

PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT:

DEMOLITION OF BUILDING 457 SOUTHERN FAÇADE AND GABLE END WALLS, AND FOR TEMPORARY USE AND ASSOCIATED WORKS TO CREATE PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

VILLAGE CENTRE SOUTH (PHASE 2), CAMP ROAD, HEYFORD PARK

ON BEHALF OF HEYFORD COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS LTD

**TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004**

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DESIGN | ENVIRONMENT | PLANNING | ECONOMICS | HERITAGE

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Dorchester Group are proceeding with the implementation of the new settlement at Heyford Park (formerly RAF Upper Heyford).
- 1.2 As the regeneration project progresses, on occasion it becomes necessary to amend the timing and form of proposals to take into account changes in the environment and/or the economic climate. This is only to be expected with a large-scale scheme which has a phased build-out over many years in what is a highly complex brownfield environment.
- 1.3 The village centre is at the heart of the Heyford Park development and has been the subject of a complex planning history since the redevelopment was first granted planning permission in January 2010.
- 1.4 This particular planning application seeks planning permission to:
 - 1) remove the remaining façade and gable ends for Building 457, which lies towards the west of the Village Centre south area; and
 - 2) bring this part of the site into beneficial public use with landscaping to create an attractive and functional public space for a temporary period of up to 5 years until the economic climate is such that the second phase of Village South can be successfully brought forward.
- 1.5 This Planning and Heritage Statement sets out a more detailed consideration of the planning history and background, the operative development plan policy framework, the various relevant material considerations, a heritage appraisal and also explains the landscape approach.
- 1.6 It concludes that the public benefits arising from the scheme outweigh the harm to the heritage assets in this instance, and that planning permission should be granted for these proposals.

2. PLANNING HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

Recent Planning History

- 2.1 The former RAF Upper Heyford military airbase, now known as Heyford Park, has an extensive planning history. The most notable planning applications are the two decisions involving the comprehensive redevelopment of the former RAF Upper Heyford military base as a whole or part thereof.
- 2.2 The first of these decisions, referred to as the 'Lead Appeal', relates to an outline planning application (08/00716/OUT) for the formation of a new settlement of 1,075 dwellings, together with associated works and facilities, including employment uses, community uses, a school, playing fields and other physical and social infrastructure, across the entire former military base.
- 2.3 The scheme was allowed at appeal (APP/C3105/A/08/2080594) dated 11 January 2010 and is subject to comprehensive S106 Unilateral Undertaking. The Lead Appeal established the principle of employment use in a considerable number of the buildings and structures on the former flying field, in association with a comprehensive management plan together with the demolition of existing structures and redevelopment of new housing and associated infrastructure along Camp Road and to the south.
- 2.4 Following the purchase of the site by the Dorchester Group in late 2010, a revised scheme, referred to as the 'Outline Permission' for the redevelopment of the residential and mixed use core of Heyford Park known as the 'New Settlement Area' was submitted to Cherwell District Council.
- 2.5 The application sought permission for a proposed new settlement of 1,075 dwellings including the retention and change of use of 267 existing military dwellings to residential Class C3 and the change of use of other specified buildings, together with associated works and facilities, including employment uses, a school, playing fields and other physical and social infrastructure.
- 2.6 The application was duly approved by Cherwell District Council on the 22 December 2011 under application reference 10/01642/OUT, and was also subject to a further S106 Agreement.
- 2.7 Development in pursuance of the New Settlement Area is being taken forward through a combination of reserved matters and further specific planning applications by the Dorchester Group and Bovis Homes.

- 2.8 In June 2014, planning permission was granted for the creation of a new Free School at Heyford Park involving the refurbishment of the former Officers Mess towards the east of Camp Road (13/00343/F) and the former sports hall building towards the west (13/00740/F).
- 2.9 With regard to the village centre specifically, a detailed planning application for the development of the Village Centre South (16/01000/F) comprising of café/restaurant/hotel facilities together with a mixed use glazed market link was approved in November 2016. This permission also granted approval for the demolition of Building 457 save for the southern wall and the two gable end walls.
- 2.10 A non-material amendment to Village Centre South (17/00091/A) was then approved in August 2017 which included detailed amendments to the scheme and a change to the timing of the submission and approval of information relating to car parking.
- 2.11 Further non-material amendments to Village Centre South (18/0043/NMA) comprising of minor design changes to Building 455 and the Canopy Link, and the introduction of a phased approach to the development, were approved in April 2018.
- 2.12 A reserved matters application for the development of Village Centre North (18/00513/REM), comprising of food store/retail/residential apartments above, was approved by the Council in July 2018.

Decision making framework

- 2.13 The determination of a planning application is to be made pursuant to Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which is to be read in conjunction with Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Section 38(6) requires LPAs to determine planning applications in accordance with the Development Plan, unless there are material considerations which indicate otherwise. Section 70(2) provides that in determining planning applications the Local Planning Authority (LPA):

“shall have regard to the provisions of the Development Plan, so far as material to the application and to any other material considerations.”

- 2.14 Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended), places a statutory duty on LPAs to ensure that any proposals preserve or enhance the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. The

Act sets out the general duty of local planning authorities as respects Conservation Areas in the exercise of their planning functions, stating that:

“In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any [functions under or by virtue of] any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”

2.15 Accordingly, the statutory requirements of Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 should be considered in conjunction with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 in the determination of this planning application.

2.16 The extant Development Plan comprises the:

- Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1, adopted 20 July 2015;
- Cherwell Local Plan, adopted November 1996 (only those policies saved by the saving direction issued by the Secretary of State and which have not been subsequently superseded by the adoption of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1); and
- Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan, made in May 2019.

