



paragon
fleet solutions

Land and Buildings at Upper Heyford, Heyford

Design and Access Statement

June 2008

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1. INTRODUCTION

Drivers Jonas act on behalf of Paragon Fleet Solutions owned by Paragon Automotive. For ease of reference our Client is generally referred to as 'Paragon' throughout this document.

Paragon is a specialist provider of marketing support, technical services and training to the automotive industry. Paragon's operations at Upper Heyford are considered a 'centre of excellence'. Facilities and services include asset management, logistics, body shop, smart repair, mechanical services, demonstration programs, and vehicle registration. 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. Paragon's current site at Upper Heyford comprises office accommodation, technical workshops, ancillary facilities, grassed areas and approximately 60 acres (24 hectares) of hardstanding. Paragon 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, awaiting parts or inspection.

This Design and Access statement is submitted by Drivers Jonas in support of 12 planning applications to further extend the time period for Paragon's temporary use of land and buildings at Upper Heyford. Paragon have been located at RAF Upper Heyford for a number of years under temporary planning permissions. The extant temporary planning permissions expire on 30 June 2008. The current planning applications seek to extend time limiting permissions by a further 5 years. This further temporary period is necessary to provide an appropriate timeframe to enable continuation of the business pending the creation of a permanent facility and footprint for our Client, to be provided as an integral part of a lasting arrangement for the airbase. The timetable and delivery of a permanent footprint is very much inter-linked with the NOC's current application.

This Design and Access Statement is submitted to assist the local planning authority in the determination of the current applications. Paragon has also worked very closely with the North Oxfordshire Consortium ("NOC") to ensure that proposals fit with the timing and delivery of their comprehensive new settlement proposals.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the Planning Statement and updated Visual Assessment also submitted in support of the applications. The purpose of this statement is to consider Design and Access issues associated with the operations of Paragon at Upper Heyford. This Statement contains the following sections:

- § Planning Context;
- § Site Analysis;
- § Design Principles;
- § Access;
- § Paragon's Future Operational Footprint;
- § Summary and Conclusions.



Typical Signage



Cars outside valeting area



View from Paragon'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.

The South East Plan (yet to be adopted)

The Plan's vision is for a dynamic and robust economy for the region. The Plan's aspiration is for a buoyant economy with high and stable levels of economic and employment growth with an emphasis on skills, innovation and enterprise.

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 1996 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 Upper Heyford 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 Paragon 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 Paragon's temporary use of land and buildings at, Upper Heyford. The extant temporary planning permissions are due to expire on 30 June 2008. More detail on these applications can be found in the Supporting Statement.

The planning applications seek to extend current time limiting permissions by 5 further years. This further temporary period is to provide an appropriate stepping stone to enable Paragon 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 7 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 in an open and exposed setting. Outside the airfield the landscape is largely agricultural in character.

The airfield includes large areas of hardstanding and scattered buildings and hangars (positioned to guard against air attack). 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.

Paragon's current site generally occupies a lower and less visible part of the flying field. Paragon use a number of 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



