



# Fire Service College

Outline planning application for residential development

## DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

URBED (Urbanism, Environment and Design)  
December 2009





# Contents

Introduction	4
Site Location	6
Site Context	8
■ Urban Form	10
■ Facilities	11
■ Landscape	12
■ Policy context	13
■ Road hierarchy	14
■ Public Transport	15
■ Constraints	16
Scheme development	19
1. Airfield legacy	20
2. Visibility	22
3. Connectivity	24
4. Avenue and street	26
5. Spaces and places	28
6. Home zones and streets	30
7. Housing mix and form	32
Illustrative masterplan	34
Illustrative masterplan yields	36
Sustainability	38

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# Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by URBED (Urbanism, Environment and Design) on behalf of the Fire Service College (FSC) as part of an Outline Planning Application for a residential development of 300 units in the South west corner of the FSC grounds. The site covers 14.25 hectares and stands on the edge of Moreton-in-Marsh, just over 870m from the market square in the heart of the town.

The application has been submitted to establish the principle of residential development of the site and the amount of development that can be accommodated. An illustrative layout has been prepared as described in this document to demonstrate how this development could be achieved. However this is a Outline Application and all matters are reserved apart from access. The FSC needs to dispose of the site in order to raise capital funds to invest in the remainder of the college. It is therefore be the intention of the College to dispose of the site to a developer with the benefit of planning consent. The college is committed to securing a quality development on its doorstep but would not wish to tie a developer to a specific layout at this stage. The illustrative layout in this report is therefore by way of an aspiration and establishes the principles to be followed in the development of the site.

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in accordance with the guidance set out in Circular 01/2006 and by CABE. We

start by summarising the background work that URBED has done to understand the site and its context before describing the development of the illustrative plan.

This document forms part of a suite of documentation to support the planning application prepared by Knight Frank including:

- **Planning Statement** - Prepared by Knight Frank;
- **Draft Heads of Terms** - Prepared by Veale Wasbrough Vizards;
- **Transport Assessment and Travel Plan** - Prepared by Peter Evans Partnership Ltd;
- **Statement of Community Involvement** - Prepared by Four Communications;
- **Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy** - Prepared by Hyder Consulting Ltd;
- **Contamination Desk Study Report** - Prepared by Hyder Consulting Ltd;
- **Ecological Appraisal** - Prepared by Hyder Consulting Ltd;
- **Archaeological Report** - Prepared by WSP Ltd;
- **Arboricultural Supporting Information** - Prepared by Crown Consultants Ltd;
- **Waste Minimisation Statement** - Prepared by Knight Frank LLP.

In the preparation of the illustrative masterplan the site area has been extended and additional work has been commissioned on archaeology, ecology and tree cover to cover this area.







## Site Location

Moreton-in-Marsh lies in the Cotswolds at the point where the counties of Warwickshire, Oxfordshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire meet. As the plan to the right shows, Moreton lies in a very rural part of the country, set among the low hills of the Cotswolds and surrounded by areas of natural beauty and landscape quality.

The nearest towns are the small towns of Chipping Norton, Chipping Camden and Bourton-on-th-Water, all about 6 miles (10km) away. Beyond that the towns of Oxford, Swindon, Gloucester, Cheltenham lie within 50km as do the outskirts of Birmingham. London is 100km to the South West.

Moreton lies at a historic cross roads of the A44 to London and the A429, the historic Fosse Way. The M4 runs to the East of the

town and the nearest junction is around 35 miles away.

Moreton has a mainline railway station on the line from Worcester to London Paddington. There are 1 or 2 trains an hour to London and more regular local services. Paddington takes just over an hour and a half, Worcester 40 minutes and Oxford 50 minutes.

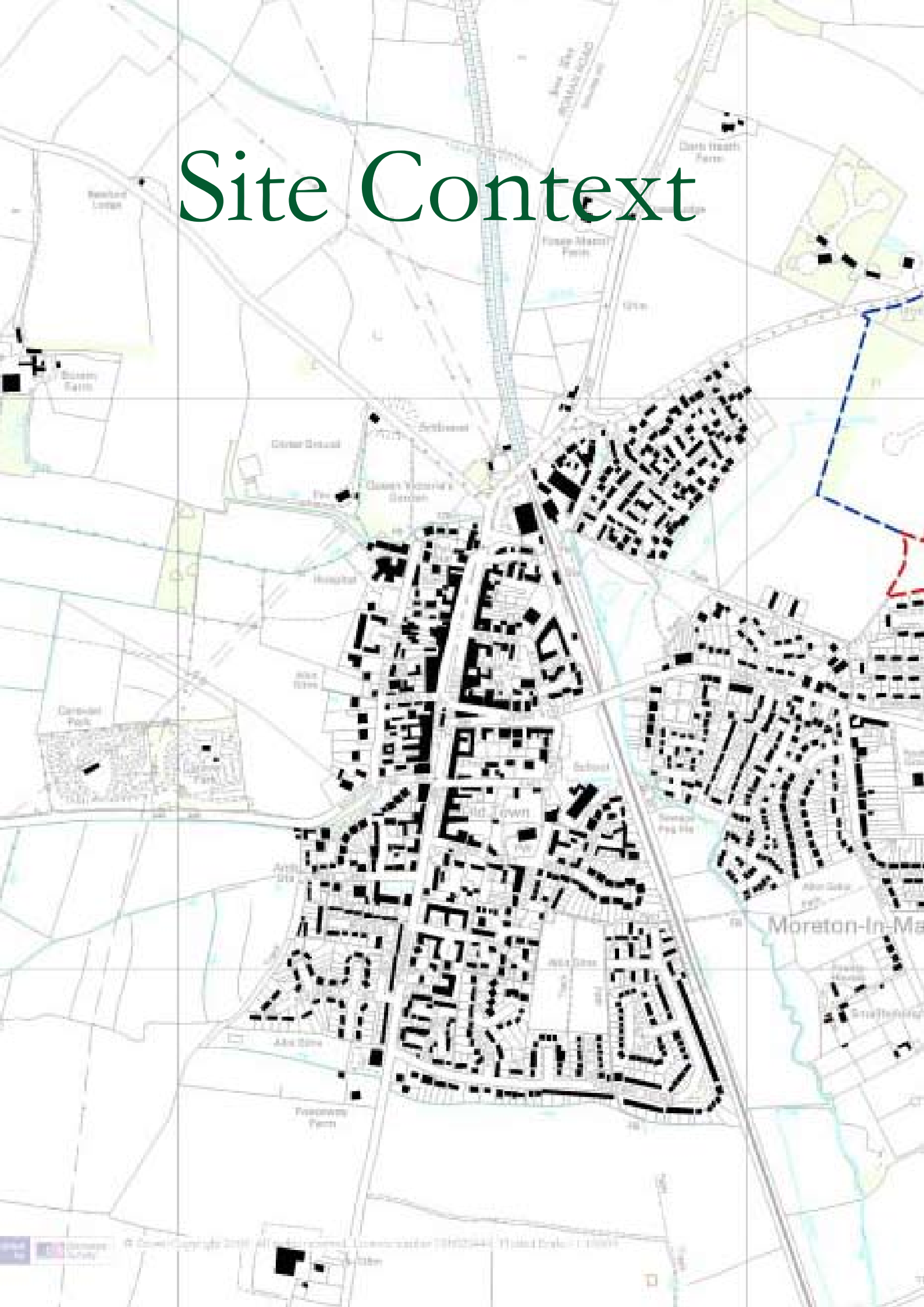
Moreton therefore benefits from a rural location with a feeling of isolation whole being located in a very accessible part of the country within easy reach by car and train of much of London and the Midlands.



