

Gavray Drive West

BICESTER

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

April 2015

Prepared by
David Lock Associates Ltd and **Paul Drew Design Ltd**
on behalf of **Gallagher Estates Ltd**
Charles Brown
and **Simon Digby**

GALLAGHER
ESTATES

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Introduction

OUTLINE OF THE PROPOSALS

1.1 This Design and Access Statement (DAS) accompanies an outline planning application for a housing development on land at Gavray Drive West, located in Bicester.

1.2 The outline application has been submitted on behalf of Gallagher Estates, Charles Brown and Simon Digby (“the applicants”) by a project team comprising David Lock Associates (town planning and urban design); Odyssey Markides (transportation); EDP (landscaping, ecology and archaeology); Arup (air quality, noise and ground conditions); JBA (drainage and flood assessment) and Kernon Countryside (agriculture and soil resources).

1.3 The outline planning application proposes the following:

- housing (class C3);
- green infrastructure including public open space and children’s play space;
- sustainable urban drainage systems including balancing ponds and drainage channels;
- connections to the surrounding highway and footpath network;
- infrastructure and utilities provision including car parking; and
- any necessary ground remodelling and engineering works.

1.4 The outline planning application seeks detailed approval for access. All other matters are reserved.

ROLE AND STRUCTURE OF THE DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

1.5 This Design and Access Statement (DAS) has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Article 9 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

1.6 In accordance with those statutory requirements, the DAS explains and justifies the development proposals for Gavray Drive West, hereafter referred to as the ‘site’. It sets out the context and characteristics of the site and its surroundings, to include site constraints, and relevant development plan and national planning policy and design guidance. It articulates the principles underlying the design of the proposed development, including how those principles have been informed by the physical and policy context for the development. The DAS also addresses access to and movement within the site.

1.7 Detailed design and siting matters are reserved for future approval but the parameters in this statement provide a sound basis on which to develop the proposals further. The Parameter Plan to which this DAS relates will be approved as part of any outline planning permission, thereby defining the key design elements of the proposal.

Context Appraisal

SCOPE OF THE CONTEXT APPRAISAL

2.1 The context appraisal describes the physical, social, economic and policy contexts that have influenced the design proposals for the site. It sets out and summarises key findings and conclusions from the technical studies that accompany the application.

2.2 The planning history of the site is complex. The principle of residential development on Gavray Drive was established in 2006. At that time the Development Plan allocated the site for employment uses. An application for 500 units was approved on appeal. That outline consent was subsequently extended in February 2012 under the provisions of the guidance contained in Greater Flexibility for Planning Permissions. That decision was ultimately set aside in the High Court following a legal challenge. There is no current planning consent on Gavray Drive. However, the suitability of the site for residential development has been tested at an appeal inquiry and is now confirmed by CDC's subsequent decision to allocate the site as part of a wider strategic residential allocation in the Main Modifications to the Cherwell Local Plan in Policy Bicester 13.

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy and Guidance

2.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012) outlines the purpose and role of the planning system. The NPPF requires planning authorities to 'boost significantly' the supply of housing (para. 47) and stresses the importance of delivering a wide choice of high quality homes (para. 50) which meets local needs, delivered through high quality and inclusive design.

2.4 The NPPF expects development to facilitate social interaction and to create healthy and inclusive communities (para 69), achieved by providing opportunities for residents to interact supported by the creation of safe and accessible environments and seeks to ensure the delivery of community and recreational facilities, through an integrated approach to development, in terms of the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities (para 70).

2.5 The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), provides further information on design in the planning process. ID 26-006-20140306 of the NPPG states:

"Design impacts on how people interact with places. Although design is only part of the planning process it can affect a range of economic, social and environmental objectives beyond the requirement for good design in its own right. Planning policies and decisions should seek to ensure the physical environment supports these objectives. The following issues should be considered:

- *local character (including landscape setting);*
- *safe, connected and efficient streets;*
- *a network of greenspaces (including parks) and public places;*
- *crime prevention;*
- *security measures;*
- *access and inclusion;*
- *efficient use of natural resources; and*
- *cohesive & vibrant neighbourhoods."*

2.6 In accordance with the NPPF and NPPG, the applicant recognises the importance of good design in sustainable development and the overall benefits it confers in terms of establishing a new community. Details of architecture, urban design and landscaping will be taken forward at reserved matters stage in accordance with the principles set out in the application proposals and Design and Access Statement.

National Design Guidance

2.7 In addition to the NPPF, there are a number of guidance documents published by the Government or by Government agencies that promote good design. Collectively, they form a widely acknowledged body of best practice design guidance.

2.8 The national guidance that has been and will continue to be considered in the design of the proposed development comprises:

- **By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System** (DETR and CABE, 2000). The aim of this guidance document is to promote higher standards in urban design, outlining key objectives derived from the study of common characteristics of successful places and exploring mechanisms for achieving those objectives in new developments.
- **By Design: Better Places to Live** (DTLR, CABE, 2000). This guide was a companion document to the former *PPG3: Housing* and remains a relevant document, setting out the principles of good design to raise overall quality in housing layout and design.
- **Safer Places – The Planning System and Crime Prevention** (ODPM, 2004). This document sets out the particular aspects of placemaking that are relevant to crime prevention.

