

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF 32 DWELLINGS AND ASSOCIATED CAR PARKING, LANDSCAPING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

**PHASE 1, HEYFORD PARK, CAMP ROAD, UPPER
HEYFORD, OXFORDSHIRE**

PLANNING STATEMENT

ON BEHALF OF THE DORCHESTER GROUP

**TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004**

Pegasus Group

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This supporting statement has been prepared by Pegasus Group (the Agent) on behalf of the Dorchester Group (the Applicant) for the erection of 32 dwellings at Heyford Park, Camp Road, Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire.
- 1.2 The Application Site is a rectangular area of land, comprising approximately 1.83 hectares, located to the south of a section of Camp Road, the main public highway running east to west within Heyford Park.
- 1.3 Heyford Park is the name given to the former RAF/USAF airbase lying approximately 7km to the north west of Bicester on a limestone plateau just to the east of the River Cherwell and 3km to the west of Junction 10 of the M40.
- 1.4 The former airbase comprises more than 500 hectares. The base originally dates from the First World War and the flying activities were enlarged considerably from its original pre WWII scale to become a significant element in the defence of the realm during the Cold War of the 1950s and 1960s, extending through to the 1990s. The site has not been operational for military purposes for some 17 years.
- 1.5 The majority of the former airfield site is designated as the RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area and contains a number of Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments which relate to the previous military use of the site. However, no Listed Buildings or Scheduled Monuments are located within or adjacent to the application site.
- 1.6 Heyford Park currently incorporates a wide variety of uses, including commercial and storage/warehousing uses along with a number of existing dwellings in the settlement area.

2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 32 dwellings, together with garages for the majority of the units and associated landscaping and infrastructure.
- 2.2 The 32 proposed dwellings comprise the following:
- 9 x 3 bedroom dwellings
 - 11 x 4 bedroom dwellings
 - 11 x 5 bedroom dwellings
 - 1 x 6 bedroom dwellings
- 2.3 The dwellings fronting Camp Road are to be accessed through shared drives directly off Camp Road, whilst smaller estate roads provide access from Camp Road to the dwellings to the southern part of the site.
- 2.4 95 parking spaces are provided as part of the proposals.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 In relation to Heyford Park as a whole, outline planning permission for redevelopment was allowed by the Secretary of State in 2010 (ref: 08/00716/OUT). This permitted 1075 dwellings, employment uses, community uses, a school, playing fields and other physical and social infrastructure.
- 3.2 A further hybrid planning permission relating to the proposed settlement area, including the site of this application, was permitted in December 2011 (10/01642/OUT). This permission includes the provision of 1075 dwellings, including the retention and change of use of 267 military dwellings and outline permission for 808 new build dwellings. The permission also includes a change of use of specified buildings with associated works including employment uses, a school, playing fields and other physical and social infrastructure.
- 3.3 This application for 32 dwellings corresponds to the planning permission of December 2011. The Development Uses Parameter Plan submitted to accompany the application indicates that the site of this application is to be used for residential Class C3 and infrastructure. The proposal subject to this application is in compliance with the terms of the approval and findings of the approved Environmental Statement and Design & Access Statement which accompanied this application.
- 3.4 In order to bring forward commencement of development on the site it has been agreed with the Local Planning Authority that this application be submitted as a separate planning application. A summary of the findings of the Environmental Statement is included in Section 5 below.

4. PLANNING POLICY

4.1 This chapter identifies the relevant planning policy context for the proposed development and establishes the planning background for the proposal.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

4.2 The NPPF was published on 27 March 2012, replacing all previous national policy contained within Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Planning Policy Statements. This document sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied at a local level.

4.3 The NPPF confirms that the Government's overarching aim for the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. **Paragraph 7** clarifies that sustainable development has three dimensions which give rise to the need for planning to perform three mutually dependant roles:

- An economic role
- A social role
- An environmental role

4.4 Paragraph 14 states that "*At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision taking.*" For decision taking this means:

- **"Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and**
- **Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:**
 - **Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or**
 - **Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted."**

4.5 The Government's 12 core planning principles are outlined in **Paragraph 17**. The principles relevant to this proposal are outlined below. They state that planning should:

- **“Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs...”**
- **Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.**
- **Encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed, provided it is not of high environmental value;**
- **Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.”**

4.6 The relevant sections of the NPPF to this proposal are discussed below.

Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

4.7 Paragraph 49 states that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption of sustainable development.

4.8 Paragraph 54 refers to housing in rural areas, and states that local planning authorities should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs.

