

**FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE
DEMOLITION OF BUILDINGS 485 AND 488 AND
THE ERECTION OF 43 DWELLINGS WITH
ASSOCIATED PARKING, INFRASTRUCTURE,
LANDSCAPING AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE**

**DORCHESTER PHASE 6, HEYFORD PARK, CAMP
ROAD, UPPER HEYFORD**

**PLANNING, HERITAGE AND DESIGN
STATEMENT**

ON BEHALF OF DORCHESTER GROUP

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

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning, Heritage and Design Statement has been prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of Dorchester Group (“the Applicant”).
- 1.2 The Statement is in support of a full planning application for the erection of 43 dwellings at Dorchester Phase 6 of the Heyford Park development (“the application site”) on land at the Former RAF Upper Heyford airbase, Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire. The proposal will involve the demolition of Buildings 485 and 488.
- 1.3 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).
- 1.4 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. The Heyford base extends to approximately 520 hectares in total and the location of the application site is identified on the Location Plan that accompanies the application.
- 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.

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:

	LPA Reference	Date Approved
Dorchester Phase 1	13/01394/REM	19 th Feb 2014
Dorchester Phase 2 (was Phase 5)	14/01500/REM	9 th Dec 2014
Dorchester Phase 3 (was Phase 2)	14/01366/REM	26 th Nov 2014
Dorchester Phase 4 & 5B	15/01612/REM	11 th Jan 2016
Bovis Phase B1	13/00711/REM	19 th Feb 2014
Bovis Phase B2a	13/01584/REM	19 th Feb 2014
Bovis Phase B2b/B5	14/01740/REM	20 th Jan 2015

3. APPLICATION PROPOSAL

3.1 This application relates to a full planning application, comprising the demolition of Buildings 485 and 488 and the erection of 43 dwellings of mixed type and tenure with associated car parking, infrastructure, landscaping and a 0.106 hectares area of public open space to include a Local Area for Play (LAP).

3.2 The dwellings proposed by the application comprise:

Market Housing	
No. of Beds	No. of Units
3	1
4	15
5	14
Sub-Total	30
Affordable Housing - Rented	
No. of Beds	No. of Units
1	2
2	5
3	2
Sub-Total	9
Affordable Housing - Intermediate	
No. of Beds	No. of Units
2	2
3	2
Sub-Total	4
Total Market Housing	30
Total Affordable Housing	13
GRAND TOTAL	43

3.3 A significant element of affordable housing is been provided, 13 of the proposed 86 units which represents a provision of 30.2%. The location of the affordable housing is displayed on the Planning Layout drawing that accompanies the application. 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.

- 3.4 The proposed development will provide a mix of 1 bedroom maisonettes and 2, 3, 4 and 5 bedroom properties which will consist of a range of property types including detached, semi-detached and terraced properties.

4. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework

4.1 The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** was published and came into effect on 27th 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.
- 4.9 Paragraph 50 states that in order to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should:
- “ - Plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes);**
 - Identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand; and**
 - Where they have identified that affordable housing is needed, set policies for meeting this need on site, unless off-site provision or a financial contribution of broadly equivalent value can be robustly justified (for example to improve or make more effective use of the existing housing stock) and the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities. Such policies should be sufficiently flexible to take account of changing market conditions over time.”**
- 4.10 With regard to the historic environment, as a general principle, the NPPF requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage asset and the contribution made by their setting; however, the NPPF guides that this should be to the level of detail proportionate to the asset’s importance and no more than is sufficient to inform the understanding of the potential effects of the Proposed Development upon their significance.

4.11 Accordingly, the NPPF requires that:

“Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal”
(paragraph 129)

4.12 In the determination of planning applications, local planning authorities are directed to take account of:

“• The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
• The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
• The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.”
(paragraph 131)

4.13 Furthermore, with regard to the impact of development proposals on the significance (sensitivity) of the heritage asset, the NPPF 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. ... As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.” (paragraph 132)

4.14 The NPPF clearly guides the degree to which harm should be considered with respect to the sensitivity and importance of the heritage asset, such 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 that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- **the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and**
- **no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and**
- **conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and**
- **the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use” (paragraph 133)**

“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use” (paragraph 134)

“The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset” (paragraph 135)

“Local planning authorities should not permit loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred” (paragraph 136)

- 4.15 The NPPF notes that not all elements (buildings, structures etc.) will necessarily contribute to the significance of a Conservation Area and that proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably, whilst proposals that would result in the loss of a building or element that does make a positive contribution should be treated as either substantial harm (under paragraph 133) or less than substantial harm (under paragraph 134) taking into account the relevant significance of the element affected and its contribution to the Conservation Area as a whole.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 4.16 On 6th March 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched the **Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)** web-based resource.
- 4.17 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.
- 4.18 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).
- 4.19 Matters relating to the historic environment are addressed within the section entitled 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'. The PPG confirms that the consideration of 'significance' in decision taking is important and states that heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. It goes on to say that being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals.
- 4.20 The PPG also provides guidance in respect of non-designated heritage assets such as buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which are not formally designated heritage assets.
- 4.21 In terms of guidance on how to assess if there is there is substantial harm, the PPG states:-

"What matters in assessing if a proposal causes substantial harm is the impact on the significance of the heritage asset. As the National Planning Policy Framework makes clear, significance derives not only

from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting. While the impact of total destruction is obvious, partial destruction is likely to have a considerable impact but, depending on the circumstances, it may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not harmful at all, for example, when removing later inappropriate additions to historic buildings which harm their significance. Similarly, works that are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all. However, even minor works have the potential to cause substantial harm.

Policy on substantial harm to designated heritage assets is set out in paragraphs 132 and 133 to the National Planning Policy Framework.” (paragraph 017¹, emphasis added)

4.22 With regards unlisted buildings in a Conservation Area, the PPG states:

“An unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to a conservation area is individually of lesser importance than a listed building (paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework). If the building is important or integral to the character or appearance of the conservation area then its demolition is more likely to amount to substantial harm to the conservation area, engaging the tests in paragraph 133 of the National Planning Policy Framework. However, the justification for its demolition will still be proportionate to the relative significance of the building and its contribution to the significance of the conservation area as a whole” (paragraph 018)²

¹ PPG Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, Paragraph: 017 Reference ID: 18a-017-20140306, last revised 06/03/2014 (searched August 2015)

² PPG Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, Paragraph: 018 Reference ID: 18a-018-20140306, last revised 06/03/2014 (searched August 2015)

4.23 The PPG states that non-designated heritage assets may comprise "... buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which are not formally designated heritage assets. In some areas, local authorities identify some non-designated heritage assets as 'locally listed'" (paragraph 039³).

