

Case Officer: Andrew Lewis **Ward(s):** Fringford And Heyfords

Applicant: Dorchester Group

Ward Member(s): Cllr Ian Corkin, Cllr James Macnamara, Cllr Barry Wood

Proposal: Development of the Village Centre (south) comprising a Hotel and associated facilities (involving the partial demolition and the refurbishment and extension of Building 455 and its change of use); Bar/Brasserie (involving the partial demolition and refurbishment and extension of Building 457) and a Covered Market (canopy link between Buildings 455 and 457) with associated landscaping and car parking.

Committee Date: 27 October 2016 **Recommendation:** Approve

Committee Referral Reason **Major**

1. Site Description and Background

- 1.1 The application site for this proposal is part of the former RAF/USAF Upper Heyford base. It is located on the south side fronting Camp Road. In terms of the uses on site, the military use ceased in 1994. Since 1998 it has effectively been under the ownership first of the North Oxfordshire Consortium and for the last few years by the current applicants, the Dorchester Group. Over the last 15 years numerous applications have been made seeking permission to either develop the whole site or large parts of it and numerous of them have gone to appeal. The most significant was application ref 08/00716/OUT. Following a major public inquiry that commenced in September 2008 the Council received the appeal decision in January 2010 that allowed "A new settlement of 1075 dwellings, together with associated works and facilities including employment uses, community uses, school, playing fields and other physical and social infrastructure (as amended by plans and information received 26.06.08)." This permission included the flying field, and the uses and development permitted upon it at the appeal have been implemented under the appeal permission. Within the settlement area Building 455 was to be retained and converted to residential use. Building 457 was to be retained and converted to a nursery/crèche. However the development of the settlement and technical areas was delayed as the site was acquired by the new owners who decided to refine the approved scheme. As a result, a new masterplan was drawn up which, whilst similar to the one considered at appeal, has been modified. The main reason for a fresh application arose from the desire of the applicant to retain more buildings on site. Apart from that, the most significant changes are a new area of open space centred on the parade ground which becomes a village green, the retention of a large number of dwellings including 253 bungalows, and more of the heritage buildings, the demolition of which was previously

consented. The retention of these buildings at their existing low density has meant the masterplan has expanded the development area west on to the sports field.

- 1.2 A revised masterplan was submitted as part of the outline application for “Proposed new settlement for 1075 dwellings, together with associated works and facilities, including employment uses, a school, playing fields and other physical and social infrastructure” and was granted permission on 22nd December 2011 (ref 10/01642/OUT). The planning permission included a number of plans with which compliance was required including a masterplan, a retained buildings plans and other plans showing layouts all of which included the retention of Buildings 455 and 457, both being proposed for a commercial use, Class A1-A5, and D1 with C3 uses as well.
- 1.3 The base was designated a conservation area in 2006, its primary architectural and social historic interest being its role during the Cold War. The nature of the site is defined by the historic landscape character of the distinct zones within the base. The designation also acknowledges the special architectural interest, and as a conservation area, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance and provides the context and framework to ensure the setting and appearance of sections of the Cold War landscape are preserved. This application is within the Settlement Area, specifically the RAF Domestic and Residential Section (Zone 10B) and in the conservation appraisal the character of the Area is described as:

The 1920s, red brick, RAF buildings to the south of Camp Road are laid out around and orientated towards the parade ground. The style of the buildings within the area is again British Military and because of their grid-like orientation the area has a strong ‘campus’ character distinct from the Technical Site to the north on the other side of the road. The area immediately south of the parade ground was developed during the period of RAF expansion in the 1930s. The area is dominated by the Institute (488) and H blocks (489, 498 and 500) set around it. This area has a coherent character distinct from the 1920s buildings. The general ‘military architect’ character of the area has been diluted by post-war alterations
- 1.4 Buildings 455 and 457 date from 1925. Both are red brick under a slate construction in a British military style. 457 is single-storied and 455 2-storied. 457 was the original Sergeant’s mess, 455 is known as the Institute Building and provided dining facilities which were later given over to the Sergeant’s mess. Both have had numerous extensions to them which spoil their historic legibility but which are being removed by an earlier consent. They front Camp Road but at the same time their focus is to the rear and to the military parade ground. They are the last remnants of that part of the site’s history. Neither building is statutorily protected although both are considered to be of local importance.
- 1.5 Currently the area on which the two buildings sit is fenced off. It measures some 0.72 hectares in size. It contains a number of mature and semi-mature trees. To the south the village green has been set out and planted. New housing has been constructed to the east and is wrapping round to the south on the east side of the village green. On the north side of Camp Road is the original entrance to the military base with Building 52, the Officer’s and administrative office, on one side and Building 100, the Security gatehouse, on the other. To the east of them is Building 74, the former Officer’s mess now Heyford Park Free School and to the west land that will form the northern side of the commercial centre together with the recently approved Heritage Centre (Building 103).

- 1.6 The current proposal seeks to retain the two buildings, extend and link them, then refurbish and convert Building 455 to a hotel with associated facilities, Building 457 to a bar/brassiere with additional space in the link providing an internal multi use area but primarily as a Covered Market. The total floorspace would be 1,642m² Use Class C1 (Building 455); 636m² Use Class A3-A5 (Building 457) and in the new Covered Link 403 m² Class A1-A3 and D1. In addition there would be 86 parking spaces created in three areas, two to the west and one to the east, and an area around the buildings consisting of the framework to form a village square, terraces for sitting out relaxing and landscaping. A location of a piece of art is proposed as a set piece for the new settlement.