Requiring good design

4.9 Paragraph 56 confirms that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment and states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

4.10 Paragraph 132 states that, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. This paragraph clarifies that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting.

4.11 Paragraph 133 confirms that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated

that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss.

Regional Planning Policy

4.12 The Government formally revoked the South East Plan on the 25th March 2013 in an Order laid before Parliament in February 2013. A single policy was saved relating to the Thames Basin Special Policy Area. The saved policy is not relevant to this application.

County Planning Policy

4.13 Upon revocation of the South East Plan, the remaining policies of the Oxfordshire County Structure Plan 2016 were also removed from the Development Plan, with the exception of **Strategic Policy H2** which relates to the overarching policy for Heyford Park.

4.14 Policy H2 states

- 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.**

Local Planning Policy

Cherwell Local Plan 1996

- 4.15 The Cherwell Local Plan was adopted in 1996. Policies saved by direction from the Secretary of State in September 2007 remain part of the Development Plan.
- 4.16 A summary of the 'saved' policies relevant to this application is included in the table below:

Policy	Compliance
H1 – Residential Development	This proposal is for nine dwellings and complies with other policies in the plan and is in accordance with the extant outline permission.
C23 – Conservation Areas	This application does not include the loss of any features which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area, preserving its character and appearance.
C27 – Historic Settlement Patterns	The proposal will form part of the wider development of Heyford Park, which respects the existing settlement pattern.
C28 – Design Policy	The accompanying Design & Access Statement demonstrates the suitability of the proposal in terms of layout, design and external appearance standard.
C30 – Design of New Residential Development	The accompanying Design & Access Statement demonstrates that the proposed houses are of appropriate design which is compatible with the surrounding area. Appropriate levels of amenity and privacy for existing and future residents are also provided.

Other Material Considerations

Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011

- 4.17 The non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011 was intended to review and update the 1996 Local Plan. However, due to changes in the planning system, this process was discontinued prior to adoption. Although not part of the statutory Development Plan, this document has been approved as interim planning policy for development control purposes. This document is therefore a material consideration, but carries only limited weight in planning decisions.

4.18 A summary of the policies relevant to this proposal is included in the table below:

Policy	Compliance
UH1-4 – Upper Heyford	The proposal complies with the wider redevelopment guidance for Heyford Park and is in accordance with the consented redevelopment.
H1a – Location of New Housing	The scope and scale of the development is on accordance with the requirements of this policy.
H4 – Types of Housing	This proposal includes an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes (9 x 3 bedroom, 11 x 4 bedroom, 11 x 5 bedroom and 1 x 6 bedroom dwellings).
EN39/40 – Conservation	The proposal is appropriate in relation to the impact on the surrounding conservation area and would not adversely affect any designated heritage assets.

RAF Upper Heyford Revised Comprehensive Planning Brief 2007 Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

4.19 This SPD was published in March 2007 to guide applications for the redevelopment of Heyford Park. The document remains a material consideration; however, the period since its publication, including the granting of two planning permissions, means that it now carries more limited weight in the assessment of this application.

4.20 Paragraph 4.1 states that the new settlement should be located in the area of the former technical core and residential areas and Paragraph 4.2 refers to the extent of the settlement area. This proposal is within the areas permitted for residential development in the extant outline planning permission and accords with the provisions of this permission.

4.21 Paragraph 4.4.5 requires development to respond to the established character of the distinct character areas. The design proposal has been developed in response to this consideration and in compliance with the emerging design code for the redevelopment of Heyford Park.

4.22 Paragraph 4.7.1 confirms that the redevelopment of Heyford Park will provide about 1,000 dwellings, including a mixture of sizes and tenures. This proposal

is associated to the wider redevelopment of Heyford Park and provides a mixture of dwelling sizes in accordance with this requirement.

