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**RICHBOROUGH ESTATES & LONE STAR LAND LTD** 

LAND TO THE NORTH OF CAMP ROAD, HEYFORD PARK

**NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY** 

**MARCH 2022** 



### **Wardell Armstrong**

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### 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 This report provides a summary, in non-technical language, of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken in support of a planning application for a landscape-led wholly residential development (hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development') on land north of Camp Road, Heyford Park. The Site is located within the administrative area of Cherwell District Council (CDC). Figure 1 illustrates the location of the Site, and the application boundary. A Location Plan is included at Appendix A.
- 1.1.2 The Site covers an irregular area of land measuring 11.68ha and is a greenfield site located on the southern and eastern edge of the former RAF Upper Heyford base.
- 1.1.3 This Non-Technical Summary provides a brief site description, a discussion of the proposals and then presents the assessment findings for each technical section of the Environmental Statement (ES). For further, more detailed technical information relating to the existing baseline conditions, the Proposed Development and the impact assessment, reference should be made to the ES.



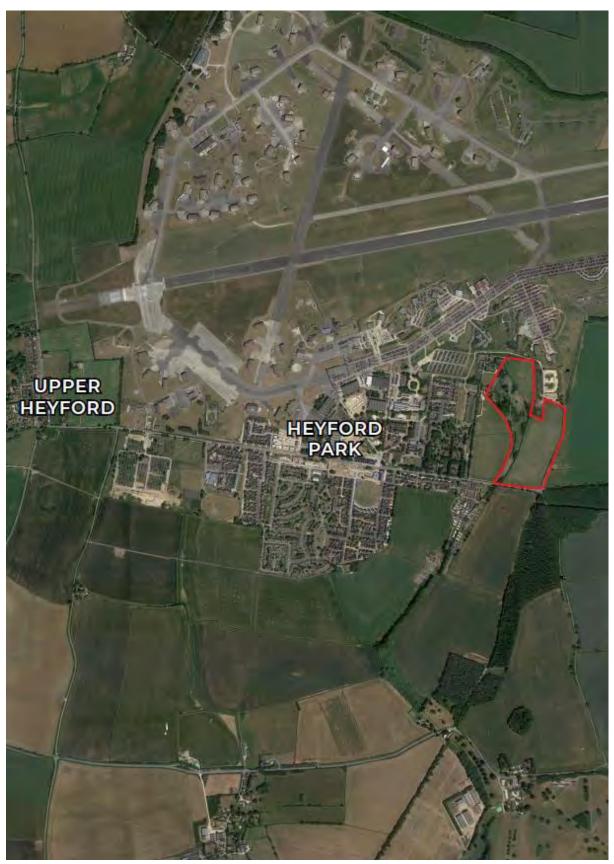


Figure 1: Site Location



### 2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1 The Site

- 2.1.1 The Site lies to north of Camp Road, at the junction of Camp Road and Chilgrove Drive, to the southeast of the former RAF airfield at Upper Heyford.
- 2.1.2 The Site covers an irregular area of land measuring 11.68ha and comprises two agricultural fields and a linear strip of land which follows a stream. The linear strip of land is located in the west of the Site and follows a north south orientation. It contains ponds and is surrounded by small areas of woodland, scattered trees, and managed grassland.

## 2.1.3 The Site is bound by:

- An agricultural field and horse paddocks to the west
- Letchmere Farm and its associated landscaped gardens to the northwest;
- RAF airfield with Nose Hangars to the northeast;
- Chilgrove Drive to the east; and
- Camp Road to the South.
- 2.1.4 There is currently no public access to the Site. Current vehicular access is located at the north-west of the Site via an access track from Letchmere Farm, located on Trenchard Circle.
- 2.1.5 The Site itself is relatively flat, with a gentle slope down to the west of the Site from the centre.

## 2.2 The Surrounding Area

- 2.2.1 The Site is located on the edge of Heyford Park, to the east of Upper Heyford. As such, land to the west of the Site predominantly comprises the residential areas and commercial uses.
- 2.2.2 The remaining land surrounding the Site and the RAF base is comprised of open countryside with scattered settlements and farmsteads.
- 2.2.3 The Site is located 10km northwest of Bicester and 27km north of Oxford, whilst Junction 10 of the M40 is located approximately 6.5km from the Site by road.

### 2.3 Environmental Designations

2.3.1 There are no designated heritage assets within the Site, however, a number of listed buildings (Grade II) and scheduled monuments are located in the RAF base. RAF Heyford is designated as a Conservation Area.



- 2.3.2 Whilst there are no statutory designated sites of nature conservation interest within or immediately adjacent to the Site, there are a number located within the wider area such as the Ardley Trackways Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Site also lies within Impact Risk Zones for Bestmoor SSSI and Ardley Cutting and Quarry Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- 2.3.3 The closest Public Right of Ways are a pedestrian footway to the southeast of the Site beyond Camp Road and a bridleway along Chilgrove Drive to the east of the Site.

