



LAND AT UPPER HEYFORD

Design & Access Statement

To Support an Application
for Full Planning Permission
September 2022



0778 Land at Upper Heyford
Design and Access Statement

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Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Document

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared to support an application for Full Planning Permission on Land at Letchmere Farm, Camp Road, Upper Heyford, Oxon.

The proposal comprises 126 new dwellings, including: 38 affordable homes; the creation of new entrance access from Camp Road; the creation of new open space; and hard and soft landscaping and ancillary works.

This document aims to respond positively to the features of the site itself and the surrounding context beyond the site boundary.

It address the ten characteristics of the National Design Guide. The document will look at the existing layout of the site - its form, scale, appearance, and materials, while endeavouring to fit in with local heritage and character. It will consider the physical characteristics of the landscape and observe access, movement and accessibility to the site, how it is used and integrated with community facilities and local services while also observing any matters relating to the local environment.

1.2 Site Location

The site sits on land at Letchmere Farm within Upper Heyford, nestled just under the RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area. It is about 4.1 hectares in size. An open green field site is located to the east of the Upper Heyford Park Central development, with Camp Road running along the southern edge of the site and Chilgrove Drive to the east. The site is approximately 6 miles north west of Bicester in Oxfordshire and a mere 30 minutes drive north of Oxford.

There are a range of designations across the surrounding landscape including the heritage asset of Rousham Park, with William Kent's (an English Landscape Architect who designed Rousham Park in the 18th century) focal points of Rousham and Steeple Aston conservation areas.

The former RAF Upper Heyford airbase as a whole is designated as a conservation area, reflecting the role that the airbase played in the Cold War years, and includes the distinctive architecture and layouts which arose from that use.

The former base contains a number of Scheduled Monuments identified as 'Cold War Structures' at the former Upper Heyford designation as well as five listed buildings.

Beyond the immediate environs of the site, the land is generally used for agriculture and comprises arable/grazing fields of varying size and shape with several woodland belts.

The location plan opposite shows the Lonestar/Richborough application to the east of the site and the Dorchester masterplan to the north and west.

- Site of application
- Dorchester masterplan
- Lonestar/Richborough application



I Introduction

1.3 Planning Policy

The Cherwell Development Plan consists of four main documents:

- Cherwell Local Plan (CLP) 2011-2031 (Part 1) (Re-adopted on 19 December 2016)
- Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Oxford's Unmet Housing Need)
- Saved Policies from the Cherwell Local Plan 1996
- Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan

These are supported by supplementary planning documents including the 'Cherwell Design Guide', which builds on the above documents to provide a framework to deliver high quality locally distinctive development.

Principle

The 'Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031' seeks to allocate sufficient land to meet district wide housing needs. The overall housing strategy is to focus housing growth at the towns of Banbury and Bicester, as well as the Heyford strategic site outside of these towns. 1,600 homes are allocated by 'Policy Villages 5' at Former RAF Upper Heyford.

'Policy Villages 5' of the 'CLP 2031 Part 1' 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 allocation as part of a potential development area.

The policy includes specific design and place-making principles including: avoiding development on more sensitive and historically significant sites; retaining features that are important for the character and appearance of the site; encouraging biodiversity enhancement; environmentally improving areas, and integrating the new and existing character of the community.

This application is identified within that allocation as part of a potential development area.

Layout and Design Principles

Policy ESD15 of the CLP 2015 seeks to secure development that would complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high-quality design. This ensures the development meets high design standards and complements any nearby heritage assets.

'Policy Villages 5' sets out a number of key site-specific design and place-shaping principles including:

- New development should reflect high quality design that responds to the established nature of the distinct character areas where this would preserve or enhance the appearance of the former RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area
- Development on greenfield land within the allocation should provide for a well-designed 'soft' approach to the urban edge, with appropriate boundary treatments
- The scale and massing of new buildings should respect their context
- Building materials should reflect the locally distinctive colour palette and respond to the materials of the retained buildings within their character area

Policy BSC2 states that residential schemes should be provided for at least 30dph, unless there are justifiable planning reasons for a lower density.

