

SUPPORTING PLANNING STATEMENT

CHANGE OF USE OF VARIOUS BUILDINGS
CAMP ROAD
UPPER HEYFORD

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CONTENTS:

Page No:

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	PLANNING POLICY AND MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS	2
3.	SPECIFIC BUILDING PROPOSALS	8
	Buildings 32a, 33, 34, 35	8
	Building 36	8
	Building 53	8
	Building 56	9
	Building 59	9
	Building 65	9
	Building 66	9
	Building 68	10
	Building 73	10
	Building 79	10
	Building 86	11
	Building 88	11
	Buildings 101/102	11
	Building 103	12
	Building 106	12
	Building 115	12
	Building 117	13
	Building 118	13
	Building 119	13
	Building 132	13
	Building 133	14
	Building 146	14
	Building 157	14
	Building 442	15
	Building 492	15
	Parking provision	15

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement accompanies a planning application for the change of use of 28 no. buildings located within the core area of the former RAF Upper Heyford site.
- 1.2 Pending the implementation of the planning permission for this part of the site which was granted by the Secretary of State in January 2010, or the future implementation of the scheme which is the subject of a current planning application for a revised approach and masterplan (reference: 10/01642/OUT), the Dorchester Group wish to let the buildings which are suitable for commercial use.
- 1.3 A number of these buildings have historically been let for various commercial uses and tenants on short-term planning permissions. These applications were submitted as specific tenants expressed an interest on an ad-hoc basis.
- 1.4 A more comprehensive approach is now sought which identifies all the relevant buildings which may be suitable for letting pending the eventual implementation of the new settlement in this part of the site in due course.
- 1.5 It is for this reason that a single application for the change of use of the 28 buildings variously located across the core part of the settlement area has been submitted. In certain cases this seeks to regularise existing occupancy by existing tenants. In other instances, it seeks planning permission in order to facilitate the future re-use of a building for future lettings. A use-class approach (rather than applying for consents limited to specific occupiers) is proposed in order to allow for some flexibility in letting the buildings without the need for re-applying if and when a tenant vacates or relocates.
- 1.6 The planning policy and development plan considerations are reviewed in Section 2 together with other material planning considerations, whilst the specific building requirements together with the proposed use class are identified in Section 3 of this Statement.

2. PLANNING POLICY AND MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

2.1 Following the CALA Homes high court action, and the pursuant letter from Steve Quartermain of 10th November 2010, the South East Plan remains part of the statutory Development Plan. The Development Plan for the site therefore currently comprises:

- South East Plan (issued May 2009)
- Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016 (approved 2005), saved Policy H2
- Cherwell Local Plan (adopted 1996), saved policies

2.2 In addition, other relevant policy related documents which should be regarded as 'material considerations' comprise:

- The non statutory Cherwell Local Plan (2004)
- The Revised Comprehensive Planning Brief for RAF Upper Heyford, March 2007
- Draft Core Strategy Consultation Draft, February 2010

2.3 The **South East Plan** was issued in May 2009. Given its strategic nature and regional and sub-regional function, its policies are perhaps of less direct relevance to this planning application. Nevertheless Policy RE1 requires that it should be sought

'...to ensure that the spatial requirements for market flexibility are fully met in all parts of the region, respecting the principles of sustainable development.'

2.4

2.5 Policy H2 'Heyford Park' of the **Oxfordshire County Structure Plan 2016** provides the overarching policy for the site and anticipates the provision of a New Settlement on the site. The site specific nature of this policy is rather unusual but reflects its strategic importance. It states:-

Heyford Park

H2 a) Land at RAF Heyford Park will provide for a new settlement of about 1,000 dwellings and necessary supporting infrastructure, including a primary school and appropriate community, recreational and employment opportunities, as a means of enabling environmental improvements and the heritage interest of the site as a military base with Cold War

associations to be conserved, compatible with achieving a satisfactory living environment.

