

PLANNING STATEMENT

PLOT 4200 – ARC OXFORD

Full Planning Application

Advanced Research Clusters GP Limited

February 2024

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Date: February 2024

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement (**‘Statement’**) has been prepared by Carter Jonas LLP (**‘Carter Jonas’**) on behalf of Advanced Research Clusters GP Limited (**‘ARC’**) in support of a Full Planning Application submitted to Oxford City Council (**‘the Council’**) in respect of Plot 4200, John Smith Drive, Oxford, OX4 2BH (**‘the Site’**) at ARC Oxford.

Background

- 1.2 Advanced Research Clusters (ARC) is Europe’s leading network of science and innovation clusters. Operating at the cutting edge of major knowledge economies, it supports businesses in the science and technology sector by creating the best possible environments for innovation, allowing them to thrive and make a difference in the world. ARC currently operates at various sites including ARC Uxbridge, ARC West London, Harwell Campus and ARC Oxford.
- 1.3 ARC is embarking on a mission to transform the ARC Oxford site into an Innovation Campus, utilising its expertise to cater for demand for high-quality space for those in the science and innovation sector looking to find a home in Oxfordshire’s prestigious and popular ecosystem. To progress towards this ambition, ARC is currently bringing forward several applications that will deliver (re)development of existing land to provide much-needed, high-quality, laboratory-enabled office space. This will be delivered alongside supporting amenities and spaces, as well as structural changes and enhancements to the way it is experienced that align with planned investment in the area.
- 1.4 The development proposed within this application (**‘the Proposed Development’**) relates to the redevelopment of Plot 4200 to provide a single laboratory-enabled office building alongside associated works with a description of development as follows:

“Demolition of existing office buildings and erection of 1no. laboratory-enabled office building for research and development with ancillary commercial space (all within use Class E). Provision of new access, enhancements to existing footpath, motor vehicle and cycle parking, landscaping and services infrastructure”

Structure of this Statement

- 1.5 This Statement has regard to, and should be read in conjunction with, the technical reports and plans submitted with the planning application, a list of which is set out in the Covering Letter.
- 1.6 The remainder of this Statement is structured as follows:

Section 2 (Site Context) introduces ARC Oxford and Plot 4200, as well as providing an overview of the surrounding areas and summarising relevant designations.

Section 3 (Site History) provides an overview of ARC Oxford’s site history, including relevant planning applications.

Section 4 (Proposed Development) provides further information on ARC’s ambitions at ARC Oxford, including a summary of the Proposed Development at Plot 4200.

Section 5 (Pre-Application Engagement) summarises engagement undertaken prior to the submission of this application with planning officers, the general public and other stakeholders.

Section 6 (Planning Policy Context) details the relevant legislative and planning policy context necessary to assess the Proposed Development, including any material considerations.

Section 7 (Assessment) assesses the Proposed Development with regard to the context outlined in Section 6.

Section 8 (Planning Obligations) outlines the planning obligations considered relevant to the Proposed Development, including a draft Heads of Terms.

Section 9 (Public Benefits) provides a summary of the economic, social and environmental benefits that would arise from the Proposed Development.

Section 10 (Conclusions) provides a summary of the Proposed Development and the reasons why planning permission should be granted.

2.0 SITE CONTEXT

ARC Oxford

2.1 ARC Oxford is an established employment site, extending to some 88 acres in the Cowley area of Oxford. It comprises land to the north and south of Garsington Road, to the west of the Eastern By-Pass, organised into development 'plots' within a landscaped, campus-style environment (**Figure 1**). These plots are largely developed and contain employment uses, though some are currently undeveloped.



Figure 1: ARC Oxford – Aerial View (Google Earth)

- 2.2 In total, ARC Oxford is home to approximately 50 businesses, including a high proportion focused on science and innovation. In addition to employment space, other uses include Oxford Factory (café/restaurant), Oxford Works (flexible workspace), a Premier Inn hotel and restaurant, David Lloyd Racket & Health Centre, Audi Car Showroom and a Bright Horizons day nursery.
- 2.3 ARC Oxford is bordered to the north, south and west by residential development within the suburb of Cowley. This transitions within the site and beyond the Eastern By-Pass to a more commercial and industrial character with the presence of uses including BMW's Plant Oxford and Oxford Retail Park.

Plot 4200

- 2.4 Plot 4200 (also known as Nash Court) lies in the southern part of ARC Oxford and is the subject of this planning application (**Figure 2**).



Figure 2: Plot 4200 (plan ref: NCO-SP-ZZ-RF-DR-A-0005)

- 2.5 Lying to the west of John Smith Drive, an internal private loop road within ARC Oxford, the Site extends to approximately 1.3ha in size and currently comprises 7 individual two storey office buildings with pitched roofs organised around areas of car parking and intermittent tree planting. It is surrounded by existing commercial uses within the ARC Oxford campus to the north, east and south. Residential development adjacent to ARC Oxford is located beyond the western boundary. A strong border exists between Plot 4200 and these residential areas in the form of a level change, as well as an existing high fence and landscaping.
- 2.6 Vehicular access to the Site is currently provided from John Smith Drive via a single entrance route to the centre of the plot. A total of 243 car parking spaces are currently provided around the buildings. An

existing private footpath extends along the southern side of Plot 4200, providing a route between ARC Oxford and neighbouring residential areas. This footpath is included within the application boundary.

- 2.7 At the time of submission, three of the existing buildings (4220; 4400; 4420) are currently occupied by businesses on leases due to expire. The remaining four buildings (4200; 4240; 4300; 4440) are vacant.

Designations

Ecology

- 2.8 There are no statutory designated sites of nature conservation interest within or adjacent to ARC Oxford or the Site. Lye Valley (SSSI) and Brasenose Wood and Shotover Hill (SSSI) lie approximately 1.5km north of ARC Oxford, with Oxford Meadows SAC located approximately 6km north-west.

Heritage

- 2.9 There are no designated or non-designated heritage assets within ARC Oxford or the Site.
- 2.10 The Temple Cowley Conservation Area lies to the north-west of ARC Oxford, approximately 450m from the Site but screened by intervening development. The Conservation Area includes the Grade II listed Nuffield Press as well as St Luke's Church, identified by the Council as a non-designated heritage asset. Oxford Stadium Conservation Area lies to the south-east of ARC Oxford, approximately 700m from the Site but again screened by intervening development. Hockmore Cottages (a non-designated heritage asset) is located approximately 250m to the south-west.

Flood Risk

- 2.11 ARC Oxford (including the Site) is located within Flood Zone 1 and is at 'very low risk' from surface water flooding.

3.0 SITE HISTORY

Cowley Motor Works

- 3.1 Historically, the land on which ARC Oxford now lies formed part of the Cowley Motor Works. Developed by William Morris through the early 20th century, the Motor Works became the location of production for 'Morris' brand motor vehicles, as well as the production of munitions and repair of aeroplanes during war time.
- 3.2 By middle of the 20th century, the Motor Works encompassed land extending to 210 acres in the area, which included a 'North' and 'South' works on either side of Garsington Road (the location of ARC Oxford today) as well as the 'Pressed Steel Works' to the east (now the location of much of Plant Oxford). The Motor Works grew to become a major employer in Oxford in the 20th century and heavily influenced the growth and suburbanisation of Cowley.
- 3.3 Following a period of company sales, industrial change and consequent restructuring and consolidation of manufacturing operations, the North and South works were closed and subsequently sold off in the

1990s. However, eventual owners BMW pledged to retain part of the Cowley Motor Works to produce its 'MINI' model, with production continuing on the former Pressed Steel Works today at Plant Oxford.

Oxford Business Park

- 3.4 In November 1992, outline planning permission (ref: 91/01303/NO) was granted the demolition of all buildings associated with the North and South Works of the Motor Works site to facilitate the construction of buildings containing 125,023sqm of B1 floorspace and 10,451sqm of C1 floorspace.
- 3.5 Over the last 30 years, it is this outline planning permission that guided the foundation of Oxford Business Park and most of the development as it exists today. Plot 4200 was developed in the 1990s under this outline planning application, providing office space via Reserved Matters application ref: 95/01818/NR.
- 3.6 Over its lifetime, the period in which Reserved Matters applications could be submitted was extended three times – via refs: 99/001351/VF; 04/00215/VAR; and 12/01424/EXT – with the latest extension (ref: 12/01424/EXT) being the last before expiring in December 2022.

ARC Oxford

- 3.7 ARC (backed by investors Brookfield) purchased and become majority landowner at Oxford Business Park in 2021 with its ownership including many (though not all) existing plots, as well as internal access roads and structure landscaping. In accordance with ARC's ambitions, Oxford Business Park was officially rebranded as ARC Oxford in 2022.
- 3.8 To address the strong demand for high-quality, lab-enabled office space that is significantly outpacing demand in the Oxfordshire region, ARC has begun to provide suitable space at ARC Oxford. Examples include the refurbishment and conversion of existing buildings at Chancellor Court (now occupied by Ivy Farm Technologies and OMass Therapeutics) and its proposals currently being determined at Plot 2000 (ref: 22/02880/RES).

4.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

ARC's Vision

The Need

- 4.1 The Government has established clear policy ambition to make the UK a global science and technology superpower, with the science and innovation sector a central part of the UK's economy strategy in the coming decades, with the potential to be a dynamo for economic growth.
- 4.2 Within this context, Oxford (alongside Oxfordshire more generally) has emerged as a preferred investment location for those within the sector. A core component of the UK's 'Golden Triangle', its attractiveness is founded in the calibre of its knowledge and research institutions, as well as the successful relationship it fosters with the wider business community. Research into 'spinouts' – companies that transform inventions developed by university research into commercial opportunities – has consistently ranked Oxford (via the University of Oxford) 1st in the UK in terms of number produced since records began in 2011 with clear daylight to competing organisations in London and Cambridge.

This has consequently amplified demand for suitable workspaces that contain laboratories or are laboratory-enabled, not only from the spinouts themselves but other stakeholders in the industry looking to benefit from the unique ecosystem Oxfordshire offers and the economic advantage of agglomeration through industrial clustering.

- 4.3 Despite clear demand and popularity, as well as being well-placed to be a global leader, it is well documented that the supply of space in Oxfordshire currently is insufficient to meet the needs of the market. Similar concerns have also been raised across the Golden Triangle more generally. Even with a pipeline of sites, supply remains tight and an overreliance on converted office stock will not accommodate the demand for high-quality, sustainable buildings with larger floorplates.
- 4.4 Accordingly, there is strategic need for Oxford to ensure it can maintain its forward supply of quality laboratory space. This would not only ensure active demand can be addressed in the short-medium term but ensure long-term supply is ready to capitalise on this growing market, preventing those in the sector going elsewhere in the UK or indeed around the world.