³ PPG Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, Paragraph: 039 Reference ID: 18a-039-20140306, last revised 06/03/2014 (searched August 2015)

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 2011-2031

5.2 The Development Plan comprises the policies of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted 20th 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 The policy 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 BSC 4 (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 The supporting table to Policy BSC4 seeks the following housing mix:

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4-bed
Market	5%	25%	45%	25%
Affordable	25-30%	30-35%	30-35%	5-10%
All Dwellings	15%	30%	40%	15%

5.12 The supporting text to Policy BSC 3 at paragraph B.114 indicates that Policy BSC 4 is only the starting point for assessing the mix of affordable housing and that the mix will be further informed by the Council's Housing Register and local housing need surveys. There has been considerable survey work at Heyford Park over recent years which has informed the derivation of a local lettings policy and assessment of needs in this particular instance.

5.13 Further analysis and discussion of these two policies is set out in full in the Affordable Housing Statement, prepared by Pegasus Group, which accompanies the application.

5.14 **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.

5.15 **Policy ESD 15 (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 15 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 potential 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 15. These criteria are:

“New development proposals should:

- **Be designed to deliver high quality safe, attractive, durable and healthy places to live and work in. Development of all scales should be designed to improve the quality and appearance of an area and the way it functions**
- **Deliver buildings, places and spaces that can adapt to changing social, technological, economic and environmental conditions ...**
- **Contribute positively to an area’s character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features, including skylines, valley floors, significant trees, historic boundaries, landmarks, features or views, in particular within designated landscapes, within the Cherwell Valley and within conservation areas and their setting**
- **Conserve, sustain and enhance designated and non designated ‘heritage assets’ (as defined in the NPPF) including buildings, features, archaeology, conservation areas and their settings, and ensure new development is sensitively sited and integrated in accordance with advice in the NPPF and NPPG. Proposals for development that affect non-designated heritage assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset as set out in the NPPF and NPPG. Regeneration proposals that make sensitive use of heritage assets, particularly where these bring redundant or under used buildings or areas, especially any on English Heritage’s At Risk Register, into appropriate use will be encouraged**
- **Include information on heritage assets sufficient to assess the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Where archaeological potential is identified this should include an appropriate desk based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.**
- **Respect the traditional pattern of routes, spaces, blocks, plots, enclosures and the form, scale and massing of buildings. Development should be designed to integrate with existing streets and public spaces, and buildings configured to create clearly defined active public frontages**
- **Reflect or, in a contemporary design response, re-interpret local distinctiveness, including elements of construction, elevational detailing, windows and doors, building and surfacing materials, mass, scale and colour palette ...**

The design of all new development will need to be informed by an analysis of the context, together with an explanation and justification of the principles that have informed the design rationale. This should be

demonstrated in the Design and Access Statement that accompanies the planning application. The Council expects all the issues within this policy to be positively addressed through the explanation and justification in the Design & Access Statement. ...”

5.16 The approach to heritage assets is discussed in detail in Section 6 of this Statement, whilst design matters are discussed in Section 7 of this Statement and in more detail in the Design and Access Statement, prepared by Focus On Design, that accompanies the application.

Cherwell Local Plan 1996

5.17 The following saved policies of the Cherwell Local Plan, adopted November 1996, remain extant and relevant to the proposed development following the adoption of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031:-

5.18 **Policy C23 (Retention of features contributing to character or appearance of a Conservation Area)** states that there will be a presumption in favour of retaining buildings, walls, trees or other features which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

5.19 Whilst **Policy C28 (Layout, design and external appearance of new development)** advises that control will be exercised over all new development, including conversions and extensions, to ensure that the standards of layout, design and external appearance, including the choice of external-finish materials, are sympathetic to the character of the urban or rural context of that development. In sensitive areas such as Conservation Areas, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and areas of high landscape value, development will be required to be of a high standard and the use of traditional local building materials will normally be required.

5.20 The approach to the historic environment and compliance with these policies is discussed in Section 6 of this Statement.

Statement of Common Ground

5.21 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.

5.22 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)

5.23 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)

5.24 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.

Building in Context – New Development in Historic Areas

5.25 With regard to development within historically sensitive areas, Historic England and CABI set out in their guidance document 'Building in Context – New Development in Historic Areas' (2001), a number of key considerations which they feel will add to the success of a project. Proposals should:

“•relate well to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land

•sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it

•respect important views

•respect the scale of the neighbouring buildings

•use materials and building methods which are as high in quality as those used in existing buildings

•create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of the setting”

5.26 Historic England has also published guidance and methodology for assessing heritage significance within views, ‘Seeing The History in the View” (May 2011), which provides a consistent base-line for assessing the impact of development on heritage significance within views. Historic England has also published further guidance on assessing the importance of setting of assets, Good Practice Advice Note: The Setting of Heritage Assets (March 2015). Both sets of guidance have also been taken into account in preparing this report.

6. HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

Introduction

6.1 This chapter provides a description of the Application Site in the context of its heritage significance and contribution to the 'Former RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area', followed by an assessment of the Proposed Development in the context of Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (see below) and the heritage-related policies of the Development Plan and other material planning considerations, as identified within Chapters 4 and 5.

6.2 Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the "... **general duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions ...**" and states:-

"In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any [functions under or by virtue of] any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area".

6.3 Accordingly, in the determination of the planning application considerable weight is required to be given to the statutory requirements in favour of preservation of the character and appearance of Conservation Areas, as well as those requirements set out in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that all planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Heritage Context

6.4 The Application Site is located within the former RAF Upper Heyford military site. The military site was initially developed in 1916 for use as an airfield during the First World War and remained operational for military use (with some minor periods of cessation) by the Royal Air Force (RAF) until circa 1950. At this time, whilst remaining a Ministry of Defence (MoD) site, its occupation was transferred to the United States Air Force (USAF) as part of the Cold War strategic defence. The USAF remained in occupation until 1994 when the site was handed back to the MoD and its military use ended.

6.5 The Application Site comprises only a small area of the former RAF Upper Heyford military site and is occupied by former military buildings, access road, service

areas, and formal amenity grass and paths. The former military buildings within the Application Site comprise: 471, 472A, 483, 485, 486, 488, 491, UH9 and UH10. These buildings are either currently vacant or have been demolished as part of the on-going redevelopment of Heyford Park (see below). The majority of land surrounding the Application Site is already redeveloped or undergoing redevelopment for residential use, with the area to the north to be redeveloped to provide a village green with cricket pitch.