2.17 Other material planning considerations include national and local policy and guidance, comprising the:

- National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019);
- National Planning Practice Guidance (various dates);
- RAF Upper Heyford Revised Comprehensive Planning Brief 2007;
- Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document February 2018;
- Emerging draft Cherwell Design Guide (November 2017).

2.18 Cherwell District Council are in the early stages of preparing their Local Plan Part 2: Development Management Policies and Sites. The Local Plan Part 2 is to conform to the strategic policies and overall development strategy set out in the Local Plan Part 1 and will cover the same time period, 2011 to 2031.

2.19 This chapter identifies the relevant planning matters contained within the Development Plan and other material planning considerations pertinent to the planning application under consideration.

The Development Plan

Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031

2.20 The Development Plan comprises the policies of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted 20th July 2015). The relevant policies from the adopted Local Plan are considered below.

2.21 **Paragraph B.96** sets out that the Local Plan seeks to deliver growth in accordance with the NPPF's Core Planning Policies including, inter alia, seeking to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity by developing new neighbourhoods and achieving regeneration and redevelopment of key sites, and encouraging the effective re-use of existing land and buildings and bring forward sites that contain land of lesser environmental value such as at the Former RAF Upper Heyford.

2.22 In line with this approach, **Policy PSD 1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development** states that the Council will take a proactive approach to reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development as contained in the NPPF, work proactively with applicants to jointly find a solution and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Furthermore, that the Council will approve applications that accord with the policies of the statutory Development Plan without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

2.23 With regard to the former airbase, **paragraph C.288** indicates that the site was previously subject to a policy from the Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016 (Policy H2) which was saved by the South East Plan and retained upon the South East Plan's revocation. However, **Policy Villages 5**, discussed below, replaces Policy H2 in guiding future redevelopment of the site, as Policy H2 has now been superseded by the adoption of the Local Plan and therefore carries no weight.

2.24 **Policy Villages 5 (Former RAF Upper Heyford)** specifically allocates this 520 hectare site for, inter alia, a settlement of approximately 1,600 dwellings (in addition to the 761 dwellings (net) already permitted) together with appropriate community and recreational opportunities.

2.25 **Policy Villages 5** sets out the description of the allocation as:

“This site will provide for a settlement of approximately 1,600 dwellings (in addition to the 761 dwellings (net) already permitted) and necessary supporting infrastructure, including primary and secondary education provision and appropriate community, recreational and employment opportunities, enabling environmental improvements and the heritage interest of the site as a military base with Cold War associations to be conserved, compatible with achieving a satisfactory living environment. A comprehensive integrated approach will be expected.”

2.26 **Policy Villages 5** also sets a range of ‘key specific design and place shaping principles’ which apply, in whole or part, to the entire allocated site unless specifically stated.

2.27 Other policies contained within the adopted Local Plan of relevance to this application are summarised below.

2.28 **Policy SLE 3: Supporting Tourism Growth** notes that the Council will support proposals for new or improved tourist facilities in sustainable locations, where they accord with other policies in the plan, to increase overnight stays and visitor numbers within the District.

2.29 **Policy SLE 4: Improved Transport and Connections** supports, inter alia, the implementation of key transport proposals including “Transport Improvements at ... the Former RAF Upper Heyford in accordance with the County Council’s Local Transport Plan and Movement Strategies”. **Policy SLE 4** also provides for new development to provide financial and/or in-kind contributions to mitigate the transport impacts of development, and seeks that all development, where feasible, should facilitate the use of sustainable modes of transport. Development which is not suitable for the roads that serve the development and which have a severe traffic impact will not be supported.

2.30 **Policy BSC 2: The Effective and Efficient Use of Land – Brownfield Land and Housing Density** states an expectation to make effective and efficient use of land through encouraging re-use of previously developed land in sustainable

locations, requiring at least 30 dwellings per hectare 'net density'¹ unless there are justifiable planning reasons for lower density development.

- 2.31 **Policy BSC 8: Securing Health and Well-Being** states that Council will support the provision of health facilities in sustainable locations which contribute towards health and well-being.
- 2.32 **Policy BSC 10: Open Space, Outdoor Sport and Recreation Provision** sets out an approach towards ensuring sufficient quantity and quality of, and convenient access to open space, sport and recreation. This is in part to be achieved by ensuring that proposals for new development contribute to open space, sport and recreation provision commensurate to the need generated by the proposals.
- 2.33 **Policy BSC 11: Local Standards of Provision – Outdoor Recreation** requires development proposals to contribute to the provision of open space, sport and recreation, together with secure arrangements for its management and maintenance.
- 2.34 **Policy ESD 15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment** advises that where development is in the vicinity of any of the District's natural or historical assets, the delivery of a high quality design that complements the asset will be essential. The policy requirements set out in **Policy ESD 15** apply to all types of development.
- 2.35 **Paragraph B.268** highlights the appearance of new development and its relationship with its surrounding built and natural environment as potentially having a significant effect on the character and appearance of an area. The need to secure new development that can positively contribute to the character of its local environment is of key importance and reflects the approach and significant criteria listed under **Policy ESD15**.
- 2.36 **Policy ESD 17: Green Infrastructure** seeks to maintain and enhance the District's green infrastructure through: pursuing opportunities for joint working to maintain and improve the network; protecting and enhancing sites and features forming the network and improving sustainable connectivity; ensuring the green infrastructure network is integral to the planning of new development; and

¹ The term 'Net residential density' is not defined in the Local Plan's explanatory text, but is usually regarded as being calculated by only including the net residential plot area including access roads and incidental open space, but excluding higher order roads and open spaces.

incorporation of green infrastructure in strategic sites (i.e. those allocated under Section C of the Local Plan).

