



BICESTER
MOTION

Experience Quarter

OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION
DESIGN + ACCESS STATEMENT

RIDGE
EDGARS

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FOREWORD

Bicester Heritage has been developing a masterplan for the creation of the UK's first automotive resort. Having successfully developed and combined the concept of a Centre for Excellence (for the historic automotive sector) with unique experiences and community involvement, Bicester Heritage will now become a component of the larger landmark development named Bicester Motion.

Bicester Motion will celebrate the PAST, the PRESENT and the FUTURE of automotive culture and technology. This opportunity will ensure that the historic airfield location it calls home fulfil its original and continued purpose as a focal point for cutting edge technology. The ambition is to become one of the country's top 20 tourist and leisure destinations.

The proposed 444-acre masterplan development will cater for a variety of sectors, including: leisure, experience and tourism, automotive engineering, aviation, technology businesses, education and employment. By bringing these sectors together, Bicester Motion aims to redefine business-to-consumer engagement through unrivalled customer experiences in a unique and holistic environment.

Bicester Motion's vision has been embraced by the UK's Department of International trade. It was presented by the governmental department and Bicester Motion at the world leading real estate, conference and networking event MIPIM in Cannes in March 2019.



Professional advisors and leading specialists



Architect

Ridge + Partners LLP
The Cowyards, Blenheim Park
Oxford Road
Woodstock
OX20 1QR



Planning Consultant

Edgars Ltd
The Old Bank
39 Market Square
Witney
OX28 6AD



Heritage Consultant

Worledge Associates
3rd Floor
3 Cornmarket Street
Oxford
OX1 3EX



Landscape Architect

ASA Landscape Architects
68i Innovation Drive
Milton Park
Abingdon
OX14 4RQ



Ecology Consultant

Ecology Solutions
Farncombe House, Farncombe
Estate
Broadway, Worcestershire
WR12 7LJ



Transport Planning

Mode Transport Planning Ltd
Lombard House
145 great Charles Street
Birmingham
B3 3LP



Motorsport + Automotive Design

Driven International
Landmark House
Station Road,
Hook
RG27 9HA



Civil Engineer

Ridge + Partners LLP
The Cowyards, Blenheim Park
Oxford Road
Woodstock
OX20 1QR



Sustainability

Ridge + Partners LLP
The Cowyards, Blenheim Park
Oxford Road
Woodstock
OX20 1QR



Aviation

Air Motive Limited



Noise

SPL Track Environmental
Mallory Park Circuit
Kirkby Mallory
Leicestershire
LE9 7QE



Arboricultural

On Centre Surveys
2 Charles Court
Budbrooke Road
Warwick
CV34 5LZ



Archaeology

Oxford Archaeology South
Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford
OX2 0ES

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This document is the Design and Access Statements for the Experience Quarter and accompanies the Outline planning application submission.

The Experience Quarter is at the heart of the Bicester Motion vision; a resort destination where automotive enthusiasts, friends and families can benefit from a unique range of experiences and adventures. This document aims to explain the background and rationale to the proposals, as well as the quantum of development proposed with indicative siting, orientation, scale and mass. It explains how the historic and local context has influenced these indicative proposals and why they are considered appropriate to the context and compliant with planning policy.

Relevant planning policy is presented and interpreted in relation to the proposals along with a description of the site and surrounds. Several challenges and opportunities have been identified by the consultant team which informed the concept and parameters plans. These are summarised within this document and will be used to drive design development going forward.

The proposed parameters and indicative massing designs have been informed by the following reports that form part of this submission:

- Bicester Motion Vision Document by Bicester Motion
- Bicester Motion- Experience Quarter Planning Statement by Edgars
- Archaeology Assessment (site wide assessment) by Oxford Archaeology
- Transport Assessment for EQ Development Parcel by Mode Transport Planning
- Travel Plan for EQ Development Parcel by Mode Transport Planning
- Bicester Motion Aviation report and plans by Air Motive Ltd.
- Heritage Statement by Worlledge Associates
- Experience Quarter – Ecological and Biodiversity Report by Ecology Solutions
- Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment by ASA Landscape Architects
- Arboricultural report by Brian Higginson

- Noise report by SPLtrack Limited
- Bicester Motion Experience Quarter Driving Tracks – Design Strategy Report by Driven International
- Bicester Motion – Experience Quarter Energy and Sustainability Design Strategy by Ridge & Partners LLP
- Bicester Motion – Experience Quarter Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment by Ridge & Partners LLP
- Ground conditions/geology/contamination by Crestwood Environmental



Figure 1. Site Location

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Figure 2. *Bird's Eye View of the Bicester Motion Site*

KEY :

- Ownership Boundary
- Surrounding Roads

1

PROJECT
OVERVIEW

1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

1.1 CLIENT BRIEF

1.1.1 Client Vision

The vision is to provide a vibrant future for the former RAF Bicester, promoting public access and offering a collection of inclusive visitor experiences unlike any other destination in the country.

The Experience Quarter offers a landmark opportunity for Bicester to become a world-leading destination to celebrate the past, present and future of automotive and aviation culture. This will not only secure a sustainable future for the historic site, but it will promote significant social and economic growth for the region. In addition, it will create new skilled employment and activities which will enhance the community, providing us all with a place to be proud of.

Ridge and Partners have been working with Bicester Motion and Bicester Heritage over a period of five years to help develop the masterplan for the former MOD site. Over the past three years focus has been on implementing new purpose and opportunities around the wider site and how to showcase these taking into account the various heritage, landscape and ecological factors.

1.1.2 Design brief

The Experience Quarter is one of the key new opportunities that has been identified as an innovative and appropriate new use. Not only will it inspire, educate, entertain and excite people of all ages and interests, it will also provide Bicester with dynamic international exposure as the world's leading automotive experience venue. The proposed works surrounding the Brand Experience can be summarised as follows:

Provide a new Experience Quarter for leading international automotive and leisure brands to create a unique and memorable lifestyle experiences for all the family.

The new development should be appropriate for its new purpose and use and sensitive to the wider site and its history. It should focus on new architectural interpretations that appropriately showcase the progression of building technologies in the same way the existing heritage buildings did in their prime.

The Experience Quarter will be formed as a cluster of high-quality buildings that will house world-leading brands across the Motion sector with each building providing views across the airfield, towards the vibrant activities taking place in the air and on the tracks, visitors can enjoy wings and wheels technology.

New driver training and handling tracks will be formed for visitors to learn new skills in a safe and family focused environment, guests of all ages can get behind the wheel or simply enjoy the show from the viewing points and walkways planned.

Demonstration and event areas are planned enabling brands to showcase new and exciting technologies to the public. As we move towards a greener future Bicester Motion aspire that the Experience Quarter will be internationally recognised as the leading site for sustainable transport product launch and demonstrations with the benefit of the on-road and off-road tracks, demonstration zones and airfield.

The creation of new walkways and cycleways connecting the four Quarters of the site (Heritage, Innovation, Wilderness & Experience) will enable visitors to explore on foot, cycle, scooters or shuttle promoting health and well-being through the enjoyment of open green space filled with vibrant activities for all of the family.

The scope of works includes a set of parameters that will guide a Reserved Matters application to deliver the requirements set out in the above brief.



Local, family and tourism visitors



School, college and community visits



Driving enthusiasts



Corporate visitors



Track Tour



Building Tour



Outdoor activities



E- Karting



Indoor activities & learning 1



Indoor activities & learning 2



Driver experience



Driver experience



Team building



Spectating



Driver safety training



Young driver experience

1.2 PLANNING DESIGN POLICY SUMMARY

Please also refer to the submitted Planning Statement prepared by Edgars.

The design policies within the Cherwell Local Plan 2011 – 2031: Part 1 outlines that all new development should incorporate sustainable design and delivering high quality design that complements the historic environment is essential. With specific regard to Policy Bicester 8, uses that will be complementary to, and help enhance, the character and appearance of the conservation area and the nationally important heritage value of the site will be sought. Any development must consider the sensitive historic fabric, layout of buildings and openness of the airfield.

The saved policies of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 also outline that development should have an appropriate layout, design and external appearance are sympathetic to the character of the urban or rural context of that development in sensitive areas, such as Conservation Areas.

RAF Bicester is designated as a Conservation Area and as such the Conservation Area Appraisal has been a key consideration within the proposed development.

These policies are supported by the National Planning Policy Framework which states that the creation of high-quality buildings and places are fundamental to what planning should achieve & that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development which creates better places in which to work. Furthermore, development should function well and add to the overall quality of the area, be visually attractive and sympathetic to the local character and history while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.

