



Planning and Heritage Impact Statement

Site: Bicester Heritage

Applicant: Bicester Heritage Ltd

August 2016

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This statement has been produced by JPPC to accompany the comprehensive applications by Bicester Heritage Ltd to convert buildings on the former RAF Bicester Technical Site to commercial uses. The application covers those buildings on the site that have not yet been approved for conversion and includes a comprehensive parking strategy; the proposed changes are as follows:

Building	Floor area	Proposed use
79		Storage (B8)
103		Overnight accommodation
108		Storage (B8)
109		Assembly/leisure (D2)
111		Workshop/ancillary retail/showroom (B2/ B1(c)/ A1/ sui generis)
112		Workshop/ancillary retail/showroom (B2/ B1(c)/ A1/ sui generis)
113		Storage (B8)
116		Workshop/ancillary retail/showroom (B2/ B1(c)/ A1/ sui generis)
118		Workshop/ancillary retail/showroom (B2/ B1(c)/ A1/ sui generis)
123		Offices (B1)
129		Conference (D2)
130		Workshop/showroom (B1(c)/B2/sui generis)
131		Workshop (B2/B1(c))
133		Workshop/ancillary retail/showroom (B2/ B1(c)/ A1/ sui generis)
135		Workshop (B2/B1(c))
136		Workshop/ancillary retail/showroom (B2/ B1(c)/ A1/ sui generis)
137		Storage (B8)

1.2 In addition to conversions replacement structures are proposed for buildings 101 and 104. New structures are proposed to replace the current substantial

buildings and allow commercial use whilst maintaining the character and appearance of the conservation area.

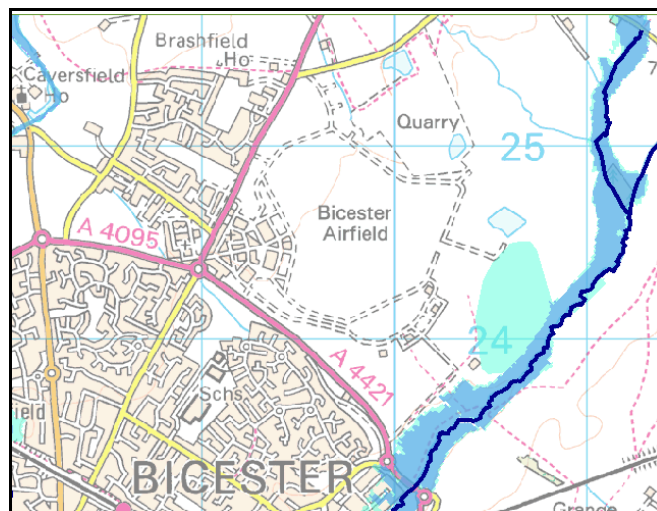
- 1.3 This report is also to support the application for listed building consent for the physical works required to enable the proposed changes of use to the following listed buildings: 79, 103, 108, 113, 123, 129, 130, 131, 135 and 137 all of which are grade II listed.
- 1.4 With reference to the character of the application site and surrounding area, an appraisal of the prevailing planning policy and planning history specifically, and assessment of the planning issues raised by the proposal, this statement sets out why the development is considered acceptable.
- 1.5 The application should be read in conjunction with the plans and Design and Access Statement produced by Gaunt Francis Architects.

2.0 Site Description, Planning History and Proposal

- 2.1 Bicester Heritage is sited on the north eastern side of Bicester, north of the A4421, which is part of the “ring road” around Bicester. It extends to some 141.5 hectares and includes various buildings and a flying field. It does not include the residential site to the west of the A421.
- 2.2 The site lies within the RAF Bicester Conservation Area and features 22 listed buildings, in addition around the fringe of the technical site and flying field there are a number of structures which have scheduled monument protection.
- 2.3 The basis for designating the site as a conservation area, and listing or scheduling most of the existing structures, derives from the fact that it is one of the best preserved airfields of its age and has a long history of military flying. Having become surplus to the MOD’s needs there were concerns the historic buildings and flying field could be lost to insensitive development, there was therefore a concerted effort to secure formal designation of the heritage assets. More recently Bicester Heritage have acquired the site and undertaken comprehensive restoration works securing the buildings and their settings, the success of which is shown in the numerous awards and plaudits

along with the removal of structures from the Historic England's 'At Risk' register.