- b) **Proposals for development must reflect a revised comprehensive planning brief adopted by the district council and demonstrate that the conservation of heritage resources, landscape, restoration, enhancement of biodiversity and other environmental improvements will be achieved across the whole of the former Air Base in association with the provision of the new settlement.**
- c) **The new settlement should be designed to encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport rather than travel by private car. Improvements to bus and rail facilities and measures to minimise the impact of traffic generated by the development on the surrounding road network will be required.**

2.6 The supporting text is also relevant because, even though it does not form part of the development plan (and therefore does not carry the full statutory weight set out in Section 38(6) of the Act), it does indicate the approach which the County Council were expecting to take to development in this location particularly as regards to the scale of new housing development. The text states:-

7.7 Land declared surplus by the Ministry of Defence at the former Air Base at Heyford Park represents an opportunity to achieve an appropriate balance between environmental improvements to a rural part of Oxfordshire, conservation of the heritage interest from the Cold War, and re-use of some existing buildings and previously developed land located in the former technical and residential core area of the base. However, the scale of development must be appropriate to the location and surroundings. The County Council is opposed to the development of a large new settlement due to the site's relatively isolated and unsustainable rural location, the threat of urbanisation in a rural area, the location of the site in relation to Bicester with which it would compete for investment in services and facilities, and conflict with the objectives of Government planning policy in PPG13 to provide accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling and to reduce the need to travel by car¹. Therefore, the Plan provides for modest

¹ In June 2003 the Secretary of State refused permission for proposals for development of a settlement on the site because he considered that the scheme did not comply with the development plan.

development of about 1,000 houses. There are about 300 existing houses on the site of which some or all could be retained or demolished, but the total limit of about 1,000 dwellings will be the determining factor. This proposal has been recognised by the First Secretary of State as 'an exception to normal sustainability objectives as a means of facilitating the remediation of the former Air Base to enable the site to present a more environmentally acceptable face than it does now'².

7.8 Proposals for development must be in accordance with a revised comprehensive planning brief for the site adopted by Cherwell District Council. Care should be taken to ensure that the heritage interest of the site as an Air Base with Cold War associations, landscape restoration and biodiversity are all taken into account in deciding appropriate measures. In revising the comprehensive planning brief, the District Council should continue to consult English Heritage and the developer on how heritage conservation issues should be addressed, including treatment of buildings from the Cold War era that English Heritage have recommended for protection. A conservation plan for the whole area of the Air Base is being prepared by the District Council in partnership with English Heritage, to enable appropriate decisions to be reached in revising the comprehensive planning brief.

7.9 In drawing up development proposals attention should be paid to ensure a satisfactory living environment is provided for future residents. Proposals should be designed to a high quality in accordance with policy H3 and will need to provide for appropriate on- and off-site infrastructure to meet the needs of the development in accordance with policy G3, including primary and secondary education, library facilities, and public transport and other highway and transport improvements. Proposals should not provide for any further significant growth beyond that envisaged in policy H2.

2.7 The proposed development at Heyford Park which has been permitted as part of the 2010 'lead appeal' consent, and that which is currently the subject of the revised application, both comply with these requirements. This application is submitted on a different basis in that it is not proposing a lasting arrangement comprising of the commercial reuse of these various buildings located within the core area, but rather

² Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 23 June 2003, reference APP/C3105/A/02/1080800.

is seeking to facilitate their re-use pending the implementation on this part of the site of an agreed and consented masterplan.

2.8 Such an interim arrangement is addressed in the **Revised Comprehensive Planning Brief (RCPB)** at section 4.7.4.5 (page 25), which addresses the matter of existing business located on the Upper Heyford site. This indicates that the Brief needs to be sensitive to the needs of existing businesses where these accord with the vision for the future of the site. As such, three tests are proposed within the RCPB, namely that within the settlement area, business could be considered provided that (1) the use is compatible with the aspirations for the settlement; (2) the use would not adversely affect residents or other business through noise, traffic movements, requirement for outside storage, working outside normal business hours; and (3) the use would not have an unacceptable impact on the surrounding landscape, historic interest of the site or nearby villages. Given that the proposed uses set out within this application are not generally proposed to be incorporated within the lasting arrangement for the new settlement application, these criteria are not directly applicable to this application.

2.9 The RCPB concludes at the end of the section that :

‘Where uses are not compatible with the new settlement temporary transitional arrangements will be considered on a case by case basis to assist the company with the relocation of the entire or part of the business off site.’

