

# **RESERVED MATTERS APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF 44 DWELLINGS, ASSOCIATED PARKING, ACCESS ROAD AND LANDSCAPING**

## **PARCELS B6 AND B2B RE-PLAN AREA, HEYFORD PARK, UPPER HEYFORD**

# **PLANNING STATEMENT**

## **ON BEHALF OF BOVIS HOMES**

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

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of Bovis Homes (“the Applicant”).
- 1.2 The Statement is in support of a Reserved Matters application for the erection of 44 dwellings at Phases B6 and the re-plan area of B2B of the Heyford Park development (“the Application Site”) on land at the Former RAF Upper Heyford airbase, Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire.
- 1.3 The Reserved Matters submission is submitted pursuant to outline planning permission ref. 10/01642/OUT. The application represents the provision of 44 dwellings with associated parking, access road and landscaping. The proposed dwellings form part of the 1,075 dwellings approved (including 762 new dwellings) at Heyford Park.
- 1.4 Detailed matters of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for these phases are provided by this submission.
- 1.5 This Planning Statement considers the relevant National and Local Planning Policy against which the application should be determined with particular reference to: the adopted policies contained within the Cherwell Local Plan (2011-2031); and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 1.6 This Statement is not intended to duplicate matters referred to elsewhere, rather it provides a comprehensive overview of the land use and planning merits of the development, to be considered against the relevant planning policies and other material considerations pertinent to this application.

## 2. SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

### Application site and surroundings

- 2.1 The application site forms of part of the Former RAF Upper Heyford, its military use having ceased in 1994. It is identified on the Site Location Plan that accompanies the application (drawing ref. UPP2\_02\_211 Rev A) and measures approximately 1.43 hectares in size, the Heyford base being approximately 520 hectares in total.
- 2.2 The former airbase base is located approximately 7km north-west of Bicester, 13km south-east of Banbury and 3km south-west of Junction 10 of the M4 Motorway, in Oxfordshire.
- 2.3 The airbase as a whole was designated as a Conservation Area in 2006, reflecting the key role that the airbase played in the Cold War years, and the distinctive architecture and layouts which arose from that use. The Trident layout at the centre of Heyford Park and the Parade Ground just south of Camp Road are just two of the significant elements of the original plans, and represent military and airfield layouts typical of their era.
- 2.4 The application site itself is located to the southern side of Camp Road and whilst it is located within the Conservation Area, it is not within the aforementioned significant areas. In terms of historic character the site is relatively well set back, and the site currently consists an open land use. It is located within an area of existing and proposed residential properties.

### Planning History

- 2.5 A Public Inquiry was held in 2008 to consider proposals for a new settlement of 1,075 dwellings, together with associated works and facilities, including employment uses, community uses, a school, playing fields and other physical and social infrastructure and employment uses in many retained buildings on the Flying Field (application ref: 08/00716/OUT), known as the 'Lead Appeal'. This was subsequently approved by the Secretary of State in January 2010. The permission was subject to a comprehensive S106 Unilateral Undertaking including a detailed Management Plan for the Flying Field and proposed Heritage Centre.
- 2.6 Following the purchase of the site by the Dorchester Group, a revised scheme for the redevelopment of the New Settlement Area, comprising 1,075 dwellings

including the retention and change of use of 267 existing military dwellings to residential Class C3 and the change of use of other specified buildings, together with associated works and facilities, including employment uses, a school, playing fields and other physical and social infrastructure, was submitted to, and approved by the District Council under application reference 10/01642/OUT.

- 2.7 Development of the New Settlement Area is now underway, with the first phases of Reserved Matters applications being implemented by both the Dorchester Group and Bovis Homes as set out below:

	<b>LPA Reference</b>	<b>Date Approved</b>
Dorchester Phase 1	13/01394/REM	19 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2014
Dorchester Phase 2 (was Phase 5)	14/01500/REM	9 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2014
Dorchester Phase 3 (was Phase 2)	14/01366/REM	26 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2014
Bovis Phase B1	13/00711/REM	19 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2014
Bovis Phase B2a	13/01584/REM	19 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2014
Bovis Phase B2b/B5	14/01740/REM	20 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2015

### 3. APPLICATION PROPOSAL

- 3.1 This application relates to a Reserved Matters submission made pursuant to outline planning permission ref. 10/01642/OUT.
- 3.2 The proposed development comprises the erection of 44 dwellings with associated car parking, an access road and landscaping.
- 3.3 The dwellings proposed by the application comprise:

<b>Market Housing</b>	
<b>No. of Beds</b>	<b>No. of Units</b>
3	6
4	7
5	8
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Affordable Housing</b>	
<b>No. of Beds</b>	<b>No. of Units</b>
1	6
2	12
3	5
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>44</b>

- 3.4 A significant element of affordable housing is been provided, 23 units of the proposed 44 which represents a provision of 52%. The location of the affordable housing is displayed on the Affordable Housing Plan that accompanies the application (drawing ref. UPP2-02-303). The application is also accompanied by an Affordable Housing Statement, prepared by Pegasus Group, which sets out the approach to affordable housing in more detail.
- 3.5 The 44 dwellings will range in height from 2 storeys to 3 storeys. Dwellings to the western end of Camp Road will follow the previous character or large detached dwellings, 2 storeys in height. As you progress east towards the village centre the scale changes to 2.5 and 3 storey.
- 3.6 Dwellings that front onto Camp Road will be directly accessed from the road via private drives and landscaped parking courts with the ability to enter and leave in a forward gear. It is proposed that the west of Gordon Road will be upgraded to provide a second vehicular access into the site via the approved road 'Landscaped Avenue' in Parcel B2B leading onto an existing road (Eady Road). Dwellings that front onto Eady Road, Landscaped Avenue and Dow Street will be accessed directly from the road.

## 4. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

### National Planning Policy Framework

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published and came into effect on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012 replacing existing planning policy statements and guidance.

4.2 Paragraph 14 of the NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which for decision taking 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 planning 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.”**

4.3 It is a Core Planning Principle set out in the NPPF that planning should:

**“Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial, infrastructure and thriving local place that the county needs.”**

4.4 To this end, for decision-taking the NPPF states that:

**“Local authorities should approach decision making in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. LPAs should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.”**

4.5 The NPPF gives a strong emphasis towards delivering good design, but also recognises that policies should avoid being unnecessarily prescriptive in respect of detail. Policies should not impose particular styles or tastes and the NPPF encourages authorities to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

4.6 LPAs should consider using design codes where they could help deliver high quality outcomes. However, design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally.

- 4.7 It goes on to say that planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.
- 4.8 Applicants are encouraged to work closely with those directly affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Proposals that can demonstrate this in developing the design of the new development should be looked on more favourably. Further discussion on how the Applicant has embraced this through a series of pre-application discussions with the LPA is set out in Section 6 of this Statement.

#### Planning Practice Guidance

- 4.9 On 6<sup>th</sup> March 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) web-based resource.
- 4.10 In terms of design, the PPG largely reflects the policies set out in the NPPF. It again reiterates that pre-application discussions are an opportunity to discuss the design policies, requirements and parameters that will be applied to a site whereby the Local Authority can explain the design issues they feel are most important and the developer can explain their own objectives and aspirations.
- 4.11 With regard to Design Codes, it is recommended that LPAs should consider using one to help deliver high quality outcomes where for example they wish to ensure consistency across large sites which may be in multiple ownership and/or where development is to be phased and more than one developer and design team is likely to be involved. It goes on to say that design codes should wherever possible avoid overly prescriptive detail and encourage sense of place and variety (unless local circumstances can clearly justify a different approach).



## 5. LOCAL PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 The determination of a planning application is to be made pursuant to Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which is to be read in conjunction with Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Section 38(6) requires LPAs to determine planning applications in accordance with the Development Plan, unless there are material considerations which indicate otherwise. Section 70(2) provides that in determining planning applications the Local Planning Authority (LPA):-

**“shall have regard to the provisions of the Development Plan, so far as material to the application and to any other material considerations”.**

### Cherwell Local Plan

5.2 The Development Plan comprises the policies of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015). The relevant policies from the adopted Local Plan are considered below.

5.3 The Executive Summary to the Local Plan confirms that an objective of the Plan is to boost significantly the supply of housing and meet the objectively assessed need for Cherwell identified in the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2014 – some 1,140 dwellings per annum or a total of 22,800 from 2011 to 2031.

5.4 **Paragraph B.96** sets out that the Local Plan seeks to deliver growth in accordance with the NPPF’s Core Planning Policies including, inter alia, seeking to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity by developing new neighbourhoods and achieving regeneration and redevelopment of key sites, and encouraging the effective re-use of existing land and buildings and bring forward sites that contain land of lesser environmental value such as at the Former RAF Upper Heyford.