- 2.4 The site's flying field origins date back to its use as a Royal Flying Corps aerodrome towards the end of WWI and, from 1925 onwards, as a military airfield by the newly formed Royal Air Force. Whilst many of the buildings have not been actively used for decades, English Heritage identify that the site's importance relates to the fact that it retains: *'...better than any other military airbase in Britain, the layout and fabric relating to pre-1930s military aviation...it comprises the best-preserved bomber airfield dating from the period up to 1945...It also comprises the best preserved and most strongly representative of the bomber stations built as part of Sir Hugh Trenchard's Home Defence Expansion Scheme'*.
- 2.5 In addition, it is relevant to note that the technical site layout has not been affected by later infilling, as at Upper Heyford for example, nor have the structures been significantly altered. Indeed, as confirmed in the RAF Bicester Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA), the special interest of the site lies in the fact that a number of the buildings on the site are the only remaining examples of certain types of Inter-war airfield buildings and many of the remaining are the best preserved examples.
- 2.6 The site generally falls outside the areas liable to flooding on the Environment Agency website and there are some public rights of way to the eastern side of the site.



- 2.7 These applications seek permission for change of use of those buildings not already permitted for conversion to commercial uses with the exception of buildings 143, 144, 146 and 147. The proposals include the required physical works to the buildings, where necessary listed building consent is sought through a parallel application. The proposals also include a comprehensive parking strategy, the proposed arrangements are informed by the Council's parking standards and demonstrate how provision will be made in a manner sensitive to the historic landscape.
- 2.8 The buildings subject of this application are numerous, the historic form and function and form of each is described in detail in **Appendix 1**. A copy of the listing for each of the listed buildings subject of these proposals is included as **Appendix 2**. The decision as to the most suitable use for each of the buildings has been informed by the size, layout and construction of the structure as the applicants seek to limit physical interventions and preserve historic character.

Planning History

- 2.9 Prior to the acquisition of the site by Bicester Heritage Ltd early in 2013 there had been no significant recent planning history on the site. The MOD benefitted from exemption from planning controls until the latest point of its tenure, consequently there is no planning history covering
- 2.10 Since 2013 numerous applications have been approved which have allowed the commercial use of structures, particularly to the northern area of the Technical Site. A schedule of planning permissions granted is included within the Design and Access Statement which accompanies this application. Extant permissions allow for a range of commercial uses on the site including industrial, retail, vehicle sales showrooms and offices.

Proposals

- 2.11 Bicester Heritage has created the nation's first business park dedicated to historic aviation and motoring excellence and forming a campus of leading national and international specialists. In this context, the overall vision is the creation of a mixed use development, with continued aviation activities from the flying field, and a range of campus uses related to the storage,

maintenance, repair, sales etc of historic vehicles and aircraft, together with ancillary activities including office uses, training and conference facilities and the provision of overnight accommodation.

- 2.12 The application proposes the change of use of the buildings to commercial uses in line with the vision for the former RAF Bicester. The proposed changes for each building are considered in detail in the accompanying Design and Access Statement, they are however summarised below.

Buildings 79 and 137- Type “A” Aeroplane Sheds

- 2.13 The two “A-type” hangars at the site are grade II listed buildings reflecting the structures’ national importance as heritage assets. The proposals involve minimal changes to the internal and external fabric of the buildings. The principal works are those of repair with the existing fabric restored as far as possible and replaced in a sensitive manner where necessary.

- 2.14 The proposed B8 use retains the wide open spaces which are fundamental to the character of the listed buildings. The securing of a commercial role will serve to ensure investment and maintenance for the longevity of the heritage asset. All services and ancillary uses are contained within the smaller structures to the site of the buildings, as was the original design. The most significant change proposed to the structure is to the main access doors with the large four-leave doors substituted for roller-shutter units.

Building 101- Spotlight Turret Trainer (replacement building)

- 2.15 The spotlight turret trainer is an unlisted steel framed building clad in asbestos. The cladding is in a particularly poor condition to a degree that the building is beyond safe reuse or repair. The proposal is for the demolition and replacement of the structure with a complementary building to provide a workshop, showroom and teaching facility.
- 2.16 The removal of the building is a necessity to ensure a safe environment is provided within the Bicester Heritage site. The applicants wish to retain the character and appearance of the historic structure, whilst also providing a high quality and viable workspace.