## 2.4 The Development Proposals

- 2.4.1 The Proposed Development will include:
  - Up to 230 dwellings;
  - Public open space;
  - Landscaping and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS);
  - Green Infrastructure; and
  - Vehicular access from Camp Road.
- 2.4.2 It is proposed that 35% of the proposed residential development will comprise affordable housing.
- 2.4.3 In addition to the vehicular access, further pedestrian access will be located off Chilgrove Drive at the east of the Site.
- 2.4.4 The ponds and watercourses within the northwest extent of the Site will be retained and will be enhanced by the provision of a 'wet corridor' open space. This 'wet corridor' will be the main area of open space and will provide significant recreational benefits to the wider community.
- 2.4.5 Further public open space will be provided in the form of two proposed play spaces within the Site.
- 2.4.6 The Site's Green Infrastructure will be further supplemented through the planting of new trees and hedgerows.
- 2.4.7 A parameters-based approach has been adopted for the planning application, and it is those parameters for which permission is sought, as shown on the Parameters Plan at Appendix B. The detailed design will be brought forward generally in accordance with those parameters; one illustrative example of how the site could be developed is provided at Figure 2 and Appendix C. For further detail on the development design please refer to the full ES and the Design and Access Statement.



## Development Timetable

2.4.8 Subject to outline planning permission being granted in mid-late 2022 it is anticipated that construction of the Proposed Development could commence in early-mid 2023. It is predicted that the Proposed Development will be constructed at a rate of 40 dwellings per year ensuring the vast majority of proposed housing will be delivered within the five year period from 2022 – 2027.

## **Consideration of Alternatives**

- 2.4.9 The consideration of realistic alternatives to the proposed scheme helps to evaluate the environmental effects of a project.
- 2.4.10 The consideration of alternatives has reviewed the 'Do Nothing' approach which assumes that the Proposed Development will not proceed and that the Site will continue with its current use. Whilst this option would eliminate potential adverse environmental impacts as a result of the Proposed Development, it would not contribute to contribute to the housing and affordable housing targets that have been identified within Cherwell District or help redress an acknowledged shortfall in the Council's current five year housing land supply. The recreational benefits, for both new and existing residents, of publicly accessible green spaces and circular walks would also be lost.
- 2.4.11 The design of the proposals has evolved to reflect feedback from consultees and the findings of the assessments undertaken in order to reduce the potential environmental effects to the lowest practical level and enhance the potential benefits of the scheme.
- 2.4.12 The suitability of the Site's location has been considered at a strategic level within the Cherwell 2017 Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). The assessment concluded that the Site is entirely 'Suitable', 'Available' and 'Achievable' for residential development.
- 2.4.13 It is concluded therefore that the proposals constitute the most suitable option for development of the Site, taking into consideration environmental effects.



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Figure 2: Illustrative Masterplan



### 3 SCOPE AND APPROACH

## 3.1 Scope of Assessment

- 3.1.1 The development was judged to be EIA development by CDC due to the potential cumulative effect of the Proposed Development with the development proposed within Policy Villages 5. CDC acknowledged that the Proposed Development would be unlikely to result in significant environmental effects in isolation.
- 3.1.2 Owing to this, an EIA has been undertaken for the Proposed Development, considering the potential cumulative effects in combination with the development planned through Policy Villages 5 within the Cherwell Local Plan 2011 2031 Part 1. The scope of the EIA was informed by CDC's Screening Opinion.
- 3.1.3 The nearby developments considered within the cumulative assessment for this EIA are as follows:
  - Policy Villages 5- Former RAF Upper Heyford;
  - Heyford Park (Reference: 18/00825/HYBRID);
  - Heyford Park, South of Camp Road (Reference: 16/02446/F); and
  - Land East of Larsen Road, Heyford Park (Reference: 15/01357/F).
- 3.1.4 The following environmental assessments have been undertaken as part of this EIA:
  - Traffic;
  - Ecology;
  - Landscape & Visual;
  - Cultural Heritage & Archaeology; and
  - Water Resources.

## 3.2 Assessment Approach

3.2.1 For each environmental discipline, the method of assessment differs according to the guidance documents that relate to the discipline. However, the overarching assessment approach is as described below.

## Step 1: Establish the Baseline

3.2.2 The baseline conditions refer to the current status of the Site and the surrounding area (which, together, comprise the study area) that relate to the environmental discipline(s) being assessed. For example, traffic surveys were undertaken to ascertain



the existing traffic flows on roads surrounding the Site in order to establish the transport baseline.