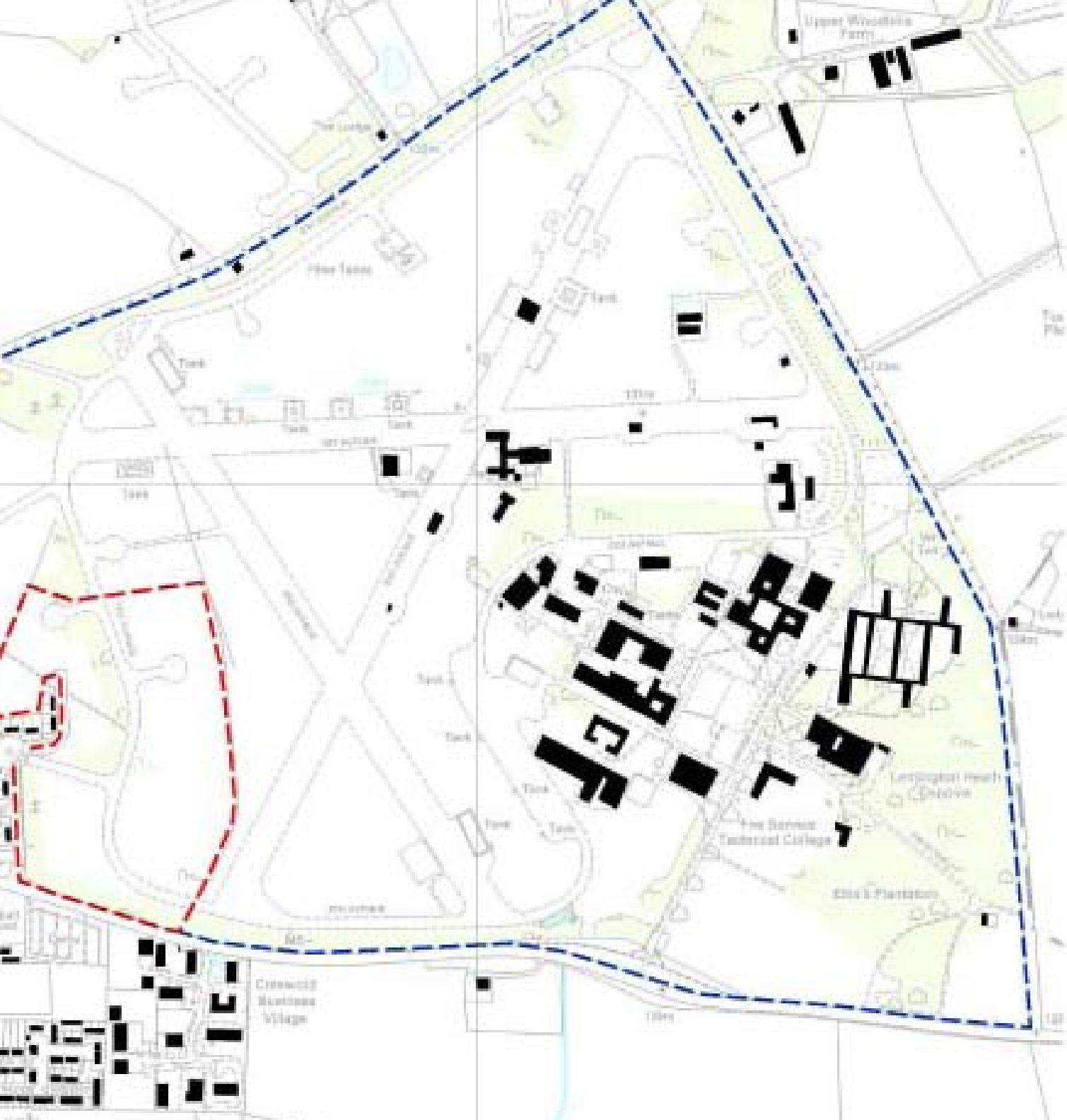




# Site Context







Moreton-in-Marsh is a compact town of just under 3200 people (2001 Census). The town as can be seen from the plan is focused on the historic Fosse Way, a Roman Road that widens to form the town's main street and Market Square. Much of the town's growth has taken place to the east on either side of the railway line. These include interwar suburbs and the more recent housing on Lemynton View. The main employment area in the town is the Cotswolds Business Village immediately to the south of the site.

The largest employer in the town and the main land owner is the Fire Service Collage. Their estate shown within the blue dotted line covers 200 hectares and is the site of a former RAF Base. The College trains the English and Welsh Fire Services and includes a series of training facilities including a railway line, a motorway, aircraft, a ship, factories and houses. A statement has been provided by the FSC outlining the impact of their activities in terms of noise and smoke. This is not considered to be incompatible with residential development.



# Urban Form

The plan above is a figure ground plan and is a useful tool for studying the urban form of the town. The plan shows only the buildings of the town, removing all other detail and is therefore useful in illustrating:

**Density:** The extent of building footprint is a useful indicator of the density of development in the town. The plan shows that the northern part of the High Street is the only area of relatively dense development. It is surrounded by low density suburban development, much of it suburban in character. The exception is the more recent Lemington View scheme, post PPS3 which shows an increase in densities.