- 2.17 The proposed structure retains the simple two storey form of the existing structure. The proposed structure is to be clad in corrugated material preserving the overall character, although the sheeting is to be metal, rather than asbestos. The orientation of the building is altered to allow access and limit impacts on trees.

Building 103- Link Trainer Building

- 2.18 Building 103 is a listed building having formerly housed the 'link trainer', an early version of a flight simulator for pilot training. The proposed external works are limited to necessary repairs with material replaced on a like-for-like basis where necessary.
- 2.19 The proposed overnight use is compatible with the scale and layout of the structure allowing viable use with limited physical change. It is proposed to provide two units of overnight accommodation which retain the principal separations in the building. Kitchen and bathroom facilities are to be provided for each unit utilising existing enclosures within the structure. The accommodation proposed is solely on a short-let basis in connection with operations at Bicester Heritage, there are no proposals for external amenity areas which could undermine the character of the site.

Building 104- Meteorological Section Office

- 2.20 The meteorological section office is a modest building of poor quality construction. The structure is built around pre-cast concrete frames, likely to have been recycled from elsewhere on the site, this suggests the building was intended as a stop-gap rather than a permanent feature. The poor quality structure is beyond its useable life and is proposed to be replaced by a permanent building providing workshop space.
- 2.21 The proposed building is on a similar footprint and orientation to maintain the character of the conservation area, it will however be of higher quality construction. The structure takes cues from the historic buildings on site, in particular in the materials and form; it however features simple contemporary detailing to distinguish it as a new build. An increase in height is proposed to allow a practical workshop space.

Buildings 108 and 113- Type “C” Aircraft Sheds

- 2.22 As with the earlier “A-type” hangars buildings 108 and 113 are grade II listed. The proposals make use of the original form of the building with the wide open bays proposed for storage with ancillary facilities in the side structures.
- 2.23 External changes are limited with the principal focus on the retention and repair of historic fabric. The limited changes proposed are to allow for the operation of the building for modern business purposes.

Building 109- Watch Office with Tower

- 2.24 Building 109 offers expansive views across the flying field from the watch tower with a collection of office spaces on the lower floors. The location to the edge of the flying field and its role as an observation point offer a unique opportunity to appreciate the site. The proposed D2 use seeks to take advantage of the building’s virtues as a leisure and assembly location on the Bicester Heritage site.
- 2.25 Limited alterations are proposed to the building with external works in the main amounting to repairs and replacement of deteriorated materials. Internal alterations are required to the ground floor to provide facilities to satisfy modern standards.

Building 111- Fire Tender Shelter and Night Flying Equipment Store

- 2.26 This modest structure is intended to provide workshop space. Roller shutter doors are proposed to the southern elevation in place of existing windows. These will allow for the creation of usable working bays and are a form of door successfully incorporated in several buildings throughout the site.

Buildings 112, 116, 118 and 136- Petrol Tanker Sheds

- 2.27 The multi-bay petrol tanker shed is proposed to offer flexible workspaces for uses connected with heritage motoring and aviation. The proposals allow for workshop use, vehicle sales and ancillary retail. New roller shutters are proposed to both ends of the existing bays. Walls are intended to enclose one end of some bays in areas where W.C. and kitchen facilities are to be

installed, these will however be screened by shutters maintaining the building appearance. Similar conversions have been approved and successfully implemented at other tanker sheds throughout the site allowing a collection of artisan businesses to become established on the site.

Building 123- Station Armoury and Lecture Rooms

- 2.28 Building 123 is proposed to be converted to offices, this allowing the most sensitive conversion from the structure's original use. The compatibility of the historic and proposed uses mean the external changes required are limited allowing the character of the structure to be retained.
- 2.29 Internally office accommodation is proposed across two floors including ancillary space such as kitchens and W.C.s. Special care has been taken in developing the internal arrangements to minimise interventions to the historic fabric. The proposed development retains the historic pattern and character of spaces to ensure the special interest of the building is maintained.

Building 129- Protected Long Bay

- 2.30 The building forms part of the motor transport yard with a simple linear form. Originally featuring a reinforced flat roof the structure now has a pitched roof. The proposals involve the formation of conference space within the structure consisting of conference rooms, a reception space and WC facilities. The conference rooms allow for the retention of the large open spaces within the structure.