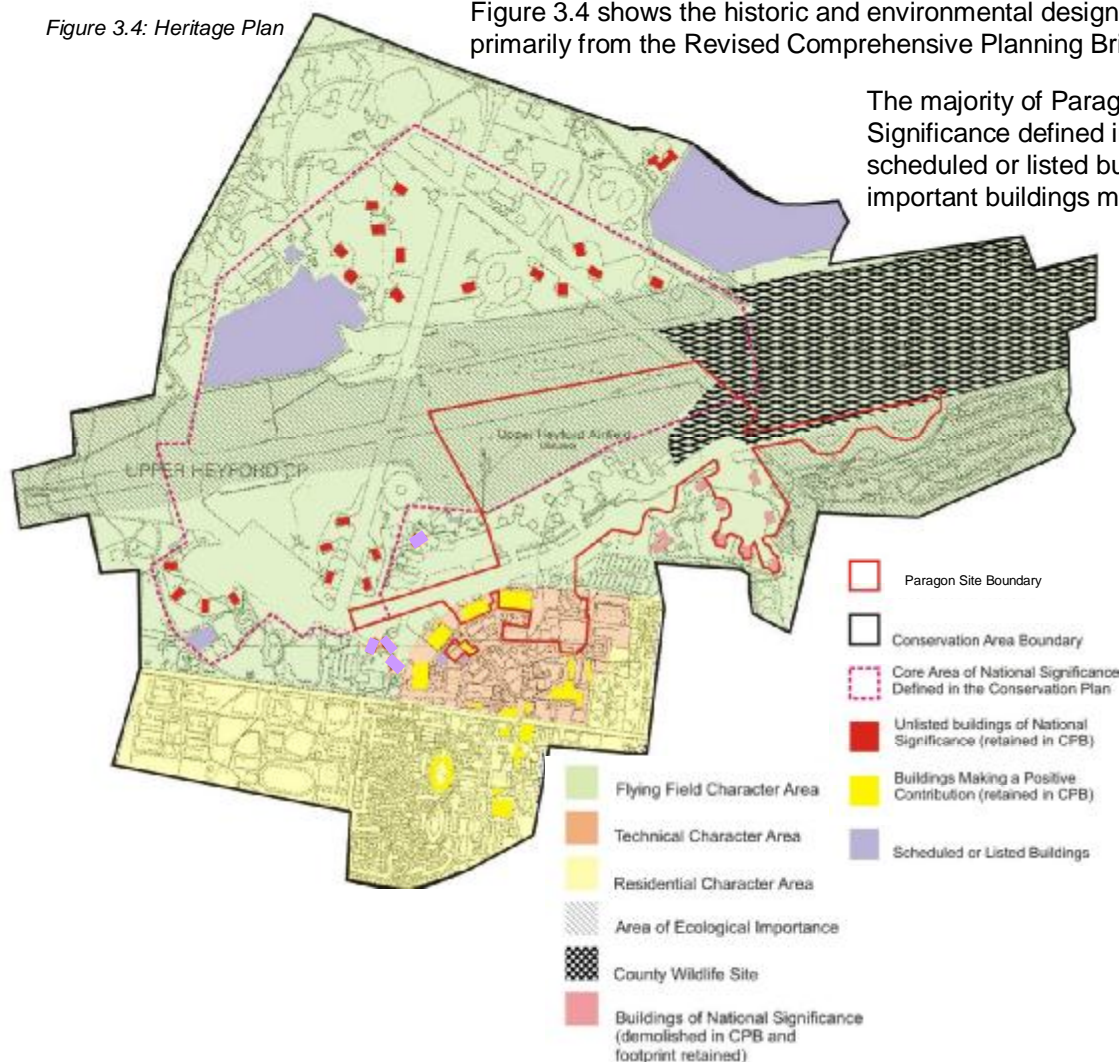
Figure 3.3: Paragon's Location at Upper Heyford Airfield

3.2 Heritage Context

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: Heritage Plan

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



The majority of Paragon's operations are outside the Core Area of National Significance defined in the CPB. The Paragon 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.

Transitional arrangements (and the ultimate permanent footprint) will provide an opportunity for the phased removal of vehicles from the main runway and taxiways which would address concerns raised by English Heritage in their letter to Cherwell Council dated 10 March 2008 which states that:

*"Our view is that car storage on the main runway is not acceptable. Storage on the taxiways east of the Group of HAS's is not acceptable because of the intervisibility with the main runway and the fact that the taxiways would have been kept clear to facilitate the movement of aircraft and therefore the uncluttered and empty appearance is part of their special character. **Within the groups of shelters and sheds standing vehicles etc and activity was historically the norm and therefore the potential exists for car staging subject to the assessment of the precise requirements (e.g. position, number, signage etc). Interestingly the 7 HAS's in the south eastern group currently provide some screening to the existing activity which will of course be lost if they are demolished.**"*

These comments raised by English Heritage, reflect the broad conclusions identified in the heritage assessment carried out by our Client in 2006 that our Clients can be compatible with the utilitarian and industrial nature of the Cold War era.

