



Fig 3.1 - Constraints and Opportunities

3.2 LOCAL CHARACTER

- 3.2.1 Due to the site's location within the North West Bicester neighbourhood, the proposed development will largely take design cues from the vision for North West Bicester set out in the SPD (2016) as to locally appropriate patterns of layout and design.
- 3.2.2 The SPD states that *'proposed development should be sensitive to the existing landscape and townscape character whilst creating a unique image for the eco-town. Development proposals should demonstrate a morphology and urban form that responds to the site's topography, ecology, natural features and landscape character as well as responding to local patterns of development'* (para 5.16).
- 3.2.3 The residential properties under construction immediately surrounding the proposed development to the north-west and south-west are generally laid out in a suburban form. They are primarily two storeys in height and constructed in stone and render under a tiled pitched roof. The majority of properties are either detached or semi-detached units. Nearly all of the properties have enclosed front gardens with parking generally either located to the front or the side of the building.
- 3.2.4 There are two heritage assets immediately neighbouring the site comprising the Church of St Laurence (Grade II* Listed) to the north-east of the site, and Home Farmhouse (Grade II Listed) to the east of the site. Parts of the Church of St Laurence date back to the 10th/11th Century with additions made in the 12th and 13th Century, and restored and partly rebuilt in 1874, and is constructed from limestone with slate and concrete roof tiles. The Home Farmhouse is an early to mid-17th Century 2-storey farmhouse which was extended in the 18th/19th Century, and is constructed from limestone and a tile roof.
- 3.2.5 The setting of these heritage assets will be respected, and their significance better revealed through the layout of the proposed development, particularly in relation to the Church of St Laurence (see Section 4.6).



Exemplar site housing

St. Laurence Church

3.3 PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

3.3.1 In developing the design of the proposal regard has been given to national and local policy and guidance including:

- “The National Planning Policy Framework” (2012)
- “Planning Practice Guidance”
- “Manual for Streets 1 and 2” (2007 and 2010)
- “Car Parking: What Works Where” (2007)
- “Urban Design Compendium” (2007)
- “Secured by Design Principles” (2004)
- “Cherwell Local Plan (Part 1)” (2015, re-adopted 2016)
- “Cherwell Local Plan (Part 2) Issues Consultation” (2016)
- “North West Bicester Supplementary Planning Document” (2016)
- “Cherwell Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document” (2017)
- “Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document 2nd Consultation Draft” (2017)
- Oxfordshire County Council “Residential Road Design Guide” (2015)
- Oxfordshire County Council “Parking Standards for new residential developments” (2011)
- “Oxfordshire Walking Design Standards” (2017)
- “Oxfordshire Cycling Design Standards” (2017)

3.3.2 The application submission comprises a Planning Statement which looks at the proposed development in context with national and local policies.

3.3.3 The following section provides a summary of the policy guidance relevant to the design of the development and the identification of appropriate uses on the site.

National Planning Policy

3.3.4 At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means approving proposals that accord within the Development Plan without delay. The NPPF requires planning authorities to ‘boost significantly’ the supply of housing (including affordable housing) (para. 47) and stresses the importance of delivering a wide choice of high quality homes (para. 50) which meets local needs, delivered through high quality and inclusive design.

3.3.5 The NPPF expects development to facilitate social interaction and to create healthy and inclusive communities (para 69), and seeks to ensure the delivery of community and recreational facilities, through an integrated approach to development, in terms of the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities (para 70).

3.3.6 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), provides further information on design in the planning process. ID 26-006-20140306 of the PPG states:

“Design impacts on how people interact with places. Although design is only part of the planning process it can affect a range of economic, social and environmental objectives beyond the requirement for good design in its own right. Planning policies and decisions should seek to ensure the physical environment supports these objectives.”

The following issues should be considered:

- *local character (including landscape setting);*
- *safe, connected and efficient streets;*
- *a network of greenspaces (including parks) and public places;*
- *crime prevention;*
- *security measures;*
- *access and inclusion;*
- *efficient use of natural resources; and*
- *cohesive & vibrant neighbourhoods.”*

3.3.7 The PPG identifies that local heritage resources should be used to give shape to a development and integrate heritage assets into the wider area, and to reinforce and sustain local distinctiveness (ID 26-008-20140306).

Local Planning Policy

Cherwell Local Plan (Part 1)

3.3.8 The Part 1 Cherwell Local Plan was adopted in 2015 and re-adopted in December 2016 to amend the wording of Policy Bicester 13: Gavray Drive.