### Step 2: Assess the Cumulative Effects

- 3.2.3 Within the assessment of cumulative impacts, there are two aspects to consider:
  - Intra-cumulative effects (i.e. those occurring as a result of different impacts of the Proposed Development in combination with each other); and
  - Inter-cumulative effects (i.e. those occurring as a result of the Proposed Development in combination with other development).
- 3.2.4 However, as it is not likely that the Proposed Development would result in significant effects in isolation, it is not considered likely that significant intra-cumulative effects would occur. As such these are scoped out of further consideration within this ES and inter-cumulative effects only are considered.
- 3.2.5 The standard approach to the inter-cumulative assessment is to identify how sensitive the baseline is to change (i.e. impact) as a result of the Proposed Development in combination with the development planned through Policy Villages 5 and to determine the magnitude of that change. The assessment of sensitivity and magnitude of change are then combined to provide an overall level of effect of the impact. Depending upon impact, an effect may be adverse or beneficial.
- 3.2.6 Effects assessed below a certain level are considered to be 'Not Significant' and effects assessed as being above a certain level are identified as being 'Significant'. Where significant adverse effects are recorded, mitigation measures are identified to avoid, reduce or remedy these effects. Where possible, enhancements are recommended for beneficial effects.

## **Step 3: Identify Mitigation Measures**

3.2.7 Where possible, potential adverse effects are 'designed out' of the design proposals as far as practicably possible. Any remaining adverse effects are then addressed via mitigation measures intended to avoid, reduce or remedy the potential adverse harm. This may include the adoption of best practice working methods and techniques, or specific strategies or action plans.

## Step 4: Assess Residual Effects

3.2.8 The potential impacts of the proposals are reassessed with the mitigation measures in place and the resulting effect is referred to as the 'residual effect'. It is the purpose of the mitigation measures to have reduced any potential adverse effects to the lowest level possible.



### 4 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 An overview of each of the environmental assessments is provided below.

### 4.2 Traffic

- 4.2.1 Existing traffic flows on the local highway network have been sourced during the baseline data collection, with the Transport chapter considering the impacts of the Proposed Development upon a study area consisting of 25 junctions and 11 links.
- 4.2.2 The Proposed Development will include for Construction Management and Traffic Plans, walking and cycling connectivity enhancements, electric charging points for each dwelling, bus service contribution and bus stop improvements.
- 4.2.3 With mitigation in place, it is considered highly unlikely that the traffic generated by the site during the construction period would result in a significant traffic increase on any of the links in the vicinity of the Proposed Development Site.
- 4.2.4 Traffic modelling has found that during operation the Proposed Development will not lead to more than a 11.82% increase in traffic on the local road network. The effect of this increase is considered to be not significant for all road links as none are considered to be sensitive links.
- 4.2.5 In conclusion, the cumulative impact during the both the construction and operational phases will be of negligible adverse significance.

## 4.3 Ecology

- 4.3.1 Baseline data has been collected through a combination of desk study and habitat and species surveys. These identified a number of features that could be exposed to adverse effects, including the Weston Fen SSSI, Non Statutory Designated Sites and habitats and species within the Site, including a Habitat of Principal Importance (HPI), bats, dormice, great crested newts (GCN), water vole and white clawed crayfish.
- 4.3.2 There will be no cumulative effect upon the Weston Fen SSSI as the developments within Policy Villages 5 do not impact the stream on Site which connects to the SSSI. For the same reason there will be no cumulative effects upon the stream on Site which is a Habitat of Principal Importance).
- 4.3.3 This stream is deemed suitable for water vole and white-clawed crayfish. Should it be required further surveys will be undertaken to identify the impacts on such species and likely mitigation measures needed to ensure no significant effect occur.

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- 4.3.4 Owing to distance from roads and distance from the committed developments (preventing impacts beyond a site level) there will be no cumulative effects on nearby non statutory designated sites.
- 4.3.5 No night work will occur and as such there will be no construction effects upon bats. However, through the introduction of street lighting, security lighting on buildings and housing on the developments this could negatively impact foraging bats. Sensitive lighting schemes will be implemented at the developments to reduce the effects upon this species during operation.
- 4.3.6 There are known GCN breeding ponds on Site. These are to be retained and terrestrial habitat removed will be compensated for via creation and enhancement. While impacts are likely to occur in combination with the development to the north on the Heyford Park site, these can be mitigated for through district level licensing.
- 4.3.7 Construction works will be undertaken in a sensible manner, suitable habitats will be maintained and nests by suitably qualified ecologist prior to removal to ensure the impact of hedgerow removal on dormice is not significant. If further sections are to be removed or evidence of dormice presence is found on Site, all works would cease, and the advice of an ecologist would be sought. Post construction there will be an increase in the length of hedgerow on Site. Furthermore, enhancement through gapping up will increase the connectivity and quality of habitat provision for dormice. The effect of this is considered to be significant beneficial.
- 4.3.8 The creation of additional hedgerows, enhancement of grassland, creation of sustainable urban drainage feature and planting of trees should result in a substantial net gain in biodiversity on Site. This will likely be compounded by the development to the north due to the requirement for net biodiversity gain at this site. Therefore, there is likely to be a significant beneficial effect to biodiversity in the long-term.