Landscape and Character

Policy ESD15 requires new developments to contribute positively to an area's character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography. This includes skylines, significant trees, historic boundaries, landmarks, features or views.

Policy ESD17 seeks to maintain and enhance the district's green infrastructure network. New landscaping areas will be required to assimilate development into the landscape and assist in the transition between the urban edge and rural areas.

Cherwell Residential Design Guide, Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

The 'Cherwell Residential Design Guide' has been used to help inform and enhance the following proposed design scheme. This document, along with supporting plans and reports, looks to demonstrate, and answer the questions set out in the typical list of topics in Section 3 (pg 31) of the SPD. The headings below have been used as a starting point to achieve a robust design proposal for the development:

- Planning review and socio-economics
- Views and sightlines
- Townscape character
- Landscape and Topography
- Movement network
- Physical constraints

2 Site and Context

2.1 Access and Movement

2.1.1 Access

The site is located on the northern side of Camp Road in Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire.

To the east of the site Camp Road leads to Ardley Road which runs south to the village of Middleton Stoney, which connects to the M40. This provides access to the town of Banbury to the north as well as Warwick, and London further afield. Further east of the M40 is the market town of Bicester. This is Upper Heyford's largest local town.

14 miles to the south of the site lies the city of Oxford. This is accessible via Station Road which heads south west from Upper Heyford, through the village of Lower Heyford and then joins the Banbury Road (A4260) heading south.

2.1.2 Pedestrian Movement

There is a speed limit of 20mph on Camp Road. The nearest bus stop is approximately a 2 minutes walk from the site entrance between where Larsden Road and Soden Road cross Camp Road.

There are no bridleways or public rights of way on the site. The nearest Public Bridleway is approximately a 5 minute walk from the site east along Camp Road and heads south at the interchange where Chilgrove Drive meets Camp Road (see map to right).

2.1.3 Cycle Paths

According to the Sustrans website there are no known cycle routes on or through the site.

2.1.4 Public Transport

Bus

The 250 Bus that runs between Bicester Town Centre and Oxford City Centre stops at Camp Road West End, as defined in application 18/00825/HYBRID.

Rail

The nearest station to the site is Heyford Station which is a 55 minute walk or a six minute drive from the site. Heyford train station sits on the Cherwell Valley Line between Kings Sutton and Tackley and is operated by the Great Western Railway.



Extract from oxfordshire.gov.uk showing 'Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way'



2 Site and Context

2.2 Local Facilities

Acceptable walking distances will vary considerably depending on various factors such as fitness and land topography. Guidelines by the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) state the acceptability of distances in metres to various attractions is as set out in the table.

Based on a walking speed of just over 5km/h, the table below shows that there are a number of facilities within a walking distance of the site.

| Service | Walking Distance (approx) | Walking Time (approx) |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Sainsbury's Local | 640m | 7 mins |
| Upper Heyford Reading Room | 2.5km | 33 mins |
| Post office | 2.4km | 29 mins |
| Heyford Park Community Garden | 960m | 12 mins |
| The Old Station Nursery | 1.7km | 21 mins |
| Heyford Park School | 960m | 12 mins |
| St Mary's Church | 2.7km | 32 mins |
| Park Keeps Pre-School | 800m | 10 mins |
| Farmers Market | 1000m | 13 mins |
| The Heyford Hotel | 300m | 4 mins |
| Baton Cafe | 350m | 5 mins |
| Spokes Cafe | 350m | 5 mins |

The nearest hospital is the Bicester Community Hospital, which is 9km away.



