

BASE MANAGEMENT PLAN

HEYFORD PARK

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Base Management Plan for Upper Heyford has been prepared by Pegasus Planning Group, in conjunction with Cooper Partnership, Roger Evans Associates Limited, Trench Farrow, Ecological Planning and Research and Oxford Archaeology on behalf of the land owners, North Oxfordshire Consortium Limited (NOC), in order to provide all relevant parties with guidance on the future conservation, management and enhancement of the site of the former RAF Upper Heyford Air Base. It is largely based upon the landscape, ecological and archaeological work already undertaken (as part of the drafting of an Environmental Statement and the Design and Access Statement) and aims to secure a sustainable and positive future for the wider Airfield site that suitably reflects its historical importance and ecological interest.
- 1.2 The document outlines what is currently understood about the site and what is significant about it. From this understanding, the Plan then sets out clear policy objectives to guide the long-term management and conservation of the site and proposes actions and management measures to help deliver a sustainable future for it. These objectives are derived from the overarching policy (Policy H2) in the Oxfordshire County Structure Plan and seek to deliver most of the Council's stated objectives as set out in the Revised Comprehensive Development Brief for Upper Heyford, recently adopted by Cherwell District Council as a Supplementary Planning document (SPD). The NOC "vision" for the "lasting arrangement" in respect of the Airfield differs marginally from the objectives outlined in the Revised Comprehensive Development Brief but for the most part the broad objectives are very similar. The aim of the Management Plan is to ensure that when the planning application is implemented these objectives are delivered in a way which secures the permanent interest within the Airfield site – both culturally and ecologically.
- 1.3 It is worth noting that since the Base ceased operations in 1994, a variety of temporary uses have been accommodated within the existing buildings and the associated open areas. Virtually all of these uses are subject to temporary planning permissions granted by the District Council. Most notably the existing housing stock within the base has been utilised for short term tenancies with the result that the 315 dwellings are currently accommodating nearly 300 families within the family housing originally occupied by service personnel. Additionally, there are a large number of employers occupying some of the former operational buildings either on or on the edge of the Airfield. Together these firms employ over 900 persons in a variety of

Class B1, B2 and B8 uses. NOC has managed these uses within the Base for the last 11 years, including the retention of secure access points into the site, particularly in the former operational areas to the north of Camp Road on the Flying Field. Such management not only involves the letting agreements in relation to the residential properties and the marketing and leasing of commercial properties, it has also involved the setting up of the requisite security arrangements and maintaining the fabric of all the existing buildings (until such time as decisions are made about their long term future), as well as the large areas of open space within the curtilage, especially on the Flying Field.

- 1.4 As such NOC has considerable experience of managing the uses within the Base but it is recognised that such arrangements will need to change as a result of the proposed New Settlement in the south-eastern corner of the Base. It should be noted that in respect of the proposed New Settlement, it is NOC's intention to dispose of individual residential freeholds and to a certain extent this will also apply to the support facilities e.g. retail, places of worship, and other land uses. Some areas of public open space may remain as well as some existing buildings where no uses are attributed, but for the most part the New Settlement Area will not need to be the subject of Management Plan arrangements.
- 1.5 So far as the Flying Field is concerned it is NOC's intention to retain control over the freehold of the buildings, as well as retaining the freehold of the runways and taxiways which are used to access the individual buildings. Where planning permission is granted for the use of buildings outside the New Settlement Area the Management Plan will provide for access to each of these within the defined Flying Field area which will continue to be the subject of separate access arrangements with security on entrance and exits.
- 1.6 This Management Plan forms part of the major planning application setting out NOC's "lasting arrangement" for the former Air Base. It will be incorporated within the Section 106 obligation for the site to ensure that its contents are implemented in a way which secures:-
 - i. Ecological protection and improvement;
 - ii. Landscape protection and enhancement;
 - iii. Protection and enhancement of cultural heritage features;
 - iv. Public access through and around the site.

2. STATUS AND PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

- 2.1 Within the UK, Conservation Management Plans have a non statutory basis. Rather, they provide an advisory policy framework for guiding and influencing in a positive manner current, planned or potential management initiatives at a variety of scales and for different purposes. Achieving the desired conservation aims for Upper Heyford depends on those signing up to it working effectively together in partnership towards the agreed objectives and aims summarised in this Plan.
- 2.2 The adopted Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016, the 'Non-Statutory' Cherwell District Council Local Plan 2011 and the adopted Development Brief prepared by Cherwell District Council are the relevant development documents against which proposals for change at Upper Heyford are to be determined. Furthermore, the Conservation Area designation is a 'key material consideration' in assessing and implementing planning policies and proposals
- 2.3 This Plan is intended to set out the day to day working arrangements necessary to secure various archaeological, cultural, historic and natural environmental objectives within the base whilst at the same time ensuring that the base performs its allotted role as a location for a new settlement of 1075 dwellings together with appropriate levels of employment, infrastructure and facilities. Accordingly, the Plan complies with the provisions of Structure Plan Policy H2 and meets the expectations of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) who wish to achieve these objectives as part of considering a planning application which provides for a "lasting arrangement" for the former Air Base.
- 2.4 The Plan is not a standard Conservation Management Plan (since this is normally produced by LPA's as an adjunct to Conservation Area Appraisals). By contrast, this is a practical document produced by the landowners as an accompaniment to the comprehensive planning application and is designed so as to deliver the various objectives required by the LPA. As such it is not a statutory document prepared and adopted by the LPA but it is a document that forms an integral part of the planning application. It is a document that is proposed to be implemented as part of the Section 106 documentation and therefore will assist in ensuring a lasting arrangement.

2.5 The Management Plan should be read in conjunction with the following documents, all of which form part of the planning application:

Planning Submission

- *Planning Drawings:*

Site Location Plan;

Built Form Masterplan;

Parameters Assessment Plans;

New Settlement Area & Flying Field;

Street Structure;

Development Uses;

Building Heights;

Development Area Open Space;

Phasing Plan.

- *Supporting Statement and Reports:*

Affordable Housing Statement;

Statement of Community Involvement;

Waste Minimisation Statement;

Planning Supporting Statement;

Design and Access Statement;

Building Appraisal;

Demolition Schedule and Plan;

Change of Use Schedule and Plan;

Employment Statement;

Flood Risk Assessment;

Section 106, Draft Heads of Terms;

Transport Assessment;

Tree Retention and Removal Schedule and Plans;

Sustainability Assessment.