**Enclosure of Space:** The extent to which it is possible to see roads and spaces on a plan such as this is an indication of how well they are enclosed by buildings. The plan shows the beautifully proportioned long market place along

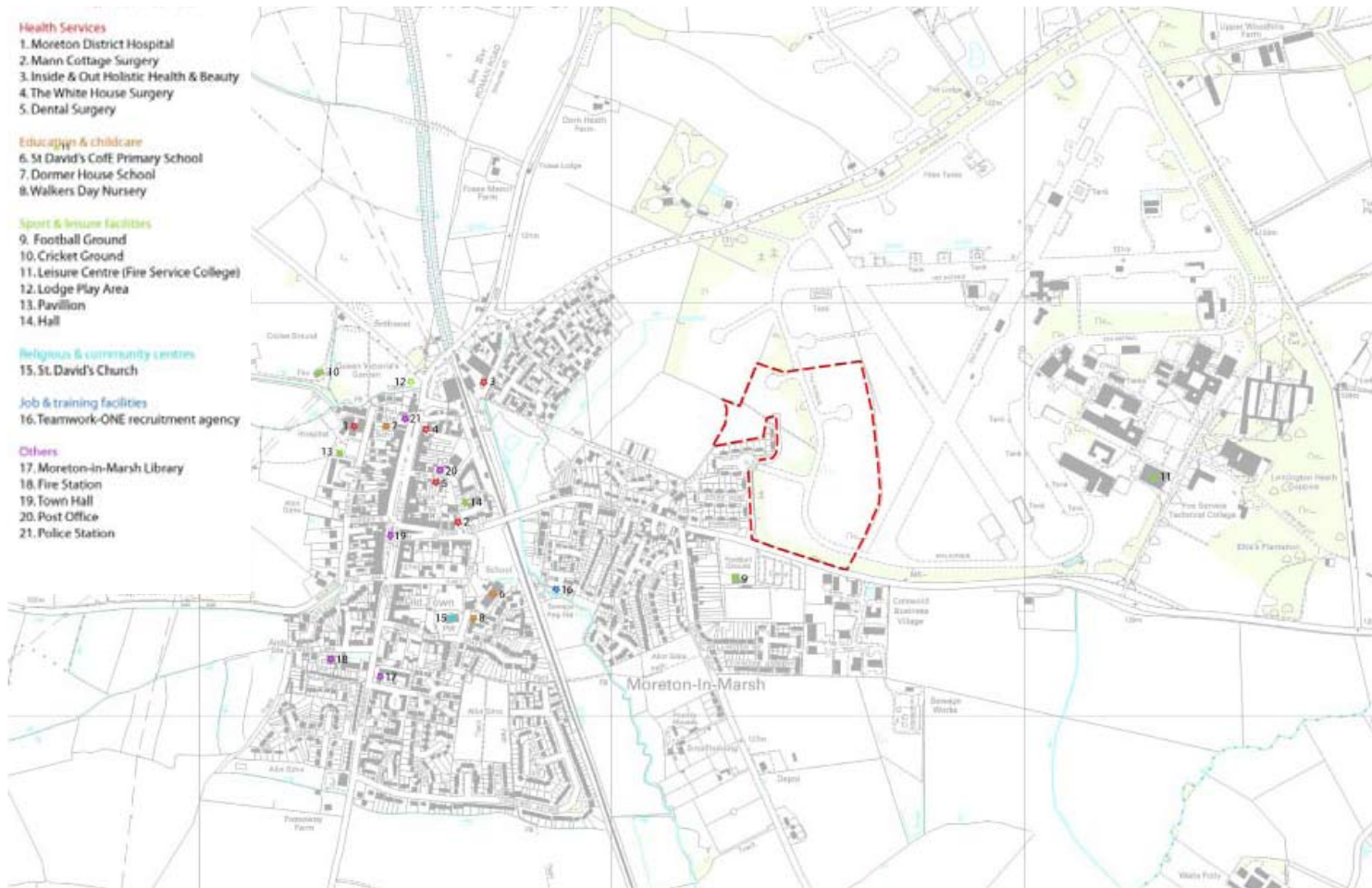


High Street with the central punctuation of the Town Hall. This is a typical arrangement for Cotswolds towns. Other than a small section of the A44 to the east of High Street (Oxford Street) there are no other streets of squares clearly defined on the plan.

**Grain:** Finally the plan gives an indication of the grain and variety of development. The varied nature of the High Street with a range of buildings of different sizes contrasts with the uniformity of the two large interwar estates.

The College itself stands to the east of the town and is a significant collection of buildings although none of the original airfield buildings remain.