- 6.6 The Application Site falls within the application boundary (08/00716/OUT) for the redevelopment of Heyford Park to form a new settlement, referred to as 'The Lead Appeal'. The Application Site is identified on the associated Built Form Masterplan (drawing ref: 1135-045 Rev N) for residential development. The planning application was accompanied by several applications for Conservation Area Consent including 07/02350/CAC which sought consent for the demolition of several buildings including Buildings 485, 488, 491, UH9 and UH10 which fall within the Application Site. The Lead Appeal and this Conservation Area Consent were granted approval at appeal⁴. This Conservation Area Consent has been implemented.
- 6.7 Subsequent to above, a planning application was submitted (10/01642/OUT) relating to that part of Heyford Park referred to as 'The Settlement Area', which encompasses the Application Site, referred to as the 'Outline Consent'. The Application Site is identified on the associated Indicative Masterplan (Dwg 031 Rev M) and Development Uses Parameter Plan (Dwg 23 Rev D) for primarily residential use with the retention of Building 485 also for residential use and the partial retention of Building 488 for business use (offices, research/development and light industrial), with the land to the north forming part of the green infrastructure. The planning application was accompanied by an application for Conservation Area Consent (10/01619/CAC) which sought consent for the demolition of several buildings, including Buildings 471, 472A, 483, 491, UH9 and the partial demolition of Building 488 which fall within the Application Site. The planning application was granted consent 22 December 2011 and the Conservation Area Consent granted approval 14 February 2011. This Conservation Area Consent has been implemented.

⁴ Appeal APP/C3105/A/08/2080594 against the refusal by CDC of application 08/00716/OUT together with 24 associated Conservation Area Consent appeals, including Appeal APP/C3105/E/08/2069341 against the refusal of 07/02350/CAC; both granted consent 11 January 2010.

6.8 The former RAF Upper Heyford military site was designated as a Conservation Area by Cherwell District Council in 2006. There are no statutory designated buildings (Scheduled Monuments or Listed Buildings) within the Application Site itself or within its immediate proximity. Two buildings within the Application Site are identified within the Former RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area Appraisal (CDC, April 2006) as being a 'Non-Listed Building of Local Significance'; these are Building 485 (Former Barrack, Type 'B') and Building 488 (Former Lamplighter Inn / Dining Facility).

6.9 The Former RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area Appraisal (CDC, April 2006) indicates the Application Site as falling within the 'RAF domestic and residential section' character area (Area 10B), which is described as:

"The 1920s, red brick, RAF buildings to the south of Camp Road are laid out around and orientated towards the parade ground. The style of the buildings within the area is again British Military and because of their grid-like orientation the area has a strong 'campus' character distinct from the Technical Site to the north on the other side of the road. The area immediately south of the parade ground was developed during the period of RAF expansion in the 1930s. The area is dominated by the Institute (488) and H-blocks (489, 498 and 500) set around it. This area has a coherent character distinct from the 1920s buildings. The general 'military architect' character of the area has been diluted by post-war alterations."

6.10 The Conservation Area Appraisal describes Building 485 as:

"Barrack Type 'B' (Building 485) constructed 1920s. Inclusion for group value of 1920s domestic buildings surrounding the parade ground."

6.11 The Conservation Area Appraisal describes Building 488 as:

"Dining Room and Institute (Building 488) constructed in red brick with flat reinforced concrete roof. Of interest is the Art Deco style influence on the design of the building with circular fan lights on the first floor and multi-rail staircase railings."

6.12 The Landscape Character Assessment of the Airbase South of the Cold War Zone (ACTA, March 2006) indicates that the Application Site spans three character areas (see **Figure 1**).

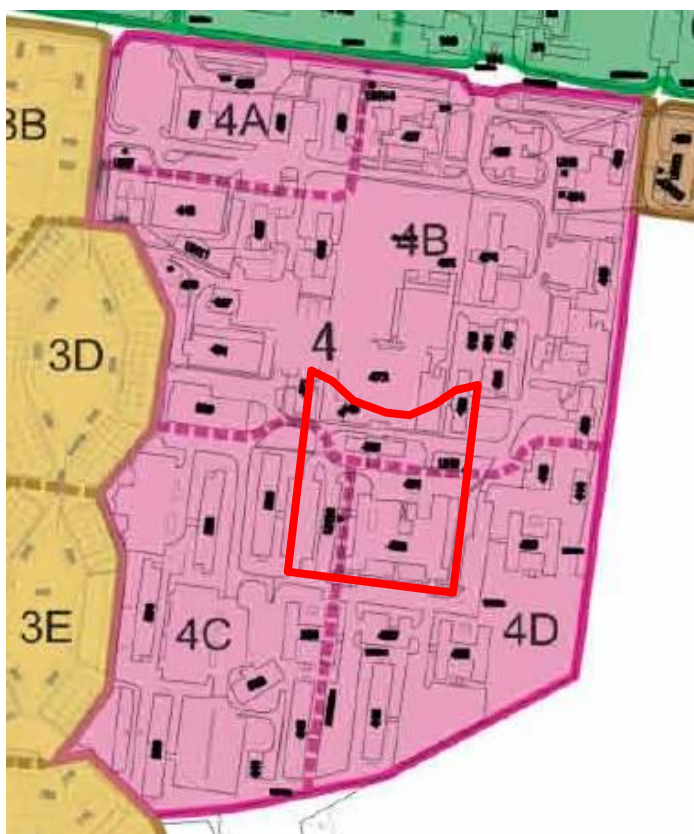


Figure 1: Extract from Landscape Character Assessment of the Airbase South of the Cold War Zone (Figure 6: Character Areas) with approximate Application Site boundary shown red

6.13 Area 4B is described as:

“4B Parade Ground Buildings

3.6.3 This area is defined by Camp Road to the north, the East Huts and a line of mature trees on the east edge, the change to the late 1930s layout to the south and Carswell Circle to the west. Its framework is formed by the 1925-6 layout of the Sergeant’s Mess (457), Institution (455), Cookhouse (474) and barrack blocks around the parade square. But all of the barrack blocks except 485 have been substantially altered or completely rebuilt and no longer have a 1920s character.

3.6.4 Within this framework there have been post-war changes, including the conversion of 440 into a large, rambling structure dominated by its balconies and the construction of the Open Mess and Recreation Centre (472) on the south part of the parade ground. There are also small prefabricated buildings which are generally white or cream with dark roofs such as 468, 449 and 484. The additions to the 1920s buildings such as the brick structures on the south, west and north elevations of the Institute (455) and the north and west of the Sergeants’ Mess (457) add to the clutter. In the land between 471/466 and Carswell Circle there are

prefabricated buildings in varied materials but also the 1930s Central Heating Plant (467) and the Decontamination Centre (465). There are many semi-mature trees particularly in the north where there is abundant Red Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus x carnea*) set out around the parade ground, but there are also random groups of conifers. The overall characteristics are thus:

- confusing mixture of buildings in varying styles, materials and quality;
- 1920s buildings usually in dark brick with pitched slate roofs surrounded by later structures;
- very varied tree cover;
- scattered prefabricated buildings in several different materials."

