

### **3. Description of the Development**

#### **Introduction**

- 3.1 This Chapter sets out the description of the Development together with a summary of the alternatives to the Development that were considered by the applicant. The nature of the Development is detailed with reference to the planning application description and drawings. The proposed demolition and construction works are also described.

#### **Need for the Development**

- 3.2 Since the closure of the RAF Airbase, temporary and permanent planning permissions have been granted for the re-use of a number of buildings on the Site for employment and residential uses. Current employment uses on the Site has generated employment opportunities for the local area. However, since the closure of the RAF Airbase some buildings on the Site, including the barracks and hospital, have become disused; thus parts of the Site are currently underutilised. Furthermore, these buildings are dilapidated and protected by security fences, creating an environment that appears rundown.
- 3.3 Development of the Site would create permanent employment opportunities in the local area, allowing existing residents, including those on-Site, to continue to work close to where they live. In addition, development of the Site would increase existing employment uses, thus generating further employment opportunities. Redevelopment of the Site would also utilise the land more efficiently and bring valuable land back into use. This would facilitate the regeneration of the Site and encourage inward investment to the area. Consequently, the regeneration of the Site would improve the Site's living and working environment, whilst ensuring the long-term maintenance of the historical assets on, and to the north of the Site within the Flying Field area.
- 3.4 The Site has been recognised by CDC, OCC and the Secretary of State as a strategic site for development, which could accommodate approximately 1,000 dwellings. Therefore the Development would provide a strategic opportunity to contribute to meeting the housing targets and requirements of Cherwell District. The proposal includes a proportion of affordable housing, which would address the affordability gap and contribute to affordable housing requirements.

#### **Alternatives and Design Evolution**

- 3.5 Under the EIA Regulations, an ES is required to provide "*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*".
- 3.6 The following paragraphs therefore review those alternatives to the Development under the following themes:
- the 'no development' alternative
  - alternative sites; and
  - alternative uses and designs.

## No Development Alternative

- 3.7 The 'No Development' alternative for the Site is to leave it in its current state. In the event that the Site is not developed, this would result in missed opportunities particularly with regard to new employment opportunities and housing, which would contribute to economic development and housing requirements within the area. Additionally parts of the Site, particularly in the south-east and west of the Site, which include the former barracks, hospital and superstore, would remain underutilised and in a poor state of repair. Historically important buildings, structures and open spaces are present on-Site. Without the inward investment generated by the Site's redevelopment, their long term preservation would be put at risk and the potential for an improvement in their setting would potentially be lost.

## Alternative Sites

- 3.8 Since the applicant is the landowner of the Site, alternative sites for development within the locality were not considered in detail. Furthermore, the Site has been identified by CDC within the '*Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan*' and '*Draft Core Strategy*' (CDC, 1994 and February 2010) as a strategic location for major growth. The Site has also been recognised by OCC and the Secretary of State as a strategic site for development, which could accommodate approximately 1,000 dwellings. The Development therefore offers an opportunity to contribute to the housing targets of CDC and Oxfordshire. Additionally, development of the Site would re-use previously developed land since the Site was part of the former RAF Airbase. Redevelopment of the Site is therefore central to CDC's 'brownfield' land strategy.

## Alternative Site Uses and Design

### Consideration of Alternative Site Uses

- 3.9 The '*Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016*' (OCC, 1995), the '*Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan*' (CDC, 1994) and emerging Core Strategy (CDC, 2010) identify the Site as suitable for a sustainable new settlement, which could deliver approximately 1,000 new dwellings. In response, a Comprehensive Planning Brief for the Site and Flying Field area was adopted in 2007 by CDC. The Comprehensive Planning Brief sets out the design aspirations, objectives, and principles for a settlement and community at the Site. The proposed uses of the Site were therefore informed by the Comprehensive Planning Brief, which sets out suitable land uses for the Site. As such alternative uses of the Site beyond the Comprehensive Planning Brief were not considered by the applicant in detail.

### Consideration of Alternative Design and Layout

- 3.10 The design and layout of the Development was considered within the context and limits of the Comprehensive Planning Brief SPD. Whilst a degree of design evolution has occurred, the principles of the Development in terms of its key objectives have remained the same from the outset. Details of the design process are provided in the Design and Access Statement that accompanies the planning application. Alternative designs and layout were identified and evaluated during the masterplanning process.
- 3.11 The Parameter Plans that are the subject of the planning application and this ES incorporate the design revisions. These are described below along with the environmental reasons for the revisions:

- retention and integration of a greater number of heritage buildings and open space, including retention or partial retention of the military Buildings 455, 457, 485 and 488 and the Old parade Ground to the south of Camp Road, to preserve heritage assets and the unique military character of the Site;
- retention and integration of parts of the existing road structure, particularly the avenues of the 'Trident' area and Carswell Circle to preserve the formal military layout of the site; and
- provision of structural tree planting along the entire length of the southern boundary to screen the Site from the south.