2.10 Rather than taking the view that only retaining existing businesses should be facilitated pending the implementation of the approved masterplan for this part of the site, Dorchester propose a more progressive approach where both existing business interests are accommodated and also new opportunities are secured by re-letting buildings on suitable commercial tenancies which will not hinder or delay the implementation of the new settlement area in this part of the site as and when commercial timing is appropriate.

2.11 It should be noted that the statutory **Local Plan** applying to the site dates back to 1996 but, because it predates the identification of this site in the Oxfordshire Structure Plan to 2011 (adopted in 1999), it contains no policies directly relevant to this application. Additionally there is the **Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan (NSLP) (2011)** which is a material consideration, but was abandoned by the Council before it reached statutory adoption. It is understood to have been adopted by the

District Council for development control purposes but carries little statutory weight. It does contain some policies referring to the Heyford Park base but has largely been superseded by the RCPB (referred to in the preceding paragraph).

- 2.12 The emerging Cherwell Core Strategy carries relatively little weight given its early stage in the LDF process, but the proposed Vision does propose fostering an economy that vibrant and diverse, and supporting a sustainable rural economy that is not entirely reliant on agriculture. This Vision summarises thus:

Our villages will be ‘lived in’ as well as ‘slept in’.

- 2.13 The overall spatial strategy notes that:

Away from the two towns, the major single location for growth will be at the former RAF Upper Heyford base which will deliver approximately 1,000 homes (gross) in accordance with policy H2 of the former Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016.

- 2.14 In terms of national planning guidance, **PPS5** is particularly relevant given that the site is located within the designated Upper Heyford Conservation Area. Paragraph 7 of the guidance states that, inter alia, the Government’s objectives for planning and the historic environment are:

‘- to conserve England’s heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance by ensuring that:

-

- wherever possible, heritage assets are put to an appropriate and viable use that is consistent with their conservation.’

- 2.15 It is precisely this approach that this planning application advocates. The proposed re-use of the existing buildings located within the heart of the Conservation Area will enable them to be put to an appropriate and viable short term use, pending the redevelopment of this part of the site in accordance with the approved masterplan in due course.

- 2.16 In summary, the proposed re-use of the various buildings will achieve the following planning benefits:-

- A greater range of employment premises available, complementing and contributing to the growth of the local economy, thereby fostering economic growth in accordance with economic policies
- Reusing existing buildings within a Conservation Area, facilitating their reuse will contributing to their upkeep pending the implementation of the new

settlement masterplan in this part of the site, and thereby maintaining and indeed enhancing the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area pending redevelopment;

- Reusing vacant building stock, stock which is suitable for re-use with no or very minor physical alteration represents an inherently sustainable approach, making appropriate use of existing building fabric.

3. SPECIFIC BUILDING PROPOSALS

Buildings 32a, 33, 34, 35

- 3.1 These buildings comprise a range of single storey general industrial/storage buildings located towards the north of the core area. The structures are steel framed buildings, metal clad, with a pitched metal roof. The buildings are believed to originate from 1945-1947.
- 3.2 Buildings 32-34 total 4,735 sq.m, whilst Building 35 extends to 745 sq.m.
- 3.3 The Buildings are proposed for use Classes B2 (General industrial) and B8 (storage and distribution).
- 3.4 At present, Buildings 32a, 34 and 35 are let. Building 33 is unlet.

Building 36

- 3.5 This building is a single storey office building also located towards the north of the core area. The structure consists of brown brick walls with a flat asphalt roof. The building is believed to originate from 1970.
- 3.6 Building 36 totals 88 sq.m.
- 3.7 The Building is proposed for use Class B1 (Office and light industrial).
- 3.8 At present, Building 36 is not let.

Building 53

- 3.9 This building is a single storey office building located towards the centre of the core area. The structure consists of a brick base with pebble dashed walls with a metal pitched roof. The building is believed to originate from 1940.
- 3.10 Building 53 totals 253 sq.m.
- 3.11 The Building is proposed for use Class B1 (Office and light industrial).
- 3.12 At present, Building 53 is not let.

Building 56

- 3.13 This building is a single storey office building also located towards the centre of the core area. The structure consists of painted brickwork with asbestos tiles on a pitched roof. The building is believed to originate from 1951.
- 3.14 Building 56 totals 25 sq.m.
- 3.15 The Building is proposed for use Class B1 (Office and light industrial).
- 3.16 At present, Building 56 is not let.