3.3.9 Policy BSC 4 of the Local Plan refers to the following broad mix of homes. The proposal will be policy compliant in respect to 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%

3.3.10 Policy BSC 10 requires the provision of open space as part of new development commensurate to the need generated by the proposals. Policy BSC 11 sets out the following open space standards:

3.3.11 An area of open space is proposed to the eastern part of the site for use by future residents for informal recreation and play. This green space will provide an appropriate setting to the adjacent heritage assets. A Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) feature will be incorporated into this space in the lowest part of the site. In addition to an area for allotments to the northern corner of the site and a community orchard to the north-eastern edge of the site in the form of a green corridor adjacent Banbury Road.

3.3.12 Policy ESD 3 states that all residential development will be expected to incorporate sustainable design and construction technology to achieve zero carbon development. Policy ESD 7 states that all development will be required to use sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) for the management of surface water run-off.

Type of provision	Quantitative Standard (ha/1,000)	Accessibility Standard	Minimum size of provision	Threshold for on-site provision
General green space (parks and gardens/natural semi-natural/amenity green space)	2.4 ha (urban dwellers) 2.74 ha (rural/urban edge dwellers)	400m (amenity open space) 1,200m (other)	200 sqm	10 urban dwellings 6 rural/urban edge dwellings
Play space – LAPs and LEAPs	0.78 ha	400m	LAP – 100 sqm activity zone; 400 sqm including buffer LEAP – 400 sqm activity zone; 3,600 sqm including buffer	10 dwellings for a LAP 50 dwellings for a LEAP and LAP
Outdoor sports provision	1.13 ha	800m (football, rugby, cricket) 1,200m (Tennis courts) 12km (bowling greens, golf courses)	0.12 ha	65 dwellings
Allotments	0.37 ha	800m	0.2 ha	275 dwellings

3.3.13 The proposals have been designed to accord with the sustainability and energy efficiency aspirations of the Council where deliverable, including the provision of SuDS.

3.3.14 Policy ESD 10 seeks a net gain in biodiversity by protecting and enhancing existing features such as trees as part of proposals.

3.3.15 The proposed development would retain existing trees and hedgerows along the boundaries of the site, where possible, with new green space, street trees and planting to provide an attractive setting to the built form.

3.3.16 Policy ESD 15 requires new development to complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high-quality design. New development should:

- Deliver safe, attractive, durable, adaptable and healthy places and spaces.
- Conserve and enhance heritage assets.
- Be designed to integrate with existing streets and public spaces.
- Be compatible with up to date urban design principles.
- Incorporate energy efficient design and sustainable construction techniques.
- Integrate and enhance green infrastructure.

3.3.17 The proposals will be designed to provide a considered response to the layout, to achieve a context-specific design response, which follows best practice urban design and sustainable design principles.

3.3.18 Policy Bicester 1 is the site-specific policy to deliver the North West Bicester Eco-Town and sets out requirements for its delivery.

These can be summarised as follows:

- Provision of 40% of the total gross site area as green space, to include sports pitches, parks and recreation areas, play spaces, allotments and SuDS.
- High quality exemplary development and design standards including zero carbon development.
- Careful consideration of open space and structural planting around the site to achieve an overall improvement in the landscape and visual impact of the site.
- No development in areas of flood risk and provision of sustainable drainage.
- A layout that respects the heritage assets outside the site.

3.3.19 The proposals will accord with Policy Bicester 1.

Cherwell Local Plan (Part 2)

3.3.20 The Issues Consultation version of the Cherwell Local Plan (Part 2) was published in January 2016. Once adopted the Local Plan Part 2 will conform and build upon the general development strategy of Cherwell Local Plan Part 1.

Plan Part 2 will conform and build upon the general development strategy of Cherwell Local Plan Part 1.

Supplementary Planning Policy and Guidance

North West Bicester SPD

3.3.21 The North West Bicester Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was published in 2016. The SPD expands upon Policy Bicester 1 of the Local Plan Part 1. The SPD sets out the key development principles and requirements for the site – a summary of which is provided below.

- To be in accordance with the SPD masterplan;
- To achieve zero carbon emissions and to incorporate sustainable design;
- To incorporate SuDS;
- To provide additional sustainability, economic or wellbeing benefits;
- To provide 30% affordable housing;
- To provide for a range of house types and tenures;
- To use energy efficient materials as part of the building fabric;
- To optimise the site's potential for solar energy gain;
- To meet lifetime homes minimum space standards;
- To provide gardens and areas for local food production;
- To carefully consider and sensitively respond to the setting of Listed buildings and important views of buildings such as the Church of St Laurence;
- To provide 40% green space;
- To provide a net biodiversity gain; and
- To adhere to best practice urban design principles to achieve a legible street hierarchy with active frontages which creates new views and vistas to help people find their way around.

