



DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

in support of Planning Application for

Land to the west of Chilgrove Drive, North of Camp Road and adjoining former
RAF Upper Heyford, Upper Heyford, incorporating former MOD gymnasium

SECTION 1: THE PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

This design and access statement has been prepared by Lyons+Sleeman+Hoare Architects Ltd. on behalf of E.P. Barrus Ltd, in support of the planning application for new warehouse and production facilities on land at Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire, for their business of garden machinery, marine, vehicle and industrial engine sales and distribution, custom engine building, and servicing and support.

The company has been based in Bicester since 1977, and due to expansion now has three temporary storage and distribution facilities located at Upper Heyford.

The company's objective is to locate their entire operations onto one site, and to provide space for future expansion, whilst staying within the environs of Bicester, that provide the majority of the existing workforce and good transport links for distribution. The proposed site at Upper Heyford achieves these objectives.

The planning application is a hybrid application, being a full application for the initial phase (Phase 1), and an outline application for Phase 2. Phase 1 will consist of the construction of a new warehouse and distribution centre, to replace temporary accommodation. Phase 2 will consist of a new production facility and training and administration accommodation.

This Design and Access Statement is to be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Planning Supporting Statement
- Transport Assessment
- Landscape and Visual Assessment
- Ecological Assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Preliminary Geo-environmental Risk Assessment
- Acoustic Assessments
- Energy Assessment.



SECTION 2: ASSESSMENT

Existing Physical Context

The site lies to the south east of the former Upper Heyford RAF/USAF base, bounded to the south by Camp Road and to the east by Chilgrove Drive.

The site slopes gently from north east to south west, with the lowest point of the site being the south west corner, the total fall being 5.4m, and the typical site gradient being around 1 in 110. All boundaries are defined by existing hedgerows of varying maturity, with some larger trees, particularly on Camp Road.

The site area is 5.7 hectares, and is currently used for agriculture. The field boundary has remained relatively unchanged with the exception of a small parcel of land in the north west corner having been transferred to the air base during the second world war. An MOD gymnasium building was constructed on the south east corner of the site during the war which has subsequently been demolished.

The former air base has been designated a conservation area and the boundary follows the current field and site boundary to the north.

For the much of the perimeter the hedgerow conceals the presence of the air base, though the tops of hardened aircraft shelters to the north of the site can be just be seen from Camp Road through gaps in the existing hedgerow, and along Chilgrove Drive. However these hardened shelters are not those that have been designated scheduled monuments, and are understood to be within the area of the airbase identified for the provision of 761 houses within the CDC Submission Local Plan.

Social Context

The air base of Upper Heyford consists the runway and associated plane shelters, the technical site, and the residential areas.

The site's location to the East of the air base provides easy access for incoming and outgoing freight with ready access to the B430, leading to junction 10 of the M40 and the A43. Being located at the perimeter of the air base, and with Letchmere Farm between the site and the residential areas, there will be a separation between the development and residential areas.