5.5 With regard to the former airbase, **paragraph C.288** indicates that the site was previously subject to a policy from the Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016 (Policy H2) which was saved by the South East Plan and retained upon the South East Plan’s revocation. However, Policy Village 5, discussed below, replaces Policy H2 in guiding future redevelopment of the site, as Policy H2 has now been superseded by the adoption of the Local Plan and therefore carries no weight.

5.6 **Policy Villages 5 (Former RAF Upper Heyford)** allocates this 520 hectare site for, inter alia, a settlement of approximately 1,600 dwellings (in addition to the 761 dwellings (net) already permitted). Policy Villages 5 sets out the position in respect of housing as follows:

**"Housing**

- **Number of homes – approximately 1,600 (in addition to the 761 (net) already permitted**
- **Affordable housing – at least 30%"**

5.7 Policy Villages 5 also sets out 'Key site specific design and place shaping principles', and in respect of housing these are:

- **New development should reflect high quality design that responds to the established character of the distinct character areas where this would preserve or enhance the appearance of the Former RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area; and**
- **The scale and massing of new buildings should respect their context. Building materials should reflect the locally distinctive colour palette and respond to the materials of the retained buildings within their character area, without this resulting in pastiche design solutions.**

5.8 Other policies contained within the adopted Local Plan of relevance to this application are summarised below.

5.9 **Policy BSC 3 (Affordable Housing)** advises that all developments at Banbury and Bicester that include 11 or more dwellings (gross), or which would be provided on sites suitable for 11 or more dwellings (gross), will be expected to provide at least 30% of new housing as affordable homes on site. Whilst at Kidlington and elsewhere, all proposed developments of the same thresholds will be expected to provide at least 35% of new housing as affordable homes on site. Furthermore, all qualifying developments will be expected to provide 70% of the affordable housing as affordable/social rented dwellings and 30% as other forms of intermediate affordable homes.

5.10 **Policy BSC4 (Housing Mix)** continues that the Council will not only aim to increase the supply of housing but to encourage a mix that can help improve the functioning of the housing market system, make it more fluid, and enable households to more easily find and move to housing which they can afford and which better suits their circumstances.

- 5.11 Further analysis of these two policies and discussion on how the proposed development provides a policy compliant scheme is set out in full in the Affordable Housing Statement, prepared by Pegasus Group, which accompanies the application.
- 5.12 **Policy ESD 13 (Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement)** advises that development proposals will be expected to respect and enhance the local landscape character, with appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided. Proposals will not be permitted where they would, inter alia, be inconsistent with local character.
- 5.13 **Policy ESD 16 (The character of the built and historic environment)** advises that where development is in the vicinity of any of the District's natural or historical assets the delivery of a high quality design that complements the asset will be essential. The policy requirements set out in ESD 16 apply to all types of development, including housing. **Paragraph B.268** highlights the appearance of new development and its relationship with its surrounding built and natural environment as potentially having a significant effect on the character and appearance of an area. The need to secure new development that can positively contribute to the character of its local environment is of key importance and reflects the approach and significant criteria listed under Policy ESD 16.
- 5.14 The approach to design is discussed in Section 6 of this Statement and in more detail in the Design Statement, prepared by Pegasus Group, which accompanies the application. The latter explains how a considered idea and proposal for 44 dwellings on the application site has been reached and identifies a detailed layout for the new buildings which are contextually appropriate and part of the sustainable long term solutions for a successful community as part of the wider redevelopment of Heyford Park.

#### Statement of Common Ground

- 5.15 During the Examination Hearings for the now adopted Local Plan, a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) was agreed between the Dorchester Group and Cherwell District Council. The signed SoCG represents the most up-to-date position of the District Council and was presented to the Examination to clarify the Council's position and interpretation of Policy Villages 5 and its implementation.

5.16 The SoCG confirms that:

**“Both the Dorchester Group and Cherwell District Council believe that the Proposed Modifications to allocate additional development through Policy Villages 5 represents an appropriate response to the uplift in housing requirements necessary to ensure that the Local Plan addresses the objectively assessed housing need.”**  
(Paragraph 3.2)

**“That the provision of additional growth at Former RAF Upper Heyford can be accommodate so that is consolidates and complements the on-going creation of a distinctive new community. Growth at Upper Heyford is being supported by the delivery of new affordable housing and new services and facilities”** (Point 2 under the matters that the Parties agree)

**“The implementation of the approved scheme and the development of identified brownfield land in particular should not be delayed.”** (Point 9 under the matters that the Parties agree)

5.17 In terms of the longer term opportunities for development at the Upper Heyford site the SoCG states:

**“The parties agree that to secure a high quality development (for housing and employment) there will be a need for a comprehensive review of the proposed development at the site that considers the important heritage landscape setting of the site and how additional development can be successfully integrated within existing consented development. This will provide the means to secure development incorporating high quality design that relates closely to the history of the site”.**  
(Paragraph 6)

5.18 There is therefore consensus with the District Council that the Upper Heyford site has an important role to play both in terms of meeting identified housing needs, and to accommodate significant additional employment.