Cherwell Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

3.3.22 A draft Cherwell Design Guide SPD was published in 2017. The purpose of the SPD is to support the delivery of high quality homes and places across the District.

- 3.3.23 New development in Cherwell should:
- Establish a positive built edge to the development;
 - Design out crime through the creation of perimeter blocks; and
 - Be easy to navigate by creating a series of memorable spaces and views.

3.4 PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION

3.4.1 A pre-application meeting with Cherwell District Council took place on 9th January 2018. At this pre-application meeting (ref: 17/00363/PREAPP) the preliminary proposals were discussed.

3.4.2 A pre-application response letter was provided following the meeting which set out a number of comments about the initial proposals presented at the meeting. The key comments and the associated design response can be summarised as follows.

Approach to residential development edge

Comment:

Justification for the proposed residential edge boundary and, and proposed boundary treatment is required.

Design response:

3.4.3 The North West Bicester Masterplan indicatively shows the site as having an area of proposed housing in the western part of the site, with an area of green space to its north-eastern and south-eastern boundaries. The SPD Masterplan is not clear on the precise location of the boundary between green infrastructure and residential development.

3.4.4 Development Requirement 9 of the North West Bicester SPD explicitly requires the provision of 40% of the total gross site area to comprise green space of which at least half will be publicly accessible and include a range of open space typologies.

3.4.5 In developing the design proposals for the site, the provision of at least 40% of the site as open space has been maintained. In this respect, the Parameter Plans provide in the region of 56% of the site as open space.

3.4.6 Open space provision on the site largely comprises amenity open space for informal leisure and recreation, landscaping and sustainable drainage. An area of equipped play is accommodated within the area of open space to the northern part of the site. An area of allotments are proposed to the

northern corner of the site (north of the area of equipped play) and a community orchard is proposed to the north-eastern edge of the site in the form of a green corridor adjacent Banbury Road. The proposals are therefore compliant with Development Requirement 9 of the SPD.

3.4.7 The development layout has also been configured to respect the setting of local heritage assets at Home Farm and the Church of St Laurence, with the vista of the Church informing the disposition of the residential avenue within the site. Specialist heritage advise (CgMS) has identified:

'Whilst development will be brought slightly closer to Home Farmhouse (Grade II listed) than is shown in the North West Bicester Masterplan, the slight encroachment will not have any increased impact on the listed building, with impact remaining less than substantial in nature, and at the lower end of this spectrum.'

3.4.8 A lower density of development is proposed at the edge of the residential area to provide a soft transition to the open space. Lower density housing in this location would comprise detached properties of up to 2 stories in height, providing 'gap' views between dwellings. The streets will comprise low key private drives (without footpaths) which will be defined by a mix of low-level hedges to blend in the existing hedgerows and strategic tree planting as part of a more naturalistic landscape at the edge. The approach to boundary treatment is set out in Section 7.0 (Design Guidelines) of this Statement.

3.4.9 The Illustrative Master Plan provides a different block arrangement to the indicative SPD Masterplan, by extending the development line marginally to the southern part of the residential area, to maximise the number of dwellings with south-facing glazing. This accords with Development Requirement 4 of the SPD which seeks to optimise the potential for passive solar gain.

This approach also enables a lower density of development at the edge of the residential area to provide a soft transition to the open space.

Housing mix and affordable housing

Comment:

In respect to a suitable mix for market housing, Policy BSC4 should be the starting point.

In respect to affordable housing, 30% of the dwellings proposed are required to be provided as affordable housing in accordance with Policy Bicester 1 and BSC3 of the Cherwell Local Plan. The indicative mix for affordable housing should provide for 70% affordable rent and 30% shared ownership.

Design response:

- 3.4.10 The proposals respond to the indicative housing mix as follows, on the basis of the illustrative master plan accommodating 75 units:

Unit size	Market units	Affordable units	Total units
1-bed flat	3 units	2 units	5
2-bed flat	4 units	0 units	26
2-bed house	9 units	13 units	
3-bed house	26 units	7 units	33
4-bed house	10 units	1 unit	11
Total	52 units	23 units	75 units

- 3.4.11 The 1-bed affordable units could be provided as drive under units that give access to parking courtyards. Due to the percentage requirement of bungalows being less than one unit, the 2-bed bungalow requirement is included with the 2-bed house percentage, providing one units.

- 3.4.12 The proposals will be policy compliant with respect to affordable housing.

Sustainability

Comment:

The proposal will be required to mitigate against future climate change scenarios such as daylight/overheating considerations including orientation of the dwellings.