### 4.4 Landscape & Visual

4.4.1 Baseline conditions have been established through a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). The assessment identified the landscape receptors and visual receptors of relevance, including users of the bridleways to the east and south of the Site; residents and people using the roads and pavements in Wellesley Close; people using the local road network of Camp Road, Chilgrove Drive and the routes which connect to the B4030 and B430; and residents of existing dwellings which surround the Site (Letchmere Farm buildings to the northwest, static homes to the southwest and new dwellings within the former RAF airfield).



- 4.4.2 The development proposals of the Heyford Park, South of Camp Road site are at an advanced stage of construction and as such are considered to form part of the baseline conditions as described in the LVIA. In addition, there are no viewpoint locations identified where the Proposed Development the site is observed in combination, this is largely due to the presence of the intervening settlement situated to the north and south of Camp Road between the Heyford Park, South of Camp Road site and the Site. The Heyford Park, South of Camp Road site was therefore excluded from the assessment.
- 4.4.3 There will be no major landscape and visual effects arising as a result of the Proposed Development in combination with the Land East of Larsen Road Heyford Park site and as such no significant effects are anticipated.
- 4.4.4 There will be no major landscape and visual effects arising as a result of the Proposed Development in combination with the Heyford Park, Camp Road site and as such no significant effects are anticipated.
- 4.4.5 At a wider scale, considering the Proposed Development with the allocation Policy Villages 5, there will be no major landscape and visual cumulative effect.

## 4.5 Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

- 4.5.1 Baseline information was established from the findings of a Built Heritage Statement, an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment, and a Geophysical survey.
- 4.5.2 The heritage receptors identified as being sensitive to the Proposed Development are the RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area (adjacent to the northern boundary of the Site) and an area of geophysical anomalies possibly relating to archaeology (located within the northern part of the Site). They are receptors of Medium and Unknown (likely to be negligible or low) sensitivity respectively.
- 4.5.3 The individual effects of the Proposed Development and the other cumulative schemes on archaeological assets will be mitigated though individual programmes of archaeological investigation. With regard to the Proposed Development itself, a programme of trial trench investigation has already been agreed with the Lead Archaeologist at Oxford County Council.
- 4.5.4 The assessment has established that there will be no significant cumulative effects associated with the Proposed Development.

### 4.6 Water Resources

4.6.1 This assessment considered the potential cumulative effects on water supply and foul drainage infrastructure.



- 4.6.2 The assessment will not consider the effects on other elements such as rainfall, topography, surface water features, flood risk, geology, hydrogeology because it is not considered likely that the impact on any of these areas will result in significant effects. The works associated with these areas are heavily regulated and underpinned by legislation, HSE and other planning guidance which ensures no development can proceed without mitigation in place.
- 4.6.3 Independently, the committed developments, following the appropriate mitigation to be employed by the statutory undertaker to re assess the network and identify the improvements mitigation strategy in line with industry standard practice, will not have any significant impact on Water Resources.
- 4.6.4 Mitigation will ensure that the residual cumulative effect of development is negligible and the cumulative effects of the development in the area will not be significant.



#### **CUMULATIVE AND RESIDUAL EFFECTS** 5

#### 5.1 **Cumulative Effects**

- 5.1.1 Potential cumulative impacts of the development, in combination with other developments in the area, were considered within the EIA and have been summarised above. The assessments identified that significant cumulative effects, both adverse and beneficial, could occur in relation to ecology.
- Prior to the implementation of mitigation measures there may be significant adverse effects upon bats through an increase in ambient light; on great crested newts through habitat removal; and on dormice through fragmentation and isolation. However, the suitable mitigation will ensure effects are reduced to a level that is not significant.
- Significant beneficial ecological effects are also expected. The increase in the length of hedgerow on Site will be of significant benefit to dormice through an increase in connectivity and quality of habitat provision. In addition, the developments will provide substantial net gains in biodiversity.
- No further significant cumulative effects have been identified. 5.1.4

#### 5.2 **Residual Effects**

- 5.2.1 A description of the measures envisaged to avoid, reduce or, if possible, offset any identified significant adverse effects, i.e. the mitigation measures, has been set out within each technical chapter of the ES. These measures have been used to reduce impacts to the lowest practicable level consistent with the overall objectives of the scheme.
- 5.2.2 Following the implementation of the mitigation measures outlined within each technical chapter, the majority of residual environmental effects have been assessed as being not significant, as summarised within Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Summary of Significant Residual Effects			
Technical Chapter	Significant Residual Effects?		
Traffic	No		
Ecology	Yes (beneficial)		
Landscape & Visual	No		
Cultural Heritage and Archaeology	No		
Water Resources	No		