2. Relevant Planning History

<u>App Ref</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Status</u>
08/00716/OUT	OUTLINE application for new settlement of 1075 dwellings, together with associated works and facilities including employment uses, community uses, school, playing fields and other physical and social infrastructure (as amended by plans and information received 26.06.08).	Granted on appeal- January 2010
10/01642/OUT	Outline - Proposed new settlement of 1075 dwellings including the retention and change of use of 267 existing military dwellings to residential use Class C3 and the change of use of other specified buildings, together with associated works and facilities, including employment uses, a school, playing fields and other physical and social infrastructure	PER
10/01778/F	Change of use of former Military Buildings to Business (Class B1), Industrial (Class B2), Storage and Distribution (Class B8), Retail (Class A1), Nursery/Training Centre (Class D1) (as specified in the submitted Schedule of Potential Planning Uses	PER
15/01944/F	Refurbishment and renovation including partial demolition of buildings and internal and external alterations of Building 455.	PER
15/01849/F	Refurbishment and renovation of Building 457 including demolition of outbuildings and internal and external alterations	PER
16/00264/F	Construction of a road with associated infrastructure within the Heyford Park development	PER

3. Response to Publicity

The application was publicised by way of neighbour notification letters and notices displayed on and near to the site. Eleven comments were received and are summarised as follows:

- The character of the Estate is being changed by the Developer which is not why people bought the houses. 485/488 have been lost and 455/457 is immersed by new additions. Both of these cases seemingly challenge Dorchester's claim to try and preserve a feel for the place and, quite rightly so, go against Historic England's broader vision.
- While a new village centre would contribute positively to Heyford Park, two important changes must be made before the proposal is approved: 1) Preservation of mature trees. It is being proposed to remove each and every tree identified in the tree survey. This would be wholly unnecessary, and would have a significant, detrimental effect on the character of the area. There is no good reason why any of the trees to the South (Trees #1498-#1505) should be removed. It would also be possible to incorporate most - if not all - of the trees to the Northwest (Trees #1509-#1515) into the design of the "central square" area. While some pruning would be appropriate, removal of all the existing, mature trees (along with likely future tree removal to the North of Camp Road) would detract from the character of the area. 2) Design of Eastern car parking. There should be no direct exit/entrance from the Eastern car parking area to/from Wellington Road. The current design proposal would encourage the use of Wellington Road for overflow parking, and also form a "rat run" along the Eastern edge of the Village Green.
- I note that the AIA submitted in support of the application has condemned all but one of the trees in the vicinity of the buildings. These are well established (mature) trees and, especially in the case of those bordering the Village Green, are pleasing to look at.
- I can understand the commercial aspect for Dorchester and their desire to fill as much of the available brownfield land with the required number of homes, yet I do not understand their approach and system of prioritizing. I wish they would engage more, think outside of the box, consider more reuse, and, if they need land to redevelop, get rid of the pre-fab bungalows.
- The shared paved area for pedestrian and vehicle use is alarming and accident waiting to happen.
- The original plan of pub and restaurant, and the two buildings connected through use of a covered area, seemed like a great idea and retained most of the 1920's buildings whilst also preserving the view of the area around the entrance to the airfield. Other buildings exist which be utilised to provide for a cinema, bowling alley or even a hotel: the last remains 1920's barrack block for the cinema etc; The families transit accommodation for the hotel.
- The original idea for a pub and restaurant, released late Summer/Autumn 2015, should be revisited.
- The only negative point will be the narrowing of the roadway through the Village Centre. The current road calming along Camp Road does not presently inhibit motorists from speeding well in excess of the prescribed speed limit as many villagers will attest. Therefore, for the roadway through the centre, 'harsher' measures should be adopted to ensure the safety of pedestrians. Whilst this may offer a 'jolt' to bus passengers, I do not feel it would stop people from using the bus services.
- We need a communal space, shop, pub, cafe in the area asap
- I am excited and greatly looking forward to the development of the proposed buildings and faculties in Heyford Park, which having lived here already. 18 months is long overdue.

- The proposed refurbishment of the existing officers' sites/buildings is very well in keeping with the current area, and lends itself well to maintaining the heritage of the building has former RAF facilities; a great mix of maintaining historic significance and updating for modern day use. Without this, the buildings (which are currently totally dilapidated and quite frankly an eyesore) would undoubtedly become impossible to maintain and eventually dwindle to nothing.
- Any delay in these plans would be of severe impact to my family of 4 as well as to the many others residents of Heyford Park who have been patiently waiting (too long) to have such facilities available to them.
- Delays mean we continue not to enjoy the village that we chose to settle our family in, as we would still be required to travel by car to do the basics of everyday life.
- Overall the plans look excellent, are very much in keeping with the local area/heritage and I truly hope the approval will proceed very quickly to avoid any delays
- I am writing in support of application 16/01000/F. I believe that the development of Heyford Park Village Centre is hugely important to the success of the creation of the new community in this housing development.
- My family moved here 4 months ago and this development was one of the key considerations when moving here - the creation of a comprehensive, modern and attractive village centre that would become the hub of this new community.
- My family are very happy with the plans that have been submitted and feel that they are in keeping with the area. The existing buildings are being maintained in such a way that preserves some of their history whilst ensuring they adapt to the housing development and to the future. As it stands these buildings are not being used and are in a state of disrepair. This application ensures that they are being put to good use and that the whole community can benefit from them.
- I understand that there may be a delay with this application and I feel that this would cause huge problems - it is important that this application is approved and that work starts as soon as possible. The housing development is growing rapidly and people are waiting for their village centre. It is fundamental to the success of Heyford Park that this community has the facilities outlined in this plan, delaying this will be detrimental to how this community interacts and to our children that are growing up here.
- I believe that the benefit to the local community outweighs the historic value of the buildings, the village centre is urgently required. There are plenty of historic buildings being saved on the airfield side of the site. These building have no value not being changed for the community.
- I was disappointed to read Historic England's letter of objection and recommendation the application is refused. I have heard nothing but positive comments from the community and personally believe Dorchester has put in significant effort to really make something of these buildings for the community and a design that will in fact celebrate and maintain their significance for many years. Camp Road has already changed beyond recognition and with the introduction of the village north and trident it will change even more, this is a very silo'd view.
- The beauty of heritage is to also weave it in with modern day living. They are being retained; they are being re-used in a modern way. The views from the old parade ground clearly demonstrate maintaining its heritage, keeping camp road sight lines is just overbearing. This plan is certainly not harming the heritage for the base, they are trying to celebrate it.
- Having recently moved into Heyford park, my family has been so excited at the plans to add the bar, hotel etc. The infrastructure of the park needs much development, and the plans we have seen are extremely sympathetic and in keeping with the heritage of the site. To think that dilapidated buildings are seen to be of better use or better interest seems ludicrous! They would be a huge target for vandalism and would only become more unsafe over time. Some change is good, and using the buildings for the

