



# **Land and Buildings at Upper Heyford, Heyford**

## **Design and Access Statement**

**June 2007**



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Drivers Jonas act on behalf of QEK Global Solutions (UK) Limited owned by Paragon Automotive Ltd. This Design and Access statement is submitted by Drivers Jonas in support of the planning applications to extend QEK's occupation at Heyford Park.

QEK is a specialist provider of marketing support, technical services and training to the automotive industry. QEK's operations at Upper Heyford are considered a 'centre of excellence'. The development of sophisticated IT solutions and a highly skilled workforce has created the highest level of technical expertise available in the UK to automotive clients. QEK's current site at Heyford Park comprises office accommodation, technical workshops, ancillary facilities, grassed areas and approximately 60 acres (24 hectares) of hardstanding. QEK does not offer long-term vehicle storage as part of its operation. However, the temporary 'staging of live vehicles' does take place between processes, for example between departments such as workshop and smart repair or awaiting parts or inspection.

QEK have been located at RAF Upper Heyford for a number of years under temporary planning permissions. Permission is now sought for the continuation of QEK's operations for a further five year temporary period in line with the recently adopted Comprehensive Planning Brief (2007). A Design and Access Statement is not strictly required for a change of use application. However, given the location of QEK's operations within a conservation area, QEK's important role locally and desire to be part of a lasting long-term settlement at Upper Heyford it is considered that an assessment of proposals in this way would be beneficial. As part of a future permanent facility the opportunity exists to implement measures to further enhance QEK's position and contribution to the area.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the Planning Statement also submitted in support of the application. This purpose of this statement is to consider Design and Access issues associated with the operations of QEK at Upper Heyford. This Statement Contains the following sections:

- Planning Context;
- Site Analysis;
- Design Principles;
- Access;
- Summary and Conclusions.



*Typical Signage*



*Cars outside valeting area*



*View from QEK's site of HASs in the northern part of the airfield*

## 2. PLANNING CONTEXT

### 2.1 Policy Context

A detailed discussion of the relevant planning policies are contained within the separate Planning Statement. The purpose of this section is not to repeat this discussion, but to provide a brief summary of the most relevant policies.

#### **Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016**

Policy H2 sets out the main statutory development plan framework for guiding new settlement proposals at RAF Upper Heyford.

#### **Cherwell Local Plan**

The adopted Local Plan does not provide specific policy guidance on RAF Upper Heyford. The more recent Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan does not contain policies directly related to the continuation of temporary uses at Heyford Park but policies UH1 to UH4 relate to the development of the site for a new village.

#### **RAF Upper Heyford Revised Comprehensive Planning Brief (CPB)(2007)**

The CPB was adopted as part of the emerging Local Development Framework as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The CPB primarily relates to the provision of around 1000 dwellings and supporting infrastructure including employment uses. The CPB contains a number of heritage objectives for the site. Opportunities are considered for companies operating under temporary planning permission to remain in some circumstances. An area is identified in the new settlement within which QEK could remain permanently.

#### **Upper Heyford Conservation Area Appraisal (2006)**

The entire RAF Upper Heyford site has been designated a conservation area. A number of buildings are listed or scheduled at Upper Heyford, or are identified in the appraisal of being of national, regional, or local significance.