- 2.37 **Policy INF 1: Infrastructure** sets out the Council's approach to infrastructure planning in the District and seeks to ensure delivery of strategic site allocations in part by requiring development proposals to demonstrate that infrastructure requirements can be met including the provision of transport, education, health, social and community facilities.

Cherwell Local Plan 1996

- 2.38 The following saved policies of the Cherwell Local Plan, adopted November 1996, remain extant and relevant to the proposed development following the adoption of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031:

- 2.39 **Policy C23: Retention of features contributing to character or appearance of a Conservation Area** states that there will be a presumption in favour of retaining buildings, walls, trees or other features which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

- 2.40 **Policy C25: Development affecting the site or setting of a scheduled ancient monument** seeks to protect the site and its setting of a scheduled monument as well as other nationally important archaeological sites and monuments, for which the Council will have regard to the desirability of maintaining its overall historic character including its protection, enhancement and preservation.

- 2.41 **Policy C28: Layout, design and external appearance of new development** advises that control will be exercised over all new development, including conversions and extensions, to ensure that the standards of layout, design and external appearance, including the choice of external-finish materials, are sympathetic to the character of the urban or rural context of that development. In sensitive areas such as Conservation Areas, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and areas of high landscape value, development will be required to be of a high standard and the use of traditional local building materials will normally be required.

Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.42 The MCNP was 'made' in May 2019 and as such comprises part of the Development Plan.

- 2.43 In terms of provision of amenities, Objective A1 supports the provision of improved facilities, particularly at Heyford Park.
- 2.44 More specific policies regarding Building and Site Design in the MCNP are noted as not being operative within Heyford Park, which is already subject to Cherwell Local Plan's Policy Villages 5.

3. DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE FOR PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Description

- 3.1 At present, the remaining gable walls and rear façade of Building 457 are a significant visual detractor, having to be shored up with scaffolding pending redevelopment as Phase 2 of Village Centre South. Given that the public will soon have access to immediately adjacent public realm to the east and to the south, the area will have to be screened off to ensure health and safety, this will cause further visual detriment to the site and its environs pending future development.
- 3.2 The proposal is to create a positive use for this site pending its ultimate redevelopment as phase 2 of village centre south. An interim area of public realm at the heart of the Heyford Park development which complements both the adjacent market link and community uses being built to the immediate east, and also open views across to the village green immediately to the south, with an equipped area of children's play (a LEAP+) due to be built once the construction compound activities have ceased.
- 3.3 The public realm proposals create a flexible open space which can provide an additional space for public use for the community within Heyford Park. This has the potential to temporarily enhance the community activities and events that currently take place helping users foster a sense of place within the evolving development. Subsequently, once the new village centre south Phase 2 is developed, the scheme would incorporate a permanent space for public use which would reinforce the sense of place and ownership for the local community.
- 3.4 The central space provides an area for a focal piece (or stage) with opportunities for street furniture to create a place for users to rest, socialise and relax. The location of the proposed footpaths aims to create routes that mirror the desire lines for users within the site and lead to the central area which is flexible to accommodate different functions. The 3 existing trees along the frontage with Camp Road, and the tree to the south provide instant features to anchor the space within the existing Heyford Park development, with additional planting proposed along the southern edge to enclose the space whilst enabling views south to the village green. This helps to provide a link between the spaces to aid permeability and legibility to encourage users to visit the village green.



Plate 1 - Example of a community event held at Heyford Park which could be in the future be accommodated in the new public realm focal point

- 3.5 This area will be an open area of landscaped public open space available for public use and events for a period of up to 5 years. It will continue to retain the 3 retained trees on the Camp Road frontage and also the single specimen towards the south west of this site.

Rationale

- 3.6 Originally when the Village Centre South planning application was submitted in 2016, the food and beverage market was booming. Since then, this market has declined resulting in the NMA submission in early 2018 which introduced a phased approach condensing some of the offering in the short term into Building 455. The market has further declined through 2018 and 2019 with many high street chains struggling and pub restaurants closing, which has resulted in our advisors and funders anticipating that Phase 2 would not be viable for at least the medium term. Therefore Phase 2 will need to be left in the current situation until the market improves.
- 3.7 The retention of the Building 457 walls will have an adverse impact on the pub, restaurant and hotel viability given the unsightly and unattractive outlook over this wall and scaffolding.

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- 3.8 Tough residential market conditions also prevail at the current time and sales of newly built houses on the adjacent parcels have slowed. Site presentation becomes an increasingly important factor during times of tough market conditions to which the remaining façade is a contributory factor.
- 3.9 Further, with the ongoing completion of Village Centre North on the opposite side of Camp Road, and the need to let the retail units to create a vibrant and successful local centre, there is now an urgent need to address the public realm and setting of the village centre.
- 3.10 In summary, the retention of the remains of Building 457, the redevelopment of which is no longer commercially viable and will be delayed for the medium term due to current market conditions, means that it is imperative to remove this structure to create an attractive area which complements, rather than detracts from, the ability to let the commercial premises in this village centre, to improve the viability of new uses opening shortly in the village centre south Phase 1, and to assist in the sale of nearby residential properties.
- 3.11 There are also significant concerns as to the structural stability of the retained walls, necessitating scaffolding and also the need for hoarding to achieve appropriate health and safety standards. These temporary measures are unsightly and inappropriate to retain into the medium term as the Village Centre is brought into active public use.