sake of the new and existing community is beneficial to all. I fully support the plans of Dorchester Living.

- Given the sheer volume of new build properties within Upper Heyford, the current provision of services does not meet needs and therefore I welcome the application.
- Whilst I do not wish to appear to jump on the environmental bandwagon, it makes no sense having thousands of unnecessary car journeys each year to Bicester, when shops/services can be built. Pollution isn't great for the environment and traffic is not good for those who have to live on busy junctions. Despite having a bus service to and from Bicester/Oxford, to be frank, those who have a car will use a car.
- It is clear that Dorchester Group have been sympathetic to create a modern space in keeping with modern demands and historic heritage. You don't need to be Jeremy Corbyn to realise (or not) that it is difficult to achieve a balance of the past, present and the future.
- With regards to the objection you have received from Historic England, I have to ask whether they have been to visit buildings 455 and 457? Whilst there is a need to preserve our heritage, one should bear in mind that the overall plans preserve much of the feeling and architecture of the past.
- With much of history already preserved within the village, no doubt to the cost of greenfield space in the future, I see no sense in preserving two ram-shackled buildings which appear to be held up with spirit rather than bricks. The incorporation of the two buildings as I see it, is using the best of what remains and blending them into contemporary design. Whatever is built there requires some element of rebuilding of these two buildings as the alternative is a Grade 1 pile of bricks.
- To suggest that Camp Road may lose the look of its military heritage is untrue. You have the Officer's Mess and associated buildings. You have ex-servicemen's houses and the new build properties along Camp Road have retained the style.
- I am dismayed at the attitude of Historic England to this proposal (and to many other proposals at Heyford Park). They have no locus whatsoever to be concerned about this application. The buildings in question are NOT listed and they have no effect whatsoever on the setting of the Ancient Monuments at Heyford Park. Unfortunately Historic England appears to have substantial power with little responsibility and in this instance they are taking a blinkered approach to their role.
- In their consultation response they spout utter rubbish - in particular "The proposals would also reduce the coherence of Camp Road as a military landscape and thus entail a moderate degree of harm to the conservation area as a whole." They appear to think that Camp Road as now reconstructed (in part) still looks like part of a military establishment - clearly it has changed out of all recognition and will change much further. The appearance of what is left of the former airbase is already "harmed" (to use Historic England's pejorative word) and will change utterly in the forthcoming years.
- The time is overdue to review the relative heritage importance of the base in the context of what has already been built and what is committed to be built in the future.
- I strongly urge CDC to ignore Historic England's objection and to treat this application on its merits - and it has many! It will form an innovative and exciting portion of the new centre for the village, which, in itself, has the potential to be a development in which we can all take some pride. In retaining the two buildings and putting them to new uses in a new context some of the history of the place is indeed being preserved.
- I am really surprised to hear that there may be an objection to this fantastic development of these two derelict buildings. We have recently purchased a property on this development and a big part of this was due to the fact that the facilities were going to be improved and brought up to standard. The community is desperate for a space where we can meet and build relationships in this thriving community and this was a big plus for us. The fact that the developers are attempting to and prepared to provide stunning facilities rather than providing a miserable pub that will only attract

drinkers and gamblers, should be encouraged in my opinion. The area is improving and moving on, I love the fact that they have retained as many original features as possible including the water tower and the officers mess however I think, especially with food involved that new buildings would fit in and feel much, much better. Please don't allow a million houses and then block the facilities. The buildings in question in their current state are an eyesore, dangerous and could attract all kinds of problems.

4. Response to Consultation

Parish/Town Council: No comment received

Cherwell District Council:

Urban Design Comments:

Local Distinctiveness & Sense of Place:

Whilst the proposals show that a distinctive place may be created through the architecture and landscape design it is not sufficiently evident how it will relate to either the former military use of the site or its location in this part of Oxfordshire.

The relationship to the military historic use of the site is preserved in the retention of buildings 455 and 457 but they will be largely masked from Camp Road by the proposed extensions. This is also unfortunate given the group relationship with buildings 52 and 100 across Camp Road.

Masterplan

It is commendable that these proposals have been considered in the context of a village centre masterplan but this context also throws up issues relating to this applications which have consequences in relation to further applications related to the masterplan. In particular how low traffic speeds and pedestrian priority will be achieved within a high quality public space within highway constraints. Also, how servicing is achieved, particularly for commercial deliveries and how the required car parking provision is achieved for the whole of the centre.