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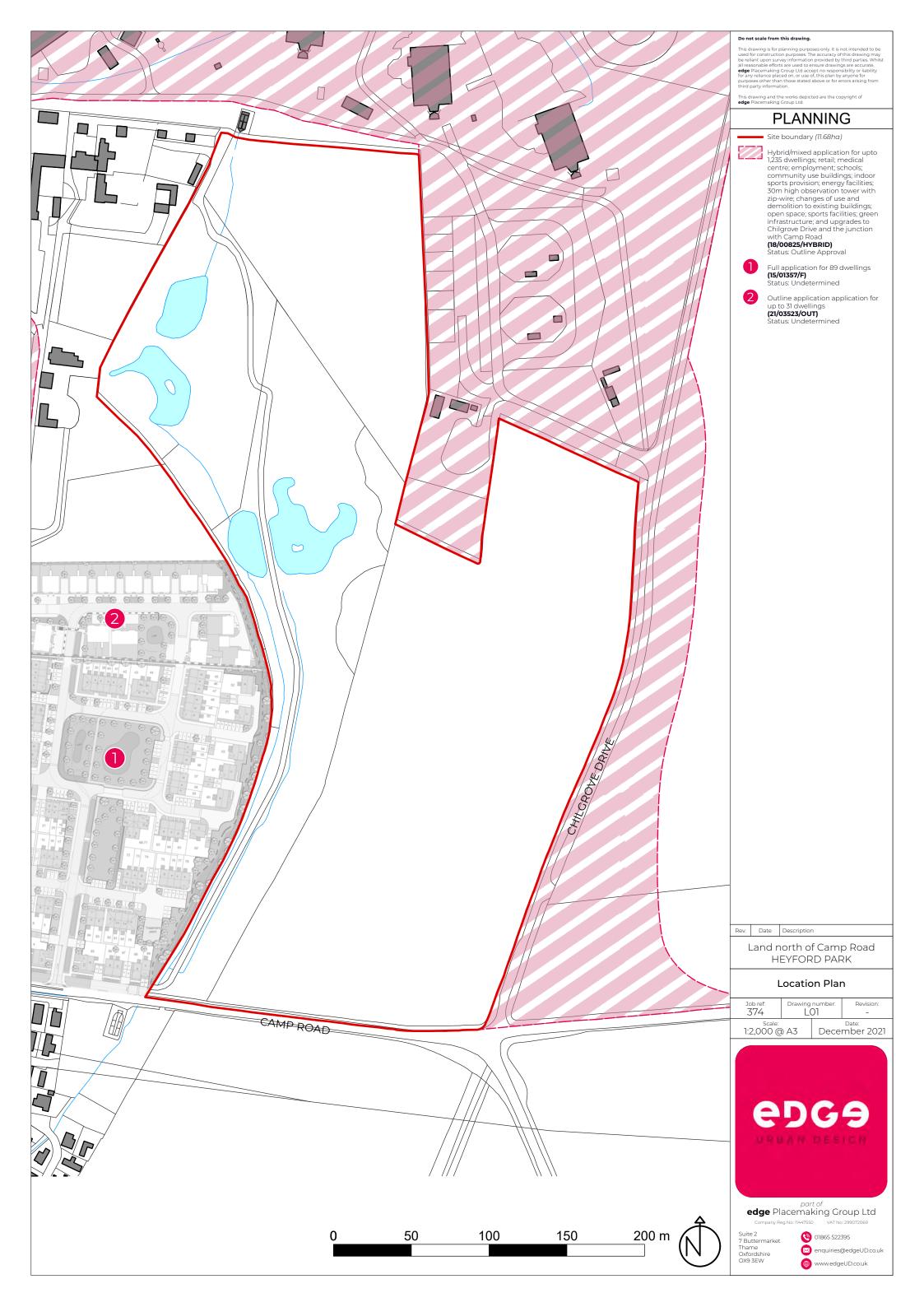