- 4.23 Paragraphs 4.10.1 and 4.10.2 refer to the scale and massing and materials used in new buildings. The accompanying Design & Access Statement demonstrates that the proposed dwellings are of appropriate scale and appearance.

Emerging Local Policy

Proposed Submission Draft Cherwell Local Plan

- 4.24 The Proposed Submission Draft Cherwell Local Plan was published in August 2012 and underwent an initial period of consultation following this. A further round of 'focussed' consultation is currently being undertaken based on changes to the Local Plan as a result of the initial consultation (published March 2013).
- 4.25 The following draft policies are relevant to this application. Note that these policies are yet to be formally examined and therefore can only be afforded limited weight in its consideration.

Policy	Compliance
BSC 1 – District Wide Housing Distribution	This proposal will assist in meeting the target for additional homes in the district
BSC 2- The Effective and Efficient Use of Land	This proposal relates to the redevelopment of a wider area of brownfield land, and meets the requirements of this condition.
Villages 5 – Former RAF Upper Heyford	This application is in accordance with the requirements of this policy as it assists in providing for 808 additional dwellings along with necessary infrastructure.

5. SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

- 5.1 The hybrid planning application (ref: 10/01642/OUT) for the new settlement area at Heyford Park was accompanied by an Environmental Statement which assessed a number of issues associated with the proposed development in order to identify potentially significant environmental impacts and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation measures to reduce them.
- 5.2 Planning permission was granted in December 2011 and the impacts outlined in the Environmental Statement were considered acceptable.
- 5.3 All of the reports produced to assess the environmental impacts encompass the new settlement, including the proposed application site for nine dwellings and are therefore relevant to the consideration of this application. A summary of the findings of each report is provided below.

Transportation

- 5.4 The submitted Transport Assessment found that there would be a temporary increase in traffic levels within the site and surrounding roads during the construction phase of the development, particularly leading up to Junction 10 of the M40 motorway at Ardley.
- 5.5 However, once operational, the assessment predicted that traffic generated from the development would be a similar level to those predicted for the previously permitted development. HGVs would be directed along specific routes away, there would be new bus routes around the site improving access and improved pedestrian and cycling facilities would also be provided across the site.

Noise

- 5.6 The Noise Assessment accompanying the application found sources of noise related mainly to road traffic and the surrounding commercial uses.
- 5.7 The assessment found that temporary noise impacts would be experienced by people living and working in the site during the demolition and construction phase, however a number of measures to minimise noise levels were recommended to be implemented during the works in addition to noise monitoring to ensure the noise levels of the works are within acceptable levels.

- 5.8 The assessment confirmed that the majority of Heyford Park is suitable for the proposed uses, including residential use. Noise levels adjacent to Camp Road were slightly higher adjacent to Camp Road meaning appropriate design of buildings would be required to ensure future residents would be unlikely to be affected by existing noise sources.

Air Quality

- 5.9 The Air Quality Assessment found that during demolition and construction works, the main impact on local air quality relates to dust which could potentially cause nuisance to nearby residents. However, the report considered that any dust and nuisance would be short term and highly localised and that risk of nuisance should be effectively minimised and reduced through use of best practice measures such as damping down exposed surfaces during dry and windy weather.

Ground Conditions and Contamination

- 5.10 This assessment identified localised contamination within soils underlying a part of the wider Heyford site and groundwater to the north of the Heyford site. The report states that construction workers would be subject to a range of health and safety controls to reduce the risk of exposure to contamination to acceptable levels.
- 5.11 The assessment also found that the proposed development does not include land uses which would likely result in significant contamination of soil, underlying groundwater and surface waters. However, ground investigation would be carried out to ensure remediation of the land prior to developing the site.

Water Resources

- 5.12 The Flood Risk Assessment found that the site is in an area which has very low risk of flooding from surface watercourses and ground levels would remain the same as existing, meaning there would be no flood risk to the proposed development.
- 5.13 The assessment confirmed a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) is to be introduced to ensure the development could effectively manage and reduce

surface water runoff to include attenuation ponds, underground tanks and porous paving materials.