The long narrow block (Phase 3) between the 21 space car park and Camp Road will need to have genuinely active frontages on all sides.

Buildings

With the exception of the masking the existing buildings from the north side I am generally supportive of the proposals. However, I have the following concerns:

The detailing of the junction between new and existing buildings, particularly at roof level is not clear and will need careful handling.

The potential for unauthorised access to roofs from the first floor terrace.

It is not clear whether the aluminium louvres to the ground floor eastern elevation of the extension to building 455 have glazing behind and will therefore offer some necessary surveillance of the car park & pedestrian route from the bowling alley.

In views of building 455 from the south there is an apparently discordant feature on the roof of the extension which appears to be a metal clad roof access.

The eastern elevation of building 455, the western and northern-western elevations of building 457 are not shown as 'active' but all face on to public areas and should be 'active' with good natural surveillance.

Refuse Stores

The internal refuse store to building 457 is located in an important corner location adjacent to the diagonal pedestrian route. This corner should be occupied by 'active' uses with windows/doors.

Micro-climate

Although these are low-rise buildings micro-climate is important in relation to usability of external public space and particularly outside café/bar areas and seating. No sun path analysis or wind turbulence modelling appears to have been submitted. This will be of particular importance in relation to use of the square on the north side of the buildings.

Pedestrian Routes

The north-south pedestrian route through the canopy link is an important connection. There should be a requirement that the through route will remain open outside commercially active hours. The statement that 'it is proposed that the covered market would be accessible circa early morning to late evening' (3.3 of the Planning Statement) is not specific enough and needs clarification.

A pedestrian route is shown running north-south through the 34 space car park against the eastern elevation of building 455 but no connecting footway is shown.

Car Parking

The 27 space car parking area exposes rear and side garden boundaries of residential property, making them less secure, and may compromise the ability to achieve a consistent built frontage to Camp Road.

The runs of parking bays should be broken up with trees.

Despite the indication of the tracking drawing the turning space is minimal.

The 34 space car park on the east side of building 455 should be broken up with trees and the view up the street on the eastern side of the 'village green' must not terminate with parked cars.

The 21 space echelon parking area is not very practical because of its single access/exit point despite the tracking drawing demonstrating that it is possible for vehicles to turn around, albeit on the diagonal pedestrian route.

Levels

Design & Access Statement Page 17 - The implications of the following statement need further explanation/exploration:

4.4 Site Layout: Levels and Drainage

'There are some points on the site where more detailed analysis will be required in future to mitigate any more significant level changes between Camp Road and proposed building levels. However at this stage, there appears to be sufficient tolerance to accommodate this.'

Paving

I agree with the statement in the Design & Access Statement Page 20 – 4.7 Paving Strategy that 'The quality of the hard surfaces throughout the village centre are of key importance to the development ...' A palette of materials is proposed although all are qualified by 'or similar approved'. Approval of paving materials must be subject to a Planning Condition.

Planting

Landscape proposals should be subject to a Planning Condition.

Care should be exercised in the choice of tree species to ensure that some medium/large stature trees are planted in sufficient space and soil volumes to grow to maturity.

Whilst some ornamental species are desirable care must be taken with highly coloured specimens. A little goes a long way with, for example golden/yellow foliated trees e.g. Gleditsia 'Sunburst'.

I would also urge caution about the proposed use of Ginkgo which has a very variable and often very sparse and unattractive crown structure.

New tree planting in the centre mainly be trees of semi-mature sizes of at least 25cm girth with key trees in the square planted as 40+ cm girth sizes.

The saw-tooth kerbline of the gives rise to impractically small and vulnerable planting areas

Conservation Officer:

The proposal impacts particularly upon the significance of Buildings 455 and 457, two of the RAF era buildings which date from 1925 which sit south of Camp Road and were originally on the northern edge of the military parade ground. When first constructed the RAF buildings formed a coherent group. Buildings 455 and 457 whilst forming part of the group of buildings defining the parade ground also faced north to tie the domestic site to the technical site north of camp road. Whilst the parade ground has now become a cricket ground the relationship between Buildings 455 and 457 on the south of Camp Road and Buildings 52 and 100 on the north remains. The remaining RAF buildings either side of Camp Road in fact strongly anchor

the site as a whole and despite the demolitions of other RAF era buildings the relationship between these few remaining RAF buildings remains strong.

Buildings 455 and 457 are flagged as buildings which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area within the 2006 appraisal. They are further flagged as building of significance within subsequent council documents which pertain to this site. The buildings were each the subject of previous applications for restoration; 15/01944/F pertained to Building 455 and 15/01849/F to Building 457.

My strong concern is that the proposed development – in particular the introduction the rendered building to the north-east of Building 455 – will break up this strong relationship between RAF buildings. In my view it is not enough that each building may be glimpsed. A strong relationship which highlights the key functional significance of these buildings at the heart of a military airfield required a strong and unhindered visual relationship.

I am pleased to see that buildings that were at the heart of the military site are to remain at the hub of the new settlement but I feel the proposed new build is intrusive in terms of both form and materials.

Environmental Protection

Thank you for supplying the ventilation strategy. This approach is satisfactory but states choice of filtration, location of roof mounted outlets etc to be decided later. Therefore I would wish to assess and approve positioning, noise rating and choice of odour/filtration units prior to installation and use. The reason is to protect residents from odour and noise. It may be necessary to position outlets away from the housing. The applicants should ensure that this is possible (if necessary) by allowing sufficient ducting space in relation to the kitchen location(s).