## The Proposals

### Overview of the Proposals

- 3.12 The applicant has submitted a single hybrid application for residential and employment uses, incorporating both an outline application in respect of the erection of new buildings and the change of use of specified buildings.
- 3.13 The Development would provide a new settlement comprising housing, employment and community uses to create a mixed use sustainable community. The framework of the Development is based upon a number of key principles, which are summarised below:
- retain key buildings and open space within the historic core of the administrative area to provide the backdrop to a new village community hub;
  - significantly upgrade Camp Road to provide a strong east west spine which provides the focal point for safer north south pedestrian movement;
  - retain and enhance areas of significant green space within the development and provide of new quality public open space to create a comprehensive network of open space;
  - a successful village centre at the heart of the settlement area, easily walkable from residential and commercial districts centred around the new Village Green space;
  - provide new community facilities and essential local uses required to enable a vibrant community of residents and workers to exist;
  - reinforce the existing Site boundaries where these are well vegetated to maintain visual screen;
  - provide new low hedgerows and intermittent native tree planting to the western site boundaries, to replicate the softer, more informal edges of traditional rural settlements;
  - retain existing housing and bungalows across the Site and integrate new housing with existing properties;
  - establish distinctive 'gateways' at key locations to create a sense of arrival into the new settlement;
  - use the existing distinctive landscape character areas of the site to create a variety of distinctive character areas across the Development, which will help to reinforce the unique character of this site, and help to integrate the Development into the wider landscape; and
  - retain and maintain, where practical, the existing mature tree cover to the Site.

### Development Parameters

3.14 The key components of the proposed Development can be summarised as:

- up to 1,075 dwellings (C3 use), of which 762 dwellings would be new build and the remaining 313 are existing dwelling on the Site;
- hotel and or care facility and student accommodation (C1/C2 use);
- employment uses comprising new build and change of use to accommodate businesses (B1 use), general industry (B2 use), storage and distribution (B8 use);
- retail uses (A1, A3, A4, A5) comprising new build and change of use of existing buildings;
- community uses (D1 use) comprising church, community hall, crèche and heritage centre;
- a Primary School;
- petrol pumps;
- provision of playing pitches and courts, sports pavilion plus incidental open space including neighbourhood equipped areas for play (NEAPs) and local equipped areas for play (LEAPs);
- provision of all infrastructure to serve the above development including the provision of the requisite access roads and car parking to District Council standards;
- removal of boundary fence to the south of Camp Road;
- removal of some buildings and structures; and
- landscaping alterations including the removal of identified trees within the Conservation Area and planting of new trees and off-site hedgerows and access track.

3.15 The parameters of the proposed Development on which the EIA was based are presented in **Figures 3.1 to 3.7** and described in **Table 3.1** below.

**Table 3.1: EIA Parameter Plans**

ES Figure Number	Description	Planning Application Drawing Number
Figure 3.1	Planning Application Boundary	14272.01-DW-411-020 B
Figure 3.2	Buildings to be Demolished	14272.01-DW-411-010.D
Figure 3.3	Buildings and Roads to be Retained	14272.01-DW-411-011.D
Figure 3.4	Development Uses	14272.01-DW-411-023.D
Figure 3.5	Building Heights	14272.01-DW-411-026.D
Figure 3.6	Access	14272.01-DW-411-028.D
Figure 3.7	Green Infrastructure	14272.01-DW-411-029.C

3.16 A schedule of the key land uses with maximum quanta of accommodation is detailed in **Table 3.2**. A more detailed description of each of the land uses is described in the following sections. **Figures 3.2 and 3.3** identify Building number references which are used in the following sections.

Table 3.2: Schedule of Accommodation

Land Use	Maximum Area of Use (ha)	Maximum Floor space (GEA m <sup>2</sup> )	Maximum No. of Residential Dwellings
Residential: Dwelling Houses (C3)	-	-	1,075
Residential: Hotels (C1) and Residential Institutions (C2)	-	5,682	-
Employment: Businesses (B1)	-	5,821	-
Employment: General Industrial (B2) and Storage and Distribution (B8)	-	20,883	-
Retail: Shops (A1)	-	1,400	-
Retail: Restaurants, Cafes, Drinking Establishments, Hot Food Takeaways (A3/A4/A5)	-	1,713	-
Non Residential Institutions (D1)	-	5,820	-
Primary School (D1)	2.2		
Sui Generis (Petrol Station)	-	10	-

### Buildings to be Demolished

- 3.17 To facilitate the creation of a new settlement with a satisfactory living environment, some existing poorer quality buildings would require demolition. These buildings are shown in **Figure 3.2**. These largely include clusters of buildings within the south-eastern part of the Site, central area to the north of Camp Road, and within the western part of the Site. Two residential dwellings on Portal Drive South would be demolished to accommodate the new main circular route.
- 3.18 There are a number of on-Site tanks that are associated with former fuel storage uses, primarily located in the north eastern part of the Site. These structures would be removed as part of the proposed Development.