*Type A Hanger and observation tower*



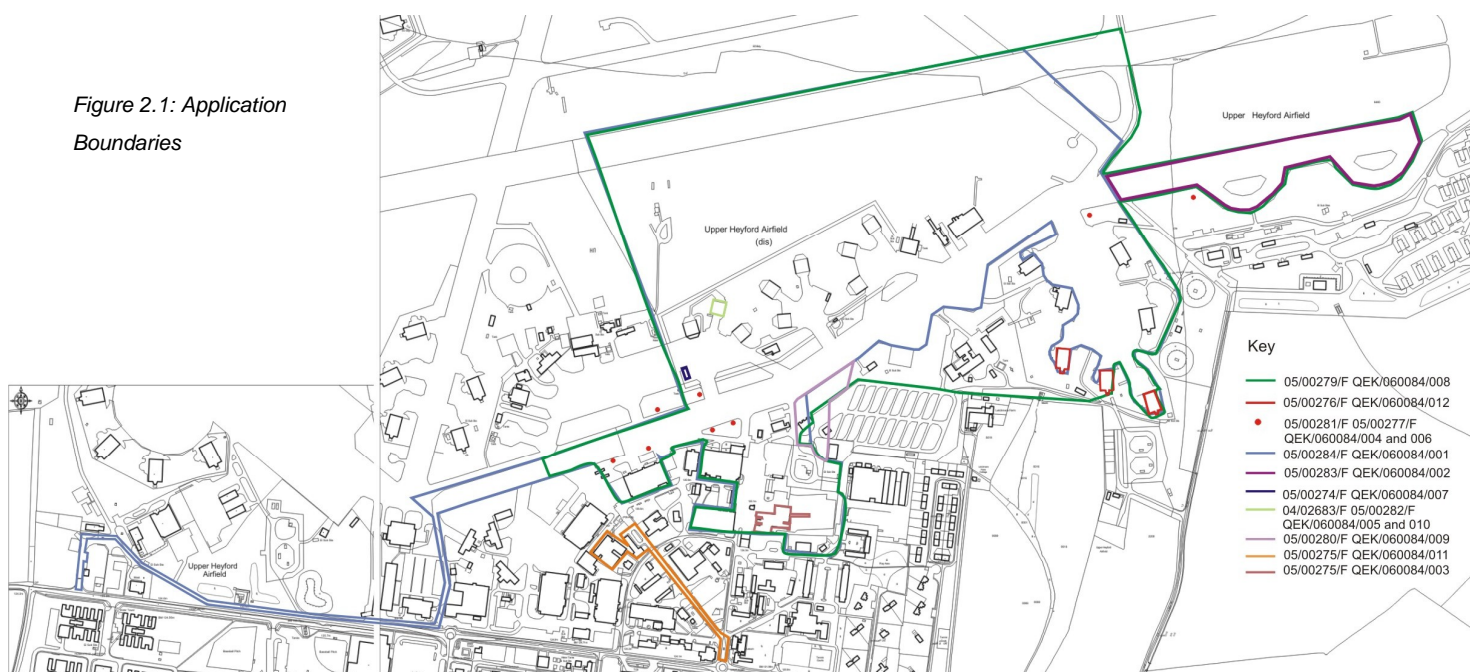
*Variety of buildings*

## 2.2 Application Proposals

This Design and Access Statement supports the planning applications submitted to the Council primarily to extend the time period for QEK's temporary use of land and buildings at Heyford Park, Upper Heyford. The extant temporary planning permissions are due to expire on 30 June 2007. More detail on these applications can be found in the Supporting Statement.

Planning applications seek to extend current time limiting permissions by five years further to the transitional arrangements provided for in the recently adopted Comprehensive Planning Brief ("CBP") for the former RAF Upper Heyford. This further temporary period is to provide an appropriate stepping stone to enable QEK to work towards a permanent facility and footprint as part of a lasting arrangement at the airbase.

Figure 2.1: Application  
Boundaries



South East HASs



Building 366



### 3. SITE ANALYSIS

#### 3.1 Location and Description



Figure 3.1: Upper Heyford's Regional Location

The former airfield is located between the Cherwell River Valley and the M40 motorway, approximately seven kilometres north west of Bicester, Oxfordshire. The United States Airforce pulled out of RAF Upper Heyford in 1994. The airbase extends over 505 hectares of land which is enclosed within a 14 km security fence.

The former airbase lies on a plateau of white limestone. Overall the plateau is on an open and exposed setting. Outside the airfield the landscape is largely agricultural in character.

The airfield includes large areas of hardstanding and scattered industrial buildings and hangars. Many redundant buildings are in a state of disrepair. The majority of buildings at RAF Upper Heyford are concentrated in the south of the site in the former technical and residential zones.

QEK's current site generally occupies a lower and less visible part of the flying field. QEK use a number cold war and other buildings for their operations as well areas of hardstanding, runway and taxiway.