## 6. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This section initially provides an analysis of the principle of the development and then provides a discussion on the design approach and evaluation of the proposed scheme as proposed.

### Principle of the development

6.2 The principle of residential development of these parcels has already been established by the granting of outline planning permission within the area clearly identified for residential development in the approved parameters plan.

6.3 The Development Plan for the area consists of the recently adopted Cherwell Local Plan (2011-2031) and is the starting point for decision-making purposes for applications in the District. The proposed development therefore needs to demonstrate compliance with the relevant policies of the Development Plan.

6.4 In terms of the principle of the development, it is considered that the application proposals do not conflict with the adopted Local Plan, as the proposals are consistent with, and will reinforce, the strategic housing function of the former RAF Upper Heyford Site as defined by Policy Villages 5.

6.5 The Upper Heyford Site is a strategic allocation within the adopted Local Plan (Policy Villages 5) and the Plan confirms the importance of this brownfield site, as a location for a significant increase in housing provision over the plan period, i.e. an increase of 1,600 dwellings. This is in addition to the 761 (net) dwellings already permitted and of which the proposed 44 dwellings in Phases 6 and B2B forms part. The principle of the development has therefore already been established and the Reserved Matters application is principally concerned with matters of design.

6.6 Furthermore, the signed SoCG also reiterates the on-going creation of a distinctive new community at Former RAF Upper Heyford and that the implementation of the approved scheme should not be delayed. There can therefore be no objection to bringing forward the residential development on Parcels B6 and B2B.

6.7 The remainder of this section will therefore consider the design approach and evolution of the scheme that has led to the development as now proposed.

#### Design Code

6.8 The District Council granted outline planning permission in 2011 for the development of part of the former RAF Upper Heyford camp for 1,075 dwellings in total, plus associated commercial uses. The outline permission defined the development form and principle of development in a series of parameter plans, which were in turn were used as a basis for the Design Code work.

6.9 The requirement for a Design Code (“the Code”) was a condition of the outline permission and it was approved by the District Council in November 2013.

6.10 The Code establishes clear performance criteria for each development area, setting out the level of prescription alongside desired and mandatory requirements. The Code however recognises that there may be circumstances where a designer working up proposals in accordance with the Code feels that a design proposal could be better contribute to the quality and identity of the development by a localised deviation from the Code. In these circumstances, a rationale for the approach being proposed is recommended in conjunction with early discussions with the District Council (para 1.29).

6.11 Accordingly, prior to the submission of this Reserved Matters application the Applicant approached and engaged with the District Council in ongoing discussions on the design of the development with reference to the Code.

6.12 A summary of the design evolution of the scheme is set out below in order to understand the rationale for the approach proposed.

#### Pre-application discussions

6.13 June 2014 – the Applicant prepared an earlier version of site layout for the scheme (Rev F), however, following discussions with the District Council a number of issues were raised with the scheme, they included:

- Large rear parking courts for the properties fronting Camp Road had no sense of place or character;
- A number of existing trees along Camp Road, including T39 were not retained as part of the proposals;

- A lack of pedestrian movement through the parcel to connect Camp Road and Gordon Road;
- Dwellings should look to front both Camp Road and Gordon Road where possible; and
- FOGs in rear parking courts to be designed out.

6.14 May 2015 –the Applicant reflected on the advice received from the District Council and accordingly prepared a revised site layout for the proposed development (Rev G) which was presented to the District Council as part of a pre-application meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> May 2015. It was noted that although the layout was an improvement on the previous version addressing a number of the comments raised, further changes were still required. They included:

- T39 must be retained;
- A further pedestrian link to be proposed connecting Camp Road and Gordon Road; and
- Increase the amount of landscaping around the parking courts.