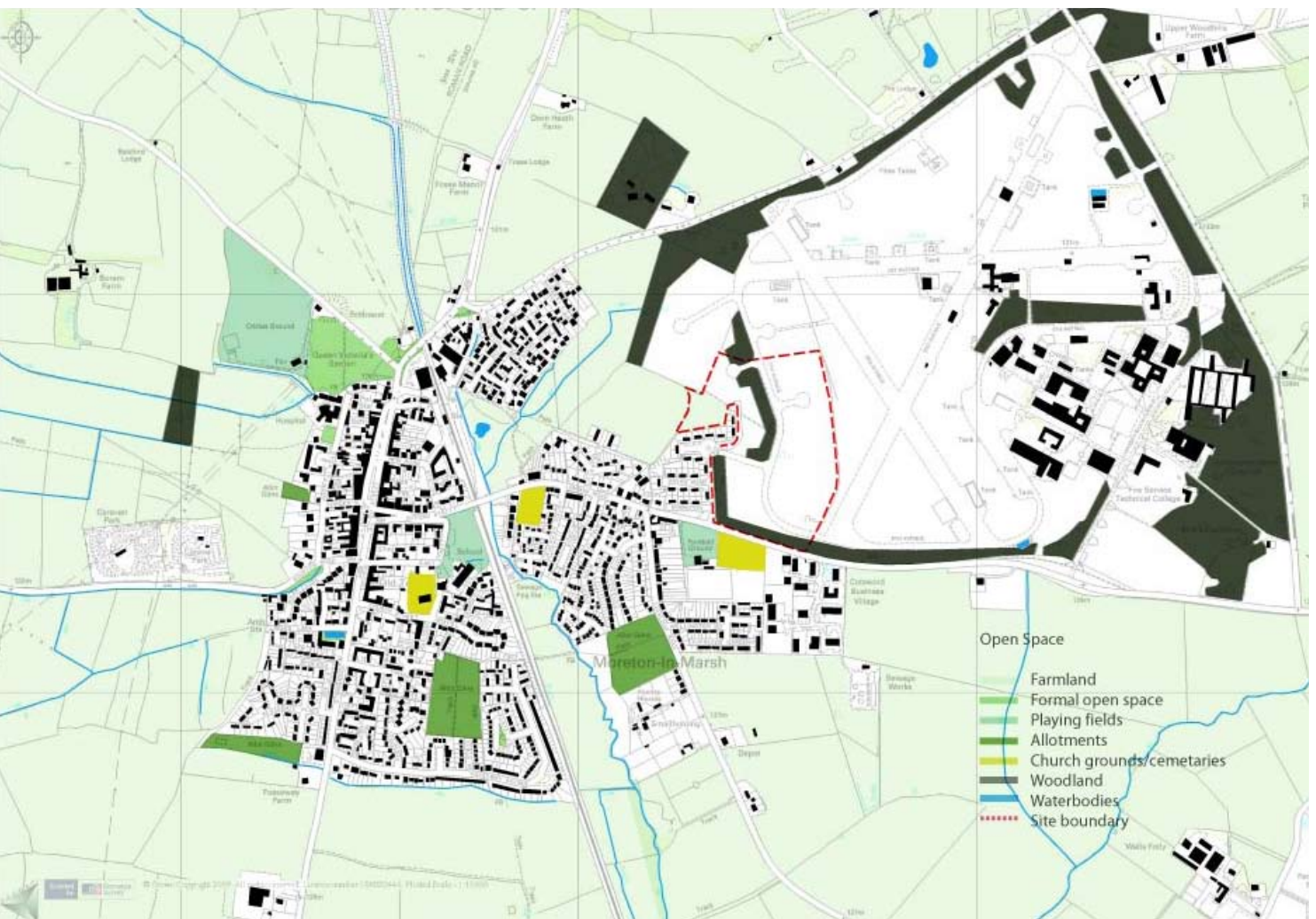


# Facilities

In order to understand the relationship of a potential development of the Fire Service College site to the town we have mapped the local facilities. This is a remarkably complete set of facilities for a town of 3,200 people and reflects the role that the town plays in serving the wider rural area. It has a library, police station, fire station and town hall (base for the Town Council). The town hosts the largest market in the Cotswolds every Tuesday and a major agricultural show every September.

Local facilities include a primary school, nursery and health facilities. It does however lack a secondary school. There are a number of outdoor sports facilities. However the main indoor facility is at the FSC which is made available for the use of local people.





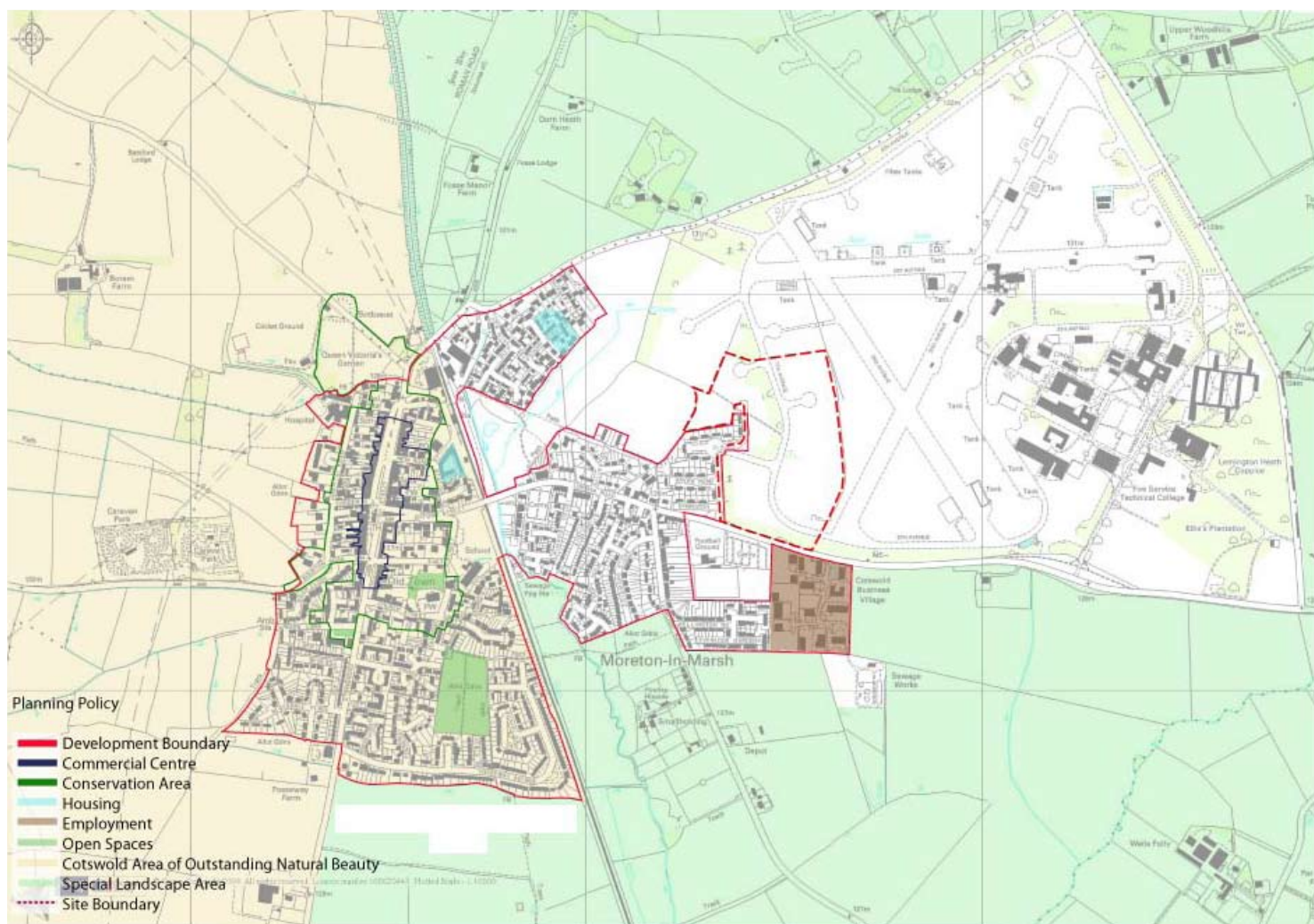
# Landscape

The plan above shows the landscape context of the site. The town is surrounded by rolling farm land at the head of the beautiful Evenlode valley. Much of this is protected as described on the facing page. The FSC is the main area near the town that lies outside this designation. As a former airfield this is an open grassed area, dotted with concrete training structures. The main landscape features are now the tree banks which surround the site and shield it from the surrounding streets. These tree banks are contemporary with the college and the trees are perhaps 30 years old although there are occasional older streets such as the large Oak at the junction of Mosedele Road and London Road.

Within the town the main park is the Queen Victoria Gardens to the north of the town which also includes the Cricket Ground. The football ground is to the east of the town, just south of the site that we are looking at. There are also a number of allotment gardens (four in total).