The national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides further practical guidance on assessing design as part of an Outline Planning Application. It highlights that the preparation of Parameter Plans and Design Codes within outline applications can be effective tools in securing good design. Both measures have been adopted in the preparation of this application.



Figure 3. Cherwell Local Plan 2011 – 2031: Part 1 & Policy Bicester 8



2

SITE APPRAISAL



2. SITE APPRAISAL

2.1 SITE LOCATION

The site is 2.4km (1½ miles) north/north east of the centre of the market town of Bicester at Bicester Heritage (former RAF Bicester).

2.1.1 Bicester

Bicester is identified in the 2011 Census as having a population of 32,642 having grown rapidly during the previous 50 years. The town is identified as being less sensitive in landscape terms than other towns in the district and is a focus for economic growth.

The adopted Local Plan states that Bicester's economy is focused on storage and distribution, retail, food processing, technology and motorsport engineering. Most of the employment in Bicester is in the distribution and manufacturing sectors. Previously, before closure, MOD activities at former RAF Bicester also contributed to the economy of the town.

The town is well-connected by road and rail. It has good infrastructure and significant investment is either being delivered or planned. Bicester is approximately 14 miles from Oxford. The good connectivity, close-proximity and relationship with Oxford helps Bicester by creating opportunities for economic development. Bicester is also well-connected to and influenced by the Chilterns, M25 corridor and London markets.

The adopted Local Plan identifies opportunities for Bicester to develop a knowledge economy around existing and new employers, sectors and clusters to create a centre of expertise and competitive advantage.

Cherwell District Council have been in consultation and are developing their Industrial Strategy, Cherwell District Council have identified Bicester Motion as a key delivery site for leisure, tourism and employment that support economic growth and prosperity in the region as well as social, health and well-being benefits.

Bicester is located at the focal point of a corridor of motorsport engineering expertise with 7 Formula 1 teams, and 7 tier 1 motorsport teams and suppliers located within 30 miles. Approximately 15 centres of motor manufacturing excellence are also located within 40 miles.

Bicester is a key retail leisure and visitor destination in Oxfordshire with visitors shopping at Bicester Village. The plans for Bicester Motion will support the opportunity for visitors to stay longer and widen their visit across Oxfordshire.

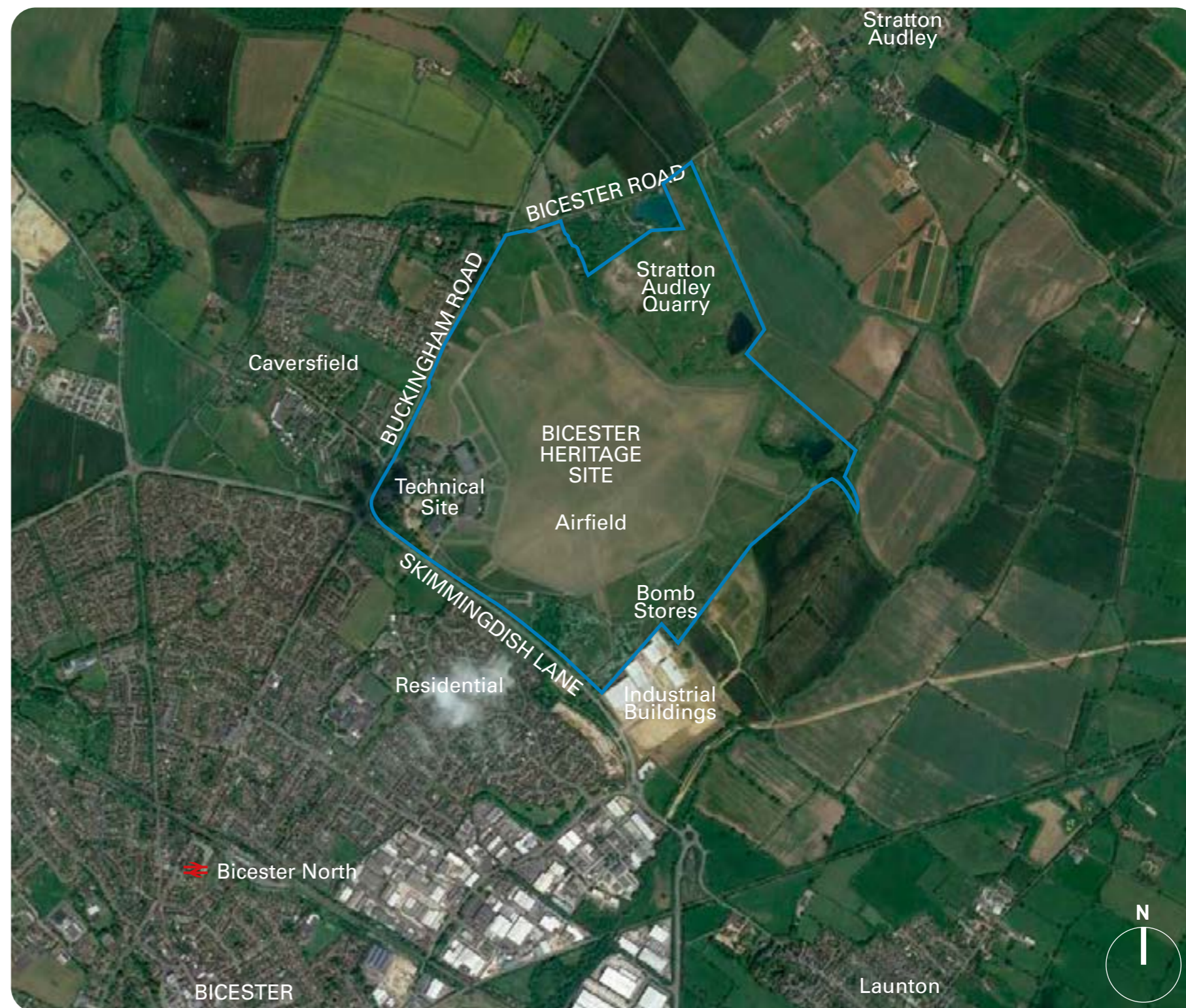


Figure 4. Site Location Diagram (not to scale)

KEY:
— Ownership Boundary

2.1.2 Bicester Motion

Bicester Motion is centrally located in the heart of the 'Motorsport Valley' as well as the Oxfordshire Tourism Cluster. The former, is a triangular concentration of automotive technology and research enterprises that stretches between Cambridge, Oxford and Silverstone whilst the latter include attractions such as Blenheim Palace, Bicester Village, Waddestone Manor and the Cotswolds receiving around 30m tourism visits each year. It is situated on the outskirts of the market town of Bicester in the Cherwell district of North Oxfordshire, about halfway between London and Birmingham.

Well within a 2-mile radius is the town centre, the well-known international retail destination of Bicester Village Designer Outlet and two train stations which provide direct connections to Oxford and London, as well as Birmingham.

2.1.3 Experience Quarter

The proposed development site is within the applicants ownership boundary, and situated between the Old Technical Site (south) and the Stratton Audley Quarry (north). It includes the former perimeter track and a portion of the current flying field.

To the south of the site is the existing former RAF Technical Site being renovated by Bicester Heritage Ltd, now restored and operating as Bicester Heritage an award winning Centre of Excellence for historic motoring.

To the west of the site is Buckingham Road. Further to the west of the site is the existing built up area of Bicester, which comprises residential development set back away from the main road.

The Bomb Stores are located east of the application boundary. A small section of the application site falls within Oxford City Council land for which lease arrangements are being sought.