4. HERITAGE STATEMENT

- 4.1 The Application Site is located within the Heyford Park new settlement within the core of the village centre.
- 4.2 Heyford Park was initially constructed in 1916 for use as an airfield during the First World War and remained operational for military use (with some minor periods of cessation) by the Royal Air Force (RAF) until circa 1950. At this time, whilst remaining a Ministry of Defence (MoD) site, its occupation was transferred to the United States Air Force (USAF) as part of the Cold War strategic defence. The USAF remained in occupation until 1994 when the site was handed back to the MoD and its military use ended. Consent was subsequently granted for the comprehensive redevelopment of the airbase to form the Heyford Park new settlement which is in an advanced stage of development, including within the new village centre.
- 4.3 The former RAF Upper Heyford military site was designated as a Conservation Area by Cherwell District Council in 2006. Notwithstanding its location within the Conservation Area, Building 457 is not a statutory designated building (Listed Building or Scheduled Monument). Furthermore, there are no statutory designated buildings within its immediate proximity.
- 4.4 During the USAF's occupation of the site, Building 457 was primarily used as a Sergeants' Mess as part of a wider residential occupation of the land south of Camp Road.
- 4.5 The Former RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area Appraisal (CDC, April 2006) indicates that Building 457 is a 'Non-Listed Building of Local Significance', falling within the 'RAF domestic and residential section' character area (Area 10B). It is important to note however that the Conservation Area Appraisal is now considerably out of date, and no longer provides an accurate description of either the character or current context of many areas within its boundaries, rather setting out a historical record of the previous character and appearance prior to the commencement of the approved redevelopment, particularly in the area directly adjacent to and south of Camp Road.
- 4.6 Nonetheless, the Conservation Area Appraisal describes Building 457 as:

“Sergeants’ Mess (Building 475²) 1925 date stone occupies a prominent position overlooking the parade ground. The building, constructed in red brick, is in good condition. This is one of the few buildings that retains the original 1925 plan-form.”

4.7 As is clearly evident, this description is no longer accurate as, following the grant of Planning Permission, the Building has been largely demolished with the only remaining element being the southern wall and the gable ends. The roof and the northern part of the building has been removed with prior consent from the Council. It would of course still be possible to reconstruct the building such that the original plan form and appearance could be recreated, although it should be noted that the extant permission did not propose this.

4.8 The Conservation Area Appraisal describes the ‘RAF domestic and residential area’ as:

“The 1920s, red brick, RAF buildings to the south of Camp Road are laid out around and orientated towards the parade ground. The style of the buildings within the area is again British Military and because of their grid-like orientation the area has a strong ‘campus’ character distinct from the Technical Site to the north on the other side of the road. The area immediately south of the parade ground was developed during the period of RAF expansion in the 1930s. The area is dominated by the Institute (4882) and H-blocks (489, 498 and 500) set around it. This area has a coherent character distinct from the 1920s buildings. The general ‘military architect’ character of the area has been diluted by post-war alterations.”

4.9 Again, this description is now entirely outdated, and simply provides an understanding of the previous context of the area. This description does not reflect either the approved future character and appearance of the area, nor the current context.

4.10 The significance of the Building was also considered in detail within the Heritage Assessment and Impact Study prepared by Oxford Archaeology as part of the assessment of the previous proposals for the redevelopment of the Building (and its neighbour (Building 455)). The Assessment concluded that the significance of the Building (along with Building 455) was as follows:

“The two buildings have evidential value in the potential they hold for furthering understanding of the structures

² It is noted that this quoted section from the Conservation Area appraisal is incorrect, the Sergeants’ Mess is Building 457 and not as quoted Building 475

themselves, as well as of RAF Upper Heyford and the nature of the 1920s RAF stations more generally. The phasing of the buildings can be gleaned from numerous areas of alteration or expansion to the fabric and this evidence can be added to the documentary sources. Some of the evidence will currently be hidden or obscured by later alterations.

The buildings have considerable historical illustrative value by helping to illustrate the history of RAF Upper Heyford and also illustrating more widely the standardised form of RAF buildings from the 1920s.

The structures have an historical associative value through the relationship of the site with the original establishment of the Royal Air Force and conflicts since then (particularly the Second World War).

The two buildings each have a simple but attractive neo-Georgian design typical for the RAF in the 1920s and this provides them with some aesthetic value.

The buildings also have some communal value, partly due to the number of people who have been stationed at the airbase and who would have used the building, but also due to their prominent location facing onto Camp Road. These will be familiar buildings to the great many people who routinely pass along Camp Road and they can be seen as landmarks from RAF Upper Heyford."

- 4.11 The report went on to summarise the significance of Building 457 (along with 455) as follows:

"Buildings 455 and 457 are clearly of heritage value as surviving fragments from the 1920s RAF Upper Heyford and as illustrations of this phase of the site's airfield history. Previous studies have established that the main historic significance of the airbase are the buildings and landscape from the Cold War period by the earlier, pre-war RAF history is also of interest. The buildings that survive from the 1920s base add to the wider collection of airfield structures at Upper Heyford Airbase and illustrate the span of the aviation history at the site. ...

The recent loss of other early RAF buildings at Upper Heyford means that it is no longer possible to describe the Parade Ground area on the south side of Camp Road as being relatively intact with Buildings 455 and 457 comprising part of a group of 1920s buildings. The coherent character of the area that was intact when the Conservation Area was designated has already been lost. However, they now have value as being surviving examples of buildings from the 1920s airfield, and do still form an important group with the other 1920s buildings north of the road around the airfield entrance. Other sites locally, as RAF Bicester, do still preserve a number of similar buildings of that era.

These are two typical inter-war airfield buildings and they provide a clear sense of the character of the former RAF Upper Heyford with red brick walls, slate-covered hipped roofs and spaced well apart from each other. They are prominent buildings located close to Camp Road and facing the parade ground. Their interiors have been much altered in later 20th-century refurbishments although evidence of their reuse by the US Air Force is also of some interest in its own right. Each building largely retains its original plan form (albeit with secondary extensions) which adds to their interest. The south elevation of Building 457 is the most prominent, coherent and significant side of this building.”