- *Environmental Statement (especially the chapters dealing with Ecology, Landscape and Cultural Heritage);*

3. CONTEXT AND GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

Historical Context

- 3.1 RAF Upper Heyford was first established in 1915 as a Royal Flying Corps station and remained in use for much of the last Century. A major rebuilding programme started in 1950 when the US military arrived to convert the base into a Very Heavy Bomber Station for Strategic Air Command as part of its offensive capability against the Soviet Union. Significant new infrastructure was constructed at the base during the Cold War period until the start of the American withdrawal in 1991. The United States Air Force finally ceased operations from RAF Upper Heyford in 1994. Having declared the base as surplus to requirements, the Ministry of Defence entered into a joint venture partnership with North Oxfordshire Consortium (NOC) to manage the site and promote its development. In 1996 a new settlement was allocated within the Oxfordshire County Structure Plan on land at the former Air Base with full ownership of the site transferring from the Ministry of Defence to NOC in 2006.
- 3.2 The former Air Base extends to over 505 hectares and is surrounded by a 14 kilometre long security fence. It is subdivided between a technical site and Flying Field to the north with a domestic area to the south-east which is to form the basis of the New Settlement. The subdivision of the Base into these areas is defined in detail in the Council's Revised Comprehensive Planning Brief adopted on 5th March 2007. The Base contains approximately 279,000 square metres of buildings together with runways, hardstandings and roadways which include the 3.4 kilometre main runway. It demonstrates many features of a Cold War military installation and in this respect is unique within the UK. This later development overlays the 1920's RAF development of which numerous features are still evident. The whole Base was designated as a Conservation Area in April 2006 but also contains smaller areas included within it designated as Schedule Ancient Monuments together with a number of unlisted buildings of national and local significance. Furthermore, an area of land around the eastern section of the runway is designated as a County Wildlife Site. The principal features of the site are shown at Appendix 1.

APPENDIX 1 – PRINCIPAL HERITAGE FEATURES PLAN

Relationship to Surroundings

- 3.3 The site lies within a predominantly rural area, including hamlets and villages. It occupies a gently domed limestone plateau overlooking the Cherwell Valley the and North Oxford Canal. The landscape character of the plateau is largely open and exposed, with little tree cover. Other than a fragment of woodland at Kennel Copse to the north-eastern boundary of the site, it is surrounded by a network of generally large arable fields with few hedgerows. The villages of Steeple Aston, Middle Aston and North Aston lie on the west slope of the Cherwell Valley and look towards the plateau and former Air Base. Furthermore Rousham Park, which is a Grade I Listed Historic Park and Garden, lies on the lower western slopes of the Cherwell valley close to the south-western boundary of the site. The surrounding area is crossed by a network of public rights of way, some of which used to run across the site of the former Air Base but which were closed as the base developed. A number of minor roads run to the north, west and south of the site and offer limited views to some of the existing built development at the site. The spatial context can be seen at Appendix 2.

APPENDIX 2 – SPATIAL CONTEXT PLAN

Geographical Coverage of Management Plan

- 3.4 The red line plan associated with the major planning application is for the most part co-terminous with the Conservation Area. Much of the former technical core and residential areas, on land to the south-east of Camp Road, is proposed for new residential and community development where individual residential curtilages will be created and sold off to private individuals. This 'New Settlement Area', which is identified in the Plan attached as Appendix 1, will include open space and other communal areas which NOC intends should be maintained in the normal manner – either by agreement with Cherwell District Council to adopt, or by the creation of a special maintenance company for the residential part of the site. Therefore as indicated above, this Plan is not generally intended to address management issues within this part of the site. However, it will address the maintenance of the historic character and appearance of buildings within this area before they are put to new uses to ensure that the fabric of the buildings proposed for retention is adequately maintained.

Current Ownership and Responsibilities

3.5 Although the land is in the freehold control of the NOC, there are a number of Government departments, agencies and other statutory bodies that have responsibilities which can directly influence the future management of Upper Heyford, including;

- *Natural England*
- *English Heritage*
- *Environment Agency*
- *Department of Communities and Local Government*
- *Department of Culture Media and Sport*
- *Oxfordshire County Council*
- *Cherwell District Council*
- *Local Wildlife Trust*

3.6 The Management Plan is primarily intended to set out clearly the solutions for dealing with the remaining areas outside the New Settlement Area, which is where most of the buildings and structures are intended to be preserved, in accordance with the designation of the site as a Conservation Area. These areas contain a relatively low density of development with the buildings and structures set in extensive open areas that contain few natural or man-made boundaries. This Plan will focus primarily on the maintenance and management of this extensive area of land, having particular regard to:

- *Its ecological interest and opportunities for biodiversity;*
- *Its landscape character and the need to retain the openness of the plateau;*
- *Its historic and cultural significance as a Cold War Airfield;*
- *Public access, whilst also retaining security;*
- *Appropriate boundary treatment at the edge of the Conservation Area and between the former Airfield and the New Settlement Area.*

- 3.7 The Management Plan has been drawn up to meet these objectives across the former Airfield whilst at the same time allowing the majority of buildings and structures to be retained as part of the “lasting arrangement”. The Plan therefore builds in an allowance for movement and activity within and across the Flying Field.

4. PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The full planning background to the Upper Heyford Air Base is set out in the Planning Chapter to the Environmental Statement and will not be repeated here except to state that its New Settlement status derives (unusually) from Policy H2 of the Oxfordshire County Structure Plan.
- 4.2 At the Local Plan level, the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 contains no specific policies for RAF Upper Heyford. The District Council approved a 'Non-Statutory Local Plan 2011' to provide interim planning policy for development control policies whilst it prepares a new Local Development Framework. Although the non-statutory Local Plan does contain site specific policies for the site, the Revised Comprehensive Planning Brief - which is now adopted SPD - relates directly to the implementation of Structure Plan Policy H2 as it takes into account information about the heritage significance of the site that was not available when the non-statutory Local Plan was prepared. The purpose of the Brief is to establish a balance between creating environmental improvements and conserving the heritage interest, whilst achieving a satisfactory living environment for residents and workers at the site
- 4.3 The adopted Revised Comprehensive Brief makes numerous references to the need for a Management Plan, specifically in relation to the New Settlement at Sub-Section 4.14 and for the Wider Airfield at Sub-Section 5.6. All references essentially relate to the need for a management organization, incorporating local representation, together with the necessary funding and staffing to ensure the proper management and maintenance of the whole site into the future. The Brief also states that the Plan should be submitted with the planning application so that certainty of a comprehensive "lasting arrangement" can be assured prior to the grant of planning consent.
- 4.4 In terms of specific requirements, we believe the Management Plan should set out how the historic character and appearance of retained buildings within the 'New Settlement Area'; will be maintained when they are put to new uses. In the wider Airfield, it is stated that the Management Plan should set out how the land and buildings are to be managed with particular reference to historic, ecological interest and public access. Consequently, these aspects are dealt with within the following four sections.

5. HISTORIC AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Aim

- 5.1 To set up a management regime that allows:
- *The character and appearance of the Conservation Area to be preserved and enhanced*
 - *The fabric of all retained buildings and structures to be maintained*
 - *Retention of the functional relationship between buildings and structures*
 - *Public access to parts of the site with historic significance commensurate with the need to maintain adequate security*
- 5.2 The designation of the whole Base as a Conservation Area clearly has important statutory responsibilities for the NOC. The most important is that all buildings should be retained and maintained unless Conservation Area Consent is granted for the demolition of buildings or other structures. In addition to the wider Conservation Area, there are specific Cold War structures within the Site that were given Scheduled Ancient Monument status in December 2006. The five distinct areas of protection include:
- **OA14A.4** The Battle Command Centre (building number 126) (SAM 30906-05)
 - **OA14B.2** The Hardened Telephone Exchange (building number 129) (SAM 30906-04)
 - **OA8B.1** The Avionics Maintenance Facility (building number 299) (SAM 30906-03)
 - **OA5A** The Northern Bomb Store and Special Weapons Area: this is contained within a security fence and includes 'special' and conventional bomb stores (building numbers 1001-1008, 1011, 1032-1048, 1050, 1060, 1870) (SAM 30906-02)
 - **OA1C** *The Quick Reaction Alert Area (QRAA): this includes hardened aircraft shelters, security fence, watch tower, fuel supply point and hardened crew buildings (building numbers 3001-3009, 2010, 3104 & 3105) (SAM 30906-01)*
- 5.3 Appendix 1 identifies the full extent of the Conservation Area together with the designated Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

5.4 Further structures are being considered for protection by the Department of Culture Media and Sport (Listing or Scheduling), these are:

- **OA1D.3** *The Control Tower (building number 340)*
- **OA1B.1** *Squadron Headquarters (building number 234)*
- **OA8A.1** *Three Nose Docking Sheds (building numbers 325, 327 & 328)*

5.5 However, although there tends to be a focus on existing structures and the need for their protection when dealing with Conservation Areas, it is important to recognise that there are other aspects which contribute to its character as a Cold War airfield including:-

- i. the openness of the Flying Field i.e. the lack of tree cover and building/structures.
- ii. The sharply defined physical separation of the expansive open space from the surrounding agricultural land not just by the security fence but also in terms of character differences.
- iii. The slightly menacing atmosphere associated with the structures and their former uses.

5.6 To highlight these aspects it should also be noted that separation from the surrounding rural area should not be equated with inactivity as the Base was occupied by nearly 10,000 personnel in its heyday. Therefore the level of activity within it was significantly greater than that in the surrounding rural area.

5.7 Notwithstanding these designations, the Revised Comprehensive Development Brief promotes the demolition of a number of buildings within the New Settlement Area and some of the operational buildings within the Flying Field. Additionally the Revised Comprehensive Development Brief proposes the removal of the perimeter fence and the removal of significant sections of the main runway and associated taxiways, particularly at the eastern and western ends.

5.8 For the most part NOC agree that the removal of a large number of the non Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area, particularly those south of Camp Road, will not detract from the character of the remainder of the area, particularly its Cold War character and status. There are also some buildings within the Flying Field which the District Council wish to see removed which NOC is content to remove. However, there are a significant number of buildings within the Flying Field which NOC wishes to retain, occupy and maintain, although the Revised Comprehensive Development

Brief wishes to see these retained but kept vacant or only occupied where there is financial justification. It is these latter two categories which are of particular importance to NOC and which are subject to control under this Management Plan.

- 5.9 NOC also wishes to retain the boundary fence partly as a means of securing the perimeter of the Airfield, but primarily because it is seen as adding significantly to the overall character of the Conservation Area. It is proposed that at the western end of the runway, where the Base most closely abuts Upper Heyford, and also at the eastern end of the runway, beyond Aves Ditch, that the chain link and barbed wire security fence should be removed as detailed on the plan and the tables at Appendix 3. Where appropriate and necessary for continuing security, a modern new boundary fence will be erected, as shown on the Landscape Key Plan in the Environmental Assessment. It is also NOC's intention to replace the fence along the Northern side of Camp Road and to erect a new fence along the northern edge of the New Settlement Area. A short section of the original fence along the northern boundary alongside the Northern Bomb Store will be retained. Further details of the removal and changes to buildings and structures within the site are set out in the Conservation Area Consent documentation.
- 5.10 The remainder of this sub section dealing with historic and cultural heritage is subdivided into the New Settlement Area and the Flying Field for reasons which are outlined above.