Figure 5. Diagram showing site in context of surrounding development

KEY :
— Ownership Boundary

2.2 DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

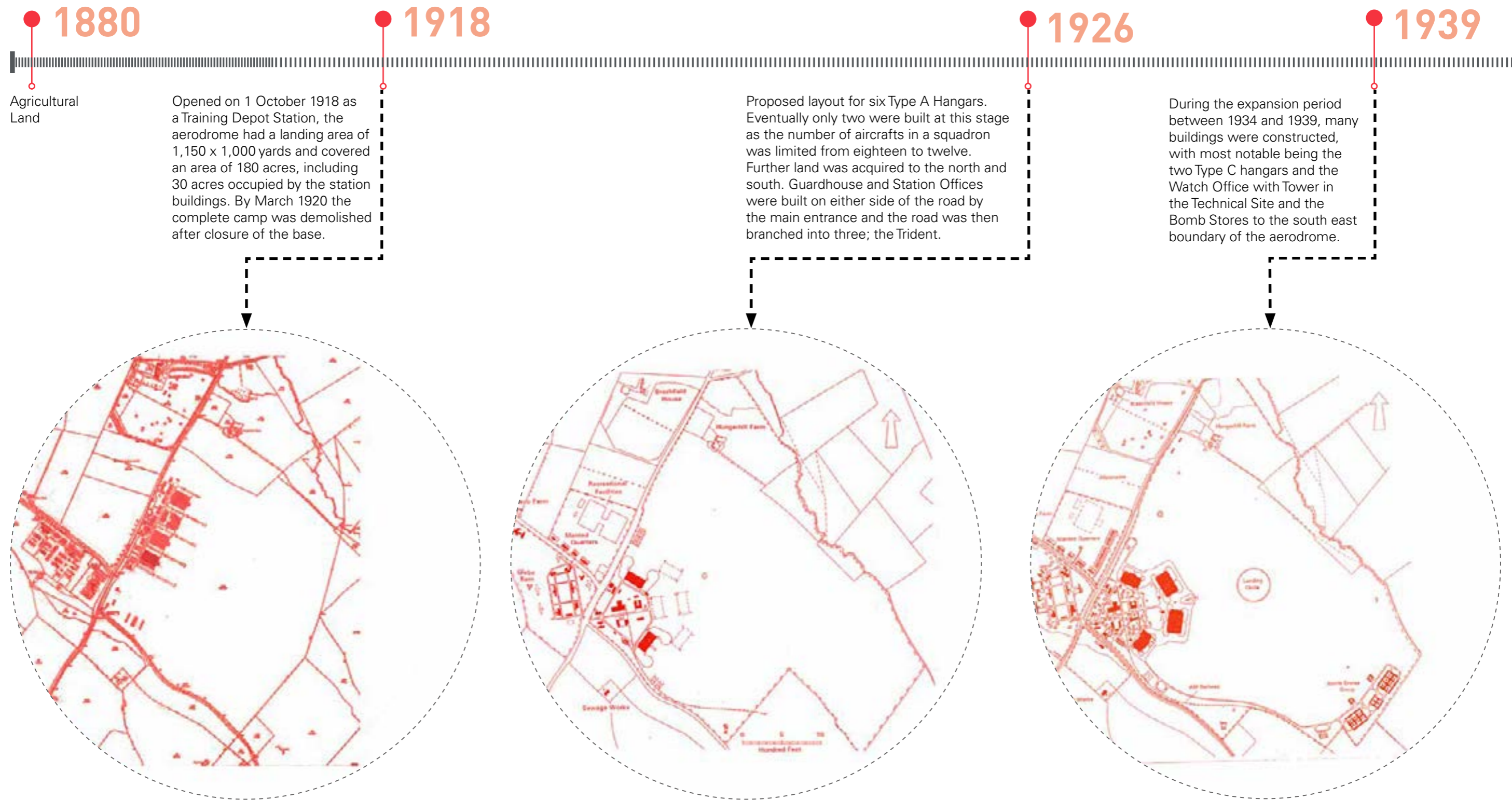


Figure 6. RAF Training Depot Site Plan 1918, P. Francis
Source: Conservation Area Appraisal 2008

Figure 7. Proposed Layout August 1926, P. Francis
Source: Conservation Area Appraisal 2008

Figure 8. Site Plan 1939, P. Francis
Source: Conservation Area Appraisal 2008

1945

During 1940-1945, the war created the need to protect the aircrafts by dispersing them around the site instead of concentrating them all in the hangars. Land was acquired for the construction of tracks and panhandle standings for the aircrafts. These "peripheral" areas were connected by the perimeter track. During this period the flying field was considerably expanded.



Figure 9. Site Plan 1945, P. Francis
Source: Conservation Area Appraisal 2008

1980

The extended panhandle areas are replaced by residential development encroaching into the former site and much of what once was part of the aerodrome was eroded.

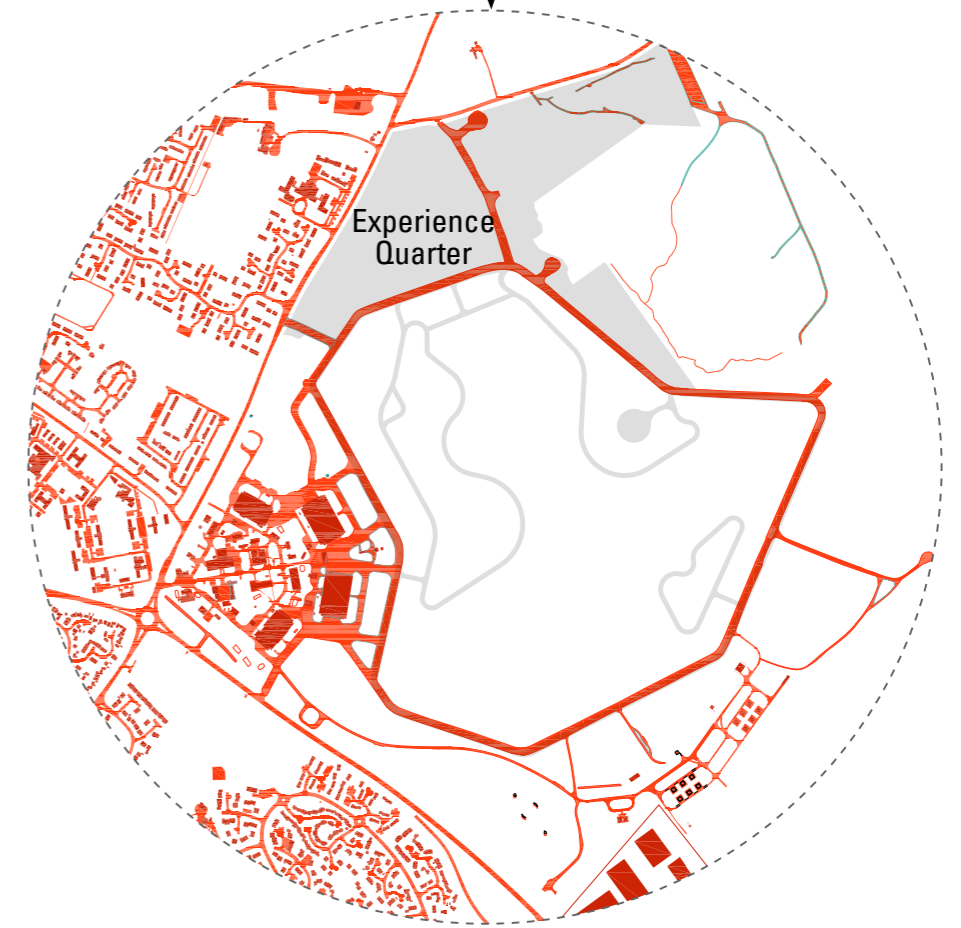


Figure 10. Site Plan 1980
source: OS map adapted to suit

2019

Urbanisation and further residential development and highway infrastructure surround the site, the Skimmingdish Lane / Buckingham Road junction has been re-aligned and upgraded.

Major industrial developments feature close beyond the south border of the site as well as large development directly south of the Bicester Heritage site.



KEY :  Application Area

Figure 11. Current site plan
source: OS map adapted to suit

2.3 SITE DESCRIPTION

Please also refer to the submitted Heritage and Landscape compendia and the Ecology report prepared by Worlledge Associates, ASA Landscape Architects and Ecology Solutions respectively.

The site primarily comprises areas of grassland with areas of hard surfacing. The land is flat and low-lying. The site comprises Previously Developed Land. The site is in Flood Zone 1 and is not at risk of fluvial flooding.

2.3.1 Structures

There are no SAM structures or buildings within the application site boundary.

2.3.2 Site Levels

The site can be described as mostly level given the historic airfield and MOD use of the land. Falls are on average 1:100, which is a gradual fall of about 10m over a kilometre cross sections of the site.

Former quarry activities within the OCC portion of land has resulted in a slightly more undulated range of levels in this area. At an average fall of 1:20, this area can still be described as relatively flat with some small 2m high embankments sloped at 1:2 in the most extreme case.

2.3.3 Perimeter Track & Panhandle Areas

The application site includes the existing perimeter track which originates from the 1940s expansion period when it connected the airfield with a vast network of dispersal roads leading to panhandle areas for aircraft. Most of these have been lost to development outside of the Bicester Motion ownership land and application site. These areas were connected to the perimeter track in 5 locations and are still evident and reflected in the existing track infrastructure.

The perimeter track is approximately 3.3km long and ranges in width from 12-14m. Its condition is poor in places and is in continued decline and is at further risk of deterioration. Evidence of the 6 dispersal road connections and the 3 panhandles remain identifiable within the current infrastructure on site (Figure 14 on page 21).