Building 59

- 3.17 This building is a single storey office building also located towards the centre of the core area. The structure consists of painted brickwork with some rendered additions and a timber lean-to at the rear, with asbestos tiles on a pitched roof. The building is believed to originate from 1940.
- 3.18 Building 59 totals 530 sq.m.
- 3.19 The Building is proposed for use Classes B1 (Office and light industrial) and Class B8 (storage and distribution).
- 3.20 At present, Building 59 is let.

Building 65

- 3.21 This building is a single storey building also located towards the centre of the core area. The structure consists of a rendered brick plinth with metal cladding above and a metal pitched roof. The building is believed to originate from 1945.
- 3.22 Building 65 totals 212 sq.m.
- 3.23 The Building is proposed for use Class B1 (Office and light industrial).
- 3.24 At present, Building 65 is let.

Building 66

- 3.25 This building is a two storey office building also located towards the centre of the core area. The structure consists of brickwork with a metal pitched roof. The adjacent

building is a single storey painted concrete block with an asphalt pitched roof. The building is believed to originate from 1939.

3.26 Building 66 totals 539 sq.m.

3.27 The Building is proposed for use Class B1 (Office and light industrial).

3.28 At present, Building 66 is let.

Building 68

3.29 This building is a single storey building also located towards the centre of the core area. The structure consists of a rendered brick plinth with metal cladding above and a metal pitched roof. The building is believed to originate from 1940.

3.30 Building 68 totals 316 sq.m.

3.31 The Building is proposed for use Class B1 (Office and light industrial).

3.32 At present, Building 68 is not let.

Building 73

3.33 This building is a double height single storey building also located towards the centre of the core area. The structure consists of brick walls and a metal pitched roof.

3.34 Building 73 totals 112 sq.m.

3.35 The Building is proposed for use Classes B2 (General industrial) and B8 (storage and distribution).

3.36 At present, Building 73 is let.

Building 79

3.37 This building is a double height single storey building located towards the centre of the core area. The structure consists of painted brick walls with a parapet to a flat roof. There is also a steel frame extension to the front with a pitched roof, clad in corrugated plastic. The building is believed to originate from 1940.

3.38 Building 79 totals 163 sq.m.

3.39 The Building is proposed for use Classes B2 (General industrial) and B8 (storage and distribution).

3.40 At present, Building 79 is not let.

Building 86

3.41 This building is a industrial single storey building also located towards the north of the core area. The structure consists of brickwork with a metal pitched roof. The building is believed to originate from 1981.

3.42 Building 86 totals 432 sq.m.

3.43 The Building is proposed for use Class B2 (General industrial).

3.44 At present, Building 86 is let.

Building 88

3.45 This building is a industrial single storey double/triple height building also located towards the north of the core area. The structure consists of a metal clad steel framed structure with a shallow metal pitched roof. The building is believed to originate from 1986.

3.46 Building 88 totals 400 sq.m.

3.47 The Building is proposed for use Class B2 (General industrial).

3.48 At present, Building 88 is not let.

Buildings 101/102

3.49 These buildings comprise 4 no. linked buildings located towards the north of Camp Road. The structures variously consist of painted brick and metal clad steel framed structures with metal pitched roofs. The buildings are believed to originate from 1939.

3.50 Buildings 101/102 total 543 sq.m.

3.51 The Building is proposed for use Classes B1(Office and light industrial) and B2 (General industrial).

3.52 At present, Buildings 101/102 are partially let.

Building 103

- 3.53 This building is a single storey double height building also located towards the north of Camp Road. The structure consists of brick walls with a tiled pitched roof. A single storey brick built extension with pitched tiled roof is adjacent. The building is believed to originate from 1940.
- 3.54 Building 103 totals 340 sq.m.
- 3.55 The Building is proposed for use Classes B2 (General industrial).
- 3.56 At present, Building 103 is let.

Building 106

- 3.57 This building is a industrial single storey double height building located towards the north of the Camp Road within the western part of the Trenchard area. The structure consists of brick and metal clad walls with a metal pitched roof. The building is believed to originate from 1940.
- 3.58 Building 106 totals 2,166 sq.m.
- 3.59 The Building is proposed for use Classes B2 (General industrial) and Class B8 (storage and distribution).
- 3.60 At present, Building 106 is not let.