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 Paragon'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 Paragon's site:

- § Station Armoury - Building number 125 (Paragon 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 – Paragon 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 – Paragon uses building 3038 (retrofit centre and internal staging).

Figure 3.5: Heritage Zone Plan



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



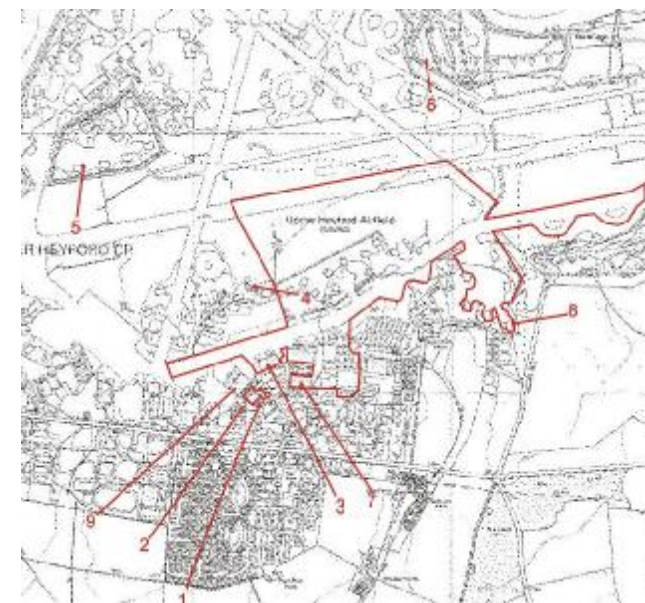
3.2 Heritage Context

The following photographs show a selection of the buildings of International, National or Local significance both within Paragon's 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 Paragon's temporary occupation for a further 5 years. The following provides a brief summary of the key considerations:

- § Since the USAF left the airbase in the mid 1990s Paragon 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 Paragon provides an important role in maintaining the setting of adjacent structures of designated heritage significance.
- § Paragon's operations do not directly impact on designated heritage features in the northern part of the airfield (as demonstrated in the pictures below).
- § English Heritage are of the view that within the groups of shelters and sheds within the south of the flying field, standing vehicles etc and activity was historically the norm and therefore the potential exists for car staging subject to the assessment of the precise requirements (e.g. position, number, signage etc). Our Clients operations in this area are capable of being compatible with the utilitarian and industrial nature of the Cold War area.
- § Paragon's impact on Cold War heritage is significantly less than other automotive operators previously located at Upper Heyford, present at the time the conservation area was identified.
- § Paragon'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 Paragon identified in the CPB for long term retention. Paragon's ongoing maintenance of locally and nationally important buildings ensures their continued preservation.
- § A further temporary permission provides the opportunity for potential operational changes to improve this position further, for example; possible changes to Paragon's operational footprint to limit staging operations in the Core Area of Historic Significance as identified in the CPB.