- **Planning and Access for Disabled People: A Good Practice Guide** (ODPM, 2005). This guidance sets out to ensure the needs of disabled people are properly considered as an integral part of the development process.
- **Secured by Design Principles** (ACPO, 2004). This document is a Police initiative to encourage the building industry to adopt crime prevention measures within development design.
- **Manual for Streets 1 and 2** (DfT, 2007 and 2010). These documents advocate a culture change in the way streets are designed, with a view to creating a more attractive public realm and a safer environment for residents.
- **Car Parking: What Works Where** (English Partnerships, 2007). This is a tool kit for looking at which parking typologies work well in different locations.
- **The Urban Design Compendium 1** (English Partnerships, 2000). This provides guidance on the principles of urban design and how to apply them.
- **The Urban Design Compendium 2: Delivering Quality Places** (English Partnerships, 2007). This document builds on the guidance set out in Compendium 1 and describes the processes needed to deliver quality places.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

Cherwell District Local Plan (1996)

2.9 The adopted Cherwell Local Plan (adopted November 1996) still remains part of the statutory Development Plan for the area. A number of policies are ‘saved’ until the Council’s replacement Local Plan is adopted.

2.10 There are no adopted policies that relate specifically to the site. Other policies which offer relevant include the following:

- **Policy C1 and C2** which seek to promote the interests of nature conservation and ensure the protection of sites of local nature conservation value;
- **Policy C7** that seeks to prevent harm to the topography and character of landscape by requiring development to take into account changes in level slope and not to detract from important views;
- **Policy C9** that seeks to ensure compatibility of development with rural location in terms of its type, scale and size;
- **Policy C14** that seeks to retain important trees, woodland and hedgerows and ensure that new planting uses species native to the area;
- **Policy C28** that seeks sympathetic layout, design and external appearance of new development and use of traditional building materials;
- **Policy C30** that seeks that new housing is compatible with appearance, character, scale of existing dwellings in

the vicinity and ensures acceptable standards of amenity and privacy;

- **Policy ENV1** that seeks to ensure the amenities of the environment and neighbouring residents are not unduly affected by development;
- **Policy R12** that requires the provision of 2.43 ha of public open space per 1,000 population; and
- **Policy TR1** that requires provision of highways improvements and/or additional public transport.

The Non-Statutory Cherwell District Local Plan (2004)

2.11 The Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan is not part of the statutory development plan but it has been approved as interim planning policy for development control purposes. As such any relevant development plan policies offer general policy provisions and do not contain any site specific policy detail. The principles for development (albeit now out of date) which are relevant to the determination of this application are:

- Housing policies **H1a, H3, H4 and H7** that relate to the criteria upon which locations for housing will be assessed which includes the need to take into account the physical and environmental constraints on development of land, not to be built at a density of less than 30 dwellings per hectare, provide for a mix of dwellings to include an element of affordable housing;

- Transport and Development policies **TR1, TR2, TR3, TR4, TR5, TR8, TR9 and TR11** that require development proposals to contribute to achieving the objectives of the local transport plan, located where it can be realistically reached by all modes of transport, ensure safe movement for all transport modes and free flow of traffic, provide appropriate cycling and pedestrian networks and facilities;
- Recreation and Community Facilities policies, **R8, R9 and R10** that require provision of 2.43 ha per 1000 population of public open space to include an element of formal sports and children's play, and areas of informal open space that contribute to the "greening" of residential areas and if necessary, secure off site enhancement of built sport and recreation facilities;
- Conserving and Enhancing the Environment policies **EN1, EN15, EN16, EN17, EN23, EN24, EN25, EN27, EN28**, that require development proposals to take into account their likely impact on built and natural environment, promote interests of nature conservation, creation of new ecological habitats and the character and appearance of the wider landscape to reduce harm and visual intrusion;
- Urban Design and the Built Environment policies **D1, D3, and D12** that seek development proposals to be locally distinctive in built development and landscape, ensure a permeable and legible form of development providing a mix of uses.

2.12 The proposed development has been informed by the characteristics of the site and the surrounding area. The application proposals include residential development, built at a range of densities and heights reflecting their context. The principles underpinning the Parameter Plan provide for walking, cycling, public transport infrastructure and facilities, promoting travel by non-car modes of transport.

2.13 Where possible, existing trees and hedgerows have been incorporated into the proposed development. A substantial area of open space will be located to the east of the housing, which will act as a buffer to the Local Wildlife Site. The development will include affordable housing which will be specified in the S106 Agreement.

Emerging Local Plan Policy

2.14 Examination of the Cherwell Local Plan 2031 has now concluded and the Inspector's decision is awaited. The draft plan focuses growth towards Bicester and Banbury. Draft Policy Bicester 13 allocates land at Gavray Drive for residential development for up to 300 houses to include open space provision and points of access from Gavray Drive. This planning application comprises part of this proposed allocation. The Planning Statement addresses this policy in detail.