Building 130- Special Repair Bay Shed

- 2.31 Planning permission and listed building consent are sought to enable the conversion of Building 130 to a workshop or showroom space. The proposed works retain the existing form of the building with limited interventions to the open space. The expansive bays are retained with the discrete inclusion of a reception space and welfare facilities for workers.
- 2.32 Minimal changes are proposed to the exterior building with the emphasis on the restoration and re-use of fabric in line with the established HPA.

Building 131- Motor Transport Shed

- 2.33 Forming the western side of the Motor Transport Yard is Building 131, a grade II listed building. It is proposed to convert the space into workshops with ancillary office and welfare spaces. The proposed use maintains the form of the building with kitchenette and WC facilities installed in discrete spaces. Limited internal changes are proposed to the northern bay of the unit to allow a usable workshop space to be created.
- 2.34 The original use of the new building is compatible with the proposed use, therefore the conversion is proposed with limited external alterations. Additional patent glazing is proposed to allow suitable light into the workspace below, this is in character with the existing building features and others on the site. New roller shutter doors are proposed to match the existing doors in the eastern elevation, with a new matching door installed to the northern bay. The proposed changes are in keeping with the existing character and appearance of the building.

Building 133- Articulated Trailer Shed

- 2.35 Building 133 has a similar design to the petrol tanker sheds on site, albeit in an elongated form and is proposed for conversion to workshop/showroom space. New roller shutters are proposed to both with a glazed timber framed 'shop-front'. The bay is to remain as an open working space with no incursions into the area. Similar conversions have been approved and successfully implemented at tanker sheds throughout the site.

Building 135- Special Repair Bay Shed

- 2.36 Building 135 is proposed for conversion to workshop/storage space. The original use of the building for vehicular repairs is similar to that now proposed, consequently the use can be accommodated with minimal alterations.
- 2.37 Internally the four separate bays are retained as separate workshop spaces with welfare facilities provided for workers to the rear. Externally roller shutter doors matching those used elsewhere on the site are proposed to the front of bays. The pedestrian door to the north-western end of the building is to be

stopped up and replaced by a metal casement window and matching brickwork.

3.0 Planning Policy

3.1 Under Section 38(6) of the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 there is a statutory obligation to determine planning applications and appeals in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3.2 The Development Plan in Cherwell District presently consists of the saved policies of the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 so far as they are consistent with the NPPF. The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 was adopted in July 2015 and is the principal planning document for strategic matters in the district.

3.3 The Council has a non-Statutory Local Plan dating from 2004 which was adopted by the Council for development control purposes but which carries no statutory weight.

National Planning Guidance

3.4 Government Guidance and Policy is also capable of being a material consideration to be taken account of in decision making. This is very up to date with the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on 27th March 2012.

3.5 The NPPF presents a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In terms of proposals for development, this means that proposals which accord with the relevant development plan should be approved without delay, unless the effects of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the associated benefits (Para 14).

3.6 The core planning principles (para 17) underpin plan making and decision taking and state that planning should, *inter alia*, proactively drive and support economic development, encourage the re-use of existing resources and conversion of existing buildings, encourage the effective use of land that has been previously developed, promote mixed use developments and conserve heritage assets.

- 3.7 One of the central aims of the NPPF is to build a strong and competitive economy. It states that the Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity (para 18) and that planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth (para 19).
- 3.8 Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and is indivisible from good planning – it should contribute positively to making places better for people (Para 56). Policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or tastes, although it is proper to seek to reinforce local distinctiveness (Para 60). Paragraph 73 recognises that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well being of communities.
- 3.9 Local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying certain principles, as set out in the NPPF.
- 3.10 The NPPF also sets out the Government’s approach in using the planning system to conserve and enhance the historic environment. Where applying for planning permission, applicants should be required to assess the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution which is made by their setting. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the asset’s significance and no more detailed than sufficient to assess the potential impact of the proposal upon this significance.
- 3.11 As a minimum, the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any assets which may be affected by a proposal, taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise (Para’s 128 - 129). In planning for the historic environment, local planning authorities should have up-to-date evidence about the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to their environment (Para. 169).
- 3.12 Finally the NPPF encourages pre-application engagement and front loading to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning system.