- 4.12 Despite the previous works to remove much of the original structure of Building 457, it is considered that this provides a fair assessment of the significance of the remains of the Building, and they still represent the most significant part of the original building, being a non-listed, but still significant building within the boundaries of a Conservation Area.
- 4.13 The remains of the Building and the application site now sits within the new village centre which comprises a mix of modern commercial/residential buildings and a few former RAF Buildings which have been repurposed and renovated (including Buildings 455 – hotel/restaurant, Building 52, Heyford Park House - offices, Building 100 – office, and Building 103 – Heritage Centre). To the south is now an area of open space and new residential dwellings, with the former character being largely lost, albeit the open space reflects the former parade ground and the architecture and design of the residential properties have been carefully considered to reflect the former use of the area.
- 4.14 Prior to any works being undertaken to Building 457, it was comprehensively recorded at 'level 3' and a copy of the record is provided at Appendix 1.

APPENDIX 1: BUILDING 457 RECORD

- 4.15 Today however, all that remains of the building is the redbrick wall which is being supported by a scaffold frame in advance of the building being redeveloped. The remains also include the gable ends and the incorporated chimney stacks.



Plate 2: Building 457 viewed from Camp Road

- 4.16 In summary, whilst Building 457 has been significantly altered such that only the southern wall and gable ends remain, and whilst it is neither a Listed Building nor Scheduled Monument, it does have some heritage value within the Conservation Area, primarily related to its 1920s military architecture.
- 4.17 In the overall current context of the Conservation Area, the general area of the village centre is considered to be of low heritage significance, primarily attributable to the mix of building periods, styles, materials and quality.

Assessment of Impact

- 4.18 As set out above, the building is located within the former RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area but is not in itself a statutory designated building; however, it is identified within the now outdated Conservation Area Appraisal as a 'Non-listed building of local significance'. The building originally comprised a single-storey structure originally constructed in 1925 in typical 1920s military architecture which has been subsequently partly demolished consistent with a previous permission such that only the southern wall and gable ends remain.
- 4.19 The surrounding area of Building 457 comprises the new village centre which is in an advanced stage of development.
- 4.20 It is determined that Building 457 provides a positive contribution to the Former RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area, albeit in its current form is not an aesthetically pleasing feature, being an undeveloped parcel within the core of the new settlement.

- 4.21 The Proposed Development would result in the demolition of the remaining elements of the building and clearance of the site, resulting in the loss of a feature which was considered to positively contribute to the character and appearance and significance of the Conservation Area.
- 4.22 As the proposals will see the complete loss of the building, this will inevitably result in harm, although in the context of the current contribution that the building makes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, the significance of which primarily lies in the buildings and landscape of the Cold War period, this harm would be less than substantial in the terms of the NPPF, at the lowermost end of the spectrum.

5. PLANNING BALANCE

- 5.1 The starting point is to consider the provisions of the Development Plan which are set out in full in Section 2.
- 5.2 The principal Development Plan policy applying to Heyford Park is Policy Villages 5 which, in effect, seeks to strike a balance between the creation of a high quality new settlement with new opportunities for housing, employment and community facilities, whilst protecting and enhancing the historic and natural environment. These considerations need not be mutually exclusive, as been often been demonstrated in successfully bringing forward the Heyford Park scheme.
- 5.3 However, in this case, given the conclusions of the heritage statement in Section 4 the Proposed Development would result in the demolition of the remaining elements of Building 457 and clearance of the site, resulting in the loss of a feature which was considered to positively contribute to the character and appearance and significance of the Conservation Area.
- 5.4 As the proposals will see the complete loss of the building, the heritage assessment concludes that this will inevitably result in harm, although in the context of the current contribution that the building makes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, the significance of which primarily lies in the buildings and landscape of the Cold War period, this harm would be less than substantial in the terms of the NPPF, at the lowermost end of the spectrum
- 5.5 The relevant test as set out in the NPPF is therefore whether this less than substantial harm is outweighed by public benefits.
- 5.6 The public benefits in this instance are principally threefold.
- 5.7 The first is the realisation of a vibrant and attractive Village Centre which lies at the heart, and is the showpiece, of the new settlement at Heyford Park. To create the complex mix of uses proposed incorporating community and commercial activities from scratch is a major challenge in the deteriorating market conditions, and the first phase of Village Centre South (with its hotel, bowling lanes, bar, restaurant and market link) is nearing completion.
- 5.8 Likewise the Village Centre North scheme, with a Sainsburys store and with a rank of other smaller commercial retail units to let which directly overlook this area is well advanced and due to open in early 2020.

- 5.9 As explained in Section 3 of this statement, there are further concerns as the effect of the wall and its unattractive scaffolding on the sale of nearby residential dwellings in what are also challenging market conditions in the residential market.
- 5.10 It is therefore imperative that the Village Centre is made as an attractive area as possible for the community, employees and visitors to Heyford Park to wish to visit and as a corollary for commercial retail, food and beverage enterprises to be able to sustain viable businesses in what are currently very difficult trading conditions. The site will remain undeveloped as part of the village centre until such time as market conditions improve, which is not anticipated to occur until the medium term.
- 5.11 The second is the positive creation of a new area of public open space which will significantly enhance the public realm. It will further complement the viability of adjoining uses by drawing visitors and people in, allowing special events to be held. It provides for a vibrant and positive environment which will allow views across to the attractive village green environment and encourages movement through to the equipped children's play area which is shortly to commence construction immediately to the south of this site.
- 5.12 The third is the removal of an ongoing health and safety issue which will come more to the fore as the adjacent areas are opened to the public and children being encouraged to actively roam and play in very close proximity to the south through the creation of a Local Equipped Area of Play Plus.
- 5.13 In summary, it is considered that these public benefits of the creation of a positive public realm pending the comprehensive redevelopment of Village Centre South Phase 2, removing a visual detractor from the area whilst actively complementing the new uses in the immediate surroundings, and removing a health and safety concern in close proximity to a large equipped children's play area scheme, outweigh the less than substantial harm to the heritage interest.