Figure 1: Site Location



SITE EVALUATION AND PHYSICAL CONTEXT

Site Description

2.15 Gavray Drive West comprises 6.9 hectares of land to the west of Langford Brook. The site is bounded by Gavray Drive to the south, the Birmingham to Marylebone rail line (Chiltern Line) to the north, the Langford Brook to the east and Oxford to Bletchley Railway line to the west and clearly delineated by the new rail chord. The site comprises of agricultural land. A public right of way crosses the site linking Langford Village with Launton and Bicester Distribution Park.



Site Surroundings

2.16 North of the site is Bicester Distribution Park, which provides large footprint B8 distribution units. There is existing housing south of Gavray Drive comprising Langford village. To the east is the A4421, which is part of the Bicester Eastern Distributor Route. Beyond this lies the strategic housing allocation of South West Bicester. The town centre is located approximately 1.3km to the west of the site offering a full range of retail, commercial, employment and residential uses. There are good existing pedestrian and cycle connections that will ensure that residents have safe and convenient access to Bicester Town Centre and Langford Village Centre.

2.17 Gavray Drive has 2m wide footways on either side. To the west, is a footpath link and bridge over the railway line connecting to Launton Road. There are also several footpath links from Gavray Drive running to the south through Langford Village and the public open space. Another pedestrian bridge is being constructed to maintain access across the railway chord. Vehicular access will continue to be taken from the existing junction on Gavray Drive, itself accessed from the A4421. The nearest railway stations to the site are Bicester North and Bicester Town, both of which are around 1500m away.

2.18 There are several bus services passing through or near the Langford area of Bicester, with the Routes 22 and 23 running along Gavray Drive. In addition, Chiltern Railways operate a Taxibus service that covers Langford Village, stopping at Peregrine Way and Mallards Way and including Gavray Drive on its route.



a. New bridge for pedestrian link

b. Access prior to new bridge

c. Footpath to town centre from Gavray Drive West

Figure 2: Pedestrian Links



Figure 3: Community Infrastructure in Bicester



TOPOGRAPHY

2.19 The site is level, with the exception of the railway embankment which sits along the northern boundary, approximately 10 metres in height. Views are limited to the north of the site, by the densely vegetated rising ground associated with the railway. Langford Brook defines the eastern edge of the site. All built development lies within Flood Zone 1 after ground remodelling. A drainage strategy incorporates the principles of Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS).

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

2.20 A landscape appraisal has been undertaken to assess the character, value and sensitivity of the site and surrounding landscape. This has been formulated through fieldwork and by analysing published landscape characterisation that has already been completed at a national and local level. Detailed findings are set out in Chapter 8 of the Environmental Statement that supports the application.

2.21 The application site is characterised by pasture, in two separate field compartments, one small and one fairly large. The site is not subject to any statutory landscape designations. The site context is inherently urban.

BIODIVERSITY

2.22 East of the application site is a Local Wildlife Site, identified for its grassland habitats. The proposed layout has taken into account habitats and features of local value at an early design stage and seeks to retain and enhance these features. There is no built development proposed within the draft River Ray Target Area.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

2.23 The site does not contain any 'designated heritage assets'. The site has previously been subject of a programme of archaeological investigation, resulting in the agreement of a strategy for phased mitigation with the local authority's archaeological advisor.