6.14 Area 4C is described as:

"4C. East Barracks

3.6.5 This area (Photo 40) consists of four barrack blocks (598, 594, 593 and 596) in widely differing materials with their long axes north-south and separated by large car parks. At the edge, the single-storey building 502 is in strange, almost pink materials. The characteristics are:

- dominance of rectangular barrack blocks of purely functional design;
- large areas of hard surface;
- absence of tree cover in contrast to adjacent areas."

6.15 Area 4D is described as:

"4D. 1930s Area

3.6.6 The north part of this area (Photos 21, 24) is dominated by the Institute (488) and the H blocks set around it (489, 498 and 500). The horizontal emphasis of the design is the dominant feature and despite modifications and deterioration the buildings retain their 1930s character. This character, however, is substantially affected by the two post-war barrack blocks 445 and 446 at the south edge so that the area takes on something of the clutter and confusion of the area 4B. The characteristics are therefore:

- 1930s style of large, low buildings;
- spacious setting;
- extensive hard surfaces and lawns;
- intrusion of later buildings at south edge;
- scattered and formless tree cover."

6.16 With regards the two buildings identified as Non-Listed Buildings of Local Significance, the Landscape Character Assessment describes these as:

“4.17 Barrack Block Type B (485)

4.17.1 This is the only barrack block that retains a 1920s appearance (Photo 18), although it was built in 1937. It is in the usual red brick with blues and pitched slate roof and is a long, narrow building. The north front comprises two projecting bays with a stone doorway between which has a large, projecting canopy.

4.17.2 In the upper floor on both the north and south sides there appear to be blocked windows but such windows are absent on the very similar Type E blocks at RAF Bicester. All windows have been renewed, but the window openings are unchanged.

4.18 Dining Room and Institute (488)

4.18.1 This is a large, flat-roofed structure with an imposing south elevation with two projecting wings (Photo 21). These have a typical 1930s design: a mainly blank wall with porthole windows at a high level and a projecting doorway with fluted sides. The position of the windows in the main block is original but the critical windows have been lost with an adverse effect on the appearance of the building in comparison with the equivalent at RAF Bicester (20). The main entrance with its Moderne styling is also of 1930s design, identical to RAF Bicester, although it is now blocked by a post-war structure (Photo 25).

4.18.2 To the rear, the building steps down to single storey with continuing emphasis on the horizontal through the use of string courses. All of the windows appear to have been replaced, but this remains a good example of the 1930s style of Air Ministry buildings under the direction of Stratton and Binge.”

6.17 Photograph 18 (Building 485), and Photographs 21 and 25 (Building 488) from the Landscape Character Assessment are reproduced below (see **Figure 2**, **Figure 3** and **Figure 4** respectively).



18. Barrack Block 485

Figure 2: Photograph 18 from the Landscape Character Assessment (Building 485)



21. Dining Room and Institute (488) from the Southeast

Figure 3: Photograph 21 from the Landscape Character Assessment (Building 488)



25 The Main Entrance to the Dining Room and Institute (488)

Figure 4: Photograph 25 from the Landscape Character Assessment (Building 488)

6.18 The RAF Upper Heyford Survey (Airfield Research Publishing, March 1996) provides a gazetteer of the surviving structures and surveyed Buildings 485 and 488, stating that:

“485 Barrack Block Type “B” (3NCOs & 56 AM) 104/23 & 2826/37

This Barrack Block was similar to the Type “C” design, but with smaller barrack rooms to house 14 airmen in each room.

Note: This design was obsolete when construction began in 1937, but at this time, the elevational treatment of all architectural designs was subject to review and approval of the Royal Fine Art Commission. The Society for the Preservation of Rural England advised on the positions of buildings. Upper Heyford was one of the first stations reviewed by both.”

“488 Dining Room and Institute 8055/38 & 2522/39

During the RAF Expansion Period “L” Scheme, in the interests of economy, convenience of personnel and good architectural design and grouping, the accommodation of Dining Room and Institute was combined as one building. The design 8055/38 for 750-800 Corporals and airmen was erected on all new Expansion Period stations. The new buildings was planned on two floors with a vertical division between the dining area and institute so that two of each were provided (one of each on both floors). The institute had

a supper room on the ground floor (requiring a NAAFI service) and games, reading and writing rooms on the floor above. When required, the ground floor area could be increased by opening a partition that normally separated the two halves to form a large function room. A stage was provided at one end with two dressing rooms. Corporals had their own side entrance leading to their supper and games rooms.

Food preparation area, kitchen and food storage rooms were all located on the ground floor behind the dining area. This part of the buildings was single-storey but, a small staff accommodation block was located on the flat roof. The kitchen equipment was far superior to that used previously, walls were finished with glazed surfaces, fitted with the latest types of steam-cooking plant, hot plates and food preparation areas were of stainless steel and dish-washing machines were also provided.

Construction as in permanent red brick with concrete floor and flat reinforced concrete roof. One interesting feature was the influence of the Art Deco style in the circular fan lights of the first floor cloakroom and multi-rail staircase railings.

The front elevation is symmetrical with a projecting entrance block at either end containing a large hall, cloak room and staircase. The centralised positioning, overlooking open countryside, provided an attractive architectural grouping with the contemporary "H"-shaped Barrack Blocks, one at either end of the front and carefully positioned so as not to interfere with the open aspect of this building. The third Barrack Block built nearby on the east side and land was reserved for a final Barrack Block to be built on the opposite side, but construction was not started due to the outbreak of war.

From each entrance hallway, access could be given in the event of an air-raid, to an underground basement refuge and escape passage to a point clear of the building. This was similar to those built underneath the "H" shaped Barrack Blocks, but larger."

- 6.19 The heritage significance of the Application Site was considered within the Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Chapter of the Environmental Statement produced in support of the redevelopment of Heyford Park ('The Lead Appeal'), identified as spanning areas 12B, 12C and 12D (see **Figure 5**).

