

Mr Andrew Lewis
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Direct Dial: 0207 973 3632

Our ref: P01122916

14 November 2019

Dear Mr Lewis

**T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**BUILDING 457, VILLAGE CENTRE SOUTH, (PHASE 2), HEYFORD PARK, CAMP
ROAD, UPPER HEYFORD, BICESTER, OX25 5HD
Application No. 19/02337/F**

Thank you for your letter of 4 November 2019 regarding the above application for planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Summary

These proposals would entail the total loss of building 457, an RAF era building which is recognised as a positive contributor to the Conservation Area in which it sits. The proposals would also reduce the coherence of Camp Road as a military landscape and thus entail a moderate degree of harm to the conservation area as a whole. As this building could be restored we do not consider the level of harm entailed to be justified as is required by paragraph 194 of the NPPF and therefore we object to this application.

Historic England Advice

Buildings 457 forms part of the Trenchard era first phase of the airfield at Upper Heyford, being built in 1925. Relatively few buildings from this period now survive on the site and while relatively simple these two are among the best survivors in architectural terms. They originally formed part of a group around a parade ground and also formed the interface with camp road. Part of this context is in the course of undergoing great change, as most of the buildings around the former parade have consent for demolition and the parade ground itself is to be replaced with a cricket pitch. However, the basic spatial disposition of the buildings - acting as an interface between Camp Road and the technical site and the main public space of the domestic site - remains as originally conceived. Furthermore, Camp Road survives more intact and is one of the last places on the base where a coherent sequence of interwar



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buildings can be seen. This is formed by buildings 74 (the Officer's Mess), 52 (Station Offices and Operations Block), 100 (the Guardhouse) and 103 in addition to buildings 455 and 457.

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

The significance of these buildings has long been recognised in that they were identified as making a positive contribution and earmarked for possible retention in the Revised Comprehensive Planning Brief (2007) and granted outline consents for the site (08/00716/OUT & 10/01642/OUT) have all included the retention and reuse of these buildings. Planning permission was been granted for the refurbishment and renovation of the building in 2015 (15/01849/F) as a café/restaurant involving minimal harm to the building's significance. The only demolition proposed was that of poor quality later alterations and the alterations envisaged to the original building were relatively minor.

In 2016 planning permission was granted for a more ambitious scheme which involved a large extension to the north of this building (16/01000/F). Historic England recommended that this application was refused as it would involve partial demolition of building 457.

Despite partial demolition loss of what remains of building 457 would harm the significance of the conservation area. This would not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and paragraph 194 of the NPPF is clear that any harm to a designated heritage asset, such as a conservation area, needs clear and convincing justification. We do not consider that this harm is justified. The remains can be incorporated into a new building on the site in accordance with the granted permission. If the proposed use is no longer considered to be as attractive commercially a new use will need to be found. If the Dorchester Group are concerned about the appearance of a propped wall they should tidy the site up or rebuild it in accordance with their granted permission, given that building works are taking place across the whole settlement this argument should be given very little weight. Furthermore, if the appearance of the site was such an important consideration they should have considered this before commencing demolition. Therefore we recommend planning permission is refused for this application.

Recommendation

Historic England objects to the application on heritage grounds.

We consider that the application does not meet the requirements of the NPPF, in



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particular paragraph number 194.

In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

Your authority should take these representations into account in determining the application. If you propose to determine the application in its current form, please inform us of the date of the committee and send us a copy of your report at the earliest opportunity.

Please contact me if we can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely



Richard Peats

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

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cc: Jenny Ballinger, Cherwell DC



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