Design response:

- 3.4.13 As set out in Section 5.0 of this Statement, sustainability is a key design aspiration of the illustrative master plan. The development has been designed to accord with the sustainability and energy efficiency aspirations of the Council where deliverable. This includes maximising the orientation of dwellings within the layout to maximise the number of dwellings with south-facing glazing to benefit from passive solar gain. Further information is provided in the Sustainability Statement, enclosed as part of the application.

Promoting healthy lifestyles

Comment:

The development would need to contribute towards promoting healthy lifestyles, supporting local services and providing no less than 40% of the site as Green Infrastructure.

Design response:

- 3.4.14 The proposals provide for at least 40% green space on-site, comprising informal open space, play provision, allotments and a community orchard promoting the active healthy lifestyles of local residents. The area to be provided as open space is set out in the Parameter Plans which are submitted for formal approval as part of this application.

Transport

Comment:

Sustainable modes of transport/ measures to promote sustainable transport options are encouraged in line with the principles set out within the NW Bicester SPD.

Design response:

- 3.4.15 The proposals provide for a network of routes and spaces allowing for use by pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, with that order of priority. This movement network incorporates both formal and informal pedestrian and cycle routes which connect into the surrounding North West Bicester area. Further information is provided in the Transport Assessment and Draft Travel Plan enclosed as part of this application.

Community use of the Church of St Laurence

Comment:

The Church of St Laurence (grade II listed) have ambitions to promote the wider community use of the Church for new residents at North West Bicester, including securing the provision of a small area for car parking on this site, open to church parishioners (and potentially a dual use for parking for allotment holders).*

Design response:

- 3.4.16 A small area of informal car parking adjacent to the allotments has been incorporated into the layout of the proposals, for use by both church parishioners and the users of the allotments.

Design and layout

Gateway to the site

Comment:

The entrance vista and arrangement of dwellings at that point will need careful consideration in terms of how this forms a gateway to the site and the scale and relationship with its surroundings.

Design response:

- 3.4.17 At the entrance to the site, dwellings will front an area of open space to provide a soft gateway to the site. Buildings at the gateway to the site (and along the residential avenue) will be 2½ to 3 storeys in height to help define the open space and the entrance vista. This will provide an appropriate transition into this part of the North West Bicester site, reflecting the storey heights of neighbouring residential development.

Design code/guidance

Comment:

In relation to design coding/guidance, given that this is a relatively small site the design and access statement could be expanded to contain matters that will apply in the future including design principles.

Design response:

- 3.4.18 This Design and Access Statement incorporates a section (Section 7.0) on 'Design Guidelines' which builds upon the broad principles set out in earlier parts of the Design and Access Statement that will be addressed by the detailed design and planning processes.

3.5 SUMMARY

- 3.5.1 Sections 2 and 3 of the Design and Access Statement describes the physical, economic, social and planning policy context for the development proposals for the site. The context has provided clear guidance for the design of the development as a whole, and the proposed use.
- 3.5.2 The need to accommodate new housing development in the area and the North West Bicester eco-town allocation guides the choice of uses (residential and open space) on the site. It is apparent from the context of the site that it is suitable for development for residential and open space purposes. The wider North West Bicester eco-town will provide for a range of facilities and services including improved public transport services which will connect to Bicester. There are local employment sources nearby, and residential development on the site will further support these local services and facilities.
- 3.5.3 Residential development as part of the North West Bicester eco-town is located to the south-west and north-west of the site; residential use is therefore considered to be consistent with the immediate site context and therefore entirely appropriate.
- 3.5.4 Policy aspirations at national and local level have led to the development of proposals that deliver high standards of sustainable design which maximise the opportunity for walking and cycling and is situated in a location accessible by public transport.
- 3.5.5 The identification of Listed buildings adjacent to the site has required the configuration of the residential layout to respond appropriately to these heritage assets. The design addresses each.
- 3.5.6 Local character has been assessed and will form the basis for the design of Reserved Matters proposals, drawing out the use of locally appropriate and high-quality materials. Whether in terms of materials, set backs, general appearance, good examples of elements that contribute to the local character will be embraced in the proposal. The Design Guidelines at Section 7.0 of this Statement provide further detail on how the detailed design will be informed by the local character and sustainability aspirations for North West Bicester.

4.0 DESIGN

4.1 AMOUNT

- 4.1.1 The principle adopted is to provide a number of houses that accord with the desire and expectation for a range of dwelling types, and with the character of the area.
- 4.1.2 The site has been designed to accommodate up to 75 new homes.
- 4.1.3 Other than residential streets, the other uses are open space including an equipped area of play, allotments, community orchards and informal car parking for the church and allotments.