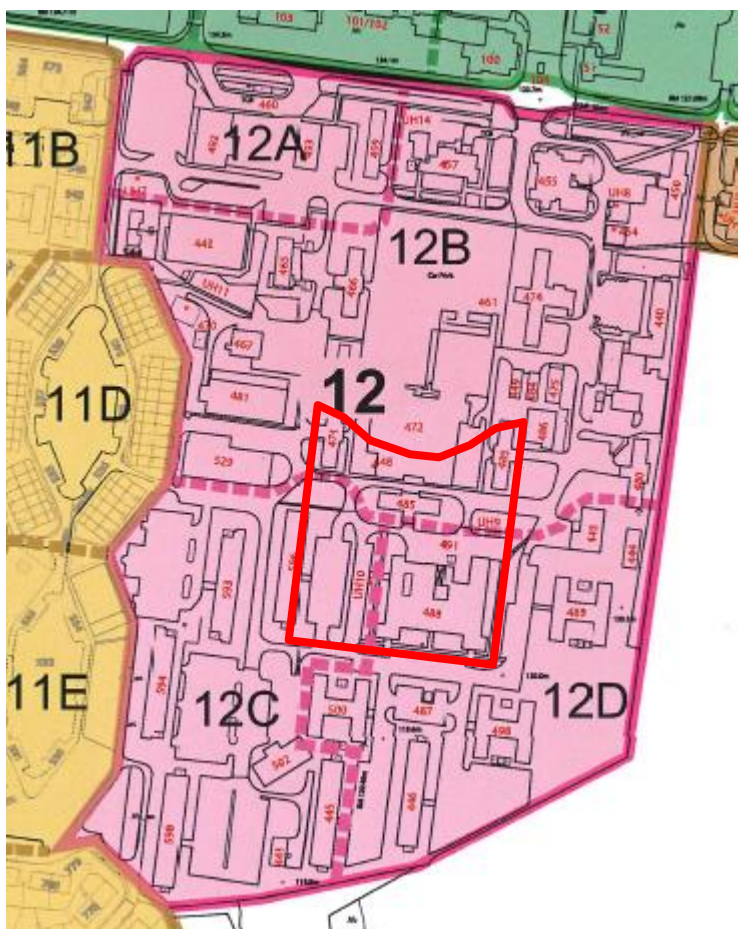


Figure 5: Extract from Environmental Statement (Figure CH14: Landscape South of the Cold War Zone: Character Areas) with approximate Application Site boundary shown red

6.20 Area 12B is described as:

“Area 12B Parade Ground Buildings

Significance: Low

A confusing mixture of buildings in various periods, styles, material and quality with considerable infill characterise this area. The primary 1920s layout is formed around the Parade Square with a Sergeants’ Mess, Institution, Cookhouse and Barrack Blocks. Some of these structures have been subject to additions, and the barracks have been substantially altered/rebuilt except building no. 485. Those that have been rebuilt may be of negligible significance but have been valued at low because they have group value, and add to value of the Character Area. The western parameters of this area include Post-War structures such as a Thrift Shop and Store. These structures have been less well maintained than the 1920s buildings to the north of Camp Road, are presently empty, and some have considerable external vegetation, particularly the Sergeants’ Mess (OA12B.2).”

6.21 Within Area 12B several buildings were individually assessed, including Building 485, which is assessed as being of 'medium' significance.

6.22 Area 12C is described as:

"Area 12C West Barracks

Sensitivity of Receptor: Low

This area is dominated by functional Post-War rectangular, long barracks, with large areas of hardstanding for car-parking. These structures are of little value and may be of negligible significance, but their number and location mean that they have some group value. All elements of this Character Area are listed in the Gazetteer."

6.23 Area 12D is described as:

"Area 12D 1930s Area

Significance: Low

The 1930s character of this area has been retained to the north with large low-range buildings in a spacious setting, which include the Institute and H Barrack Blocks. To the south, the coherence is compromised by two Post-War Barrack Blocks (building nos. 445-6). The H Barracks Blocks are of medium significance, although architecturally they are not as impressive as the 1920s structures within Area 12B along Camp Road (OA12B.1-OA12B.3)."

6.24 Within Area 12C several buildings were individually assessed, including Building 488, which is assessed as being of 'medium' significance.

6.25 The above assessment of heritage significance with regards both the identified Areas (Areas 12B, 12C and 12D) and Buildings 485 and 488, was reiterated in the subsequent Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Chapter of the Environmental Statement produced in support of the new settlement area (The Outline Consent), albeit the areas re-referenced to 3B, 3C and 3D respectively.

6.26 In summary the Application Site is considered to be of low heritage significance, primarily attributable to the mix of building periods, styles, materials and quality, with the Conservation Area Appraisal indicating that the military architect character of the wider area within which the Application Site is located as having been diluted by post-war alterations. The Landscape Character Assessment identified the Application Site as spanning three distinct character areas, indicating that there is no coherent character. Notably, the northern part of the

Application Site was referred to as being overall a confusing mix of buildings, the south-west being dominated by former barracks (many of which have been demolished and the land redeveloped) and the south-eastern part being affected by the post-war construction of barracks (also subject to demolition and redevelopment) with the southern edge thereof also comprising a mix of buildings which add to the general clutter and confusion. As noted, many of the former military buildings have already been demolished as part of the approved schemes for the redevelopment of the Settlement Area.

- 6.27 Notwithstanding the above, the two extant buildings identified as being 'Non-Listed of Local Significance' (Buildings 485 and 488) have some inherent heritage value and provide some, albeit limited, contribution to heritage significance of the Conservation Area, due primarily to their representing 1920's military architecture. Building 485 (Barrack Block Type B) is noted as being the only one of this barrack type retained, but is devalued by more recent alterations including the replacement of windows. Building 488 (The Lamplighters Inn/Dining Room and Institute) is noted as being a good example of 1930s architecture with some interesting retained Art Deco features, albeit this building is also devalued by post-war alterations including the replacement and blocking up of windows such that a better example of these exists at RAF Bicester. Building 488 is noted as being dominant within the area. Neither building has been appraised as being of sufficient value to be a listed building or a scheduled monument.

Heritage Planning Appraisal

- 6.28 A description of the existing heritage context has been provided above and therefore this Statement complies with the requirement of the NPPF (paragraph 128) and extant Policy ESD15 of the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1, for an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage asset and the contribution made by its setting. This has been provided to a level of detail considered proportionate to its importance, in this instance development within the Former RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area including the demolition of two non-designated heritage assets (Buildings 485 and 488).
- 6.29 The Proposed Development comprises the demolition of Buildings 485 and 488 and the subsequent construction of 43 dwellings of mixed type and tenure with associated car parking, infrastructure, landscaping and 0.106 hectares area of public open space including a Local Area for Play (LAP).

Assessment of Heritage Significance

- 6.30 The NPPF (paragraph 132) requires that due consideration should be given to the relative significance of the heritage asset; the greater the significance of the heritage asset the greater the weight should be afforded.
- 6.31 With regards the Former RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area, this is statutorily protected, for which the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, requires that “... **special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area**”, albeit the Conservation Areas are not afforded 'highest significance' status within the NPPF (paragraph 132). In this respect the effect of the demolition of buildings and features within the Conservation Area and that of the Proposed Development on the significance of the heritage asset and its setting 'as a whole' (NPPF, paragraph 134, emphasis added) should be afforded due weight. It is noted that the Conservation Area was designated in 2006 and that its primary reason for designation, as stated in the Conservation Area Appraisal, is its Cold War importance, the main features of which relate to the flying field to the north of Camp Road and not within the Settlement Area.
- 6.32 With regards non-designated heritage assets, i.e. the two 'Non-listed buildings of local significance', in accordance with the NPPG (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, paragraph 018), these are considered “... **individually of lesser importance than a listed building**”. However, with regards their contribution to the Conservation Area, it is noted “**If the building is important or integral to the character or appearance of the conservation area then its demolition is more likely to amount to substantial harm to the conservation area ... However, the justification for its demolition will still be proportionate to the relative significance of the building and its contribution to the significance of the conservation as a whole**”.

