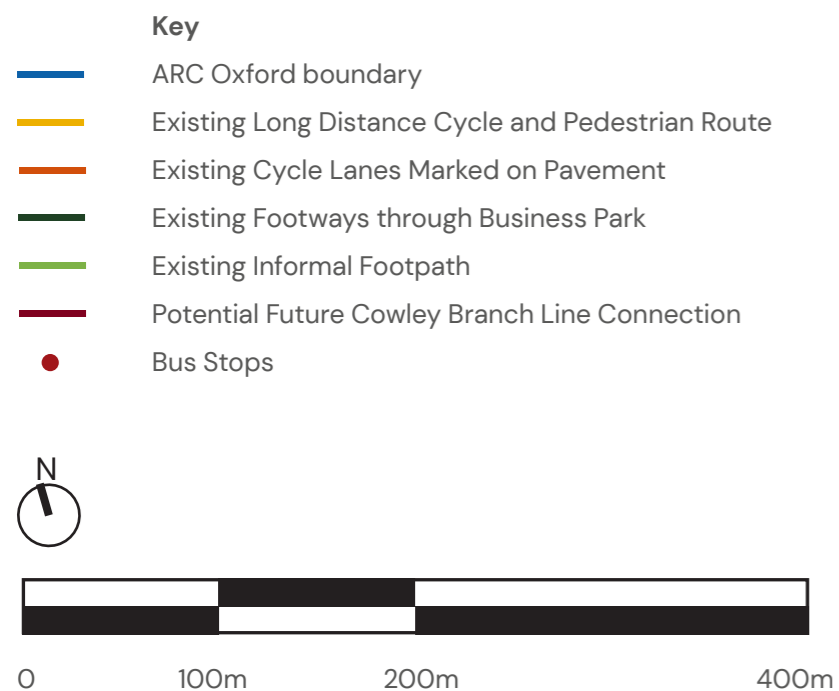


2.0 | CONTEXT

2.10 | ARC OXFORD CONNECTIVITY | PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLIST

Pedestrian and cycle access to ARC Oxford is currently available from several points. As well as from Garsington Road, two points of access exist from the long-distance shared footpath / cycleway running adjacent to the Eastern Bypass in the north and south. The latter lies adjacent to a subway that runs underneath the Eastern Bypass to the southern tip of Oxford Retail Park. A further entrance point is provided via a shared footpath / cycle path connecting to Boswell Road along the southern edge of Plot 4200 and an important means of access for users accessing the site from an existing bus stop on Barns Road to the south. This footpath is included within the application boundary.

There is an opportunity to enhance existing pedestrian and cycle travel and users' sense of arrival to ARC Oxford. As previously highlighted, the campus currently places emphasis on the car with existing footpaths narrow / impeded, indirect and often to one side of the road only. The long-distance cycleway is an important asset to the site which provides wide-ranging connectivity to other parts of Oxford. This includes the subway which would be vital to connectivity to the Cowley Branch Line and a potential new station.



3.0 | EXISTING SITE

3.0 | EXISTING SITE

3.1 | EXISTING CONDITION

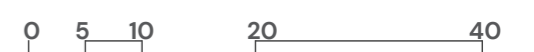
The site comprises seven two-storey buildings on a development plot in the southern part of ARC Oxford. It is located to the west of John Smith Drive, served by a single vehicular entrance. Immediately to the south of the plot, a footpath provides a pedestrian and cycle connection leading from Boswell Road to the west with John Smith Drive on the campus. A pavement borders to John Smith Drive for the full length of the plot's eastern boundary.

The site's boundaries are planted with groups of semi mature trees, predominantly Lime, Pine, Birch and Whitebeam, which are under-planted with mature shrubs. These trees are important assets to the site and form part of the wider campus landscape bordering John Smith Drive, which is present on several plots around ARC Oxford. Within the internal site area, the office buildings are bordered by narrow shrub beds with individual early-mature Pine and Lime trees which form a broken tree line running north to south through the central part of the site.

The site's western site boundary is bounded by a brick wall topped with a timber fence, approximately four metres in height, together with Pine and Lime trees. Beyond this boundary are the rear gardens of residential properties on Phipps Road and Frederick Road. The site is surrounded by other employment uses within the campus including Chancellor Court to the south, Kingsgate to the north, and other two and three storey office buildings to the east. The site, the surrounding developed plots and the campus roads are structured by a maturing landscape framework.