The Opportunity

- 4.5 The Oxford Economic Strategy 2022-2032 recognises ARC Oxford as a “*major economic node*” and an “*internationally, nationally and regionally important anchor institution*” in Oxford's economy. Recognised as an area for growth, amongst its guiding principles is a desire to “*increase the quantum and quality of commercial space on the city's planned and existing sites, with a focus on supporting Life Sciences, Low Carbon, Digital and knowledge driven sectors*”.
- 4.6 This is an ambition that ARC wholeheartedly supports and (driven by its own business expertise) has already begun to realise at ARC Oxford. However, as outlined above, there is a clear imperative to secure future supply to meet market requirements (including more, purpose-built facilities) as well as creating an environment that can foster innovation.
- 4.7 More specific to ARC Oxford, the existing campus is of a layout of its time. Whilst containing several positive aspects such as a rich structure landscaping to development plots, the existing site currently provides visual overdominance and preference to the vehicle and offers limited public realm that enables interaction. It is considered these could benefit from improvement to enhance the attractiveness and functional operation of the entire Campus as a localised cluster, with sufficient facilities and amenities provided to support the main employment use of the site.
- 4.8 Outside of market conditions, this area of Oxford is undergoing significant change. The reintroduction of rail passenger services along the Cowley Branch Line is recognised in the Local Plan as amounting to a strategic ‘Area of Change’ opportunity with the potential to make more efficient use of land through the intensification of sites as the sustainability of the location increases. This is vitally important in the context of employment land in Oxford more generally which is already recognised as being of finite amount and more pronounced heritage constraints in more central locations.

From Business Park to Innovation Campus

- 4.9 To realise the above opportunity, ARC is embarking on a process of transforming the existing ‘Business Park’ into an ‘Innovation Campus’. In addition to delivering high-quality employment space to meet the needs of those in relevant sectors, this includes providing supporting facilities and spaces and change to the experience of ARC Oxford as a whole that can enable the conditions for a 21st century science and innovation cluster.

- 4.10 To deliver on this ambition, ARC has therefore identified 5 general design principles within which it can “reprogram” the Campus:

Enhanced sense of arrival

Improve the Campus’s identity, sense of place and sense of arrival through architectural and landscape design of the highest quality, including creating new focal buildings and spaces which pay homage to its industrial past.

Enhanced connectivity

Improve existing and create new ways of movement to and within ARC Oxford, promoting walking and cycling routes and enabling a transition toward more active and sustainable forms of travel, including the Cowley Branch Line.

Enhanced landscape structure and public realm

Retain and further enhance the successful structure landscaping of plots within the Campus, whilst taking opportunities to include new, external amenity spaces.

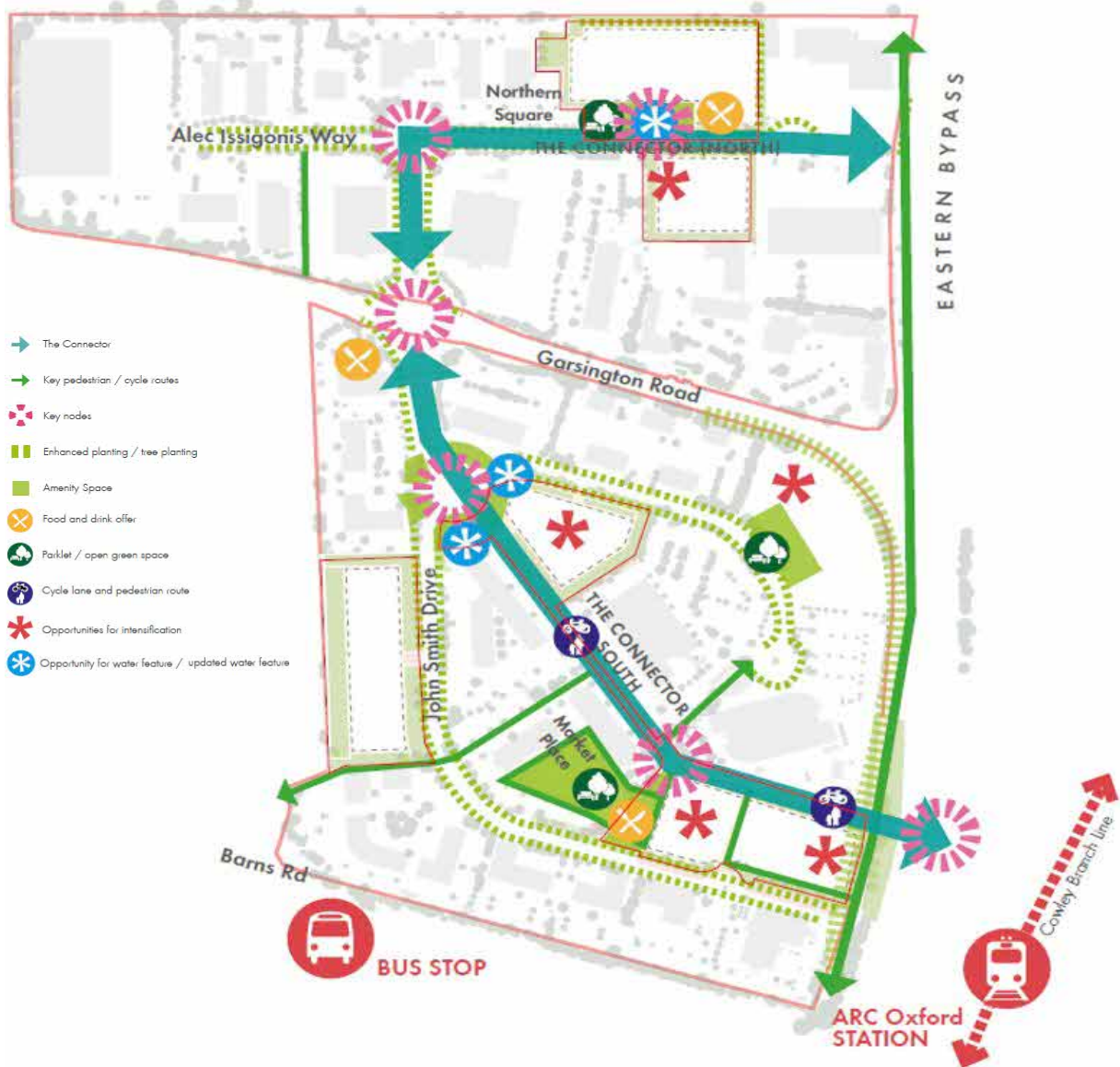
Supporting facilities and amenities

Provide supporting facilities and amenities necessary to support a successful and attractive employment space and contribute to a dynamic urban campus and living environment.

Planning for a sustainable future

Deliver social, environmental and economic value that contributes overall to the delivery of a sustainable development.

- 4.11 These principles are informing the basis from which new development is coming forward at ARC Oxford – including the Proposed Development at Plot 4200.



Plot 4200

4.12 This planning application relates to Plot 4200 and seeks planning permission for the following:

“Demolition of existing office buildings and erection of 1no. laboratory-enabled office building for research and development with ancillary commercial space (all within use Class E). Provision of new access, enhancements to existing footpath, motor vehicle and cycle parking, landscaping and services infrastructure”

4.13 A summary of the Proposed Development is provided below, with full details contained within the Design and Access Statement, Landscape Statement and submitted plans and documents supporting the application.

- 4.14 The existing buildings, designed for office use, are not considered suitable for conversion to meet the requirements of a life science. Their small, separated floorplates do not provide sufficient flexibility and efficiency required for modern lab/office organisation. Moreover, they are of inadequate massing, floor-to-ceiling heights and structural loading capable of supporting required laboratory equipment and provision of required plant.
- 4.15 Accordingly, the Proposed Development plans their demolition and replacement with a more suitably designed lab-enabled office building that can meet the needs of the market. This can be delivered alongside several enhancements to the urban design and experience of the plot that align with ARC's design principles.

Architectural Concept

- 4.16 A new, single building will be constructed on the Site inclusive of a central entrance and core, supported by two wings and stacked plantrooms either side, achieving an efficient and flexible design.
- 4.17 The core use of the building would be for laboratory and research facilities with supporting office space (Use Class E). At ground floor level, other usable space includes a double height reception area and dedicated Travel Hub. The latter, benefitting from a secondary rear entrance, will be inclusive of excellent end of journey facilities including secure storage, lockers, showers and changing facilities. Additional amenity space intended to provide for uses such as a gym and/or café is provided for on the second floor and third floor / roof terrace, providing supporting facilities for employees of the building in an ancillary fashion.
- 4.18 Taking the form of a ground plus two storey building, various architectural devices and treatments have been incorporated to tailor the massing, appearance and attractiveness of the new building in order to enhance the sense of arrival and respect its residential edge:

The siting of the new building footprint is set back further away from residential development abutting the western boundary compared to the existing built footprint, with car parking areas and landscaping provided to the rear to maintain a significant buffer.

A central entrance block, inclusive of a colonnaded double storey entrance that tops the building as a loggia, providing a partial crown. Only seen from within the Campus, this provides a clear sense of arrival, breaks up the linear wings and provides the opportunity for external building amenity.

Upper roof levels feature a roof top terrace to the front building, as well as plant, which have been reduced in scale and located away from residential development.

A secondary entrance to the rear is provided as a single storey and made subservient to the building main, limiting the impact of massing towards the residential edge.

A bespoke front and rear façade strategy provides an appropriate elevational response to its context, utilising materials that draw inspiration from the textures, tones and heritage of historic Oxford. These provide for a high-quality, yet sympathetic finish that respects and enhances the character of the area whilst fostering passive design with high sustainability credentials.

- 4.19 In addition to the main building, a number of external buildings required to support the use of the building for the life science sector are provided at the edges of the Site including 2 x shared gas/bin stores, a generator and a HV switch room.

Access and Parking

- 4.20 The Proposed Development would stop up the existing vehicular access to the centre of the plot, thus providing a focal entrance for pedestrians and a direct route to the building. Vehicular access will be provided from John Smith Drive via two priority junctions at the northern and southern extents of the Site, providing access to servicing areas and the parking area.
- 4.21 The Proposed Development is inclusive of significant enhancements to the existing footway/cycle way route connecting Boswell Road to ARC Oxford, encouraging an increase in walking and cycling and wider connectivity for ARC Oxford. The improvements include the removal of existing gates at the entrance to Boswell Road to allow for 24-hour access, as well as the installation of a re-paved plaza area providing a widened opening to the Campus alongside improvements to landscaping, extension of CCTV coverage, wayfinding and external lighting provision.
- 4.22 A total of 166 car parking spaces would be provided by the Proposed Development, 6 of which are blue badge parking spaces. This delivers a 77 space reduction in the number of spaces on the existing site (243) as part of an ambitious mode share to enable a transition to more sustainable modes of travel. 29% of spaces (43) will be provided with EV charging.
- 4.23 A total of 135 cycle parking spaces would be provided by the Proposed Development, provided in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council guidance. Utilising a combination of hoops and gas-powered stackers, these spaces will be contained within a secure and covered Travel Hub facility to the rear of the building, with additional spaces also provided by a separate cycle enclosure within the car park. A further 3 spaces in excess of County Council requirements will be provided to support other short-term uses.

Landscape Strategy

- 4.24 All existing trees to the site boundaries are proposed for retention, ensuring continuity of the structural landscaped character which presents as a positive feature of development plots throughout ARC Oxford. A central, greened entrance to the building frontage leads from John Smith Drive, outwardly facing the Campus and creating a clear sense of arrival at the building entrance. This includes seating within a planted setting. A planted plaza marks the building's rear entrance ensuring a well-defined pedestrian / cycle focus in the car park area with clear access into the building.
- 4.25 As noted above, the Proposed Development also includes improvements to the existing footpath immediately south of the plot, ensuring an enhanced sense of arrival with well-defined connections to the wider Campus amenities and local area. Landscape interventions include a new path leading into the western side of the plot, new boundary fencing, together with tree and groundcover planting. In addition, a new plaza at the end of the footpath will provide a gateway to the campus and a place to stop, sit and rest.
- 4.26 A planting scheme focuses on enhancing existing habitats and creating new habitats to support local biodiversity, including achieving a significant biodiversity net gain (70.35%) and a gain in tree canopy cover. Other landscape improvements include rain gardens to either side of the building entrance as part of an integrated SuDS strategy; planted rooftop amenity space and biodiversity green roof combined with solar PVs; and a range of tree species which aim to create a resilient landscape in the face of the climate emergency.