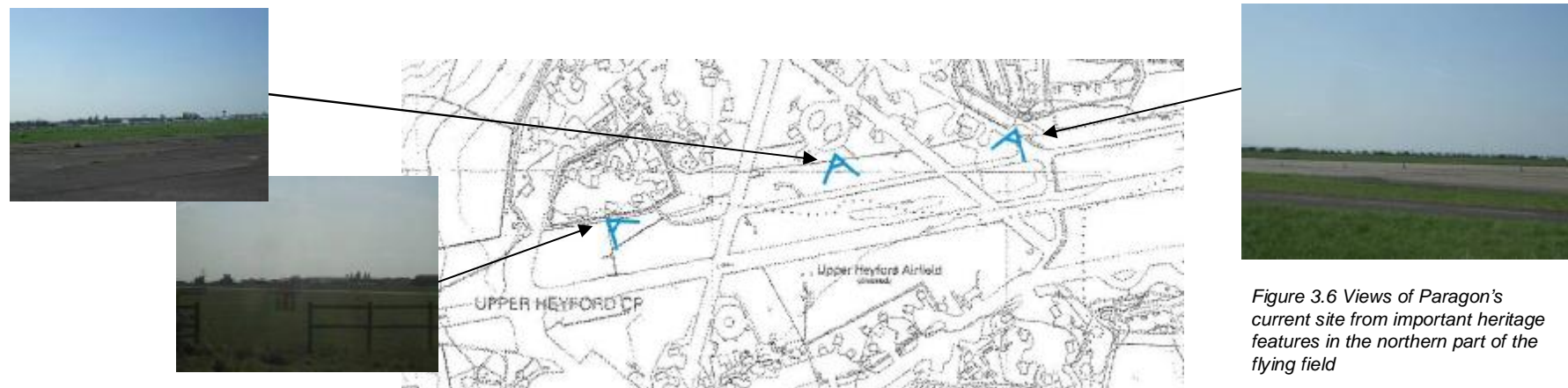


Figure 3.6 Views of Paragon's current site from important heritage features in the northern part of the flying field

3.3 Social and Economic Context



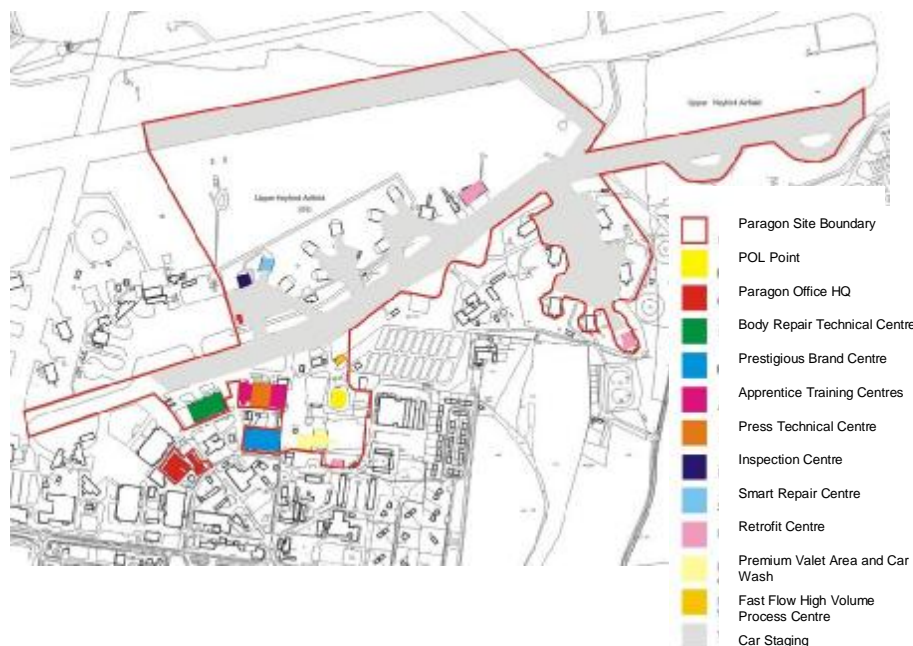
Paragon plays an important role in the local social and economic context as a significant local employer. The Supporting Statement considers this in detail, however, in terms of setting the context in this Design and Access Statement the following headline facts should be noted:

- § Paragon is the largest existing employer at Upper Heyford and the 3rd largest employer in Cherwell District;
- § Paragon makes a significant contribution to the local economy and community, also supporting a wide range of other local services;
- § Paragon directly provides in the region of 500 jobs, a large proportion of which are full time;
- § Around 2/5 of Paragon's employees live in the Cherwell District, with a number of these people living locally, including in Upper Heyford itself;
- § Paragon employs a technical and diverse workforce with over 50% of employees being classified as 'skilled';
- § Paragon offers a competitive salary to its workers comparable to the District average;
- § Paragon values training and has been awarded 'Investors in People' along with a number of other awards;
- § Paragon supports local charities and organisations;
- § Paragon works actively with local schools and colleges and operates a highly successful apprentice programme; and
- § There are future opportunities for growth at Paragon to create more employment, including jobs which are highly specialist and skilled nature.