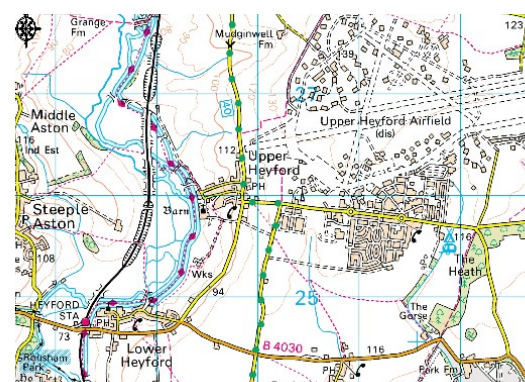


Figure 3.2: Upper Heyford Airfield's Local Context

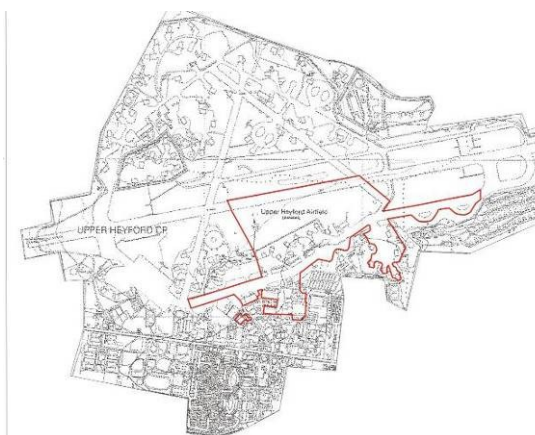
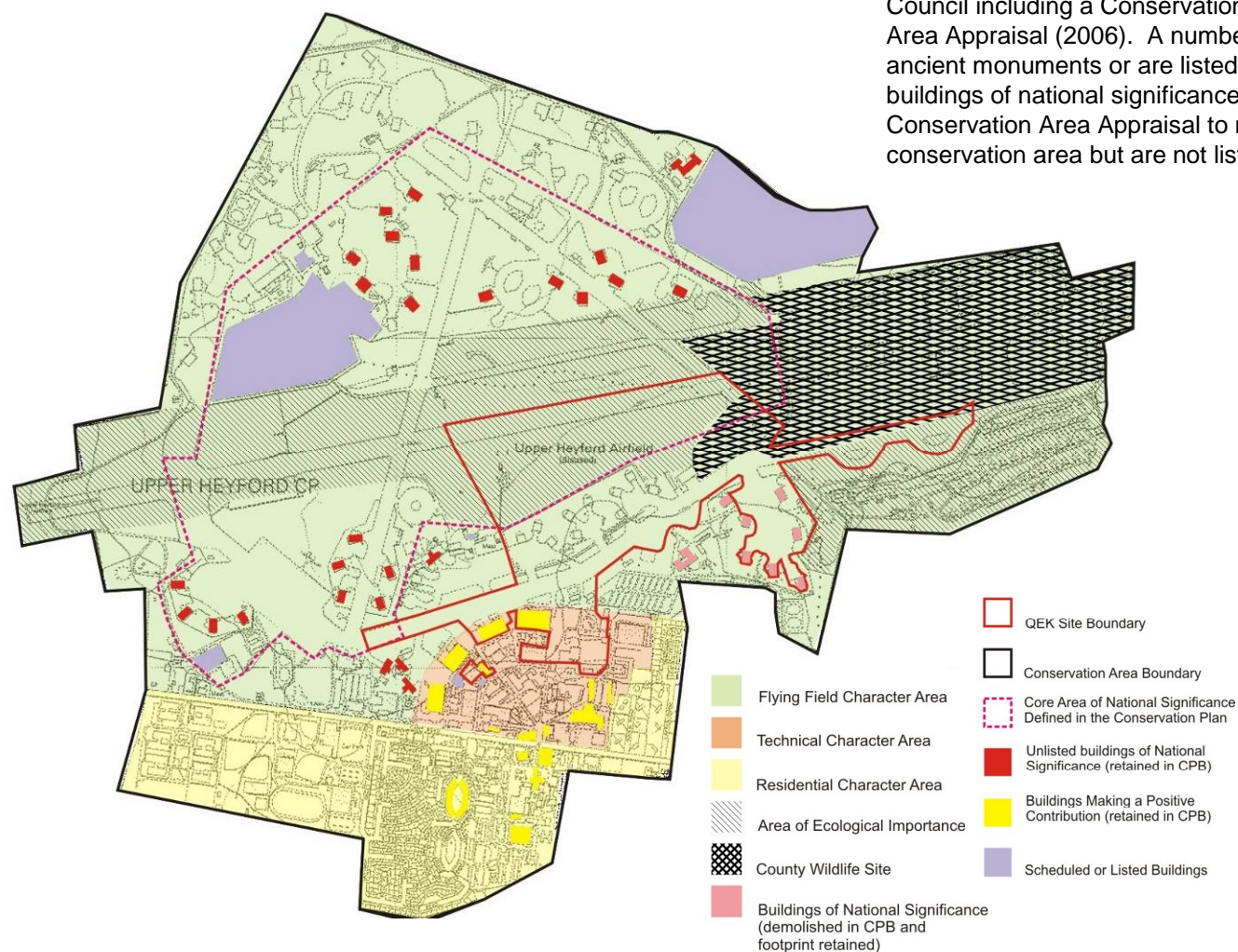


Figure 3.3: QEKs Location at Upper Heyford Airfield

## 3.2 Heritage Context

Figure 3.4: Heritage Plan



The entire RAF Upper Heyford site is designated as a Conservation Area. The importance of the site is primarily as a Cold War airbase. The site has been subject to significant analysis by the Council including a Conservation Plan (2005) and a Conservation Area Appraisal (2006). A number of structures are scheduled as ancient monuments or are listed. There are also a number of buildings of national significance or which are considered in the Conservation Area Appraisal to make a positive contribution to the conservation area but are not listed.

Figure 3.4 shows the historic and environmental designations relating to the whole Upper Heyford Site sourced primarily from the Comprehensive Planning Brief.

The majority of QEK's operations are outside the Core Area of National Significance defined in the CPB. The QEK boundary does not take in any scheduled or listed buildings but the company does occupy and maintain other important buildings making a positive contribution to heritage which the CPB retains.



## 3.2 Heritage Context

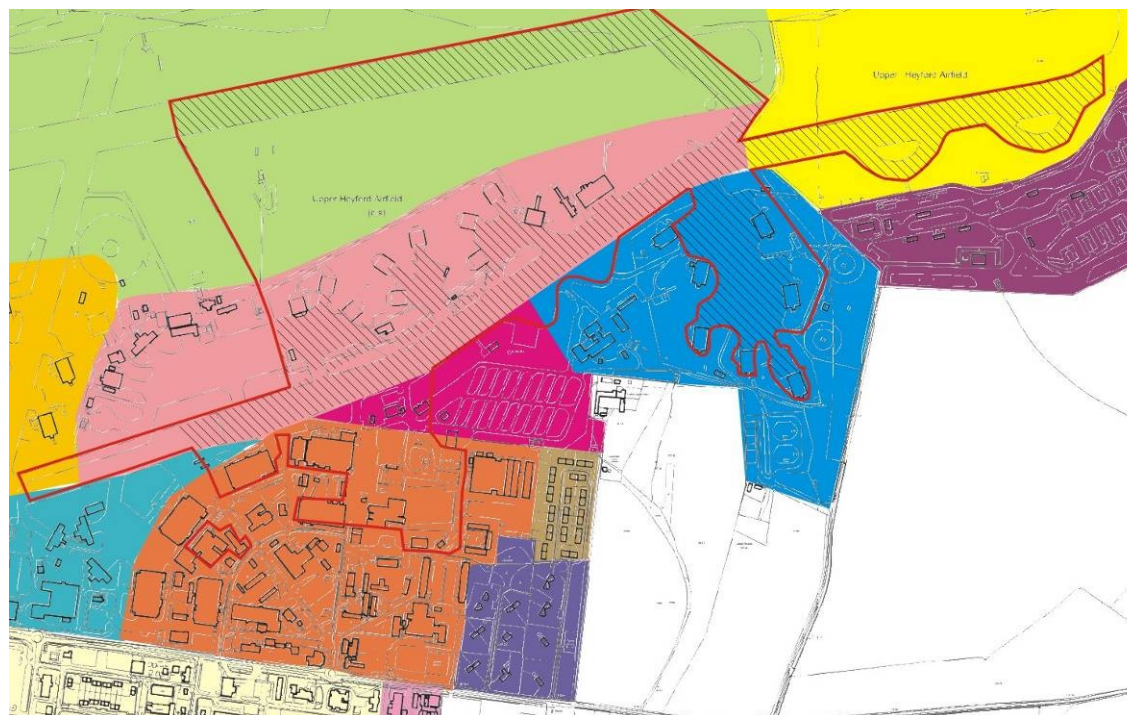
The Conservation Area Appraisal divided the historic landscape of the RAF Upper Heyford into different character zones. Parts of a number of these zones cover QEK's existing operational area:

- East Terminal Runway Zone (hard standing only - staging)
- Central Runway Zone (hard standing only - staging)
- South Aircraft Shelter Zone (hard standing and buildings – staging and technical operations)
- Built Up South Edge (hard standing and buildings – staging and technical operations)
- Tanker Area (technical building)
- Technical Site (technical and administrative buildings).

A number of significant buildings are within QEK's site:

- Station Armoury - Building number 125 (QEK head office) – unlisted building of National Significance
- Type A hangers - Buildings 350, 172 and 151 (body repair centre, training centre, press technical area, brand centre) – unlisted buildings of National Significance
- Victoria Alert Complex and Hush House (Buildings 2001, 2002, 2003, 357, 2004, 2005, 2008, 359, 2009, 1368) – unlisted buildings of Local Significance – QEK uses buildings 2001 (inspection centre) and 2002 (smart repair centre)
- South East HAS (Buildings 3042, 3036, 3037, 3038, 3039, 3040) – unlisted buildings of National Significance – QEK uses building 3038 (retrofit centre and internal staging).

Figure 3.5: Heritage Zone Plan



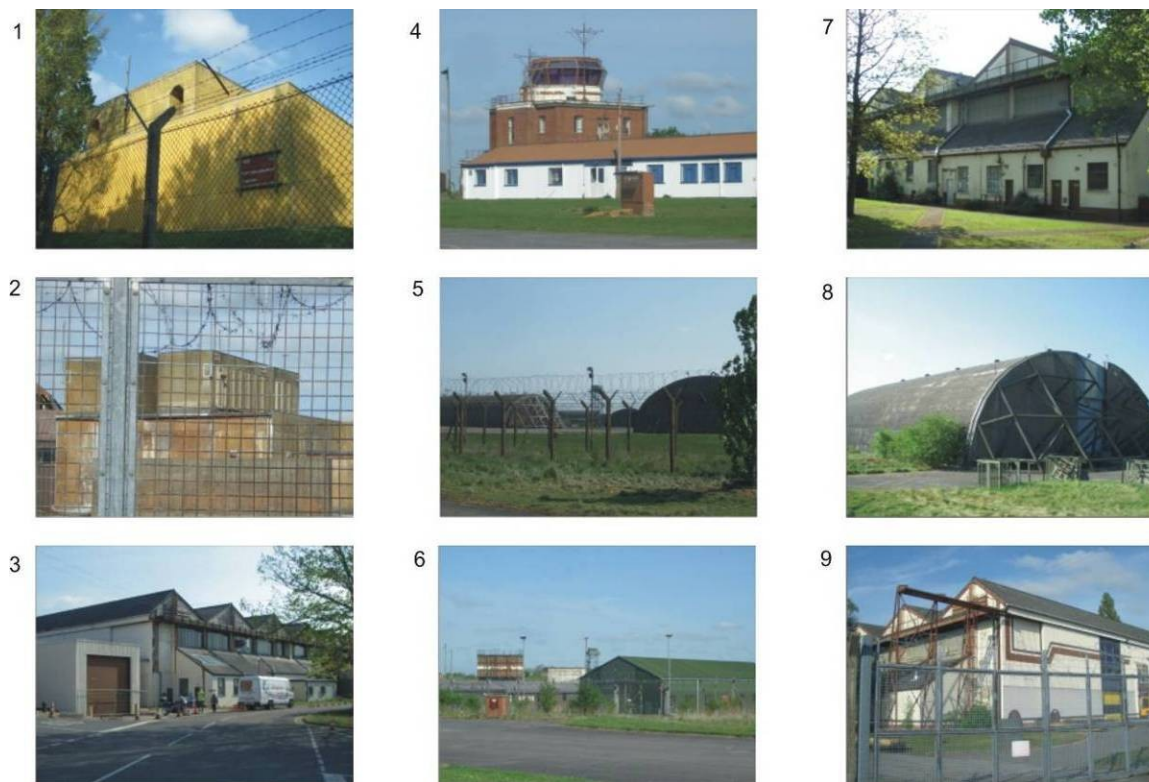
QEK's Head Office Building – Unlisted Building of National Significance

- QEK's Existing Boundary
- Runway East Terminal
- Southern Conventional Arm Store
- Central Runway
- South East HASs
- South Aircraft Shelters
- Tanker Area
- Technical Site
- Airmen's Housing and Bungalows
- RAF Officers' Married Residential Area
- Built up South Edge
- Service and Recreational Area
- South West HAS
- School and Other Prefabricated Buildings
- QEK's staging area



