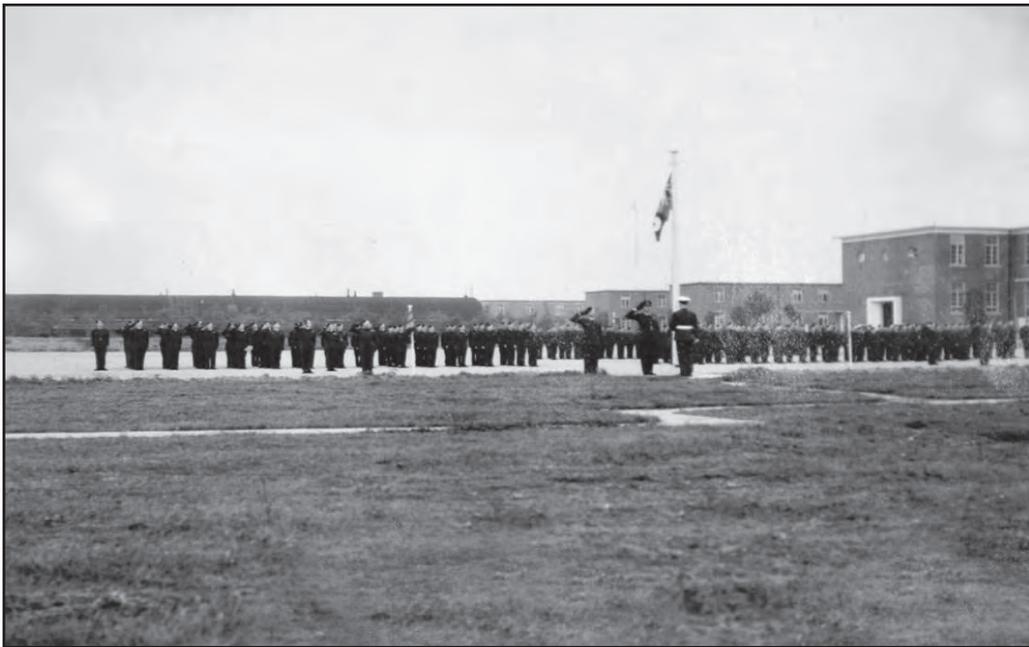


# FORMER RAF UPPER HEYFORD, OXFORDSHIRE

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## HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING AND INVESTIGATION

### VOLUME 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION



*Front cover: View of Barrack Area taken between 1940 and 1942*  
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TABLE 1: STRUCTURES DESCRIBED WITHIN THE GAZETTEER (VOL.2) (ORGANISED BY OA AREA)

Building Number	Area	Recording Level	Date	Function
<b>Area OA1</b>				
UH31	OA1D	1	U/d	Store
UH32	OA1D	1	U/d	Store
<b>Area OA8: South-West Edge</b>				
293	OA8A	2	1971	Flight Simulator
293A	OA8A	1	1988	Gatehouse
294	OA8A	1	1971	20th Fighter Group Operations
300a	OA8A	2	1953	20th Maintenance and Equipment
300b	OA8A	2	1953	20th Maintenance and Equipment
300c	OA8A	2	1953	20th Maintenance and Equipment
300d	OA8A	2	1953	20th Maintenance and Equipment
300e	OA8A	2	1953	20th Maintenance and Equipment
301	OA8A	1	1953	Generator
301A	OA8A	1	1953	Fuel Tank
346	OA8A	1	1950s	Fuel Tanks
UH33	OA8A	1	U/d	Sub-station
<b>Area OA9: School Huts</b>				
804-815	OA9	1	1950s	School huts
UH74	OA9	2	1972	Water Tower
<b>Area OA10: Playing Fields and Large Buildings</b>				
515	OA10A	1	1983	Leisure
527	OA10	1	1976	Electric sub-station
528	OA10A	1	1982	Store
566	OA10B	1	1989	Store
567	OA10A	1	1977	Baseball dugouts
570	OA10A	1	U/d	Store
577	OA10A	1	70s/80s	Baseball dugout
578	OA10A	1	1955	Fuel inlet
579	OA10B	1	1980	Medical Gas Storage
581	OA10B	1	1975	Supermarket
582	OA10B	1	1982	Hospital
584	OA10A	1	1982	Store/ Pre-match
590	OA10A	1	1940	Waste disposal
595	OA10A	1	1970/80	Baseball dugout
599	OA10A	1	1970s	Baseball dugout
UH3	OA 10A	1	1970s	Distribution Substation
UH5	OA10A	1	1970s	Viewing tower
UH15	OA10A	1	1970s	Works/ Maintenance
<b>Area OA 11: South Residential Area</b>				
291	OA11B	2	1972	Water tower
546	OA11B	1	1977	Credit union
547	OA11B	2	1940-42	Laundrette
548	OA11B	1	1940	Electric sub-station

551	OA11B	1	1935	Water pump
552	OA11B	1	1952	Water tank
564	OA11B	1	1970s/80s	Hut by 548
565	OA11B	1	1979	Water tank
568	OA11B	1	1945	Hut
573	OA11B	1	1987	Water tank
588	OA11B	1	1975	Store
712	OA11A	1	1960s	Bungalow
UH2	OA11B	1	1970s	Electricity Substation
<b>Area OA12: Barracks and Institutions</b>				
440	OA12B	2	1980s	Barrack Block
440b	OA12B	1	1980s	Boiler Room
441	OA12C	1	1970	Boiler House
442	OA14B	1	1984	Education Centre and Nursery
443	OA12D	1	1971	Cold Store
444	OA12D	1	1982	Office
445	OA12C	1	1970/2	Barrack Block
446	OA 12D	1	1970/2	Barrack Blocks
449	OA12B	1	1940	Storage Unit
450	OA12B	2	1925	Barrack Blocks - Type C
454	OA12B	1	1950	Water tank
459	OA12A	2	1925	Barracks for Airmen
460	OA12A	1	1950s	Bus shelter
461	OA12B	1	1980s	Storage Unit
465	OA12B	2	1935	Decontamination Centre
466	OA12B	2	1925	Barrack Block - Type C
467	OA12B	2	c.1939	Central Heating Station
468	OA12B	2	c. 1950	Hut
470	OA12B	1	1977	Shed/ store
471	OA12B	2	1925	Barrack Block - Type C
472A & 472B	OA12B	2	1947-1954	Mess complex
474	OA12B	3	1925	Dining Room/ cookhouse
475	OA12B	2	1925	Ration store & shop
476	OA12B	1	1980s	Electric Substation
480	OA12B	2	1925	Barrack Block Type C
481	OA12B	1	1973	Thrift shop
483	OA12B	2	1925	Barrack Block Type C
484	OA12B	1	1950/60s	Nursery
485	OA12B	3	1937	Barrack Block Type C
486	OA12B	1	1976	Bio-environmental engineering
487	OA12B	1	1940	Electric substation
488	OA 12D	2	1937-1942	Combined Dining Room and Institute
489	OA 12D	2	1939	Barracks Block - Type H
491	OA12B	1	1935	Store
492	OA12A	1	1985	'Shopette'
493	OA12A	1	1985	Petrol Station
498	OA 12D	2	1939	Barracks Block - Type H
500	OA 12D	2	1939	Barracks Block - Type H
502	OA12C	2	1950s	USAF Security Police
529	OA12B	2	1939	Field Force Motor Transport shed
593	OA12C	1	1970-2	Barrack Block
594	OA12C	1	1970-72	Barrack Block
596	OA12C	1	1970-2	Barrack Block

598	OA12C	1	1970-2	Barrack Block
<b>UH and Subsidiary buildings</b>				
UH8	OA12B	1	1970s	Oil Storage
UH9	OA 12D	1	1970s	Generator
UH10	OA12C	1	1970s	Electrical Substation
UH11	OA12C	1	1980s	Portacabin
<b>Area OA13: East Huts</b>				
400	OA13	1	1947-1954	Huts (Finance Offices)
401	OA13	1	1947-1954	Huts (Housing Offices)
402	OA13	1	1947-1954	Huts (Offices)
403	OA13	1	1947-1954	Huts (Offices)
404	OA13	1	1947-1954	Huts (Community Bank)
405	OA13	1	1947-1954	Huts (Offices)
406	OA13	1	1947-1954	Huts - Incinerator
407	OA13	1	1947-1954	Huts - Exchange Retail Warehouse)
408	OA13	1	1947-1954	Huts – Abolition Block
409	OA13	1	1947-1954	Huts - Offices
410	OA13	1	1947-1954	Huts - Boiler House
<b>UH and Subsidiary Buildings</b>				
UH12	OA13	1	1950s	Tank
UH13	OA13	1	1980s	Offices
<b>Area OA14: Technical Area</b>				
32-35	OA14D	2	1947	Commissary
36	OA14D	2	1970	Air Defence/ Veterinary Clinic
38	OA14D	2	1986	Car Wash
51	OA14E	1	1942	Briefing rooms
53	OA14B	2	1950s	Office
54	OA14B	2	1940s	Single storey hut
56	OA14B	1	1951	The Works Squadron
59	OA14B	2	1928 & 1980s	Works Service building
62/69	OA14B	1	1981	Workshops (Electrical)
63	OA14B	1	1947	Water Tank
64	OA14B	2	1940s	Petrol Store
65	OA14A	2	1960s	Civil Engineering Operations Office
66	OA14B	2	1939	Offices
67	OA14	1	U/d	Sub-station
68	OA14B	2	1947-1954	Offices
70	OA14B	1	1972	20th CES Conference Room
72	OA14B	2	1953	Storage sheds
79	OA14B	1	1940	Garage
81	OA14A	2	1947-54	Auto Admin. Maintenance
84	OA14C	1	1975	Petrol Kiosk
85	OA14C	1	1950/60s	Store/ Workshop
86	OA14C	1	1981	Auto Hobby Workshop
88	OA14C	1	1985	Refuelling Vehicle Maintenance
89	OA14A	2	c.1939	Firing Range
89A	OA14C	2	1950s	Petrol Pump Booth
89B	OA14A	2	1939	Blast separation wall
101/102	OA14B	2	1926	Fire-party House
106	OA14B	1	1954 and 1980s	Post Office
107	OA14B	1	1926	Reservoir
108	OA14B	1	1926	Water tower

113	OA14B	2	1937- 42	Transformer House Substation
113A	OA14B	1	1937 - 42	Tanks
113B	OA14B	1	1980s	Electric Substation
114	OA14B	2	1937 - 42	Transformer House
115	OA14B	2	1927-31	Motor Transport shed
117	OA14B	2	1927-31	Motor Transport shed
118	OA14B	2	c.1939	Link Trainer
119	OA14B	2	c.1939	Garage and store
130	OA14A	2	1925	Workshop
145	OA14B	2	1925	Inflammables store
146	OA14B	2	1926	Lubricant Store
147	OA14B	2	1940s	Office Link Trainer
156	OA14A	2	1926	Store
131	OA14A	1	1965	Boiler House
171	OA14A	1	1939	Petrol Tanker sheds
312	OA14A	1	1970/80s	Electric Substation
313	OA14A	1	1950	Pavilion
317	OA14A	1	1947-54	Workshop
317A	OA14A	1	1950s	Canopy
<b>UH and Subsidiary buildings</b>				
2x	OA14D	1	1980s/ 1990s	Refrigeration Unit
3x	OA14D	1	1980s/ 1990s	Refrigeration Unit
4x	OA14D	1	1980s/ 1990s	Refrigeration Unit
UH44	OA14B	1	1970s/ 1980s	Electricity Sub-station
UH46	OA14B	1	1980s	Office/ Portacabin