Sainsbury's Local



Local bus stop

2 Site and Context



Site Accessibility Plan

2 Site and Context

2.3 Site Analysis

2.3.1 Topography

The land subject to this application is approximately 4.1 hectares in size and an open green field site located to the east of the former RAF/USAF Upper Heyford base on the north side of Camp Road. The land slopes down to its eastern boundary to Sor Brook and hedging. Beyond that are a small group of ponds and beyond that another open field.



Northern boundary



Southern boundary



Western boundary



Eastern boundary

2 Site and Context

2.3.2 Site Boundaries

- The Northern boundary.
- The Eastern boundary is a strong green boundary of trees and hedging. The land slopes down to its eastern boundary to Sor Brook and hedging.
- The Southern boundary is a hedgerow.
- The Western boundary is a track that leads to a group of residential buildings to the north of the site that are collectively known as Letchmere Farm. On the other side of the track is a strong green boundary of trees and hedging. This forms the eastern edge of the former Heyford base.



View looking south across the site



View looking north across the site

2 Site and Context

2.4 Ecology

Work undertaken to date comprises a desktop study, Phase 1 Habitat survey and a general faunal assessment, most recently undertaken in August 2022. A number of Phase 2 surveys were also undertaken to identify the presence of any protected species, these were undertaken between April 2021 and June 2021. This included a Badger survey and Reptile surveys. The key constraints and opportunities based on the work carried out to date are set out below.

2.4.1 Key Constraints

Designations

No European Designations are present within 10km of the site boundary, the nearest European Designation is Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC) located 15.4km south of the site. There are no statutory ecological designations within the site or within 2km of its boundaries.

The nearest other statutory ecological designation is Bestmoor Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located 4.3km to the north-west of the site. There are no non-statutory designations within or adjacent to the site. A number of non- statutory designations are present within 2km of the site, the closest of which comprises Trackway Adjacent to The Gorse Proposed Cherwell District Wildlife Site (pCDWS) and The Heath pCDWS located 0.2km to the south-east of the site. The Ardley and Upper Heyford Conservation Target Area also lies 0.2km to the east of the site at its closest point.

Habitats

The site is dominated by habitats of negligible / low ecological value including improved and semi-improved grassland, tall ruderal vegetation, dense / scattered scrub and hardstanding. The habitats of comparatively greater value within the site comprise boundary hedgerows and associated trees and ditch. There is no mapped ancient woodland within the site, or any

mapped ancient, notable or veteran trees or Priority Habitat. Survey work undertaken at the site confirmed the hedgerows along the south and east boundaries are likely to qualify as Priority Habitat Hedgerows under the standard definition.

Fauna.

The survey work carried out to date has identified the following:

Bats (trees) – A small number of trees have the potential to support roosting bats and further survey work will be undertaken as / if required (e.g. if trees need felling to facilitate development).

Bats (activity) – The site offers limited opportunities for foraging and commuting bats with the exception of boundary hedgerows which will be largely retained under development proposals.

Badger – No Badger setts have been recorded to date, however the habitats across the site are suitable for foraging.

Dormouse – Dormouse are unlikely to be present and have been scoped out from further survey.

Otter – No suitable habitat present within or adjacent to the site. Species considered likely absent from the site and as such, will be unaffected by the proposals.

Water Vole – No suitable habitat present within or adjacent to the site. Species considered likely absent from the site and as such, will be unaffected by the proposals.

Birds – Habitats within the site provide suitable habitat for nesting birds such as hedgerows, trees and dense scrub. Species recorded during survey work are largely common and widespread species with occasional Priority Species such as Starling also recorded.

Amphibians – No waterbodies are present within the site itself, however five ponds are present within 250m of the site boundary. The closest pond, located adjacent to the north-eastern site boundary, returned a number of records of Great Crested Newt dating from 2014. Based on this third party survey

data, it is considered that this and the three other ponds present to the north-east of the site support a medium metapopulation of Great Crested Newt. On this basis, the site is currently entered into the Nature Space District Level Licensing Scheme under the existing planning applications.