Heritage Policy Objectives – New Settlement Area

- 1. Maintain the successful integration of all retained buildings, their curtilage and setting, with all new development within the New Settlement Area.**
- 2. Maintain key spaces within the built form of the New Settlement Area that are of historic significance together with any associated planting structure.**
- 3. Introduce a new Heritage Centre to allow wider understanding of the Cold War and the role of the Airfield within this.**

5.11 Within the New Settlement Area (NSA) most of the buildings associated with the housing of service personnel and their support functions, will be removed. Only limited buildings will be retained, as shown on the plan attached as Appendix 3. All other buildings will be removed and will be subject to Conservation Area Consent applications. However, the New Settlement Area contains two buildings protected as Scheduled Ancient Monuments. These are the Hardened Battle Command Centre (Building 126) and the Hardened Telephone Exchange (Building 129); a number of other buildings within this general area are retained due to their positive contribution to the Conservation Area which is identified on the attached plan at Appendix 3. Any proposals within the vicinity of each of these retained buildings will need to have regard to protecting their curtilage and setting. This process has been incorporated in the preparation of the built form Masterplan forming part of the application. The Hardened Battle Command Centre and Hardened Telephone Exchange will form part of a new Heritage Centre focussed on Building 315 with its own separate access and car parking. Elsewhere within the New Settlement Area (NSA) the retained buildings have been incorporated within the layout so as to retain their historic interest whilst at the same time providing them with an appropriate use within the New Settlement.

**APPENDIX 3 – BUILDING STATUS (RETAINED AND DEMOLISHED)
PLAN & TABLE**

5.12 All aspects of the buildings and structures that remain on the former Base contribute to the understanding of its history and development. However, it is not only the disposition of buildings and the built form that contributes to this understanding or the special character of the Conservation Area. Of equal importance are the spaces between the buildings and the functional and administrative relationships are of particular significance and should therefore underpin the long-term management of the site.

5.13 Key spaces within the New Settlement Area include the “trident” road layout, and green space within Carswell Circle; the retention of these will maintain a sense of distinctiveness and retain a link with the past. The “trident” road layout is of particular historical significance as it was the mainstay of Sir Hugh Trenchard’s plan for the development of the site in the 1920’s. It is reinforced by the avenue of tree planting along the radial routes and outer arc which, together with other parts of the imposing tree structure, will be maintained over the long-term.

5.14 Each of these retained buildings and spaces is incorporated within the built form Masterplan that accompanies the planning application. For the most part the

buildings have been specifically identified as having new uses which fit within the overall framework of the New Settlement. This is described in detail in the accompanying Design & Access Statement which shows how the existing buildings have been used as a focus for new development. The open space will either be transferred to the District Council as part of the normal arrangements (together with a commuted sum) or will be retained in a separate private management company.

Heritage Policy Objectives – Flying Field

- 3. Maintain appropriate controls over uses involving external storage or activity across the wider Flying Field.**
- 4. Ensure that any re-use of retained buildings is compatible with conserving their historic and cultural interest.**

5.15 The Revised Comprehensive Development Brief for the Airfield following the earlier Conservation Plan (October 2005), subdivided the wider Airfield into a number of distinct areas and this derived from the earlier Conservation Plan. The major part of the Airfield lies within a central Core Area of Historic Significance based upon the runway which is of national significance due to its Cold War associations. This also contains the Quick Reaction Alert Area and the Avionics Maintenance Facility which are of international significance. The Northern Bomb Store and Special Weapons Area which is of national significance (ACTA et. al 2005), which is reflected in their status as Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The flying field has an austere military character dominated by grassland and hard surfacing, punctuated by buildings that also include the 56 Hardened Aircraft Shelters (HAS). The core landscape is of national significance as illustrated in Figure 18 of the Conservation Plan (ACTA et al 2005), the area surrounding this is overall of less significance, although contains structures and areas of national and international significance. This Management Plan does not seek to differentiate greatly in the management of this wider area as it all forms part of the Conservation Area where landscape, heritage and ecological objectives are of considerable importance.

5.16 The Comprehensive Planning Brief recognises that to achieve a “lasting arrangement” for the site as a whole it is necessary to strike a balance between enabling development and conservation of the heritage interest. In view of the rural

location of the site it is necessary that the NOC proposals provide for employment opportunities to ensure the new community is as sustainable as possible. Whilst some employment opportunities will be concentrated within near buildings and structures to be located in the settlement area, a significant number of companies already occupy (and would continue to occupy) buildings on the Flying Field as part of the current application. It is NOC's intention to continue the employment use of most, if not all, of these buildings for appropriate employment uses which can be accommodated without detriment to the Conservation Area character. In this context it is important to note that many of the current activities can be accommodated without having any adverse effect on the structure of the protected buildings or their surroundings. English Heritage have looked at all of the temporary uses and NOC believe that many could be accommodated on a permanent basis in accordance with the advice in PPG15. For completeness a plan showing the extent of the proposed uses within the retained buildings is attached as Appendix 4.

APPENDIX 4 – CHANGE OF USE PLAN

5.17 With the reuse of many of the Hardened Aircraft Shelters and other structures on the Flying Field, the District Council's Revised Comprehensive Development Brief draws attention to potential problems which could occur and which will need to be controlled. This includes:-

- 1) Minimising external storage of materials that might otherwise detract from the character of the buildings on the Airfield as a Conservation Area;
- 2) Minimising the impact of car parking associated with the use of these buildings.
- 3) Preserving the significant internal fixtures and fittings within the structures, in particular former RAF Upper Heyford has the best collection of war art in the country;
- 4) Ensuring that movement to and from businesses operating from the historic buildings within the Flying Field are concentrated on existing surfaced areas in a way which allows a safe means of access whilst minimising signage;
- 5) Minimising the effect of external lighting.

5.18 Practically all of these issues are matters which can be controlled by way of the imposition of conditions. However, NOC wishes to ensure that uses within the site do not detract from the overall character and appearance of the Conservation Area and would therefore insist on similar controlling provisions within the leases that are

granted in respect of all buildings within the Flying Field. These requirements are outlined in sub section 8 of this Plan. Further details on movement and car parking across the Flying Field are outlined in sub section 7.