Building 115

- 3.61 This building is a single storey building located towards the north of the Camp Road within the western part of the Trenchard area. The structure consists of brick and some timber infill painted walls, concrete end walls, with a pitched tiled roof. The building is believed to originate from 1939.
- 3.62 Building 115 totals 221 sq.m.
- 3.63 The Building is proposed for use Class B1 (Office and light industrial).
- 3.64 At present, Building 115 is let.

Building 117

- 3.65 This building is a single storey double height building located towards the north of the Camp Road within the western part of the Trenchard area. The structure consists of brick painted walls, concrete end walls, with a pitched tiled roof. The building is believed to originate from 1939.
- 3.66 Building 117 totals 384 sq.m.
- 3.67 The Building is proposed for use Class B1 (Office and light industrial).
- 3.68 At present, Building 117 is let.

Building 118

- 3.69 This building is a single storey building located towards the north of the Camp Road within the western part of the Trenchard area. The structure consists of brick walls with a parapet to a flat roof. The building is believed to originate from 1935.
- 3.70 Building 118 totals 132 sq.m.
- 3.71 The Building is proposed for use Class B1 (Office and light industrial).
- 3.72 At present, Building 118 is let.

Building 119

- 3.73 This building is a 1.5 storey height building located towards the north of the Camp Road within the western part of the Trenchard area. The structure consists of brick walls with a parapet to a flat roof. The building is believed to originate from 1939.
- 3.74 Building 119 totals 86 sq.m.
- 3.75 The Building is proposed for use Class B1 (Office and light industrial).
- 3.76 At present, Building 119 is let.

Building 132

- 3.77 This building is a single storey building located towards the north of the Camp Road within the western part of the Trenchard area. The structure consists of brick walls with a pitched, tiled roof. The building is believed to originate from 1926.

3.78 Building 132 totals 114 sq.m.

3.79 The Building is proposed for use Class B1 (Office and light industrial).

3.80 At present, Building 132 is let.

Building 133

3.81 This building is a single storey building located towards the north of the Camp Road within the western part of the Trenchard area. The structure consists of brick walls with a pitched, tiled roof. The building is believed to originate from 1926.

3.82 Building 133 totals 1,946 sq.m.

3.83 The Building is proposed for use Class B1 (Office and light industrial).

3.84 At present, Building 133 is partially let.

Building 146

3.85 This building is a two storey building located towards the north of the Camp Road within the western part of the Trenchard area. The structure consists of brick walls with a pitched, tiled roof together with a delivery platform. The building is believed to originate from 1926.

3.86 Building 146 totals 150 sq.m.

3.87 The Building is proposed for use Classes B2 (General industrial) and Class B8 (storage and distribution).

3.88 At present, Building 146 is partially let.

Building 157

3.89 This building is a single and two storey building located towards the north of the Trenchard area. The structure consists of brick walls with a pitched, metal roof. The building is believed to originate from 1935.

3.90 Building 157 totals 239 sq.m.

3.91 The Building is proposed for use Class B8 (storage and distribution).

3.92 At present, Building 157 is not let.

Building 442

- 3.93 This building is a single storey building located towards the south of the Camp Road. The structure consists of brick walls with a pitched, tiled roof. The building is believed to originate from 1984.
- 3.94 Building 442 totals 975 sq.m.
- 3.95 The Building is proposed for use Class D1 (Non residential institutions).
- 3.96 At present, Building 442 is let.

Building 492

- 3.97 This building is a single storey building located towards the south of the Camp Road. The structure consists of brick walls with a flat metal roof with a deep fascia. The building is believed to originate from 1985.
- 3.98 Building 492 totals 616 sq.m.
- 3.99 The Building is proposed for use Class a1 (retail shop).
- 3.100 At present, Building 492 is let.

Parking provision

- 3.101 Given that parking requirements within these proposed use classes will vary by type of occupier, it is proposed that a condition should be imposed to the effect that prior to letting a building (or within 3 months of the grant of planning permission for those buildings occupied at the time planning permission is granted), a parking plan shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing.