

2 | Context

Campus Context

Context & Features

Existing Land Uses

Mixed areas of grassland, fields, active travel routes, Phase 1 roads, Phase 1 existing development, drainage infrastructure and landscaping.

Boundary Treatments

Existing boundary treatments are varied, with surrounding context being varied in their nature from road and rail, adjoining residential areas, the new HMP Highland and agricultural land. Structured and unstructured boundary treatments are extant, with their character depending on the adjoining features. Phase 1 established a distinct character and language for boundary treatments.

Focal Points & Views

A detailed analysis of the vistas and views to, from and over the site can be found within the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment forming part of the EIA, by Horner & MacLennan Landscape Architects. The key vistas from the site that relate to the design principles are the views to the north towards Ben Wyvis and to the south towards Beinn Bhuidhe Mhòr.

Topography

The site is relatively flat, rising to the southern boundaries adjacent to the railway and proposed ELR

Surrounding Buildings

Existing Settlement Pattern

The existing settlement pattern surrounding Inverness Campus is varied, with open arable land, residential areas and care home, small and larger scale commercial, large scale retail and the new HMP Highland. The building lines, sizes and styles are mixed in their appearance, scale and massing.

Within Inverness Campus, Phase 1 has been developed out in accordance with the approved Phase 1 Masterplan and is nearing completion, having established a world-class business location with high quality facilities for businesses, researchers, academia and scientists in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. A strong identity for the Campus has been created through distinctive masterplan elements and Character Areas, that set out building densities, sizes and styles appropriate to location and context.

The existing Campus buildings are set around a high-quality parkland which runs through the centre of the site, with landscape elements structuring the spaces, building lines and contributing to a strong sense of place. Short edges of buildings are oriented towards the landscape, and parking is located towards the periphery, away from the Campus Green.

The scale & massing of buildings developed during Phase 1 of the Campus is primarily a mixture of two storeys with roof top mounted plant and 3 storeys with roof top plant, with the highest building being UHI Inverness at 3 storeys with enclosed plant approximately the equivalent of 2 storeys in addition . Existing building massing and appearance is articulated by a mixture of materials and architectural elements in relation to the Character Areas defined in Phase 1.

Landscape

Landscape Character & Features

The existing features including existing tree lines, watercourses and habitats have been protected and enhanced in Phase 1 of Inverness Campus, layered and interconnected with a parkland setting inspired by interpretation of varied Highland landscapes, with the central focal point being the Campus Green, visible from the approach avenue. The axis extending from the Campus Green extends Northwest towards the Golden Bridge. Public realm considerations including soft and hard landscaping, SUDs networks, street furniture, lighting, signage and wayfinding all contribute to the high-quality landscape, with play & recreational space open to everyone for active engagement and contemplation.

The site has been subject to a Flood Risk Assessment to determine the areas within the development where flooding could occur during extreme events. This study can be found within the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Furthermore, a Landscape Plan and Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan are included in this submission in support of the planning application in principle and contains further details of the existing landscape character, wildlife habitats etc.

Access & Connectivity

Street Layouts & Vehicular Movement / Access, Parking & Circulation

Inverness Campus is located immediately to the north of the A9 Trunk Road. The A9 intersects with other strategic and local roads at three points within Inverness, at Longman Roundabout (A82), Raigmore Interchange (A96) and Culloden Road (B9006). Longman Roundabout provides connection west to the A82 via Longman Road. A Transport Assessment (Fairhurst) is submitted in support of this planning application and gives further details of the transport analysis and proposals for access, parking, EV charging and circulation.

Public transport

Bus services in the Inverness area are provided by Stagecoach and The Highland Council. Inverness Campus is currently served by several services. Rail services are provided by ScotRail, LNER and others, are located at Inverness Railway Station. Frequent bus services linking Inverness Campus to the City Centre provide good connections to and from the site to the railway station.

Pedestrian & Cycle Movement

Phase 1 promoted and implemented active travel provision within the Campus and enhanced active travel connections. Consideration has been given to desire lines and disabled access within the site, with high-quality walking, wheeling and cycling connectivity, and Phase 2 will reinforce and enhance connectivity.

Accessibility

Accessible parking should be provided in accordance with regulatory requirements. Active travel routes are to be accessible for all wherever possible. Stepped access to external routes should be avoided, and where this is not possible, an alternative means of access which is accessible should be provided.

Building and landscape proposals for Occupier Plots should consider accessibility, including for level access, and buildings should be barrier-free.