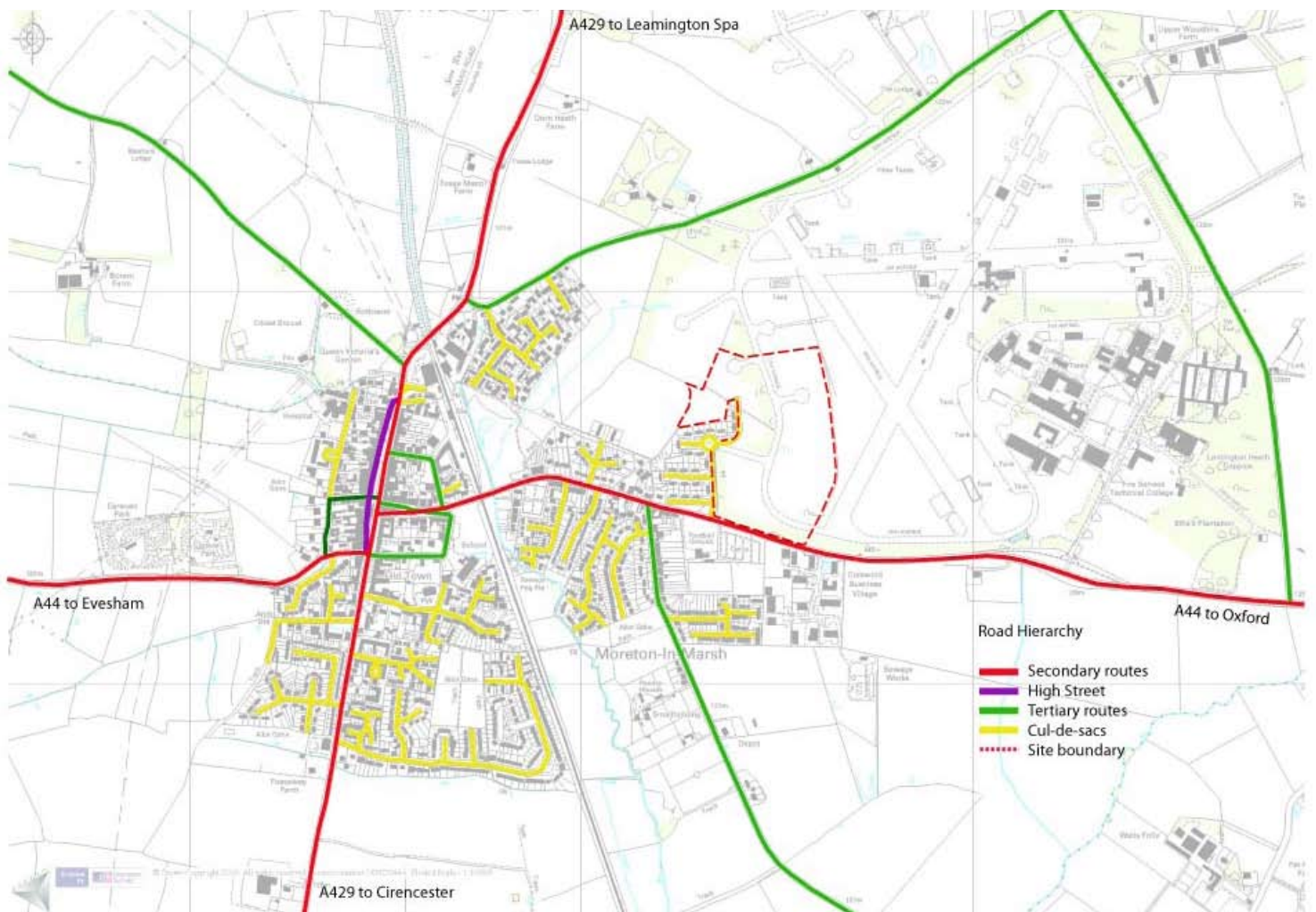
# Policy context

The plan above shows the planning policy context for the site. The area to the west of the town and much of the town itself is designated as the Cotswold's Area of outstanding Natural Beauty with the rural areas to the north and south of the FSC are designated as special landscape areas. The College and the land to the east of the town therefore represent the main opportunity for expansion in a way that does not impact on these designated areas.

The heart of the town is designated as a Conservation Area. This however does not extend to the east of the railway and is not visible from the FSC. There are two small housing allocations that have been built out and the Cotswold Business Village is allocated for employment uses.



In identifying additional residential opportunities to meet housing numbers the policy priorities sites that adjoin the development boundary shown in red on the plan. The FSC site meets this requirement as does the land to the west of this that is subject to a current planning application by Carla Homes.



# Road hierarchy

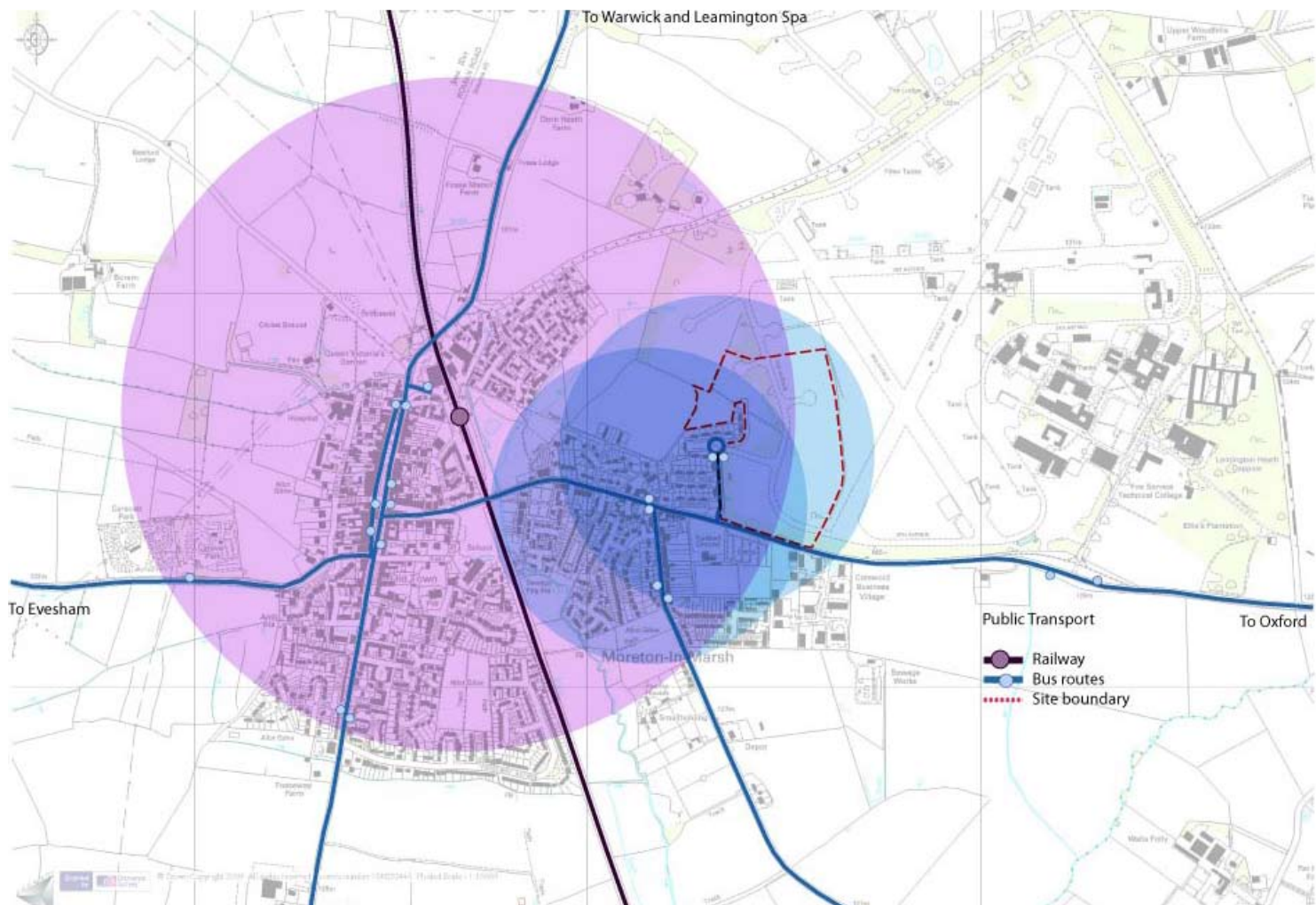
The street network of the town is based upon its origins as a cross roads. The A429 running North South is the Fosse Way, an ancient Roman Road that ran between Exeter and Lincoln. The A44 running east west is less venerable but forms the other key route through the town.