4.27 The table below provides a summary of key components of the development:

Gross External Area (GEA)	12,614sqm
Gross Internal Area (GIA)	9,829sqm
External buildings	5 – totalling 162sqm (GEA)
Height (Storeys)	Ground plus two storeys, plus additional rooftop amenity space and plant
Maximum Height	17.1m (89m AOD)
Cycle Spaces	138
Car Parking Spaces	166 (160 staff, 6 visitor)

4.28 Subject to receipt of planning permission, it is anticipated that the building would be constructed and operational from early 2026.

5.0 PRE-APPLICATION ENGAGEMENT

5.1 This Section details pre-application engagement undertaken with relevant stakeholders prior to the submission of this planning application.

Pre-Application Discussions

5.2 Since 2021, ARC has engaged in detailed pre-application discussions with Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council officers regarding the delivery of various proposals at ARC Oxford predicated on the Vision set out in Section 4.

5.3 Initially, redevelopment of Plot 4200 was programmed to be included within a wider outline application seeking consent for the (re)development of a number of existing plots as well as and other structural improvements and enhancements founded in the Vision – most notably of which is a new landscaped-green spine through the heart of the Campus known as ‘The Connector’. Pre-application discussions for these proposals took place throughout 2023 with City and County Council officers, including an Oxford Design Review Panel meeting (see below).

5.4 In August 2023, a decision was made to remove Plot 4200 from the outline planning application above, instead to be delivered as a full planning application. This was decided in the interests of bringing forward proposals to market more quickly to deliver on the need for lab-enabled office space, as well as its lesser reliance on the detail of The Connector.

5.5 As a separate planning application, 3 pre-application meetings took place with Oxford City Council officers on 17 October 2023, 29 November 2023 and 5 January 2024. These meetings focussed on a detailed design of the proposals and yielded design development and constructive feedback from Council officers that has influenced the submitted design and contents of this planning application, further detail on which is set out in the DAS. These comments and the project team’s responses are set out below.

Oxford Design Review Panel

5.6 As noted above, high-level principles for Plot 4200 inclusive of built form parameters were shared with the Oxford Design Review Panel on 6th July 2023 as part of wider discussions regarding forthcoming development at ARC Oxford. No specific comments were received in respect of proposals at Plot 4200. Other comments relevant to other development coming forward at ARC Oxford will be addressed with those applications.

Public Consultation

5.7 Prior to submission of this planning application, ARC undertook a wider consultation exercise with the general public and key stakeholders regarding its detailed proposals for Plot 4200 which was presented alongside the wider proposed changes to the ARC Oxford site. Detailed information of this consultation is set out in the Statement of Community Involvement.

5.8 This consultation exercise yielded no comments from the general public relevant to Plot 4200, though comments were received regarding justification for the demolition of the existing buildings and the acceptability of car and cycle provision from Oxford Civic Society. These comments and the project team’s responses are set out below.

Design Team Response

5.9 A summary of issues raised during pre-application engagement and the project team’s response is provided in the table below.

Comment	Response
<p>The planning application should clarify how the Proposed Development relates back to ARC’s ‘Vision’ for ARC Oxford.</p>	<p>As detailed in Section 4, ARC has established 5 general design principles through which it can “reprogram” ARC Oxford into a 21st century science and innovation cluster in forthcoming development. ARC is seeking to focus development in these design principles as it brings forward the (re)development of several plots. How Plot 4200 responds to these design principles is summarised below:</p> <p><u>Enhanced sense of arrival</u></p> <p>The Proposed Development introduces a new building of high-quality architecture, providing an improvement on the existing, dated architecture currently on site. This includes a reconfiguration of the site layout that relocates car parking to the rear and moves vehicular access points to the perimeter, enhancing the experience of the pedestrian. Enhancements to the footpath include a new plaza at its southern end, beneficial to all moving through the Campus.</p>

	<p><u>Enhanced connectivity</u></p> <p>The proposals are inclusive of enhancements to the existing footpath adjacent to the site, with interventions to make it easier and more enjoyable for pedestrians/cyclists moving through the site. This includes the enabling of 24-hour access, improved landscaping and lighting and provision of a separate, gated and controlled entrance for users of the building. High end-of journey facilities are provided, with cycle parking provision in exceedance of the City Council’s standards, are provided.</p> <p><u>Enhanced landscape structure and public realm</u></p> <p>The scheme provides a rich external landscaping scheme to the site, including the retention of perimeter trees that strengthen existing structure landscaping. Alongside further planting, the Proposed Development results in a Biodiversity Net Gain of 70.35% and a net gain in tree canopy cover. New spaces are created in the form of a plaza at the end of the footpath and spaces to the front of the building with seating.</p> <p><u>Supporting facilities and amenities</u></p> <p>The Proposed Development is inclusive of internal, ancillary commercial space with the potential of supporting such as a café or gym to support employees at the site.</p> <p><u>Planning for a sustainable future</u></p> <p>The Proposed Development is founded on high standards of sustainability. This Statement summarises the public benefits of this application in Section 9.</p>
<p>Could the buildings be reused / justification for the demolition of the building should be provided and consideration should be given to the re-use of materials.</p>	<p>The potential reuse of the existing buildings to accommodate a lab-enabled use was explored as part of design development but was subsequently ruled out. Detail of this exercise is provided in the Design and Access Statement.</p> <p>With demolition required, ARC is committed to minimising the amount of waste resulting from redevelopment and the principles of a site waste management plan are set out in the Design and Access Statement.</p>
<p>The potential for a new connection from Bailey Road should be explored.</p>	<p>The potential for a new connection from Bailey Road through the centre of the plot was explored by the design team but was ultimately ruled out due to differences in elevation and security requirements. Instead, the Proposed Development is inclusive of</p>

	<p>several enhancements to the existing footpath to the southern boundary of the plot which enhance movement and sense of arrival into the Site – including works to enable its 24 hour passage alongside improved landscaping treatments, lighting and security.</p>
<p>The massing and appearance of the building should consider impacts on the residential amenity of neighbouring residents.</p>	<p>The siting, massing and treatment of the building has been meticulously discussed with Oxford City Council officers as part of the pre-application process. Following these discussions, the building (as measured from the main wings) is positioned 33.7m away from the rear gardens of the closest shared boundary with residential properties to the north – an increase of 16.3m further away from the line of the existing buildings and therefore offering a significant improvements.</p> <p>Other changes incorporated include increased articulation to the rear elevation (including a stepping in of upper floors); alterations to the size, positioning and materials of the plant compound; and a façade design to the rear which includes a central mullion / fin to windows which works to reduce overlooking and the amount of glazing.</p> <p>The planning application is supported by drawings within the DAS and a Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment.</p>
<p>The massing and appearance of the proposals should be 'verified' in both local and longer distance views, including how this impacts on the historic core.</p>	<p>A total of 13 views were agreed with Oxford City Council and have been used to inform and assess the Proposed Development.</p> <p>These views have informed the assessments set out in the submitted Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment.</p>
<p>An acceptable level of car and cycling provision should be provided in lieu of the Cowley Branch Line and Eastern Arc bus services.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development is supported by 166 car parking spaces and 139 cycle parking spaces.</p> <p>The 166 car parking spaces represent a significant reduction from the number currently on site (243) and has been calculated based on a mode share accommodating 40% of assumed occupants in the building at any one time. This complies with the required approach of Policy M3 and this mode share has been agreed with Oxfordshire County Council in pre-application discussions. This mode share applies in the event the building is operational at any time before the Cowley Branch Line is open and planning obligations will be secured to bring about a reduction in the number of spaces as public transport improvements are made.</p> <p>The Proposed Development provides 139 cycle parking spaces, a level in alignment with the higher standards set by Oxfordshire County Council and therefore in excess of the standards set by Oxford City Council.</p>

6.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the determination of planning applications must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This Section outlines the relevant planning policy context for determination of the planning application.

Development Plan

6.2 The Development Plan of the Council consists of the Oxford Local Plan 2036 (adopted June 2022) and supporting Policies Map. A number of strategic policies are relevant to ARC Oxford and are subsequently listed below. Other, more detailed policies are outlined and used to assess the Proposed Development in Section 8.

Local Plan Strategy

6.3 **Policy S1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)** confirms the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), proactively working with applicant to find solutions that secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Planning applications that accord with the Local Plan will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.4 The Local Plan's strategy is focussed around 7 overarching aims and associated objectives, which as relevant to the Proposed Development, includes:

- Building on Oxford's economic strengths and ensuring prosperity and opportunities for all;
- Making wise use of our limited resources and securing a good quality local environment;
- Protecting and enhancing Oxford's green setting, open spaces and waterways;
- Enhancing Oxford's unique built environment; and
- Ensuring efficient movement into and around the city.

Policy E1: Employment Sites

6.5 The Local Plan designates ARC Oxford as a Category 1 employment site.

6.6 Within such sites, **Policy E1 (Employment Sites)** confirms planning permission will not be granted for development that results in any loss of employment floorspace. It also adds that non-employment uses will be permitted in certain circumstances, including other complementary uses that support an employment site's successful economic function.

6.7 On employment sites generally, Policy E1 also confirms their intensification, modernisation and regeneration for employment purposes will be granted if it can be demonstrated that the proposal makes the best and most efficient use of land and does not cause unacceptable environmental impacts and effects.

Policy SP10: Oxford Business Park and the Cowley Branch Line ‘Area of Change’

- 6.8 The Local Plan identifies several ‘Areas of Change’ (AOC) in Oxford, described as ‘*areas of the city where significant change is expected or best directed*’.
- 6.9 ARC Oxford lies adjacent to the ‘Cowley Branch Line’ AOC, identified due to the potential offered from the proposed opening up of passenger services along the Cowley Branch Line. **Policy AOC7 (Cowley Branch Line)** states planning permission will be granted for new development within the AOC where it takes opportunities to deliver elements, where relevant, including enhanced tree cover and making more efficient use of space through intensification of existing sites, such as rationalisation of car parking.
- 6.10 Within the AOC, ARC Oxford (referred to as Oxford Business Park) is subject to a site-specific allocation. **Policy SP10 (Oxford Business Park)** states planning permission will be granted for B1 and B2 employment uses, with other complementary uses considered on their merits. It adds that opportunities should be sought to enhance and promote more sustainable travel modes to the site, recognising at paragraph 9.75 that ‘*access to the site would be enhanced considerably with the opening up of the Cowley Branch Line to passengers*’.
- 6.11 Other relevant policies of the Local Plan are outlined and used to assess the Proposed Development in Section 8.

Material Considerations

- 6.12 There are a number of relevant documents considered material to the determination of this planning application.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 6.13 The sixth revision of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2023 and sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- 6.14 Of particular relevance to this application are the following provisions:
- Paragraph 7** confirms the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. **Paragraph 8** adds that sustainable development consists of economic, social and environmental objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives. **Paragraph 9** goes on to confirm that planning decisions should guide development towards sustainable solutions, taking into account local circumstances such as character, needs and opportunities.
- Paragraph 85** confirms 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.
- Paragraph 87** states planning policies should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors – including making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations.
- Paragraph 131** stipulates that the creation of high-quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what development should achieve.