Cherwell Local Plan 2031 Part 1

- 3.13 The emerging CLP has reached the examination stage and provides the most up to date indication of the Council's aspirations for development in the District.
- 3.14 Policy Bicester 8 relates specifically to the future use of RAF Bicester. It states that the Council '*will encourage conservation-led proposals to secure a long-lasting, economically viable future for RAF Bicester's Technical Site and Flying Field*'. Additionally, the policy states that the Council will support a range of uses for the site - including employment, recreation, leisure, tourism and community uses.
- 3.15 It further identifies that the development of hotel and conference facilities may also be supported as part of a wider package of employment uses, but makes clear that development proposals must maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, protect listed, scheduled and other important buildings, and protect the sensitive historic fabric of the buildings and preserve the openness of the airfield.

Adopted Cherwell Local Plan (CLP)

- 3.16 The Adopted CLP is of an age which may be considered out of date by the NPPF. There have also been significant material changes in circumstances at RAF Bicester since its adoption, notably the designation of the conservation area, the statutory listing of many of the buildings and designation of scheduled monument status open other structures.
- 3.17 Part of the airfield at RAF Bicester surrounding the existing hangars was allocated for employment generating development with the remainder identified for recreational uses in Policy EMP2 of the adopted CLP. However, the policy was not saved.

Non Statutory Local Plan

- 3.18 There are no policies in the NSCLP referring specifically to the RAF Bicester buildings or flying field. However, Policy EMP6 supports the re-use of buildings provided proposals do not harm the character or the setting of buildings of

architectural or historic interest. These policies are broadly in line with the thrust of the NPPF.

Bicester Master Plan (SPD Consultation Draft Aug 2012)

- 3.19 The Master Plan identifies RAF Bicester as a mixed use employment area, described thus: *'providing a wide range of employment opportunities in new and refurbished buildings including the reuse of the listed buildings. Uses could include: history and heritage interpretation; conservation, repair and restoration activities; specialist aviation manufacturing and repair; community performing arts; health club and small business units and tourism facilities'*.

RAF Bicester Planning Brief

- 3.20 The Planning Brief was adopted by the Council in 2009 and, therefore, is a material consideration for future proposals at the site. It does not however have the status of a Supplementary Planning Document.
- 3.21 The Brief encourages the re-use of the buildings for their original purpose but recognises that, in most instances, a new use will need to be found. It seeks a comprehensive approach to the management of the technical site, which ensures a consistent maintenance regime across the campus style layout and no subdivision of the landscape with means of enclosure.
- 3.22 The Brief recognises that employment uses would be suitable for many of the buildings, but that care would need to be taken over the level of alterations to facilitate such uses.

4.0 Discussion

Listed Building Issues

- 4.1 The buildings 79, 103, 108, 109, 113, 123, 130, 135, 137 are all grade II listed. The submitted application for listed building consent is subject to considerations beyond those of the planning application.
- 4.2 The proposed uses for each building have been considered on the basis of their compatibility with the historic structure, by and large the proposed use is

a commercial version of the building's original purpose. The similarities of use mean the proposals require only modest alterations to the fabric of the structure, and allow for the retention of the historic spaces.

- 4.3 The listed hangars (79, 108, 113 and 137) are characterised by their vast open spaces. The proposed use allows the buildings' retention in a commercial function. Those limited works required to allow modern use are contained within the historic service wings and proposed in a manner which respects the historic character. The works of improvement to the fabric are sensitive and in character with materials retained and reused wherever possible.
- 4.4 The proposals for listed buildings around the Motor Transport Yard similarly (129, 130, 131) draw upon the virtues of the buildings' original purpose and seek to introduce vehicle focussed commercial uses. The proposed changes are in character with the proposed structure and the workshop and showroom uses in the spirit of the original use. The layout of the building is broadly retained preserving the character of the internal space in the building.
- 4.5 The conference space proposed within Building 129 makes use of the open space of the building for communal gatherings. The appearance and character of the listed structure will be preserved, making use of the internal layout. The proposed conference use will allow greater access to the structure, allowing the heritage asset to offer a broader public benefit.
- 4.6 The remaining listed building proposed for conversion is Building 103, the Link Trainer. The original use of the structure to house an early form of flight simulator is of interest, however the equipment has long been removed. The proposed use as overnight accommodation allows commercial re-use with minimal alterations to the historic fabric. The proposed accommodation is to serve businesses at Bicester Heritage on a short-let basis as already provided elsewhere on site (Building 82). The short lets have no need for external amenity areas, and will not give rise to any obvious domestic paraphernalia in their vicinity.
- 4.7 Building 109 is the former airfield control tower. The building is an attractive structure important to the character of the airfield, its form however means it is challenging to find a viable commercial use. The proposals involve minimal internal and external changes to allow use of the building for assembly and

leisure. The limited floorspace and unusual form of the building limit practical uses, however the proposed changes will allow for provision of hospitality in connection with events on the flying field.