2.3.4 Screening

The perimeter track passes directly in front of the listed Type C hangars and the Watchtower (part of the Old Technical Site) and approximately 100m from the scheduled Bomb Stores. Most of the application site, however, is further away from the Old Technical Site and Bombs Stores and range in distance from 500m to over a kilometer.

Apart from the OCC portion of land, which is screened by woodland trees, the site is unscreened from the hangars and Watchtower buildings, but viewed against a backdrop of trees.

Views out are predominantly over the treeline with glimpses of long views over lower scrub and gaps in the vegetation along dispersal roads No.1, 2, 4 & 6 (Figure 14 on page 21).

The most prominent view into the application site is from a section of Caversfield in the vicinity of dispersal road number 1 (Figure 14 on page 21). Further intermittent glimpses are possible along Buckingham Road (in-between dispersal roads 1 and 2), but for the most part these are from the road and the footpath as another layer of screening is provided by a second row of trees on the opposite side of Buckingham road.

2.4 SITE VIEWS

KEY



1. Site part aerial view
2. View from Watchtower towards north-western part of the site





- 3. View from the flying field, showing the application site in relation to the Technical Site and context
- 4. Perimeter Track passing in front of hangars
- 5. Aerial view from Buckingham Road entrance
- 6. View south with application site area in foreground
- 7. View of Buckingham Road
- 8. View of degraded landscape with overgrown shrubs





2.5 SITE CONTEXT

2.5.1 Introduction

Bicester airfield, a planned Royal Flying Corps training station, was first brought into use in the summer of 1918, but closed down in March 1920 due to post-war cut backs.

A change in the country's defensive structure was introduced in January 1925, known as the Air Defence of Great Britain (ADGB). Under this scheme, two new permanent three squadron bomber airfields were planned for Bicester and Upper Hayford and almost immediately a start was made on the reconstruction of the abandoned sites.

The planned layout was on modern lines and included six (two for each squadron) hangars of the interwar period. Only two hangars (A-types) were actually built at this time, but room was allowed for four more, should they have been needed. A range of single and two-storey permanent buildings was also designed and built during this mini-expansion period. Combined this part of the larger airfield site is called the Technical Site and has been successfully repurposed by Bicester Heritage. Buildings were separated from each other by large grassed areas. The reasons were two-fold, first, it allowed for future expansion if necessary, and second, it would minimise the effect of attack by hostile aircraft. A further two hangars (C-Types) were built were around 1936, totalling the four large hangars that currently defines the Eastern edge of the Technical Site.

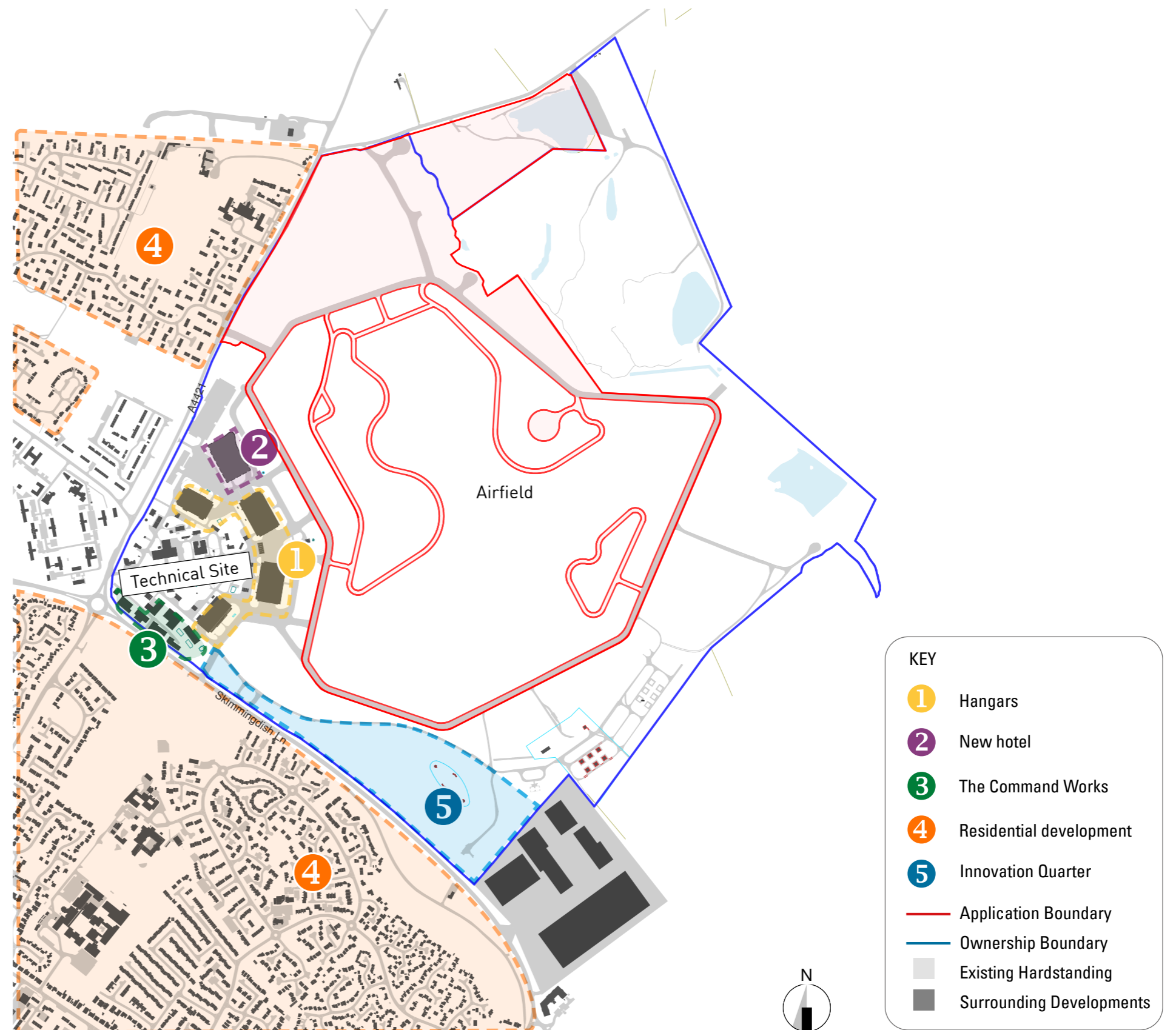


Figure 12. Character Analysis Location Plan (not to scale)

Other contextually relevant developments around the application site include:

- The Command Works, which is constructed, successful and operational.
- The Hotel proposal, which is located within the Technical Site, also west of the application boundary; planning permitted.
- Innovation Quarter, which is recently received outline planning approval, located to the south of the application site.
- Bicester town suburban developments to the west and south.

It is worth noting that, with the exception of the relatively nucleus Technical Site and the aviators using the flying field at present, the remaining, much larger, site is unutilised at present. This applies to the application site area as well.

Figure 12 identifies the study area in relation to the site.

A character analysis of the immediate and surrounding area has been conducted and relevant design elements informed and shaped the design proposals put forward for this outline planning application.

2.5.1.1 Type A and C Hangars

Constructed in 1924, the two Type A hangars were the first permanent end-opening hangars of the interwar period. The buildings represent good surviving examples of their type.

Type A hangars are large sheds with full height steel doors at each end with a series of 7 brickwork gables to each long side with encased steel external stanchions. Below these are a continuous strip of patent glazing, in 9 lights to each bay, with exception to the two end half-bays. Structurally and operationally these were cutting edge with very large hangar doors and impressive spans to house the new larger types of heavy bomber aircraft.

The last two hangars to be built were constructed after the second wave of development occurred and were Type C hangars. Type C hangars are large sheds with full height steel doors at each end. The roofs are a series of transverse ridges with hipped ends, behind a parapet, and with deep apron above doors.

Architecturally these are characterised as proud unapologetic (in stature) structures at the edge of the Technical site and splayed in an array facing the airfield. The roofscape creates a distinctive rhythm to these otherwise simple masses. The material palette is restrained palette of brick to compliment the existing technical site and functional with a rich texture.



Type A hangar



Type C hangar

2.5.2.4 Hotel

Within the curtilage of the Technical Site, planning consent for a new hotel has been granted and a new extension to the Technical Site is constructed, successful and operational, known as the CommandWorks. Combined, these will form part of a first phase in repurposing the former RAF site to provide a long term and sustainable business, tourism and recreational use. The focus is on reinforcing the site's acknowledged reputation, historically and currently as a site for creativity, innovation and excellence in motor engineering.