Paragraph 135 states that planning decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping, are sympathetic to local character and the surrounding environment, and establish and maintain a strong sense of place using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places.

National Planning Practice Guidance

- 6.15 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) website was launched on 6 March 2014 and replaced and consolidated around 7,000 pages of planning guidance. PPG provides further detail and guidance on a wide range of technical issues to the provisions of the NPPF and should be read in conjunction with it. Relevant provisions have guided the preparation of this planning application.

Technical Advice Notes (TANs)

- 6.16 The Council has a variety of TANs which provide additional guidance to support the policies of the adopted Development Plan. Those of relevance to the proposal have been considered in the preparation of this planning application and include:
- TAN 2: Employment and Skills;
 - TAN 3: Waste Storage;
 - TAN 5: Health Impact Assessments;
 - TAN 7: High Buildings;
 - TAN 8: Biodiversity;
 - TAN 9: Green Spaces;
 - TAN 12: Car and Bicycle Parking; and
 - TAN 14: Sustainable Design and Construction.

Oxfordshire County Council Parking Standard for New Development (October 2022)

- 6.17 Oxfordshire County Council has recently adopted updated parking standards, replacing previous parking guidance contained in “Transport for New Development Parking Standards for New Residential Developments” (December 2015).
- 6.18 This document sets out the County’s approach to parking for all new development proposals across Oxfordshire and is to be used to inform the design process of proposals.

Emerging Oxford Local Plan 2040

Oxford Local Plan 2040

- 6.19 The Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan, which will guide development in Oxford to 2040.
- 6.20 At the time of submission, the Council is recently consulted on a Regulation 19 version of the document. ARC Oxford remains a site-specific allocation for employment uses akin to that of the adopted Local Plan. According to the latest Local Development Scheme (2023-2028), the plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination in March 2024 before adoption by March 2025.

- 6.21 With regard to paragraph 48 of the NPPF, this Statement does not apply weight to its content instead assessing the Proposed Development with full regard to the adopted Development Plan.

7.0 ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 7.1 This Section of the Statement assesses the Proposed Development in consideration of relevant national and local planning policy.

Environmental Impact Assessment

- 7.2 The redevelopment of Plot 4200 was included as part of wider proposals at ARC Oxford subject to an EIA Screening Request in February 2023. The Council issued a Screening Opinion in respect of these proposals on 17th March 2023 where it concluded this development cumulatively would not constitute EIA development. A copy of this decision is included at **Appendix A**.
- 7.3 Whilst the Proposed Development in isolation would constitute applicable development in its own right under Schedule 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (by virtue of its nature as a non-residential urban development project on a site exceeding more than 1 hectare), it is not considered that the Proposed Development in isolation would lead to an alternative conclusion to the one reached in the above Screening Opinion and is not considered to have likely significant effects that would require an Environmental Impact Assessment under Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations.

Principle of Development

- 7.4 The Local Plan sets out Oxford's employment strategy which recognises the importance of the city particularly in the knowledge economy but also seeks to achieve sustainable growth by balancing the supply of labour, housing and infrastructure. Oxford Business Park is designated a Category 1 employment site by Policy E1, which seeks to safeguard existing employment sites and resist the loss of protected employment sites.
- 7.5 Plot 4200 (as part of ARC Oxford / Oxford Business Park) is also specifically allocated for development within Policy SP10, which states that planning permission will be granted for B1 and B2 employment uses at Oxford Business Park.
- 7.6 Notwithstanding this, the NPPF encourages weight to be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, and in particular in areas with high levels of productivity which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential (paragraph 85). Decisions should recognise the specific locational requirements of different sectors, including making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge industries (paragraph 87).
- 7.7 The principle of the Proposed Development is therefore established and should be supported.

Design (including Townscape and Heritage)

Relevant Local Policy

- 7.8 **Policy DH1 (High quality design and placemaking)** states that planning permission will only be granted for development of a high quality design that creates or enhances local distinctiveness, meeting key design objectives and principles for delivering high quality development.
- 7.9 **Policy RE2 (Efficient Use of Land)** states that planning permission will only be granted where development proposals make efficient use of land. Development proposals must make best use of site capacity, in a manner compatible with the site itself, the surrounding area and broader considerations of the needs of Oxford, as well as addressing the following criteria:
- the density must be appropriate for the use proposed;
 - the scale of development, including building heights and massing, should conform to other policies in the plan. It is expected that sites at transportation hubs and within the city and district centres in particular will be capable of accommodating development at an increased scale and density, although this will also be encouraged in all other appropriate locations where the impact of so doing is shown to be acceptable;
 - opportunities for developing at the maximum appropriate density must be fully explored; and
 - built form and site layout must be appropriate for the capacity of the site.
- 7.10 **Policy DH2 (Views and building heights)** states the Council will seek to retain significant views both within Oxford and from outside, in particular to and from the historic skyline. Planning permission will be granted for developments of appropriate height or massing, as demonstrated by ensuring: design choices regarding height and massing have a clear design rationale and the impacts will be positive; any design choice to design buildings to a height that would impact on character should be fully explained (with regard to the High Buildings TAN; and demonstrating how proposals have been designed to have a positive impact through their massing, orientation, the relation of the building to the street, and the potential impact on important views including both in to the historic skyline and out towards Oxford's green setting.
- 7.11 **Policy DH3 (Designated heritage assets)** states planning permission will be granted for development that respects and draws inspiration from Oxford's unique historic environment. Where the setting of an asset is affected, a heritage assessment should include a description of the extent to which the setting contributes to the significance of the asset, as well as an assessment of impact of the proposal on that setting.
- 7.12 **Policy DH5 (Local Heritage Assets)** states planning permission will only be granted for development affecting a local heritage asset or its setting if it is demonstrated that due regard has been given to the impact on the asset's significance and its setting and that it is demonstrated that the significance of the asset and its conservation has informed the design of the proposed development.
- 7.13 **Policy DH7 (External servicing features and stores)** states that planning permission will be granted where it can be demonstrated that external servicing features have been designed as an integrated part of the overall design or are positioned to minimise their impact.
- 7.14 **Policy H14 (Privacy, daylight and sunlight)** states that planning permission will only be granted for new development that provides reasonable privacy, daylight and sunlight for occupants of both existing and new homes and does not have an overbearing effect on existing homes.

Assessment

General Design

- 7.15 A Design and Access Statement (DAS) prepared by Spratley & Partners has been submitted with the planning application.
- 7.16 The existing buildings are not considered suitable for conversion to life science buildings due to their existing structures and separated form, as well as an inability to support the required supporting equipment (e.g. plant). Accordingly, the Proposed Development plans their demolition and replacement with a more suitably designed lab-enabled office building that can meet the needs of the market.
- 7.17 The design of the Proposed Development has maximised optimal efficiency and attractiveness to those in the life science sector, whilst remaining mindful of its location and relevant constraints, particularly, the neighbouring residential uses to the east.
- 7.18 The height, scale and massing of the building has been the subject of detailed pre-application discussions with the Council and is now included of several interventions aimed at ensuring the building appropriately sits in its context. The building is positioned 33.7m from the shared boundary of the rear gardens on Bailey Road, Frederick Road and Phipps Road. This represents a significant increase of 16.3m from the line of the existing buildings. Further, the building is subject to a number of articulation interventions to mitigate the impact of the building (including privacy/overlooking) – including the stepping up of massing at upper levels, the introduction of central mullions/fins to break-up glazing; and the placement and design of plant which works to ensure the plant reads as part of the building.
- 7.19 To confirm the impacts of the building's massing, a Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment prepared by GIA has been submitted with the planning application. This concludes, with reference to BRE Guidelines, that the massing of the proposal would not lead to noticeable or measurable daylight, sunlight or overshadowing impacts for all of the pertinent neighbours surrounding the site.
- 7.20 The Proposed Development delivers enhancements to existing routes and points of access, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. The pedestrianisation of the front of the buildings works to create a new entrance plaza, reducing the visual overdominance of the car on arrival, with access roads pushed to the site's periphery and the vast majority of car parking located to the rear of the building. The Proposed Development is inclusive of best-in-class end of journey facilities.
- 7.21 The Proposed Development delivers improvements and enhancements to the Boswell Road footpath, resulting in a safer, easier and more pleasurable entrance into the Campus for all users. This includes measures to enable its 24-hour use, the inclusion of a more direct connection for cyclists through a controlled gate and the creation of a new entrance plaza at the southern end which enhances the sense of arrival into the Campus and creates a new node for future connections at ARC Oxford as the site develops.
- 7.22 Externally, the landscaping design has respected and retained the existing structure landscaping which works successfully across ARC Oxford plots – alongside the introduction of attractive external spaces which will work to promote social interaction and health and wellbeing. This has been subject to improvement with appropriate species planting and treatments which contribute to biodiversity – as detailed later.
- 7.23 The building is inclusive of external servicing structures including bin/gas stores, a generator and a HV switch room. These have been positioned at the peripheries of the site and treated with timber cladding to lessen their visual impact.

Townscape

- 7.24 As agreed with the Council during pre-application discussions, the impact of the Proposed Development has been assessed via a Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA). This has been prepared by Macregor Smith and submitted with the planning application. The TVIA provides an assessment of the townscape and visual effects
- 7.25 From a townscape perspective, the proposals perpetuate the positive facets of Character Area 8A, Cowley Motor Works and offer an improvement. In a character area dominated by big box retail, commerce and industry, there is little architectural innovation or regard for streetscape and public realm. The business park currently provides a positive digression with a more thoughtful approach, including featuring structural landscape throughout, and the proposals result in a positive addition founded in this context.
- 7.26 The closest visual receptors are those within the immediate surrounds of the plot which are considered of low sensitivity due to their localised nature, experienced only by workers, visitors or those transiting the site. The proposals would introduce a more vibrant and inviting area in which to work. The retention of all boundary trees continues the green edge to the plot but interface with the wider business park is reinforced with a more engaging building frontage which offers an improved sense of arrival. The impacts on these receptors are considered positive.
- 7.27 Some visual receptors at an intermediate distance are considered to be highly sensitive due to the presence of residential development. However, these impacts are limited to properties immediately backing onto the Site. Whilst the height of the building has increased presence, this is mitigated by carefully considered architectural interventions to the buildings positioning, massing and elevational articulation and calm, sensitive façade treatments – with further mitigation offered in the way of layers of planting which screen the building.
- 7.28 The long-distance receptors are all highly sensitive and susceptible to change. However, at a significant distance from the site, changes are barely perceptible element within a field of vision that contains many prominent elements and details in the skyline. Nonetheless, the assessment has had regard to the tests of visual obstruction, visual competition, skylining and change of character set out in the High Buildings TAN and confirms that there is no change to any of the four principal visual characteristics of Oxford.
- 7.29 Overall, the proposals have been assessed as having nominal impacts with some beneficial effects. The assessment has not identified any aspect that would merit further analysis of mitigation measures. The scheme offers a positive addition to the locality, raising the design quality of the business park and taking opportunity to reinforce and promote Oxfords long standing position as a centre of pioneering research, science and innovation.

