

## **2 THE APPLICATION SITE, PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING**

### **2.1 Application Site**

- 2.1.1 The sites are located to the east of Fairford, within the county of Gloucestershire; and are centred on National Grid Reference SP 1650 0055 covering an area of approximately 42 hectares in total.

#### Lakes 104, 103 & 103A

- 2.1.2 The proposals are to be arranged within the northeast corner of lake 104, around the whole shorelines of lake 103 and the western shoreline of lake 103A. The northeast shoreline will be modified to accommodate an access track and to realign the public footpath from its current permissive route onto its definitive course. The lakes are currently used for fishing from platforms and rowing boats.
- 2.1.3 The land to be developed is contained within a strong prevailing pattern of hedgerows and tree belts around the lake boundaries and each lake has its own defining character and qualities.

#### Milestone

- 2.1.4 The land surrounding Milestone House currently consists of a large detached residential property, two fishing lakes and an area of hard standing. Existing access is directly off the A417 approximately 150m west of the current access into lake 103. The house and hard standing area will be demolished and the two lakes re-profiled into a single water body that will be managed in the future for nature conservation and a setting to the pavilions and apartments around it.

### **2.2 Access and Transport Arrangements**

- 2.2.1 Main access to the Lakes application site will be off a new junction with the A417 Fairford to Lechlade road, to the northeast of lake 104. The position and road specification will be in accordance with the previous application as the inspector at the S.78 appeal concluded that access at this location could be accommodated without detriment or unacceptable harm to the landscape or character of the area.
- 2.2.2 Access, to the fishing lakes is currently from a gravel track to the east of Milestone House in the northeast corner of the site with secondary access from a private gated entrance off the Whelford Road to the southeast that runs to the south of neighbouring lake 105.

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- 2.2.3 It is proposed that the existing entrance to Milestone House be closed, and that the proposals within Milestone are served from a junction off the new access road as it enters the northeast corner of lake 103.
- 2.2.4 In addition, a number of public rights of way pass through and around the Lake site providing links to Fairford town centre, 750m to the west and to several other lakes north of Whelford in the east.
- 2.2.5 The A417, London Road is an existing bus route with services linking Cirencester, Lechlade and Swindon. It is proposed to provide bus stops at the new site access to encourage the use of public transport. Other improvements to sustainable modes of transport include improving facilities for pedestrians and cyclists in the form of a continuous footway/cycleway alongside the A417 between Fairford and the Whelford Road junction and cycle storage facilities within the development.
- 2.2.6 The highway authority has plans to improve the Whelford Road junction as part of its plans to create the 'Eastern Spine Road' linking the eastern section of the Cotswold Water Park to the A419 trunk road at Latton to improve accessibility. The proposed development will assist in bringing forward that scheme by contributing to highway improvements on the A417.

## **2.3 The Proposed Development**

### **Design Concept and Overview**

- 2.3.1 The aim is to provide an innovative and sustainable development to high standards of design as an exemplar of what can be achieved in the Cotswold Water Park, acting as a catalyst for further tourist investment. The proposals for the site are intended to interact cohesively with each other, whilst integrating into the surrounding landscape. This is to be achieved by providing:
- a unique contemporary "statement design" in both landscape and built form to give a strong sense of identity and attraction with the emphasis on quality, using locally sourced materials wherever practicable.
  - an alternative concept to most existing developments in the water park, whilst respecting the context of the site and the character of the surrounding areas.
  - a flexible tourist product based on individual ownership, which will ensure increased occupancy rates (i.e. over and above traditional tourist accommodation and second homes accommodation) and which will maximise the throughput of visitors whilst preventing occupation of the units as second homes. This will also maximise the positive effects of the proposed development in terms of its contribution to the local

economy. In this regard the proposals have had careful regard to saved Local Plan Policy UT.1 and the Cotswold Water Park Supplementary Planning Guidance.

- a high quality core Leisure Complex building (Use Class D) providing a range of leisure facilities.
- monitoring, improving and managing existing habitats and wildlife conservation to increasing biodiversity, to act as a tourist attraction in itself.
- It is also proposed that the site is developed to provide additional services and facilities within the local area and surrounding district. This is to be achieved through:
- upgrading and improving the Public Rights of Way, including the addition of cycle routes, in and around the site.
- providing sports and Leisure facilities including a gymnasium, swimming pool and other indoor sporting activities (Use Class D) with access for local residents only
- employment opportunities for local people
- increased economic infrastructure for use by local businesses

2.3.2 The lakes application site proposals will consist of:

Table 2.1 the lakes development schedule

Area	Zone (SPG)	Proposed development	Maximum Height To Ridge	
Lake 104	B	Leisure Building (no accommodation) Consisting of: Gymnasium, swimming pool	10m	
Lake 103A	B	6 Pavilions	6 up to 10m	
Lake 103	C	53 Pavilions	45 up to 10m	8 up to 12m

2.3.3 The Milestone application site proposals will consist of:

Table 2.2 Milestone Development Schedule

Area	Zone (SPG)	Proposed development	Maximum Height To Ridge	
Milestone	C	16 Pavilions 63 Apartments	16 up to 10m 8 blocks up to 10m	5 blocks up to 12m

### **Environmental Setting**

- 2.3.4 The site is not subject to any national or regional environment-related designations. There are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest abut the southern application boundary of Lake 104.
- 2.3.5 Of local importance, Tree Preservation Orders cover the lake 104 application area.
- 2.3.6 These designations are discussed in further detail within *Chapters 9.0 and 10.0* (Ecology and Landscape)