- 5.19 Since NOC anticipate occupation of buildings within the Flying Field it is important to stress that this single large open area will not, for the most part, be divided into separate curtilages or areas by means of physical delineation i.e. fences, in order to protect the overall character of the Conservation Area. As a consequence the Management Company will be responsible for protecting the open nature of the Flying Field, subject only to improving public access along defined routes and ensuring reasonable levels of security for proposed occupants.
- 5.20 Where it is necessary to provide security, for example to the remaining car storage areas, this will be achieved by a reduced height 'cat proof' barrier, and not by fencing. This will be to provide security but also protection for the ground nesting bird population on the airfield grass land.
- 5.21 Large parts of the taxiways and runways within the Flying Field have been the subject of temporary planning permissions for car storage and car staging. The Inspector at the 2003 appeal drew attention to the adverse visual effect which parking of large number of vehicles on the runway had from certain viewpoints. Moreover, more recently, permanent planning permission has been refused on the western part of the Airfield for car storage and this decision has been supported on appeal because of the potentially adverse visual impact that this would have on Conservation Area and the Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Mindful of this, NOC are proposing a substantially reduced area of car staging, within the eastern part of the taxiways (to the south of the main runway).
- 5.22 Whilst there is sufficient current knowledge to have identified the various areas of significance within the wider Airfield, there remain numerous gaps in knowledge that may need to be addressed to ensure that the heritage interest is suitably conserved. This will apply to all aspects of the physical management of the site and its retained buildings. Consequently, in all buildings that are to be re-used it is imperative that tenants maintain the integrity of their component features for example the winches and ventilation systems within the HASs. Otherwise, there is significant risk that features which might contribute to the future understanding of the heritage asset could be inadvertently destroyed. It follows that in order to protect the structural integrity of all those buildings within the Flying Field, all NOC leases will prohibit

structural alterations without prior written agreement with the landlord. All tenants will also be reminded of the need to obtain planning approval (where necessary) in addition to obtaining landlord approval.

- 5.23 One of the key features associated with a number of the buildings within both the New Settlement Area and the Flying Field relates to “wall art” undertaken by military personnel. Prior to the demolition of any structures NOC will undertake an internal visual inspection to record all such wall art. On those buildings which are to be retained any “wall art” or other culturally significant features which should be retained will be recorded within 6 months of consent and measures introduced to ensure their protection. Tenants of retained structures will be prohibited from making any alterations which adversely affect these features through the operation of the lease.

6. LANDSCAPE

Aim

6.1 To provide a management regime that allows:

- *The retention of visual openness for the flying field*
- *The aims of landscape character guidance to be achieved*

Policy Objectives – Landscape

- 5. Provide a landscape management regime for the flying fields which ensures that existing planting will be managed to maintain the visually openness, through the continued grass management regime.**
- 6. Remove inappropriate alien conifers from the former air base as a whole**
- 7. Ensure that new planting accords with the retention of openness and the objectives of the Farmland plateau defined by the County Council in Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Strategy 2004**

6.2 The Management Company will pay particular attention to ensure that any existing or new landscape treatment for the site conforms to the appropriate landscape character guidance for the area.

6.3 The Oxford Wildlife and Landscape Strategy identifies the relevant landscape type as being Farmland Plateau. This designation covers the elevated landscape extending between Chipping Norton and Banbury dissected by the rivers Evenlode, Glyme and Dorn.

6.4 The relevant strategy guidelines are as follows:

- *To conserve the open spacious character of the landscape by limiting the amount of woodland planting;*
- *To establish tree planting around the airfield, where this does not damage the species rich grassland, (it is understood that over planting of trees will be detrimental to the existing ecology);*
- *To reduce the inappropriate visual impact of structures*
- *To encourage the conversion of arable to pasture land*

- *To maintain a sparse settled character by concentrating development in association with existing settlements, particularly on the plateau which is sensitive to visually intrusive development, large buildings and communication masts*
 - *The use of local materials, and*
 - *To promote a scale of development appropriate to the landscape type.*
- 6.5 In particular the Management Company will ensure that proper attention is given to views from Rousham Park, listed Grade I in the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens, as identified on the Spatial Context Plan at Appendix 2.
- 6.6 The defining character created by the former use of Upper Heyford is largely one of an open nature with few trees, (particularly in relation to the flying field). However, the New Settlement Area contains a significant number of trees are protected by virtue of the Conservation Area status. Some of these trees will be removed and are specifically identified in the plans accompanying the application. Most trees are proposed for retention and are incorporated within the Master Plan for the New Settlement Area. The Management Company will ensure the proper conservation of trees. Particular care will be taken in the management of the site to
- *Protect and enhance existing trees to be retained; and*
 - *To avoid inappropriate planting.*
- 6.7 To achieve the above aims and objectives the Management Company will undertake the landscaping management regime for the Flying Field (as a whole). As such individual tenants will not be permitted to carry out their own planting or management schemes in order to protect the established character.

7. ECOLOGY

Aim

7.1 To provide a management regime that allows:

- *The enhancement of biodiversity across the site;*
- *Protection and enhancement of the County Wildlife Site and Ecologically Important Landscape;*

Policy Objectives – Ecology

8. **Monitor the nature conservation interest of the grassland through regular vegetation and habitat surveys and adapt management regimes where practicable to maximise.**
9. **Manage the restoration of land where buildings/structures are removed to allow further colonisation from the County Wildlife Site and Ecologically Important Landscape.**

7.2 The majority of the open land within the former Airfield has escaped agricultural improvement. This has resulted in significant areas of limestone grassland such that it is the largest expanse of such habitat in the District. This type of grassland and its associated flora and fauna are of considerable ecological interest. A large area at the eastern end of the former Airfield is species rich and has accordingly been designated a County Wildlife Site (CWS) (see Appendix 5). A survey undertaken by EPR in 1997 established that beyond these areas the grassland within the former Airfield was largely ecologically neutral with low species diversity. However, land to the north and south of the CWS together with the grassland either side of the main runway is designated as an Ecologically Important Landscape (EIL) in the SPD with scope for ecological improvement.

APPENDIX 5 – COUNTY WILDLIFE SITE & AREA OF ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE PLAN

7.3 The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) sets targets for the protection, restoration and management of limestone grassland. Within Oxfordshire, relevant objectives of the BAP are to halt the loss of existing areas of limestone grassland and to maintain and restore populations of key species associated with the habitat. Whilst the grassland on the site is already regularly managed, extension of the species rich areas may be

achieved through appropriate alterations to the current management regime to increase the biodiversity value of the site, to create and maintain wildlife links and incorporate features to encourage wildlife to return to the site. However, prior to their implementation, it will be necessary to ensure that any such changes are compatible with the operation of other uses on the site.