Figure 4: Site Characteristics and Opportunities

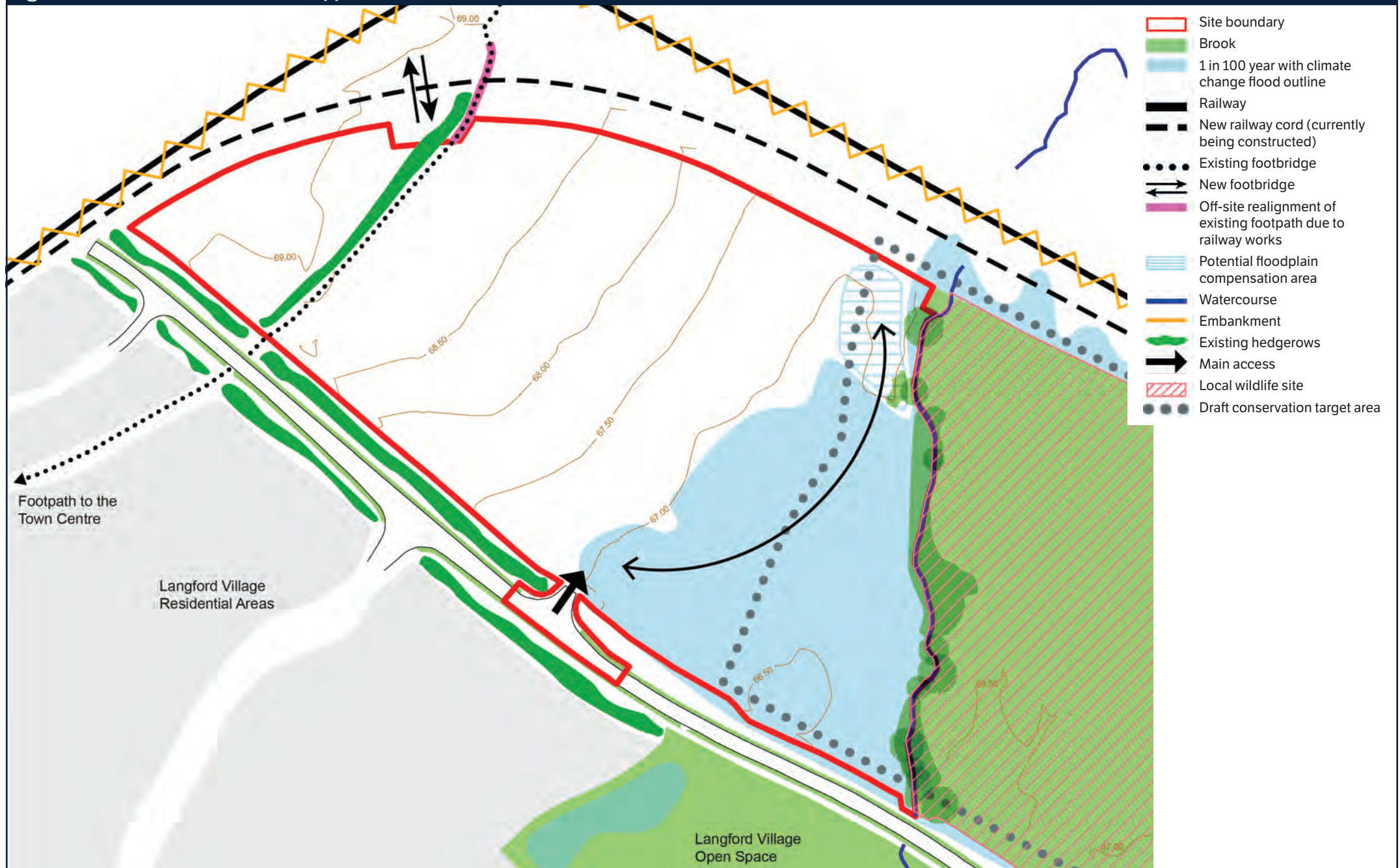
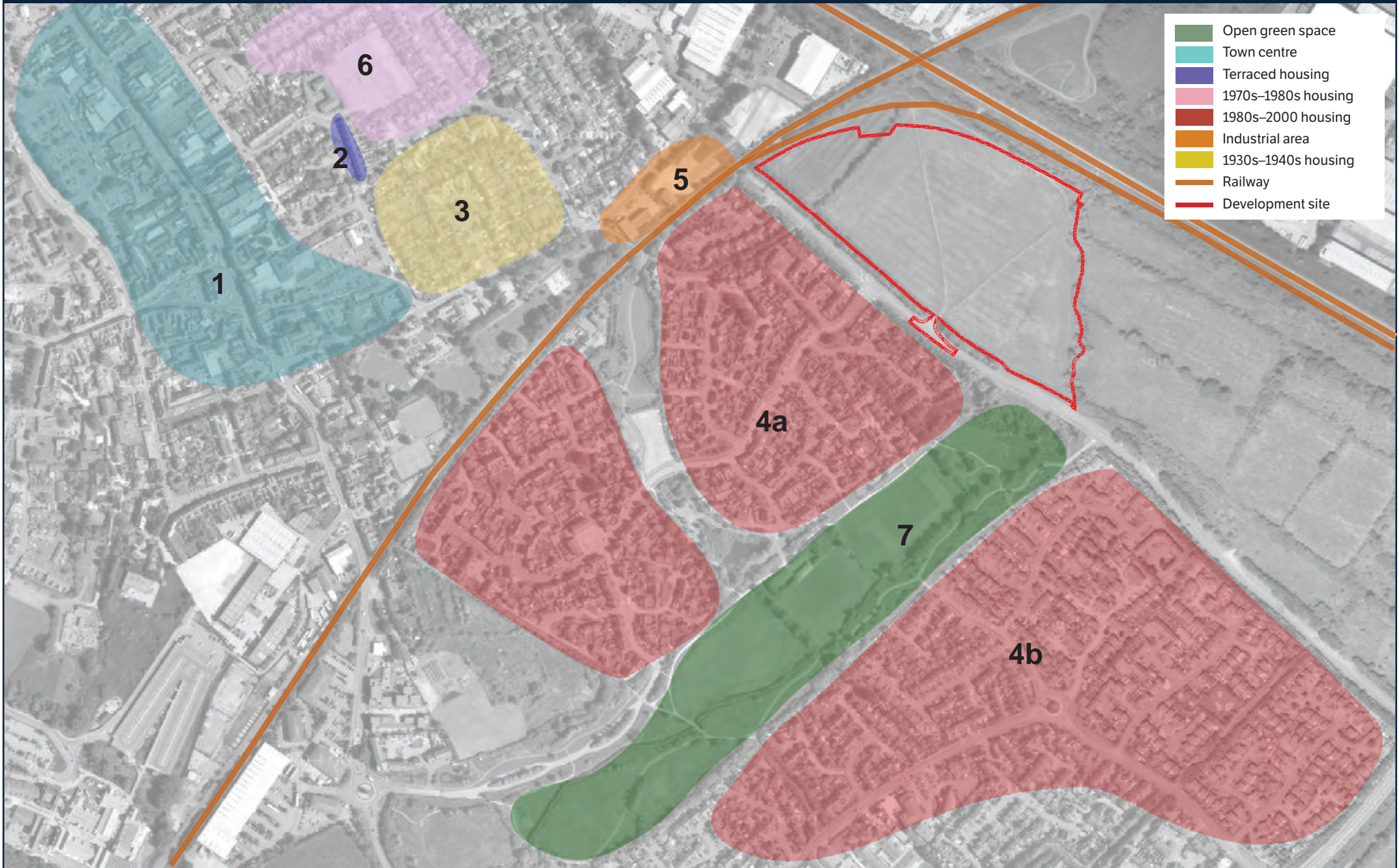