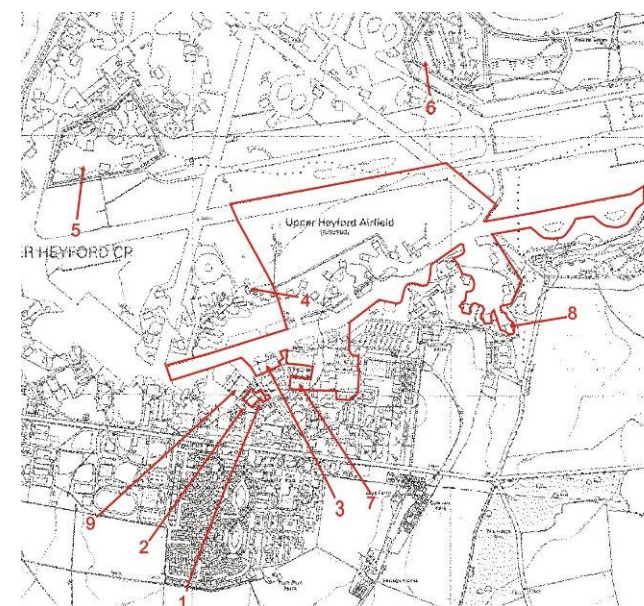
## 3.2 Heritage Context

The following photographs show a selection of the buildings of International, National or Local significance both within QEKs boundary and the RAF Upper Heyford site more broadly.



5. Quick Reaction Alert Area (QRA) – group on nine Hardened Aircraft Shelters (HASs) contained within a fence, Statutorily Protected and Internationally Significant.
6. Northern Bomb Store and Special Weapons Area, Statutorily Protected and Nationally Significant.
7. Building 151 Type A Hangar, Locally Significant (not defined for retention in CPB).
8. One of a group of 7 HASs, Nationally Significant (to be demolished and footprint retained in CPB).
9. Building 345, Type A Hangar, Locally Significant and Makes a Positive Contribution (potentially to be retained in CPB).

Figure 3.6: Historic Photo Location Plan



1. Building 129 Hardened Telephone Exchange, Statutorily Protected and Nationally Significant.
2. Building 126 Battle Command Centre, Statutorily Protected and Internationally Significant.
3. Building 350 Type A Hangar, Locally Significant and Makes a Positive Contribution (potentially to be retained in CPB)
4. Building 340 Control Tower (rear of picture), Statutorily Protected and Nationally Significant.

## 3.2 Heritage Context

The Supporting Statement provides an assessment of heritage issues associated with the proposal applications to extend QEK's temporary occupation for a further five years. The following provides a brief summary of the key considerations:

- Since the USAF left the airbase in the mid 1990s QEK has played an important role in maintaining site security, the condition of site infrastructure and ecological resources.
- There are no statutorily listed buildings or scheduled ancient monuments within the application site. However the continued use of buildings by QEK provides an important role in maintaining the setting of adjacent structures of designated heritage significance.
- QEK's operations do not directly impact on designated heritage sites in the northern part of the airfield (as demonstrated in the pictures below).
- QEK's impact on Cold War heritage is significantly less than other automotive operators previously located at Heyford Park.
- QEK's current administrative and technical buildings already fall within an area defined in the CPB as suitable for employment as part of a lasting arrangement. This also includes a number of important buildings occupied and maintained by QEK identified in the CPB for long term retention. QEK's on going maintenance of locally and nationally important buildings ensures their continued preservation.
- The retention of QEK in their current form will 'maintain' the level of impact on the Conservation Area. A further temporary permission provides the opportunity for potential operational changes to improve this position further, for example; possible changes to QEK's operational footprint to limit staging operations in the Core Area of Historic Significance as identified in the CPB.

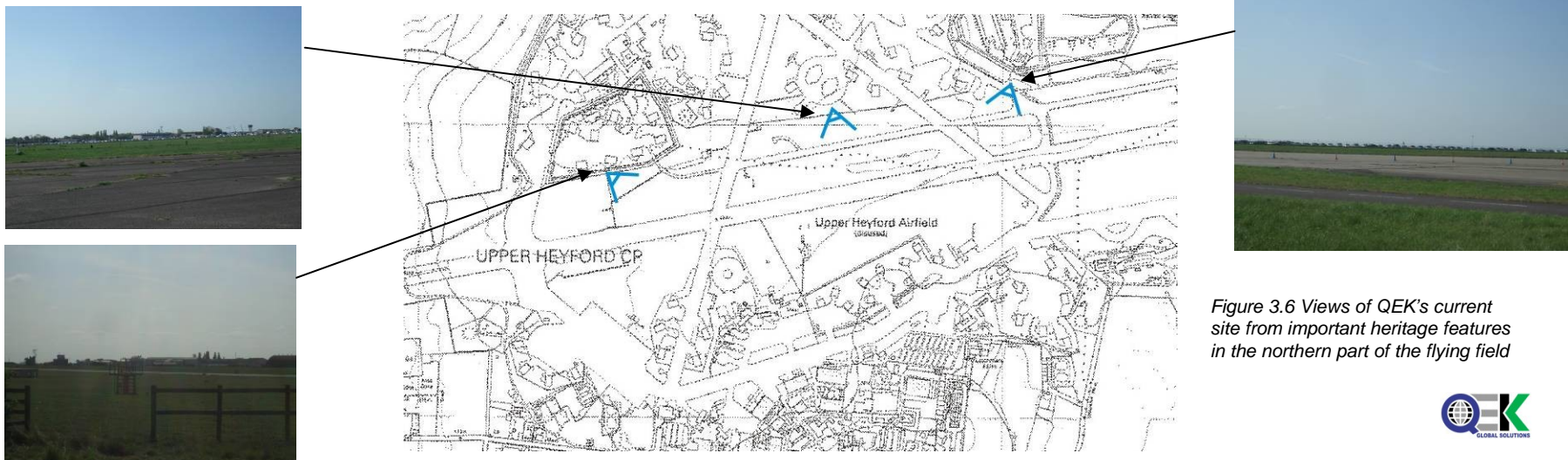


Figure 3.6 Views of QEK's current site from important heritage features in the northern part of the flying field