Historical Context

History of the Site

The location of Inverness Campus has had a historical importance due to its coastal location and arable land, and evidence of prehistoric settlement has been discovered in the area, which reflects its diverse history. The site is shown on earlier historic maps as part of a busy rural landscape, with road and rail infrastructure having been built up and developed over time.

There is a scheduled monument located within the site boundary for Phase 2 of the Campus in the northern section of the Campus to the north of the railway, 'Ashton Farm Cottages, ring ditch 415m SW and pit circles 460m WSW of (SM11535)'.

The scheduled monument comprises the remains of a ring ditch and three pit circles of buried archaeological features, interpreted as the remains of a prehistoric settlement. The scheduling is split over two scheduled areas, a rectangular western area and a circular eastern one, encompassing the remains described.

There is potential for the survival of buried archaeological features and deposits within the area of proposed development. There are no listed buildings or conservation areas located within the development area. AOC Archaeology has contributed to Cultural Heritage input forming part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

Inverness has expanded towards the east during recent years, during which time the character of the area surrounding Inverness Campus has changed, and Phase 1 of Inverness Campus has been implemented. Inverness is projected to continue expanding to the east, and the proposals for Phase 2 take cognisance of this.

Inverness Campus Phase 1

Phase 1 now has approximately 47,000sqm floorspace, including:

- UHI Inverness
- National Treatment Centre - Highland
- UHI Student Accommodation
- Aurora House - a multi-occupier commercial building
- Solasta House - a multi occupier commercial building
- SRUC's Rural & Veterinary Innovation Centre (RAVIC)
- An Lòchran (jointly UHI and HIE occupied building)
- A veterinary referral clinic
- Life Sciences Innovation Centre (LSIC)

Phase 1 includes planning permission in principle for sports facilities and the subsequent planning approval for outdoor sports pitches and facilities at Plot 13 (reference 22/05823/MSC). In addition, a significant proportion of high-quality public realm and landscaped open space has been developed as an integral component of the Campus.

Note:

- 'Approved masterplan' refers to the design documentation prepared by 7N as part of the original Planning Permission in Principle (PPP). Whilst numerous Matters Specified in Conditions (MSC) applications and full planning applications have built on this during Phase 1, the overarching principles are those established by the original PPP and relate to development of the Campus prior to Phase 2.
- 'Phase 1 Design Guidelines' refers to Consolidated Design Guidelines by 7N, 3rd July 2013, and relate to development of the Campus prior to Phase 2.

Planning History

In 2011 planning permission in principle 09/00887/PIPIN was granted for an education campus comprising non-residential institution, business, residential institutions, assembly and leisure and associated infrastructure, open space, means of access etc. on land at Beechwood Farm. In May 2014, an application (13/00618/S42) submitted under section 42 was granted for a new planning permission in principle for the same development permitted under the previous permission 09/00887/PIPIN but with different planning conditions.

Since the original PPP was granted numerous applications for approval of matters specified in conditions (MSC) pursuant to planning permission in principle have been granted alongside applications for full planning permission. These have involved the development of individual building plots and campus infrastructure such as access, an internal road network and infrastructure.

There is current application for planning permission (24/05220/FUL) made by NHS Highland for the development on Plot 5 of the Campus for staff and student residential accommodation.



Phase 1 Buildings

1. UHI Inverness
2. National Treatment Centre - Highland
3. UHI Student Accommodation
4. Aurora House - a multi-occupier commercial building
5. Solasta House - a multi occupier commercial building
6. SRUC's Rural & Veterinary Innovation Centre (RAVIC)
7. An Lòchran (jointly UHI and HIE occupied building)
8. A Veterinary Referral Clinic
9. Life Science Innovation Centre (LSIC), jointly owned by UHI and HIE

Phase 2 Context

Infrastructure

The East Link Road

The A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton Road development, also known as the East Link Road, is part of the £315 million Inverness and Highland City Region Deal. The A9/A96 scheme involves a 3.2 km single carriageway and bridges over the A9 and Highland Main Line Railway, aiming to connect Inshes and Smithton. The proposed road alignment roughly forms the eastern boundary of the Campus. The Road Order and Compulsory Purchase Order were confirmed on 14 May 2024, and came into force on 20 June 2024. HIE was also served with additional CPO information on 4th April 2025 (dated 3rd April) that the CPO land will be vested to Transport Scotland on 5th May 2025.