Figure 5: Local Townscape Character



LOCAL CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

2.24 Figure 5 provides a townscape character analysis of the Bicester and residential areas that immediately adjoin the town which have informed the design proposals.

1. Town centre



View from Market Square of pedestrianised town centre area closest to Gavray Drive

Market square, view from pedestrianised Sheep Street

The courtyard Youth Art Centre on Launton Road



Bicester’s town centre characteristics:

- Mixed use and amenities
- 3 storeys buildings
- Dense development and continuous frontage on all sides
- Variety in built form
- Commercial activity around the triangular Market square and Sheep Street
- Origin in the mid-17th century
- Buildings arranged in the centre of Market square road junction
- Pedestrian link along the space connecting Sheep Street with Gavray Drive

Significance to Gavray Drive:

- Town centre’s variety of uses and activities such as local amenities and open green spaces
- 600m from Gavray Drive to town centre, 6–7 mins walk
- Good connectivity which promotes sustainability ie. transport choices

2. Victoria Road Terraced Housing, Victoria Road



Layout and characteristics:

- Town centre hinterland
- 2 storeys Victorian workers terraces
- Retained integrity of original features
- Yellow brick, red roof tiles, decorative windows
- Low brick wall boundary
- Shallow set back
- On-street parking
- Continuous and homogeneous build line with repetition of blocks detail

Significance to Gavray Drive:

- Continuity of frontage
- Good pedestrian interface
- Contribution to overlooking at the street from shallow front gardens

3. 1930s-1940s residential area, Lambourne Crescent



Layout and characteristics:

- Garden suburb planning
- 2 storeys semi-detached properties
- Red brick, brown roof tiles
- Large set backs and on-plot parking
- Vehicular access directly from the street
- Facing backyards
- Small public garden in the neighbourhood roundabout
- Red brick, brown roof tiles

Significance to Gavray Drive:

- Consideration of semi-detached can allow for flanked parking
- Opportunity for green space

4. 1980s-2000 housing neighbourhood, Mallards Way & Sandpiper Close



Layout and characteristics:

- Series of cul-de-sac
- Mix of typologies
- 2-2½ storeys semi-detached properties
- Red / yellow bricks and grey roof tiles
- 4m set-back and on-plot parking
- Backyards delineated by hedgerows
- Varied roofline
- Varied range of materials

Significance to Gavray Drive:

- Good pedestrian connectivity
- Good overlooking of streets also from side windows
- Use of local building materials

5. Railway and industrial area, Launton Road



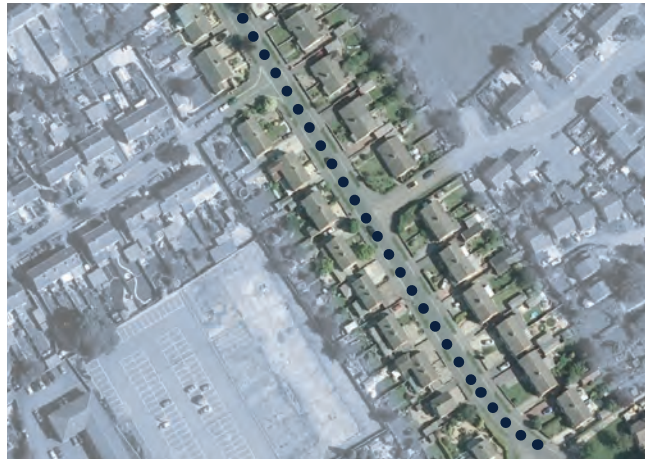
Layout and characteristics:

- Industrial development established along the initial part of Launton road, closest to Gavray Drive
- Typical industrial building typology
- Group of 1–2 storeys industrial buildings including parking areas
- Edges of the area defined by hedgerows

Significance to Gavray Drive:

- Close proximity to industrial development may require considered housing design

6. 1970s–1980s residential area, Longfield Street



Layout and characteristics:

- 2 storeys detached properties arranged parallel to the street
- Regular set back and on-plot parking
- Vehicular access directly from the street
- Facing backyard gardens
- Strong symmetry of doors and windows on the facade
- Use of cladding within masonry façade

Significance to Gavray Drive:

- Of limited significance to Gavray Drive

7. Green open space and wetlands



Layout and characteristics:

- Langford open space is a valued asset to the existing community
- The Langford public open space connects to the tree planted verges of Gavray Drive. This provides a landscape enclosure to the existing housing
- Provides pedestrian and cycle linkages between neighbourhoods and across the open space, including connection to play areas
- Provides informal natural landscape of grassland, hedgerows and brook watercourse

Significance to Gavray Drive:

- Continuing the landscape pattern and character such as informality, grassland and watercourse, in Gavray Drive
- Opportunity for play areas

Design

3.1 The Parameter Plan seeks to secure an acceptable balance between development and ecological interest. The development footprint has been reduced from that previously consented. A reduction in capacity results in there being no requirement for an on-site primary school, following confirmation of the Oxfordshire County Council's approach to manage pupil place demand through expansion of existing schools. Furthermore, the reduced development footprint does not encroach into the Local Wildlife Site.