A typical road hierarchy would have a series of secondary streets running between these

primary routes, However virtually none exist in the town and the majority of streets are cul-de-sacs so that the town is lacking in the sort of permeable street network that one would expect to find in a historic town. Because of this all traffic in the town is channelled through the high street causing considerable pressure and congestion in the town centre. The issue for the FSC site is whether it continues this fragmented pattern of street layout or whether it seeks to create a more permeable pattern. Together with the Carla Homes site there is an opportunity to start linking up sites on the eastern side of the town. In the future this could even include a direct link between the London Road and the A429 to the North to avoid the town centre. This could of course become a rat run, however carefully designed it could be an important asset to the town.







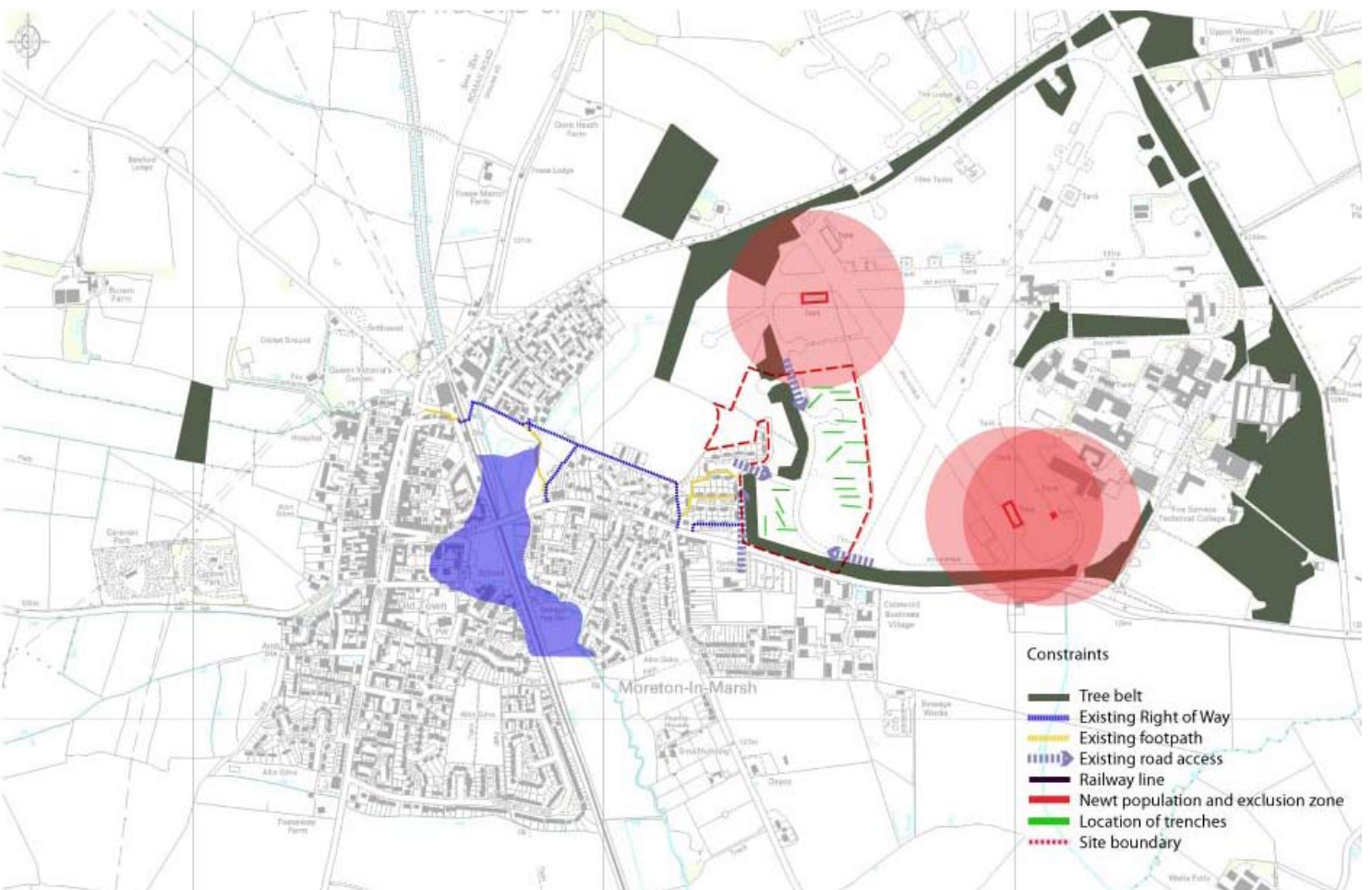
# Public Transport

The plan above shows the public transport connectivity of the site. The station, as we have said has nine services and includes links to London, Oxford, Gloucester and the Midlands. The service to London is 1 hour 40 minutes which is not the easiest commute compared to some faster lines but is used by commuters.

The large circle shows the 800m walk zone around the station. This is the distance commonly walkable within 10 minutes and is considered the distance that most able bodied people are prepared to walk. This shows that the station is well within reach of the site. Indeed there is a public footpath across the fields to the station that provides a direct route for pedestrians and cyclists.

Bus stops and routes are shown in blue on the plan above. The blue circles show 400m walk zones around bus stops (one of which exists on Mosedale). Guidance suggests that all new housing should be within 400m of a stop.

Many bus services to the town run only on Tuesdays to serve the market. The 50 Service however runs hourly between Moreton-in-Marsh and Chipping Norton along the A44. This can serve the new development and could even be diverted into the site (as an alternative to using Mosedale Road)



# Constraints

The conclusions of the analysis work undertaken by URBED and other members of the team are summarised on the plan above and opposite. The main influences on the site are:

**Tree belts:** The tree belts that surround the college contain very few trees that are significant. However the belts as a whole have a landscape value and have been treated as a constraint, being retained as far as possible.

**Flooding:** The main area affected by flooding to the west does not affect the site. However the capacity of local drainage is such that there is a need to avoid any run-off from the site. There will therefore be a need for soakaways equivalent to 10% of all hard standings plus additional soakaways in gardens for roofs.

