



Historic England

Mr Chris Wentworth  
Cherwell District Council

Direct Dial: 0207 973 3632

Our ref: P01562390  
17 July 2023

Dear Mr Wentworth

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

**OS PARCEL 1570 ADJOINING AND WEST OF CHILGROVE DRIVE AND  
ADJOINING AND NORTH OF CAMP ROAD UPPER HEYFORD  
Application No. 23/01503/OUT**

Thank you for your letter of 27 June 2023 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.

**Historic England Advice**

We note that this is a resubmission of application 21/04289/OUT, which was refused in April 2022. One of the principal reasons for refusal was the adverse impact the proposals would have on the significance of the Upper Heyford Conservation Area. We are also aware that this parcel of land is one of a number around the former airbase which is being considered for allocation in the Cherwell Local Plan Review (Community Involvement Paper 2: Developing Our Options, Appendix 2, 2021).

The former airbase at Upper Heyford is highly significant as one of the few places where it is still possible have a direct experience of the Cold War. The scale of investment in the base illustrates how seriously the NATO allies took the threat from the USSR and the way in which the flying field survives largely intact is truly remarkable.

The most important part of the Conservation Area is therefore the flying field itself. The site in question sits outside the Conservation Area, well off the axis of the main runway and there would be little intervisibility between the two. Development here would compromise the openness of the flying field to a small extent, but the harm would be minor in nature and certainly less than substantial.

However, the National Planning Policy Framework points out, *any* harm to a designated heritage asset requires a clear and convincing justification and needs to be



4TH FLOOR, CANNON BRIDGE HOUSE, 25 DOWGATE HILL, LONDON EC4R 2YA

Telephone 020 7973 3700  
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outweighed by public benefits (paragraphs 200 and 202). We are also aware that this site is not allocated in Villages 5 of the Cherwell Local Plan and that this plan fully addresses Cherwell's current housing needs.

The Council should therefore only grant planning permission if they are convinced that there are clear public benefits that outweigh the harm caused to the conservation area.

If, in the future, the Council decides that there is a need for additional housing at Upper Heyford over and above that allocated in Villages 5, or it becomes apparent that it is impossible to deliver the aspirations of Villages 5 without encroaching onto the flying field, placing this housing on this site (and on other sites nearby which area outside the flying field) would be cause far less harm, and therefore be preferable, to development on the flying field itself.

### **Recommendation**

Historic England has concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds.

We consider that the issues and safeguards outlined in our advice need to be addressed in order for the application to meet the requirements of paragraphs 200 and 202 of the NPPF.

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 and of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Your authority should take these representations into account and seek amendments, safeguards or further information as set out in our advice. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us.

Yours sincerely

### **Richard Peats**

Team Leader

E-mail: [richard.peats@HistoricEngland.org.uk](mailto:richard.peats@HistoricEngland.org.uk)



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