### 3.3 Social and Economic Context



QEK plays an important role in the local social and economic context as a significant local employer. The supporting statement considers this in detail, however, in terms of setting the context in this Design and Access Statement the following headline facts should be noted:

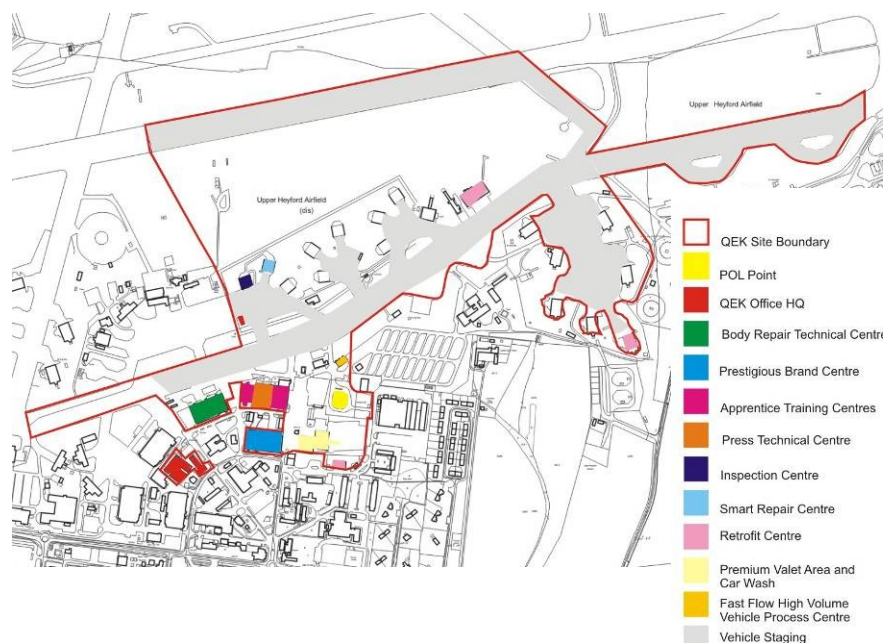
- QEK is the largest existing employer at Upper Heyford and the 3rd largest employer in Cherwell District;
- QEK contributes around £30 million to the local economy annually;
- QEK directly provides in the region of 550 jobs, a large proportion of which are full time;
- Over 200 of QEKs employees live in the Cherwell District, with a number of these people living locally, including in Upper Heyford itself;
- QEK employees a technical and diverse workforce with over 50% of employees being classified as 'skilled';
- QEK offers a competitive salary to its workers exceeding the District average;
- QEK values training and has been awarding 'Investors in People' along with a number of other awards;
- QEK supports local charities and organisations; and
- QEK works actively with local schools and colleges and operates a highly successful apprentice programme.



## 4. DESIGN PRINCIPLES

### 4.1 Use and Layout

Figure 4.1: Site Use



The table and plan on this page describe the various processes which take place as part of QEK's operation. Operational adjacencies are essential to QEK's business in order to optimise process flows and minimise unnecessary vehicle movements.

Building Number	Operation	Summary Description
125 and 123	Office HQ	Diverse skills, knowledge and expertise found in this sector of the business. Includes qualified accountants, international business leaders and client management experts.
2001, 345, 2002, 354, 151, 350, 366	(Technical) Inspection centre, body repair, smart repair, fast flow process centre, prestigious brand centre, press technical area, retrofit centre.	Many of the UK's most highly qualified technicians are found in this area of the business. Master and Lead Technician status is achieved through extensive training development. Highest level of expertise is required as these are pre-production, pre-launch vehicles. Expert vehicle body repair masters area also included within this sector, all of the above assist with the writing of proper repair methods which must be adhered to by the rest of the UK.
87, 80	Car wash and valeting	The final Quality Checkpoint in the entire process. Quality assurance experts possessing technical expertise in hand finish and automatic wash machine operation, bring vehicles to pristine presentation prior to delivery to VIPs, celebrities, shows and events.
350	Apprentice Training Centre	Intensive 3 year apprentice trainee programmes within the Technical Workshops and Bodyshop are offered to the local schools and community. Technical work experience placements can also be accommodated.
Hard standing runways and taxiways	Car manoeuvring and delivery	The car manoeuvring function pulls all operation areas together, ensuring vehicles are in the right place, at the right time.

## 4.2 Scale and Appearance



QEK currently occupy a 61 ha site divided between technical operations, administration and vehicle staging. This site boundary also includes substantial grassed areas but these are managed for their ecological value. The planning applications seek to extend current time limiting permissions on the site by a further five years further to the transitional arrangements provided for in the recently adopted Comprehensive Planning Brief (“CBP”) for the former RAF Upper Heyford. This further temporary period is to provide an appropriate ‘stepping stone’ to enable QEK to work towards a permanent facility and much reduced footprint as part of a lasting arrangement for the airbase. Possibilities for changes to the footprint of car staging can also be considered as part of this ‘stepping stone’ arrangement before a permanent solution is agreed.

Given the cold war nature of the site QEK’s use seems to be complementary and in keeping with the military and utilitarian and industrial nature of the technical and flying field character areas. In addition QEKs use of these buildings and infrastructure will ensure their continued maintenance.