Reptiles – Survey work recorded a low population of Grass Snake at the boundaries of the southernmost field.

Invertebrates – Generally the site has limited potential to support notable invertebrates given the habitats which are present.

2.4.2 Key Opportunities

The key opportunities include:

- Retention and enhancement of the eastern site boundary to create a wildlife corridor for species such as Great Crested Newt. This will include landscape planting with native species, creation of species-rich grassland and Swales
- There are significant opportunities to deliver other habitat enhancements, for example through infill planting of gappy hedgerows and over-sowing of existing improved grassland to create wildflower grassland in areas of public open space
- Enhancements can be readily delivered which can be targeted to rare/declining species, for example with the provision of bird boxes, bat boxes and delivering a ‘Hedgehog friendly’ development (with cut-outs in garden fences and Hedgehog highways)

The masterplan has been developed to take account of the key ecological constraints and ensure there is provision to deliver the opportunities identified.

2.4.3 Lighting

Information on lighting recommendations for Upper Heyford can be found in the Ecological Appraisal document: ‘*Land at Larson Road, Upper Heyford*’ (dated Sept 2021) and ‘*Land South of Heyford Grange, Letchmere Farm, Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire*’ within section 6.1.4 and 6.1.5 respectively.

2 Site and Context

2.5 Constraints and Opportunities

2.5.1 Topography

The constraints and opportunities of the site can be summarised as:

- Vehicle and access will be formed by a new junction on Camp Road, breaking through the existing hedgerow.
- The topography of the site falls from west to east.
- Category B, C and U vegetation to be retained, where possible, as sensitive lighting corridors.
- Respect relationship to existing properties around the site.
- A 6m right of access easement to be maintained to the south of the scheme.
- Underground power cable. 6m easement.
- RAF Upper Heyford conservation area.



3 Character Assessment

3.1 Historical context

The village of Upper Heyford dates back to at least the pre-Roman period. The village is just east of the River Cherwell. "Upper" distinguishes it from Lower Heyford which is about 1 mile (1.6 km) "lower" downstream along the Cherwell valley.

The parish's western boundary is just west of the river. Chilgrove Drive, a continuation of Aves ditch, forms part of the parish's eastern boundary. Field boundaries bound the parish on the south.

The majority of the former airbase, which partly surrounds the site, was designated as a Conservation Area in 2006 because of its architectural and social historic interest due to its role during the Cold War.

The airfield was originally built in 1916 in response to a requirement for trained aircrews for the Royal Flying Corps during WWI. Immediately after the war, the airfield was abandoned, although this was short-lived, and in 1923 the site was brought back into use. It continued to have a significant role in Britain's air defence systems up to and including WWII. However, it was the Cold War period after the war which saw the most intense period of development and use and occupation by the American Airforce USAF. The former base was leased by the USAF from the 1960s until the military vacation of the base in 1994. The end of the Cold War resulted in the de-commissioning of RAF Upper Heyford in 1993.

Today, there are a number of buildings close to the site which reflect this rich heritage and give the site a distinct character.



Officers' housing



View looking west towards the local centre

3.2 Character Appraisal

A character appraisal has been undertaken to draw out the characteristics which define the site and its neighbouring built environment. The key design references which have informed the evolution of the proposals have been outlined below.

The main aim is to form an identity for the proposed development that will be evocative of the good quality design characteristics found in some of the surrounding areas.

Within the approved Design and Access Statement for Heyford, P16-0631_81 HEYFORD_UH DAS, seven character areas were identified. Please see opposite page:

- CA1 – Village Centre
- CA2 – Village Centre Residential
- CA3 – Trident Housing
- CA4 – Camp Road
- CA5 – Village Green
- CA6 – Rural Edge
- CA7 – Core Housing



Character Analysis Areas

3 Character Assessment

3.2.1 Character Appraisal

As a collective for this proposed scheme, an additional thorough assessment of the character of Heyford Park has been carried out assessing the contrasting urban forms, building materials and details to further establish this scheme as an extension of the Heyford Park development.