NTS



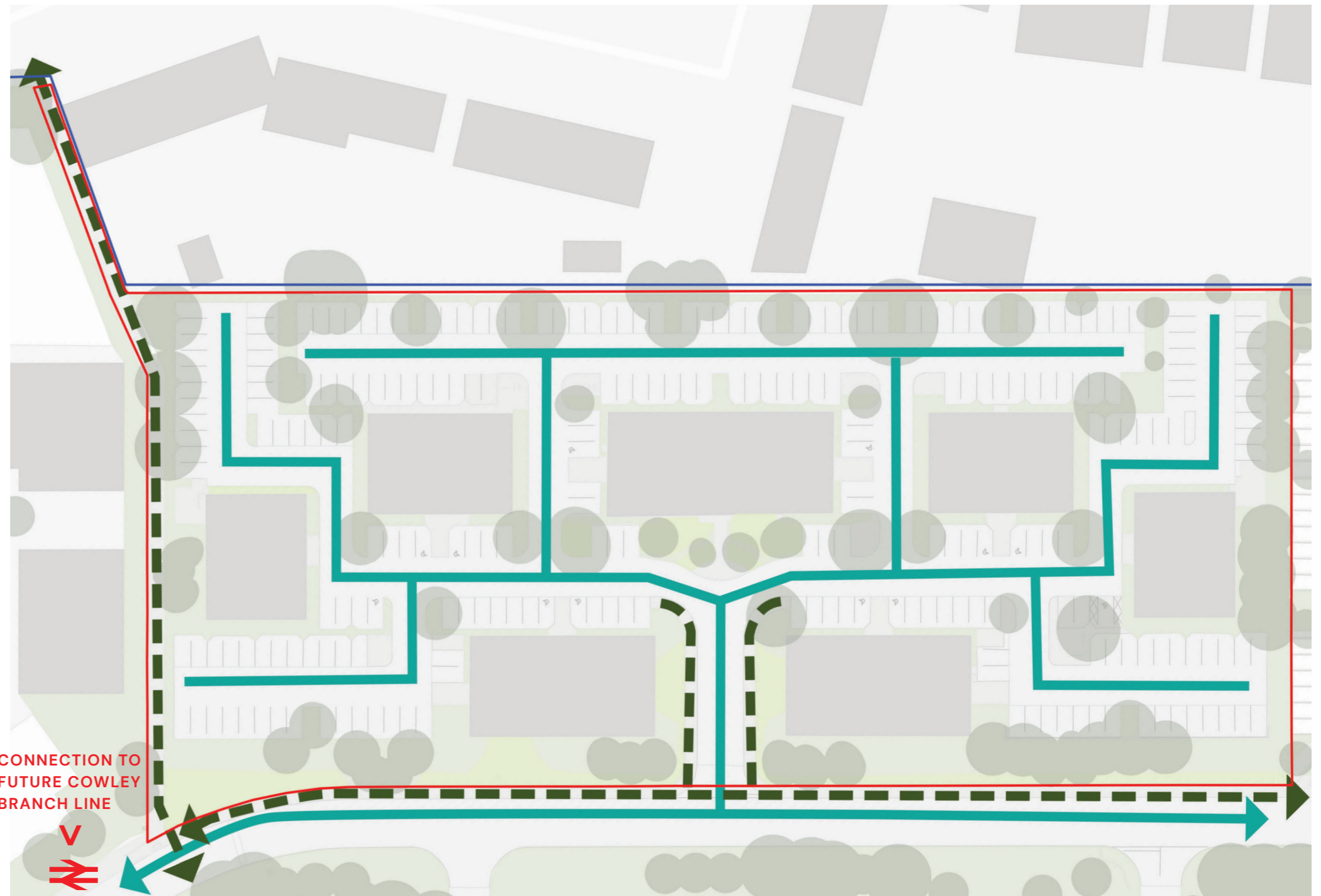
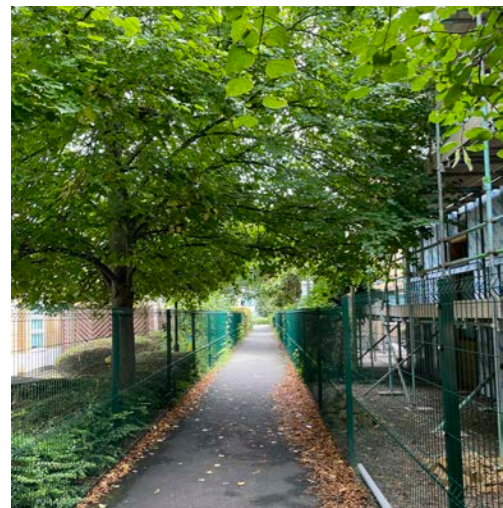
3.0 | EXISTING SITE

3.2 | EXISTING ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

Whilst the site benefits from private vehicular connections, access and movement for people is more limited.