**TABLE 2: STRUCTURES DESCRIBED WITHIN THE  
GAZETTEER (IN NUMERICAL ORDER BY BUILDING  
NUMBER)**

<b>Building Number</b>	<b>OA Area</b>	<b>Recording Level</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Function</b>
32-35	OA14D	1	1947	Commissary
36	OA14D	2	1970	Air Defence/ Veterinary Clinic
38	OA14D	2	1986	Car Wash
51	OA14E	1	1942	Briefing rooms
53	OA14B	2	1950s	Office
54	OA14B	2	1940s	Single storey hut
56	OA14B	1	1951	The Works Squadron
59	OA14B	2	1928 & 1980s	Works Service building
62/69	OA14B	1	1981	Workshops (Electrical)
63	OA14B	1	1947	Water Tank
64	OA14B	2	1940s	Petrol Store
65	OA14A	2	1960s	Civil Engineering Operations Office
66	OA14B	2	1939	Offices
67	OA14B	1	U/d	Sub-station
68	OA14B	2	1947-1954	Offices
70	OA14B	1	1972	20th CES Conference Room
72	OA14B	2	1953	Storage sheds
79	OA14B	1	1940	Garage
81	OA14A	2	1947-54	Auto Admin. Maintenance
84	OA14C	1	1975	Petrol Kiosk
85	OA14C	1	1950/60s	Store/ Workshop
86	OA14C	1	1981	Auto Hobby Workshop
88	OA14C	1	1985	Refuelling Vehicle Maintenance
89	OA14A	2	c.1939	Firing Range
89A	OA14C	2	1950s	Petrol Pump Booth
89B	OA14A	2	1939	Blast separation wall
101/102	OA14B	2	1926	Fire-party House
106	OA14B	1	1954 and 1980s	Post Office
107	OA14B	1	1926	Reservoir
108	OA14B	1	1926	Water tower
113	OA14B	2	1937- 42	Transformer House Substation
113A	OA14B	1	1937 - 42	Tanks
113B	OA14B	1	1980s	Electric Substation
114	OA14B	2	1937 - 42	Transformer House
115	OA14B	2	1927-31	Motor Transport shed
117	OA14B	2	1927-31	Motor Transport shed
118	OA14B	2	c.1939	Link Trainer
119	OA14B	2	c.1939	Garage and store
130	OA14A	2	1925	Workshop
131	OA14A	1	1965	Boiler House
145	OA14B	2	1925	Inflammables store
146	OA14B	2	1926	Lubricant Store
147	OA14B	2	1940s	Office Link Trainer
156	OA14A	2	1926	Store
171	OA14A	1	1939	Petrol Tanker sheds
291	OA11B	2	1972	Water tower

TABLES: STRUCTURES DESCRIBED WITHIN THE GAZETTEER

293	OA8A	2	1971	Flight Simulator
293A	OA8A	1	1988	Gatehouse
294	OA8A	1	1971	20th Fighter Group Operations
300a	OA8A	2	1953	20th Maintenance and Equipment
300b	OA8A	2	1953	20th Maintenance and Equipment
300c	OA8A	2	1953	20th Maintenance and Equipment
300d	OA8A	2	1953	20th Maintenance and Equipment
300e	OA8A	2	1953	20th Maintenance and Equipment
301	OA8A	1	1953	Generator
301A	OA8A	1	1953	Fuel Tank
312	OA14A	1	1970/80s	Electric Substation
313	OA14A	1	1950	Pavilion
317	OA14A	1	1947-54	Workshop
317A	OA14A	1	1950s	Canopy
346	OA8A	1	1950s	Fuel Tanks
400	OA13	1	1947-1954	Huts (Finance Offices)
401	OA13	1	1947-1954	Huts (Housing Offices)
402	OA13	1	1947-1954	Huts (Offices)
403	OA13	1	1947-1954	Huts (Offices)
404	OA13	1	1947-1954	Huts (Community Bank)
405	OA13	1	1947-1954	Huts (Offices)
406	OA13	1	1947-1954	Huts - Incinerator
407	OA13	1	1947-1954	Huts - Exchange Retail Warehouse)
408	OA13	1	1947-1954	Huts – Abolition Block
409	OA13	1	1947-1954	Huts - Offices
410	OA13	1	1947-1954	Huts - Boiler House
440	OA12B	2	1980s	Barrack Block
440b	OA12B	1	1980s	Boiler Room
441	OA12C	1	1970	Boiler House
442	OA14B	1	1984	Education Centre and Nursery
443	OA12D	1	1971	Cold Store
444	OA12D	1	1982	Office
445	OA12C	1	1970/2	Barrack Block
446	OA 12D	1	1970/2	Barrack Blocks
449	OA12B	1	1940	Storage Unit
450	OA12B	2	1925	Barrack Blocks - Type C
454	OA12B	1	1950	Water tank
459	OA12A	2	1925	Barracks for Airmen
460	OA12A	1	1950s	Bus shelter
461	OA12B	1	1980s	Storage Unit
465	OA12B	2	1935	Decontamination Centre
466	OA12B	2	1925	Barrack Block - Type C
467	OA12B	2	c.1939	Central Heating Station
468	OA12B	2	c. 1950	Hut
470	OA12B	1	1977	Shed/ store
471	OA12B	2	1925	Barrack Block - Type C
472A & 472B	OA12B	2	1947-1954	Mess complex
474	OA12B	3	1925	Dining Room/ cookhouse
475	OA12B	2	1925	Ration store & shop
476	OA12B	1	1980s	Electric Substation
480	OA12B	2	1925	Barrack Block Type C
481	OA12B	1	1973	Thrift shop
483	OA12B	2	1925	Barrack Block Type C
484	OA12B	1	1950/60s	Nursery
485	OA12B	3	1937	Barrack Block Type C

486	OA12B	1	1976	Bio-environmental engineering
487	OA12B	1	1940	Electric substation
488	OA 12D	2	1937-1942	Combined Dining Room and Institute
489	OA 12D	2	1939	Barracks Block - Type H
491	OA12B	1	1935	Store
492	OA12A	1	1985	'Shopette'
493	OA12A	1	1985	Petrol Station
498	OA 12D	2	1939	Barracks Block - Type H
500	OA 12D	2	1939	Barracks Block - Type H
502	OA12C	2	1950s	USAF Security Police
515	OA10A	1	1983	Leisure
527	OA10	1	1976	Electric sub-station
528	OA10A	1	1982	Store
529	OA12B	2	1939	Field Force Motor Transport shed
546	OA11B	1	1977	Credit union
547	OA11B	2	1940-42	Laundrette
548	OA11B	1	1940	Electric Sub-station
551	OA11B	1	1935	Water pump
552	OA11B	1	1952	Water tank
564	OA11B	1	1970s/80s	Hut by 548
565	OA11B	1	1979	Water tank
566	OA10B	1	1989	Store
567	OA10A	1	1977	Baseball dugouts
568	OA11B	1	1945	Hut
570	OA10A	1	U/d	Store
573	OA11B	1	1987	Water tank
577	OA10A	1	70s/80s	Baseball dugout
578	OA10A	1	1955	Fuel inlet
579	OA10B	1	1980	Medical Gas Storage
581	OA10B	1	1975	Supermarket
582	OA10B	1	1982	Hospital
584	OA10A	1	1982	Store/ Pre-match
588	OA11B	1	1975	Store
590	OA10A	1	1940	Waste disposal
593	OA12C	1	1970-2	Barrack Block
594	OA12C	1	1970-72	Barrack Block
595	OA10A	1	1970/80	Baseball dugout
596	OA12C	1	1970-2	Barrack Block
598	OA12C	1	1970-2	Barrack Block
599	OA10A	1	1970s	Baseball dugout
712	OA11A	1	1960s	Bungalow
804-815	OA9	1	1950s	School huts
<b>UH and Subsidiary buildings</b>				
2x	OA14D	1	1980s/ 1990s	Refrigeration Unit
3x	OA14D	1	1980s/ 1990s	Refrigeration Unit
4x	OA14D	1	1980s/ 1990s	Refrigeration Unit
UH2	OA11B	1	1970s	Electricity Substation
UH3	OA 10A	1	1970s	Distribution Substation
UH5	OA10A	1	1970s	Viewing tower
UH8	OA12B	1	1970s	Oil Storage
UH9	OA 12D	1	1970s	Generator
UH10	OA12C	1	1970s	Electrical Substation
UH11	OA12C	1	1980s	Portacabin
UH12	OA13	1	1950s	Tank
UH13	OA13	1	1980s	Offices

UH15	OA10A	1	1970s	Works/ Maintenance
UH31	OA1D	1	U/d	Store
UH32	OA1D	1	U/d	Store
UH33	OA8A	1	U/d	Sub-station
UH44	OA14B	1	1970s/ 1980s	Electricity Sub-station
UH74	OA9	2	1972	Water Tower
UH46	OA14B	1	1980s	Office/ Portacabin

# GLOSSARY

AP	Aerial Photograph
CDC	Cherwell District Council
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
GPS	Global Positioning System
HAS	Hardened Aircraft Shelter
HE	Historic England (formerly English Heritage)
HER	Historic Environment Record
OA	Oxford Archaeology
PSA	Property Services Agency
RAF	Royal Air Force
SAM	Scheduled Ancient Monument
USAF	United States Air Force
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



## FORMER RAF UPPER HEYFORD, OXFORDSHIRE

HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING AND  
INVESTIGATION*VOLUME 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION*

## SUMMARY

*The airbase began life as a First World War airfield, and following a short period of closure, was redesigned in 1925 when it became a model on which airfields of its type was based. Upper Heyford saw active service in the Second World War and at the end of the war, was chosen to house aircraft of the United States Air Force (USAF) Strategic Air Command. The airbase was developed from the 1950s when F-111E bombers were based at the airbase, which were able to carry immediate-range nuclear weapons. The strategy of retaliation made it necessary to protect bases, and the policy of ‘hardening’ airbases was instigated creating a landscape of hardened structures which today remains unaltered from its original Cold War form.*

*This significance of the landscape is recognised in former RAF Upper Heyford’s designation as a Conservation Area by Cherwell District Council, and the Scheduling and Listing of structures and areas at Upper Heyford by Historic England. The Conservation Area includes the area to the south of the Flying Field, which contains predominantly technical and residential buildings, many of which pre-date the Cold War. These are of less functional and historical significance than those structures within the Flying Field, and it is within this area to the south of the Flying Field that the vast majority of development is situated. This development has been enabled by the demolition of structures, which has necessitated their archaeological recording through planning conditions.*

*The more recent planning history at Upper Heyford dates from its closure in 1994, following which the North Oxfordshire Consortium purchased the airbase. Following a public inquiry planning permission was granted to develop the site in 2010 including 1,000 new houses. The site was subsequently purchased by the Dorchester Group who began developing the site, with the programme of archaeological recording commencing in 2012. In total 161 structures have been approved for demolition, almost exclusively within the area to the south of the Cold War airbase. These structures have been recorded in accordance with English Heritage guidelines, the results of which are described within this report.*

*The structures have been recorded at different levels (1 to 3) as set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (2012) in agreement with Cherwell District Council. The recording also entailed a programme of historical research in which aerial photographs and historic maps were identified to enhance understanding of the historic landscape. The results of this recording and analysis is described within the Gazetteer of this report, the recording also entailed the recording of war art particularly within barrack blocks which are described within a separate report (OA forthcoming).*



## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 *Background*

1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) has been commissioned by the Dorchester Group to undertake a programme of historic building recording and investigation at former RAF Upper Heyford in Oxfordshire (Fig.1). The vast majority of the development is located to the south of the Flying Field, in which a total of 161 buildings have been demolished dating from 1925 to the 1980s. The structures have been recorded from levels 1 to 3 in accordance with Historic England (HE) (formerly English Heritage) guidelines, although the majority of structures are of low value and have been recorded at level 1.