6.15 Following the pre-application meeting, further revisions were made to the proposed site layout (ref. UPP/02/201A) in response to the comments raised which were addressed as summarised below:

- A pedestrian link was included between plots 269 and 270 to increase accessibility between Camp Road and Gordon Road;
- T39 is now retained and becomes a focal point to the scheme with housing well set back from Camp Road; and
- The parking courts have reduced in area, maximising the potential for landscaping and tree planting.

#### Rationale for the design approach

6.16 The Applicant has actively worked with the District Council in the preparation of the development as now proposed. The application as now submitted has taken account of the advice received and has responded positively with amendments to address the concerns raised at various stages of the pre-application discussions.

6.17 In particular it is pertinent to highlight the following points which have influenced the layout, character, scale and appearance of the proposed development and materials to be used:

Layout:

- Large detached dwellings that front Camp Road are set back from the kerb to accommodate a tree lined avenue. Wherever possible generous set backs are provided to create small pockets of open space;
- A landscaped square at the centre of the site forms a focal space to the scheme, with existing trees retained. Buildings are set back to form the space with double fronted units turning corners where possible;
- Semi-detached and terraced dwellings fronting onto Eady Road and Dow Street are set back to allow for parking to the front of properties with vocational spaces for tree planting;
- Dwellings fronting the bus route (Landscaped Avenue) are set back from the carriageway to accommodate a tree lined avenue, with direct access to dwellings; and
- The properties have been designed and orientated to avoid overlooking of any adjacent or proposed dwellings.

Character:

- The proposed dwellings have drawn on architectural details found within the Conservation Area. In particular inspiration has been drawn from the 'Officers Housing' and 'Other Ranks Housing' through the use of a variety of building materials, protruding gables and feature chimneys; and
- Parcel B6 contains 4 character areas which have derived from the design code: CA1 Camp Road, CA2 Village Centre, CA3 Core Housing West and CA4 Bus Route; and
- The Design Statement, prepared by Pegasus Group, which accompanies the application demonstrates the design response of the proposed development in relation to the design aspirations of the various character areas noted above, qualifying where necessary when there is a deviation from the approved Design Code.



Scale:

- The 44 dwellings will range in height from 2 storeys to 3 storeys; and
- Dwellings to the western end of Camp Road follow the previous character of large detached dwellings, 2 storeys in height. As you progress east towards the village centre the scale changes to 2.5 and 3 storey.

Appearance:

- The 44 proposed dwellings which form the third phase of this character area are architecturally inspired by a simple 'arts and craft' form of development. The purpose of this style is so that these houses will contain a variety of architectural features to 'animate' the frontage and create visual interest;
- The housing will provide a variety of roofstyles with feature gables and the use of slate. The frontages will consist of a mixture of render and red-brick. Stone-cills will be prominent in the house types with casement windows and doors; and
- All dwellings will have doorways defined by canopies.

Materials:

- Slate effect is to be implemented along the Camp Road frontage to support its function as the main route through the scheme. The slate effect will be supported by red brick walls.
- The bus route (Landscaped Avenue) will consist of red brick with brown tiled roofs, broken up by slate effect roofs; and
- Dwellings fronting onto Eady Road will consist of red brick with contrasting brick header and cills with brown tile roofs.

Compliance with the Development Plan

6.18 Through the discussion of the approach to design and the evolution of the scheme it is clear that special consideration has been given to the design of the development in view of the Design Code and the specific characteristics of the two land parcels. The proposed residential development will respect the local

landscape character to ensure that there is no adverse impact, therefore complying with the provisions of Policy ESD13 of the adopted Local Plan. Furthermore, the appearance of the proposed development and its relationship with its surrounding built environment has been shown to be an integral part of the design evolution. This has served to ensure that the new residential properties positively contribute to the character of the local environment in accordance with the provisions of Policy ESD16 of the adopted Local Plan.

## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

- 7.1 The principle of residential at Parcels B6 and the re-plan area of B2B has already been established through the outline planning permission and the 44 dwellings proposed will remain consistent with the Strategic Allocation (Policy Villages 5) of the recently adopted Local Plan.
- 7.2 The proposed development itself will make a positive contribution to Heyford Park, conserving and enhancing the character, creating an attractive and legible residential development. The design has been carefully considered which promotes strong relationship and distinction between private and public realms and responds well to its surrounding context.
- 7.3 Special consideration has been given to how the proposed designs accord with the Design Code, specifically in terms of the layout, character areas and frontage treatments.
- 7.4 It is therefore been demonstrated within this and preceding sections that the development proposals are suitable and appropriate within these land parcels and that there are no reasons why the development should be resisted.