A CEMP should be required in relation to construction. I note your comment about demolition.

Tree Officer/Landscaping (on amended plans)

I can see no detailed hard and soft landscape/tree pit details.

We will require the planning conditions to ensure the appropriate standard and quality is achieved. This will also apply to the village centre phase to the north of Camp Road.

Accept the development proposal in Arboricultural terms, because much of the proposed tree removals are of lower quality trees that have defects or are of poor form.

Oxfordshire County Council:

Transport (on amended plans)

An objection is made on the basis of points of detail, but it is anticipated these could be dealt with through the submission of further plans and by conditions.

Key issues:

Some issues raised in our previous response have been addressed but some have not.

Cycle parking and parking – issues over number and location of spaces

Comments here are restricted to the development in the red line area – it is understood a further application will be made to discharge condition 21 of the outline permission relating to details of Camp Road, and that Camp Road alterations (outside the existing S278 agreement) will be the subject of a further planning application. It is noted that the red line area is largely not proposed for adoption.

Permissive path agreements are likely to be required to secure right of cycle/pedestrian access through unadopted areas.

Conditions:

If the LPA is minded to grant planning permission the conditions are recommended to cover:

- Access
- Vision splays
- Delivery and Service Plan
- Car Parking details
- Cycle parking details
- Car park Management Plan
- Drainage/Flood risk compliance

Detailed comments:

This amended application includes some further detail to address concerns OCC raised in our previous response about the treatment of Camp Road through the village centre. However, the letter from Pegasus makes it clear that the application site excludes works on Camp Road and that matters relating to Camp Road have not been fully addressed as part of the package submitted with this amendment. A further application to discharge condition 21 of the Outline planning permission is expected to deal with all these matters and updated comments on Camp Road will be provided in response to that application, i.e. not included here (although pre-application advice may be given separately).

Other comments made in our original response dated 7 July still apply.

Parking

A parking accumulation survey, based on TRICS data, has been provided for the village centre south. It predicts a maximum demand of 86 spaces and these have been provided in three separate parking areas south of Camp Road. However, the assessment assumes that there is no residential parking. Especially given that no parking south of Camp Road is indicated for a residential building south of Camp Road expected to be part of the application for Village Centre north, it is highly likely that the village centre parking will suffer from residential overspill, reducing the available parking for users of the centre. Parking restrictions and enforcement by the developer will be required to prevent this – I have therefore recommended a condition for a Parking Management Plan.

We welcome the 10% provision of disabled parking however I have two issues with the spaces proposed: I am not familiar with Building Regs Part M, but the spaces proposed do not meet Inclusive Mobility guidance as some have inadequate margins to the side, and none to the rear. The spaces in the western car park should be relocated to the central car park, as they should be as close as possible to the doors of the buildings, and avoid disabled users having to cross a road.

Cycle parking

The proposed cycle parking is well below OCC recommendations, and the justification for this in the Transport Statement is based on wording from the original TA suggesting low levels of cycle use. However, this was referring to cycle travel outside Heyford Park into rural areas, not within Heyford Park itself, where we need to be aiming for high levels of cycle use for local trips, and there is scope for the infrastructure to support this. It is proposed that further cycle parking could be delivered through the travel plan – this could be explored with our Travel Plans team, but certainly sites for potential future cycle parking should be allocated within the design, otherwise there will not be suitable places for it. Further, I can see no secure, covered cycle parking for staff and hotel residents. This needs to be provided.

Servicing and delivery arrangements

The applicant has responded to our comments and suggests that the type of delivery vehicle and the delivery arrangements will be controlled by the management company. I accept this, subject to the Delivery and Servicing Plan being required by condition, with the following exceptions:

- Delivery bay on the western access road is not wide enough – this shows clearly in the tracking drawing supplied. This needs to be addressed
- Delivery to the hotel building is highly unlikely to be made from the delivery bay on Camp Road. The hotel would want deliveries to be made to the back entrance, direct to the kitchen area, and as a result, I think vans would reverse down the car park which would be unsafe. This needs to be addressed, to show suitable delivery arrangements to the rear of the building.

Western access road

It is noted that this road was the subject of a previous planning application. However, I feel that pedestrian and cycle provision near the junction with Camp Road could be improved, to provide safer and more convenient crossings of the car park entrance and the western access road itself. This area looks fairly intimidating, with two bellmouth accesses almost immediately opposite one another, and needs some further consideration as part of the detailed design.

Drainage

OCC have reviewed the updated Flood Risk Assessment by Woods Hardwick (Their ref: 16871/B4 - REV 3 dated August 2016). Although the submitted plan (Drawing Ref: HEY – 5-148D) (showing flood routes in exceedance events and storage areas) appears satisfactory, it is recommended that it is updated prior to occupation of the development, to take into account any as-built information and any revised micro-simulation modelling. The maintenance schedule and details provided within the revised FRA should form part of a more comprehensive 'SUDS Site Management and Maintenance Plan' for the development. The scope of this document should be based on the advice given in 'The SUDS Manual' (Ref: Ciria 753) Chapter 32 - Operation and Maintenance. This Management and Maintenance plan should be updated prior to occupation of the development so that the final document issue is agreed.

Other External Consultees:

Historic England (on amended plans):

The application should be determined in accordance with national and local guidance and on the basis of specialist conservationist advice

Environment Agency: No objection subject to conditions (on contamination and soakaways).