1.1.2 The Gazetteer reports the results of the building recording programme, and describes all 154 buildings within the area is situated. A separate report describes the war art identified within those building which have been demolished or are proposed for demolition, this art dates from the Cold War period and is predominantly found within the barrack buildings (OA forthcoming). At the time of writing (November 2015) discussions about the further development of Upper Heyford are ongoing, and it is possible that this document will become a basis for the reporting of further archaeological recording.

### 1.2 *Report Format*

1.2.1 This report includes two volumes; this first volume provides background information both of the project and the airbase. It includes the following sections:

Introduction

Airbase Description and Significance

Aims and Methodology

Historical Background.

1.2.2 The second volume is the Gazetteer which includes the results of the buildings archaeology recording project. The gazetteer is divided into sections according to historic areas within the airbase, and the buildings are described numerically within this. The description includes the use of photos and figures (where appropriate).

1.2.3 Two tables present numerically those buildings which have been recorded within this report in two different formats. Table 1 presents details the buildings numerically by building number within each area, and Table 2 categorises the building numbers numerically but not according to historic area. The latter table is for ease of reference so that buildings can be readily identified and located.

### 1.3 *Planning background and related works*

1.3.1 The development to which the current document relates has been the result of a long and complex planning history dating from former RAF Upper Heyford's closure in 1994. This is described in various documents (CDC 2006, OA 2010 and ACTA et al 2005), a brief outline is given below.

1.3.2 Following its closure the site was brought by the North Oxfordshire Consortium (NOC), a Comprehensive Planning Brief for the airbase was adopted by CDC in 1999, and NOC subsequently made a planing application for the site which was turned down at appeal in 2002/3. In parallel with this HE was assessing the Cold War features of the airbase as part of the national Monuments Protection Programme (MPP). To provide further understanding of the site a Conservation Plan was completed by OA, ACTA and the Tourism Company in 2005 which was commissioned by NOC, CDC and HE. In conjunction and following this HE made a number of the areas and buildings at Upper Heyford Listed buildings and Scheduled Monuments (see Fig.2). As a result of the Conservation Plan, in 2006 CDC also awarded Conservation Area status to the airbase.

- 1.3.3 Following the Conservation Plan mixed use redevelopment proposals were prepared and an application was submitted in 2007. In 2008 an appeal was submitted to CDC on the grounds of the non-determination of this application, and following a public inquiry in 2009 the inspector and the Secretary of State ruled in favour of the development in January 2010. The site was subsequently sold to the Dorchester Group, who have commissioned this work to facilitate the development of the site.
- 1.3.4 The recording is undertaken as a condition of various Conservation Area Consents for the demolition of structures at Upper Heyford (including, but not limited to Condition 4 of Conservation Area Consent granted on 14 February 2011; App No. 10/01619/CAC, Condition 4 of Conservation Area Consent granted on 11 January 2010; App No. 07/02350/CAC and Condition 4 of Conservation Area Consent granted 30 September 2013; App No. 13/01097/CAC). These consents, and therefore the recording, covers only the structures at the site proposed for demolition rather than every building at Upper Heyford.
- 1.3.5 This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has previously been approved by CDC under reference 11/00275/DISC dated 15 August 2012, but has been updated to include a number of other structures which are to be demolished as part of the redevelopment of the site.

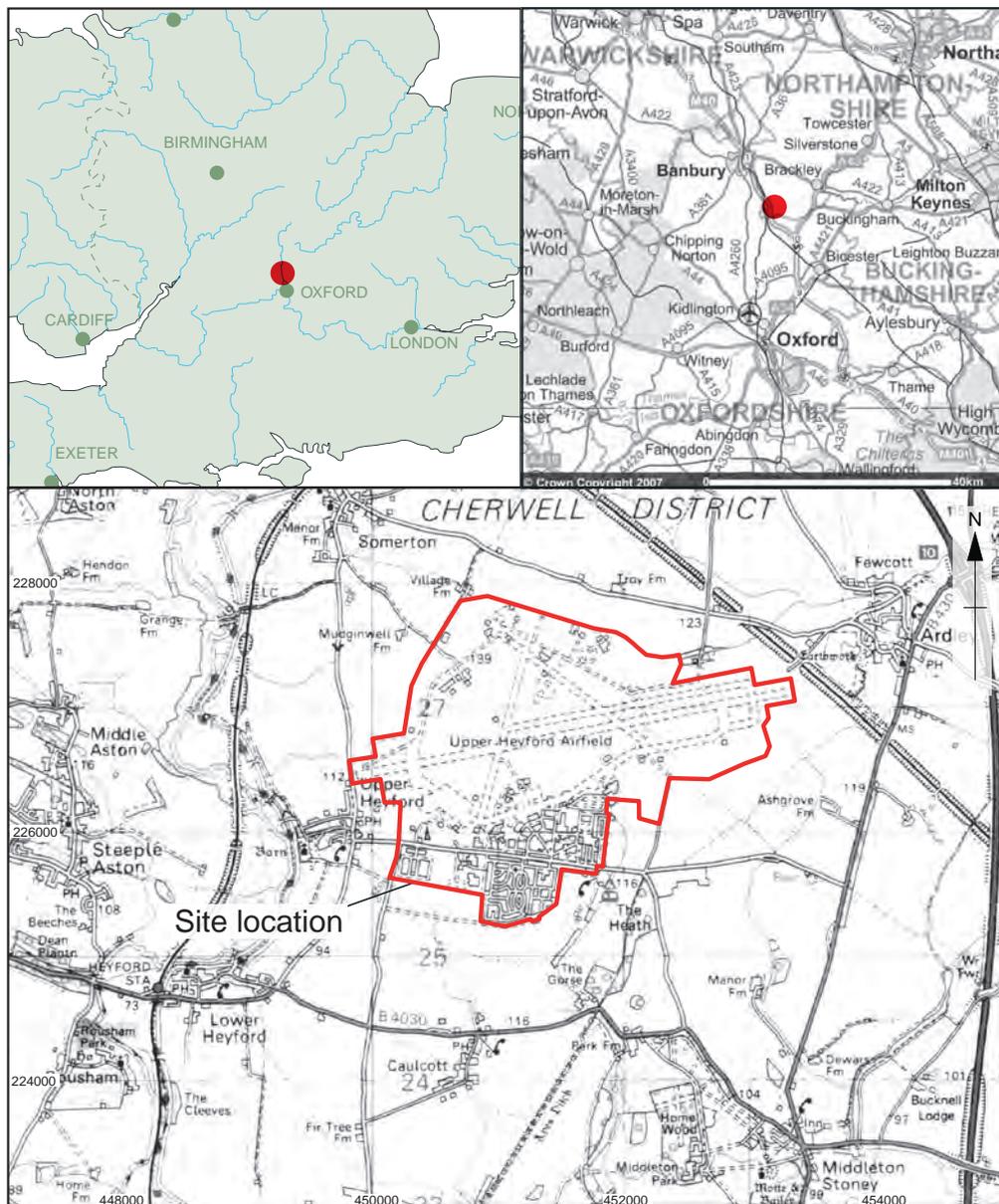


Figure 1 Site location

This drawing is on a base produced by Wardell Armstrong (Drawing Number CA02305\_01) which was an amalgamation of the Ordnance Survey digital topographical plan and the USAF base comprehensive plan dated Sept 1984 (revised Dec 1993 and amended Apr 2002) © Crown copyright 100035542



Character Areas	
1	Central Airbase
1A	Central Runway
1B	Central Plateau
1C	Quick Reaction Alert Area
1D	South Aircraft Shelters
1E	Southwest HASs
2	Runway West Terminal
3	Runway East Terminal
4	Southern Conventional Arms Store
5	North Edge
5A	Northern Bomb Stores
5B	Plateau Edge
5C	North Fringe
5D	Northwest Fringe
6	Southeast HASs
7	Tanker Area
8	Southwest Edge
8A	Built up South Edge
8B	Avionics and HASs

	Scheduled Monuments
	Listed Structures
	Landscape South of the Cold War Zone
	Cold War Landscape
	Landscape Character boundary
	Landscape Character sub-division
	Conservation Area

Figure 2: RAF Upper Heyford Area and Designations  
 Reproduced from ACTA et. al (2005)



## 2 AIRBASE DESCRIPTION AND SIGNIFICANCE

- 2.1.1 The former airbase at Upper Heyford occupies an area of 540.5 ha, located 6km north-west of Bicester, within the Cherwell District and the civil parishes of Upper Heyford, Somerton and Ardley. The airbase lies on the edge of a plateau from which the lands falls into the Cherwell Valley, the surrounding landscape is predominately rural but the airbase is close to major transport corridors including the M40 and A43. Camp Road passes through the south end of the site, separating the main part of the airbase from the technical and residential areas to the south (Fig.3). Due to the airbase's closure at the end of the Cold War, it retains a high concentration of military buildings dating from the First World War to the end of the Cold War.

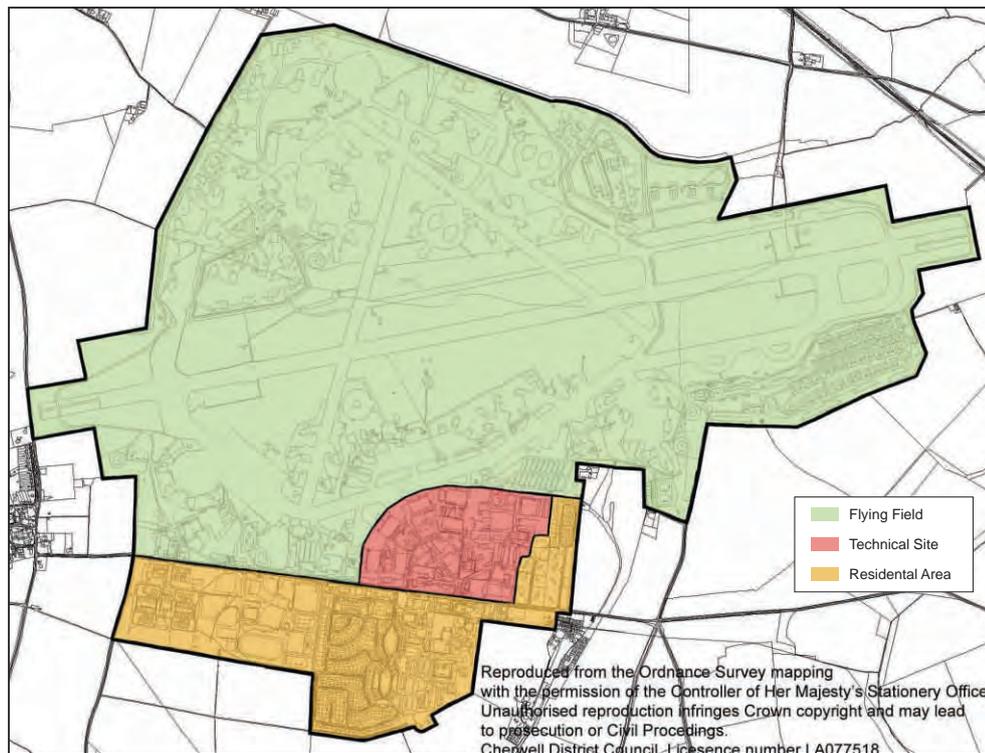


Figure 3 Character areas within the airbase (reproduced from the CDC 2006)