## **APPENDICES**



## Appendix A

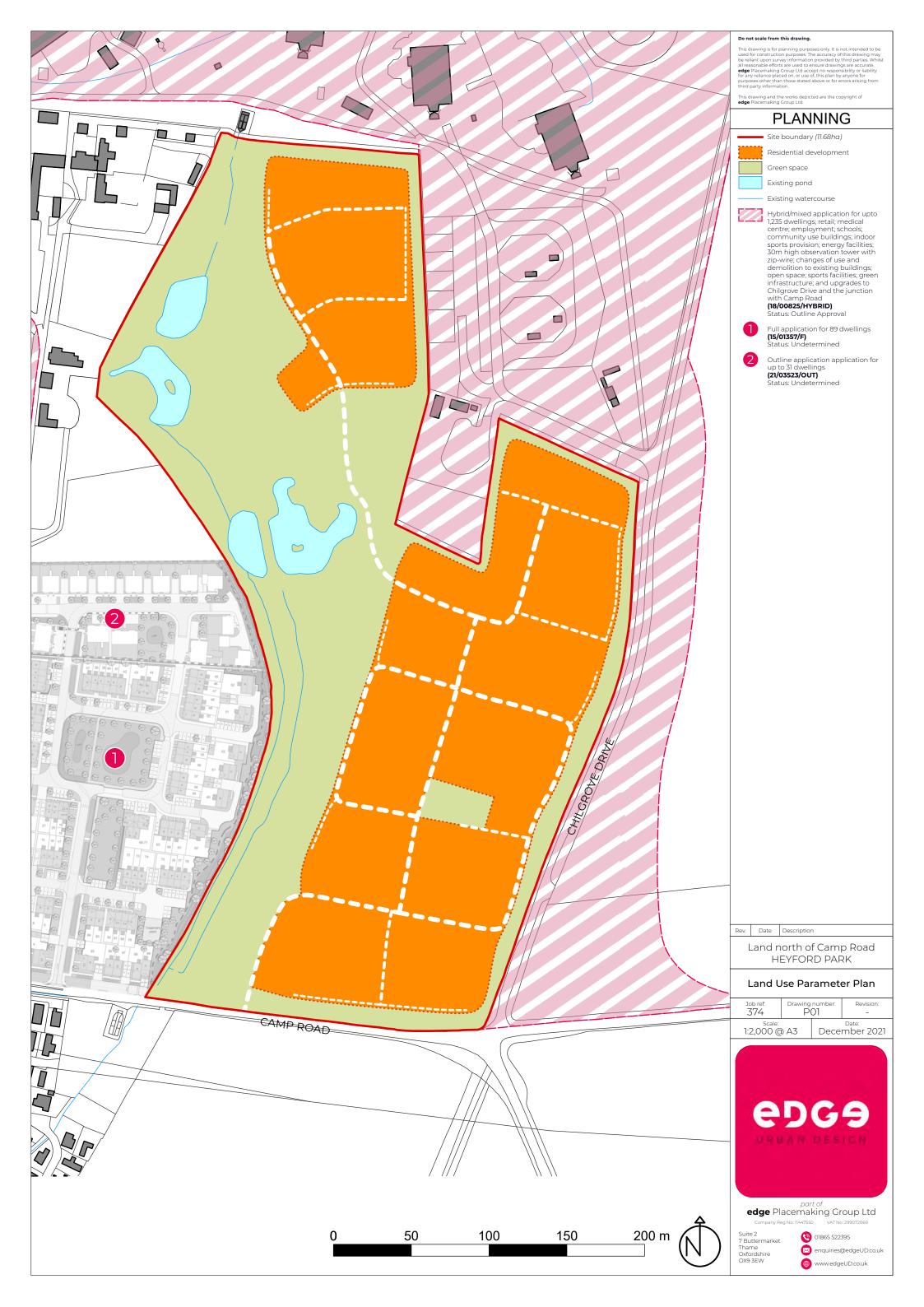
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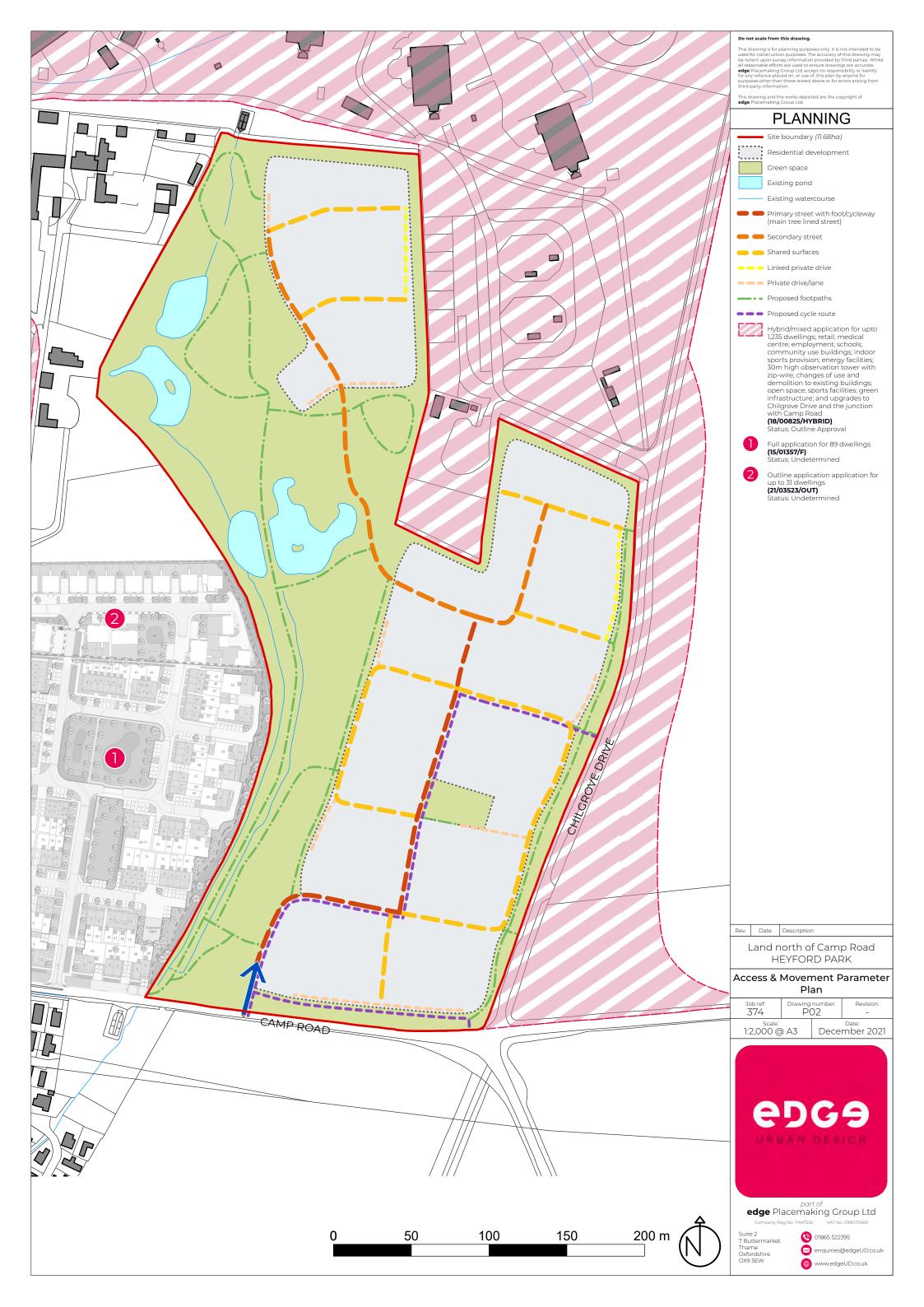