The shape, footprint and orientation of the hotel has been designed to provide a rectangular massing that sits naturally and proud within the existing pattern of development next to one of the C-Type hangars. The approach to the Hotel design was for it to read as a modern 'hangar' feature, in keeping with the original six hangar planned development of 1925, whilst still allowing the development to be legible as a modern hotel.

A subtle curve feature design to the building has been introduced in order to provide a design feature that distinguishes the hotel.

2.5.2.5 New Technical Site

Located to the south of the Old Technical Site, the Command Works is to create a sense of an extension of the Old Technical Site. The form of the buildings are simple, following the military 'austere', having clean lines (with single and double pitched roofs), gable end walls and differing heights which reflect the existing building variety on site. It is making direct references to existing site materiality to respect their context and ensure high quality aesthetics that align with the standard of the original Technical Site buildings. The following main materials have been used in different variations to ensure consistency whilst avoiding monotony:

- Sinusoidal metal cladding in anthracite and muted olive green to reflect the military interpretation and colours of the existing Technical Site.
- Industrial vibrant brick gable ends.

2.5.2.6 Neighboring residential development

To the south of the site is a local residential area with associated day-to-day commercial facilities. These are predominately two to two and a half stories, semi-detached, dwellings and townhouses with pitched roofs. The finishing materials are mainly brick.

2.5.2.7 Innovation Quarter

To the south-east of the site, outline planning permission for the Innovation Quarter has been granted recently. It includes 6 units for B1, B2 and B8 uses, height ranging from 9m to 11.5m.

From a design perspective, the Innovation Quarter is contemporary and innovative. It draws on the rhythmic of the Old Technical Site; in specific the hangars, but positively avoids a pastiche copy. The design includes a modern take on materiality. A recessive colour palette will link them in tone to the hangars. The roofscape will build on the undulated roof theme of the hangars to create a uniformity across the development and link the Innovation Quarter units together in architectural style and proportions.

2.5.2 Analysis

2.5.2.1 Scale:

The Technical Site demonstrates variety in scale. The four hangars, along with the proposed new hotel, visually dominate the Technical Site due to their size.

2.5.2.2 Form:

The form of the buildings are simple with clean lines. Roofs are pitched, double pitched, hipped or flat, along with a varied scale and materiality. Combined they create a uniformity but also demonstrate variety throughout the whole Bicester Heritage Site.

The roofscape of the hangars, in specific the gable ended A-type hangars, provide a unique military rhythm to their simple form. The hangar cluster group appear uniform and uncomplicated in form without much decoration or ornamentation.

2.5.2.3 Materials & Colours

In general, colours are muted or natural and therefore recessive in character. The existing material and colour palette of the Type A and Type C hangars, as well as the rest of the historic structures in Bicester Heritage Site, are limited due to the General Camouflage Policy enforced between 1838-1944. Brick is the predominant material, followed by steel, concrete, timber and glass.

New developments, including the hotel, the CommandWorks and Innovation Quarter, largely adopt a similar material palette to the Technical Site. Albeit interpreted in a slightly more contemporary way, they demonstrate a homage to the architectural style of the Technical site.

It can be argued that, should the base have been functional today in a similar status as in its heyday, it would have moved with the times and new structures would have been innovative and of the time. It is therefore felt that a contemporary and innovative approach to new development within the wider former MOD site, would be most appropriate in keeping with the spirit of the former Bicester RAF.

- 1. New hotel (planning approved)
- 2,3. The Command Works
- 4. Neighbouring residential development
- 5. Innovation Quarter



2.6 EXISTING ACCESS

There are eight existing access points to the wider Bicester Motion site. Of these, three are located within the application site and can provide direct access/egress to/from the Experience Quarter, two coincide with historic dispersal roads (numbers 1 & 2 shown on page 21) and are located along Buckingham - and Bicester Road respectively. The Buckingham Road access, just north of the Old Technical Site, is currently used for events access.

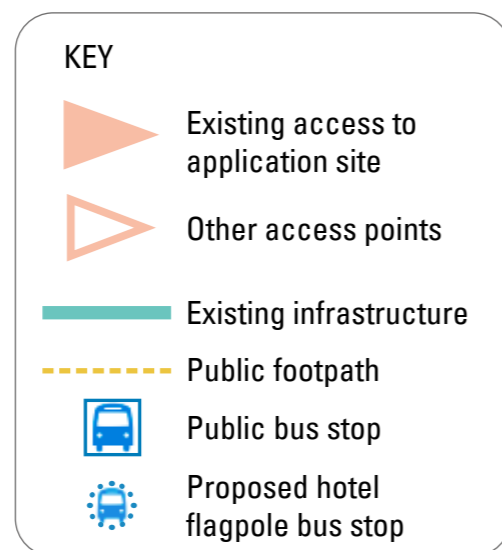


Figure 13. Site Access And Movement Diagram (not to scale)

2.7 EXISTING PERIMETER TRACK & SURROUNDING INFRASTRUCTURE LAYOUT AND CONDITION

Figure 14 shows the existing surviving infrastructure within and immediately around the application site. The various tracks are colour coded to illustrate their general current condition. The dispersal tracks that once linked to the wider network of panhandle areas with the perimeter track, are numbered for reference.

A visual inspection and several core samples have been taken around the perimeter track to assess condition. The wider network of tracks outside of the Perimeter Track have been assessed based on visual inspection only.

It has been found that the perimeter track condition progressively worsens further away from the Technical Site.