- 2.1.2 In general those buildings dating from the periods of the World Wars are located to the south of the landscape within the Technical and Residential Areas, and those relating to its Cold War history are situated in the vast Flying Field to the north. To facilitate understanding the airbase has been divided into 15 Character Areas, which have been adopted from previous research. Those within the Cold War landscape were taken from the Conservation Plan (ACTA et al 2005), and are divided into 8 Character Areas (1-8), in some cases these were further subdivided into components within this (described for example as OA1D) (see Fig.2).
- 2.1.3 A Landscape Character Assessment of the Airbase South of the Cold War Zone was undertaken in 2006 (ACTA), as this area was not included in the Conservation Plan. This area comprises all the land south of Camp Road, the technical area bounded by the 1920s aircraft sheds in the west and the houses off Soden Road and Larsden Road. The Character Areas identified were numbered 1 to 7 in the report, and these have been renumbered 9 to 15 within this report because of obvious confusions with duplication of numbers from those used within the Flying Field. As with the Cold War Landscape some of the Character Areas were further subdivided into smaller components. These Character Areas are illustrated in Figure 4.
- 2.1.4 The Character Areas are detailed below, the Gazetteer describes the buildings within each character area. The buildings that have been recorded (and thus demolished or proposed for demolition), are all included within Character Areas 9 to 15, with the exception of a small number of structures within Area 8.

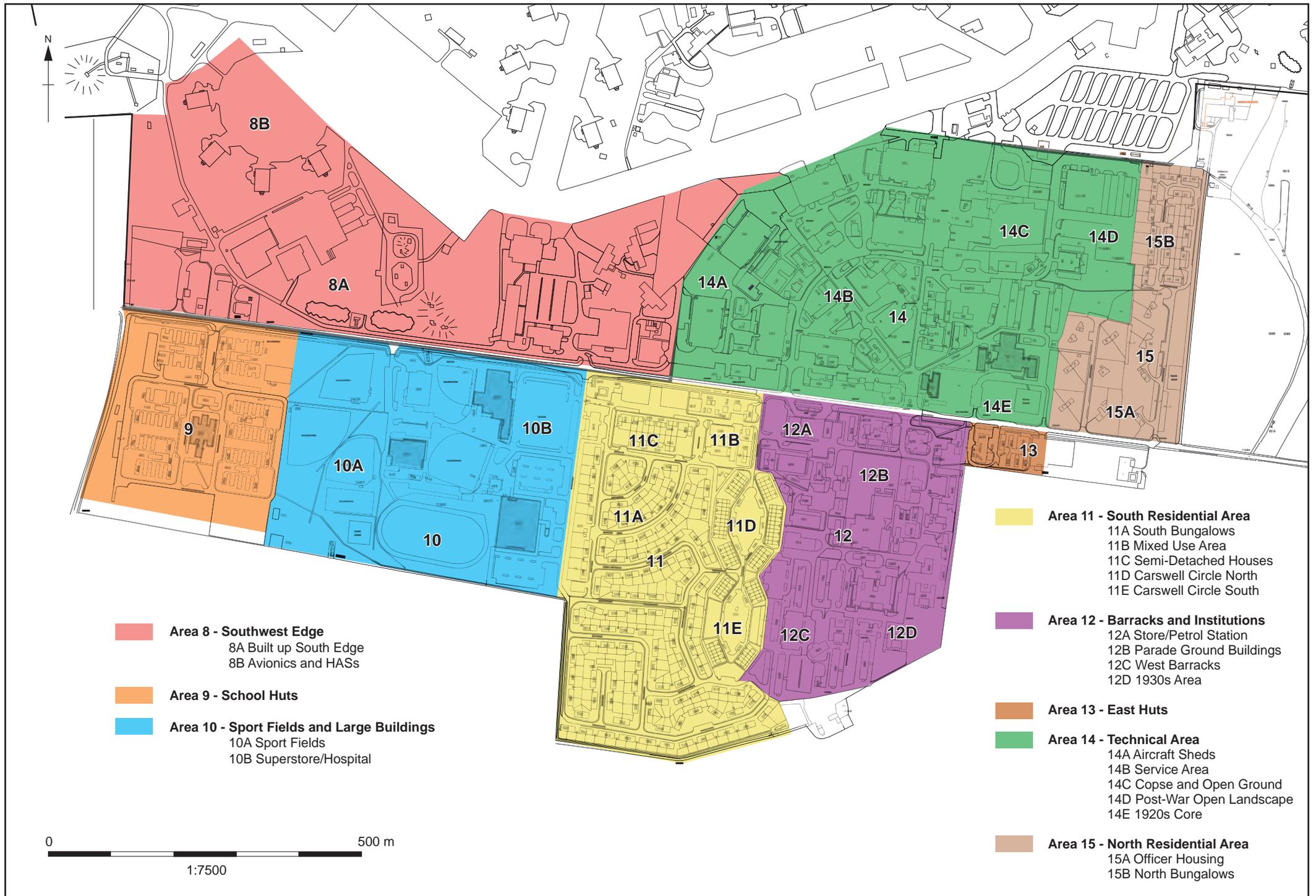


Figure 4 Historic Character Areas within the area to the south of the Flying Field (the area of redevelopment)

OA Number	Description	Number in previous report
<b>COLD WAR LANDSCAPE (ACTA et. al 2005)</b>		
<b>1</b>	Central Airbase	1
<b>1A</b>	Central Runway	1A
<b>1B</b>	Central Plateau	1B
<b>1C</b>	Quick Reaction Alert Area	1C
<b>1D</b>	South Aircraft Shelters	1D
<b>2</b>	Runway West Terminal	2
<b>3</b>	Runway East Terminal	3
<b>4</b>	Southern Conventional Arms Store	4
<b>5</b>	North Edge	5
<b>5A</b>	Northern Bomb Stores	5A
<b>5B</b>	Plateau Edge	5B
<b>5C</b>	North Fringe	5C
<b>5D</b>	Northwest Fringe	5D
<b>6</b>	South-east HASSs	6
<b>7</b>	Tanker Area	7
<b>8</b>	South-west Edge	8
<b>8A</b>	Built up South Edge	8A
<b>8B</b>	Avionics and HASSs	8B
<b>LANDSCAPE SOUTH OF THE COLD WAR ZONE (ACTA 2006)</b>		
<b>9</b>	School Huts	1
<b>10</b>	Sports Fields and Large Buildings	2
<b>10A</b>	Sports Fields	2A
<b>10B</b>	Superstore/ Hospital	10B
<b>11</b>	South Residential Area	3
<b>11A</b>	South Bungalows	3A
<b>11B</b>	Mixed Use Area	3B
<b>11C</b>	Semi-Detached Houses	3C
<b>11D</b>	Carswell Circle North	3D
<b>11E</b>	Carswell Circle South	3E
<b>12</b>	Barracks and Institutions	4
<b>12A</b>	Store/ Petrol Station	4A
<b>12B</b>	Parade Ground Buildings	4B
<b>12C</b>	West Barracks	4C
<b>12D</b>	1930s Area	4D
<b>13</b>	East Huts	5
<b>14</b>	Technical Area	6
<b>14A</b>	Aircraft Sheds	6A
<b>14B</b>	Service Area	6B
<b>14C</b>	Copse and Open Ground	6C
<b>14D</b>	Post-War Open Landscape	6D
<b>14E</b>	1920s Core	14E
<b>15</b>	North Residential Area	15
<b>15A</b>	Officer Housing	15A
<b>15B</b>	North Bungalows	15B

## 2.2 *Significance of former RAF Upper Heyford*

- 2.2.1 The significance of the airbase at former RAF Upper Heyford is recognised in its designation as a Conservation Area, this and the designations within the airbase are illustrated in Figure 2). The Historic England assessment of the site defined the ‘special interest’ of RAF Upper

Heyford, as the structures and layout played an important role during the Cold War airbase particularly during the period of hostilities known as 'Flexible Response' (described in ACTA et. al 2005 and the 'Historical Background' section of this report). English Heritage's assessment concentrated on its Cold War heritage contained within the Flying Field as the most significant period in Upper Heyford's history. A number of structures within the site were Scheduled in December 2006 under Section 1 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act of 1979. The five distinct areas of protection include:

The Quick Reaction Alert area (QRA): this includes the hardened aircraft shelters, security fence, watch tower, fuel supply point and hardened crew buildings (building numbers 3001-3009, 2010, 3104 & 3105) (SAM 30906-01);

The Northern Bomb Store and Special Weapons Area: this is contained within a security fence and includes 'special' and conventional bomb stores (building numbers 1001-1008, 1011, 1032-1048, 1050, 1060, 1870) (SAM 30906-02);

The Avionics Maintenance Facility (building number 299) (SAM 30906-03);

The Hardened Telephone Exchange (building number 129) (SAM 30906-04);

The Battle Command Centre (building number 126)(SAM 30906-05).

Further structures Listed at Grade II by DCMS (April 2008) following recommendations by OA (ACTA et. al 2005) include:

Three Nose Docking Sheds (building numbers 325, 327 & 328 and Listed Building numbers 490616, 490929 & 490931)

Squadron Headquarters (building number 234, and Listed Building number 495960)

The Control Tower (building number 340, and Listed Building number 495959).

### 3 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 *Aims and objectives*

3.1.2 The main aim of the project was to record for posterity the historic structures prior to their removal in the redevelopment of the site. The work particularly concentrated on the structures' construction, development, alteration and use.

#### 3.3 *Methodology*

3.2.1 The levels of recording as set in the WSI (2012):

Those structures defined as being of medium significance are recorded at Level 3 (as defined by Historic England).

Those structures defined as being of low significance are recorded at Level 2.

Those structures defined as being of very low significance are recorded at Level 1.

3.2.2 The level of recording is as set out in English Heritage guidance (2006), which states that:

3.2.3 *Level 1 is essentially a basic visual record supplemented by the minimum of information needed to identify the building's location, age and type. This is the simplest record, not normally an end in itself but contributing to a wider aim.... Level 1 surveys will generally be of exteriors only, although they may include superficial interior inspection for significant features. Only if circumstances and objectives allow will any drawings be produced, and these are likely to take the form of sketches.*

3.2.4 *Level 2 is a descriptive record, made in circumstances similar to those of Level 1 but when more information is needed. It may be made of a building which is judged not to require any fuller record or it may serve to gather data for a wider project. Both the exterior and interior will be viewed, described and photographed. A plan and sometimes other drawings may be made but the drawn record will normally not be comprehensive.*

3.2.5 *Level 3 is an analytical record, and will comprise an introductory description followed by a systematic account of the buildings origins development and use.... It will also include all drawn and photographic records that may be required to illustrate the building's appearance and structure and to support an historical analysis'. A level 3 record would include a plan of the building and other drawings such as elevations, sections, detail drawings, 3-dimensional projections when they would be of use in interpreting the building.*

#### 3.2.6 **Site recording**

3.2.7 The site recording consists of three main elements: a drawn record, a descriptive, written record and a photographic record (detailed further below). Particular attention is paid to evidence of the former uses of the buildings and their operations. Any evidence relating to the primary or historic use is recorded and interpreted to inform the overall understanding of the site.