APPENDIX 1
BUILDING 457 RECORD

Building 457 Former RAF Upper Heyford Oxfordshire



**Historic Building Recording
and Investigation**



April 2016

Client: Dorchester Group

Issue No: 1

OA Job No: 6334

NGR: SP 51382 25732

Client Name: Dorchester Group
Document Title: Building 457 (Sergeant's Mess) Heyford Park
Document Type: Historic Building Recording

Issue Number: 1

Grid Reference: SP51382 25732

OA Job Number: 6334

Site Code: UHBLD15

Location for archive: Oxfordshire County Council

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Date: April 2016

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Building 457 Upper Heyford Airbase

Introduction and Summary

Oxford Archaeology were commissioned by the Dorchester Group to undertake building recording on Building 457 (The Sergeant's Mess) at the former RAF Upper Heyford in Oxfordshire. The recording was undertaken prior to the alteration and conversion of the building as part of the wider development of the former airbase. The recording on this building was undertaken as a condition of a planning consent granted by Cherwell District Council (Condition 4, planning ref: 15/01849/F).

OA have undertaken similar recording on a large number of other buildings at Upper Heyford, in relation to the same overall development of the site and a gazetteer report on all the buildings is being produced. Therefore the current report on Building 457 has been produced in a format to fit into this gazetteer (as well as being a stand-alone document to allow easy submission to clear the specific planning condition).

Building 457 was constructed in 1925 as the Sergeant's Mess. It formed part of the original airbase and it is shown on various airfield plans from the first half of the 20th century. The building was significantly extended in the 2nd half of the 20th century.

BUILDINGS 455 AND 457



Building 457: Sergeant's Mess

NGR: SP 51382 25732

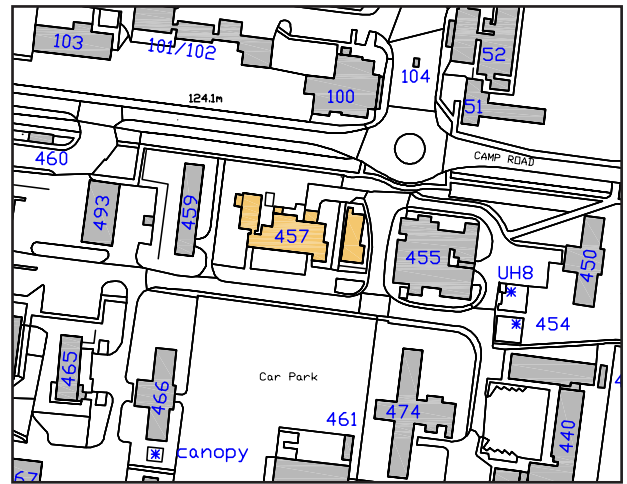
Recording Level: 3

Location

This building is located at the north of the Parade Ground within Area OA14, it is situated adjacent to Camp Road with its main frontage facing onto the Parade Ground.

History/ Function

The Sergeants' Mess is known to have been part of the establishment of RAF Upper Heyford in the 1920s and it is shown on the 1926 airfield plan. It is shown with a broadly east to west plan form facing onto the Parade Ground and with several projections, the main ones being to the north. The plan suggests that the two main projections on the north side flank a distinct area which was probably a lower lobby area with flat roof or an external yard. The plan key confirms that the use of the building was as a Sergeant's Mess from its outset and that at this stage it was numbered 45 in the airfield numbering system.



The airfield plan of 1931 shows that by this date an extension had been added to the west end of the main range of the building. The same footprint for Building 457 is shown on the plans of 1937, 1938 and 1939. One of the plans from 1939 (a heating ducts plan for the buildings around the Parade Ground) labels Building 457 as the Sergeant's Quarters rather than the Sergeant's Mess and this slight change in use relates to the construction of the combined dining rooms at the south end of the Parade Ground. A site plan from 1945 shows that at this date the building was numbered 67 and it appears that various small alterations had been undertaken to the building.

The two main northern projections appear to be slightly shorter than on previous plans and the footprint of both ends of the main range are shown slightly different than before. It is possible that the differences partly relate to this plan being more schematic than earlier ones. A further plan from 1947 also shows this building as number 67 and labels it as the Sergeant's Single Quarters.

An aerial photograph from 1954 shows what appears to be a large extension at the north-west corner of the building and this is presumably the extension that survives today in this area. The roof of this extension stands out brightly in the aerial photo from the older ranges which at this date may have retained war-time camouflage paint. The aerial photograph is not clear enough to be able to trace the exact footprint of the building or identify the smaller extensions.

An airfield plan from 1982 appears to show the building largely as it survives today. The final use of the building was as an American fast food restaurant.

Description

Exterior

The Sergeants' Mess is a single storey, red brick building located at the north end of the Parade Ground and it has a slate-covered roof. The main range is orientated east-to-west, with the principal elevation overlooking the Parade Ground. The building is predominantly constructed of red/orange/brown coloured bricks measuring 214 x 100 x 65mm and laid in a stretcher bond. There is an occasional over-fired brick. The windows have brick header lintels and concrete sills with slight moulded details, the windows within are modern replacements dating to the 1982 refurbishment works. The primary roof incorporates a variety of gables, gablets and hipped ends and has lead flashing. The roof structure overhangs and the underside has green painted wooden boards with additional moulding at the join with the brick wall.