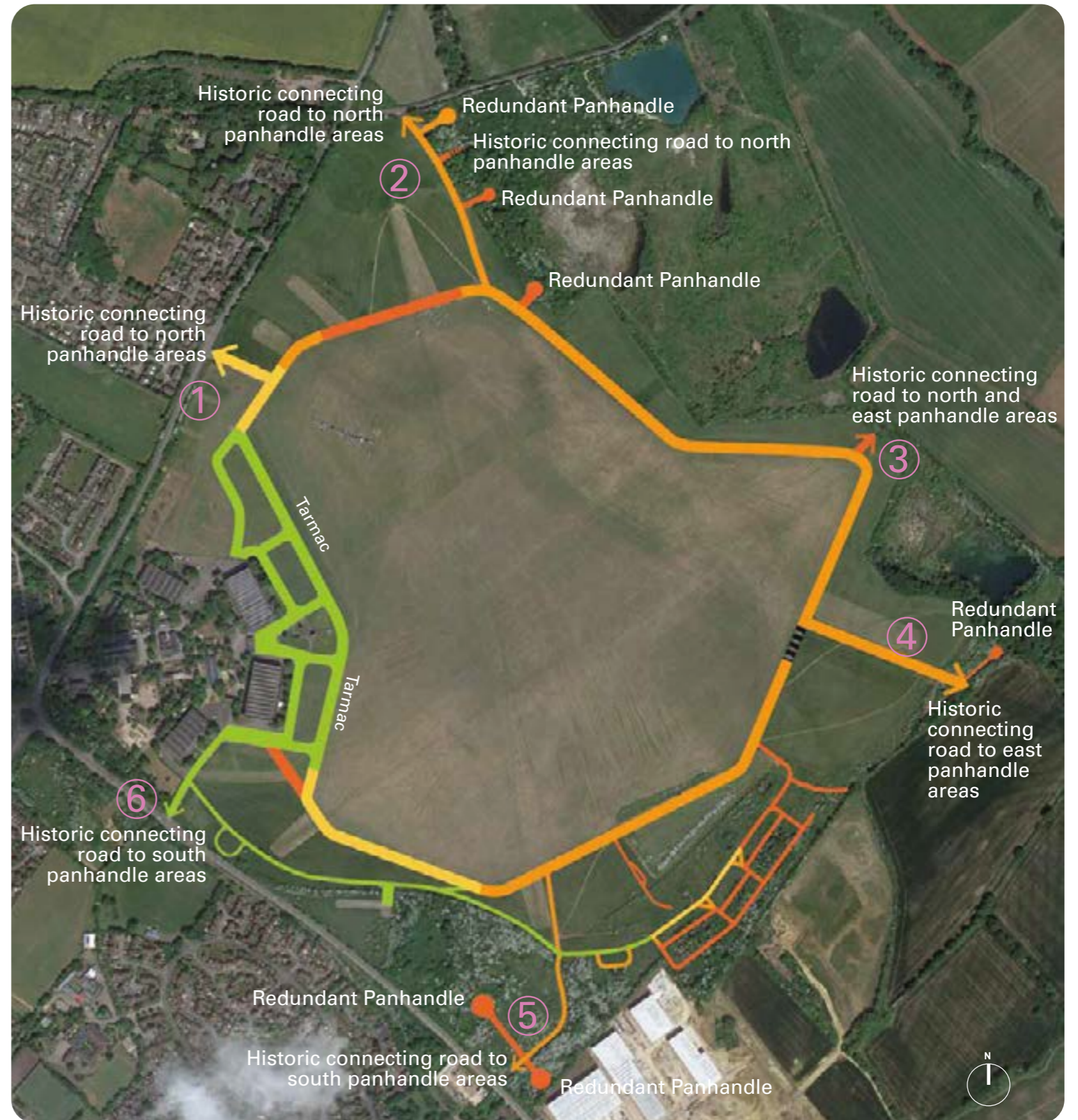
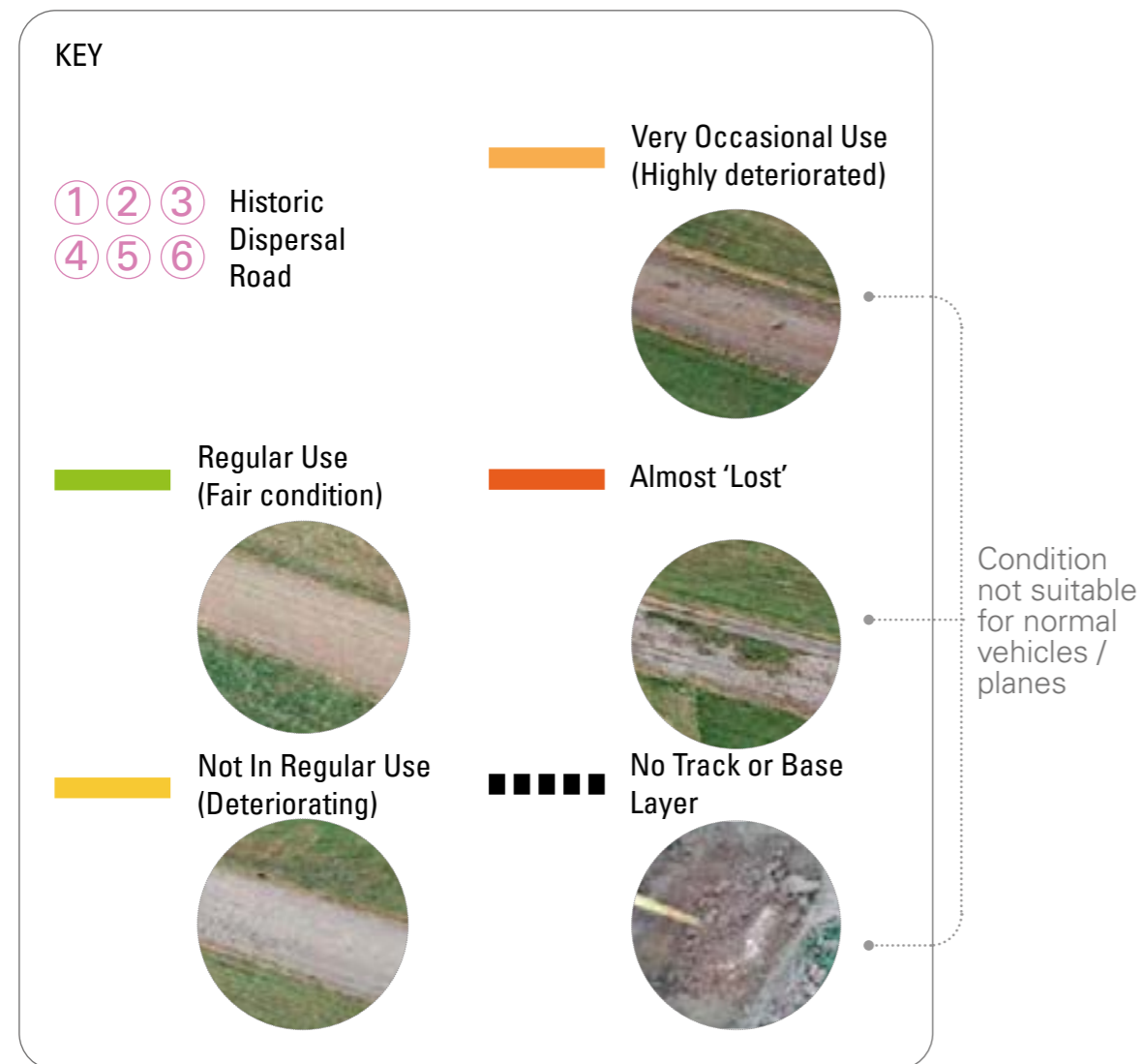


Figure 14. Existing and Historic Track Condition Diagram (not to scale)

2.8 EVIDENCE BASE

A sequence of workshops were held with the project team to review the evidence base and with a focus on understanding the challenges and opportunities, in order to unlock the development opportunities presented by policy Bicester 8 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2031. There has been a strong emphasis on a collaborative approach between landscape, heritage and ecological disciplines combining over 70 hours of collaborative design workshop and site studies, with the joint findings of the relevant specialists feeding into the architectural and masterplan proposals to inform the quantum of development for the site. For ease of reference we summarise the heritage, landscape and ecology reports further below. These were most influential in establishing the opportunities and challenges illustrated in the diagrams on page 31 to page 35.



Figure 15. View of Perimeter Track

2.9 HERITAGE SUMMARY

A Heritage Report prepared by Worlledge Associates is submitted in support of the proposed development. A summary of the report is set out below.

RAF Bicester is recognised as a rare survival of a 1930s military airbase. Because of its limited use during and after the war it has survived better than any other to provide evidence of Hugh Trenchard's 1930s military offensive strategy in layout, building design, use and the functional interrelationships between those buildings. The flying field retains the form and extent of runways that would have existed at the outbreak of war in 1939. The flying field is special because the grass runways survive, where elsewhere others have been 'upgraded' to concrete.

For RAF Bicester the heritage led business model seeks to promote leisure, tourism and business initiatives in a way that sustains what is special about the airbase, whilst creating something new, innovative and inspiring, as the next chapter in the site's history. The vision is to achieve this in a way that adds to people's understanding and enjoyment of a historic place, demonstrating that 'constructive conservation' is about embracing change for the benefit of the historic environment, the economy and for our health and wellbeing. There is a powerful story that can be told by allowing the place to continue to evolve.

Development needs to allow the history of the site to be read and experienced, at the same time providing a platform for creating a 21st century history. Fundamental to this approach is the acknowledgement that new development will be visible, which will change our experience of the site, from within and without. It cannot remain a time capsule and survive. New development associated with economic identity of the region (as a motor engineering and innovation hub) is proposed that can extend our experience of the place and add to the values that are currently attributed to it. This is not about erasing its history or how we experience it, it is about adding to it.

National and local heritage policy and the local authority's approach to this site is to ensure that the historic assets are given a new use, making sure that those elements are properly integrated as a part of any new development. This ensures that new development is sensitive to the site's significance, as a whole and its constituent parts. With input from Historic England and the Council's heritage specialists the proposals have been developed to eliminate or minimise any harm to the heritage assets, individually and collectively.

The development proposed will bring with it a number of heritage benefits, which along with other public benefits will compensate for any harm that may be caused. These heritage benefits will include the delivery of a shared operation and unified purpose for the whole site, the repair and re-use the perimeter track for dispersal of equipment and people around the airfield, protection and re-use of the grass runways, preservation of identified views and openness of the flying field and improved access to the public and other visitors.



Figure 16. *Aerial view of northern part of the application site with the flying field in the foreground, the quarry in the middle ground and the rural landscape beyond.*

2.10 LANDSCAPE SUMMARY

A Landscape and Visual Appraisal is submitted in support of the proposed development which addresses the landscape and visual impact of the development site and its wider setting. A summary of the LVIA is set out below.

The proposals will not be out of character or inappropriate for the re-purposed site. The current proposals will have localised impacts within discrete areas of the site. The large scale of the airfield will mean that the Experience Quarter buildings will not dominate the rest of the site or change the underlying open character of the main flying field and setting to the Technical Site. The cumulative effects of the Experience Quarter development, though significant within its own peripheral zones, are not predicted to be of such a quantum as to significantly harm the underlying character of the site overall. The tracks will have some sequential impact in terms of cumulative impacts but due to the overall large scale of the airfield, the separation between the tracks and the absence of any permanent vertical clutter, these effects are considered to be less than significant.