Approach to Assessing Harm

- 6.33 In general terms, the NPPF (paragraph 131) requires that consideration should be given to the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of the heritage asset, the consideration of the positive contribution that the asset makes to a sustainable community and the desirability of new development to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

6.34 Where a proposal would lead to substantial harm or total loss of significance to a designated asset, such as the Conservation Area, the NPPF (paragraph 133) directs that a LPA should refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated that it is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the identified harm or loss. Where a less than substantial harm is identified, the NPPF (paragraph 134) requires that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including securing its optimum viable use. It is pertinent that the NPPF notes that not all buildings or structures will necessarily contribute to the significance of a Conservation Area and that harm should take account of the relevant significance of the element affected and its contribution to the Conservation as a whole. The relevant NPPG (paragraph 17) makes clear that **“In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases ... an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest”**; furthermore **“It is the degree of harm to the asset’s significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed.”**

6.35 With regards non-designated heritage assets LPAs are guided within the NPPF (paragraph 135) to take a balanced judgement as to the scale of any direct or indirect harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Appraisal

6.36 The Proposed Development would affect only a very small area of land within the Conservation Area (1.7 hectares from a total of 520 hectares) for which consideration has previously been given to its redevelopment for residential use, both with and without the retention of Buildings 485 and 488. Furthermore, the Application Site’s location to the south of Camp Road is not within the area identified as being of primary importance to the designation of the Former RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area (i.e. the flying field to the north of Camp Road).

6.37 The Proposed Development forms part of the comprehensive redevelopment of the Settlement Area. The Lead Appeal provided for the demolition of all buildings within the Application Site (including Buildings 485 and 488) with the subsequent redevelopment to provide circa 40-50 residential dwellings. The subsequent Outline Consent provided for the demolition of majority of buildings within the Application Site, with the partial retention of Building 488 for business use and retention of Building 485 and redevelopment of the remainder of the area for

residential use. Both these planning permissions establish the principle for the substantial redevelopment of the Application Site and have been deemed to be acceptable with regards their effects on the Conservation Area.

- 6.38 Notwithstanding the above, the Proposed Development would provide 43 residential dwellings of which 13 would be Affordable Housing (intermediate or rented), as well as a local area of play and public open space, and would therefore clearly provide public benefits.
- 6.39 Consideration has been given to the retention of either Building 485 and/or Building 488 by their incorporation into the overall Application Site layout. However, this would have serious implications on the ability to deliver a comprehensive residential scheme, in a sustainable manner by making the most efficient use of the Application Site and that provides the proposed affordable and market housing. In terms of context, the land to the east, west and south of the Application Site is already subject to planning permission(s) for redevelopment, such that the surrounding buildings will comprise residential new built form. To the north of the Application Site will be the village green. Due to the reshaping of the village green and cricket pitch, revised in accordance with Sport England requirements, the village green is now wider (east-west) and does not extend as far south as originally proposed in the Outline Consent. In order to make the most efficient use of available land, the Application Site extends to the edge of the village green. Whilst this planning application is submitted as a stand-alone application (not as reserved matters to the Outline Consent), it is noted that Condition 6 of the Outline Consent requires that the detailed design need only be **"... in general accordance with the provision of the Parameters Plans ..."**. The reshaping of the village green / cricket pitch to the north, as agreed in principle with CDC, has resulted in some necessary alteration to the overall masterplan in this area.
- 6.40 The retention of Building 485 would result in its location towards the centre of the Application Site, surrounded on all sides by new build residential development, such that it would be isolated from any other buildings or features providing historic context to the Conservation Area or the former military architecture or use. Furthermore, the provision of vehicle and pedestrian access to the building would necessarily reduce the available land to deliver residential dwellings. It is noted that Building 485 is situated off-centre to the village green such that if consideration were given to leaving the land surplus to the requirements of the

village green undeveloped, the retention of Building 485 would not satisfactorily frame the village green and in any event would not represent the efficient use of land by reducing the capability of the Application Site to deliver the market and affordable housing proposed.

- 6.41 Building 488 is located to the south-east corner of the Application Site and presently occupies a considerable footprint. The Outline Consent proposes the partial demolition of this building, involving the removal of the various single storey extensions (of varying height and age) and roof-top air conditioning plant to the north. The retained element would be located on the south and eastern edge of the Application Site adjoining the access road. However, whilst located to the edge of the Application Site, Building 488 would also be isolated from any other buildings or features providing historic context to the Conservation Area or the former military architecture or use, being adjacent to new build residential development on all sides. Whilst its retention would not necessitate the provision of separate vehicle or pedestrian access, these being provided by the bordering access, its retention would also serve to reduce the available land to deliver the number of residential dwellings proposed.
- 6.42 It is also worth noting that Buildings 485 and 488 are physically separated from each other, such that even were both buildings to be retained, any intervening residential development would preclude the interpretation of their historic context through inter-visibility. Accordingly, even were both buildings retained, they would each still be isolated from other buildings or features to provide any historic context. It is worth noting that similarly, the Outline Consent proposed intervening residential dwellings, rear gardens (and no doubt appropriate 2m high fencing) with landscaped/tree lined parking areas, such that the inter-visibility of these buildings would be limited.
- 6.43 Notwithstanding the above, consideration has been given the potential to reuse one or both buildings to mitigate the loss of available land within the Application Site to deliver the residential dwelling units proposed. However, this would require considerable refurbishment works to bring them up to a modern standard (for example roof/wall insulation, electrical re-wiring, heating, double-glazing etc. and the associated works to strip out old/unused services) and considerable adaptation (for example structural and non-structural modifications to walls and potentially reinforcement of floors, as well as installing fire resistivity measures) to provide self-contained residential units. Such structural and non-structural

alterations, would further affect any remaining features of these buildings both internally and externally. It is already noted that both buildings have already been adapted from their original 1930s military architecture with some loss of historic and architectural integrity, such that their heritage significance has already been degraded.