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 Paragon's operation. Operational adjacencies are essential to Paragon'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 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	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



Paragon currently occupy a 61 ha site divided between technical operations, administration and external vehicle processing [circa 60 acres (24 hectares)]. This site boundary also includes substantial grassed areas retained for their ecological value.

Given the Cold War nature of the site, Paragon'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 Paragons use of these buildings and infrastructure will ensure their continued maintenance. In terms of timetable, delivery of the permanent footprint is very much interlinked with the timing of NOC's wider settlement proposals. In moving towards a permanent footprint, there is potential for the implementation of appropriate transitional arrangements which can provide an opportunity for Paragon to take account of comments raised by English Heritage and others in relation to relocating vehicles from the main runway and eastern taxiway.



4.3 Landscape



The current renewal applications are accompanied by a detailed Visibility Assessment carried out by Entec UK Limited, updating their assessment carried out in 2005 to support previous permissions to renew temporary planning permission. The assessment focuses on day time impacts. This updated assessment has confirmed the conclusions reached in the previous assessment that no existing receptors sustain significant visual effects. Notwithstanding this already favourable position, visual effects would be further reduced through the removal of vehicles from the main runway and eastern taxiway.



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

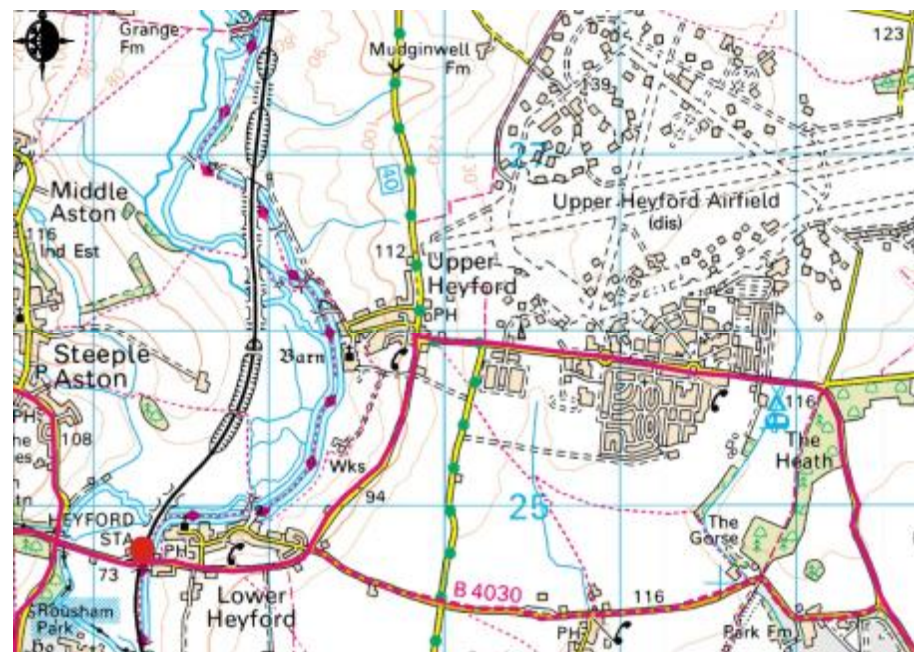
The site is located in North Oxfordshire approximately 4 miles (7km) north-west of Bicester. The nearest motorway junction is Junction 10 of the M40 which is 2 miles (3km) north east. RAF Upper Heyford is around 70 miles (113km) from London and 55 miles (89km) from Birmingham.

The nearest train station is on Station Road in Lower Heyford. The Station is less than 2 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 25/25A/25B Oxford/Bicester bus service runs along Camp Road on an hourly bases in the daytime with a number of additional services in both direction in the AM peak hour.