5. Relevant National and Local Planning Policy and Guidance

5.1 Development Plan Policies:

The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 was formally adopted by Cherwell District Council on 20th July 2015 and provides the strategic planning policy framework for the District to 2031. The Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 replaced a number of the 'saved' policies of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 though many of its policies are retained and remain part of the Development Plan. Planning legislation requires planning decisions to be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant planning policies of Cherwell District's statutory Development Plan are set out below:

Cherwell Local Plan 2011 - 2031 Part 1 (CLP)

ESD15 - The Character of the Built and Historic Environment

VIL5 - Former RAF Upper Heyford

ESD15 - The Character of the Built Environment

ESD13 - Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement

ESD10 - Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment
ESD1 - Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change
ESD2 - Energy Hierarchy
ESD3 - Sustainable Construction
ESD4 - Decentralised Energy Systems
ESD5 - Renewable Energy
ESD6 - Sustainable Flood Risk Management
ESD7 - Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)
ESD8 - Water Resources
SLE1 - Employment Development
SLE3-Supporting Tourism Growth
SLE4 - Improved Transport and Connections
PSD 1-Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Cherwell Local Plan 1996 (Saved Policies) (CLP96)

C28 - Layout, design and external appearance of new development
C30 - Design of new residential development
C23 - Retention of features contributing to character or appearance of a conservation area
T2- Support for Tourist accommodation in built up Settlement

5.2 Other Material Planning Considerations:

National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) - National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) – This sets out regularly updated guidance from central Government to provide assistance in interpreting national planning policy and relevant legislation.

RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Appraisal 2006 (UHCA)

Application 08/0716/OUT- Appeal decision; both the Secretary of State's decision letter and the Inspector's report are of significance to this application

In addition a design code was approved in October 2013 in order to comply with Condition 8 of planning permission 10/010642/F. This was required to "to ensure that the subsequent reserved matters applications are considered and determined by the Local Planning Authority in the context of an overall approach for the site consistent with the requirement to achieve a high quality design as set out in the Environmental Statement, the Revised Comprehensive Planning Brief for the site, and Policies UH4 of the Non Statutory Cherwell Local Plan, H2 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016 and comply with Policies CC6, CC7 and H5 of the South East Plan 2009." Although this application is a full one the contents of the code are still an important guide for the developer and Planning Authority.

6. Appraisal

Relevant Background

- 6.1 An outline application that proposed: "A new settlement of 1075 dwellings, together with associated works and facilities including employment uses, community uses, school, playing fields and other physical and social infrastructure (as amended by plans and information received 26.06.08)" was granted in 2010 following a major public inquiry (ref 08/00716/OUT).

- 6.2 The permission with regard to the flying field was implemented but a subsequent second application was submitted for the settlement area. That permission for a new settlement was granted in December 2011 (ref 10/01642/OUT). The permission was in outline so details of layout, scale, appearance, landscaping and access (the reserved matters) have to be submitted within a period of six years. This site is slightly different in so far as although it was shown on the approved parameter plan for commercial use, the use envisaged for Buildings 455 and 457 would be slightly different. Because of this change the applicant has submitted the details as a full application.
- 6.3 The appeal and subsequent planning decisions have already been taken into account by the Council as part of its Local Plan and the development of former RAF Upper Heyford is seen as the major single location for growth in the District away from Banbury and Bicester. This seems a feasible proposition as the outline permission is now in place. Furthermore, in the CLP, additional sites have been allocated for development in and around Heyford.
- 6.4 Extensive pre application discussions have been had on this site firstly about seeking to retain Buildings 455 and 457. The developers had at one stage considered their demolition. Although not statutorily listed they are of local interest and as the site is located within the RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area Officer's considered it critical that the development reinforced and enhanced the character of this area. After consulting with a marketing strategist, the current model was put forward by the applicant for the retention and conversion of the two buildings. Subsequently discussions have been had about design and layout, conversion, its compliance with the existing masterplan, Design Code and Local Plan policy (Villages 5).
- 6.5 Turning to the detail of the application, Officers' consider the following matters to be relevant to the determination of this application:
- Planning Policy and Principle of Development;
 - Design, Layout and Appearance
 - Impact on Heritage
 - Landscape Impact;
 - Accessibility, Highway Safety and Parking;
 - Employment
 - Flooding Drainage

Planning Policy and Principle of the Development

- 6.6 Paragraph 14 of the NPPF makes it clear that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that permission should be granted unless any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against policies in the Framework taken as a whole. There remains a need to undertake a balancing exercise to examine any adverse impacts of a development that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of it and also the harm that would be caused by a particular scheme in order to see whether it can be justified. In carrying out the balancing exercise it is, therefore, necessary to take into account policies in the development plan as well as those in the Framework. It is also necessary to recognise that Section 38 of the Act continues to require decisions to be made in accordance with the development plan and the Framework highlights the importance of the plan led system as a whole.
- 6.7 The Development Plan for Cherwell District comprises the saved policies in the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 and the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provides that in dealing with applications for planning permission the local planning authority shall have regards to the provisions of the development plan in so far as is material to the application and to any material

considerations. Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination shall be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This is also reflected in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) at paragraph 11 which makes it clear that the starting point for decision making is the development plan.

