

1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 The Dorchester Group (hereafter referred to as the ‘applicant’) is seeking to obtain planning permission for the redevelopment of an approximately 76 hectare (ha) site (the ‘Site’), located within the administrative district of Cherwell District Council (CDC) approximately 7 kilometres (km) north-west of Bicester. The proposed redevelopment (the ‘Development’) would create a new settlement comprising up to 1,075 dwellings, together with the provision of employment uses, community uses and associated landscaping and infrastructure.
- 1.2 Waterman was commissioned in May 2010 by the applicant to carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the Development. EIA is a formal procedure that must be followed for certain types and scales of development, where the likely significant environmental impacts of the development are systematically assessed and reported, to assist the determination of a planning application. The potential environmental impacts of the Development, both during construction and once completed and operational, have been considered. The EIA process can also identify ways in which the project can be modified or adverse impacts mitigated, so as to reduce or avoid potential adverse impacts and to optimise beneficial impacts.

Site Context

- 1.3 The Site is approximately 78ha in area and is located near to the village of Upper Heyford in Oxfordshire. A plan showing the location of the Site is presented as **Figure 1.1**. The planning application boundary of the Site is shown in **Figure 1.2**.
- 1.4 The Site comprises the area often referred to as the ‘Settlement Area’ of the former RAF Airbase. The Site is bound by the ‘Flying Field’ area of the former Airbase to the north and west, and agricultural land to the south and east. The Site is surrounded by a network of villages and hamlets, with the settlement of Upper Heyford located close to the western part of the Site.
- 1.5 The main vehicular route into the Site is along Camp Road. This public road extends in an east/west direction and separates the primarily technical area to the north containing occupied commercial units and buildings associated with the former flying area from the primarily residential area to the south, which contains most of the residential buildings and support facilities. Camp Road links Upper Heyford village to the west with the B430 Ardley to Middleton Stoney road in the east which connects with junction 10 of the M40 motorway at Ardley. The Site’s sewage treatment works is located approximately 100m to the south east of the Site.
- 1.6 The houses that served the Airbase have been brought back into use and consist of bungalows on the western side, south of Camp Road, with two-storey semi-detached or short terraces of 1950s houses to the north and east. These houses are currently used under a temporary planning permission. To the west there are sports fields around a gymnasium and, beyond this, a disused store and hospital. East of the bungalows are 1920s houses around Carswell Circle, with more recent houses around a similar close to the south. A small supermarket has been brought back into use and there is a disused petrol station adjacent. Further east is a complex of former single airmen’s accommodation, offices and car parks, all now disused.
- 1.7 Former officer housing is located off Soden Road and Larsen Road to the north-east of Camp Road, along with additional bungalow accommodation. These residential properties benefit from a permanent planning permission. To the west is a substantial disused 1920s RAF officers’ mess largely in its original setting. The principal entrance to the Airbase is to the west of this, via

a roundabout on Camp Road. Heyford Park House and the guardhouse, which are also 1920s buildings, are located either side of the roundabout, from which three partially tree-lined avenues (known as the 'Trident') radiate into the Site. Most buildings to the north of Camp Road are currently in office or commercial use. Two important Cold War buildings are located in the western part of this area: the Battle Command Centre (Building 126) and the Hardened Telephone Exchange (Building 129).

- 1.8 At present there are just over 300 dwellings available for residential occupation, the majority of which are currently let. As a result, the Site is now home for around 800 residents. Facilities such as the former Airbase's convenience store (the 'shopette'), the community hall and the chapel serve the community living on the Site.
- 1.9 The entire Airbase site was designated as a Conservation Area in April 2006. Two Buildings on-Site have also been recognised as being of international and national importance as Scheduled Monuments. However, many parts of the technical and residential areas appear run-down, dilapidated and in need of renewal. A water tower in the north-east corner and one 150m further east along Camp Road are prominent landmarks.

Site Planning History

- 1.10 Since the RAF Airbase closed in 1994, temporary planning permissions have been granted for the re-use of a number of the buildings on the Site. A planning application for the entire former Airbase (i.e. the Site and the Flying Field to the north) was submitted in 2007 and was granted permission in January 2010. The planning application was accompanied by an ES (Roger Evans Associates Ltd, Environmental Statement, September 2007), parts of which were subsequently updated in June 2008. The proposals described in this application would therefore replace those already consented for the Site, although the consented development for the remainder of the Airbase will proceed.