The north elevation incorporates two substantial chimney stacks which project slightly from the main face of the wall and a projecting gable elevation at the western end (Plate 457.1). The projecting gable has a slightly higher roofline than the main range and a ventilation opening within the gable (Plate 457.2). The coping of the parapet gable wall is of moulded concrete. Set within the gable is a date stone with the date '1925'. The window within this gable wall is large with a brick header arch over the brick header lintel. Within the arch there is a herringbone pattern in the infill brickwork. There are two entrances to the building on this elevation. The western entrance is accessed via a concrete ramp and has modern double doors with small

overhanging porch over and the eastern entrance has modern double doors with a clerestory window over and is accessed via steps. This latter entrance was formerly a single door entrance that was widened during the 1982 works. The jambs are of modern brick and it also appears the clerestory window was also widened during these works. The projecting chimney stacks are simple in design and there are small gables in the roof with the slate tile roof flush against the elevation at this point. To the west of this range is a single storey concrete slab extension containing male and female WCs with pitched corrugated iron roof and a small brick flat roofed extension linking this to the main range (Plate 457.3). Both are painted white and have mid to late 20th-century windows.

The west elevation of the gable range has a projecting section with low hipped roof and tall chimney with curved detail using brick headers (Plate 457.4). The rear of the projecting gable range has a gablet and hipped roof. To the rear of the building is a low single storey range with a section of catslide roof supported by a wood bracket. Under this overhang is a small window so the purpose of this is unclear. To the north of this is a window inserted during the 1982 works with lintel and sill to match the existing primary phase windows.

To the rear of the building is a series of projecting ranges and extensions (Plate 457.5 and Plate 457.6). Centrally placed is a brick single storey projecting range of 1925 date with low hipped roof. A brick lean to with corrugated iron roof is situated against this range with external access only and this is the boiler room. On the south eastern end is a compound of corrugated iron and timber construction for several large walk in refrigerator units. Between this and the primary rear projection, the space has been enclosed to form a dry goods store. This extension pre-dates the 1982 works. There are extensive air conditioning ducts and pipes located on the flat roof with a modern steel ladder providing access to the roof. A brick wall at the rear of the building encloses the kitchen and store areas. To the west of this a further small extension of the same construction as the boiler room contains the electrics.

To the north west of building 457 there is a further, much larger, concrete extension of the same construction as the smaller WC block and a lean to building of timber and board construction with a single pitch flat roof (Plate 457.7 and Plate 457.8). This shed extension houses a large walk in refrigerator and has an external extractor fan. A portacabin in a very ruinous state with painted green fibreboard walls is also located on the rear elevation with internal access to the large concrete extension via steps (Plate 457.9).

Interior

Similarly to Building 455, the interior of Building 457 has also been radically altered in the later 20th century to form the American diner or fast food restaurant although this use adds to the interest of the building.

The entrance on the south east of the front elevation leads to a lobby with modern tile floor laid in a herringbone pattern (Plate 457.10). The male and female WCs are accessed through the link extension to the small concrete block extension. The fixtures and fittings within the WCs are all modern. To the north of the lobby is the larger concrete extension and this is accessed via double doors (Plate 457.11). On the 1982 plan this is not shown in full but it is named as 'Brown Derby Pizza Parlour' suggesting it was a separate restaurant to the main burger bar. Internally there are no fixtures in situ except for laminate tiles which are set on a cement floor and brown wood effect laminate boxing in to the concrete 5 no. concrete roof trusses (Plate 457.12). A non tiled area to the south western corner is possibly a former bar area or servery. Adjacent to this is a glass external door indicating this restaurant had its own entrance. A further untiled floor area is at the north end of the extension and here on the west elevation is a window blocked in with modern brick and a large bricked in section has a wood door set within providing access to the walk in refrigerator store in the adjacent lean to (Plate 457.13). This suggests the pizza parlour had their own kitchen area. On the east elevation at this point there is also brick blocking in and access via steps to the portacabin which may have served as an office. The windows in this building are simple wood casements. The concrete slab walls have different sizes for use where there are windows and are held in place by metal pins.

A games room has been constructed inside the lobby with board partition walls on a timber frame and large glass windows (Plate 457.14). An access door is located on the corner of this room. Within, the games room has fitted plastic seating and open units. The interior of the main range is now largely open plan with fixed tables and chairs, suspended ceiling panels with integral lighting and a quarry tile floor laid in a herringbone pattern (Plate 457.15 and Plate 457.16). The walls have wall papered panels up to a wood rail and painted plaster walls above. The panelling is shaped around the bottom of windows. A separate easting area at the eastern end of the room has some decorative mirrors in situ and a door leading to a staff rest and wc area (Plate 457.17). Two large arches are located on the north elevation of this room and from plans it would appear these were inserted during the 1982 refurbishment. What appear to be sections of extractor fans over suggest this was a servery area, although there is currently fixed plastic seating within these spaces. Several ceiling tiles are down exposing the primary phase ceiling which is constructed of lath and plaster and has moulded cornicing (Plate 457.18).

Access to the kitchens is through a wide opening with walls concealing the kitchens from view (Plate 457.19). These walls are

covered in cream coloured rectangular tiles laid vertically. A lower section of wood with integral lights spans the opening and according to the 1982 plan formed part of the servery. The kitchen is situated to rear of this and also has tiled walls throughout (Plate 457.20). Some stainless steel ovens, sinks and hobs are still in situ. The floor within the kitchen and servery is 10 x 10cm brown quarry tiles. To the rear of the kitchen is a tiled lobby with external door and two offices which have wallpapered walls and low fibreboard ceilings with strip lighting. The dry goods store (Plate 457.21) has plain wallpapered walls and a concrete floor with a sloping area around two sets of double doors leading to the external walk-in refrigerator store (Plate 457.22).