6.8 Policy Villages 5 of the CLP identifies the former military base as a strategic site in the rural area for a new settlement. The land subject of this application is identified within that policy as part of a potential development area. The policy seeks to achieve a settlement of approximately 1600 dwellings in addition to those already approved together with employment and other development. This includes community facilities and local centre/hotel. The policy also goes on to lay down infrastructure needs, specific design and place making principles including avoiding development on more sensitive and historically significant sites, retain features that are important for the character and appearance of the site, encourage biodiversity enhancement, environmentally improve areas, integrate the new and existing communities and remove structures that do not make a positive contribution to the site's special character. The plans and supporting documentation demonstrate its conformity with the development plan in particular:

- development of a brownfield site
- retention of two buildings considered to be historic assets
- the formation of a new settlement centre in a sustainable and highly accessible location.
- the environmental improvement of the locality
- a commitment to high quality design and finishes reflective of the approved Heyford design code and appropriate for a new commercial heart to the settlement
- scale and massing of new buildings to reflect their context and
- integration and connectivity to the surrounding development

The main issues will be discussed in more detail below but in principle the application is seen to conform with Policy Villages 5.

Design, Layout and Appearance

6.9 Extensive work and discussions have been had with the developer to establish a layout and architectural vocabulary for the site which will reinforce and enhance its heritage value. The starting point has been the retention of Buildings 455 and 457 but in addition the applicant has had to consider the creation of a new centre, ensure it integrates into the wider settlement and becomes an accessible and community hub. It needs to take account of the linkage it has to its immediate surroundings and beyond. In particular, to Camp Road which it fronts and to the Village Green to its rear, although historically its relationship was stronger to the latter space when it was formerly a parade ground.

6.10 An extensive Design and Access statement has been prepared and subsequently revised following submission of the application after the Council's Design Consultant secured revisions in the architectural styles proposed here. The architect's use of the Design Code as a guiding tool can be seen by the simple style of the extensions to the two existing buildings and the link between them. In fact the scheme has been broken into a number of constituent elements that have been designed individually then brought together to form a coherent whole. They are described accordingly.

6.11 The eastern part of Building 455 and some minor extensions are removed stripping it back to its original form. The building is then extended to the north, east and south in a more modern style and materials to contrast with the existing building which is refurbished in a style and materials to reflect its existing appearance. Internally space is created to provide a variety of

commercial and community uses. On the ground floor are a number of rooms that will provide an estates office, lounges, a screening room and bowling alley. Above on the first floor are 16 hotel bedrooms. A total floorspace of 1,642 m² is created.

- 6.12 Similarly 457 is stripped back to its original single storey form by removing later extensions. Again the building is refurbished in a style reflecting its existing appearance but gains a first floor extension which is more modern in appearance and uses contrasting materials. This creates a floorspace of 636 m² and would be used as a bar/brasserie.
- 6.13 Possibly the most exciting design element is a glazed canopied link that joins the two buildings. This provides a multi-purpose area of 403m² designed for indoor market, social events, café, etc. Its design is contemporary but reflective of the A frame hangers seen in the Technical Area although it is understood to be inspired by market halls. The use of glass gives it an open feel and enables a connectivity to be viewed of the village green from Camp Road.
- 6.14 The juxtaposition of the three buildings creates terraces and spaces around them for outside activity that should form strong links to the village green to the south and to Camp Road to the north. The latter includes an element of design that will create a new public square, albeit with Camp Road running through it. The concept is not fully formed and a new application is anticipated for the Village Centre North which will physically complete the design. Part of the anticipated use will involve the closure of Camp Road for markets, and social and seasonal events. The square will be surfaced in contrasting materials to create strong routes through it linking destinations such as the school buildings. The finish of surface materials is important and a commitment has been given to use high quality throughout the scheme which will be reinforced by conditions.
- 6.15 Other spaces that will be created are for three courtyard parking areas. One east of the hotel will provide 34 parking spaces, one west of the brassiere of 21 spaces and a separate car park to the west of 27 spaces. These will be supplemented by parking/service laybys on Camp Road and the new access road to the south. In total there are 86 spaces of which 9 will be to an accessible standard.
- 6.16 It is considered the scale of the development is appropriate vertically and spatially. That the buildings and their setting are of a suitable form and appearance that follows the place making guidance set out in the CLP. The range of specified materials is of quality, although a condition is specifically required to ensure this. The result creates a more informal relationship to the village green and more formal to the main street, and although its impact will be somewhat different it should create a harmonious blend to both. The Officers conclude that what is proposed conforms to CLP policies Villages 5 and ESD 15, and CLP96 policies C28 and C30.

Landscape Impact

- 6.17 The landscape setting is an important part of the character of Heyford. Presently there are a number of mature trees on the site but they have been inspected and found to be almost entirely diseased or of poor quality. In principle therefore, the officers have not objected to an almost wholesale restructuring of the landscaping on this part of the site and to the loss of 18 trees. A strategy has been prepared which combines a good mix of hard and soft landscaping combined with surface treatment which will act as mitigation but also add to the place making exercise. The applicant has requested the actual details are worked up through the use of conditions and this is acceptable to the Landscape Officer. Part of the condition will include provision of appropriate street furniture. Maintenance of the landscaping at Heyford Park will be undertaken for the applicant who has set up a management company responsible for it. This keeps control of some of the hedging, planting

and trees in the public domain. It is concluded that what is provided is therefore an environmental enhancement in compliance with Policy Villages 5.