- 7.4 Discussions with Oxfordshire County Council with respect to calcareous grassland restoration have focused on scarification of parts of the runway and taxiways at the eastern and western ends of the site. In time, this will encourage their colonisation by the grassland and consequently extend the area of ecologically important habitat. The reviews of grassland management should seek to facilitate this process over the longer-term.
- 7.5 A baseline ecological management regime has been prepared by the Cooper Partnership and EPR and this is attached as Appendix 6. The main objectives for the Management Plan are as follows:-

Policy Objectives – Ecology Management

- 10. To restrict disturbance in appropriate locations to protect the habitat of ground-nesting birds and other species.**
- 11. To manage retained buildings and structures to facilitate continued use by protected species, particularly Great Crested Newts and Bats (See Appendix 3).**

- 7.6 To ensure that ground nesting birds are not disturbed it will be important to restrict public access and to continue a sympathetic farming regime on these open areas. Consequently NOC intend not to allow widespread access into this area and will continue the current agricultural management methods in the open areas.
- 7.7 In order to protect the large population of Great Crested Newts on site the emergency water storage tanks and oils interception tanks will be maintained on site for their use.

**APPENDIX 6 – COOPER PARTNERSHIP &
EPR MANAGEMENT REGIME DOCUMENT**

- 7.8 The northern and southern bomb stores lie within the EIL designation either side of the CWS at the eastern end of the Airfield. The bomb stores are generally earthed over and covered with grass on three sides and otherwise set within grassland of importance for ground nesting birds. Within these areas are the highest populations of Great Crested Newts on site that occur within artificial water bodies. However, these areas are currently within commercial use and there is consequently the potential for disturbance to these species. Removal of the bomb stores would itself result in considerable disturbance that could only be recovered in the long-term. It is therefore important that they are retained and occupied so as to ensure the ongoing maintenance of the structures. Any risk of disturbance critical to the nature conservation interest can be dealt with by suitable provisions within the lease arrangements relevant to these buildings and structures.
- 7.9 Similarly, a number of the buildings and structures across the Airfield site are host to bats and other protected species. It will be necessary for these to be managed in such a way as to avoid unnecessary disturbance.

8. PUBLIC ACCESS AND MOVEMENT WITHIN THE FLYING FIELD

Aim

8.1 To provide a management regime that allows:

- *Improved public access to the site and from surrounding villages to the facilities within the New Settlement;*
- *Interpretation of the site's history and ecology;*
- *Controlled access to the site's historic and cultural assets;*
- *Safe access for occupants of buildings within the Flying Field.*

Policy Objectives - Public Access and Movement within the Flying Field

12. **To maintain Portway and Aves Ditch as public rights of way through and around the former Airfield site.**
13. **To allow interpretation of the site's history and ecology along public rights of way around the site.**
14. **To improve footpath links between the New Settlement and the surrounding villages**

8.2 During development of the Air Base the ancient routes of Portway and Aves Ditch were severed and stopped up. The development proposals will allow for their reinstatement to allow links to other rights of way outside the site. However, they both cross the areas of grassland towards the eastern and western ends of the runway, including that area to the east designated as a County Wildlife Site. Consequently, whilst they will be maintained as public rights of way in the longer term, they will be outside the proposed new fence so as to prevent public access across the ecologically sensitive areas.

8.3 Fencing is also critical to maintaining the ongoing security and health and safety requirements of the extant commercial uses and therefore wider public access (except in respect of tours by interested parties) is not anticipated or facilitated.

- 8.4 Where public rights of way cross or pass close to the site, there is the opportunity to allow provision for enhanced interpretation of the site's history and ecology including the introduction of a circular walking route around the Airfield, the Upper Heyford Trail, as set out in Landscape Key Plan of the Environmental Statement. This will take the form of new information and interpretation boards highlighting relevant features of interest within the Airfield. Two new vantage points will be introduced to allow appreciation of the size and stature of the runway.
- 8.5 As the New Settlement will provide a range of facilities likely to be attractive to adjoining villages NOC will support Oxfordshire County Council in their proposals to extend the footpath network to allow linkages to adjoining villages, where these have been lost. In particular links to the Villages of Ardley, Fewcott, Fritwell, Sommerton and Upper Heyford can be improved. This is shown on the Landscape Key Plan and on Appendix 7 and Plan L15 within the landscape and visual chapter of the Environmental Statement.

APPENDIX 7 – IMPROVED FOOTPATH LINKS AND PUBLIC ACCESS PLAN

- 8.6 The integrity of the wider landscape and historic built form of the former Air Base are essential to the understanding of its historical context and as such its development. Its re-development and management should ensure that this integrity is not prejudiced. The New Settlement Area is designed to ensure that the coherency of this former technical area is well articulated and retains a number of key buildings that reflect the historical pattern of development. The NOC proposals envisage the establishment of a Heritage Centre in Building 315, with a permanent exhibition of material from the Airbase. This facility will be linked with the Hardened Battle Command Centre and Hardened Telephone Exchange (SAMs) with dedicated access from Camp Road and associated car parking. In addition to this visitor facility limited demand for public tours of the base is likely to remain over the longer-term. Future management of the base will therefore allow for organised tours, (associated with the ticketing and entry system for the proposed Heritage Centre) compatible with the need to maintain the overall security for commercial uses on the site.
- 8.7 It is anticipated by NOC that the Heritage Centre could also perform as a multi function education centre for the benefit of the new community and visiting users and it is envisaged that the facility could be used for lectures programmes and for school and higher education projects relating to the airfield.

Policy Objectives - Public Access and Movement within the Flying Field

- 15. To allow for approved tours with visits to selected areas on the former Airfield.**
- 16. To formulate an Access and Parking Strategy to control safe entrance and egress to the Flying Field.**

8.8 In conjunction with NOCs proposal to retain and utilise most of the retained buildings within the Flying Field it will be essential to ensure that adequate access is devised together with a safe and convenient means of movement. Additionally in order to minimise the visual effect of parking a strategy needs to be put in place to identify suitable locations adjacent to individual buildings.

8.9 It is proposed that access to the site will be through a security control as shown at Appendix 8. A one way circular route has been devised giving access to all buildings with the only exit being through gated security control. As the use of the majority of buildings is proposed to be storage (Class B8) associated parking requirements are likely to be limited. However, there are some buildings which are proposed for Class B1 or B2 uses. However these have adequate existing vehicle parking in place as a remnant of their former military use. For all other buildings 3-4 parking spaces per building will be identified and marked appropriately. The attached plan shows the routing arrangements and the car parking for the main buildings; it is anticipated that the precise location of car parking associated with the other buildings will be determined via the imposition of conditions.