‘The aim is to form an identity for the proposed development that will be evocative of the good quality design characteristics found in... the surrounding areas.’

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS & BLOCK STRUCTURE



- Heyford Park is a new settlement designed to reflect the formality of it's previous use as an airfield.
- The scheme follows a linear form design influenced by Camp Road and the rectilinear form of the existing base layout and barracks.
- The density of the Upper Heyford development ranges to give different characteristics throughout.
 - *Rural Edge*: Low density, to give a softer built form when approaching the development.
 - *Camp Road*: Low density becoming higher density while traveling into the Village centre to provide a clear sense of arrival and transition.
 - *Key Spaces*: Higher density to create a stronger frontage on to open spaces or arrival points.
 - *Core*: Ranges from low to high densities to create a sense of place throughout these areas.
- Clear legibility is provided for the user to provide suitable access for pedestrian and vehicles, clearly delineated through the use of surface materials

BUILT FORM



- A range of 2-3 storey buildings to help form different character areas through the development and create a sense of arrival
 - Camp Road, Rural Edge and Core Housing predominately consist of 2-2.5 storey dwellings
 - Village Centre, Village Centre Residential and Village Green consist of 2.5-3 storey dwellings
- Throughout the development a range of Apartment Blocks, Terracing, Semi-Detached and Detached units have been used in relation to the densities to create and form, character and legibility
- The existing Officer Housing is observed to be detached 2 storey dwellings

PUBLIC OPEN SPACES



- Varying scale of public open spaces used throughout the development.
- Village green character is the largest public open space at the heart of the development, which is a response to its former use as a parade ground; this includes play equipment
- Smaller incidental spaces are found throughout the different character areas; some contain play equipment
- All open spaces have a strong frontage overlooking, which provides a sense of security and ownership
- Clear visual and physical connections are provided to help orientate pedestrians

BUILDING MATERIALS & DETAILS



- A common theme of materials and detailing has been through the following characters, taking inspiration from what has been observed from the existing Officers' Housing; Camp Road, Rural Edge and Core Housing
- A more contemporary approach has been taken for the Village Centre and Village Centre Residential which transitions from Camp Road creating a new sense of place when arriving
- Around the village Green takes use of the Georgian architectural style, creating a sense of grandeur around this green open space.

3 Character Assessment

3.2.6 Design Considerations

Upon reviewing the characteristics of Heyford Park and the design approach for the proposed scheme, it would be representative to take influence from the Camp Road rural edge and core housing characters of Heyford Park.

This would create a seamless transition from the edge to the heart of the development, thus maintaining a singular development expansion.

Strong higher density linear build frontages will create a sense of arrival and space. Lower density on the edges will reflect Camp Road and the rural edge while also responding to the character of existing detached Officers' Housing to the west to the site.

The following features represent design references considered appropriate to draw reference from:

Built Form

- Predominantly 2 storey dwellings with the use of 2.5 storey dwellings as key focal points
- Use of terraced, semi-detached and detached dwellings
- Frontages on to public open spaces providing natural surveillance
- Use of regular and linear set back distances
- Low to medium density

Facing Materials

- Facing materials to include brick and render
- Render predominantly to gateways and facing public open spaces
- Brick detailing, to match main facing brick
- Black rainwater goods

Roofs

- Plain profiled tiles
- Slate grey and brown in colour
- Box eaves / clipped verges

Windows

- Predominantly casement in style
- Cills and lintels to be cast stone and brick

Doors

- Predominantly 6 pane doors
- Door canopy styles flat GRP, lean-to and gable fronted porches

Boundary Treatments

- Amenity shrubs and hedge planting
- Black railings



Voussoirs brickheads



Dog-tooth detailing



Soldier course brickheads



Flat door canopy



Cast stone window cill



Brick corbel detail

4 Design Development & Supporting Plans

4.1 Layout Description

The Planning Layout represents an appropriate masterplan for the site, which responds to the local site conditions and context. This is assessed through the character assessment of Heyford Park in section 3 of the Design Considerations.