#### 3.2.8 **Photographic Record**

3.2.9 The photographic record is intended to act as a general record of the historic buildings in their final state, prior to the development. It will generally include both general shots (exterior and interior) of accessible areas as well as detail shots of items/ features of archaeological detail. It will consist of 35mm monochrome (black and white) film to produce an archive-stable photographic record and digital photography with an 8 megapixel camera. Digital images will be stored on CD and in an appropriate format to conform to the requirements of the archiving authority. Photographs in archives deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service are generally of jpeg format.

<b>Indication of levels of photographic coverage</b>	
<b>Level 1</b>	General views of all accessible external areas General views of particularly significant internal areas (where accessible and appropriate). Sometimes the photographic record of Level 1 buildings may be relatively extensive (eg large structures such as the hospital).
<b>Level 2</b>	General views of all accessible external areas General views of particularly significant internal areas Close-up images of particularly significant and easily accessible features or details which demonstrate important elements of the building's history, structure or use.
<b>Level 3</b>	General views of the exterior of the building; The overall appearance of the principal rooms / areas; Detailed coverage of the building's external appearance Any detail, structural or decorative, which is relevant to the building's design, development and use and which does not show adequately on general photographs These may include blocked doors/ windows, changes in construction, evidence of machinery, hoists, trap doors etc. Views showing the building's relationship to it's setting, to other buildings or to a significant viewpoint.

3.2.10 All photographic records will be accompanied by a photographic register. Each film will have a unique film number, related to an agreed site code (agreed with Oxfordshire Museums Service).

3.2.11 A photographic scale will be used in images of features or artefacts. It is anticipated that a flash will be required for most of the internal photographs.

### **3.2.12 Drawn Record**

3.2.13 The drawn record comprises the preparation of an appropriate number of scaled drawings to explain, describe and interpret each structure. The number and type of drawings produced depends on the level of recording specified for each building (Levels 1, 2 or 3), their intrinsic significance and the most appropriate drawing for detailing that significance.

3.2.14 Wherever possible the drawn record has utilised the existing plans and other drawings held on site in the Upper Heyford archives. These drawings were scanned, printed and when appropriate taken to site to allow descriptive and interpretative annotation to be added. This annotation helps to explain and record the buildings in terms of their construction, development, history and use. Phasing and archaeological detail (eg location of blocked doors/ windows, changes in construction, evidence of former walls etc) were added to the drawings.

3.2.15 Additional survey work was undertaken with a combination of digital metric survey (REDM, rectified photography, GPS etc), and traditional hand-drawn survey techniques as appropriate. In addition in some instances the outline footprint of a building was taken from a historic plan and enhanced through the addition of the internal layout. Other significant details in buildings to be recorded at Level 3 were drawn at appropriate scales (1:1-1:10) and annotated to show materials.

3.2.16 The drawn record also includes an overall site plan showing the buildings covered by the current recording and numbered.

3.2.17 The exact type of drawings produced for each building depends on the level of recording required and the particular significance of each structure. For example in one building there may be an elevation which is of particular importance and where detailed recording would be of value, while in another building the elevations may be entirely featureless and where detailed recording would not be of value.

3.2.18 The following table lists the type of drawings required at each level.

<b>Indication of requirements of different levels of drawn record</b>	
<b>Level 1</b>	Outline footprint of building, principally intended to show its location within the Upper Heyford complex. This will not generally show the internal layout of the building although when there is an existing plan in the Upper Heyford archives then this will be collected and will form part of the record of the Level 1 structures.

<b>Level 2</b>	Floor plan showing internal layout
<b>Level 3</b>	Full floor plans Significant elevations (internal and/or external) Other significant details

**3.2.19 Written Record**

- 3.2.20 The written record is intended to supplement and support the other two elements of the recording and to provide additional descriptive analysis of the buildings, in terms of their architecture, setting construction, development and use.
- 3.2.21 It provides a detailed description of the buildings in terms of its function, history, phasing, relationship with other parts of the complex, evolution, significance, structure, construction and condition.
- 3.2.22 With such a large complex as Upper Heyford it is essential that the existing numbering system is continued in the current recording. All records will show the building number and the area in which the building is located.

<b>Indication of requirements of different levels of written record</b>	
<b>Level 1</b>	Building number and area in which the building is located (consistent with previous reports) Outline description of exterior in terms of function, construction, materials, size and approximate age General location in overall complex Outline description of principal internal rooms or areas
<b>Level 2</b>	Building number and area in which the building is located (consistent with the Conservation Plan and EIA) Detailed description of exterior Detailed description of all accessible internal rooms/areas Description of important features/plant/fixtures within building Outline analysis of function of building, growth of building
<b>Level 3</b>	Building number and area in which the building is located (consistent with the Conservation Plan and EIA) Site details Detailed description of interior and exterior in terms of function, history, phasing, relationship with other parts of the complex, evolution, significance, structure and construction An account of the buildings' development (with evidence) An account of the buildings' past uses, and the uses of its parts, with evidence. An account of any fixtures, fittings plant or machinery associated with the building or its parts evidence for demolished structures or plant copies of other records of the building or a note of their existence and location

- 3.2.23 An important element of the written survey was the preparation of a proforma sheet for every building to be recorded.

**3.2.24 Historical Research**

- 3.2.25 A programme of historical research was undertaken to add to the overall understanding of the history and development of the site and the significance of structures. This research is partly based on the historical data on the site which OA has gathered in previous investigations, but also includes analysis of plans and drawings held at the Upper Heyford archives.
- 3.2.26 Archives
- 3.2.27 At the National Archives in Kew, several folders were identified which hold information about the airbase at Upper Heyford. Of particular importance was a Unit diary dating from 1941-47, in which were found historic photographs of the airbase (AIR29/657). Early plans of the site were also identified within file AIR2.319 and file DEFE71.301.

- 3.2.28 At the Historic England archives photographs of the Property Services Agency (PSA) are held, which include numerous images of the site under construction in the 1970s. These cover the entire airbase, and usefully include the area to the south of the Flying Field which has been the subject of redevelopment. Several of these images have been included within this report. At the Historic England archives a photographic search also identified aerial images of the airbase, those found to be most significant and used within the dating of buildings within this report date from 1937, 1942 and 1947.
- 3.2.29 Historical research at the RAF Museum at Hendon identified several early plans of the site, which have been useful in determining the date of structures to the south of the airbase. Plans were also identified of several structures, some of these were structures specifically identified as being at Upper Heyford. Other buildings were also identified on building types which were the same as those proposed for demolition, for example plans were identified of the Institute (488) and MT sheds (115 and 117) which were both constructed to a standard numbered building design. .
- 3.2.30 At Upper Heyford a plan room contains a vast quantity of building plans of individual structures within the airbase, as well as site plans. These plans are to some extent organised by building number within plan chests, but there is a vast quantity of uncatalogued building plans within rolls within the room. A search was completed within the plan chest of all building which are recorded within this project. Within each gazetteer entry, a section on 'Archive' details whether a building plan was identified, if this section is not included it is because no building plan was identified. It may however be the case that building plans survive within the large quantity of uncatalogued drawings. Site plans were also identified of Upper Heyford, although few from the Cold War period.
- 3.2.31 The Oxfordshire History Centre and the Historic Environment Record (HER) were both accessed for information. These searches produced some aerial photography of the airbase, and documentary information relating to the history of the airbase.
- 3.2.32 Websites
- 3.2.33 Websites were also a useful source of information in identifying information about former RAF Upper Heyford, in particular the RAF Upper Heyford Memorial website includes useful aerial images of the site. The Airfield Information Exchange website provided useful historical background information, particularly of the early history of the airfield.
- 3.2.34 Secondary Sources
- 3.2.35 Secondary sources were used to enhance understanding the history of the airfield and the types of building constructed during its history, particularly from the Inter-war period. Of particular value are Paul Francis's book on 'Military Airfield Architecture' (1996) and Graham Buchan Innes's book on 'British Airfield Buildings: Vol.2' (2000). Paul Francis's unpublished report on RAF Upper Heyford (1996) also provided valuable information particular on the early history of Upper Heyford.
- 3.2.36 Reporting and archiving**
- 3.2.37 This report is the result of the site recording completed at former RAF Upper Heyford between 2012 and 2014. In addition to this introduction, methodology and background to the project, the report contains a section explaining the historic background to the airfield. It places the buildings within their historic context to enhance understanding of the airbase. The main body of this report is contained within the Gazetteer, which describes through written descriptions, photographs and plans each building which has been recorded as part of this project.
- 3.2.38 The archive will be compiled in accordance with the standards contained in MAP2 (HE) and with the receiving museums guidance (Oxfordshire County Museums Service). It will include all records collected and produced during the works (photographs, negatives, notes, drawings, report). All archive storage material will comply with the requirements of the UKIC. The archive will be indexed and internally consistent.

### 3.2.39 Results of Recording

- 3.2.40 This project has created a body of information about the history of former RAF Upper Heyford, and the structures within the former airbase. This work has been generated by the demolition/proposed demolition of 145 structures predominantly within the residential and technical areas of former RAF Upper Heyford. Many of these structures, particularly those of more historical significance, date from the Inter-war period, and this research has provided an opportunity to provide a more in-depth understanding both of the history of the airbase during this period but also the archaeology of those structures which are recorded within the gazetteer of this report. The extent of demolition, particularly with the Barrack Area to the south of Camp Road, has resulted in the loss of large areas of the former airbase. This work has therefore provided an opportunity to preserve these structures and their surrounds by record.
- 3.2.41 There has not previously been an in-depth study of the airbase, previous assessments have provided an overview of the history and significance of the airbase only, or the impact of proposed development (for example Conservation Plans and EIAs). These have predominantly concentrated on assessing the landscape as a whole and determining the significance of areas and key structures within it. This report has provided a detailed understanding of the archaeology of the buildings within the landscape which are proposed for demolition, their functions and inter-relationships and the chronology of the expansion of the airbase.
- 3.2.42 This project has also provided an opportunity to undertake desk-based research into the historical development of the former RAF Upper Heyford, particularly relating to the airbase's early development. Major archives such as the National Archives, Historic England Archives and the archives at the RAF Museum at Hendon have been visited in addition to local archives in Oxford. This information, particularly APs and historic plans, has provided valuable information confirming the construction date of structures and the development of the airbase in response to changing military threats.

## 4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1.1 OA have previously undertaken programmes of research to enhance understanding of former RAF Upper Heyford, and the historical background below is based partly on this previous research.