Legal Framework for the Environmental Statement

- 1.11 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 (as amended) (hereafter referred to as the EIA Regulations) require that, before consent is granted for certain types of development, an EIA must be undertaken. The EIA Regulations set out the types of development which must always be subject to an EIA (Schedule 1 development) and other developments which may require assessments if they have the potential to give rise to significant environmental impacts (Schedule 2 development).
- 1.12 The redevelopment falls under Schedule 2, Categories 10a and 10b of the EIA Regulations: 'industrial development projects' and 'urban development projects' over 0.5ha respectively. Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations describes the criteria for determining whether a Schedule 2 development should in fact be subject to EIA. These criteria include:
 - the characteristics of the development (e.g. its size, use of natural resources, quantities of pollution);
 - the environmental sensitivity of the location; and
 - the characteristics of the potential impact (e.g. its extent, magnitude, probability and duration).
- 1.13 A formal Screening Opinion was not requested from CDC because it was considered by the applicant that an EIA should be carried out for a development of this scale, to demonstrate the thoroughness of its approach to the preparation of the planning application. The EIA was therefore undertaken to determine the likely significance of potential environmental impacts and

the nature of any mitigation measures that may be required. The findings of the EIA are presented in this document, which comprises an Environmental Statement (ES) for the purposes of the EIA Regulations.

Nature of the Application and EIA Compliance

- 1.14 The Site is located within the administrative area of CDC. The planning application has therefore been submitted to CDC, as local planning authority, for their determination.
- 1.15 The planning application takes the form of a 'hybrid' application incorporating both an outline application in respect of the erection of new buildings and the change of use of specified buildings across the Site.
- 1.16 The outline planning application seeks to establish the principles for the development of the Site. Where an EIA is required, the description of the Development within the ES must be sufficient to enable the requirements of the EIA Regulations to be fulfilled, and in particular, to enable the likely significant impacts of the Development to be identified. A series of parameters were therefore used to provide the context for the subsequent detailed design. These parameters are presented and discussed within **Chapter 3**.
- 1.17 The details of the Development, which will be the subject of applications for approval of reserved matters, fall within the parameters laid down by the outline planning permission and on which the EIA was based. A Design and Access Statement also accompanies the application and provides further illustrative information about the Development.

Structure of the Environmental Statement

- 1.18 This ES (Volume 3 of the planning application documentation) comprises three separate parts namely the Main Text and Figures (**Part 1**); Appendices (**Parts 2 and 3**) and Non-Technical Summary (**Part 4**).

Environmental Statement Part 1: Main Text and Figures

- 1.19 **Part 1** of the ES comprises fourteen chapters, which are illustrated throughout by a series of figures.
- 1.20 The EIA Regulations (Part 1 of Schedule 4) set out the type of information that is "*reasonably required to assess the environmental effects of the development and which the applicant can, having regard in particular to current knowledge and methods of assessment, reasonably be required to compile*". This information is presented in **Table 1.1**, which also indicates where items can be located within this ES.
- 1.21 The ES provides a description of the approach to the EIA (**Chapter 2**); the nature, extent and justification for the proposed redevelopment and an overview of relevant national, regional and local planning policy (**Chapters 3 and 4**). **Chapters 5 to 14** present the findings of the EIA for the following disciplines: transportation; noise; air quality; ground conditions and contamination; water resources; landscape and visual character; archaeology and cultural heritage; ecology; socio-economics; and cumulative impacts.
- 1.22 Each technical chapter of the ES is set out in accordance with Government guidance and best practice, and comprises: (i) an introduction; (ii) legislation and planning policy context (iii) a methodology of assessment (iv) a description of baseline conditions; (v) an assessment of the likely environmental impacts of the development; (vi) a description of mitigation measures and discussion on residual impacts; and (vii) a summary of the key issues.