In term of planning policy and in particular Cherwell Local Plan Policy ESD13 Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement, the proposals will have a short-term local impact on nearby landscape receptors including residential, road and roadside footpath users, but these impacts will be mitigated over time with proposed new structural planting.

Policy Bicester 8 of the Cherwell Local Plan enables Bicester Motion to put “wheels in Motion” for the strategic regeneration and transformation of the former RAF Bicester to create tourism, leisure and recreational uses to deliver employment opportunities and support the use of the site by the community.

There will be no impact on areas of high tranquillity. The site is not in an area of high tranquillity being subject to aircraft noise, road noise and existing motoring uses.

Overall, in landscape and visual terms, the Experience Quarter developments will have site level and local level impacts, but these impacts will be mitigated over time, as new planting establishes and matures. The impacts on key features of the existing Bicester Heritage site and the wider landscape are considered to have less than significant harm.



2.11 ECOLOGY SUMMARY

An Ecology Report is submitted in support of the proposed development. A summary of the ecology report is set out below.

The proposals for the Environment Quarter form one phase within a wider visionary masterplan for the Bicester Heritage site. This visionary masterplan seeks to deliver new development whilst protecting, enhancing, and integrating biodiversity as part of the sites long-term operational use.

As such, whilst the Experience Quarter proposals are to come forward as a standalone application, the importance of understanding cumulative ecological impacts and opportunities across the visionary masterplan have guided the proposals from an early design stage. Accordingly, ecological survey work has been undertaken across the visionary masterplan area, allowing the ecological value of this wider site (including the Experience Quarter) to be ascertained and for appropriate avoidance, mitigation and enhancement opportunities to be secured as part of phased development proposals.

This approach seeks to ensure the development of the Experience Quarter site, as well as the Bicester Motion site as a whole would avoid adverse ecological impacts and indeed would ensure opportunities for biodiversity enhancement are realised.

Opportunities for mitigation and enhancement within the Experience Quarter site include for the delivery of extensive areas of species-rich calcareous grassland, as well as ephemeral and short perennial vegetation within the central airfield area. This will greatly enhance the botanical and functional value of land which has been historically suppressed through intensive management and resultant supports a species poor sward. The targeted management of this area will seek the delivery of high quality Open Habitat Mosaic, a habitat type of particular importance within the wider site. Through securing net gains in the quantum of both Open Habitat Mosaic and species-rich calcareous grassland, the Experience Quarter proposals will not only enhance the botanical value of the site (achieving Biodiversity Net Gains overall), they will deliver complementary habitats to

support Bicester Airfield LWS, Stratton Audley Quarry LWS and the communities of valuable flora and fauna that these habitats support. The proposals will moreover provide a mechanism to secure appropriate habitat management in the long-term, in contrast to a no-development situation.

The presence of protected and notable species is acknowledged and again mitigation principles have been identified with regard to potential cumulative impacts, such that the Favourable Conservation Status of protected species, as well as valuable assemblages are safeguarded in the long-term.

As such, it is considered that the emerging Experience Quarter proposals may offer long-term enhancements for biodiversity over the existing situation, in line with relevant legislation and planning policy.



Figure 17. Aerial view of part of the application site with a backdrop of trees and the developed residential area of Caversfield beyond

2.12 CONCLUSION & MOVING FORWARD

In heritage terms, the Experience Quarter offers the opportunity to experience the site in new ways by extending our experience of place and adding to the values attributed to the wider site.

The heritage statement concludes that the development proposed will bring with it a number of heritage benefits, which along with other public benefits will compensate for any harm that may be caused. The site will be experienced in new and exciting ways.

In landscape and visual terms the Experience Quarter will have site level and local level impact, but these impacts will be partly mitigated over time, as new planting establishes and matures.

In terms of ecology, it is considered that the Experience Quarter proposals offer long terms enhancement for biodiversity over the existing situation, in line with relevant legislation and planning policy.



2.13 CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES DIAGRAMS

The comprehensive and robust evidence base has been translated into the following opportunities and challenges diagrams:

2.13.1 Heritage Significance: Views And Setting

(Figure 18 on page 32)

2.13.2 Heritage Significance: Key Features / Character Areas

(Figure 19 on page 33)

2.13.3 Landscape Significance: Views And Setting

(Figure 20 on page 34)

2.13.4 Landscape Significance: Key Features / Character Areas

(Figure 21 on page 35)

The opportunities and challenges diagrams have informed a series of parameter plans which in turn have influenced the quantum of development.

2.13.1 Heritage Significance: Views And Setting

KEY




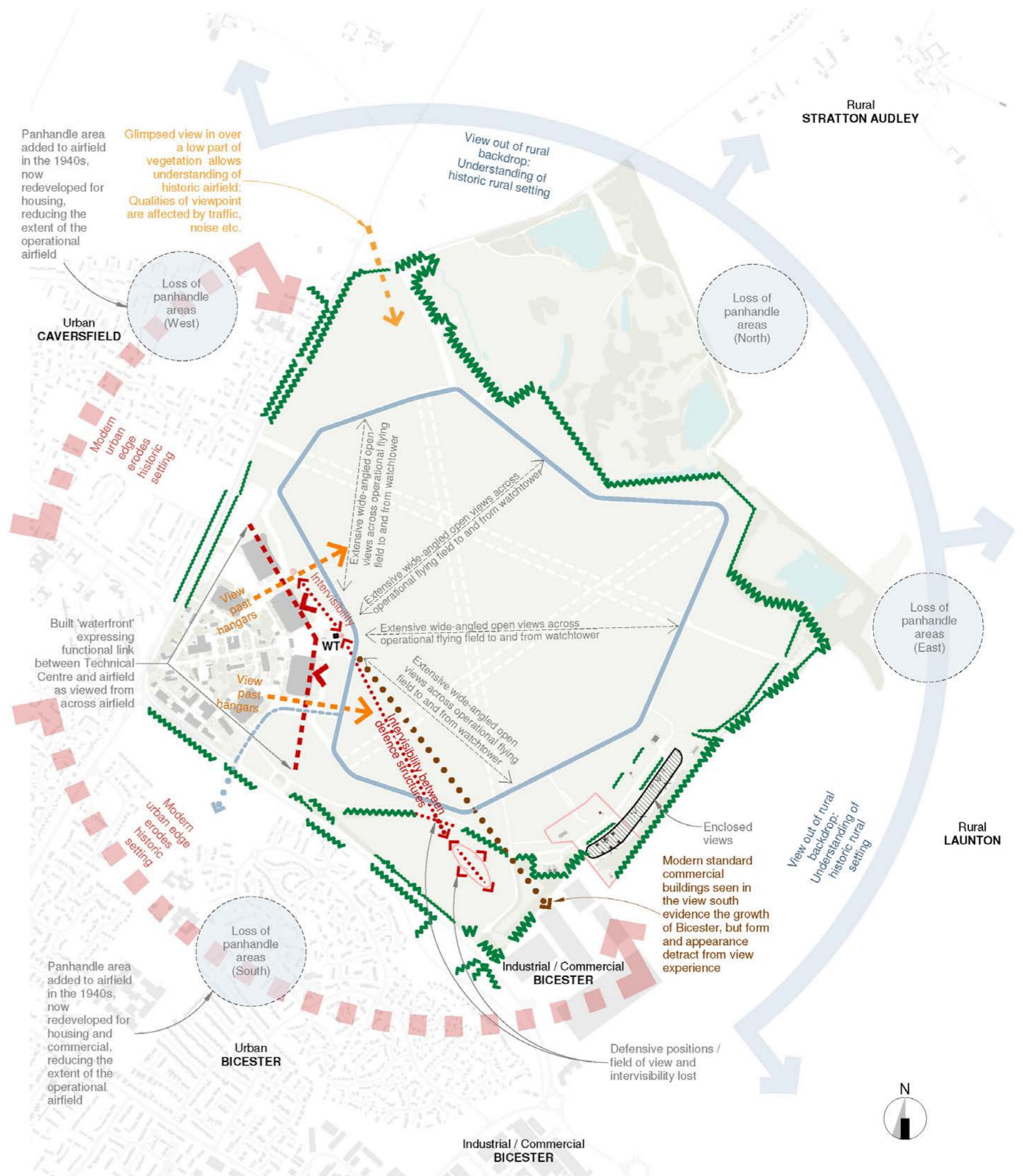
-  5-8m Trees / Scrub / Landscape edge
-  8-14m Trees / Scrub / Landscape edge
-  14+ m Trees / Scrub / Landscape edge