### Buildings and Roads to be Retained

#### Buildings

- 3.19 All the buildings and structures identified for retention within the '*RAF Upper Heyford Revised Comprehensive Planning Brief*' apart from where otherwise agreed with English Heritage and CDC. These buildings are shown in **Figure 3.3**. The Scheduled Monuments and key heritage buildings would be retained and integrated into the Development to conserve the heritage and unique character of the Site and Conservation Area. Most of the existing buildings located in the employment area to the north of Camp Road, together with the church and community buildings to the south of Camp Road, would also be retained. With the exception of the two residential dwellings described above, all 313 residential dwellings would be retained and integrated into the Development.

### Roads

- 3.20 The existing roads and formal layout of the Site represent the original structure of the former Airbase. Distinctive street patterns considered to be of historic significance would be retained and integrated into the Development with new roads (see **Figure 3.3**). In particular, the formal avenues of the 'Trident' area to the north of Camp Road would be retained as an important feature of the Airbase. Carswell Circle to the south of Camp Road would also be completely retained to preserve the character of this part of the Site.

### Residential Uses

- 3.21 Up to a maximum of 1,075 dwellings would be provided including the retention and change of use of the majority of existing military housing and the change of use of various buildings) comprising:
- existing 46 dwellings already benefiting from a Certificate of Lawful Use or Development for Class C3;
  - change of use of 253 dwellings to Class C3 (already subject to planning application 10/00640/F);
  - change of use of 12 dwellings along Dacey Drive and 2 dwellings on Dow Street to Class C3;
  - demolition of 2 existing dwellings, no.'s 5 and 7 Portal Drive South;
  - change of use of Building 485 to provide up to 12 dwellings; and
  - erection of up to 762 new dwellings.
- 3.22 Residential uses would occupy much of the Site (see **Figure 3.4**), with the principal residential area proposed to the south of Camp Road and further residential areas proposed to the north of Camp Road towards the centre, north-eastern and north-western of the Site.
- 3.23 The majority of residential dwellings to be retained in the central part of the Site, south of Camp Road are one storey in height. However, residential dwellings to be retained along Soden Road and Larson Road in the north-eastern part of the Site and to the south around Carswell Circle and Carswell Crescent are two storeys in height. Retained dwellings would not be subject to any refurbishment which would affect the roofs, either internally or externally.
- 3.24 New residential dwellings would be largely up to two storeys in height, which equates to a maximum height of 10m to the eaves. Building heights would rise to a maximum of three storeys (approximately 13m to eaves) at locations close to the Old Parade Ground, Trident area near to the existing hangers and along the central part of Camp Road within the 'local centre'. **Figure 3.5** shows the nature of the building heights across the Site.
- 3.25 New residential dwellings would provide a mix of sizes, tenures and densities, with 30% of the housing being affordable.

### Employment Uses

- 3.26 Employment uses would be concentrated within existing commercial buildings to the north of Camp Road, particularly around the existing hanger buildings (see **Figure 3.4**). Up to 5,821m<sup>2</sup> of B1 Business use would be provided in existing buildings 100, 123, 125 and 488 with the remainder provided in new buildings. All of the B2/B8 employment uses (up to 20,833m<sup>2</sup>) would be provided in existing buildings, as follows: Buildings 80, 151, 172, 320, 345 and 350. Building 158 is proposed for B8 uses only.
- 3.27 The majority of the existing buildings, which would be retained for employment uses are four storeys in height (approximately 16m to eaves). However, the B1 business uses located on Camp Road and within the residential area to the south of Camp Road would be limited to two storeys. **Figure 3.5** shows the nature of the building heights across the Site.

### Retail Uses

- 3.28 Retail uses would be provided within the 'local centre' situated in the central part of the Site along Camp Road (see **Figure 3.4**). Up to 1,400m<sup>2</sup> of A1 shops would be provided in new buildings of up to three storeys (see **Figure 3.5**). Use classes A3, A4 and A5 (food and drink establishments) would be provided in existing buildings only comprising Buildings 103, 455 and 457.

