

Case Officer: Richard Greig

Recommendation: Approve

Applicant: Heyford Park Developments Ltd

Proposal: Discharge of condition 16 (Phase 10 only - bat, bird, owl and invertebrate boxes) of 18/00825/HYBRID

Expiry Date: 27 June 2023

Extension of Time: N/A

1. APPLICATION SITE AND DESCRIPTION OF APPROVED DEVELOPMENT

- 1.1. The former USAF/RAF Upper Heyford airbase site is located 7km northwest of Bicester, in an isolated rural location, within the parishes of Upper Heyford, Somerton and Ardley.
- 1.2. The former airbase is located at the top of a plateau and is set within otherwise open countryside. Land to the west falls sharply to the Cherwell valley and Oxford Canal (the Canal itself has been designated a Conservation Area). The Grade I listed Rousham Park is located in the valley to the southwest of the site. The Rousham, Lower Heyford and Upper Heyford Conservation Area adjoins the airbase site, whilst the airbase itself has been designated a Conservation Area in view of the international importance of the site and the significant Cold War heritage interest.
- 1.3. There are several designated Scheduled Monuments and listed buildings, and other non-designated heritage assets of national importance on the former airbase site, as well as other unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area, and much of the airfield is also of ecological importance including a Local Wildlife Site.
- 1.4. The parent permission (planning reference 18/00825/HYBRID) of September 2022 to which this application relates, secured outline consent, in part, for 1,175no dwellings to the Heyford Park settlement, including 140 in Phase 10.

2. CONDITIONS PROPOSED TO BE DISCHARGED

- 2.1. This application seeks the partial discharge of Condition no.16 (scheme for location of roost and nesting habitat) of planning reference 18/00825/HYBRID in respect of Phase 10 only of the approved Heyford Park development.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1. The following planning history is considered relevant to the current proposal:

Application Reference 18/00825/HYBRID

- Hybrid planning application wherein permission was granted for, in part, 1,175no new dwellings.
- Approved September 2022.

4. RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

4.1 CDC Ecology

No comments received.

5. APPRAISAL

5.1 Condition no.16 to planning reference 18/00825/HYBRID requires the submission and approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority of a scheme for the location of roost and nesting habitats on each phase of the Stage 2 development at Heyford Park, to protect habitats of importance to biodiversity conservation from any loss or damage - in this instance the measures relate to phase 10 only, at the western end of the development.

5.2 In response to the above a schedule (titled 'Associated Notes'), setting out a number of roost and nesting habitats has been submitted together with the relevant layout plan, titled 'Planning Layout' (DWG no0521-PH10-102) wherein the proposed measures consist of the following:

- 12no. swift boxes;
- 8no. sparrow terraces;
- 4no. starling boxes;
- 4no. bat boxes; and,
- 10no. bat tubes.

5.3 Having regard to the merits of the respective measures, the proposed Swift boxes would be located a minimum of 5m above ground level, under an overhang or eaves for protection; the Sparrow terraces would be positioned between 1.5m and 5.5m above ground level, avoiding strong sunlight and prevailing winds; the Starling boxes would be located under the eaves of the relevant building, out of direct sunlight; and the bat boxes/tubes would be positioned at least 4m above ground level and away from artificial light. Whilst it is acknowledged that the orientation of a small number of the boxes/tubes may not be ideal, this is offset by their proximity to the landscape belt to the north, which consists of trees and hedgerows, where bats are likely to feed and use as a navigation aid.

5.4 In addition to the above, the number of roost and nesting measures is considered sufficient to provide a proportionate response to the phase 10 development of 140 affordable homes.

5.5 With the above in mind, the scheme for the location of roost and nesting habitats to phase 10 is considered consistent with the requirements of condition no.16 - to protect habitats of importance to biodiversity conservation from any loss or damage.

6. RECOMMENDATION

That Planning Condition no.16 of Application Number 18/00825/HYBRID be discharged in respect of Phase 10 only, based upon the following:

Condition no.16

In accordance with:

- Associated Notes (comprising a schedule of roost and nesting habitats); and,
- Planning Layout drawing (Dwg. No.0521-PH10-102).

Case Officer: Richard Greig

DATE: 7 June 2023

Checked By: Andy Bateson

DATE: 8th June 2023