**Archaeology:** Desk top and trial trench investigations have taken place (trenches are shown on the plan). These have uncovered nothing of significance.

**Contamination:** Investigations have shown no issues.

**Ecology:** The main ecological constraints relate to newts that have been found in three of the tanks within the FSC. The exclusion zone around the northern tank affects the northern part of the site.

**Footpath Routes:** There are a number of existing footpaths to the west which go to the footbridge over the railway. There is the opportunity to connect these to the site.













# Scheme development

URBED's approach to masterplanning is to create a distinctive sense of place. This we do through what we call the three 'R's: *Rediscovery* of the site's history, *Repair* of its urban fabric and *Renewal* of its urban form. In the case of the Fire Service College, the most interesting part of its history is its time as an airfield so that we have built on this as a starting point for our work. The job of repair is not so great as it is in many urban areas. Nevertheless as we have said the road network of the town is very disconnected and there is an opportunity to knit the site into the fabric of the town. The final R - Renewal is about creating some where distinctive that has its own character and doesn't feel like a 'anywhere' housing estate.



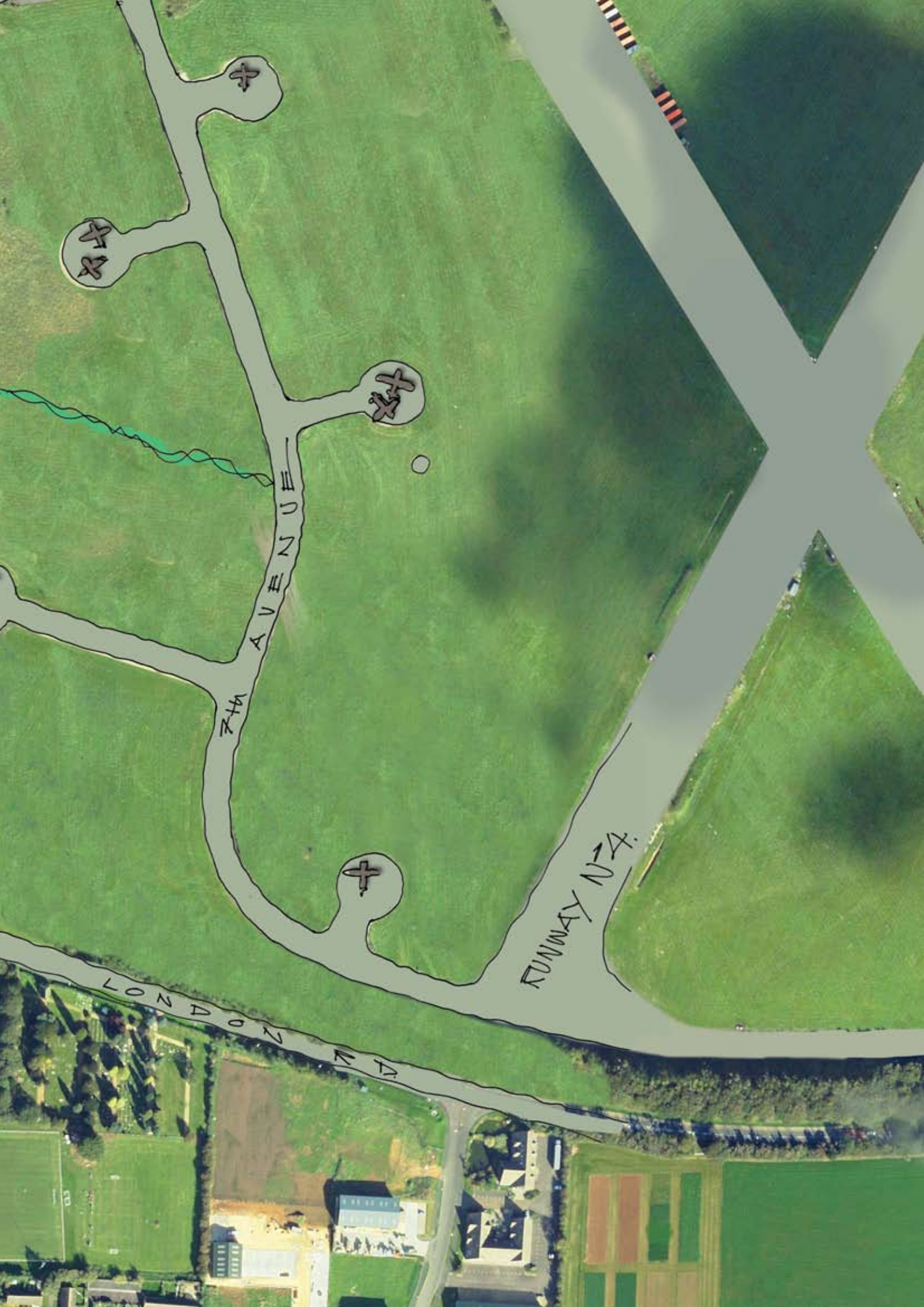
# 1. Airfield legacy

The archaeological work shows very little on the site before the advent of the Airfield and its use in the second world war. The airfield was a base for Wellington Squadrons and largely a training base although operational flights were flown from here. The runways remain in use by the FSC as training areas including a section of motorway. 7th Avenue was a taxi way and the arms off this were parking areas for the aircraft. This ensured that the aircraft were dispersed and therefore presented a more difficult target. The air crew were accommodated around their aircraft in tents or huts.

Most of these features still exist (including the roundabout on Mosedale Road which was once one of the circular parking areas. The illustrative masterplan has retained 7th Avenue and a number of these circular parking areas. This will be a point of interest to future residents and could be reflected in the naming of the streets.











## 2. Visibility

The retention of the tree belts while desirable, create a problem for the site in terms of visibility. If the development were to be entirely hidden behind the tree belts the residents would be cut off from the town and the developer would struggle to market the property. The illustrative masterplan seeks to overcome this by removing a small section of trees on the corner of Mosedale Road and London Road and then using the view that this opens up to maximum effect. This is achieved with three elements:

**A gateway to frame a view:** It is proposed that this gateway is made of two blocks of apartments with an area of more formal landscaping.

**A vista:** A long view deep into the site to show the extent of the scheme and to visually connect it back to the town.

**A landmark:** A significant building at the end of the vista to draw the eye into the site. in the past this would have been a church, but in the absence of demand for this the plan uses another apartment building.





NEW ROAMING AREA

TREE BANK

TREE

GATEWAY

VISTA

LONDON AVE

LANDMARK

RUNWAY N4

BUTTERFLY





### 3. Connectivity

The plan seeks to avoid the feel that the scheme is one large cul-de-sac but is rather connected in to the rest of the town. There are limited opportunities to do this however there are opportunities to use Mosedale Road and to link to the Carla Homes site.