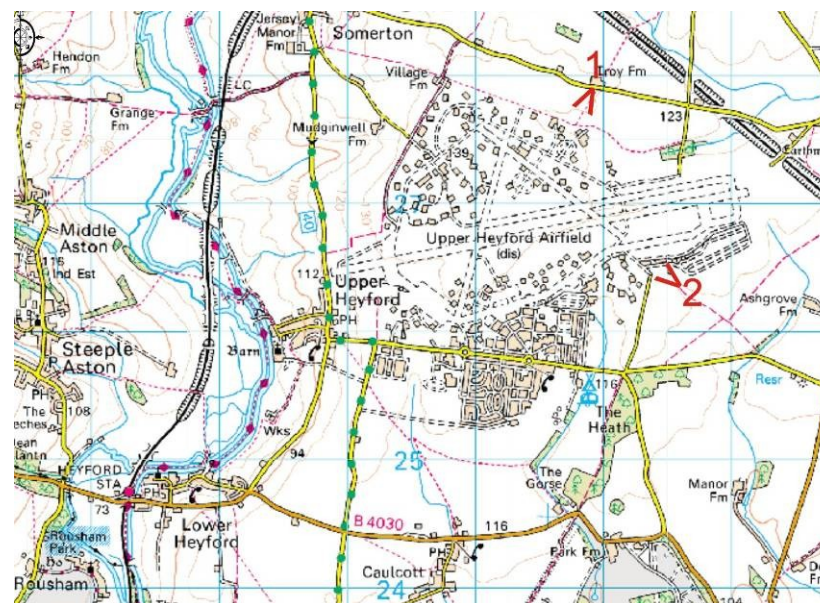
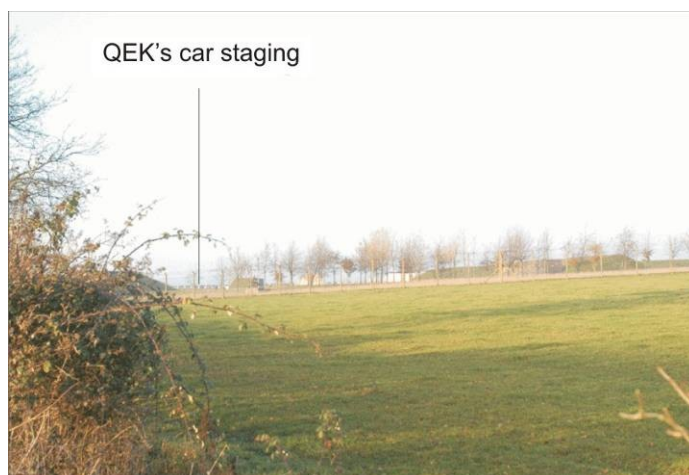
## 4.3 Landscape

1



A detailed Visual Assessment accompanied the previous renewal planning applications which considered both day and night visibility issues. Further to the conclusions of the Assessment and subsequent negotiations with the Council's Development Control Officer, an agreed position has been reached where QEK's current permitted vehicle staging is barely perceptible and generally not a feature in the landscape. As part of the current application, the results of this previous visual assessment have been validated on site to ensure that conclusions reached remain the same today.

2



View 1 is the view from Troy Cottages on Somerton Road

View 2 is from a bridleway through a break in the hedgerow



## 5. ACCESS

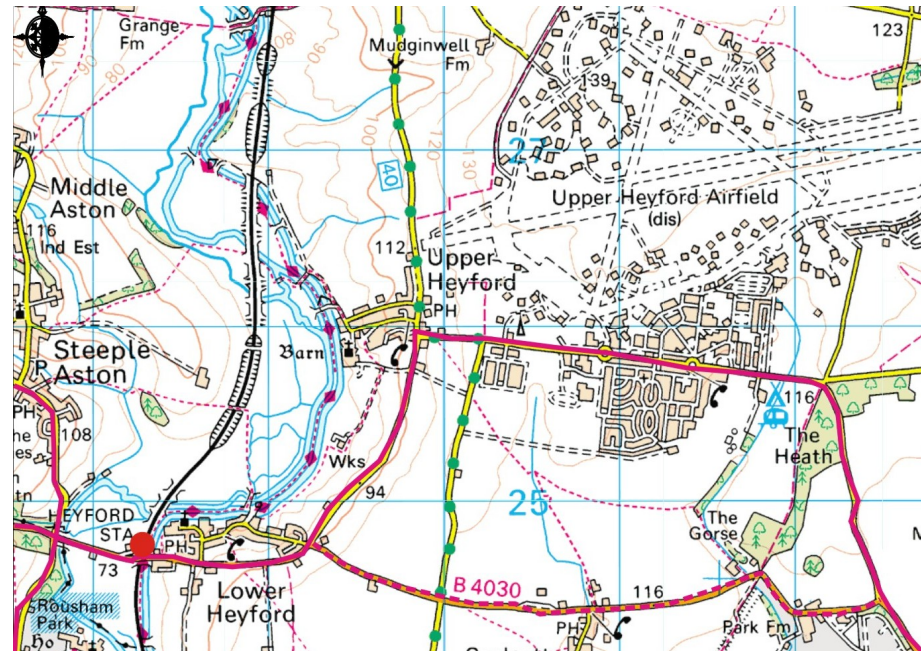
### 5.1 Accessibility

The site is located in North Oxfordshire approximately 4 miles (7km) north-west of Bicester. The nearest motorway junction is Junction 10 of the M40 which is 2 miles (3km) north east. RAF Upper Heyford is around 70 miles (113km) from London and 55 miles (89km) from Birmingham.