Heritage

- 7.30 A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) prepared by Montagu Evans has been submitted with the planning application.
- 7.31 The HIA considers, with regard to a number of verified views, the potential for the Proposed Development to impact upon the setting and therefore significance of a number of designated and non-designated heritage assets.
- 7.32 The HIA finds the Proposed Development results in no harm to the ability to appreciate or experience the architectural and historic significance of the Grade II listed Nuffield Press building, nor the character and appearance (significance) of the Temple Cowley Conservation Area. Moreover, the HIA considers the proposals cause no harm to the ability to experience or appreciate the character and appearance of the Central (City and University) Conservation Area and likewise harm to the setting of the highly graded

listed buildings within the city centre, including historic spires and the interrelationship between them discernible from elevated views surrounding the city. Similarly, no harm is found in the ability to appreciate the significance, character or appearance of the Oxford Stadium Conservation Area. Finally, the Proposed Development is not considered to cause harm to the setting, or indeed significance, of the non-designated heritage assets of Hockmore Cottages.

Conclusions

- 7.33 In conclusion, it is considered that the overall design of the Proposed Development – including its scale, height and massing – has resulted in a high-quality development that has made an efficient use of land and followed the principles of good design. It is considered of its constraints and has been appropriately defined to sit comfortably within the local and wider townscape context. This additionally results in no harm to Oxford’s designated and non-designated heritage assets and thusly complies with Policy DH1, DH2, DH3, DH5, DH7 and RE1 of the Development Plan.

Energy and Sustainability

Relevant Local Policy

- 7.34 **Policy RE1 (Sustainable Design and Construction)** states that planning permission will only be granted where it can be demonstrated that sustainable design principles have been incorporated. Furthermore, non-residential development proposals are required to meet BREEAM ‘Excellent’ standard in addition to achieving a 40% reduction in carbon emissions compared with the 2013 Building Regulations (or future equivalent legislation) compliant base. Non-residential development proposals are also required to meet the minimum standard of four credits in respect of water efficiency under the BREEAM assessment.

Assessment

Energy

- 7.35 An Energy Statement has been prepared by Clancy Consulting and submitted with the planning application. It demonstrates how the Proposed Development follows the principles of sustainable design and utilises the energy hierarchy to make the fullest contribution to minimising carbon dioxide emissions.
- 7.36 To **be lean**, a number of passive design measures have been incorporated within the proposals, including an enhanced building fabric possessing lower U-Values (i.e. offering better insulation). Other measures include the planting of trees, incorporation of green spaces, adoption of an efficient building services system and the use of design interventions to minimise solar gains in some areas, including the reception areas. These measures will ultimately reduce the demand for energy from the outset.
- 7.37 To **be clean**, incorporation into a heat network has been considered, but ruled out, due to the isolation of ARC Oxford from potential options. It is proposed that building services will utilise an all-electric approach to its energy need and will not use gas CHP. This puts it a position to take advantage of the decarbonisation of grid electricity and meet the ‘nearly zero carbon emissions’ standard within Part L 2021. Therefore, the Proposed Development has maximised its potential to be clean in the energy it sources.
- 7.38 To **be green**, the Proposed Development includes provision for a new, roof photovoltaic system with space for approximately 1,212m² of panel area facing east-west at an inclination of 10°. This will provide

approximately 263kWp, or annual output of 212 MWh of electricity. Air source heat pumps are also proposed for both space heating and domestic hot water production.

- 7.39 As a result of the measures above, the new building is predicted to achieve a 45.4% reduction in carbon emissions against Part L of the Building Regulations 2021 – in excess of the requirements set by Policy RE1. This will be monitored from the current design stage through to the end building to confirm the building meets this requirement. Once operational, end use energy metering will be included to record at least 90% of the utility meter energy against an end use category, along with sub-metering on the PV system. This will include the provision of automatic meter reading and data collection facilities.

BREEAM

- 7.40 A BREEAM Pre-Assessment report has been prepared by Sustainably Built and submitted with the planning application. This demonstrates a baseline score of 79.7% for the building, providing a substantial margin of almost 10% above the BREEAM Excellent requirement (70%). This includes the targeting of 4 credits under Wat 01 (Water Consumption) in accordance with Policy RE1 of the Local Plan.

Managing the Impact of Development

Relevant Local Policy

- 7.41 **Policy RE7 (Managing the impact of development)** states planning permission will only be granted for new development that ensures the amenity of communities, occupiers and neighbours are protected during the construction and operational phases.
- 7.42 **Policy RE6 (Air Quality)** states that planning permission will only be granted where the impact of new development on air quality is mitigated and where exposure to poor air quality is minimised or reduced.
- 7.43 **Policy RE8 (Noise and Vibration)** states planning permission will not be granted for development proposals that will generate unacceptable noise and vibration impacts.
- 7.44 **Policy RE9 (Land Quality)** stipulates requirements for applications where proposals would be affected by contamination or where contamination may present a risk to the surrounding environment. These include details of investigations carried out to assess the nature and extent of contamination and possible impacts on the development and future users, biodiversity and the natural and built environment; and detailed mitigation measures.
- 7.45 **Policy V8 (Utilities)** states planning permission will not be granted where there is insufficient evidence on utilities capacity to support the development and that the capacity will be delivered to meet the needs of the development.
- 7.46 **Policy V9 (Digital Infrastructure)** states planning permission will be granted for major developments where they are served by full fibre broadband.

Assessment

- 7.47 This planning application is supported by several documents that assess the impact of the Proposed Development with regard to potential impacts at amenity and managing the impact of the development.

Air Quality

- 7.48 An Air Quality Assessment (AQA) has been prepared by Dragonfly Consulting and submitted with the planning application. It assesses air quality impacts resulting from the construction and operational phases, including dust emissions and consideration of additional vehicle emissions.
- 7.49 During the construction phase, the Proposed Development has been identified as a medium risk site for dust soiling effects and PM₁₀ concentrations related to demolition and construction and a low-to-negligible risk site during earthworks and trackout. In line with Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) guidance, the AQA recommends the implementation of appropriate dust and pollution control measures to be secured prior to commencement of any work taking place on Site and these have been incorporated within the submitted Construction Management Plan (see below). Subject to the implementation of these measures, the AQA concludes the impacts associated with the construction phase of the Proposed Development are likely to be insignificant.
- 7.50 For the operational phase, the AQA has considered the air quality effects from energy generation and fume cupboards, as well as the predicted impact of on local air quality resulting from a change in vehicular trips on the existing road network. The AQA concludes that a negligible impact on NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} concentrations at existing sensitive receptors would result during the operational phase of the Proposed Development.

Construction

- 7.51 An Outline Construction Management Plan (CMP) has been prepared by Stantec and submitted with the planning application.
- 7.52 The CMP details the expected construction and demolition traffic expected to occur during the construction period and provides a framework for future contractors to manage construction traffic impacts. This document will be updated and completed by the appointed contractor if planning permission is received and updated during the construction process where necessary.

Ground Conditions / Land Contamination

- 7.53 A Land Contamination Assessment (LCA) has been prepared by Baynham Meikle and submitted with the planning application.
- 7.54 Given the current use of the Site, the LCA finds it unlikely that any significant contamination will be found on the current site. Updated investigation works have confirmed that no evidence of significant contamination has been discovered that is likely to present a risk to the future site user. As such, no remediation measures are deemed necessary for the Proposed Development.
- 7.55 The LCA does, however, identify the Site as being at risk for transmission of pollution into groundwater. The LCA therefore recommends that if discharge of surface water is confirmed to be via infiltration techniques then protection measures are to be considered such as introduction of clean stone capping, with geotextile marker layers to the porous sub-base in order to allow discharge of treated surface water into the ground.
- 7.56 The LCA further recommends – in the interests of mitigating against unidentified, localised areas of contamination that may exist at the Site – that an appropriate ‘hotspot’ protocol should be in place for ground workers to act upon should such contamination be identified during the construction process. It also advises that trial trenches may be required to further investigate the site, due its previous use as the siting of a former factory in order to ensure any obstructions are removed to facilitate the groundworks operations.

- 7.57 ARC is willing to invite a condition in these terms which would ensure possible impacts on the development and future users, biodiversity and the natural and built environment can be understood and detailed mitigation measures implemented.

Lighting

- 7.58 A Lighting Assessment, accompanied by an External Lighting Drawing (plan ref: P2000-SPIE-XX-XXDR-E-6350), has been prepared by Dalkia and submitted with the planning application.
- 7.59 The lighting objectives of the Proposed Development have sought to provide adequate illuminance whilst mitigating light pollution and light trespass, limiting potential impacts on ecology and minimising energy consumption.
- 7.60 Externally at ground level, the lighting design will install the following luminaires. Each will utilise a colour temperature of 3000K to give a warmer feel whilst providing a less harsh environment should bats ever habit near the plot. All external lighting will be controlled centrally via a programmable time block lighting control system which will be zoned to allow different areas to be controlled independently:
- 36 x column mounted luminaires (upon 4m columns) to illuminate the main roadway from John Smith Drive to the building, car park and side walkways;
 - 1 x Multi head columns with 14 x luminaires to illuminate the central, front and rear walkways;
 - 9 x downlights installed to the underside of the building canopies; and
 - 29 x Pathway bollards (1m high) to illuminate the pathways around the building and the footpath adjacent to the plot.
- 7.61 The Assessment confirms that average illuminance and Uniformity requirements as detailed within British Standard EN 12464-2: 2014 has been achieved by the design. Obtrusive light has been kept to a minimum, with the external lighting scheme cumulatively resulting in a 0.16% Upward Light Ratio – below the 15% maximum permitted by standards in a comparable environmental zone. Moreover, spill light at the boundary onto adjacent plots has been kept to a minimum, averaging around 1 lux at the boundary. This is comparable to moonlight and considered to result in negligible impact beyond the site boundaries and in line with the CIE 150:2017 guidance.
- 7.62 Internally, the lighting of the building will be controlled by a lighting control system throughout the installation. The internal lighting will only operate when an area is occupied, switching off automatically once presence has not been detected.

Noise Impact Assessment

- 7.63 A Noise Impact Assessment prepared by Dragonfly Consulting has been submitted with the planning application.
- 7.64 The primary changes to the noise environment include the installation of air source heat pumps, air handling units and the future provision of tenant extract flues. An assessment has taken place from several noise sensitive receptor locations on adjacent residential roads.
- 7.65 The results of the assessment indicate that noise contributions from the above are predicted to be less than 5dB above the existing measured background noise levels at all receptor locations during the daytime and night-time period. The noise impacts are predicted to be below the Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level, which as set out Noise Policy Statement 3, are considered to result in no adverse effect. Accordingly, the assessment demonstrates that the Proposed Development will not cause an unacceptable noise impact as required by Policy RE8 of the Development Plan.

Utilities

- 7.66 A Utilities Statement prepared by Baynham Meikle has been submitted with the planning application.
- 7.67 Based on analysis of existing provision in the area, it details the proposed service strategy in respect of provision of electricity, telecommunications and surface/foul drainage and concludes, subject to detailed discussions with relevant authorities and providers, that the strategy is feasible and sufficient to support the needs of the Proposed Development without the requirement of any major off-site local infrastructure and minor disruptions to existing local infrastructure.

Transport and Parking

Relevant Local Policy

- 7.68 **Policy M2 (Assessing and managing development)** requires a Transport Assessment, Travel Plan to be submitted for development that is likely to generate significant amounts of movement.
- 7.69 **Policy M3 (Motor vehicle parking)** states parking requirements for non-residential development will be determined in light of a submitted Transport Assessment or Travel Plan, which must take into account the objectives of the Plan to promote and achieve a shift towards sustainable modes of travel. The presumption will be that vehicle parking will be kept to the minimum necessary to ensure the successful functioning of the development. Policy SP10 states that opportunities should be sought to enhance and promote more sustainable travel modes within the ARC Oxford.
- 7.70 **Policy M4 (Provision of electric vehicle charging points)** requires states planning permission will only be granted for non-residential development that includes parking spaces if a minimum of 25% of the spaces are provided with electric charging points.
- 7.71 **Policy M5 (Bicycle Parking)** confirms planning permission will only be granted for development that complies with or exceeds the minimum bicycle parking provision set out at Appendix 7.3 of the Local Plan. It adds bicycle parking should be well designed, well located, convenient, secure, covered and provide level, unobstructed access to the street. For non-residential development, the provision of showers and changing facilities in accordance with thresholds and minimum standards also detailed at Appendix 7.3.

Assessment

- 7.72 A Transport Assessment (TA) prepared by Stantec has been submitted with this planning application.

Car Parking

- 7.73 In accordance with the requirements of Policy M3, ARC has undertaken pre-application discussions for the provision of appropriate mode shares for future development at ARC Oxford. Based on the current travel patterns of employees and future accessibility improvements planned for the area (including the Cowley Branch Line and Eastern ARC bus route), an ambitious 40% mode share target for car users has been agreed with Oxfordshire County Council. This has been applied to the Proposed Development.
- 7.74 Based on expected staff provision in the order of 500 employees, 80% of which are expected to be on site on any given day, results in the requirement for 160 car parking spaces at a 40% mode share. A minimum of 6 additional spaces are required in addition to serve the needs of visitors, bringing the total requirement of 166 spaces. This is a significant reduction of 77 spaces from the 243 currently provided by the existing development, far exceeding the requirements of Policy M3 to provided 'no net increase'.

- 7.75 A total of 12 motorcycle spaces will be provided, in accordance with the standards for powered two-wheelers set out in Appendix 7.1 of the Local Plan.
- 7.76 Of the parking spaces provided, 6 will be accessible parking bays. These are located at ground floor level within the surface car parking areas, to the front of the building and close to the main entrance and lift wells. Moreover, 29% (48 spaces) will be fitted with EV charging points in accordance with the requirements of Policy M4 of the Local Plan.
- 7.77 As agreed in pre-application discussions, ARC is willing to accept a planning condition to reduce the level of parking on the site once the Cowley Branch Line is operational. In accordance with other schemes, this would be triggered when the new station at ARC Oxford is open and being served by a minimum of two trains an hour during commuter peak hours. Such a reduction would bring the car driver mode share for staff down to 31%.

Cycle Parking and Shower Facilities

- 7.78 The Proposed Development accommodates cycle parking in accordance with the ratio set by Oxfordshire County Council in its document 'Parking Standards for New Development', at minimum of 1:150sqm for employees and 1:250sqm per visitors. This exceeds the required standard set out in Policy M5 of the Local Plan.
- 7.79 Accordingly, in total, 135 cycle parking spaces would be provided on site. Within a dedicated Travel Hub to the rear of the building, a total of 59 cycle spaces will be provided comprising of stacked provision (34) and Sheffield hoops (25). A further 76 spaces are provided for staff and visitors is made within a secure shelter to the west of the building, inclusive of stacked provision (44) and Sheffield hoops (32).
- 7.80 The combination of stacker and Sheffield hoop provision would enable cycle parking provision in excess of requirements, whilst allowing accommodation for larger bikes. All would be provided at ground level and therefore accessible for all users and moreover are in secure, covered and convenient locations. A further 3 cycle parking spaces (in the form of uncovered Sheffield stands) are provided in excess of the requirement for the building in the new plaza at the end of the footpath to contribute to cycle parking provision more generally.
- 7.81 Showers and changing facilities will be provided to encourage active travel as a mode of choice for employees, particularly cycling. These have been aligned in accordance with BCO guidance, which states 1 shower should be provided per 10 cycle spaces, with the number of lockers matching the number of cycle spaces.
- 7.82 In total, 11 showers are provided by the Proposed Development alongside 103 locker spaces. These are largely provided in the dedicated Travel Hub to the rear of the building (6 and 89, respectively) which also includes 4 drying cabinets. The remaining provision (5 and 14, respectively) is provided on Level 02 of the building. In total, for staff cycle provision (97) this exceeds the Applicant's BCO requirements and the equivalent requirements set out in Appendix 7.1 of the Local Plan.

Trip Generation and Impacts

- 7.83 The TA provides a comparison of expected trips from the existing development (with 243 spaces) vs. the Proposed Development (with 166 spaces) and forecasts there will be an overall reduction of at least 25 two-way trips in both the AM and PM peak hours.

Travel Plan

- 7.84 A Draft Travel Plan (DTP) prepared by Stantec has been submitted with this planning application.

- 7.85 At present, the occupiers for Plot 4200 are not yet known and so at this stage definitive Travel Plan measures and targets cannot be set. To ensure that the development is progressed sustainably from the outset, this DTP has been designed to provide a template that can be adapted by the occupiers once the plot is operational.
- 7.86 The DTP contains a variety of measures based on the existing opportunities of the Site and provides an overarching set of principles and guidance for forthcoming development at ARC Oxford, including timescales for implementation, responsibility, monitoring and funding.
- 7.87 Once operational, the occupiers of Plot 4200 will update this report to suit the needs of their employees, whilst remaining faithful to the measures and targets set out in the DTP.

Deliveries and Servicing

- 7.88 A Delivery and Servicing Management Plan (DSMP) prepared by Stantec has been submitted with this planning application.
- 7.89 As the potential occupiers of the building are unknown, the DSMP provides a framework through which deliveries, servicing and operation of the Proposed Development shall be undertaken. These measures would be implemented upon first occupation of the building and utilised for its lifetime.
- 7.90 The DSMP assesses the impact of, and sets out measures related to, the delivery of material to support the laboratory use, as well as refuse collection requirements. This demonstrates that this traffic can be suitably accommodated without leading to unacceptable impacts on the wider highway network.
- 7.91 Overall, the TA (in combination with the DTP and DSMP) demonstrates appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable travel modes have been taken up, with safe and suitable access as well as acceptable parking provision made for all users. The traffic impacts from the Proposed Development would not have a material impact on the operation of the local highway network, instead providing a betterment by reducing the number of trips compared to the existing use.

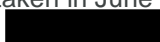
Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

Relevant Local Policy

- 7.92 **Policy G2 (Protection of biodiversity and geo-diversity)** states that development that results in a net loss of sites and species of ecological value will not be permitted. Compensation and mitigation measures must offset the loss and achieve an overall net gain for biodiversity. For all major developments proposed on greenfield sites or brownfield sites that have become vegetated, this should be measured through use of a recognised biodiversity calculator. To demonstrate an overall net gain for biodiversity, the Council advises a biodiversity calculator should demonstrate an improvement of at least 5% from the existing situation.
- 7.93 Policy SP10 specifically requires a biodiversity survey to assess the biodiversity value of the undeveloped plots on the site, with any application demonstrating how harm will be avoided, mitigated or compensated.

Assessment

Ecology

- 7.94 An Ecological Assessment (EcoA) has been prepared by Ecology Solutions and submitted with the planning application. This has been informed by an extended Phase 1 habitat survey undertaken in June 2023 and updated in October 2023, alongside specific surveys completed in respect of bats 

- 7.95 Due to the nature of the Proposed Development, as well as the Site's sufficiently removed and buffered location, the EcoA concludes there will be no adverse effects on statutorily designated sites – including the Lye Valley SSSI, Brasenose Wood and Shotover Hill SSSI and Lye Valley LNR). Similarly, it concludes there will be no direct impacts on non-statutorily designated sites – including Lye Valley and Cowley Marsh LWS.
- 7.96 In accordance with best practice, the EcoA does recommend the production of a comprehensive Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) that should implement standard construction and engineering safeguards, as well as to negate pollution risks during site preparation and construction works. ARC invites the Council to include an appropriately worded condition in these terms to any grant of planning permission.
- 7.97 The EcoA confirms there are limited habitats or features of ecological interest on the existing site. Whilst the Proposed Development would result in impacts on some areas of limited interest at site level, it is considered that appropriate and proportionate measures are included or recommended to ensure necessary mitigation and enhancement is delivered. Specific design mitigations and interventions include:

For **bats**, a sensitive lighting scheme has been chosen to avoid light spillage on areas retained and created that would be suitable foraging and commuting habitat (see 'Lighting'). Moreover, 5 bat boxes (the locations of which are identified on the Biodiversity Feature plan ref: 1389-401) are included to provide nesting opportunities for a range of bat species.

With respect to **birds**, during the site preparation phase, clearing suitable bird nesting habitats should be undertaken outside the nesting season (typically March to August inclusive) and where this cannot be achieved, a check survey for nesting birds will be undertaken by an ecologist with any confirmed nests buffered and left in situ until the young have fledged. Moreover, 7 bird boxes (locations on plan ref: 1389-401) are included to provide nesting opportunities (both tree-mounted and building-mounted) for a range of bird species – including swifts and sparrows.

For **invertebrates**, 5 insect boxes (locations on plan ref: 1389-401) are provided on existing trees to accommodate bees, wasps and lacewings.

- 7.98 Overall, the EcoA concludes the proposed mitigation and enhancement strategies, including habitat provision of high nature conservation value, would ensure local wildlife can be maintained at a favourable conservation status with no significant residual effects are anticipated. Furthermore, such measures will provide measurable biodiversity net gain (see below).

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 7.99 A Biodiversity Net Gain Report has been prepared by Ecology Solutions and has been submitted with the planning application, supported by DEFRA's Biodiversity Metric 4.0.
- 7.100 As currently developed, the existing site provides a total of 6.18 habitat units made up of modified grassland, introduced shrubs and urban trees. Following implementation of the Proposed Development, including the introduction of rain gardens, biodiverse green roof and urban tree planting – this would raise to 10.53 habitat units. This is an increase of 4.36 units, equivalent to a biodiversity net gain of 70.35%.
- 7.101 Accordingly, the Proposed Development will deliver significantly greater gains than the requirement to provide a simple 'net gain' stipulated by the NPPF, the 5% required locally by Oxford City Council and the 10% soon to be made mandatory by the Environment Act.

Trees

Relevant Local Policy

- 7.102 **Policy G7 (Protection of existing Green Infrastructure features)** states planning permission will not be granted for development that results in the net loss of green infrastructure features such as hedgerows, trees or woodland where this would have a significant adverse impact on public amenity or ecological interest. It adds permission will not be granted in the direct loss of trees, unless it can be demonstrated that retention of the trees is not feasible; or where tree retention is not feasible, any loss of tree canopy cover is mitigated by the planting of new trees or introduction of additional tree cover (with consideration to the predicted future tree canopy on the site following development).

Assessment

Trees

- 7.103 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) has been prepared by Aspect Trees and submitted with the planning application. The AIA is accompanied by a Tree Survey, Tree Constraints Plan (TCP), Tree Protection Plan (TPP) and Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS).
- 7.104 A total of 44 arboricultural features (individuals and groups) comprising of 63 trees have been identified on the existing site. A further 7 are present outside the site area but close to the boundary. These are located at the boundaries as part of structural landscaping and more centrally within existing planted beds close to buildings. The majority of specimens are Category B with the remainder Category C, except a single Category U tree at the northern boundary. No specimens are considered to be Category A, subject to a TPO or considered ancient/veteran trees. The location of these trees (including Root Protection Areas) are shown on the TCP.
- 7.105 The layout of the Proposed Development has sought to preserve trees that make a positive contribution to the layout and the perceived visual amenity of the Site wherever possible. In total, the Proposed Development would result in the total removal of 16 individual trees and the partial removal of 2 groupings (G3 and G43). The vast majority of these trees are located within the centre of the site. This strategy allows for boundary trees to be retained to screen the new building, enabling the maintenance of visual amenity value on all four sides, whilst ensuring internal tree removals will not be significantly noticeable in the wider landscape. Removal of these trees will also remove issues to do with close proximity of trees to existing buildings and root disturbance of parking hard surfacing. To mitigate tree loss and maintain amenity, ecological provision and tree canopy cover (see below), a total of 45 semi-mature trees will be planted within the site. Overall, the AIA concludes the proposed landscaping strategy will provide sufficient mitigation for the trees being removed.
- 7.106 The AIA goes onto to make several recommendations regarding the protection of existing trees and root protection areas, as well as pruning works. These are set out in the TPP and AMS.

Tree Canopy Cover Assessment

- 7.107 The Landscape Statement prepared by Macgregor Smith and submitted with the planning application includes a Detailed Tree Canopy Cover Assessment (pg. 26 and 75-76) in accordance with guidance in TAN 9.
- 7.108 The existing site contains a baseline canopy cover of 2,631sqm, or 20.4% of the total site area. Accounting for tree removal, retained trees and proposed tree planting, the Proposed Development would

achieve a canopy cover of 2,409sqm. However, at 25 years, this would increase to 5,095sqm – a 0.1% increase over the baseline if the Proposed Development would not take place (5,078sqm).

- 7.109 Accordingly, the Proposed Development would result in a small net gain in tree canopy cover in its design over the existing site as it matures.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Relevant Local Policy

- 7.110 **Policy RE3 (Flood risk management)** requires planning applications on sites larger than 1ha in Flood Zone 1 must be accompanied by a flood risk assessment. Planning permission will only be granted where proposals demonstrate they will not increase flood risk on site or off site.
- 7.111 **Policy RE4 (Sustainable and foul drainage, surface and groundwater flow)** states that all development will be required to manage surface water through Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) or incorporate techniques to limit run-off. Surface water runoff should be managed as close to its source as possible in line with the drainage hierarchy set out in the policy.

Assessment

- 7.112 A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (FRADS) has been prepared by Baynham Meikle and submitted with the planning application.
- 7.113 The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and would provide a 'less vulnerable' end use within the Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification. Accordingly, the Sequential Test is passed and an Exception Test is not required. The Site is at 'low risk' of pluvial (surface water) flooding but at 'high risk' of groundwater flooding, although it does not lie near or within any Source Protection Zone.
- 7.114 Drainage is proposed to be directed into existing public sewer networks beneath John Smith Drive, subject to confirmations this is a viable means of discharge. It is not possible to direct discharge into an existing water body. Infiltration has been discounted at this stage, but subject to the results of further site investigations and infiltration tests, infiltration may be incorporated as a means of discharge.
- 7.115 A variety of SuDS features have been considered and incorporated within the design of the development. Surface water discharge will be attenuated by green roofs, pervious pavements and geo-cellular systems with a combined attenuation volume of approximately 481m³ – equivalent to a 1 in 100 year plus 40% climate change event. This will lead to a discharged surface water rate equivalent to 4.7l/s.
- 7.116 Foul water is proposed to be discharged into the existing foul sewer system that follows the south western boundary of the Site.
- 7.117 Overall, the Proposed Development is not at any increased flood risk from the Site itself or adjacent developments, nor it would lead to increased flood risk elsewhere.

8.0 PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

- 8.1 **Policy S2 (Development Contributions)** states the Council will, where appropriate, seek to secure physical, social and green infrastructure to support new development by means of planning conditions, planning obligations and the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

- 8.2 Paragraph 57 of the NPPF (reflecting Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010) confirms planning obligations must only be sought where they meet all of the following tests
- a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
 - b) directly related to the development; and
 - c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

Section 106

- 8.3 The Council's Affordable Housing and Planning Obligations SPD (September 2013) predates the adoption of the current Local Plan, but it has nonetheless been used to outline the expected liable obligations for the Proposed Development. The draft heads of terms expected are as follows:
- Biodiversity;
 - Employment and Skills; and
 - Transport.
- 8.4 The areas of contribution are indicative and may be subject to change as a result of further discussions between ARC and the relevant authorities. This will be agreed as part of a Section 106 Agreement to be agreed prior to determination of the application.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 8.5 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) permit a local planning authority to levy a standard charge on new development to fund identified infrastructure projects. The Council is a CIL charging authority.
- 8.6 The Council's CIL Charging Schedule (2013) specifies a non-indexed rate of £20 per square metre for 'business' and 'all other uses'. This application is supported by a completed CIL Additional Information Form 1 to allow the calculation of liability.

9.0 PUBLIC BENEFITS

- 9.1 This Section sets out the public benefits that would be yielded from granting of the Proposed Development.
- 9.2 The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways; an economic objective, social and environmental objectives, which public benefits can help deliver and contribute to.
- 9.3 PPG (Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 18a020-20140306) adds that public benefits: *'could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress as described in the National Planning Policy Framework. Public benefits should flow from the Proposed Development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and should not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits'*.

- 9.4 The Proposed Development will deliver significant mutually supportive economic, social, and environmental public benefits that should weigh heavily in favour of granting planning permission, with those benefits including:

Economic Benefits

- 9.5 An Economic Statement has been prepared by Carter Jonas and submitted with the planning application.
- 9.6 Economically, the Proposed Development would strengthen the provision of lab-enabled office space within Oxford, further strengthening its position as a world-leader for R&D development.
- 9.7 During the construction phase, the Proposed Development would result in the creation of 115 construction jobs per annum. A net total of 90 jobs per annum associated with the construction (on-site and off-site) would be created for residents of Oxford, equivalent to 145 jobs over the construction period.
- 9.8 The construction phase would contribute just over £5 million in GVA per annum to the local economy, or just over £8 million over the construction period, plus related spending from workers in the local economy.
- 9.9 In the operational phase, the Proposed Development would create a total of 500 on site jobs. A net total of 190 jobs associated with the operational phase (on-site and off-site) would be created for residents of Oxford. More tailored economic benefits would be secured through a Community Employment Plan (see below).
- 9.10 The operational phase would contribute £38 million in GVA per annum to the local economy, plus related spending from workers in the local economy. Additional revenues associated with the development include additional tax revenues and business rates, as well as associated contributions via the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 contributions.

Social Benefits

- 9.11 A Social Value Statement has been prepared by Carter Jonas and submitted with the planning application. The Proposed Development is inclusive of several public benefits surfacing from a development of exceptional design that promotes the health and wellbeing of users, as well as commitments to ensuring the benefits of the Proposed Development is felt in the local community.
- 9.12 The architectural design of the Proposed Development is of exemplary quality, providing an improvement on the existing buildings which are of dated and unsightly visual appearance. This exemplary architecture would result in a more pleasant outlook for members of the public walking through the Campus, with the massing of the Proposed Development carefully tailored to ensure it respects its residential neighbours and its place within the City of Oxford – including surrounding heritage assets. ARC will look to secure the overall quality of the building through Fitwel certification.
- 9.13 The Proposed Development would deliver significant enhancements to the local landscape including enhancements to the adjacent footpath. These enhancements provide a sense of arrival into the Campus for users of the path with improvements provided including the enabling of 24-hour access, additional security through lighting and CCTV, a plaza place and signage and wayfinding. Further public benefits are secured through the retention of existing trees and increased opportunities to interact with nature, thus promoting health and wellbeing.
- 9.14 Building on its existing work, ARC is further committed to establishing a Community Panel and delivering a Community Employment Plan – the latter containing initiatives to encourage access to education,

training and jobs to local people from the Proposed Development to ensure there is tangible economic and social benefits to the local area. This commitment is to be secured through S.106 agreement.

Environmental Benefits

- 9.15 Environmentally, the Proposed Development is inclusive of several public benefits related to combatting the effects of climate change, improving biodiversity and promoting cleaner, active travel.
- 9.16 The Proposed Development will deliver high standards of sustainability across its operations, including a building that is free from fossil fuels in its energy production with maximum provision of on-site renewables through rooftop PV panels. This delivers a development that will deliver a 45.4% reduction in operational carbon emissions when measured against Part L of the Building Regulations 2021, in excess of the requirements of this Local Plan. This should be considered a significant achievement in the context of the nature and use of such a building.
- 9.17 As part of a holistic approach to sustainable construction, ARC is committed to ensuring that waste resulting from demolition is diverted from landfill and reused where possible within the development and will implement a Site Waste Management Plan to manage demolition waste responsibly and would invite a condition to any planning permission to secure such public benefits in this manner.
- 9.18 As a result, the Proposed Development significantly enhances the ecological quality and value of the site. In terms of biodiversity, the Proposed Development would achieve a Biodiversity Net Gain of 70.35% - substantially in excess of both Local Plan requirements (5%) and the forthcoming legal requirement of 10% to be mandated by the Environment Act 2021. This is supported through the provision of species and climate appropriate planting through a variety of interventions, as well as interventions to support existing species where present, as well as the securing of a net gain in tree canopy cover.
- 9.19 The Proposed Development would provide 139 cycle parking spaces, in excess of Oxford City Council requirements and in alignment with the higher quantum set by Oxfordshire County Council. These will be supported by high-quality end of journey facilities including showers and changing facilities that will promote active travel and improve the health and wellbeing of occupiers. More sustainable travel in general will be promoted through a Travel Plan.
- 9.20 The Proposed Development would also provide 29% (48) of car parking spaces with 'active' EV charging facilities, in excess of Local Plan requirements (25%).
- 9.21 As noted above, the Proposed Development would enhance and improve the existing footpath adjacent to Plot 4200, providing an easier route for pedestrians and cyclists entering the park from the west, in particular, from the bus stops located on Barns Road.
- 9.22 Overall, the Proposed Development would achieve a BREEAM Excellent rating. This considers the social, economic and environmental sustainability of the Proposed Development in the interests of ensuring long-term climate and economic resilience.

10.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 This Statement has been prepared in support of a Full Planning Application at Plot 4200, John Smith Drive, Oxford, OX4 2BH.
- 10.2 Oxford has emerged as a preferred investment location for those within the science and technology sector, guided by the calibre of its knowledge and research institutions and the successful relationship it fosters with the wider business community. This has amplified demand for suitable workspaces looking to

thrive in this ecosystem and consequently, the need for Oxford to maintain its investment attractiveness by ensuring a healthy supply of appropriate, high-quality and sustainable buildings.

- 10.3 Within this context, ARC is embarking on a process of transforming ARC Oxford from a 'Business Park' into an 'Innovation Campus'. This includes delivering high-quality employment space to meet the needs of this sector, alongside supporting facilities and spaces that can enable the conditions for a 21st century science and innovation cluster.
- 10.4 The Proposed Development at Plot 4200 forms part of this ambition and seeks the erection of a new, exemplary life-sciences building with appropriate supporting facilities and enhancements, replacing existing office buildings currently on the Site.
- 10.5 The principle of such development is fundamentally established through its identity as a brownfield site within a Category 1 Employment Site, with local policy direction seeking a more effective use of employment sites and recognising that ARC Oxford is a major node for the life sciences sector. With the building incapable of being reused or retrofitted for such uses, the Proposed Development can act as a catalyst for bringing an obsolete and vacant building back into meaningful employment use which in turn would bring life and activity to the area as well as improve the Site's relationship with the street and surrounding area.
- 10.6 This Statement has assessed the Proposed Development against the Development Plan and other relevant planning policy and guidance at both the local and national level and has demonstrated that it meets these requirements.
- 10.7 This Statement has demonstrated that the Proposed Development yields a multitude of mutually supportive economic, social and environmental public benefits that should weight significantly in favour of granting planning permission.
- 10.8 Accordingly, it is considered that planning permission should be granted for the Proposed Development without delay in line with national and local planning policy requirements.

APPENDICES

A OXFORD CITY COUNCIL EIA SCREENING OPINION

ARC Oxford
c/o Stephanie Weeks
Carter Jonas
Mayfield House
256 Banbury Road
Oxford, OX2 7DE

Date: 17th March 2023
My ref: 23/00553/SCREEN
Please ask for: Jennifer Coppock
Extension: 5475

Dear Stephanie,

APPLICATION: 23/00553/SCREEN

PROPOSAL: Development for up to 75,000sq.m of commercial floorspace consisting of lab-enabled office space (Use Class E(g)(i)/(g)(ii) and incorporate associated ancillary Use Class E including (but not limited) to cafe; restaurant; gym; children's day nursery; incubator space and events space.

AT: Plots 3000, 8200, 8400, 9200, 4200, 5700 (part), 5500 (part) and 5000
ARC Oxford, John Smith Drive, Oxford, OX4 2BH

FOR: ARC Oxford

I refer to your letter dated 24th February 2023 requesting a Screening Opinion as to whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required to accompany a forthcoming planning application for the above development.

The Local Planning Authority has considered your request in accordance with Part 2, Regulation 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended).

The plots collectively measure approximately 5.5ha and is designated as a Category 1 employment site within the Oxford Local Plan 2036.

The supporting letter dated 24th February and supporting documents outline that the development would comprise of the following elements:

- Approximately 75,000sqm (GEA) of office and laboratory floorspace with ancillary uses
- Maximum building height of 35m
- Approximately 1,350 car parking spaces
- Associated landscaping

It is understood that an outline planning application would be made with all matters reserved except access.

Having examined the proposals, the Local Planning Authority is of the view that the development does not fall within any of the categories of development within Schedule 1 of the 2017 Regulations where an EIA would always be required.

The proposal would however fall within the category of an 'Urban Development Project' as described in section 10(b) of Schedule 2. The scale of development proposed would fall within the category of part (i) of section 10(b) of Schedule 2 (development of more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwellinghouse development).

The proposal therefore needs to be screened by the Local Planning Authority to determine whether significant effects on the environment are likely and hence whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is required. In screening the proposal, the selection criteria set out in Schedule 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 are considered in the assessment that follows.

Characteristics of Development

The proposals outlined within the submitted letter dated 24th February 2023 indicate that the proposed buildings would be large in terms of general footprint and scale, though officers are mindful of the surrounding commercial development within ARC Oxford and to the east of the Eastern by-pass and the Local Plan designations in relation to the site. The application site is designated as a Category 1 Employment Site within the Oxford Local Plan 2036 where planning permission will be granted for the intensification, modernisation and regeneration for employment uses. Further, the site falls within the Business Park Local Plan site allocation which supports employment uses and other complimentary uses, to be considered on their merits. The site also sits within the Cowley Branch Line Area of Change, within this area, high density employment development that makes efficient use of land is expected and more efficient use of land.

The cumulative impact of adjacent commercial development within the vicinity, particularly in terms of air quality and highway safety, need to be considered carefully in the light of supporting technical information. Notwithstanding this, it is considered that the development would be of a scale that any cumulative impact could be assessed as part of the planning application process and would therefore not require an EIA.

Site drainage is required to be sustainable through local planning policies. Similarly, the production of waste from the site, both at construction and operational stages, would not be significant, and local planning policies require the minimising of waste during construction and operation.

During both the construction and operational phase, risks relating to air quality will need to be adequately controlled. This can be appropriately achieved within the scope of a planning application through the application of appropriate planning conditions to control and mitigate risk, as informed by an Air Quality Assessment as outlined below.

The use of the site for Class E(g) purposes is considered unlikely to give rise to significant pollution and would be unlikely to pose a risk of accidents or risk to human health and is unlikely to result in any significant production of waste. Whilst there may be some noise generation taking into account the need for conditioning units, plant and extractor systems as part of this type of development, it is considered unlikely to result in substantial noise issues.

Location of development

The proposed development is located within both developed and undeveloped plots of ARC Oxford (formerly known as Oxford Business Park). The plots are surrounded by various urban built forms, including large scale Class E(g) employment buildings within ARC Oxford (north and south) and to the east of the Eastern by-pass. The general form, scale and layout of development

would be absorbed into the existing built envelope of this particular part of the City. A Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment would be required as part of the planning application to assess local and long range views of the site.

The plots themselves are not the subject of any specific designations in terms of biodiversity or ecological value. The closest statutory designated sites are Brasenose Wood and Shotover SSSI and Lye Valley SSSI which lie approximately 3km and 2km from the site respectively.

The nearest European designation is Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC), also notified as a SSSI lies approximately 7km north-west of the site. The forthcoming application would be supported by a suite of ecology surveys and assessments, providing a preliminary assessment of the likely impact of the development on biodiversity.

The site is located within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

The site sits wholly within flood zone 1 (lowest probability of flooding).

Characteristics of the potential impact

Taking each potential impact, as set out within the regulations, in turn:

Use of Natural Resources

ARC Oxford is broadly level and laid out as development plots which could be developed without physically changing the topography of the area. The use of materials would be assessed through an Energy Statement to ensure that sustainable resources are used during the construction and operational phases. Further, there are no areas within or around the site that contain high quality or scarce resources which would be impacted by the project.

Production of Waste

The proposal would result in the demolition of a number of buildings. However, it is considered that any impacts can be suitably mitigated by the requirement to produce a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), secured by a suitably worded condition. Further, Local Plan policy RE1 requires all waste materials to be recycled where possible and compliance with the approved Energy Statement would be conditioned.

Pollution and Nuisances

The proposed development would likely lead to an increase in localised traffic generation which would impact on the local road network. It is considered that these impacts could be adequately assessed as part of the planning application process through the provision of a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan. Impacts during the construction and operational phases could be reasonably mitigated by the imposition of appropriate conditions.

There is potential for noise during the construction process and from mechanical plant associated with the operation of the proposed buildings. It is considered that noise impacts derived from the proposed development, taking into account the proposed use of the site and surrounding land uses, could be sufficiently addressed through the submission of a Noise Impact Assessment and mitigated by the imposition of appropriate conditions requiring a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) and CEMP.

The proposed land use is not associated with the release of hazardous substances into the air or ground. The storage of hazardous substances would be minimal and would be stored and handled in accordance with relevant legislation.

A Ground Condition Desk Study would be submitted as part of the planning application. It is considered that any impacts may be mitigated through appropriate planning conditions.

Population and Human Health

The use of the site for Class E(g) purposes is considered unlikely to give rise to significant pollution and would be unlikely to pose a risk of accidents or risk to human health and is unlikely to result in any significant production of waste. Whilst there may be some noise generation taking into account the need for conditioning units, plant and extractor systems as part of this type of development, it is considered unlikely to result in substantial noise issues.

Air Quality

The development would result in an increase in vehicular use which would impact on localised air quality within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). A maximum of 350 parking spaces are currently proposed. The nature of the proposed development may give rise to a significant effect on air quality (during both operational and construction phases) in the absence of mitigation. Notwithstanding this, the impact is likely to be localised and may be addressed through appropriate planning conditions and means of reducing dependence on private means of transport as informed by an appropriate Air Quality and Dust Assessment, taking into account the cumulative effect on traffic levels from upcoming developments within ARC Oxford. The application will also need to be supported by a Travel Plan.

Climate Change

As captured within this letter, it is considered that any impacts in relation to flood risk, drainage, air and noise pollution would be resolved during the planning process and mitigated by appropriate conditions.

Risk of Accidents

The use of the site for Class E(g) purposes is considered unlikely to give rise to significant pollution and would be unlikely to pose a risk of accidents or risk to human health and is unlikely to result in any significant production of waste. The demolition and construction processes have the ability to impact on air quality but could be carefully identified through an Air Quality Assessment and then managed through a CEMP.

Whilst there may be some noise generation during the operational phase, taking into account the need for mechanical plant, it is considered unlikely to result in substantial noise issues and would be fully assessed through the submission of a Noise Impact Assessment.

Water Resources

There are no significant water resources close to the site. As above, the site lies wholly within flood zone 1. It is considered that these matters may be addressed through the provision of an appropriate Drainage Strategy as informed by a Flood Risk Assessment which would be required in support of the planning application. Site drainage is required to be sustainable through local planning policies.

It is considered that flood risk and drainage matters could be sufficiently addressed through the application process and mitigated by the imposition of appropriate conditions.

Ecology and Trees

It is considered that any ecological impacts could be sufficiently dealt with as part of the planning application process through the provision of assessments and surveys as required. Appropriate conditions would be attached to any planning permission.

With regards to trees, the proposal has the potential to affect existing trees. However, it is considered that these impacts could be adequately assessed as part of the planning application process through the provision of a Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Arboricultural Method Statement, Canopy Cover Assessment and imposition of appropriate conditions.

Landscape, Visual and Built Heritage

The proposals would potentially impact on the setting of the following Conservation Areas:

- Central (University and City)
- Oxford Stadium
- Littlemore
- Beauchamp Lane
- Temple Cowley

However, as plots come forward they would be carefully considered in design and heritage terms. Any planning application would need to be accompanied by a Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment to enable an assessment of potential harm to the City's skyline and other heritage assets.

Built Heritage and Archaeology

In terms of below ground archaeological potential, there is general potential for Roman activity that has to be weighed against the level of likely disturbance from the demolition of the former car plant. A condition requiring a watching brief would be attached to any planning permission.

Transport and Access

As set out above, the proposed development would likely lead to an increase in localised traffic generation which would impact on the local road network. It is considered that these impacts could be adequately assessed as part of the planning application process through the provision of a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan. Impacts during the construction and operational phases could be reasonably mitigated by the imposition of appropriate conditions.

Land use

It is considered that any potential impact on surrounding residential dwellings could be considered during the formal planning process and mitigated by suitably worded conditions in relation to views, noise and light pollution and air quality.

Land Stability and Climate

The site is not susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion or extreme adverse climatic conditions.

Cumulative Effects

It is not anticipated that the proposals would lead to cumulative impacts together during the construction and operational phases.

Transboundary Effects

The relatively small scale of the proposal and adequate distance to any boundaries would ensure that the proposed development would not have any transboundary effects.

Summary

In summary, the overall magnitude and spatial extent of the impact, the nature of the impact and the intensity and complexity of the impact are not considered to be of a scale to warrant EIA. The Council considers that the proposed development would not give rise to any unusually complex or potentially hazardous environmental effects, which could not be addressed through the application process.

Accordingly in exercise of the powers conferred upon it by Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, the Local Planning Authority determines that the planning application proposed to be sought is not EIA development and that an EIA would not be required to accompany a planning application submitted in accordance with the details you have supplied.

Yours sincerely,

Jennifer Coppock MRTPI

Principal Planner

For and on behalf of the Head of Planning