The main vehicle access is taken from London Road via a new junction. This feeds into the bottom of the retained 7th Avenue that becomes the main vehicle circulation spine for the scheme. Further vehicle access points are created from the Mosedale Road roundabout and from the far end of the street. There is a potential road link to the Carla Homes site which we believe it is important to create.

North of this there is a potential access into a future phase of the FSC site if that were to come forward for development.

The main pedestrian access into the site is via the gateway from the junction of London Road and Mosedale Road. This will be an attractive entrance point and will link the scheme both physically and visually back into the town. Connections are also made from the residential streets to the west of Mosedale Road. There is also an important public footpath route from the station that links into the north west part of the site





Link to possible future development

Footpath to the station

MOSEDALE AVENUE

LONDON ROAD

RUNWAY N4





A new avenue created as part of the New Hall development in Harlow

## 4. Avenue and street

The layout is organised around two main north/south elements that provide circulation through the site as well as two very different character areas:

**7th Avenue:** As described above, the scheme retains this element of the airfield for its historical significance. This is a wide street and the aim is to break it up with a median strip down its centre, wide pavements and street trees. The central strip is to be used as a swale to collect surface water run off. It is anticipated that this will be 1.5m wide and so will create 900m<sup>2</sup> of soakaway area. The houses along the avenue are mostly detached and spaced to create a rhythm along the street.

**The Village Street:** To the east of the avenue a very different north south route. This is intended to be a village street, with an organic form, shared surfacing and housing built to the back of pavement to create a village character winding through the site.



A scheme by Taylor Wimpey at Chelmer Green in Chelmsford









New village square as part of the Telford Millennium Village (URBED Masterplan)

## 5. Spaces and places

The illustrative masterplan creates a generous variety of public open space throughout the site. These include:

**The Green:** This is intended as an intimate village green. The central area is 0.11ha but it is surrounded by home zone areas so will feel larger.

**Gate:** The entrance to the site from the south west is designed as a more formal landscaped area covering 0.14ha. This will include hard surfacing and a pond as part of the soakaway system.

**Play:** In the middle of the site is the main open space area for the site. This includes part of the tree bank and in total covers 0.47ha. This will include the main play area (NEAP). It is

designed as a landscaped square with supervision from surrounding housing.

**Edge:** To the north of the site is a transitional space overlooking the college grounds. This will also include a soakaway pond and covers 0.18ha.

**Circuses:** There are two small circular spaces based on the old plane parking areas. These are 0.06ha each.

In addition to this the majority of the tree bank areas are retained. In total 1.56ha of tree bank is retained while 0.27ha is removed to facilitate access (17%).

Along the eastern edge of the site there is a landscaped strip to protect the site from the railway. This covers 0.78ha. and there a further nature area covering 0.26ha on the western edge of the site.

In total this means that the illustrative masterplan includes 0.96ha of public open space and 2.6ha of landscaping and tree cover. This will be resolved in detail at reserved matters stage.



Housing facing the edge - The Chelmer scheme in Chelmsford









A homezone in Groningen, the Netherlands

## 6. Home zones and streets

The other element of the public realm are the streets. There are two broad categories of street in the illustrative masterplan:

**Streets:** The areas in grey on the plan opposite are conceived as streets with a relatively traditional appearance. These are roads with a carriage way, kerbs, pavement and on street parking. These streets will take most of the traffic moving through the site (although the volume of this will be small). It could also accommodate a diversion of the bus route as shown by the dotted line on the plan opposite.

**Home Zones:** The other streets shown in brown are planned as home zones. These are to be shared surfaces with pedestrian priority. There will be no pavements or kerb lines and the housing will define the carriageway edge.

**Parking:** The illustrative masterplan has been tested for parking and achieved 150%. All of the larger houses have an in-curtilage parking space, normally in a garage. This potentially accommodates 2 spaces because of the hardstanding in front of the garage. Other parking is provided either on street or in small internal courtyard car parks. The latter have been minimised and tend to be used in blocks where there are apartment blocks.



Ecolonia in the Netherlands









New housing in Bishop's Stortford

## 7. Housing mix and form

The scheme layout has been tested to achieve 300 units. These include 36 apartments and 264 houses. The apartments are indicated with the orange squares on the plan opposite (each square represents a stack of three flats). These blocks will all be three storey.

In addition to this there are a range of three storey houses shown in red on the plan. These are based on the standard housetypes of one of the main housebuilders and the variety of heights is intended to create variety and interest.

The layout is based on 40m wide urban blocks allowing an internal privacy distance of at least 20m and generally more than this. On the few occasions where the geometry of the site makes this difficult it is anticipated that design features can be used to mitigate any overlooking issues.

Contemporary villas in the Cotswold Water Park









Elevation to the Village Street



## Illustrative masterplan

The principles brought together on the previous pages have been used to create the illustrative masterplan on the opposite page. The elevation above is based on the housetypes used in the creation of the plan rendered in traditional designs. The same types could be rendered in contemporary styles although this would be a decision for the developer.







Elevation to 7th Avenue



## Illustrative masterplan yields

This is just an illustrative plan but it shows how the site can be developed with typical housetypes to achieve 300 units. The housetypes used are those of one of the UK's large housebuilders. They include a mix of 2 and 3 storey units and a mix of 2 to 4 bed houses.

The 36 apartments are based on a quarter of the 50% social housing requirement and is based on discussions with housing associations. The mix of the remainder of the units is not to be fixed at this stage but the layout is sufficiently flexible to allow for a range of uses.









# Sustainability

The FSC aspires for the scheme to represent good practice with regard to sustainability. However at the outline stage it is difficult to set this out in detail and we would anticipate these issues being dealt with as part of reserved matters applications. At this stage a detailed Sustainability Statement will be submitted in line with Local Plan Policy 40 and the Cotswold Design Code. At this stage we have considered the following:

**Efficient use of land:** The proposal would result in the more efficient use of 14.25 ha of brownfield land that is currently surplus to the requirements of the FSC. Therefore the principle of development would accord with the sustainability objectives of national, regional and local planning guidance which seeks to promote the development of brownfield sites in preference to greenfield locations.

**Car use:** The scheme would be accessible to public transport, both bus and rail. The train station is within a 10 minute walk so that it will be possible to live on the site without being dependent on a car.

**Sustainable Drainage:** The illustrative plan has been designed to avoid surface water run-off. Swales and ponds are provided to cover 2500m<sup>2</sup> which is 10% of the hard surface area. This includes a linear swale down the centre of the Avenue. The residential courtyards include soakaways (shown in blue) to handle run-off from roofs.

The Sustainability statement will also cover:

- accessibility, environmental impact and resources during construction and use;
- performance against eco-homes standards for housing development;
- water use;
- energy consumption, incorporation of renewable energy proposals;
- sustainable construction, utilising recycled building materials.









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