3.2 The Parameter Plan has evolved fixing the key design and access elements of the scheme in the outline permission. The key design and access elements comprise:

- Amount;
- Layout;
- Scale;
- Landscape;
- Appearance;
- Access; and
- Sustainability.

AMOUNT

3.3 The site has been designed to accommodate approximately 180 homes and public open space, to include retention of the public right of way. A range of dwellings types and sizes will be provided, but will be predominantly 2-4 bed family housing, to include provision for affordable housing as part of an appropriate tenure mix.

Figure 6: Parameter Plan

- Application boundary
- Residential
- Public open space
- Area of surface water run-off
- ✱ Play area
- Main residential street – made up of 5.5m wide carriageway and two footways of 2m width
- Access to minor lanes and mews streets
- Retained footpath
- Proposed footpath
- Footpath connections at application boundary
- Hedgerow canopy (category B)
- Local wildlife site



LAYOUT

3.4 The precise layout of the development will be determined at the Reserved Matters stage. However the key principles of the layout include:

- Provision of an attractive green setting to the development with retention of pedestrian and cycle connections through the site to the wider area, utilising the new footbridge to improve pedestrian accessibility;
- Layout of housing to overlook streets and public open spaces and;
- Provision of a play area.

SCALE

3.5 The principle adopted in relation to scale is to ensure that development sits within the local setting and landscape and its scale is in keeping with the character of development within the local area. Most of the surrounding buildings in the area are residential, and predominantly two storey dwellings. Residential densities are proposed to be comparable to the residential area surrounding the site.

LANDSCAPE

3.6 Retained hedgerows along the site boundaries will create a strong landscape framework to define the extent of development and provide appropriate transition between the site, adjacent residential areas and Local Wildlife Site. Existing trees along the boundary hedgerows will add height and structure as well as offering shade, particularly within the public open space.

3.7 The main areas of formal open space provision lie at the eastern edge of the site, next to Langford Brook and respect the boundary to the Local Wildlife Site. CDC's Open Space calculation is set out in the table below. This is based on 180 homes with an average household size of 2.45 persons per household. This equates to a population of 441.

Category of Open Space	Draft Cherwell Local Plan	Requirements for development	Amount of POS proposed
General Green Space (overall)	2.40 ha / 1000 rural/edge dwellers	1.05 ha	2.0 ha to include play area
Children/Teen Play Areas	0.78 ha / 1000 people	0.34 ha	

APPEARANCE

3.8 The detailed appearance of the development will be established at reserved matters stage. Proposals should respond positively to the site context in particular landscape setting and local vernacular form, while also meeting contemporary needs and demands for sustainable development.

3.9 It is imperative that the materials used are appropriate, not only in terms of their aesthetic qualities, but also their function and durability.

3.10 Illustrative sketches are provided at Figures 7-9 to help demonstrate an appropriate design response to the development of the site and can be used to help guide the preparation of reserved matters.