Wider redevelopment at ARC Oxford offers an opportunity for enhanced connections, improved permeability through the main part of the site and encouragement of more sustainable forms of travel – such as walking and cycling. This can be tied in with several existing and proposed assets – such as the long-distance cycleway adjacent to the Eastern Bypass, the Cowley Branch Line and the Eastern Arc bus network.

More locally to Plot 4200, there is an opportunity for enhancements to the existing footpath on the southern edge of the site, linking to Boswell Road and bus stops on Barns Road and further links to Templars Square. High mesh fencing with gates and barriers at the footpath entrance give this tarmac path a narrow, enclosed character. Enhancements would include removal of the gates and barriers, with new fencing, lighting, planting, and paved plaza with seating.



CONNECTION TO
FUTURE COWLEY
BRANCH LINE

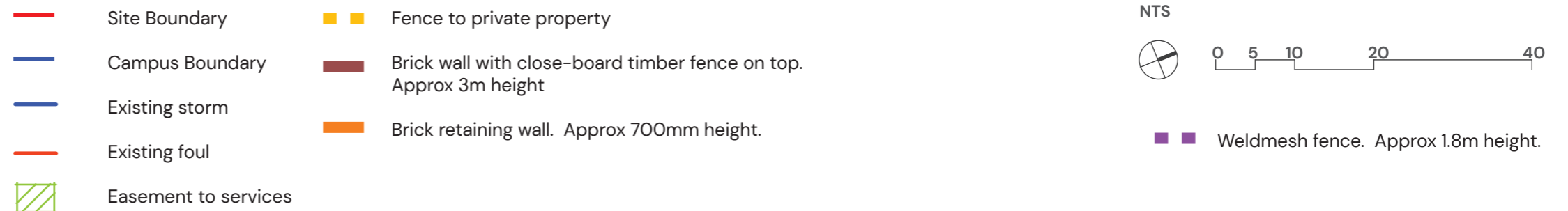
- Site Boundary
- Campus Boundary
- Existing tree
- - - Existing pedestrian route
- Existing vehicular route



3.0 | EXISTING SITE
3.3 | EXISTING SITE CONSTRAINTS

Existing storm and foul drains and an associated six metre wide easement zone are located within the site, lying close to the site's western and southern boundaries. No new tree planting is permitted over this easement.

Boundary treatments on site include 1.8m height green weldmesh fencing which borders either side of the southern footpath, a low retaining wall bordering a tree group in the site's north-east corner, and a brick wall with close-board timber fence on top, approximately 4 metre height, along the whole of the western boundary.



3.0 | EXISTING SITE
3.4 | EXISTING TREES

A full arboricultural survey assessment was carried out by Aspect Trees on 15 May 2023 including a baseline site survey and structured quality assessment of the existing trees to establish key arboricultural constraints to development. Refer to the submitted Tree Survey and Tree Constraints Plan prepared by Aspect Trees for more detailed information on the existing trees.

63 no. trees were surveyed within the application site with a further 7 no. trees surveyed outside the site area but close to boundary. There are no trees in or around the periphery of the site that are covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).

Trees around the site boundaries comprise primarily of Lime, Pine, Birch and Whitebeam, classed as 'Moderate' quality. Trees in the centre of the site are in planted beds close to the buildings and include Pine, Lime and Whitebeam, with small numbers of Cherry, Dogwood and Hornbeam. These trees are generally classed as 'Moderate'-'Low' quality. The largest trees are either early-mature or mature Limes and Pines, with the smaller Whitebeams and other mixed species classed semi-mature.

A summary of the condition of the trees is illustrated on the Existing Trees diagram opposite. The condition of each tree was assessed according to the following categories:

- Category B 54 no. trees plus 5 no. off-site trees
- Category C 9 no. trees plus 1 no. off-site tree
- Category U 1 no. off-site tree