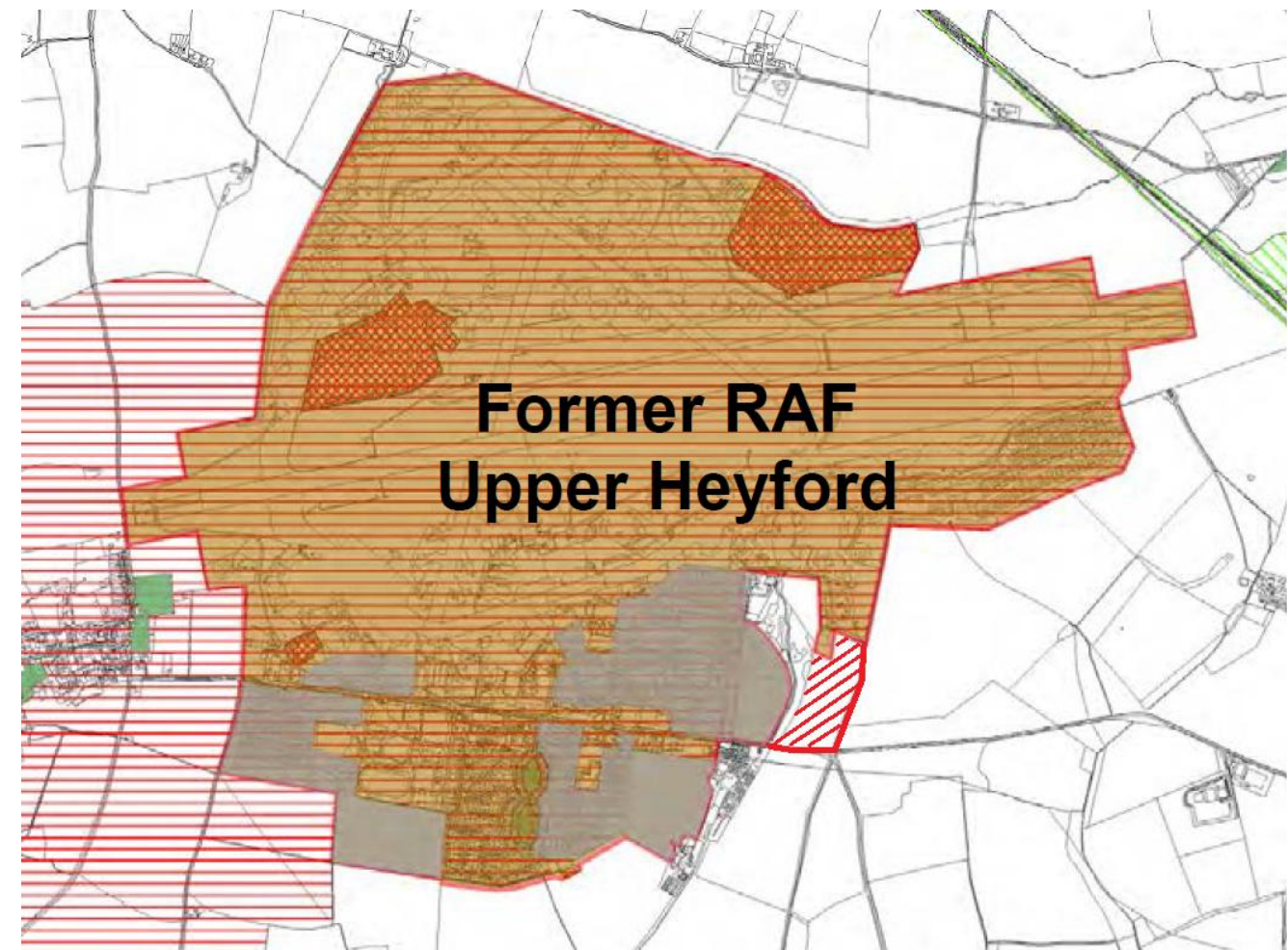
Planning Policy

The site is immediately adjacent to the Upper Heyford development area, and the Upper Heyford conservation area which overlap for the extent of the air base. The retained Oxfordshire Structure Plan policy H2 designated the development area to provide a new settlement of about 1000 dwellings and necessary supporting infrastructure. The focussed changes to the Local plan recognise Upper Heyford as a proposed strategic site for new rural settlement and include the provision of 2,361 new homes; an increase of 1,601 from the submission plan.

In recognition of the heritage and environmental constraints within the former air force base, the focused changes identify an area of land directly to the west of the proposed site, as an extension to the proposed settlement boundary. As Cherwell have accepted the principle of extending the settlement boundary, inclusion of the application site would provide a logical rounding off of the boundary, as is evident from the plan below shown hatched in red.

Although adjacent to the development area the following parts of Policy Villages 5 of the draft Cherwell Local Plan are potentially relevant to this site:

- New and retained employment buildings should make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area and should be located and laid out to integrate into the structure of the settlement
- 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



SECTION 3: EVALUATION

Constraints

The proximity of the site to the adjacent conservation zone and its rural setting require that the development is designed so as not to negatively impact on the character of the local environment.

A key consideration in developing the design has been to preserve the existing field hedgerows and trees where possible, to maintain the existing field pattern, to reinforce this with new native planting, and thereby to minimise the visual impact of the development.

The complex road junction at the south east corner of the site also necessitates careful consideration of vehicular access, which is covered in detail in the Transport Assessment.

Opportunities

The size of the site provides opportunities to consolidate the company's operations on one site, in an accessible location.

The site is large enough to allow the buildings to be set back from the roadways and screened by a planting buffer zone.

The provision of a balancing pond to provide rainwater mitigation provides opportunities for further landscaping and ecological biodiversity.



SECTION 4: DESIGN PROPOSALS

Use

The initial phase will be used as a high bay storage for the storage and distribution of garden machinery, marine, vehicle and industrial engines. Welfare facilities will be provided for the warehouse staff and for the company's drivers, together with a manager's office.

The second phase will provide production and testing facilities, where custom engine building and adaption of engines will take place, alongside remanufacturing of engines back into use servicing of engines.

The office and training building will house the company's administration staff, and provide facilities for training and marketing. A car park will be provided for staff, visitors and customers.

Amount

The initial phase of the development comprises of 9808m² GEA of warehouse accommodation and 141m² of ancillary accommodation at mezzanine level.

The second phase comprises of 9136m² GEA of production space, and 3000m² of office and training accommodation.

Layout

The buildings are set back from the site perimeter to reduce their visual impact from adjacent highways, and screened by the existing hedgerows surrounding the site. Additional perimeter landscaping will be provided adjacent to the hedgerows to further screen the development. Further details are given in the Landscape and Visual Assessment.