Conclusions

The fact that the main range was refurbished in the later 20th century means that it is in good condition although some of the northern extensions are not. Internally the 1982 refurbishment removed the majority of the early fixtures and fittings and only the cornicing and lath and plaster ceiling of the main dining room remains.

Archive

There are three drawings within the Upper Heyford archives which all date to the 1982 refurbishment works. The drawings are: cold water services, as existing elevations and proposed ground floor plan. The two plan drawings do not show the concrete extensions to the west of the building in full.



Proposed Ground Floor Plan

- Post 1981
- 1955 - 1981
- late 1940s - 1954
- Pre 1931
- 1925 Original build

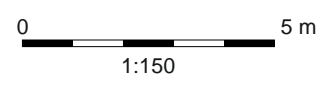


Figure 457.1: Phased plan of ground floor

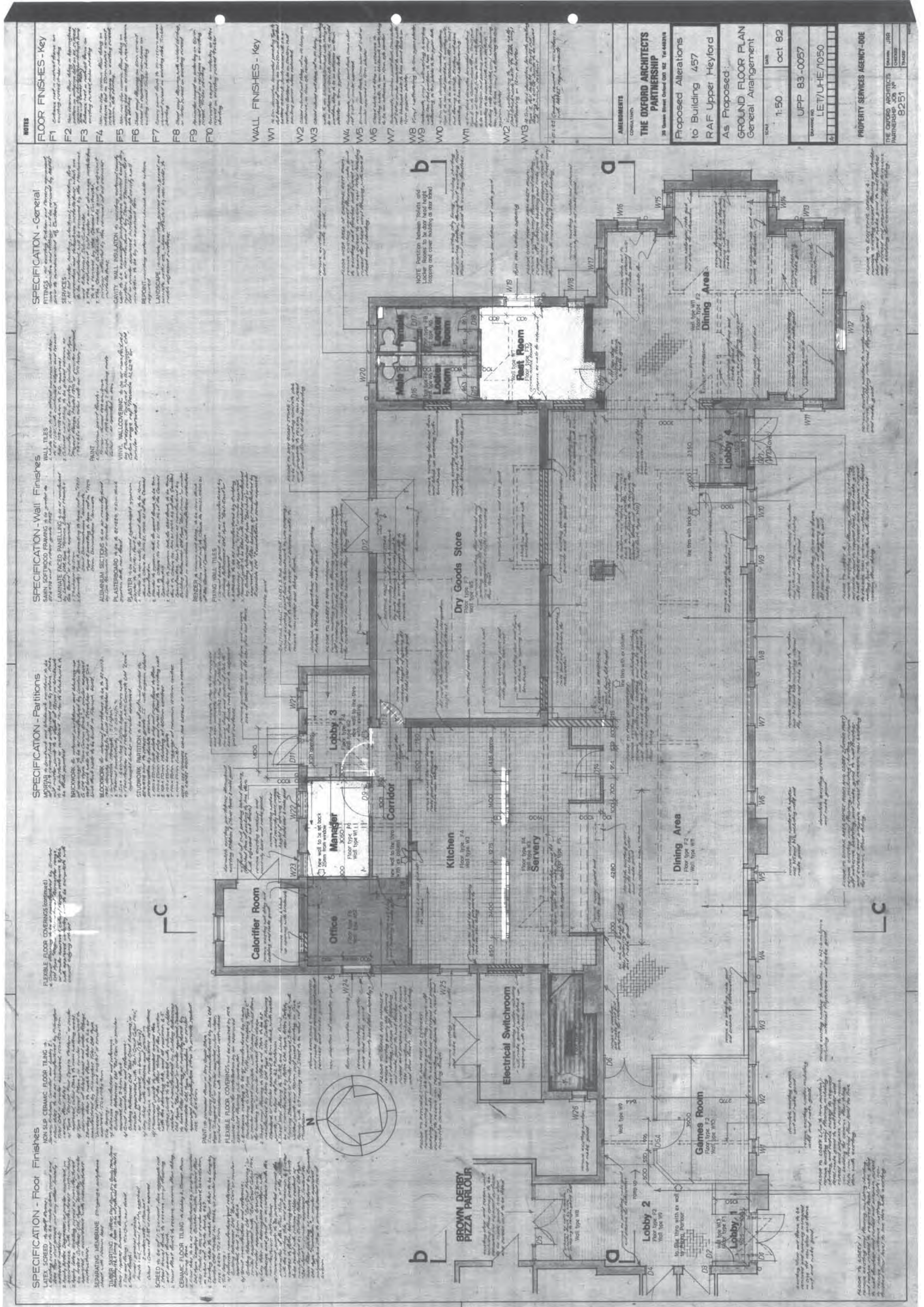


Figure 457.2: 1982 Proposed ground floor plan



Plate 457.1 View of front (north) elevation



Plate 457.2 Detail of second entrance and gable with datestone



Plate 457.3 View of concrete wc extension



Plate 457.4 View of west elevation



Plate 457.5 View of south elevation, central section



Plate 457.6 View of south elevation, west end



Plate 457.7 View of large concrete extension, east elevation



Plate 457.8 View of east elevation



Plate 457.9 View of porta cabin extension



Plate 457.10 View of entrance lobby towards wc extension



Plate 457.11 View of entrance lobby



Plate 457.12 View of large concrete extension interior



Plate 457.13 Detail of blocked openings within large concrete extension



Plate 457.14 View of games room within entrance lobby



Plate 457.15 View of main dining area within original wing



Plate 457.16 View of main dining area within original wing



Plate 457.17 View of main dining area within original wing



Plate 457.18 Detail of former ceiling within main dining area



Plate 457.19 Detail of servery and entrance to kitchens



Plate 457.20 View of kitchen



Plate 457.21 View of cold store



Plate 457.22 View of refrigeration unit store



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