Table 1.1: Location of Information in the ES Required Within Part I of Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations

Specified Information	Location in Environmental Statement
1 Description of the development, including in particular -	
(a) a description of the physical characteristics of the whole development and the land-use requirements during the construction and operational phases;	Chapter 3 (Description of the Development)
(b) a description of the main characteristics of the production processes, for instance, nature and quantity of materials used; and	Chapter 3 (Description of the Development)
(c) an estimate, by type and quantity, of expected residues and emissions (water, air and soil pollution, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation, etc.) resulting from the operation of the proposed development.	Chapter 6 (Noise) Chapter 7 (Air Quality) Chapter 8 (Ground Conditions and Contamination)
2 An outline of the main alternatives studied by the applicant or appellant and an indication of the main reasons for his choice, taking into account the environmental effects.	Not Applicable
3 A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development, including, in particular, population, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets (including telecommunication interference), including the architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and inter-relationship between the above factors.	All Technical Chapters (Chapters 5 to 14)
4 A description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment, which should cover the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the development, resulting from:	
(a) the existence of the development;	All Technical Chapters (Chapters 5 to 14)
(b) the use of natural resources; and	Not Applicable
(c) the emission of pollutants, the creation of nuisances and the elimination of waste.	Chapter 5 (Transportation) Chapter 6 (Noise) Chapter 7 (Air Quality) Chapter 8 (Ground Conditions and Contamination) Chapter 9 (Water Resources)
5 A description of the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and where possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment.	All Technical Chapters (Chapters 5 to 14)
6 A non-technical summary of the information provided under paragraphs 1 to 5 of this Part.	Part 3: Non Technical Summary (separate ES document)
7 An indication of any difficulties (technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered by the applicant in compiling the required information.	Chapter 2 (EIA Methodology) All Technical Chapters (Chapters 5 to 14) where appropriate

Environmental Statement Part 2 and 3: Appendices

- 1.23 Appendices are included where appropriate and are supplied as separate volume of documents to prevent the main text of the ES becoming excessively long. **Part 2** comprises **Appendices 1 to 5** and **Part 3** comprises **Appendices 6 to 14**.

Environmental Statement Part 4: Non-Technical Summary

- 1.24 Presented as a summary of the ES in 'non-technical language', the Non-Technical Summary (NTS) provides a concise summary of the approach to the EIA, the development proposals, development alternatives considered, potential environmental impacts and measures proposed to mitigate or to avoid these impacts.

Project Team

- 1.25 The ES forms part of a sequence of reports that will support the planning application for the Development; these are referenced throughout the ES. This ES was prepared by Waterman and presents the results of an EIA carried out by Waterman, and a number of specialist designers and consultants appointed by Waterman or directly by the applicant. These designers and consultants are presented in **Table 1.2** below, along with their respective disciplines and contribution to the EIA.

Table 1.2: The Project Team

Organisation	Expertise	EIA Input
The Dorchester Group	Applicant	
Pegasus Planning Group	Planning Consultant	
Scott Brownrigg	Architect	
Macgregor Smith Ltd	Landscape Architect	
Waterman Energy, Environment & Design Ltd	Environmental Consultant and EIA Co-ordinators	Co-ordination of the EIA and principal authors of the ES. Noise Assessment. Air Quality Assessment. Ground Conditions and Contamination Assessment. Landscape and Visual Character Assessment. Socio-economic Assessment. Cumulative Impacts Assessment.
Waterman Transport & Development Ltd	Flood Risk and Drainage Engineer	Water Resources Assessment including Flood Risk Assessment.
Peter Brett Associates	Traffic and Transport Consultants	Transportation Assessment.
Oxfordshire Archaeology	Archaeology and Cultural Heritage	Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Assessment.
Thomson Ecology Ltd	Consulting Ecologists	Ecology Assessment.