### 4.1.2 The pre-militarised landscape

4.1.3 Early maps of the Flying Field show that the fields that lie within it were mostly arable, much of the land was owned by the Wardens and Scholars of New College and some by the Earl of Jersey. Camp Road is not in existence during the post-medieval period, although a road extends from Upper Heyford village to Middleton Stoney, to the south of what would become Camp Road. The 1833 map (Fig. 5) does not show details such as field boundaries but does show the structure of the landscape, and illustrates the formalised pattern of the roads seen today outside the airbase. It also shows the landscape where Aves Ditch runs through the later airfield, and the point where the plateau on which the majority of the airfield is located, drops into the valley below. The 1842 Enclosure map of Upper Heyford parish shows the enclosure of the landscape, whereby the unenclosed lands were enclosed into small private landholdings, thus formalising the structure of the landscape and roads. The formalisation and enclosure of the landscape included the addition of Camp Road, which would later provide the major access for the airbase, with the Flying Field and Technical Area to the north and Residential Area to the south.

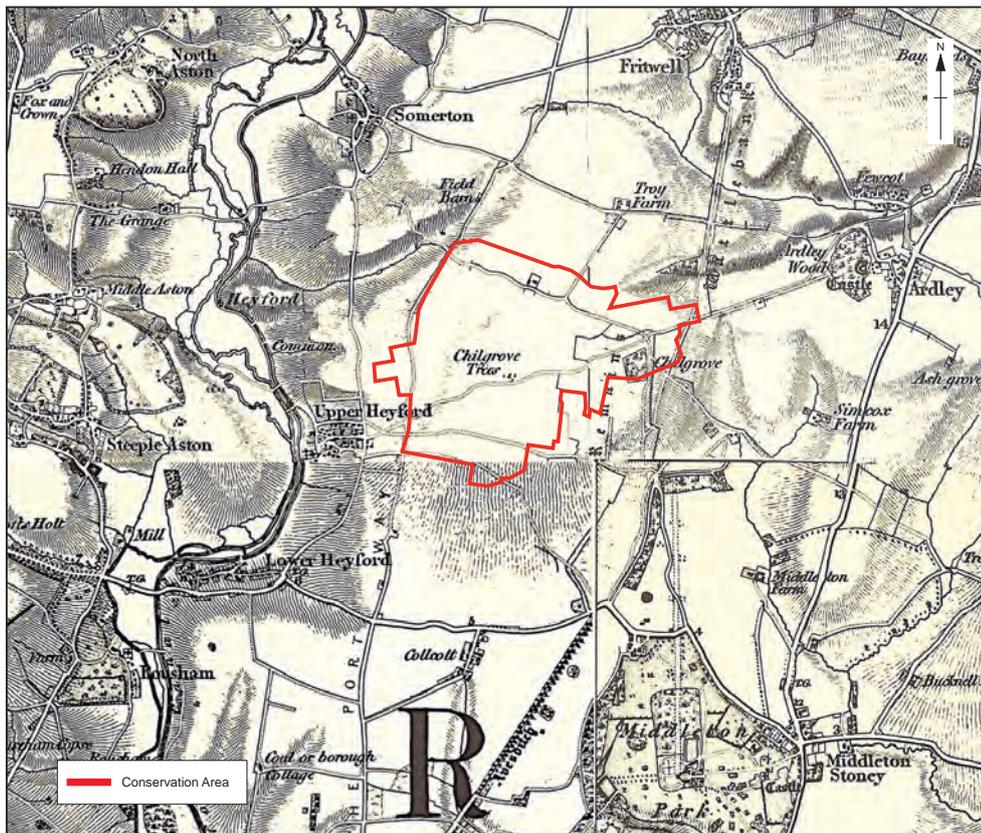


Figure 5 1st Edition 1 inch map of 1833, with approximate location of airfield

### 4.1.4 World War I (1914-1918)

4.1.5 The military occupation of the land at Upper Heyford dates from 1916 when it came briefly into use for the Royal Flying Corps, when Canadian engineers laid out a field with six hangars and a tarmac hangar apron. This apron may also have served as part of the runway, making Upper Heyford the first airfield in Britain to be so equipped. The airfield opened in 1918 as Number Three Mobilisation Station with 122, 157 and 158 Squadrons and the Canadian Royal





Air Force were also established at Upper Heyford. The aerodrome covered 267 acres, of which 46 acres were taken up by station buildings. The type, layout and quantity of buildings were typical of Training Depot Stations built at this time, but the actual position of technical and domestic accommodation was unique to Upper Heyford (ACTA 2006).

4.1.6 The war ended before the Squadrons became active, and the airfield was not kept on the permanent list of RAF stations. By the end of the 1920s the site was deconstructed as roads were broken up, underground services removed and all buildings were demolished with the exception of ‘one small hut’ (Dobinson 2000). The 3rd edition Ordnance Survey map of 1923 shows no evidence of the airfield. The land was returned to New College Oxford in 1919 at the end of the war, and not re-purchased by the President of the Air-Council until 1924 (ACTA et. al 2005).

#### 4.1.7 The Trenchard Years (1924-1930)

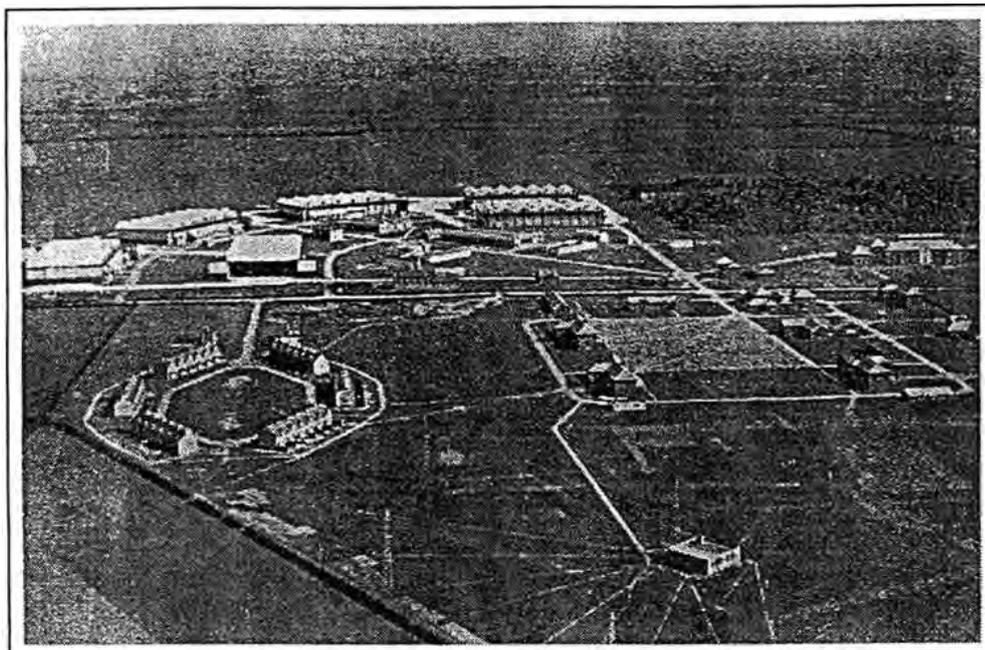
4.1.8 From 1923 Sir Hugh Trenchard, the Chief of Air Staff between 1919 and 1930, concentrated on the construction of offensive bomber bases, primarily located in East Anglia and across Oxfordshire/ Gloucestershire, with a fighter ring protecting London. To achieve this some sites needed to be re-purchased and modernised to be made fit-for-purpose. Upper Heyford (with nearby Weston-on-the-green) were the first to be identified by the Aerodrome Board, and at Upper Heyford he began building his ‘Class A airfield’. The initial concept was the a technical site comprising workshops and the latest design in aircraft hangars, the ‘A’ type, married quarters were also introduced (Clarke 2008).

4.1.9 In 1923 the 52-Squadron scheme for the site was the first within the Gloucestershire/ Oxfordshire group of airfields to get Treasury approval. The land was therefore repurchased in 1924 and funds allocated to build a permanent bomber station. The land purchased extended beyond the World War I site to include land south of Camp Road, and at this time an aerodrome was designed for three squadrons of twelve aircraft with an additional 50% reserves. During this period Sir Hugh Trenchard, heavily influenced the strategic selection of bases, and to some extent their layout. This influence is clearly reflected in the plan at RAF Upper Heyford, and was the model on which airfields of its type were based in the period 1925-1934. The radial road pattern of the Trenchard layout has survived despite later infill, and provides clear structure to the landscape north of Camp Road.

4.1.10 The design layout of the airbase was influenced by dispersal, to avoid large numbers of aircraft, equipment and men being hit by a single bombing run. However, tests showed that the buildings needed to be 400 yds apart to ensure that no more than one was destroyed by a single bomb. This however proved to be impractical. Therefore, like at RAF Bicester, there was only a modest separation, although the layout was more dispersed than in World War I. A new range of single and two-storey permanent technical buildings were constructed including some building types which had not been seen before. New typologies of domestic buildings were also constructed at Upper Heyford such as the Barrack Blocks and Married Quarters.

4.1.11 Files within the National Archives at Kew contain various plans of the proposed airfield at Upper Heyford. File AIR2/319 shows three proposed drawings of the airfield from 1924 which show the various structural components of the airfield in varying arrangements. The earliest military plan of the airbase dates from 1926 (Fig. 6), and shows the site dissected by Camp Road running east/ west across the site with the Trident (technical) area to the north and the barrack area to the south of Camp Road. An image from c 1928 provides a useful oblique image of the airbase (Fig. 7). Today many of the structures which remain extant within the airfield identified from the 1920s plan retain their earlier appearance, although in some examples the space between the structures have been infilled in the 1970/80s, particularly within the Parade Ground.

4.1.12 Within the technical area the A-Frame hangars (172, 151,315, 320, 345, 350) form the north-west boundary of the site with the Flying Field. The hangars, which survive in good condition and are a key landscape feature, are situated at the west edge of the technical area and include four sheds set on arc with two sheds further into the site. A small shed survives from 1925 immediately to the south of hangar 350, and is recorded within this document. Within this arc of buildings is the Armoury and Lecture Room (125) which remains extant, and was originally



*Figure 7 RAF Upper Heyford c.1928*

built as a three Squadron (bomber) Station Armoury. It was constructed in two phases, the north part in 1925-6 and the south part at a right angle to it forming a T-shaped building in 1937/8. Consideration was given to the architecture of the secondary phase and this matches the original in brick colour, window sashes and roof line. Building 123 at RAF Bicester is of identical phasing.

- 4.1.13 At the entrance to the Trident area a group of inter-war buildings create a core inter-war landscape, these include the Guard House (100) and Offices and Operations Block (52) which provide an impressive entrance to the former airbase. To the east of these is the large Officers Mess and Quarters (74), which now form part of the Free School located on the former airbase. At the centre of the Trident Area the site for the M.T sheds is identified on a 1926 plan of the airbase (115-117), and the Lubricant Store (146), Inflammable Store (145) and a Store (130) are also identified. These buildings (115-7, 146, 145, 130) form part of the report, and will be demolished to facilitate the development at Upper Heyford. The Reservoir and Water Tower (107 and 108) will also be demolished, which are located on the edge of Camp Road, to the west of the main entrance. The Power House (103) which is located directly to the south of these structures and shown on the 1926 plan of the airbase remains extant.
- 4.1.14 To the south of Camp Road the barrack area is formed around a rectangular Parade Ground, to the south of which the 1926 plan shows recreational facilities including two pitches. At the north edge of this and facing Camp Road is the barrack blocks for Airmen and Pilots (459), which dates from 1925 and has now been demolished but are recorded within this report. The Sergeants Mess (457) and Institute (455) also date from 1925 and are situated directly to the east of building 459 and remain extant. To the south of this and at the east edge of the Parade Ground, is the Dining Room and Cook house (474) which dates from 1925 and is recorded within this report.
- 4.1.15 The remaining inter-war structures around the former Parade Ground later became C-Type barrack blocks (440, 450, 466, 471, 480, 483). Building 440, directly to the east of the Dining Room and Cookhouse, was a Sick Quarters, which was rebuilt in the 1970/80s on a similar footprint. The remaining barrack blocks identified as 'C' type surrounding the Parade Ground were heavily altered in the 1970/80s, and evidence of their early construction is not readily identifiable. The structures are also recorded within this report. At the east edge of the Parade Ground is the Ration Store and Shops (475) which dates from 1925, and has also been demolished and is recorded within this report. Situated to the west is the distinctive married accommodation of Carswell Circle North, which are reminiscent of the garden city style (535-540)

and remain extant. The houses are set around a central green with canopies over the doors and mouldings around the windows.