### Community Uses

- 3.29 Buildings 549 and 572 are proposed for change of use to D1 uses comprising a community hall and chapel. These buildings would also be located in the 'local centre' towards the centre of the Site and just south of Camp Road (see **Figure 3.4**). The 'local centre' would also accommodate a new building providing a crèche facility. The community hall and chapel buildings are two storeys in height and the new crèche building would be up to three storeys in height (see **Figure 3.5**).

### Heritage Centre

- 3.30 A heritage centre (also D1 use) is proposed which would be accommodated in the retained hanger building 315 and nearby existing Buildings 126 and 129 to provide permanent space to exhibit material from the Airbase (see **Figure 3.4**). The heritage centre would be located towards the centre of the Site near to the proposed mixed use 'local centre' and would be equivalent to four storeys in height (see **Figure 3.5**).

### Care Facility/Hotel

- 3.31 The two storey, existing and retained former Officers Mess building (Building 74), is proposed for flexible C1/C2 use which could comprise a residential care home facility or a hotel (see **Figures 3.4** and **3.5**).

### Education Provision

- 3.32 A new two-form entry Primary School (D1 use) would be provided towards the centre of the Site adjacent to the 'local centre' and Old Parade Square (see **Figure 3.4**). The school would cover approximately 2.2ha of the Site and provide education facilities to meet the needs of people living on the Site. The school buildings would be one storey in height (see **Figure 3.5**).

## Transport Infrastructure and Access

- 3.33 Vehicular access and egress to the Site would be along Camp Road, which would continue to form the primary route through the Site (see **Figure 3.6**). Main circulatory routes would be created from Camp Road to the north and south of the Site, enhancing connectivity and permeability through the residential and commercial areas. The main circulatory route proposed south of Camp Road contains a one-way section.
- 3.34 Owing to vehicular access required to serve the existing businesses on the Flying Field, a route for commercial vehicles and Heavy Good Vehicles (HGVs) has been designated with the intention of confining these vehicles to this route. As the majority of commercial vehicles would be arriving along Camp Road from the east, the proposed HGV route extends north from Camp Road on the eastern side of the site, so that HGVs would leave Camp Road before reaching the proposed 'local centre'. The route then extends north past the proposed hotel/care facility through an area of proposed commercial use, before turning west running through a proposed residential area and further commercial area before reaching the boundary with the Flying Field.
- 3.35 The proposals also include for a bus route. This would arrive at the Site from the east and take a route along the main circulatory route to the south of Camp Road servicing the main residential area proposed to the south of Camp Road. This route also serves the proposed 'local centre' and the Primary School.

## Green Infrastructure

### Public Open Space

- 3.36 Green space would comprise areas of natural open space, open space and sports grounds. The Old Parade Ground, adjacent to the proposed Neighbourhood Centre, would be restored to create an area of open space, together with a sports ground. This would form a multiuse village green and a focus point for the community.
- 3.37 Further areas of open green space, together with sports grounds would be provided principally to the west and north-east of the Site. A corridor of green space would be created along the entire length of Camp Road to encourage pedestrian movement. Areas of green spaces would be connected through a number of green links, which would act as wildlife corridors.
- 3.38 Neighbourhood Equipped Areas of Play (NEAP) and Local Equipped Areas of Play (LEAP) would be created across the Site. The proposed green infrastructure is shown in **Figure 3.7**

### Natural Open Space

- 3.39 Two large areas of natural open space would be provided in the far east and far west of the Site (see **Figure 3.7**). These natural green areas would provide nature conservation benefits.

### Trees

- 3.40 The Site is dominated by semi-mature and mature trees, particularly to the north of Camp Road in the 'Trident' area, in the eastern part of the Site currently occupied by housing and along Camp Road. Where possible, trees would be retained to preserve the setting and character of the Site. Structural tree planting would extend the entire length of the southern boundary to screen the Site from views from the south.



### Drainage Infrastructure

- 3.41 Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) would be incorporated into the Development to attenuate surface water runoff from the Site. Attenuation would in the main take the form of balancing ponds strategically located within catchment areas (see **Figure 3.7**). However, permeable paving in areas of hard-standing, car parks and roads are also included within the drainage strategy for the Site. Oversized pipes and underground attenuation tanks are proposed to manage surface water runoff in areas which are constrained by existing buildings.

### Development Programme and Construction

- 3.42 It is anticipated that demolition and construction works would commence in 2012, and take approximately five years to complete.
- 3.43 The Development would be likely to take place on a phased basis whereby individual phases would be built out in entirety before work commences on the next phase.
- 3.44 The Development would be delivered by a number of main contractors who would construct the various buildings, public realm, infrastructure and highways works in addition to any demolition and enabling works.