The site is accessible by bicycle and a number of Paragon's staff cycle to work. A proportion of Paragon'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. In addition, the new settlement will provide a number of new facilities within walking distance of the site including crèche/nursery facilities, playing pitches and shop.

A Green Travel Plan will be developed as part of the permanent plan for Upper Heyford and Paragon would be willing to link into this. Implementation of the Travel Plan will improve provision of public transport and walking and cycling facilities as well as promoting car sharing and car club schemes.

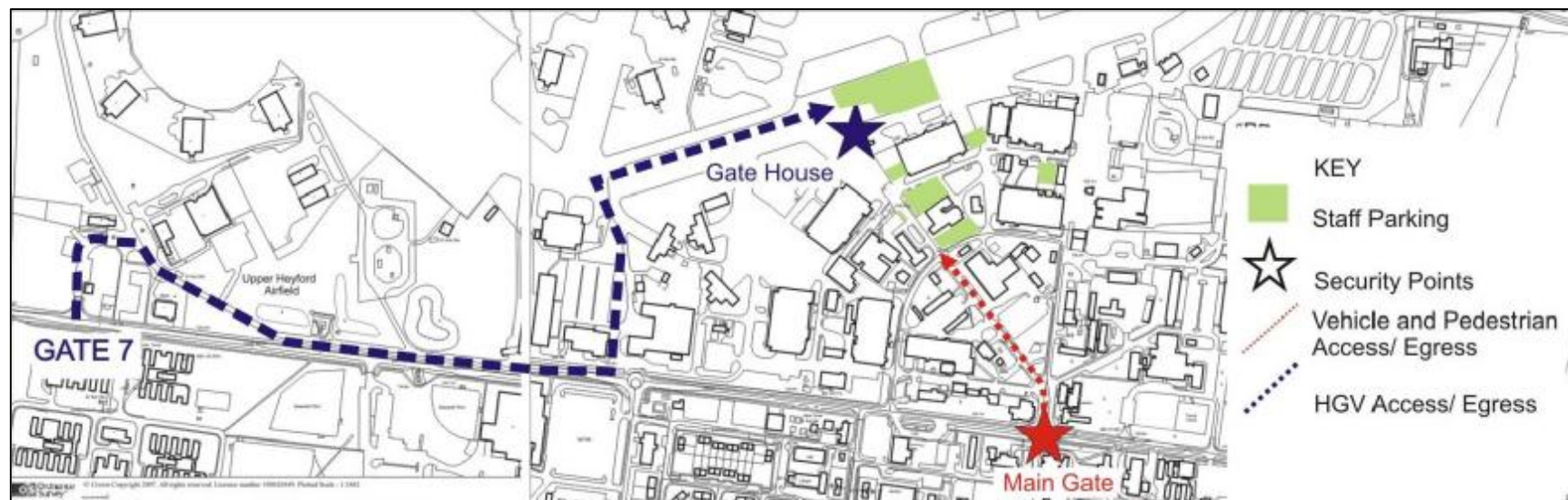
Paragon are mindful of making their buildings and operations accessible to all and implement special measures when disabled access is required. Paragon will consider making more formalised accessibility arrangements as part of the lasting solution for the site.



5.2 Access and Parking

There are two ways to access the Paragon 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 Paragon (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. CHANGES TO EXTERNAL FOOTPRINT

It is currently anticipated that the development of new settlement proposals by the NOC will commence in early 2010. More details on this can be found in the Planning Statement.

Given the timescale and complexity of the site and associated development issues, development of the settlement will be phased over a long period. Anticipated phasing and construction periods which, together with the revised start date defined by the NOC, is reflected in the duration of the temporary permission sought.

As part of transitional arrangements, Paragon will be willing to consider the removal of vehicles from the main runway and eastern taxiway [and relocation to new areas as necessary, including that created on the former tanker area (as defined for 'car storage' in the CPB)].