The nearest train station is on Station Road in Lower Heyford. The Station is less than two miles away by road, however, accessibility by foot is restricted as not all of the roads have pavements. Trains run from Lower Heyford to Banbury and Oxford around 7 times a day. The 25A Oxford/Bicester bus service runs along Camp Road on average six times a day, on weekdays.

The site is accessible by bike and a number of QEK's staff cycle to work. A proportion of QEK's staff already live in the local area and there is potential for this position to be further enhanced with significant population growth as part of the future permanent lasting arrangement for the site. Additionally the implementation of Green Travel Plan initiatives and the provision of public transport improvements as part of the wider settlement will also improve long term accessibility.

QEK are mindful of making their buildings and operations accessible to all and implement special measures when disabled access is required. QEK will consider making more formalised accessibility arrangements as part of the lasting solution for the site.

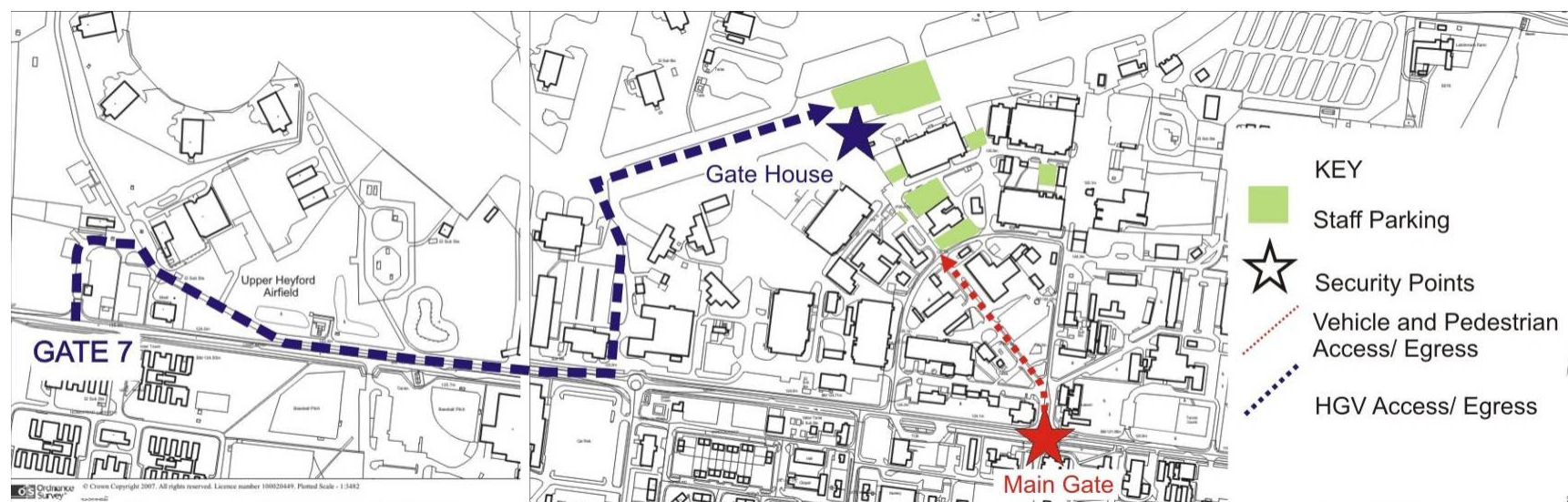


- Train Station
- Bus route (25A)
- - - Bus route (82 less than daily service)

## 5.2 Access and Parking

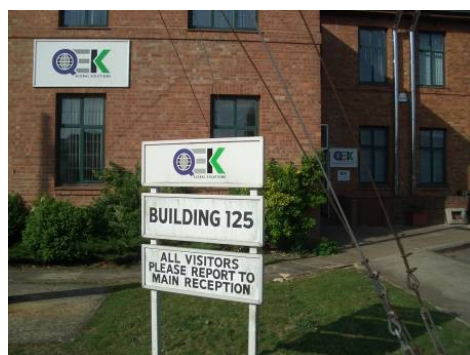
There are two ways to access the QEK site by vehicle. Firstly, via Gate 7 and secondly, via the Main Gate. Gate 7 allows access for staff cars, stock movements (driven and transported) and parts deliveries. The Main Gate is used for staff cars, visitors, service and postal deliveries. Access is controlled by two security points.

Figure 5.1 Access and Parking



There are seven staff car parks at QEK (shown in green on the plan above) providing in the region of 500 spaces. The largest of these car parks is at the western edge of the site. The distribution of these car parks allows for conveniently located disabled parking for staff and visitors as and when this is required.

## 6. Summary and Conclusions



This Design and Access Statement has considered the site, design and access of QEK's operations at Heyford Park and is submitted in support of the planning applications to extend QEK's occupation at the former airbase. This further temporary period would provide an appropriate stepping stone to enable QEK to work towards a permanent facility and footprint as part of a lasting arrangement for the airbase.

The entire RAF Upper Heyford site is designated a conservation area, primarily for its importance as a Cold War airbase. The QEK boundary does not take in any scheduled or listed buildings and much lies outside of the defined Core Area of National Significance. QEK's uses can be regarded as being complementary and in keeping with the military, utilitarian and industrial nature of the technical and flying field character areas. Also QEK's proposals will ensure the continued maintenance of important buildings and other site infrastructure. In addition QEK's current vehicle staging is barely perceptible from outside the airbase and has limited visual impact from the most historic areas within the airfield.

This Design and Access Statement considered access and transport including staff parking and entrance and egress from the site for private vehicles and HGVs. Opportunities exist to build upon current levels of accessibility, as well as to fully address other issues, as part of a lasting solution for the site.