### Description of Construction Activities

#### Demolition and Substructure

- 3.45 Each phase would commence with the demolition of buildings identified for removal. A Site Investigation would be undertaken following determination of the planning application to facilitate a detailed foundation design. At this stage, however, it is anticipated that deep-piled foundations would not be required.

#### Plant and Equipment

- 3.46 Consideration was given to the nature of plant and equipment that would be likely to be used during the demolition and construction works. The key plant and equipment include earthmoving plant, supply vehicles, truck concrete mixers, poker vibrators, cranes, vibratory rollers, asphalt spreader/chip spreader/roller, wheeled loader, compressors, and welding generators.






Not to Scale

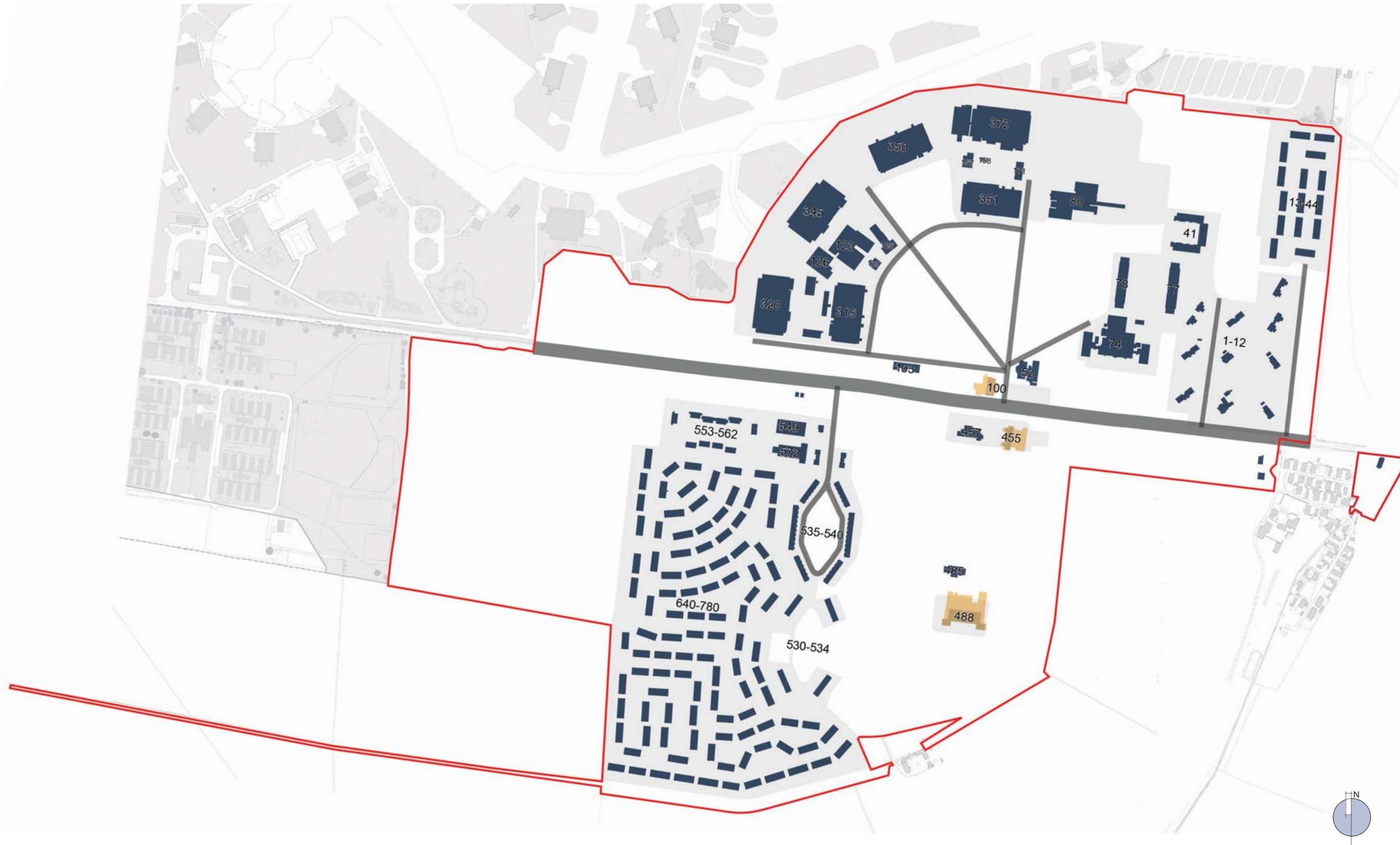






Project Details	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
Figure Title	Figure 3.1: Planning Application Boundary
Figure Ref	E10658-103_GR_ES_3.1A
Date	October 2010
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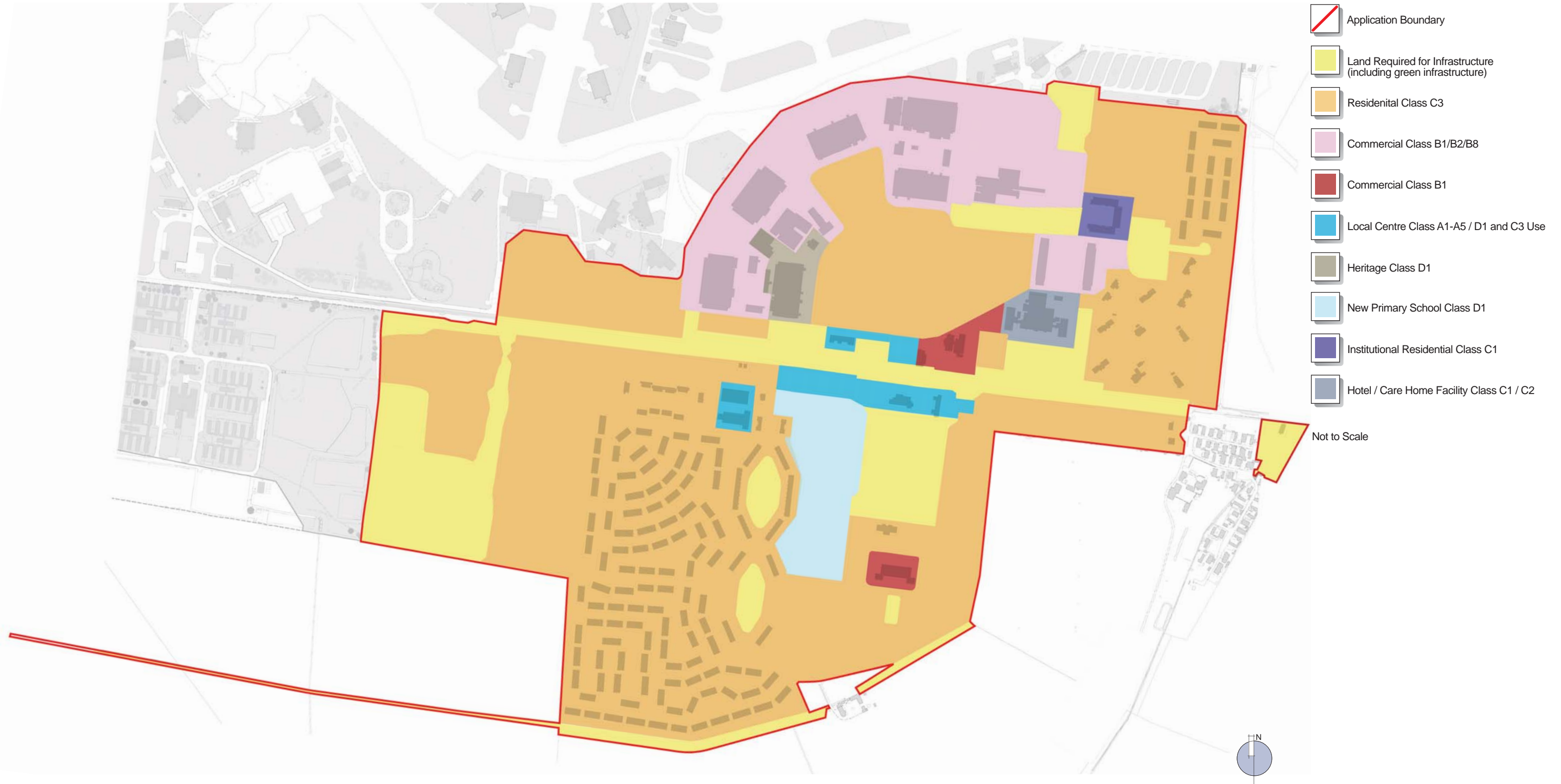