The height of the development has been kept as low as practical, whilst providing high bay racking within the warehouse to utilise the floor space to the maximum. To achieve this a low roof pitch has been used for the warehouse and production building, with a single span structure to provide a column free footprint for future flexibility. Further details of the requirements are set out in the Need Assessment.

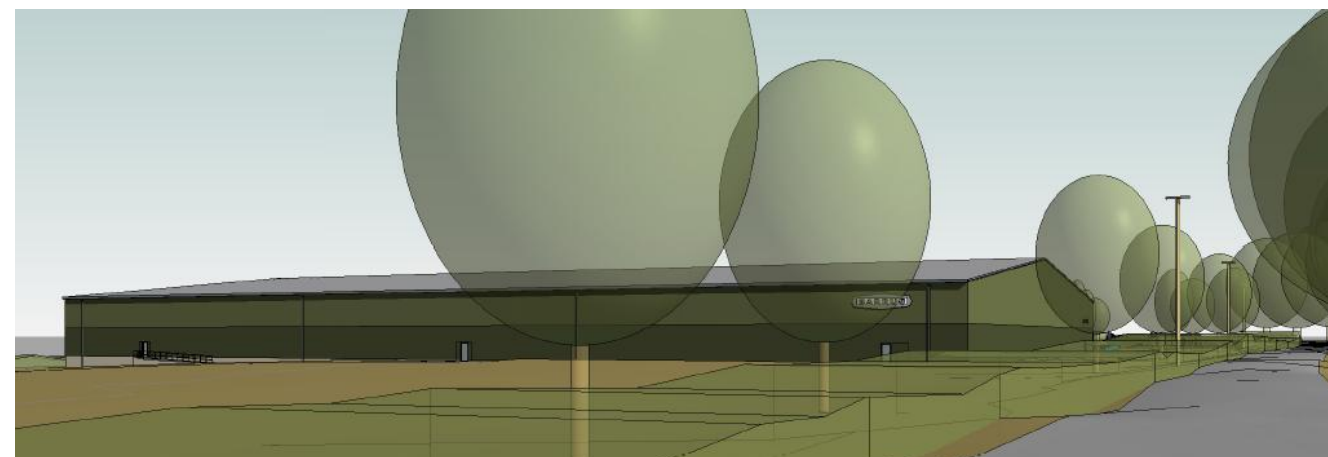
The three buildings are to be separated but linked together, so as to avoid problems associated with large valley gutters, and to provide natural lighting and ventilation to the office and training school. The office and training building will be on two storeys, though equivalent in height to the other buildings, with training facilities at ground floor and offices above. The staff and visitors' car park will be to the south of the office building, and will include tree planting and perimeter planting to blend the parking into the landscape.

Scale

The scale of the development is considered appropriate for its setting, as the buildings are set back from the site boundary and are screened by existing and new planting. Hence the buildings appear low against the horizon, appropriate for the rural setting. Splitting the development into three linked buildings further reduces the apparent scale of the development.

Appearance

The buildings are simple rectilinear forms with gable ended roofs, reflecting the functional forms of agricultural buildings. The phase 1 warehouse is clad externally with vertical ribbed composite cladding panels. The cladding is divided into two bands, both coloured green, with the lower section being a slightly darker colour than the top. The dark green elevations merge the building into the tree line from distant views, as can be seen from the Landscape and Visual Assessment.



The roof will be finished with a grey lightweight PVC coated fabric, to create a simple uncluttered appearance.

Photo-voltaic panels provided in accordance with the Energy Assessment will be ground-mounted, and located around the perimeter of the service yard, and hence will not be visible from outside of the site.

The design of the Phase 2 production building, office and training building will be subject to a reserved matters application.



SECTION 5: ACCESS

The site is adjacent to the 25A bus route between Bicester Upper Heyford, Kirtlington, Kidlington and Oxford. Heyford train station is 3½ miles from the site. With the realisation of the residential development outlined in Policy Villages 5 of the draft Cherwell Local Plan, public transport will be further enhanced.

The Transport Assessment provides further analysis of vehicular access to the site.

The service yard that forms part of the initial phase will include parking for warehouse staff and visitors, including a disabled parking bay and covered cycle racks.

The entrance to the warehouse building of Phase 1 will be step free, and will be fully accessible. The building will include a disabled toilet at ground floor level for visitors, and an ambulant accessible staircase to first floor level.

Phase 2 of the development will provide car park spaces for staff and visitors, including 6% disabled parking, and dedicated covered cycle racks, and motorbike parking will also be provided.

The entrance and reception area of Phase 2 will be adjacent to the disabled parking and with a step free approach. Phase two accommodation will also include a DDA compliant lift and staircase to give access to the first floor, and further accessible toilet accommodation. There will be step free access between the three buildings in the form of covered links.