Figure 7: View west along Gavray Drive



Figure 8: Approach from Gavray Drive

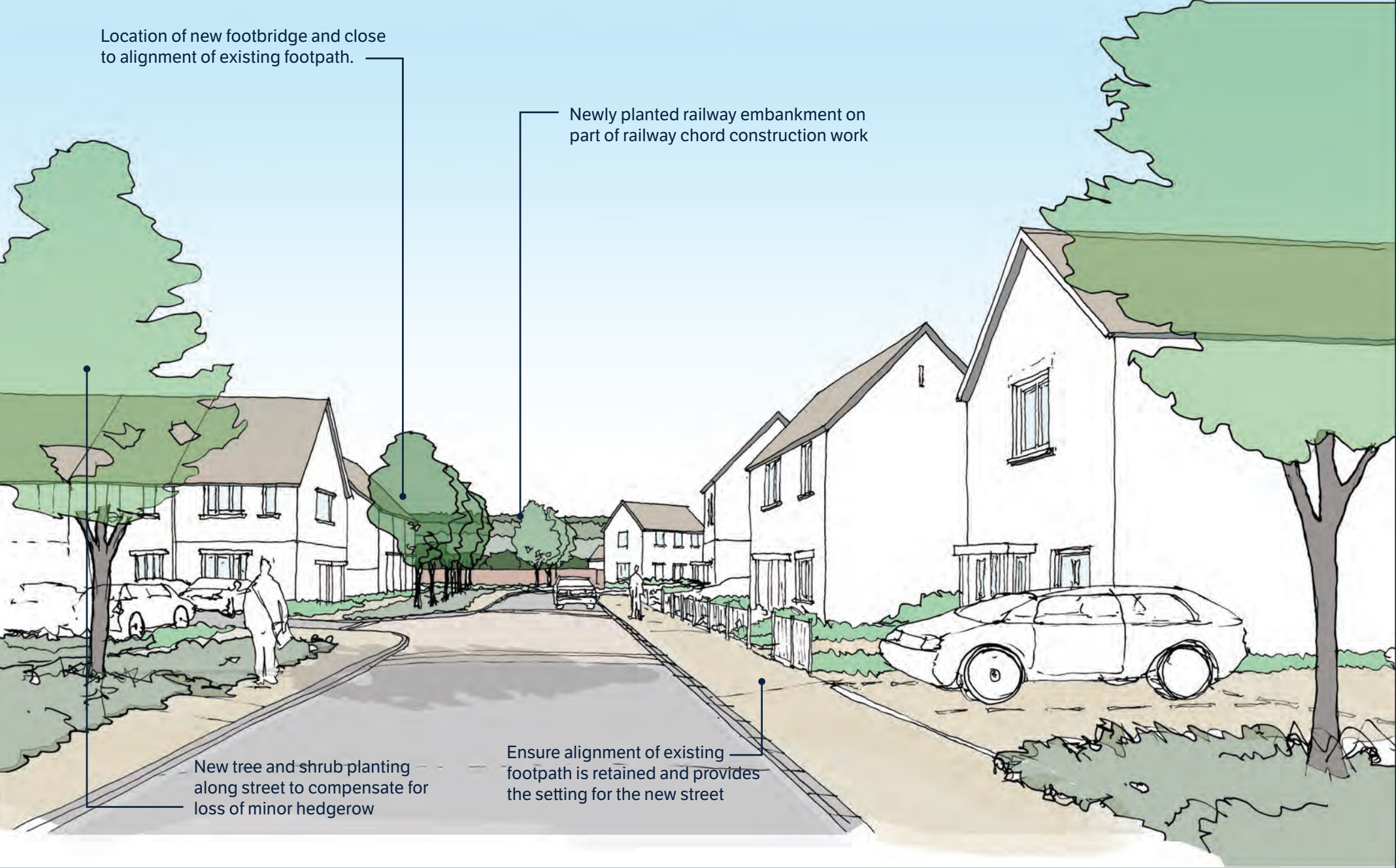


Provide edge lane fronting Gavray Drive hedgerow ensure minimum overshadowing of dwellings from edge

Dwellings sited to enclose long view and screen rail embankment and planting

Main street entrance from Gavray Drive using existing junction location

Figure 9: View through the site - route of existing footpath



Location of new footbridge and close to alignment of existing footpath.

Newly planted railway embankment on part of railway chord construction work

New tree and shrub planting along street to compensate for loss of minor hedgerow

Ensure alignment of existing footpath is retained and provides the setting for the new street

ACCESS

3.11 The national and local transport policy context is provided in the Environmental Statement and Transport Assessment that accompanies the outline application. The Proposed Development adopts the approach to transport promoted in the NPPF that people should be given a real choice about how they travel, designing a transport system that reflects the thrust towards sustainable transport modes.