- 5.14 The assessment also found that the resulting residential use will produce a similar level of foul water discharge than when the site was fully occupied in its previous military use. The assessment also identifies water efficiency measures to minimise increase in water demand across the site.

Landscape and Visual Character

- 5.15 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment found that the resulting development would result in beneficial changes to the character of the site as current buildings are in a poor state of repair are replaced with new residential and community uses and open space. The assessment also considered that there would be negligible impact on the character of areas outside the site boundary due to the physical separation between the areas.
- 5.16 The assessment concluded that the development would improve the amenity of existing views by creating a more natural transition between the site and surrounding countryside through the introduction of new landscape planting, wildlife and open space areas. At further distances, including the Rousham Park View Cone and the Cherwell River Valley, the development becomes indiscernible on views and negligible impacts were predicted.

Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

- 5.17 This assessment found that the previous use of the site means that any potential archaeological deposits are likely to have been significantly disturbed or destroyed. A number of archaeological features relating to the military use of the site were identified, but do not relate to the site for the current application.
- 5.18 The assessment also concluded that although there would be considerable change across the site significant buildings and areas would not be directly impacted and that demolition would predominantly be carried out in less historic areas.

Ecology

- 5.19 An Ecological Assessment was undertaken and found that the site is of low nature conservation value, although trees and hedgerows provide important habitats for invertebrates, bats and birds. The assessment found that planting of new native hedgerows and trees should improve connection between habitats to ensure ecological benefits are maximised.
- 5.20 The assessment found European species in the form of great crested newts and bats at the site which would be affected during the construction phase. The assessment recommended that new ponds for the great crested newts should be provided and enhanced with suitable vegetation and that further bat surveys are undertaken prior to demolition to accurately assess the type of bat roosts and to provide alternative roosts, possibly in existing buildings.
- 5.21 The assessment also considered that vegetation clearing and demolition should take place outside of the breeding season for nesting birds to ensure impacts are minimised.
- 5.22 The site for this application is outside any 250m for the buffer of water bodies containing great crested newts.

Socio-economics

- 5.23 This statement found that the development will generate around 285 construction jobs and 250 new jobs on site once the development is completed and provide long-term security for people currently employed at the site and surrounding area.
- 5.24 The proposal was also considered to contribute to the Council's housing targets by providing a significant number of new homes. Additional people living on the site would increase demand for healthcare and education facilities which would be provided within the development or provided by way of a financial contribution

Cumulative Impacts

- 5.25 The cumulative impacts of the development in terms of combined impact on the existing residents of Heyford Park during construction were considered to

be acceptable given that measures such as a Construction Environmental Management Plan which would minimise the nuisance impacts.

- 5.26 The impacts in relation to other planned developments within the Cherwell District were considered minimal both during the construction and operational phases.

6. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle for residential development

- 6.1 The principle for residential development at this site has previously been established in the granting of the previous planning permissions for the wider redevelopment of Heyford Park.
- 6.2 A total of 1075 dwellings were permitted in the permission ref: 10/01642/OUT, including 808 new build houses. The approved Land Use Parameters Plan, submitted to accompany this application, indicates the site for use for residential purposes and infrastructure.

Design

- 6.3 A full assessment of the Design rationale for the proposed dwellings is provided within the accompanying Design and Access Statement prepared by Barton Willmore. However, the site has been designed so as to provide a continuous frontage along Camp Road, as well as providing a positive development frontage towards the fields to the south.
- 6.4 The proposed dwellings also comply with the latest Design Code for the wider character area pursuant to the earlier planning permission (10/01642/OUT).

Highways

- 6.5 The 32 proposed dwellings will be located adjacent to Camp Road, an Oxfordshire County Council adopted highway.
- 6.6 The majority of the dwellings will have associated garages and parking within the curtilage of the property. Eight of the units do not have garages and parking for these units would be provided within the curtilage of the plot. In all cases vehicles would be able to join the public highway in forward gear.

Drainage

- 6.7 The majority of the site drains by gravity to mains foul sewer. The remainder of the site will drain to small adoptable package pumping station, where it will be pumped to the mains foul sewer.
- 6.8 Surface water is disposed of to the existing watercourse. Surface water will be attenuated on site to ensure compliance with the FRA.