The following figures show:

- § Paragon's existing external vehicle processing footprint;
- § A proposed 40 acre permanent footprint for Paragon as shown in the NOC's submitted duplicate application, which at the time of preparing this report was pending determination. This proposed footprint addresses concerns made by English Heritage regarding the location of vehicles on the main runway and eastern taxiway.

Figure 6.1: Paragon's existing car staging footprint.

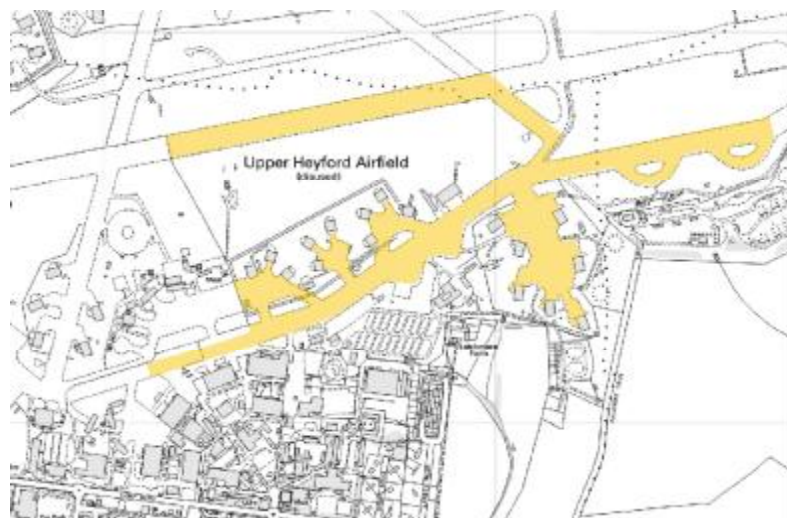
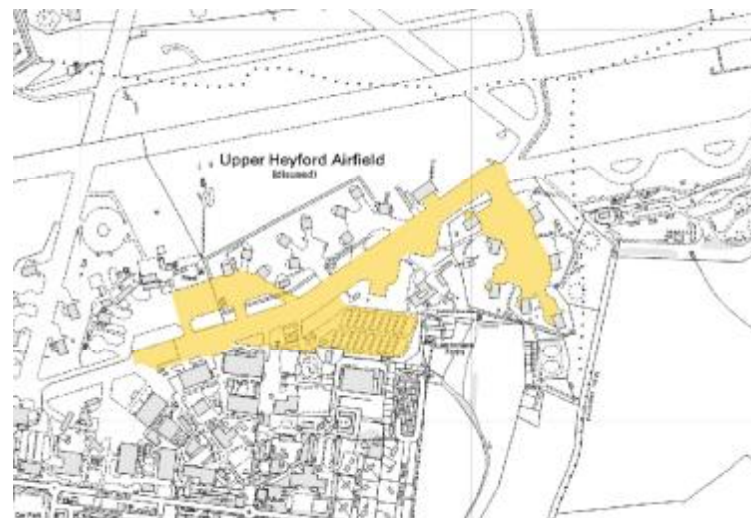


Figure 6.2 A proposed footprint for Paragon as shown in the NOC's duplicate application.



7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS



This Design and Access Statement has considered the site, design and access of Paragon's operations at Upper Heyford and is submitted in support of the planning applications to extend Paragon's occupation at the former airbase. This further temporary period is necessary to provide an appropriate timeframe to enable continuation of the business pending the creation of a permanent facility and footprint for our Client, to be provided as an integral 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 Paragon boundary does not take include any scheduled or listed buildings and the majority of operations are outside of the defined Core Area of National Significance. Paragon'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. Paragon's proposals will ensure the continued maintenance of important buildings and other site infrastructure. In addition Paragon's current external vehicle processing area is barely perceptible from outside the airbase and has limited visual impact from the most historic areas within the airfield. This position will be enhanced through the anticipated relocation of vehicles from the main runway and eastern taxiway.



This Design and Access Statement has 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.