- 4.1.16 Following the construction programme at Upper Heyford, the airfield became operational in 1927 when Oxford University Air Squadron used it to gain flying experience, and in 1928 the RAF were again reinstated. Between 1931 and 1942 the airbase at Upper Heyford regularly housed at least three bomber squadrons.

#### **4.1.17 The RAF Expansion Period (1934-9)**

- 4.1.18 The RAF Expansion Period refers to the era of German re-armament, resulting in the expansion and reorganisation of the RAF, until the outbreak of war. This led to large-scale rebuilding of Britain's airfields, when from 1934 the RAF were authorised to increase its number of airfields from fifty-two to one hundred and thirty eight. These new airfields (and indeed the existing ones brought up to the same standard), used buildings of brick to a standard design so the stations appeared similar. Consideration was given to architectural detailing with designs approved by the Royal Fine Arts commission and the Society for the Preservation of Rural England. The leading architects of the time such as Lutyens and Archibald were employed to design and plan the buildings.

- 4.1.19 On the airfield side the buildings included the control tower and hangars, petrol tanker sheds, fire tender sheds and the night flying equipment store. The technical and instructional site buildings included parachute stores, workshops, lubricants and inflammables stores, main stores, link trainers building and an armoury. Motor transport was an increasingly important part of the RAF's equipment; as a result the provision of mechanical transport yards and sheds (MT Sheds) was a requirement at the expansion period airfields (Airfield Information Exchange website).

- 4.1.20 Within the non-technical site were the administration, communal and living buildings which include the station headquarters, dining rooms, messes, institutes and the combined dining. Squash courts, gymnasiums and grocery shops served the physical needs of the personnel whilst the Chapels and Chancels saw to spiritual needs. Barrack blocks again came in various forms and drawing numbers, examples of two-storey 'H' blocks were common, and are evident at Upper Heyford (489, 498 and 500).

- 4.1.21 At Upper Heyford plans of the airbase from the 1930s show relatively little change to the landscape from the 1926 plan described above (Fig. 8). A new phase of construction took place towards the end of decade, in the lead up to the Second World War. These new additions to the landscape reflect a more considered design, and are evident on an AP from 28th July 1942 and plans from the 1940s (Fig. 9). To the south of Camp Road significant structures of this period include the Dining Room and Institute (488) and the Barrack Blocks Type H (489, 498 and 500). The Dining Room and Institute occupied a central position overlooking countryside, with the surrounding H blocks carefully positioned to not interfere with the open aspect of the building. The construction of these buildings necessitated the need for a Central Heating Station (467), which fed the wall mounted radiators within these buildings. This group of buildings are recorded within this report.

- 4.1.22 A further group of buildings surrounding the former Parade Ground dating from the RAF Expansion period include a B-type Barrack Block (485), dating from 1937, which is recorded in this report. Internally, the building has several pieces of war art undertaken by the USAF in the 1980s and 1990s which are recorded in a separate report on war art (OA forthcoming). To the west of building 485 is the 'Field Force Motor Transport Shed' (529), which also dates from the RAF expansion era, although this was significantly remodelled in the USAF period. The Decontamination Centre (465) which dates from c.1935, is situated to the north of building 529, and was designed to deal with personnel who became gas casualties. These buildings are recorded within this report.

- 4.1.23 Several, some less substantial, buildings were also constructed on site including a store (491) located to the rear of the Institute (488) within the barrack area. To the north of Camp Road, within the technical area are several structures thought to date from c. 1939 which include:

the Firing Range (89), the Link Trainer building (118), Garage and Store (119), Works Service Building (59) and the Petrol Tanker Sheds (171).

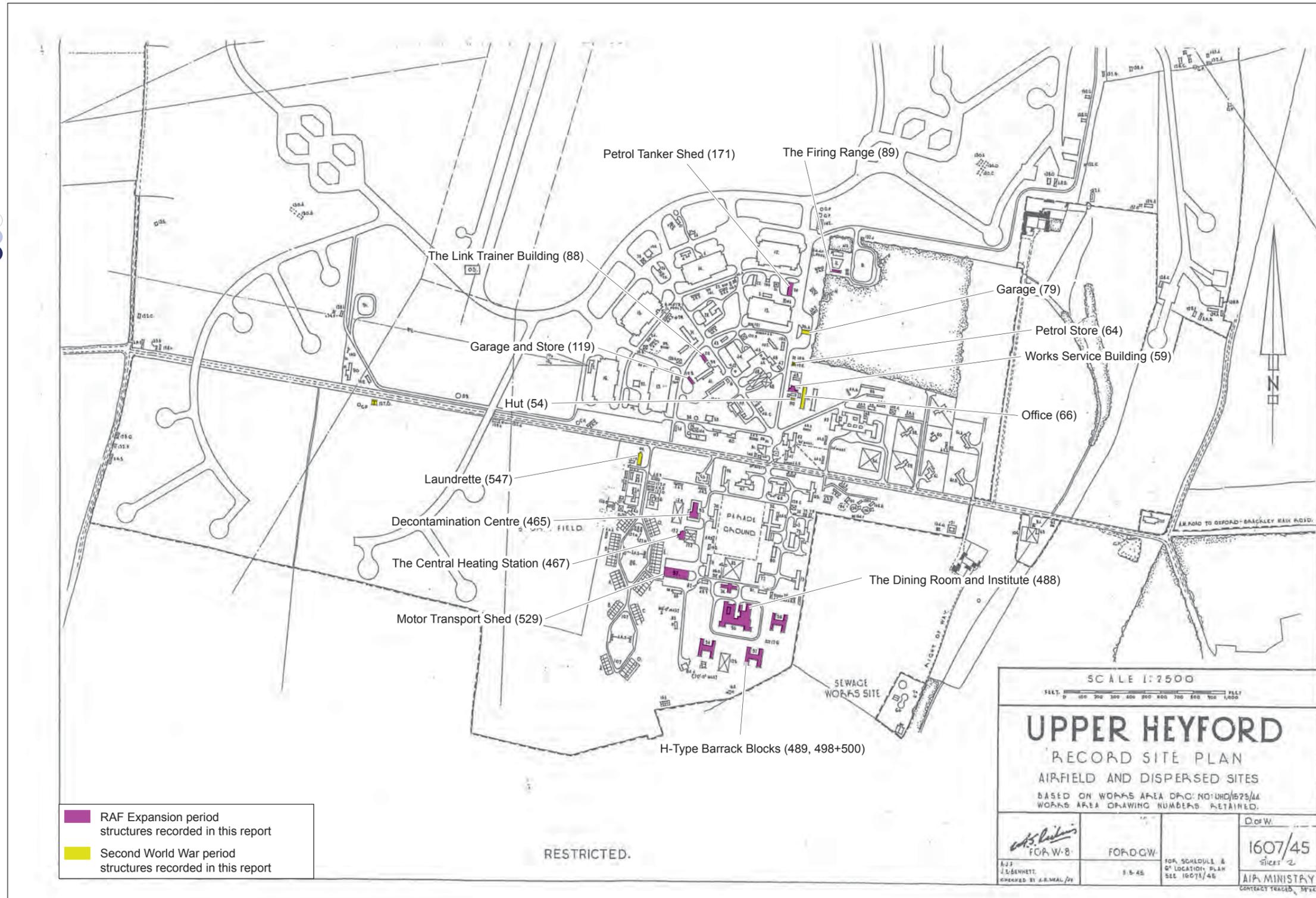
- 4.1.24 RAF Upper Heyford played an important role in preparing Britain's air force for the Second World War, perhaps the most significant contribution was the use of one of its aircraft as a test target for the Daventry BBC transmitter, in researching the use of radio waves in detecting enemy aircraft. The increasing threat from Germany led to the formation of six new squadrons, and during the first six months before the outbreak of the war, it was primarily engaged in crew training.



*Figure 8 Aerial photograph (1937)*

#### **4.1.25 The Second World War (1939-1945)**

- 4.1.26 The outbreak of the war in 1939 led to a change in the role of the airbase, as operational Squadrons were put on a war footing and training became paramount. The base also continued to be involved in the development of military radio and radar technology, and nationals from all Commonwealth and allied nations passed through training courses there. The 16 Operational Unit was the station's principal resident unit for the majority of the war and the unit took part in the first Thousand Bomber raid in Cologne, the second 'Millennium' raid to Essen, the third



NOT TO SCALE

Figure 9: Upper Heyford Recorded Site Plan (1945), annotated to show key buildings recorded within this report



Thousand Bomber raid on Bremen and the ‘Main Force’ raids against Hamburg and Düsseldorf. During this period there was limited construction within the airbase.

- 4.1.27 The most substantial wartime alteration at Upper Heyford was within the Flying Field. The period 1945-50 was the time of the Marshall Plan, the hardening of attitudes between the Eastern and Western Blocs, culminating in the Berlin Airlift and the Korean War, and the emergence of China as a significant communist power. At this time RAF Upper Heyford was relatively quiet and largely remained as a training unit. Figure 9 shows key structures from the period of the Second World War which are recorded within this report. The 1954 AP (Fig. 10) shows some additions with the barrack area including the construction of the Mess Complex (472A and 472B) between 1942 and 1947, and of the same date the huts to the east of the barrack area, at the southern edge of Camp Road. The School Huts at the west edge of former RAF Upper Heyford are also evident in the 1954 AP.
- 4.1.28 Within the development area a small number of wartime buildings have been demolished and are recorded within this report, including the Laundrette (547) which is situated on the southern side of Camp Road and was formerly a Grocery Store, as well as a waste disposal pit (590). Further buildings to the north of Camp Road include a single storey hut (54), a petrol store (64), a garage (79), an office (66). These structures, dating from the Second World War, are generally recorded at Level 2 within this report.
- 4.1.29 Mutually Assured Destruction (1950-1963)**
- 4.1.30 The period 1950-1963 was the time of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), and in 1950 the British Government approved the formation of permanent United States Air Force (USAF) bases in Britain. In June 1950 work began at former RAF Upper Heyford to remodel the airfield extensively, and it became one of Strategic Air Command’s (SAC) ‘principal bases in Britain’ (MPP 2001). In all approximately one hundred and seventy new buildings were erected at this time, as well as runways, spectacles, aprons and hardstanding. The main buildings of historic significance dating from this period are located within the Flying Field, and although some construction also took place to the south of the Flying Field, these buildings are of less archaeological and historical interest.
- 4.1.31 To the south of Camp Road, the USAF occupation of the airbase saw the beginnings of expansion of the residential areas and the development of ‘Little America’. These properties are retained within the current redevelopment of the site, with the exception of one bungalow (712) which is recorded within this report. At the west end of Camp Road a group of huts which were later used as a school are evident on the 1954 AP (see Fig.10). Generally other buildings from this period which have been demolished are of lesser significance including a water tank (454), hut (468) and electricity sub-station (476). At the east and west edge of former RAF Upper Heyford, situated on the southern edge of Camp Road, the complex of huts (400-410 to the east and 804-810 to the west), have been demolished and are recorded within this report.
- 4.1.32 To the north of Camp Road several administration and technical buildings were added to the military landscape, which include the 20th Fighter Group Operations building (300a-300e), Commissionary (32-35) and an adjacent generator and fuel tank (301 and 301a). Further buildings in this area include the Pavilion (313), Workshop (317) and adjacent chimney/ canopy (317a) and fuel tanks (346), an office (53), a Works Squadron (56). The buildings are generally minor structures which are to be demolished and recorded at Level 1 within this report.
- 4.1.33 Sustained Deterrence USAFE 1965-1979**
- 4.1.34 The later 1960s was the beginning of the period of détente culminating in President Nixon’s visits to Beijing and Moscow, which continued through the 1970s and saw the hardening of NATO and the Warsaw Pact frontline bases.
- 4.1.35 In March 1965 the USAF stopped regular SAC rotations in England, and RAF Upper Heyford was transferred to the United States Airforce Europe (USAFE). In 1966 France withdrew from NATO, and all US aircraft on French bases were redeployed, thus the 66th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing of the 4th Allied Tactical Force was moved to the airbase. In this phase the airbase continued to be used as a forward base by SAC, and with the use of B52 bombers