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  -  Existing Buildings to be Demolished
  -  Buildings for Partial Demolition
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Project Details	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
Figure Title	Figure 3.2: Buildings to be Demolished Plan
Figure Ref	E10658-103_GR_ES_3.2A
Date	October 2010
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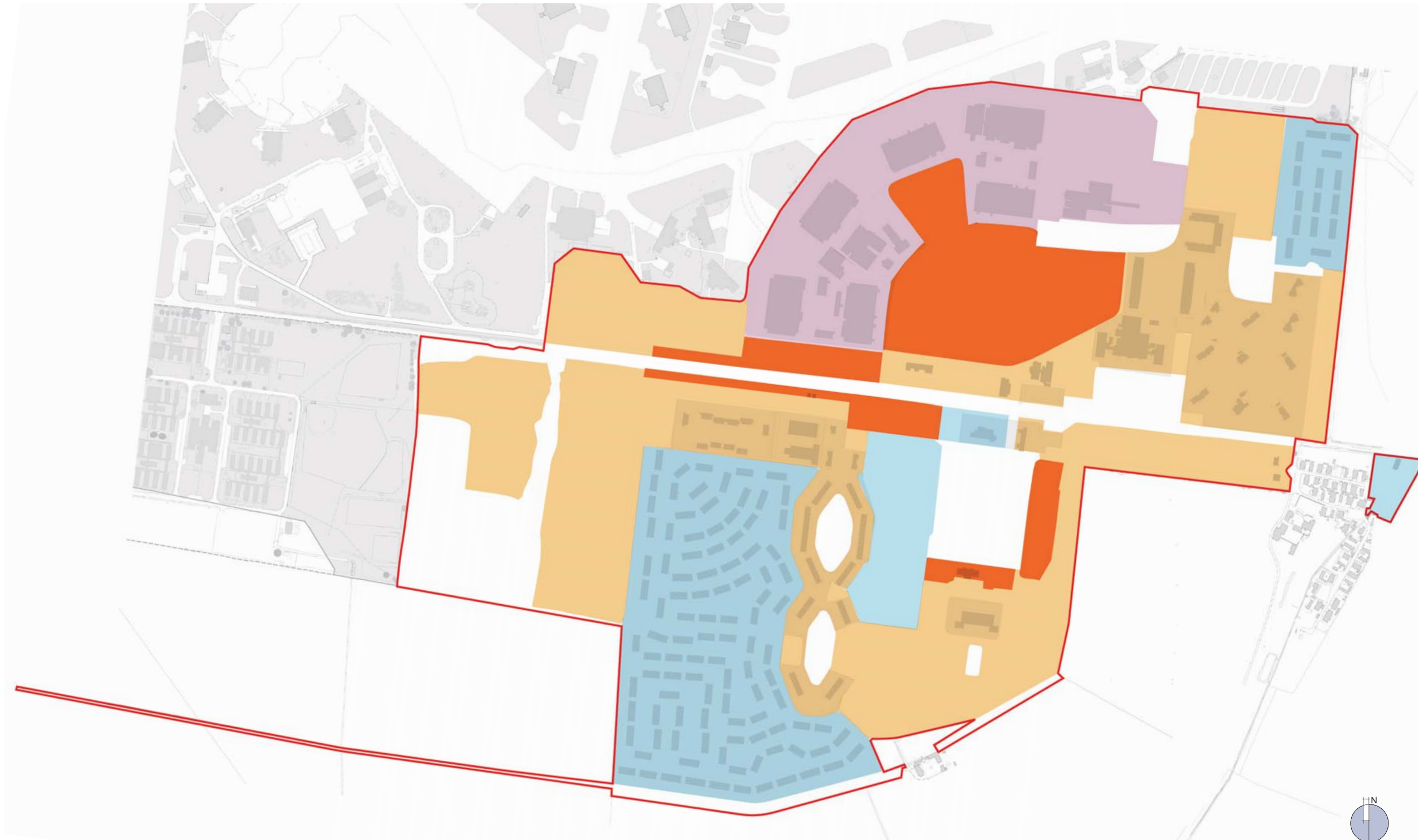
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  -  Key Roads to be Retained
  -  Buildings for Retention
  -  Buildings for Partial Retention
- Not to Scale