Development Phasing

Phase 2 construction will occur in phases, with initial development on the south side of the railway utilising existing roads before the East Link Road (ELR) is completed. Post-ELR, new access routes will be established to facilitate further development on both sides of the railway. Alongside respective infrastructure, like Phase 1, development is likely to take place on a plot-by-plot basis.

The Green Freeport

The Scottish Government has designated a significant portion of Inverness Campus as part of the 'Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport', aimed at fostering innovation, inclusive growth and environmental protections. The Green Freeport will offer tax incentives and is particularly interested in businesses that can demonstrate their connection to the Tier 2 supply chain.

Planning Policy Context

Planning Policy Context

The Highland-wide Local Development Plan 2012 (HwLDP) sets out the vision and policies for the whole administrative area of The Highland Council (THC). The HwLDP sits alongside National Planning Framework 4 (2023), THC's Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2 (June 2024) and Inverness East Development Brief (June 2018) as well as THC's development guidance. These documents have been taken into account in the design of the proposed Phase 2 Campus development which is explained in more detail in the Planning Statement which accompanies the planning application.

NPF4, Climate Change & Biodiversity

Climate change and biodiversity enhancement are key consideration moving forward, with reference to The Highland Council's Biodiversity Enhancement Planning Guidance (May 2024). Phase 1 established challenges with the use of BREEAM as a measurement of sustainability due to the greenfield factor. Further to giving consideration to biodiversity enhancement measures at the planning permission in principle stage, consideration should also be given to biodiversity at the detailed stage on an individual plot-by-plot basis.

Public Consultation

In advance of making the planning application, HIE carried out statutory pre-application consultations with the community in relation to the Phase 2 proposals. A pre-application consultation report has been prepared which highlights the main issues raised during the consultation process, including design, the applicant's response and potential changes and commitments made to the proposal as a consequence.



Inverness Campus Phase 2
Artist Impression

Context

Existing Site - Key Features

1. UHI Inverness
2. National Treatment Centre - Highland
3. UHI Student Accommodation
4. Aurora House - a multi-occupier commercial building
5. Solasta House - a multi-occupier commercial building
6. SRUC's Rural & Veterinary Innovation Centre
7. An Lòchran (jointly UHI and HIE occupied building)
8. A Veterinary Referral Clinic
9. Life Science Innovation Centre, jointly owned by UHI and HIE
10. Inverness Shopping Park
11. Lifescan Scotland
12. Inshes Retail Park
13. Inshes Veterinary Centre
14. Morar Living Castlehill Carehome
15. HMP Highland - under construction

-  Railway
-  Watercourse
-  SUDS Pond
-  Scheduled Monument
-  Hospital
-  Veterinary Practice
-  College
-  Student Accommodation
-  Offices
-  Residential
-  Retail
-  Offices, Research + Professional Services
-  HMP Highland
-  Existing Buildings



Context

Existing Site - Aerial





Context
Ownership Boundary

- Existing Buildings
- HIE Ownership Boundary

Ownership Boundary Area	
Name	Area
Ownership Boundary	75.40 hectare
Total	75.40 hectare





Context
Planning Boundary

- Existing Buildings
- Planning Boundary

Planning Boundary Area	
Name	Area
Planning Boundary	55.05 hectare

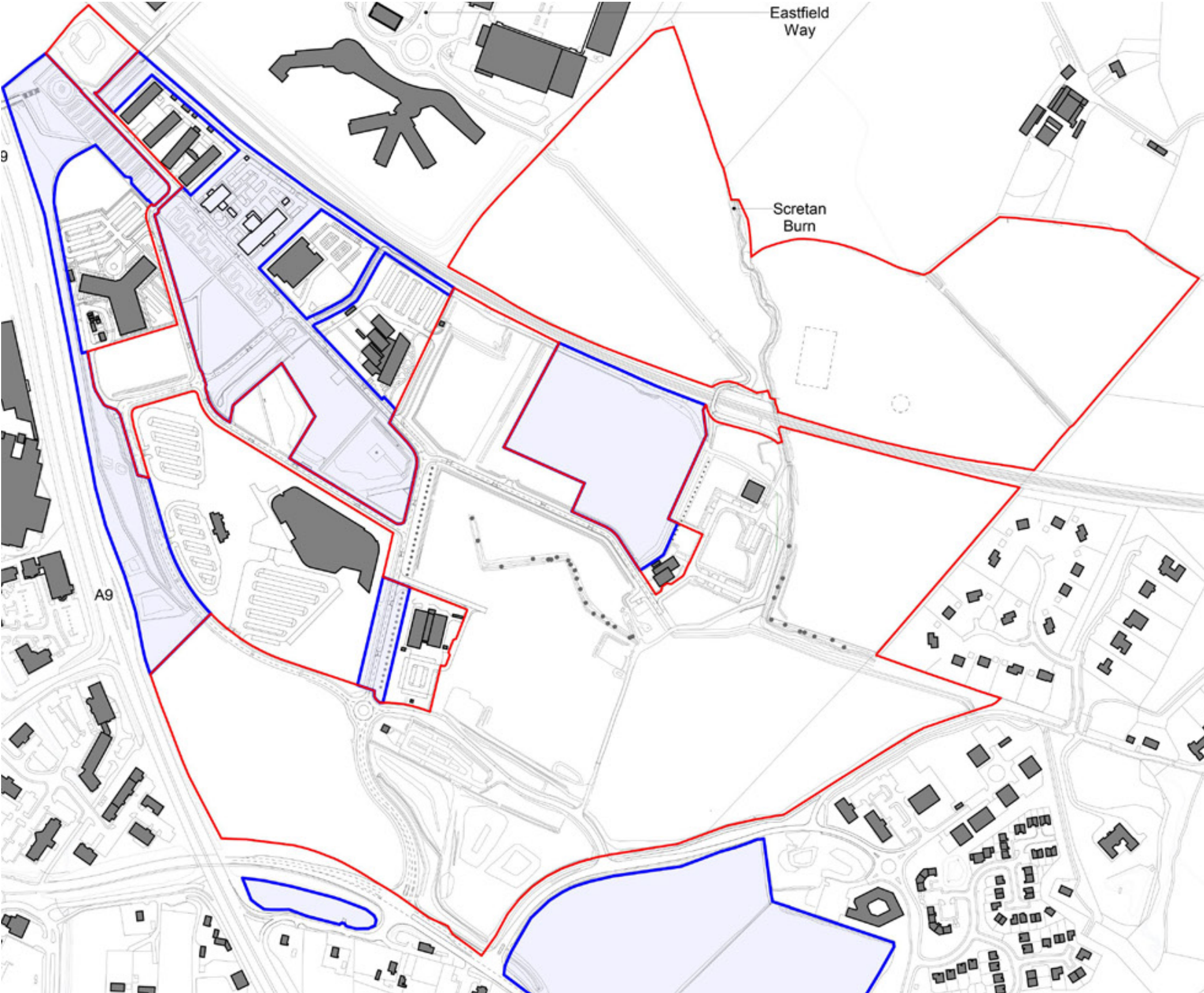


Context Location Plan



- Planning Boundary
- Neighbouring Land Owned By Applicant
- Existing Buildings
- Scheduled Monument

Boundary Area	
Name	Area
Ownership Boundary	75.40 hectare
Planning Boundary	55.05 hectare



Context

Green Freeport Boundary



 Green Freeport Boundary

Green Freeport Areas	
Name	Area
GF_Plot 3	0.63 hectare
GF_Plot 6A	0.34 hectare
GF_Plot 11/12	1.01 hectare
Phase 1	1.98 hectare
GF_Plots 15-19, 20b	6.68 hectare
GF_Plots 22-23	2.28 hectare
Phase 2	8.97 hectare
Total	10.95 hectare



Context
Bus Routes



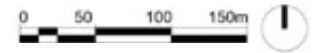
- Bus Route 2: Craig Dunain - Westhill
- Bus Route 3: Culloden - Craig Dunain
- Bus Route 5 & 6:
Route 5: Inverness Bus Station - Inverness Bus Station
Route 6: Inverness City Centre - Inverness City Centre
- Bus Route 27: Inverness Bus Station - Inverness Airport
- Bus Route M39: Inverness Bus Station - Inverness Campus
- Bus Route X37: Carrbridge - Inverness Bus Station
- Bus Route X99: Inverness Shopping Park - Inverness Bus Station