Environmental Statement Availability and Comments

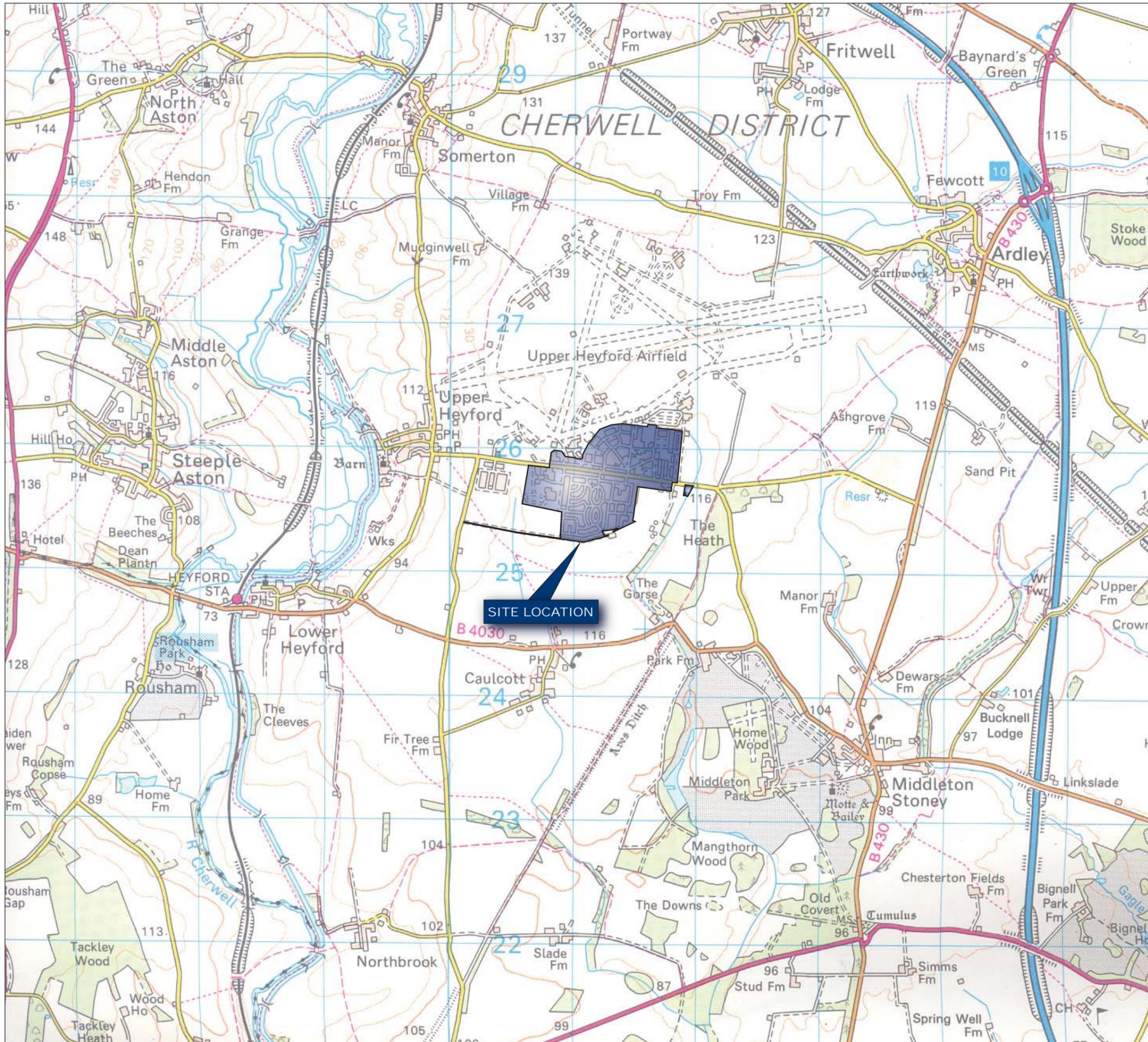
- 1.26 Additional copies of the ES can be purchased from Waterman on request. The Non-Technical Summary can be obtained free of charge. A CD version of the ES can be purchased at a cost of £20. All documents are available from:

Waterman Energy, Environment & Design Ltd
Versailles Court
3 Paris Gardens
London
SE1 8ND
Tel: 020 7928 7888
Fax: 020 7928 3864
Email: eed@waterman-group.co.uk

- 1.27 Additional copies are also available for viewing during normal office hours in the planning department of CDC at the address below. Comments on the planning application should be forwarded to the planning case officer, Andrew Lewis, at the following address:

Cherwell District Council
Planning Department
Bodicote House
Bodicote
Banbury
Oxfordshire
OX15 4AA