Figure 18. Heritage Significance Diagram : Views and Setting



2.13.2 Heritage Significance: Key Features / Character Areas

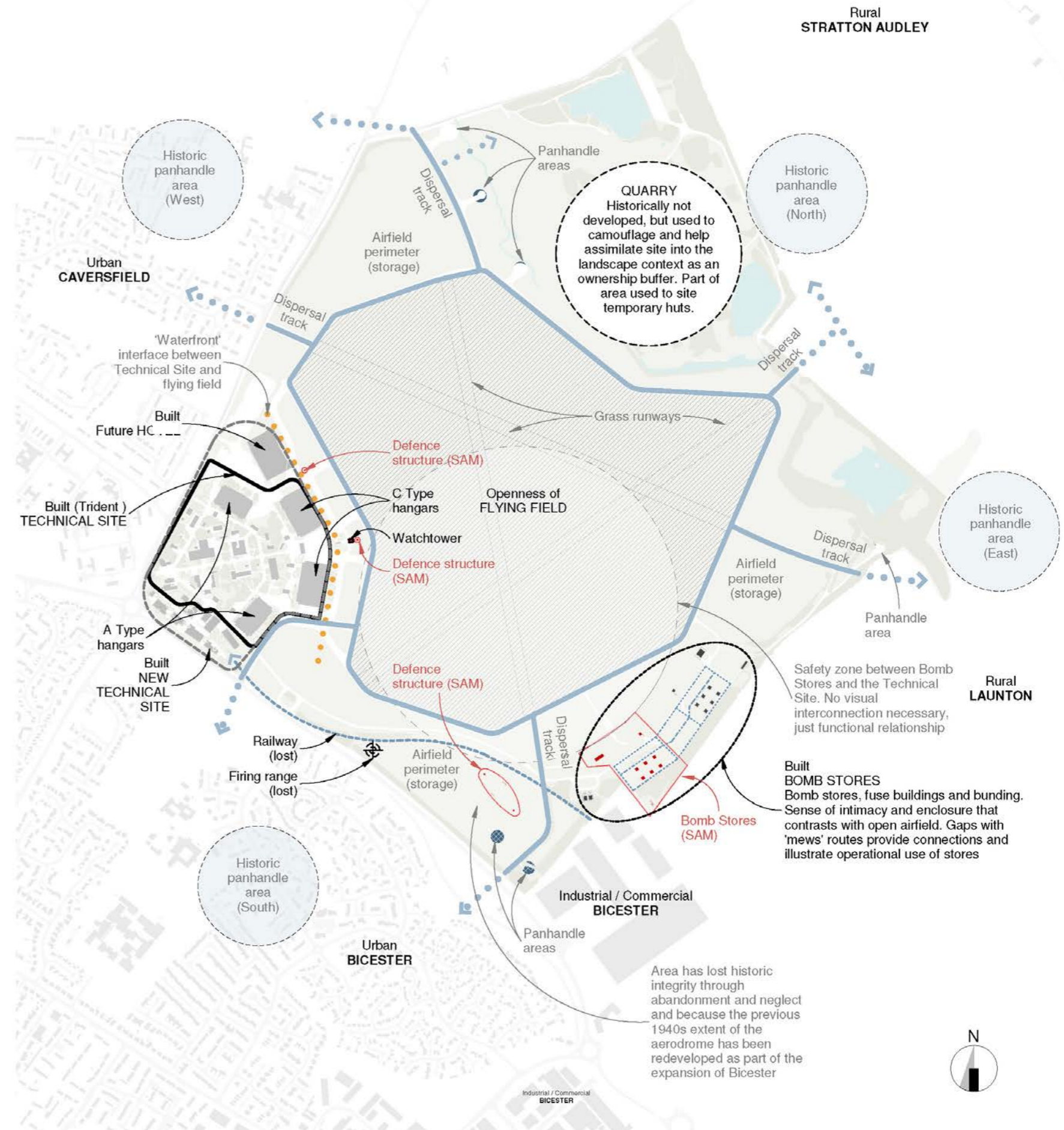


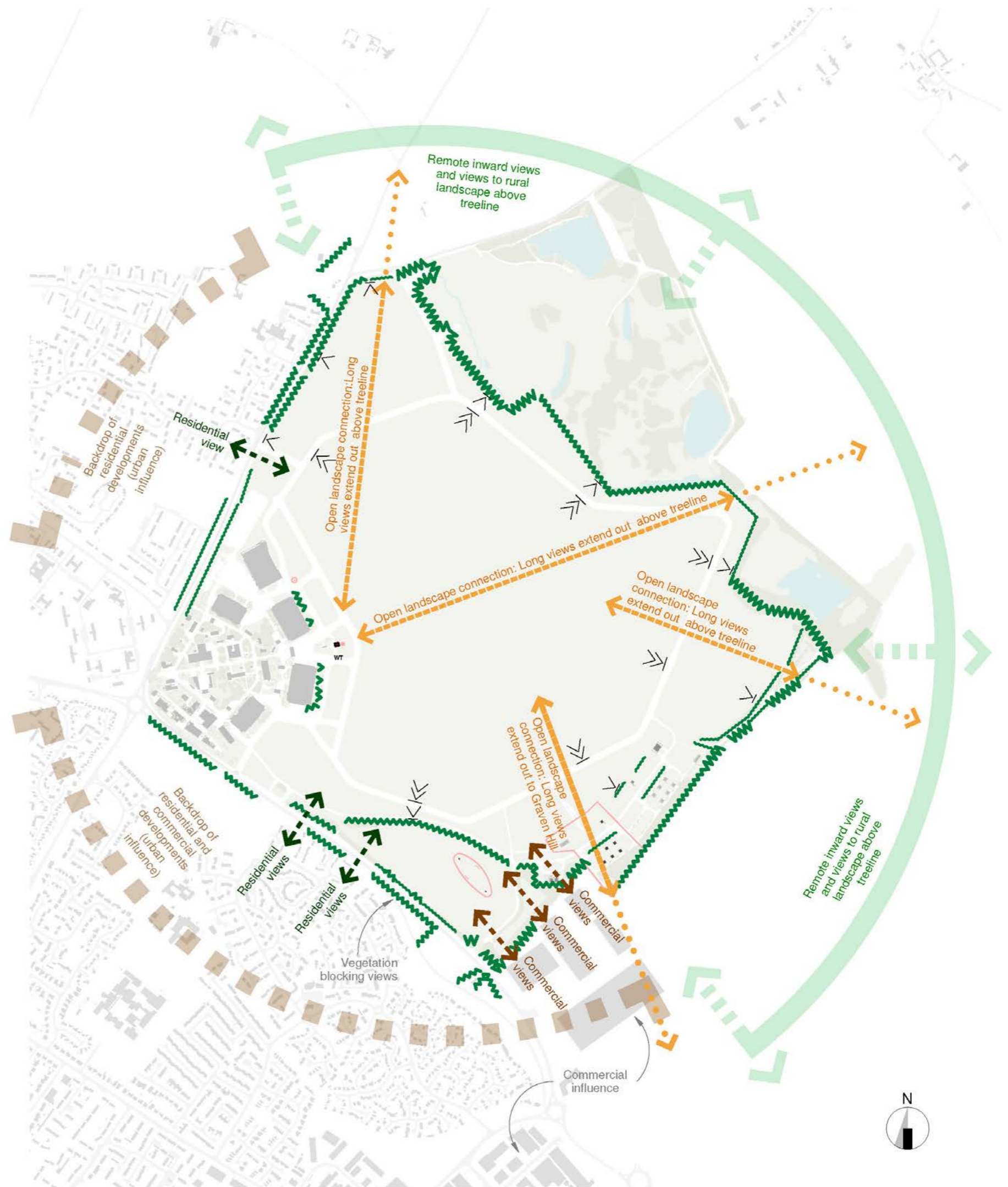
Figure 19. Heritage Significance Diagram : Key Features / Character Areas

2.13.3 Landscape Significance: Views And Setting

KEY

- >>| Openness of flying field
- >| Peripheral area contributing to 'openness'
- ~~~~~ 5-8m Trees / Scrub / Landscape edge
- ~~~~~ 8-14m Trees / Scrub / Landscape edge
- ~~~~~ 14+ m Trees / Scrub / Landscape edge

Figure 20. Landscape Significance Diagram : Views and Setting



2.13.4 Landscape Significance: Key Features / Character Areas

KEY




-  5-8m Trees / Scrub / Landscape edge
-  8-14m Trees / Scrub / Landscape edge
-  14+ m Trees / Scrub / Landscape edge

Figure 21. Landscape Significance Diagram : Key Features / Character Areas