Note: Routes shown current as at April 2025

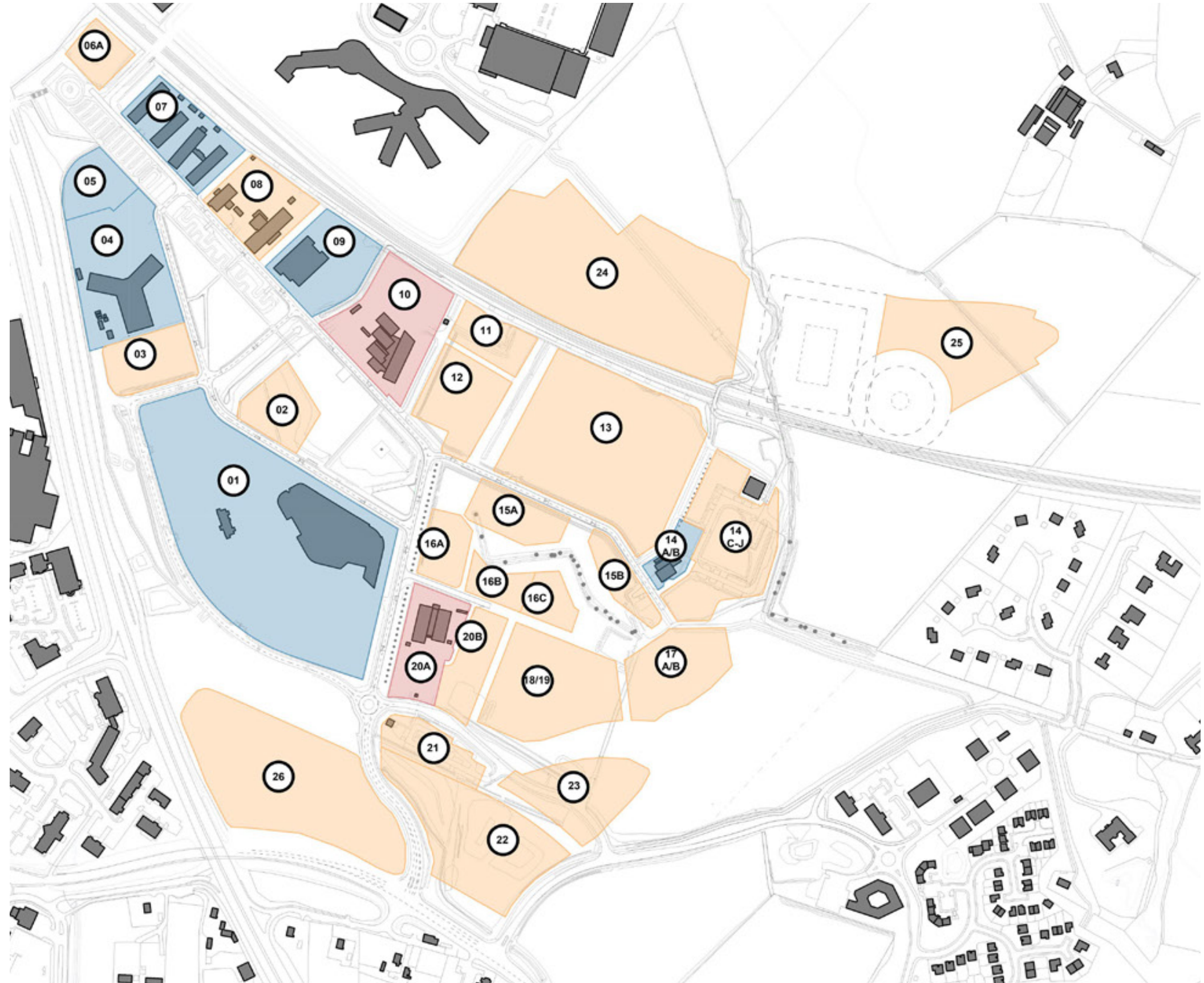


Context

Individual Plot Boundaries



-  Existing Buildings
-  Plots - HIE Ownership
-  Plots - HIE Partial Ownership
-  Plots - Ownership by others





Context
East Link Road CPO Land Take

- Existing Buildings
- Servitude Right to be Acquired (CPO - Land take)
- Land to be Acquired (CPO - Land take)
- Green Freeport Boundary
- Planning Boundary

Ownership Boundary Area	
Name	Area
Planning Boundary	55.05 hectare
Green Freeport Boundary	10.95 hectare
CPO Land Take	18.52 hectare





Context
Ownership Post East Link Road CPO

- Existing Buildings
- Servitude Right to be Acquired
- Land to be Acquired
- Post CPO Ownership Boundary
- HIE Ownership Boundary

Ownership Boundary Area	
Name	Area
Ownership Boundary	75.40 hectare
Post-CPO Ownership Boundary	55.85 hectare