APPENDIX 8 – PARKING AND CIRCULATORY VEHICLE MOVEMENT PLAN

9. DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS

- 9.1 In order to ensure delivery of the objectives outlined above, NOC will set up within its organizational structure a Management Company. This will primarily look after the open land and buildings on the Flying Field, but also look after some buildings and open space issues within the New Settlement Area until these are either adopted or a private owner has been secured. It should be noted that none of the privately retained buildings can be changed in a way which alters their external appearance because of the Conservation Area designation. The purpose of the Management Company will be to control and manage those objectives outlined above which are not subject to direct planning control.
- 9.2 It should be remembered that the former Air Base is already subject to a strict regime of both built environment management and ecological management which keeps it from deteriorating, commensurate with its status as a Conservation Area. NOC believe that the delivery of the cultural heritage, landscape, ecological and public access arrangements can best be achieved by modifying and formalizing these existing, successful, arrangements.
- 9.3 Within the Flying Field the Management Company will have the following functions:
- 1) To secure access to the whole of the Flying Field north of Camp Road including the operation of a single manned access point with the retention of a perimeter security fence;
 - 2) To ensure the maintenance of the existing buildings and structures within the Flying Field;
 - 3) To ensure the maintenance of the open land on the Flying Field in a way commensurate with ecological enhancement;
 - 4) To manage controlled public access onto the site by means of guided bus tours;
 - 5) To devise a safe means of access to all the buildings within the site utilizing the existing runways and roads within the Flying Field;
 - 6) To protect and maintain all proposed retained structures and open space within the New Settlement Area until these are either leased or sold to new owners or passed to a public agency for adoption.

9.4 It is NOC's intention that, in order to achieve maintenance of the protected structures, and the creation of an ongoing situation for maintaining all aspects of the Base, the general principle of ensuring that as many as possible of the retained buildings are occupied, will be is the best means of achieving this. Occupation will normally ensure that maintenance is likely to occur on a regular basis as part of the standard arrangements under a full repairing and insuring lease. This arrangement is already successfully used in respect of many of the existing buildings within the Flying Field and it is normal practice to make tenants responsible for repairs to the fabric of the building during the period of the tenancy. In order to prevent potential difficulties identified in the Revised Comprehensive Development Brief all leases on the Flying Field will also include requirements that:-

- i. No external storage will be permitted except where explicitly consented by the Planning Authority.
- ii. No signage will be permitted without landlord consent and without advertisement consent being granted.
- iii. No external lighting will be permitted save for that which already exists or that which is consented by the Local Planning Authority.
- iv. No car parking will be permitted except in designated areas save for up to 3/4 car parking spaces adjacent to each Hardened Aircraft Shelter.
- v. No Lorries or trailers will be kept externally within the Flying Field for more than 48 hours.

Within the New Settlement Area individual arrangements will be made where new uses arise.

9.5 NOC expect that such activities would also be controlled through conditions imposed on any planning permission granted on the site. At the end of the tenancy, lease provisions will allow for the Managing Agents to review dilapidations and to ensure that the buildings are left in a good state of repair. The advice in PPG15 indicates that ensuring occupation is the best means of protecting the fabric of historic buildings and the same principle applies in respect of the Airfield.

9.6 To facilitate this, the Management Company will be responsible for a programme of advertising and letting properties to appropriate companies. The current application involves primarily Class B8 uses within the Flying Field, the aim of which is to limit the level of activity, in particular the need for substantial numbers of HGV movements. In order to ensure that this objective is met NOC propose the imposition of a limit to the average number of HGV movements per building on the Flying Field

to an average of 4 HGV movements per day. These movements will be monitored by checks through the security point. All HGVs will be subject to an off site Routeing Agreement (as currently exists) with the County Highway Authority. Within the Flying Field a route for access to buildings has been devised which is safe and minimizes the impact on other objectives. It is anticipated that the Management Company will actively promote the use of all retained buildings and where necessary co-ordinate applications for planning applications on behalf of potential tenants (where this involves uses not consented under the current "lasting arrangements").

- 9.7 All the buildings on the Air Base were the subject of a Buildings Survey in 2005. This identified that, in general, the buildings to be retained are in a reasonable condition given their age and, as such, repair work is anticipated to be minimal. Any buildings identified to be in a poor state but to be retained will be put in a weatherproof condition within one year of implementing the planning permission for the new settlement.
- 9.8 However, in order to prevent deterioration in the structure of these buildings, all occupied buildings on the Airfield will be subject to a quinquennial inspection both internally and externally by a suitably qualified Surveyor. Representatives from English Heritage (or their nominees) will be given four weeks notice of all inspections and invited to attend. A schedule of all relevant repairs will be issued and copies circulated to the Management Company and the Liaison Group following each inspection (see below). However, the managing agents will invariably undertake more regular checks of the properties and will identify problems on these occasions and will notify tenants of failure to observe any stipulations in the lease or breaches of planning conditions. In the event that tenants make unauthorized changes to the structures these will also be identified so that such changes are either re-instated or formally approved.
- 9.9 All unoccupied buildings will also be subject to an inspection on the same basis starting from the first year from when planning permission is granted. The Management Company will be responsible for distributing copies of the '*Schedule of Repairs*' to all lessees within four weeks of completion and will notify the Liaison Group when such repairs are completed (see below). In respect of all Schedules of repairs on unoccupied buildings, the Management Company will be responsible for drawing up a programme of works to be discussed and approved with the District Council within six months.