- 4.8 The NPPF requires that regard is paid to the particular significance of the heritage asset. In this case the particular significance is derived from the function of the buildings and how this dictated their form. The proposals respect the particular interest of the listed buildings and will enable their viable use to ensure future safeguarding as encouraged by the policies of the NPPF and Local Plan.

Planning Considerations

Principle of development

- 4.9 With regard to the overall impact of the proposed uses the commercial operations are entirely in line with the accepted vision for the site set out under policy Bicester 8. The office, storage, showroom and workshop uses all complement the site vision for a heritage motoring and aviation hub. The proposed uses are well located within the Technical Site and are not of a nature that would give rise to any form of nuisance to neighbours, or any form of detriment to local amenity, detailed amenity impacts are considered later in subsequent sections.
- 4.10 The proposed development involves the creation of two additional units to provide overnight accommodation ancillary to businesses and operations at Bicester Heritage. Planning permission 14/00209/FUL allowed for the creation of such accommodation in Building 82 on the site, confirming its provision to be acceptable in principle. The unique hub for heritage motoring and aviation businesses created at Bicester Heritage is a national and international attraction for specialists and customers alike. The businesses on site require high quality, short stay accommodation to support their operations. The accommodation provided in Building 82 has been integral to the success of businesses individually and as a cluster at Bicester Heritage.
- 4.11 The application now submitted seeks to allow the introduction of additional businesses to the site. The accommodation proposed in Building 103 is to allow sufficient provision to support planned business growth. As above noted

the short-lets are not proposed with any external amenity areas, nor do they require any residential paraphernalia, therefore impact on the broader environment will be negligible.

- 4.12 A limited level of D2 space is also included within this application. The former control tower to the edge of the flying field is a challenging building, the proposed changes will however allow for provision of hospitality space, principally connected with events on the flying field. Policy Bicester 8 seeks to encourage leisure activities at the site, particularly connected with heritage and aviation. The proposed use is entirely in line with this.
- 4.13 Teaching and conference spaces are also proposed within buildings 129 and 101. These uses are considered to be in line with Policy Bicester 8 as they further knowledge in the arena of heritage aviation and motoring. Bicester Heritage has been successful in creating a cluster of businesses with common interests and complimentary expertise, however none is sufficiently large to justify a specialist conference facility of its own. The proposed facility will provide a badly needed communal conference space on the site.

Physical works

- 4.14 The proposed alterations to the buildings are visually discrete and in character with the existing structures and wider site. In the main physical changes are limited to restoration and necessary replacement of sub-standard fabric. Those physical alterations proposed are necessary to ensure commercial viability for the buildings and to ensure the structures meet current workplace safety standards, the changes are therefore necessary to allow their beneficial use to secure their future. The alterations are discrete, entirely in character with the host structures and complementary to the character and appearance of the area.
- 4.15 A good deal of the interest of the conservation area arises from the collective value of the unusually complete group of buildings. The restoration of the historic buildings and the securing of their active use will preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area in line with the requirements of the NPPF.

- 4.16 The buildings all benefit from vehicular access points by virtue of their former use. Minor amendments and repairs are proposed to existing roadways to improve access to the buildings. Areas of new hardstanding are limited as far as possible, where they are required they are proposed in sensitive materials to respect the character of the landscaped site.
- 4.17 The proposal involves the demolition and replacement of two buildings on site. The former meteorological station section (Building 104) is a building of particularly poor quality construction, likely from reclaimed materials, and of limited architectural merit. The poor quality means the structure is unsuitable for conversion and cannot be viably be retained, the presence of a building is however felt to be important to the historic character of the site, and therefore a suitable replacement is proposed.
- 4.18 The proposed building retains the simple form of the existing building, it does however include an increase in height to allow for a viable workshop workspace. The structure respects the functional design of the historic buildings on site, it does not however seek to recreate in historic pastiche. The importance of the Conservation Area is in large part derived from the narrative in the collection of buildings allowing the evolution of structures to be read. The proposed building has a simple form characteristic of the military buildings, it however has contemporary detailing, such as the roof glazing allowing it to be read as part of the ‘new chapter’ of the site under Bicester Heritage’s tenure.
- 4.19 Care has been taken in the design and siting of the proposed replacement structures to allow the retention of the most important trees in their vicinity. The proposed building is considered to be in scale and character with its surroundings and to preserve the character of the Conservation Area as required under the Local Plan and NPPF.
- 4.20 Building 101 is the former Turret Trainer and the second structure proposed for replacement. The role of the structure is of interest, however the equipment has been removed and the substantial use of asbestos means it cannot be retained on the working site. The applicants have sought to design a replacement which retains the character of the building, albeit in a modern interpretation in order that an understanding of the original building may be retained.