Traffic, Access and Parking

- 6.18 Development at Heyford Park is required by the CLP to provide good transport links, to minimise traffic generation, to calm and manage traffic where it occurs and that the settlement should be designed to encourage walking and cycling. This site with its central location is possibly the most accessible and therefore the most sustainable for commercial development in Heyford Park. It forms the hub that the surrounding development revolves around both inside the new settlement and in the wider district surrounding. Buses go along Camp Road and the prime stop will be in the village centre. Footpath and cycle routes will radiate outwards from the new Square. Most of the community services will be provided here (in the next phase of the village centre) so this accessibility is important and needs to be maintained.
- 6.19 In terms of the physical proposals, Camp Road's linearity is retained which is important to reflect its heritage importance. However, that provides issues in calming traffic as without measures in place there will be opportunity for high speeds to be attained. It is also important for the solutions to be designed rather than engineered. Most of Camp Road is outside the red line application site so these details are being secured through other applications but what is shown indicatively are physical alterations to the carriageway that will force traffic to slow down when it enters the centre in addition to which are surface treatments that have been used elsewhere and which will give pedestrian priority in the area and help create a sense of place.
- 6.20 The parking areas to the west will be accessed off an approved circulatory road and not direct from Camp Road. The hotel car park to the east will have a direct access to Camp Road entering the highway to the east of the centre. In itself, the new access should be a traffic calming feature. The layout and level of parking has been revised to better reflect the Highway Authority's normal standard. Cycle parking of some 37 stands is proposed but neither the County nor your officers think this is enough nor are they all in the right place in order to encourage cycling. Conditions have been suggested to secure satisfactory provision.
- 6.21 The Highway Authority has expressed some reservations about engineering elements to the scheme and has therefore maintained an objection to it. However the applicant has specified their willingness to comply with appropriately worded conditions to secure detailed design of accesses, junctions and surfacing, together with a servicing management plan, and this seems an appropriate course of action.

Impact on Heritage

- 6.22 This application seeks approval for an important phase of development by Dorchester Homes. In this case it aims to retain Buildings 455 and 457; all other buildings associated with that period of British Military history and the Parade Ground have now been demolished or have consent to be removed. 455 and 457 are in the British military style constructed in red brick under a hipped slated roof and dating from the 1920's. They formed a group located around and orientated towards the parade ground which made them contained and self-referencing. The arrangement of these buildings on a grid enhanced the strong building lines and imbued the parade ground area with a campus quality.
- 6.23 Historic England originally objected to the proposal but on submission of a modified scheme that has been withdrawn. The Conservation Officer has some reservations.

6.24 The merits and significance of 455 and 457 have previously been considered at the inquiry into planning application 08/00716/OUT and at other instances when the Conservation Area was being appraised, environmental statements prepared for other applications and for a Heritage Assessment and Impact Study. The conclusion is that the significance of the area is low, and depended on it being part of a coherent group of buildings around the Parade Ground. And the significance of the two buildings themselves was also low, both are “Non Listed Buildings of Local Significance.” However, when the applicant had previously requested through pre-application discussions to demolish them, this was resisted by Officers as the rationale behind allowing development at Heyford was the preservation of the main heritage assets and environmental improvements.

6.25 Turning to the guidance to Planning Authority’s contained in the Framework and the NPPG on the historic environment:

Para 131 of the Framework advises: *“In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*

- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

Para 132 goes on to advise: *“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.”*

6.26 In this case Buildings 455 and 457 have undergone much change inside and out reducing their integrity. Their setting is also somewhat different now that the outline planning permissions and the CLP policies are being implemented. The assets are also not listed other than of local interest. However they do form an important link to the buildings on the other side of Camp Road and to the re-created space of the Parade Ground. It is therefore the view of the Officers that what is proposed will preserve and enhance the Conservation Area and preserve important heritage assets.

Employment

6.27 No figures are given in the application for the level of employment likely from this development. It is considered that what is proposed should provide some of the 1500 jobs required by CLP Policy Villages 5 and in a mixed range of employment opportunities bearing in mind the nature of the commercial enterprises proposed which will contrast to the higher levels of employment provided on the Flying Field and in the Technical area from B1, B2 and B8 operations. Hotel use is also supported by CLP Villages 5 and by CLP96 policy T2. The economic case for development forms one of the three aims of the NPPF to create sustainable development along with social and environmental considerations therefore it is seen as another reason to support this development.

Flooding and Drainage

6.28 The site lies within Flood Zone 1 (low risk). A Flood risk assessment has nevertheless been undertaken by the applicants for this and the rest of Heyford Park. As the site is in Zone 1 redevelopment of the site is not precluded. Surface water discharge from the site can be discharged to a new drainage system that can be suds compliant. OCC, the local flood risk authority, are generally happy with the scheme that is formed by underground tanks and oversized pipes. This will meet the 1/100 year event with a 30% allowance for climate change. Other measures are indicated as part of it SUDs proposals including balancing ponds, permeable paving, swales, etc. Should the 1/100 year event occur the area has been designed so water will flow away from buildings.

Engagement

6.29 With regard to the duty set out in paragraphs 186 and 187 of the Framework, problems or issues that have arisen during the application have been largely resolved. It is considered that the duty to be positive and proactive has been discharged through the efficient and timely determination of the application and the pre-application engagement that preceded it. It does need to be recorded that the applicant has followed our normal procedures and protocols and engaged in pre-application discussions.

7 Conclusion

7.1 What is proposed as part of this application is seen as sustainable development. It provides economic, social and environmental benefits in line with guidance in the NPPF. It conforms to the main thrust of the Development Plan, in particular Policy Villages 5. It is considered on balance that what is now proposed will form an area of a distinct character reflecting the design of the surrounding development but without slavishly following it or creating a pastiche. It will enhance the setting of the Village Green and Camp Road. Taken together the disparate elements of this development create an attractive and accessible Centre. It is recommended that planning permission is granted.

Recommendation

Approve, subject to Conditions which will be provided in advance of Committee.

(At present because of the number and technical nature of some of the conditions a dialogue with the applicant and the County Council is being undertaken to finalise them)

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