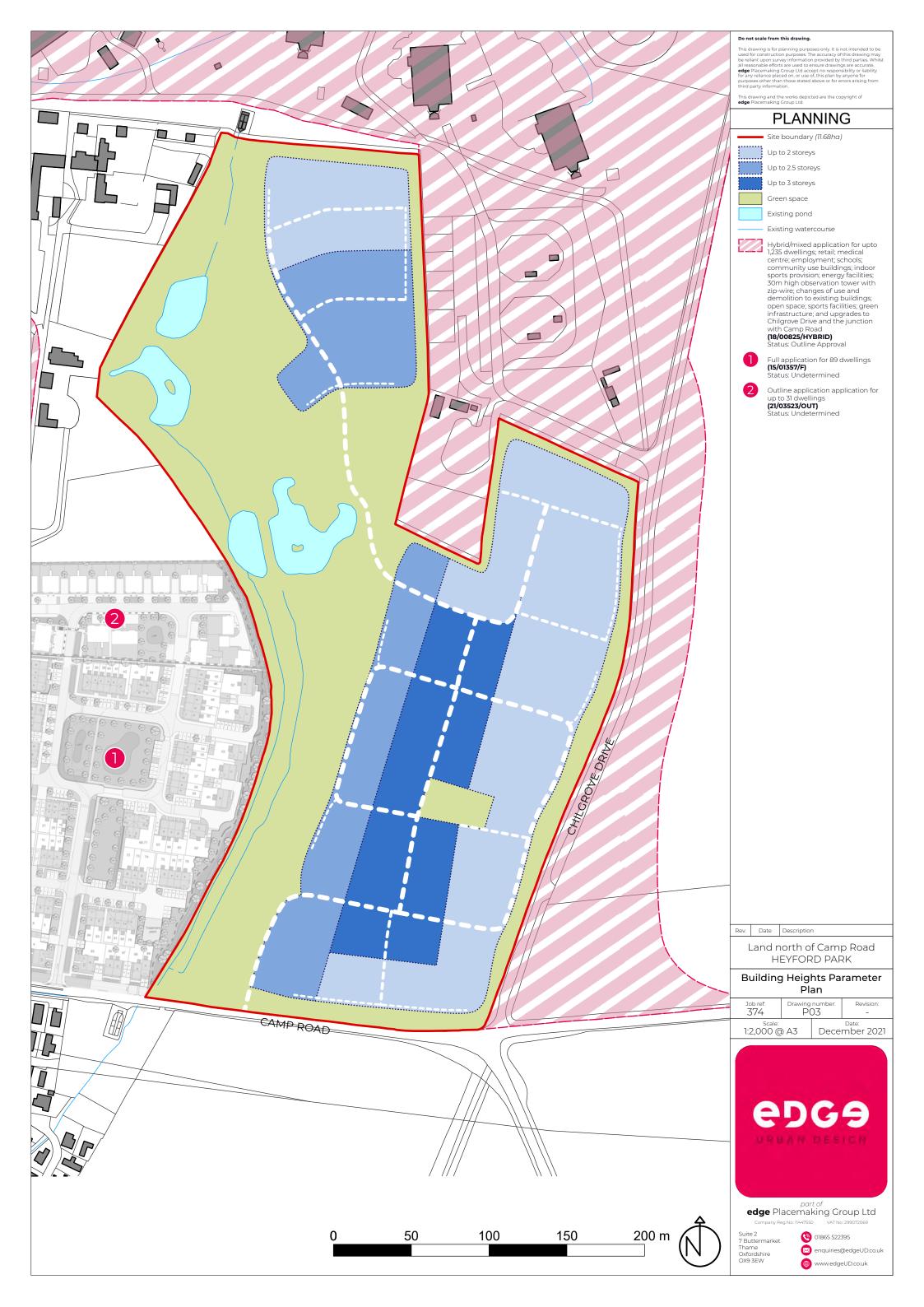


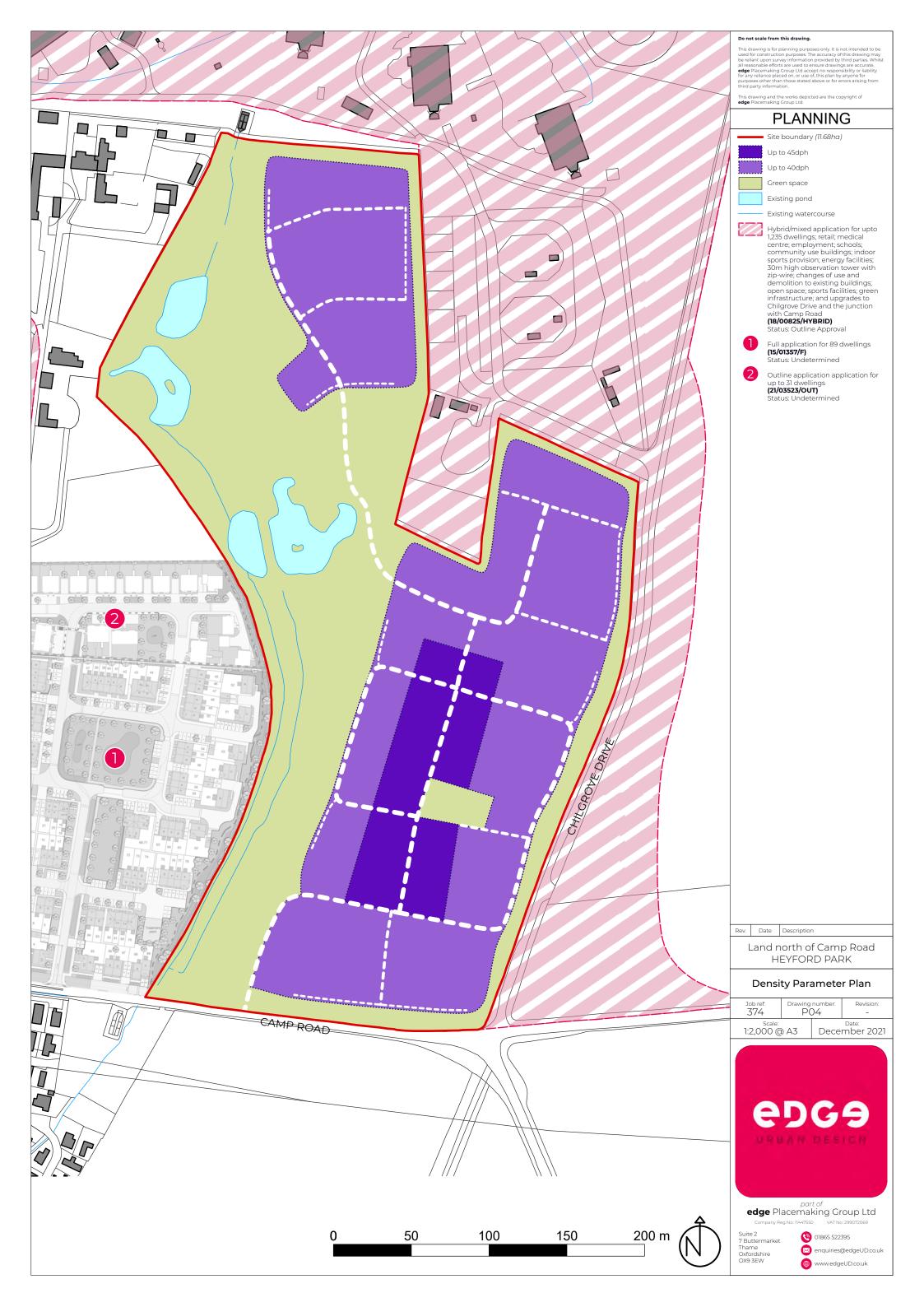
## **Appendix B**

**Parameter Plans** 













# Appendix C

Illustrative Masterplan



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