- 9.10 In addition to the main structures, the Management Company will be responsible for the runway, taxiways and roadways within the Flying Field, except where these are specifically leased to individual tenants and subject to full repairing and insuring requirements. The Company will be responsible for the maintenance of the runways, taxiways and other structures within the Airfield, together with the open grassed areas between. These grassed areas will remain open and will not be subdivided by tree and hedge planting, or new man made structures so as to retain the openness of the Cold War Airfield, save for those means of enclosure included within this application. The grassland areas are already maintained by means of Farm Business Tenancies with local farmers and it is NOC's intention to continue this modus operandi. Whilst this is likely to continue to involve the pasturing of stock on a rotational basis, the Liaison Group may recommend changes to the agricultural regime on the basis of best ecological practice appropriate to the site, specifically with a view to improving biodiversity.
- 9.11 In addition to securing rents from occupants of the Flying Field, the Management Company will also levy a service charge on all commercial tenants which will provide for the maintenance of the open areas. The service charge will also allow for the vehicle circulatory areas and associated common services to be properly managed and maintained. The Management Company will also be responsible for ensuring that various covenants in leases i.e. preventing external storage, controlling signage etc are properly complied with (see above).
- 9.12 This approach of ensuring occupation of the protected structures, wherever possible, will not only accord with central Government guidance but is most likely to ensure the maintenance and protection of the existing structures within the Conservation Area on the Flying Field in accordance with English Heritage guidance. Securing the Airfield by the maintenance of the perimeter fence and by the erection of a more modern fence, in appropriate locations, will also ensure that the ecological value is maintained by limiting public access to these open areas.
- 9.13 Although the District Council has reserve powers to undertake works to protect Listed Buildings and Buildings within Conservation Areas (and to recharge freeholders the

costs), under the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 2004, it will be apparent that this should only be used as a last resort. Consequently a separate fund of £300,000 will be provided by NOC and held in an escrow account to provide against any failure of the Management Company to fulfil its obligations in the event of insufficient funding. These funds will be available for essential repairs and maintenance in the event of default by the Management Company. If NOC or succeeding freeholders can demonstrate over the period to 2018 that self-financing arrangements through the service charge are acceptable, and no substantive call has been made on the escrow account within this period, then this sum can be recovered by the NOC/freeholder at that time.

- 9.14 NOC will set up the Management Company with responsibilities for the overall maintenance of the Flying Field together with residual retained interests within the New Settlement Area. This includes the proposed Heritage Centre and associated buildings (the two Scheduled Ancient Monuments), and potentially some of the larger areas of open space on the fringes of the New Settlement Area.
- 9.15 The Management Company will comprise a Board appointed by the freeholders with powers to subcontract the collection of rents and service charges, security aspects of the Base and other day to day operational issues. The Management Company will meet on a quarterly basis and receive representations from a Liaison Group. The Board will be charged with providing an annual Business Plan which will include estimates of service charges levyable on commercial tenants together with annual accounts.
- 9.16 The Management Company Board will be advised by a Liaison Group to include representatives from:
- i. The freeholders (up to 3 persons)
 - ii. The management agents and other subcontractors (2 persons)
 - iii. English Heritage (1 person)
 - iv. County Wildlife Sites Officer (1 person)
 - v. A representative from Upper Heyford Parish, Cherwell District and/or Oxfordshire County Council representatives (1 each).

- 9.17 The Liaison Group will meet up to four times a year (prior to the Management Company Board) with minutes to be submitted to the Management Company. The Liaison Group will have the ability to recommend projects for inclusion in the annual Business Plan although the Management Company will ultimately bear responsibility for its inclusion and implementation within the Business Plan. The Management Company will provide in the Business Plan for a cost for the running of the Liaison Group including a budget for specific expenditure up to a total of £10,000 per annum. Expenditure in excess of this will require specific approval from the Management Company and/or will need to be incorporated within the Business Plan.
- 9.18 The existing arrangements for the open area within the Flying Field allow for these areas to be grazed on a rotational basis by stock from adjoining local farms. Such arrangements are subject to normal commercial terms and are expected to continue under the current management arrangements. The Liaison Group can monitor these arrangements and promote amendments to this regime (including proposals for improved biodiversity) through their normal reporting arrangements to the Management Company. In agreeing to an appropriate management regime for the area of the site covered by the County Wildlife designation, the Management Company will seek professional ecological advice and follow an appropriate agricultural regime for maximum biodiversity.

10. SUMMARY

10.1 Arising from this Plan NOC covenants with the Council to undertake the following tasks:-

- 1) To retain all the identified structures within the Conservation Area not subject to a Conservation Area Consent.
- 2) To seek to introduce acceptable uses within the retained structures so as to comply with central Government guidance over the protection of historic buildings.
- 3) The Management Company which will oversee the day to day running of the Flying Field and commercial area including collection of rents and service charges. The Management Company will produce annual accounts and a Business Plan.
- 4) To ensure that all leases with occupants incorporate controls within the Flying Field over:-
 - a) External storage;
 - b) Car parking in accordance with a plan to be approved by the Local Planning Authority;
 - c) The use of all new external lighting;
 - d) The introduction of any signage;
 - e) Access and parking of Heavy Goods Vehicles;
 - f) Restrict recreational use of the grassland on site.
- 5) To collect service charges from all tenants to maintain the building and structures.
- 6) To introduce a system of defined footpaths and cycleways across and around the Base and to support the County Council's efforts to restore former links to adjoining villages.
- 7) To introduce a Heritage Centre within the site to be open to members of the public, together with controlled access for organised tours within the Flying Field and information boards at key points on the surrounding footpaths.
- 8) To introduce security measures to control all access onto the Flying Field and to monitor HGV movements to individual buildings on the Flying Field.
- 9) To set up a Liaison Group with an annual budget of £10,000 to report to the Management Company with recommendations on the protection of retained buildings and ecological enhancement; the Group shall meet quarterly and have representatives from the freeholders, managing agents, English Heritage, wildlife organisations and from the Parish, District, and County Councils.

- 10) To undertake quinquennial reviews of the fabric of the buildings and structures within the Flying Field.
- 11) To continue an agricultural regime within the grassed areas of the Flying Field which encourage greater biodiversity.
- 12) To establish a landscape management regime which seeks to retain the openness of the plateau and to accord with landscape character guidance for the area.
- 13) To deposit a sum of £300,000 in an escrow account to be drawn down only in the event that the Management Company have insufficient funds to undertake repair of the retained buildings within the Flying Field and the management of the ecologically important parts of the same area.
- 14) To protect and maintain all retained buildings and open spaces within the New Settlement Area until such time as these are sold to new owners or in the case of open space, until this is adopted by a public agency.