Heritage Assets

- 6.9 The site comprises a small cluster of single storey, prefabricated buildings of white render with corrugated, asbestos roofs and boarded up windows and doors, with an area of open space to the east. These buildings were previously office buildings associated with the former military use of the wider site, however all of the buildings are currently vacant and disused following the closure of the airbase in 1994.
- 6.10 The site and existing buildings fall within the designated Upper Heyford Conservation Area, however none of the buildings have been afforded either statutory Listed status or Scheduled Monument status as has occurred in respect of a number of other more significant buildings and structures elsewhere within the Conservation Area. There are also no Listed Buildings or Scheduled Monuments adjacent to or within the near vicinity of the site and therefore it is considered that there would be no impact to the Listed Buildings or Scheduled Monuments located north of Camp Road or their setting.
- 6.11 The RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area Appraisal (April 2006) identifies the site as representing a 'degraded edge', whilst the ACTA '*Landscape Character Assessment of the Airbase South of the Cold War Zone*' (March 2006) identifies the characteristics of the site as follows:
- Dominance of closely-packed white huts;
 - Run-down appearance;
 - Abrupt contrast with open land to east and south.
- 6.12 Cherwell District Council previously granted Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of the buildings and structures on the site to allow for the comprehensive redevelopment of the wider airbase under reference 10/01619/CAC.
- 6.13 It is therefore considered that the considered redevelopment of the site will serve to enhance this area of the Conservation Area, in line with the provisions of the existing planning permission of the wider site (LPA ref: 10/01642/OUT), and provide a more sympathetic relationship between the built form and the countryside to the south.

Landscape / Arboricultural Impact

Landscape Strategy

- 6.14 As the primary route through the settlement, Camp Road will have a strong character which is reinforced through the landscape design. Where appropriate existing trees will be retained to provide a mature setting for the development, reinforced with new highway tree planting within the 3m wide grass verges, creating a sense of arrival and local distinctiveness for Heyford Park's future evolution. Trees will be selected to provide an upright, uniform habit, and be tolerant of soil conditions. Changes in species will announce the user's sense of arrival and departure from one character area to another. Feature trees, selected for their autumnal colour or floristic value, are proposed to define entrances and key points within the development.
- 6.15 The landscape design aims to create an attractive environment for the setting of the new homes and public open space through a species palette which provides year round interest, colour, texture and scent. Tree planting within the street scene and gardens provide year round interest and feature trees, selected for their autumnal interest are placed at focal points, entrances and key intersections. Ornamental shrubs and hedgerows provide continuity through the development with specimen shrubs punctuating focal points and entrances.

Tree removal

- 6.16 Where possible trees to Camp Road will be retained to provide a mature landscape setting for the development and the settlement as a whole. Tree removal will be necessary where existing levels are altering due to improvements to highway verges and the creation of a successful footpath and cycle network through Heyford Park.

Planning Obligations

- 6.17 The 32 proposed dwellings will contribute towards the 1,075 previously consented dwellings under the permission granted in December 2011 and do not represent any additional provision. As such, relevant obligations to this permission will continue to apply to this proposal.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 This Statement has been prepared on behalf of the Dorchester Group in support of an application for full planning permission for the erection of 32 dwellings south of Camp Road in Heyford Park.
- 7.2 The proposal is in accordance with the terms of the extant planning permission for the comprehensive redevelopment of the settlement area of Heyford Park (ref: 10/01642/OUT). This application is submitted to expedite the commencement of development for the development works.
- 7.3 The conclusions of the Environmental Statement submitted to accompany the hybrid planning application are relevant to this proposal and demonstrate there would not be harmful environmental impacts as a result of the development in terms of impacts on transportation, noise, air quality, ground conditions, flood risk, landscape and visual character, archaeology and cultural heritage, ecology, socio-economic factors and cumulative impacts.
- 7.4 The Planning Statement demonstrates the proposed residential development complies with the provisions of the NPPF, existing and emerging local planning policy and the comprehensive development brief for Upper Heyford.