6.44 With this respect it is worthy of note that in concluding the Lead Appeal, the Planning Inspector identifies that (paragraph 19.406, emphasis added) **“Most of those [buildings within the New Settlement Area south of Camp Road] that make a positive contribution are of a form that is inflexible and/or could only be converted at a cost that is disproportionate to their importance or to the likely quality and versatility of the accommodation that would be provided. The costs of conversion would not be justified by the quality of the result. Overall the general character, appearance and disposition of the existing buildings would be very difficult to integrate within a new development of high quality design. Some buildings have been much altered.”** Accordingly, the evidence provided “... **convinces me** [the Inspector] **that demolition of these buildings is justified subject to an acceptable replacement development.”**

6.45 Furthermore, the Inspector’s Report also notes that in considering the agreement as to acceptability of their demolition “There is now no issue between the appellant, English Heritage and the Local Planning Authority on the demolition of buildings in the new settlement area (away from the Cold War part of the Conservation Area)” (paragraph 9.39, emphasis added), such that following an assessment of the buildings as provided by the appellant at the time “... has satisfied English Heritage that the buildings can be demolished without harm to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area ...” (paragraph 9.40, emphasis added). Moreover, the Inspector stated that “The removal of the buildings will in addition satisfy the final element of Policy H2a, this is to produce a new settlement which is in a form compatible with achieving a satisfactory living environment” (paragraph 9.41). Whilst Policy H2a of the form CDC Local Plan has been superseded, the underlying principle remains relevant to the current application.

6.46 The Proposed Development has been designed in accordance with the principles of the agreed Settlement Area Design Code, specifically those of the relevant Character Areas CA5 (Village Green) and CA8 (Core Housing East).

Notwithstanding this, the planning application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement which demonstrates that the Proposed Development has been designed to integrate with the surrounding built and natural environment, in accordance with the requirements of CDC Local Plan Policy ESD13. Measures include a higher density, maximum 3 storey height and formally aligned, common building lines with equal spaces between dwellings fronting the village green, and a simple and formal 'perimeter block' housing, maximum 2.5 storey dwellings of subtly differing character form and appearance dwellings in a character inspired by simple Arts and Crafts form, with mix of formal and informal streets and varying eaves and ridge lines in the core housing area.

Summary and Conclusion

- 6.47 In summary, the Proposed Development would affect only a very small area of land within the Former RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area and this parcel is not related to the primary importance of the Conservation Area's designation. The Application Site and buildings therein provide limited contribution to the significance and/or interpretation of the Conservation Area as a whole, specifically given the context of surrounding new build residential development. Conversely, the retention of Buildings 485 and 488 may serve to detract from the overall environmental improvements that a comprehensive scheme could achieve and could hamper the delivery of public benefits (market and affordable housing) through limiting the efficient use of land and overall design concept.
- 6.48 Accordingly, whilst there may be a loss of heritage features and introduction of new build development within the Conservation Area, at worst the effect on the Former RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area would be less than substantial; the significance of the Conservation Area 'as a whole' would be neither lost nor substantially harmed. Therefore with regards the Conservation Area, the requirements of the NPPF (paragraph 133) have been satisfied. Furthermore, the public benefits of providing comprehensive, high quality, affordable and market housing scheme, incorporated into the Settlement Area are considered to outweigh the less than substantial harm, and therefore the requirements of the NPPF (paragraph 134) have also been satisfied. The above has demonstrated that whilst the buildings to be demolished provide some limited contribution to the character of the Conservation Area, their retention would hamper the implementation of an integrated satisfactory living environment, as supported by

the comments of the Planning Inspector with regards the Lead Appeal. It is therefore concluded that compliance with Policy C23 has also been demonstrated.

- 6.49 With specific regards to the 'Non-listed buildings of Local Significance' it has been demonstrated that whilst Buildings 485 and 488 provide some limited contribution to the Conservation Area, they are individually and collectively of low heritage significance and have both been much altered over time such that their value as a heritage asset has been degraded. The retention of either or both buildings would render them isolated and surrounded by new build residential development; even were the Outline Consent implemented there would be intervening residential development and landscaped parking such that their contribution to historic interpretation of the wider Conservation Area and heritage value would be limited. It has been demonstrated that in order to accommodate the buildings within the design would have serious deleterious effect on the layout and delivery of residential dwellings, and therefore serve to limit the public benefits that could be afforded. Furthermore, in order to achieve a re-use of these buildings would involve substantial alterations such that not only would this be uneconomical but would also further alter their historic integrity and in the words of the Planning Inspector **"... their conversion would not be justified by the quality of the result."**
- 6.50 Accordingly, in taking a balanced judgement as to their retention with respect to the limited positive contribution to the Conservation Area as a whole and to their heritage value as non-designated assets, it is concluded that the limited harm from their demolition would be outweighed by the public benefits associated with the implementation of a comprehensive residential scheme, providing market and affordable housing, that is integrated into the surrounding environment. In this respect, it is concluded that the demolition of these buildings is justified when weighting their relative significance and contribution to the conservation as a whole and compliance with the NPPF (paragraph 135) has been demonstrated.
- 6.51 In conclusion, the proposed demolition of Buildings 485 and 488 has been fully justified and the subsequent redevelopment of the Application Site for residential use would be acceptable in terms of balancing the less than substantial harm to the Conservation Area as a whole and the individual non-designated heritage assets against the benefits to be gained from a comprehensive, high quality, affordable and market housing scheme that is fully integrated into its surrounding environment.

7. PLANNING AND DESIGN ASSESSMENT

7.1 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

7.2 The principle of residential development within the Dorchester Phase 6 area has already been established by the granting of outline planning permission 10/01642/OUT with the majority of the area identified for residential development in the approved parameters plan, with the remainder identified for commercial Class B1 use and land required for infrastructure (for a park).

7.3 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.

7.4 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.

7.5 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. The principle of the development has therefore already been established and this planning application is therefore principally concerned with matters of design and heritage interests.

7.6 Furthermore, the signed SoCG between Cherwell District Council and the Dorchester Group in December 2014 also reiterates the on-going creation of a distinctive new community at Former RAF Upper Heyford and that the implementation of the approved outline scheme should not be delayed. There can therefore be no objection to bringing forward residential development within the Dorchester Phase 6 area.

7.7 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

7.8 The District Council granted outline planning permission in 2011 for the development of part of the former RAF Upper Heyford 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.

7.9 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.

7.10 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).

7.11 Therefore, given the deviation from the approved parameters plan in so far this parcel of land is concerned, prior to the submission of the application the Applicant approached and engaged with the District Council in ongoing discussions on the design of the development with reference to the Code.

7.12 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

7.13 The Design and Access Statement, prepared by Focus on Design, that accompanies the planning application describes the design evolution of the proposed development.

7.14 Pre-application discussions were initially held with the District Council in March 2015 where two potential schemes were submitted for discussion purposes:

- SK01 – showing residential uses extended slightly northwards overlooking a shard surface; and
- SK02 – showing the southern part of Building 488 retained for use either as commercial or for conversion into residential uses, and to the north, Building 485 retained for conversion to residential use.