Project Details	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
Figure Title	Figure 3.3: Buildings and Roads to be Retained Plan
Figure Ref	E10658-103_GR_ES_3.3A
Date	October 2010
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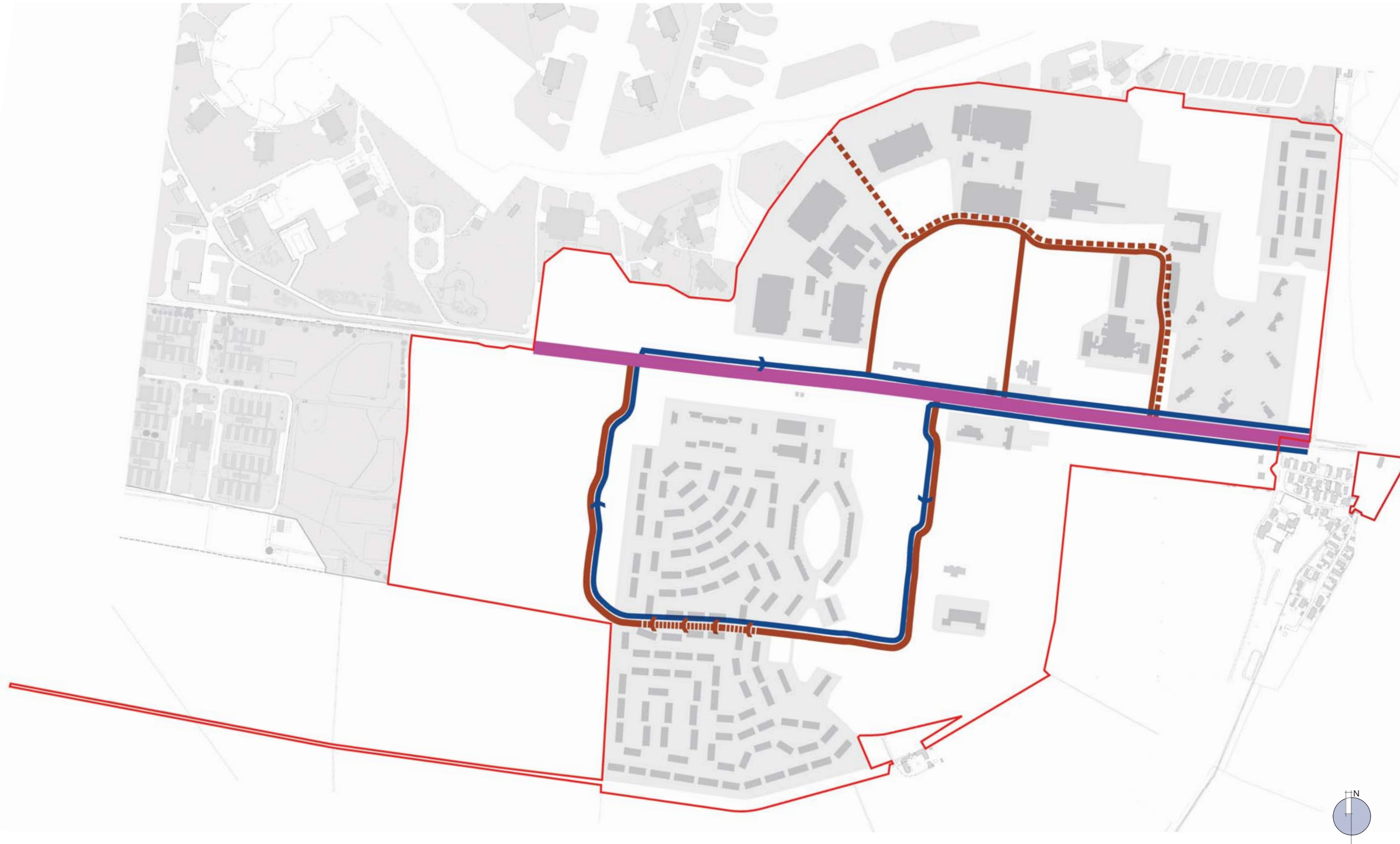
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Project Details	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
Figure Title	Figure 3.4: Development Uses Plan
Figure Ref	E10658-103_GR_ES_3.4A
Date	October 2010
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-  Application Boundary
  -  1 Storey Buildings  
Eaves height not to exceed 7.5m above local ground level
  -  Up to 2 Storey Buildings  
Eaves height not to exceed 10m above local ground level
  -  Up to 3 Storey Buildings  
Eaves height not to exceed 13m above local ground level
  -  Up to 4 Storey Buildings  
Eaves height not to exceed 16m above local ground level
- Not to Scale

Project Details	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
Figure Title	Figure 3.5: Building Heights Plan
Figure Ref	E10658-103_GR_ES_3.5A
Date	October 2010
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




-  Application Boundary
-  Main Circulatory Route
-  HGV Route
-  One Way Traffic
-  Primary Route (Camp Road)
-  Bus Route

Not to Scale

Project Details	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
Figure Title	Figure 3.6: Access Plan
Figure Ref	E10658-103_GR_ES_3.6A
Date	October 2010
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-  Application Boundary
  -  Open Space
  -  Natural Open Space
  -  Sports Ground
  -  Green Routes (see DAS)
  -  Structure Planting (see DAS)
  -  Surface Water Attenuation Feature (precise number, location and dimension to be determined)
- Not to Scale

Project Details	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
Figure Title	Figure 3.7: Green Infrastructure Plan
Figure Ref	E10658-103_GR_ES_3.7A
Date	October 2010
File Location	\\nt-lmpg2weedl\projects\10658\103\graphics\issued figures