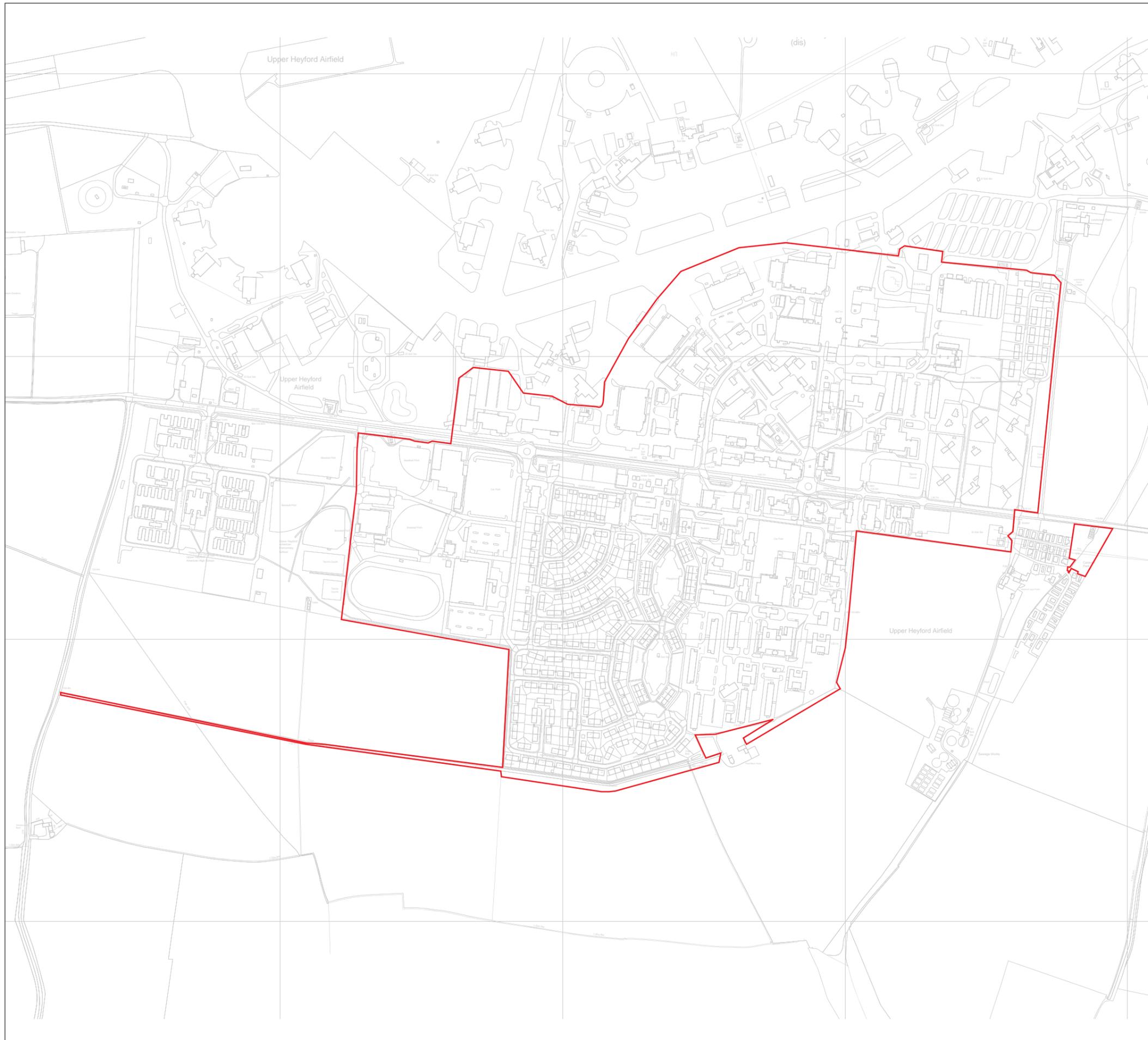
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Project Details	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
Figure Title	Figure 1.1: Site Location
Figure Ref	E10658-103_GR_ES_1.1A
Date	October 2010
File Location	\\nt-lngp2weedl\projects\10658\103\graphics\issued figures



Not to Scale



Project Details	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
Figure Title	Figure 1.2: Application Boundary Plan
Figure Ref	E10658-103_GR_ES_1.2A
Date	October 2010
File Location	\\nt-lmpg2weedl\projects\10658\103\graphics\es\issued figures