7.15 Following feedback from the District Council on the two proposed options, further discussions were held where it was agreed that an application for a full residential scheme should be submitted. A revised layout for the proposed development (ref. CL02-2) was submitted showing a strong crescent form framing the re-proportioned Village Green area to the north of the application site.

7.16 The layout of the development was then revised again following negotiations with the Tree Officer at the District Council in February/March 2016, where it was agreed that two trees could be removed from the centre of the scheme. The effect of which meant that the Tertiary Street now extends through the centre of the scheme.

Rationale for the design approach

7.17 The Applicant has actively worked with the District Council in the preparation of various phases of development across the Heyford Park site. The application as submitted has taken account of advice received and it is pertinent to highlight the following points which have influenced the design of the proposed development:

Layout and Scale:

- The layout of the proposed development complies with the indicative Building Density Plan for CA8 providing a medium density of 31 dph in accordance with the target density of between 30-38 dph;
- The proposed development will also accord with the indicative Building Heights Plan for CA8 – which is between 2 - 2.5 storeys for the majority of the application site and between 2.5 - 3 storeys for the northern edge of the application site;
- A mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced properties generally served by private driveways with courtyard parking for some properties in the centre of the development; and

- The south-western corner of the application site lies within Special Condition D (Secondary Street Bus Route through CA7 & CA8) and particular regard has been given to the design and layout of properties within this area as set out in the Design Code.

Architectural Design:

- Creation of active street frontages through movement at building entrances and visibility through fenestration;
- Visible end elevations treated as part of the street scene; and
- Dwellings will have living spaces fronting streets. No bathrooms or ancillary rooms to dominate street frontage/public realm.

Materials:

- A relatively simple palette of material will be used varying according to the Character Area;
- Maximum 3-4 finishes in a single elevational composition; and
- Change of materials used to express geometry of the building rather than just for variety.

Parking:

- Overall, parking will be provided on plot and/or adjacent to properties. Parking will be provided as a mix of on plot and courtyard parking with on plot provided as a mix of hardstanding and detached garages;
- Visitor parking will be provided on street in the form of parallel parking spaces in line with Oxfordshire County Council Parking Guidance; and
- In total, and in accordance with the Design Code, 133 parking spaces will be provided for the residential properties along with 2 visitor spaces giving rise to a total parking allocation of 135 spaces across the proposed development.

Recycling and Refuse Collection:

- The Refuse Plan that accompanies the application identifies the location of areas for the storage of refuse and recycling;
- These will be positioned within the curtilage of each dwelling within the rear garden area; and
- The proposed arrangement will therefore allow residents to store containers away from frontages.

Landscaping:

- Open space both within the application site and surrounding environs will help to create a relatively soft setting to the proposed scheme, the large area of open space to the village green has a relatively formal character and helps to unify the overall development proposals;
- Where space allows, strategically placed trees along garden frontages will help to break up the building mass, these predominantly native tree species will link the adjacent trees and woodland areas creating 'green-corridors' through the development and beyond into the surrounding landscape;
- Robust yet simple landscaping planting will be implemented which encapsulates a green structure of several low native hedgerows, through which larger yet generally small canopied street trees will be implemented;
- The key landscape strategy for planting to individual plots is to create belts of colour to house frontages; and
- The LAP within this development phase has been designed to provide safe and secure areas for residents.

Compliance with the Design Code

7.18 In addition to the above, whilst this full planning application is not subject to the approved Design Code it can be shown the proposed development has adopted the principles established for the relevant Character Areas, namely CA5 (Village

Green) and CA8 (Core Housing East) and where there is deviation reasoning has been provided. In particular the planning application demonstrates:

Character Area 5 (Village Green):

- ✓ Higher density, set piece housing fronting the Village Green; and
- ✓ A maximum height of 3 storey detached and semi-detached dwellings only formally aligned with common building lines and equal spaces between dwellings.

Character Area 8 (Core Housing East):

- ✓ Simple and formal 'perimeter block' housing with a strong sense of public and private realm relationship with fronts facing onto the shared public realm and private backs in the gardens;
- ✓ A maximum of 2.5 storey dwellings, with similar, but subtle differences to the form, detailing and range of materials and colours proposed within CA7;
- ✓ Character is inspired by simple Arts and Crafts form of Carswell Circle and Officers housing;
- ✓ A mix of formal and informal streets with dwellings providing clear presence and frontage onto streets and public realm; and
- ✓ Eaves and ridge lines consistent within groups of building but may vary along length of street.

Compliance with the Development Plan

7.19 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 application site. 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 and natural 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 ESD15 of the adopted Local Plan.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The principle of residential development within Dorchester Phase 6 has already been established through the outline planning permission and the proposed 43 dwellings are consistent with the Strategic Allocation (Policy Villages 5) of the recently adopted Local Plan.
- 8.2 The proposed development itself will make a positive contribution to Heyford Park, conserving and enhancing the character of the area creating an attractive and legible residential development. The design has been carefully considered and responds well to its surrounding context.
- 8.3 Special consideration has been given to how the proposed design accords with the Design Code approved under the outline planning permission where appropriate, specifically in terms of the layout, character areas and frontage treatments.
- 8.4 Furthermore, notwithstanding the location of the application site within the Former RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area, the proposed development would affect only a very small area of land within the Conservation Area and the application site is not related to the primary importance of the Conservation Area's designation. The application site and buildings therein provide limited contribution to the significance and/or interpretation of the Conservation Area as a whole, specifically given the context of surrounding new build residential development. Conversely, the retention of Buildings 485 and 488 may serve to detract from the overall environmental improvements that a comprehensive scheme could achieve and could hamper the delivery of public benefits (market and affordable housing) through limiting the efficient use of land and overall design concept. Accordingly, whilst there may be a loss of heritage features and introduction of new build development within the Conservation Area, at worst the effect on the Conservation Area would be less than substantial; the significance of the Conservation Area 'as a whole' would be neither lost nor substantially harmed.
- 8.5 With specific regards to the 'Non-listed buildings of Local Significance' it has been demonstrated that whilst Buildings 485 and 488 provide some limited contribution to the Conservation Area, they are individually and collectively of low heritage significance and have both been much altered over time such that their value as a heritage asset has been degraded. The retention of either or both buildings

would render them isolated and surrounded by new build residential development. To accommodate the buildings within the design would have serious deleterious effect on the layout and delivery of residential dwellings, and therefore serve to limit the public benefits that could be afforded. Furthermore, in order to achieve a re-use of these buildings would involve substantial alterations such that not only would this be uneconomical but would also further alter their historic integrity.

- 8.6 It has therefore been demonstrated within this and preceding sections that the development proposals are suitable and appropriate within the Dorchester Phase 6 area and that there are no reasons why the development should be resisted.