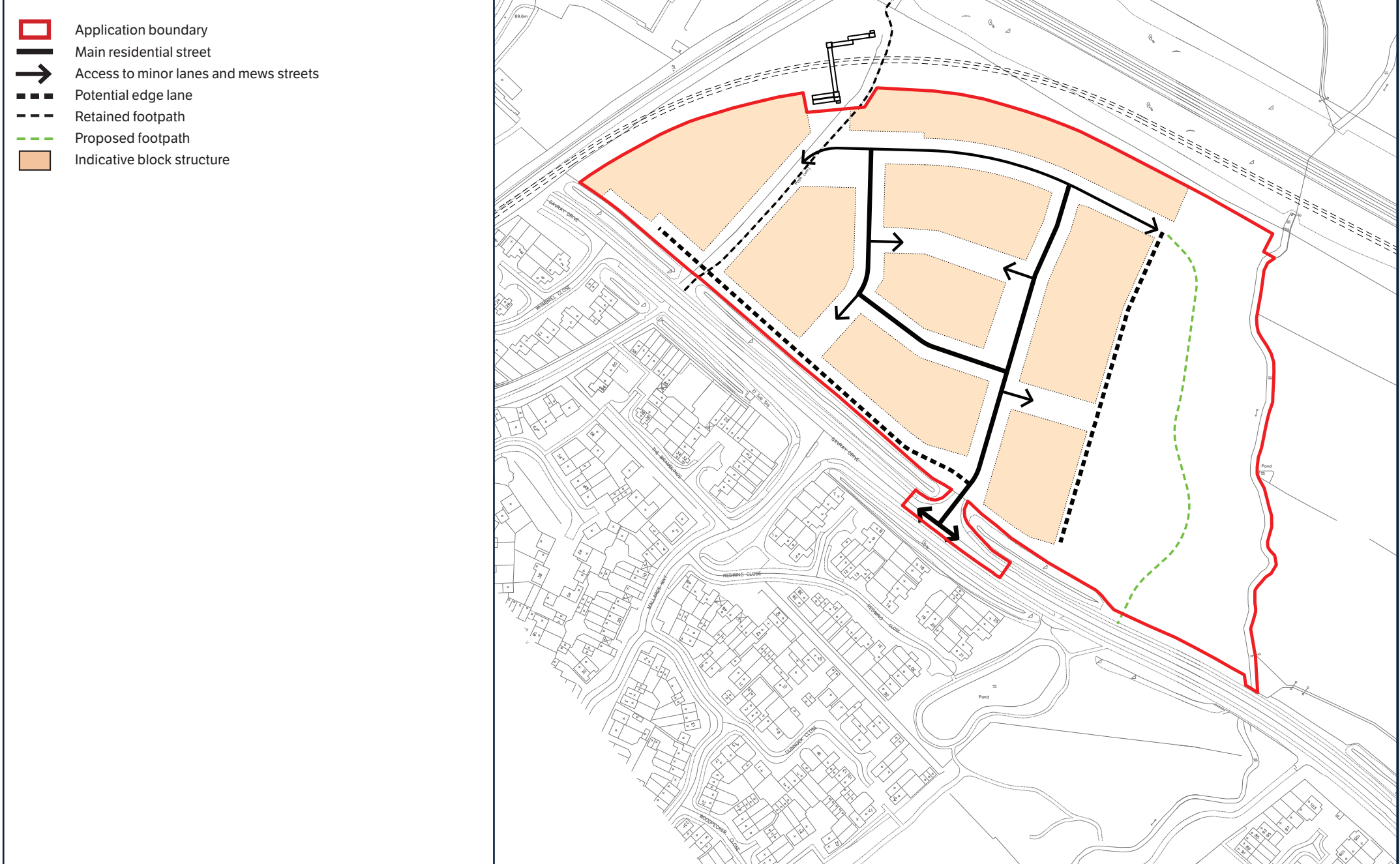
3.12 Safe and satisfactory access and egress for the development site will be provided via an existing junction off Gavray Drive. The internal road layout facilitates access to all parts of the site and turning movements as required. As the application is in outline, the details of parking arrangements will be fixed at the reserved matters stage, however the principle is that it should be provided as close to each property as possible and is safe and easy to use. Parking is expected to be provided in spaces on plot.

3.13 Parking provision will take account of relevant guidance on parking standards as set out in the NPPF and local plan standards, adopting a pragmatic and flexible approach to ensure that parking provision meets the needs of its users in an appropriate and practical way.

3.14 The scheme will be designed to be inclusive of disabled users and consideration will be given to access to the proposed properties and the ease of use taking account of advice set out in “Planning and Access for Disabled People” (ODPM 2004), “The Principles of Inclusive Design” (Cabe 2006), “Inclusive Mobility: A Guide to Best Practice” (2002).

3.15 One of the objectives of local planning policy is to encourage the use of public transport, walking and cycling. New leisure routes within the proposal provide accessibility to open spaces that are well surveilled by development frontage. Furthermore, the site is accessible to local facilities and well served by means of bus services and Bicester railway stations.

Figure 10: Indicative Movement Framework



ILLUSTRATIVE MASTER PLAN

3.16 An illustrative master plan is provided based on the Parameter Plan.

3.17 Key features of the illustrative master plan comprise:

- Maintaining the mature hedge and trees along boundaries to soften the visual impact of the development;
- Creation of open space at the eastern edge of the site, which protects and enhances the Local Wildlife Site, supplemented by green infrastructure within the streetscape;
- Areas of formal and informal open space, including a play area;
- Retention of existing rights of way through the site;
- Consideration of the development edge to the rail chord reserve, which is now under construction;
- Provision for surface water attenuation as part of the open space network; and
- Provision of appropriate flood plain compensation.

Figure 11: Illustrative Master Plan

- Indicative blocks
- Private gardens
- Green corridors
- Roads
- Balancing ponds
- Play area



Sustainability

4.1 Sustainability is a key design and development aspiration of the proposals. The layout of the development, the incorporation of sustainable drainage systems and the enhancement of natural site features all form a key part of the master plan design. A connected network of streets, footpaths and cycleways, will support sustainable patterns of movement.

4.2 Building in sustainability will be an integral part of the development proposals. The applicants will ensure that the development meets the appropriate national standard at the point of consent.

4.3 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) techniques will be used for surface water generated from the new development wherever possible. Implementation of strategies to reduce waste, including construction waste and to encourage recycling and adoption of a 'Travel Plan' to encourage sustainable modes of travel are further ways to build in sustainability to the development proposals.

Conclusion

5.1 This Design and Access Statement has explained how the design of the proposed development takes full account of its physical and supportive policy context to draw together a set of overarching design principles that should govern the development of the site. A condition on any Outline permission requiring compliance with the Parameter Plan, would ensure effective application of such principles at the detailed design stage.

5.2 The proposed development will provide a residential development providing a full range of tenures and dwelling sizes along with open space, in accordance with the emerging Local Plan allocation.

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