the runway was widened. In the late 1960s and early 1970s new buildings were erected within the residential and technical area to the south, and the Cold War landscape to the north.

- 4.1.36 The next phase of operation in the 1970s was of ‘Sustained Deterrence’, which saw a major episode of building, in order to house the three Squadrons of 20th Tactical Fighter Wing. These changes and the subsequent hardening of buildings created the ‘Landscape of Flexible Response’ within the Flying Field (described and illustrated in OA 2005), and the base became operational in the 1970s with the arrival of 20th Tactical Fighter Wing’s three squadrons (55th, 77th & 79th). These were equipped with F111 ‘Aardvark’, and by July 1971 RAF Upper Heyford could claim to be the largest fighter base in Europe.
- 4.1.37 The USAF occupation saw to the south of Camp Road the expansion of ‘Little America’, particularly the construction of bungalows employing a standard design and materials (evident on the 1969 AP, Fig. 11). This period saw the extension of buildings to serve the welfare needs of the occupants at Upper Heyford such as the large supermarket (581), Sports Area (OA10) including the American baseball pitches. Within the Barrack Area to the south of Camp Road, large barrack blocks were constructed to house the American servicemen (445, 446, 593, 594, 596, 598), in addition to the Thrift Shop (481). These barrack blocks contain numerous examples of war art completed by the servicemen which is separately recorded in the war art report (OA forthcoming).
- 4.1.38 Within the Flying Field, as a result of the vulnerability of these aircraft, Hardened Aircraft Shelters (HAS) were provided between 1977 and 1980. Within the Technical Area to the south of the Flying Field, the Hardened Telephone Exchange (129) and Battle Command Centre (126) were constructed and are now designated as Scheduled Monuments.

#### **4.1.39 The Second Cold War 1980-1993**

- 4.1.40 The 20th Tactical Fighter Wing’s role changed in 1984 with improved Warsaw Pact defences, and the F111s were replaced in the UK by the introduction of mobile Ground Launched Cruise Missiles. In 1987 a Treaty led to the dismantling of medium and short-range nuclear missiles, and by this date the 42nd Squadron joined Upper Heyford. Several of the Squadron took part in the suppression of Libyan air defences in 1986. From the 1980s the threat from the Soviet Union declined, although F111s from Upper Heyford were involved in the First Gulf War (1991) and the Kurdish Relief (1992), as well as operations during the Bosnian Conflict. Strategic arms treaties of 1991 and 1993 led to the end of the Cold War. In 1993 the F111s left Upper Heyford, and the base was handed back to the MoD in 1994.
- 4.1.41 This phase of operation is reflected in further construction within the Flying Field largely to serve the 42nd Squadron (Fig. 12). Structures considered to be of national significance within the Flying Field, include a group of 6 HASs (building no. 3052–55 and 3058) and a Squadron Headquarters (383). Within the settlement area construction also took place to serve the American servicemen and their families including the large hospital (582), ‘Shopette’ (492) and Petrol Station (493). The Technical Area to the north of Camp Road saw the addition of new structures including a Vehicle Maintenance structure (88), Auto Hobby Workshop (86) and Workshops (62/69). These structures are general of less significance and recorded within the Gazetteer of this report.



NOT TO SCALE

Figure 10: Aerial photograph (1954), annotated to show key structures recorded in this report





Figure 11: Aerial photograph (1969)



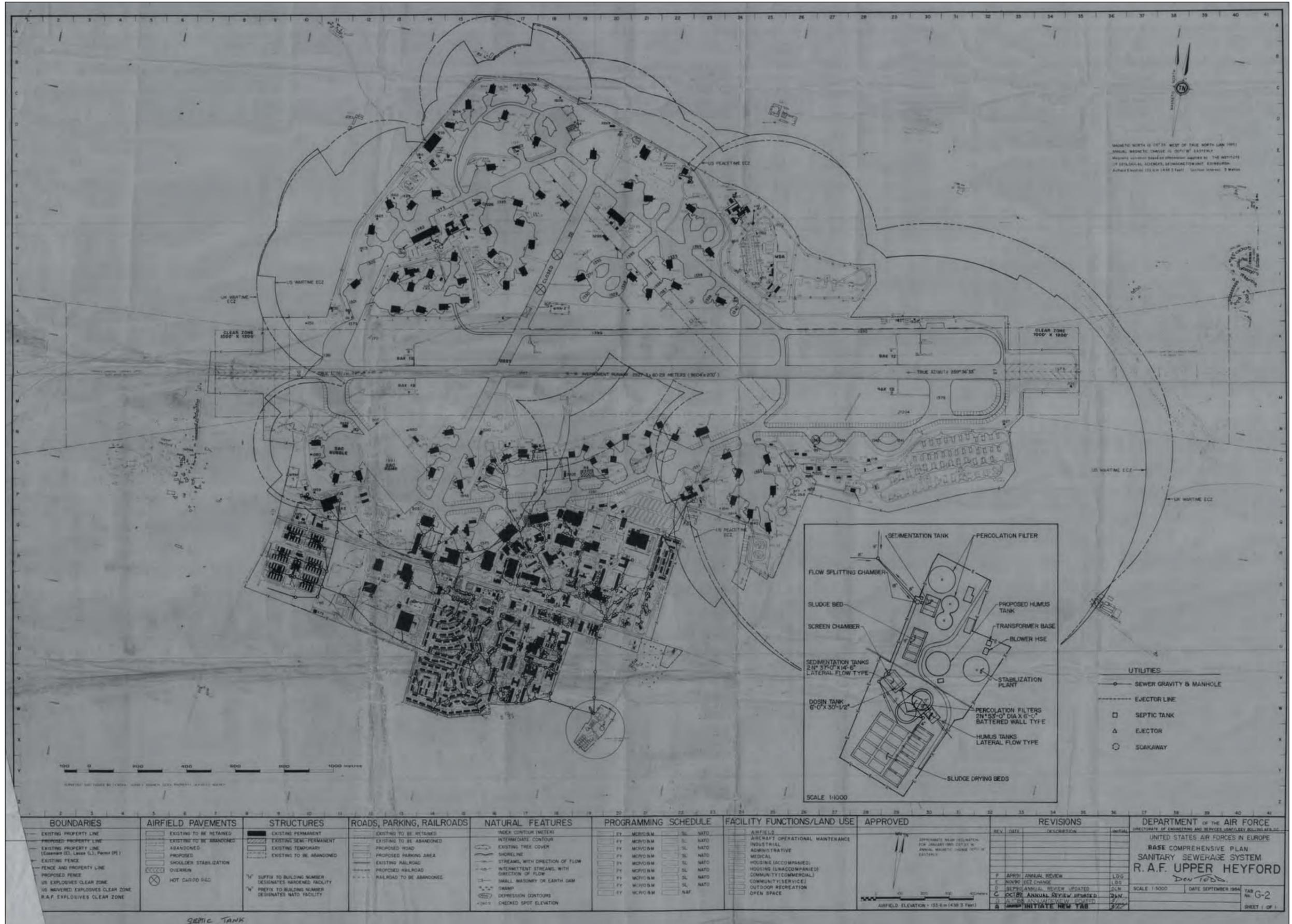


Figure 12: Base Comprehensive Plan (1991)



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## Plans

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- Upper Heyford 3.S.E.B Squadrons on a Station Basis, Location Plan, Revised to Date (July 1926)
- Upper Heyford Location Plan (February 1927) (Air Ministry 174/27)
- Upper Heyford Location Plan (November 1928) (Air Ministry 1335/27)
- Upper Heyford Site Plan 1209/31 (9.3.32)
- Upper Heyford Site Plan (Record) 263 (February 1937) (Air Ministry 827/37)
- Upper Heyford Site Plan (Record) 263 (F1.3.1939) (Air Ministry 38)
- Upper Heyford Improvements to Living Accommodation, 1946/47 Programme (Air Ministry 205/47)
- Upper Heyford Site Plan Aircrew Mess and Quarters and Airmens' Mess (3238/47)
- Upper Heyford Site Archive
- RAF Upper Heyford Record of Site Plan (1980) (419/80)
- Base Comprehensive Plan (Reviewed April 1991)

## Aerial Photography

English Heritage Archives

AP 1937 (SP5326/2 CCCS199/HJT305)

AP 1942 (15.AC46.H13.28.4.42 5'')

AP 1942 (16.AC46.H13.28.4.42 5'')

AP 1942 (47.AC46.H13.28.4.42 5'')

AP 1947 (3632.CPE/UK2013.16APR47)

AP 1954 (0289.F62.82/RAF/1006.31Aug'54)

PSA Collection

47 sets of images accessed taken between 1970 and 1989

Airfield Information Exchange website - Accessed October 2015

AP (1969)

Photograph of Upper Heyford c. 1928

## Documents

National Archives – files accessed

AIR29/655 (includes images of airbase taken between 1940 and 1942)

AIR2/18254

AIR2/13877

DEFE71/301

AIR29/ 657

AIR2/63

AIR29/520

AIR2/13877

AIR2/18254

AIR2/18833

AIR28/866

## Building Plans

RAF Museum Hendon

12035-12037 (8055/38, 8056/38, 8060/38) Combined Dining Room and Institute

12019 (104/23) Barrack Block Type 'B' and 'C'

12189 (218/25) Upper Heyford 'C' Barrack Block

12194 (22/27) Upper Heyford – MT Vehicle Sheds – Electric Lighting

12218 (221/25) Upper Heyford Type Barrack Block for 12 Airmen Pilots

12108 Proposed Reinforced Concrete Water Storage (1178/25) (2.7.1926)

Upper Heyford Plan Room

This vast quantity of plans are organised by building number, but are not as yet catalogued with reference numbers.

## Websites

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<http://www.airfieldinformationexchange.org/community/showthread.php?1374-Expansion->

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