



Press statement

2 November 2007

RAF Bentley Priory

VSM Estates confirms public consultation will take place over future plans for the site

VSM Estates has confirmed that it will be seeking community feedback on its proposals for the redevelopment of the RAF Bentley Priory site. This follows the adoption of Harrow Council's Supplementary Planning Document [SPD], which represents a significant milestone in the planning process. Adoption of the SPD also represents a major step forward towards securing the Priory's long-term future and enabling the preservation of its unique and significant heritage. VSM's consultation on the future of the site will include a two-day public exhibition to be held at the end of November and in early December and will continue into the New Year.

VSM Estates has a successful track-record of working in partnership with local Councils and involving communities in the redevelopment of former Ministry of Defence (MoD) sites within the M25 that have been released through Defence Estates' Project MoDEL. VSM Estates was recently granted planning permission by the London Borough of Hillingdon for the redevelopment of RAF West Ruislip and is now working with the Borough on plans to redevelop RAF Uxbridge. It is also working with the London Borough of Barnet on an Area Action Plan for Inglis Barracks in Mill Hill, and with the London Borough of Greenwich over the redevelopment of Victoria House in Woolwich.

Bill Oliver, Director of VSM Estates said:

"VSM Estates fully acknowledges the importance of RAF Bentley Priory, and as such we are committed to a full programme of public engagement to ensure local people and other interested parties are consulted on the issues involved in redeveloping the site and securing its heritage, and can have their say. We have been working in partnership with the Bentley Priory Battle of Britain Trust, the MoD, including the RAF Museum in Hendon, the London Borough of Harrow, the Princes Regeneration Trust and English Heritage to ensure that the objectives of all stakeholders can be delivered.

"We see public consultation as the next step in this process and look forward to engaging with the Stanmore Society, local residents and all those with an interest in the future of the Priory. We believe we can develop a sustainable outcome that preserves the heritage of this important site, however this will require all parties to work together to find a viable and long-term solution."

VSM Estates was appointed by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in August 2006 to develop a number of MoD sites within the M25, including RAF Bentley Priory. The sites will become vacant as part of the MoD's plans to combine operations in the capital into a single integrated site for servicemen and women at RAF Northolt, which is known as Project MoDEL. VSM will also implement the £150 million investment at RAF Northolt to provide new first-rate facilities and reduce running costs for the MoD.

VSM Estates has been working closely with the Bentley Priory Battle of Britain Trust for over a year, and has reached an agreement in principle with the Trust regarding the planned redevelopment of the site. The agreement will ensure that both the Trust and VSM work together to secure the long-term future of the site and deliver a viable solution to preserving its heritage. Although the agreement represents a significant step forward, both bodies recognise that a significant amount of work will be required to obtain a planning consent which delivers a sustainable heritage solution and potential educational facility, to be enjoyed by the public and future generations.

As part of its consultation process, VSM Estates will be outlining the work that has been undertaken to date, some of the issues that need to be addressed, and the progress that has been made so far at meeting of the Stanmore Society on 21 November 2007. Full details of this event will be published by the Society.

VSM Estates' public exhibitions will be held on **Friday 30th of November** and **Saturday 8th December** at **Church House on Old Church Lane** in Stanmore. Full details will be published once they become available and a detailed planning application is then expected to be submitted for the site in Spring 2008.

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For further information

For more information please contact Pippa Savage or Paul Teverson on 020 7636 7366

Notes to Editors

1. Famous for its pivotal role as Lord Dowding's Fighter Command Headquarters during the Battle of Britain, RAF Bentley Priory is one of six surplus sites acquired and due to be redeveloped by VSM in Greater London as part of the 'MOD Estate in London Project,' (MoDEL). MoDEL is a key MOD project aiming to implement the Department's Estate Strategy, by creating a fit-for-purpose defence estate for Greater London capable of delivering 21st century operational output.
2. Project MoDEL aims to consolidate the facilities occupied in London by the MOD onto a fit-for-purpose site thereby generating a number of benefits in terms of reducing running costs, improving efficiency and consolidating resources. Approximately 1,000 military and civilian personnel from the disposal sites will be directly affected by the move to RAF Northolt where they will benefit from improved accommodation and facilities. The consolidated site will enjoy new offices, new squadron accommodation, single living accommodation, catering facilities, welfare, physical and recreational training areas. Consolidating resources will improve efficiency across the Estate. The redevelopment of RAF Northolt will relocate personnel from 40 units across all three Services.

3. Project MoDEL released the following sites for acquisition:
 - RAF Uxbridge
 - RAF Bentley Priory
 - RAF Eastcote (under construction)
 - RAF West Ruislip (has outline consent)
 - Inglis Barracks, Mill Hill
 - Victoria House, Woolwich
4. VSM Estates is a joint venture between VINCI PLC and St Modwen Properties PLC established to deliver Project MoDEL, the Ministry of Defence's programme to create a 21st Century MOD Estate. Both VINCI and St Modwen Properties bring decades of project management, construction and development expertise coupled with a unique understanding of complex PPP projects. VSM Estates' fully integrated approach to Project MoDEL has allowed for the optimum balance between the development at RAF Northholt and the disposal of the vacated sites, offering a best value solution. This expertise, complemented by the strength of the other project partners, provided the MOD with the confidence that VSM Estates could deliver Project MoDEL.
5. VINCI PLC forms part of VINCI, a world leader in construction, concessions and associated services with over 128.000 employees operating on more than 80 countries. A number of specialist subsidiaries operating throughout the UK, most notably Norwest Holst, enables VINCI PLC to offer a complete construction package from inception to completion of a project and beyond.
6. St Modwen Properties PLC is a property development and investment company concentrating on regeneration. It has four particular areas of specialism: town centre regeneration, partnering industry in its restructuring, renewal of brownfield land, and heritage restoration. It has high profile regeneration assets in London and UK-wide schemes including the Elephant and Castle Shopping Centre and Longbridge in the West Midlands. With over 5,000 acres of developable land and many town or district centre schemes under its control, the company is able to marshal a wide range of projects through the planning and development process.
7. The Bentley Priory Battle of Britain Trust is a charity registered in July 2006. Its objectives are to preserve Bentley Priory as a memorial to those who planned and flew in the Battle of Britain and as a centre of education about the Battle. The Trust was founded at the behest of the Battle of Britain Fighter Association, the official association of The Few, the pilots who flew in the Battle.