



Historic England

SOUTH EAST OFFICE

Mr Andrew Lewis
Cherwell District Council
Planning, Housing & Economy
Bodicote House, Bodicote
Banbury
Oxfordshire
OX15 4AA

Direct Dial: 01483 252026

Our ref: P00516456

8 July 2016

Dear Mr Lewis

Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2015 & T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

**BUILDING 455 AND 457 HEYFORD PARK CAMP ROAD UPPER HEYFORD
Application No 16/01000/F**

Thank you for your letter of 21 June 2016 notifying Historic England of the above application.

Summary

These proposals would entail a high level of harm to the significance of buildings 455 and 457, two RAF era buildings which are recognised as positive contributors to the Conservation Area in which they sit. The proposals would also reduce the coherence of Camp Road as a military landscape and thus entail a moderate degree of harm to the conservation area as a whole. As there are extant permissions for a far more sensitive restoration of both these buildings we do not consider the level of harm entailed to be justified.

Historic England Advice

Buildings 455 and 457 form part of the initial institution of the airfield at Upper Heyford, being built in 1925. Relatively few buildings from this period now survive on the site and while relatively simple these two are among the best survivors in architectural terms. They originally formed part of a group around a parade ground and also formed the interface with camp road. Part of this context is in the course of undergoing great change, as most of the buildings around the former parade have consent for demolition and the parade ground itself is to be replaced with a cricket pitch. However, the basic spatial disposition of the buildings - acting as an interface between Camp Road and the technical site and the main public space of the domestic site - remains as originally conceived. Furthermore, Camp Road survives more intact and is one of the last places on the base where a coherent sequence of interwar buildings can be seen. This is formed by buildings 74 (the Officer's Mess), 52 (Station Offices and Operations Block), 100 (the Guardhouse) and 103 in addition to buildings 455 and



EASTGATE COURT 195-205 HIGH STREET GUILDFORD SURREY GU1 3EH

Telephone 01483 252020
HistoricEngland.org.uk





SOUTH EAST OFFICE

457.

In our view these buildings make an important contribution to the significance of the conservation area as the last remaining indicators that the land south of Camp Road was once an interwar RAF domestic site and as part of a coherent group of survivors centred along Camp Road. The fact that it was the first of the Trenchard era bomber bases to be constructed and acted as a model for those that followed heightens the value of these buildings.

The significance of these buildings has long been recognised in that they were identified as making a positive contribution and earmarked for possible retention in the Revised Comprehensive Planning Brief (2007) and granted outline consents for the site (08/00716/OUT & 10/01642/OUT) have all included the retention and reuse of these buildings. Recently planning permission has been granted for the partial demolition, refurbishment and renovation of both buildings (15/01944/F - for building 455 and 15/01849/F - for building 457). The development permitted consists of converting both buildings to café/restaurant use. Part of a presumed later single storey addition to building 455 was to be demolished. Building 457 was to be converted with minimal harm to the building's significance. The only demolition proposed was that of poor quality later alterations and the alterations envisaged to the original building were relatively minor.

The current proposals are much more ambitious. The entire rear (northern) side of building 457 would be demolished and rebuilt, building 455 would be surrounded by new structures to the north and east and the two would be linked by a glass walled structure. This would make buildings 455 and 457 invisible when viewed from Camp Road. Consequently their visual relationship with the RAF buildings on the north side of the road, particularly 52 and 100, would be lost and the coherence of this road as a whole would be damaged. The Heritage Statement prepared in support of this application recognises that there would be a moderate degree of harm to the buildings. This in our view underestimates the harm entailed. Large areas of primary fabric would be lost and the way in which it is proposed to surround them with new building means that very little of their original context would survive. Consequently we conclude that there would be a high level of harm to the significance of the buildings themselves. Furthermore, the loss of coherence of Camp Road would result in a moderate level of harm to the significance of the conservation area as a whole, an issue not properly considered in the heritage statement.

Paragraph 132 of the NPPF requires clear and convincing justification for any harm to a designated heritage asset. We recognise that these buildings are currently empty and a new use is needed but do not accept that the harm proposed is necessary to achieve this. There are extant planning permissions for a much more sensitive restoration of both 455 and 457; therefore reuse of the buildings could be achieved in a much less harmful way.



EASTGATE COURT 195-205 HIGH STREET GUILDFORD SURREY GU1 3EH

Telephone 01483 252020
HistoricEngland.org.uk





Historic England

SOUTH EAST OFFICE

Your Council will of course have to weigh up other public benefits associated with the application against the harm as required by paragraph 134 of the Framework. The proposal would strengthen the village centre by providing a hotel and additional retail area. However, this is an extensive site and it would be possible to provide these facilities in other ways which were less harmful to these buildings. For this reason again we do not think there is adequate justification for the harm entailed.

Recommendation

Historic England recommend that this application is refused on the grounds that the harm entailed to the significance of buildings 455 and 457 would not be justified as required by paragraph 132 of the NPPF. We recommend that the extant planning permissions for the restoration of these buildings are implemented and less harmful ways of delivering a village centre are explored.

We would welcome the opportunity of advising further. Please consult us again if any additional information or amendments are submitted. If, notwithstanding our advice, you propose to approve the scheme in its present form, please advise us of the date of the committee and send us a copy of your report at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely



Richard Peats

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas
E-mail: richard.peats@HistoricEngland.org.uk
cc: Rose Todd, Cherwell District Council



EASTGATE COURT 195-205 HIGH STREET GUILDFORD SURREY GU1 3EH

Telephone 01483 252020
HistoricEngland.org.uk