The scheme has been developed using principles of the linear forms seen in the surrounding context of Heyford Park, with strong build lines creating a sense of regiment-built form. The eastern boundary has a more rural edge form to address the countryside open space. This approach is appropriate whether or not the Lonestar scheme goes ahead, when it will still front POS, but will not be edge of countryside.

Around the central green open space, dwellings will be outward facing to provide a sense of enclosure. They will overlook the public space, which will provide play provision and landscape features.

The layout comprises the following key features:

Access and Movement

- 01 Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site from Camp Road, through an existing hedgerow
- 02 Footways to both sides of the primary route access the central green open space
- 03 Clear way finding and safe pedestrian access to LAP and LEAP
- 04 Green open space public connections
- 05 Clear defined transition of highways to shared surfaces
- 06 Right of Access to be maintained through the development, along the northern edge of the existing hedgerow

Place Making

- 07 Existing trees and hedgerows to be retained, where possible, along the boundaries
- 08 Detached gateway buildings, follow the similar grain of Camp Road
- 09 Use of terraced units through the scheme are reflective of the barracks associated with this new development.
- 10 Well-defined residential perimeter blocks
- 11 Dwellings overlook public realm and vegetation to provide natural surveillance.
- 12 Accessible green open space is for well-being and is a place to interact for the new community
- 13 Strong frontages define green open space
- 14 A focal point for when entering the site and approaching the central green open space
- 15 Detached units are reflective of the detached existing Officers' Housing
- 16 Consistent setback distances around the proposed scheme
- 17 Detached informal buildings along the edge of development, reflect the character of the rural edge
- 18 Continuous building lines create strong frontages

Landscaping

- 19 Visual connections to existing landscaping and vegetation
- 20 Root protection areas to be maintained and a no-dig construction approach will be taken when private drives and footpaths encroach
- 21 New landscape features to be included in the design proposal
- 22 Boundary vegetation to be retained where possible

4 Design Development & Supporting Plans



Planning Layout - 0778-102

4 Design Development & Supporting Plans

4.2 Amount

4.2.1 Site

The site area is 4.12 ha.

4.2.2 Residential

The development will provide 126 dwellings which will provide a range of 1 bed apartments and 2, 3, and 4 bedroom homes, as well as 2 bed bungalows. These will be both open market and affordable in tenure.

The development uses densities that are appropriate to the locality and provides a gross density of 30.6 dph.

4.3 Affordable

The development will provide 38 (30%) affordable dwellings, which are split into tenures of: Affordable – Rented, Affordable – Shared Ownership and Affordable – First Homes. Opposite is a break down of these tenures.

Affordable dwellings have been integrated within the scheme with the use of clustering and the same design approach as the open market units, creating a continuous tenure blind design scheme.

| | No. of Beds | No. of Units |
|-----------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| AFFORDABLE RENTED | | |
| SF58 | 1 Bed flat | 5 |
| SF59 | 1 Bed flat | 5 |
| BELTON | 2 Bed bungalow | 2 |
| SH51 | 2 Bed house | 4 |
| SH52 | 3 Bed house | 3 |
| SH54 | 4 Bed house | 1 |
| Total affordable units | | 20 |
| AFFORDABLE SHARED OWNERSHIP | | |
| | 2 Bed house | 3 |
| | 3 Bed house | 6 |
| Total affordable units | | 9 |
| AFFORDABLE FIRST HOMES | | |
| | 2 Bed house | 9 |
| Total affordable units | | 9 |
| OVERALL TOTAL UNITS (30%) | | 38 |

4 Design Development & Supporting Plans