- 4.21 The proposed structure retains the same broad form and scale of the existing building. The building is intended to be clad in ridged metal to reflect the character of the original structure, in particular its distinction from other more conventional buildings on the site. The detailed design of the proposed building also seeks to retain the character of the turret trainer, new window openings reflect the position of vents in the upper part of the building, while roller shutter doors are proposed to retain the simple functional form.
- 4.22 In the absence of a viable means of retaining Building 101 the proposed replacement with a modern structure evocative of the original building is considered the most appropriate course of action. The proposed structure will allow the character and appearance of the Conservation Area to be maintained whilst the future of the broader site and range of heritage assets is safeguarded.

Transport impacts

- 4.23 This application is accompanied by a Transport Statement provided by Mode. The assessment takes account of impacts from the proposed development along with that of the units already permitted.
- 4.24 This application includes parking provision for all of the proposed units in line with the Council's non-residential parking standards. The application also seeks to formalise parking arrangements for a number of units previously permitted on the site. In considering parking arrangements the character and appearance of the Conservation Area has been a principal consideration, in particular the avenues of the site have been kept clear with cars sited in discrete locations wherever possible.
- 4.25 Where possible parking is located on existing hardstanding; any parking that is not on hardstanding is to be surfaced in discrete materials such as grasscrete to maintain the overall landscape character.

Landscape impact

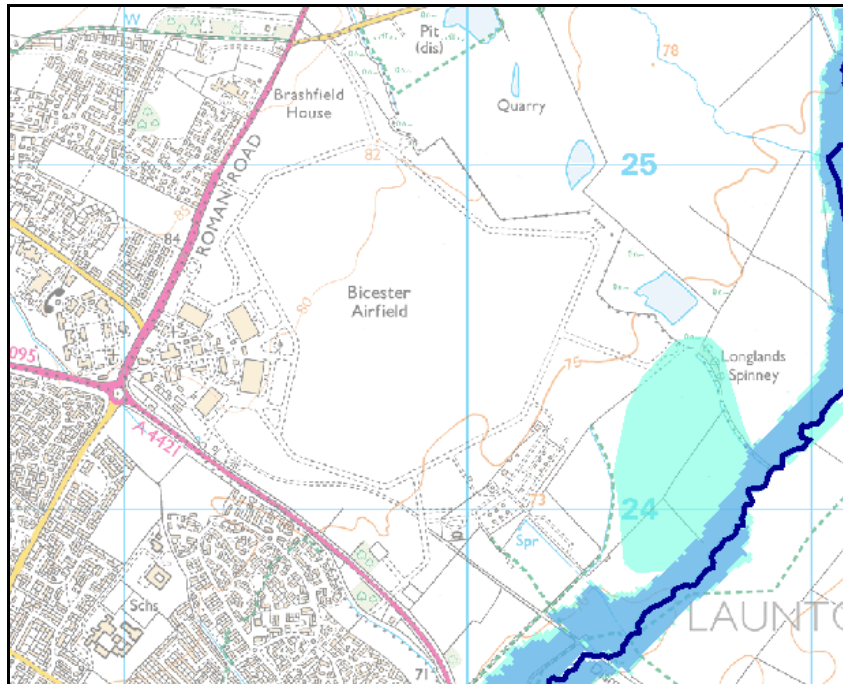
- 4.26 The proposals involve limited new-build development. The contained nature of the site means there will be no impact upon the broad landscape. The closed

landscape of the former RAF Technical Site is a landscape in itself which contributes to the character of the Conservation Area, the impact upon this must be considered.

- 4.27 The site was planned with the buildings as an integral part of the landscape. The safeguarding of these structures through positive re-use is imperative to protection of the character of the area, including the landscape. The character of the site has been successfully maintained throughout Bicester Heritage's tenure through a comprehensive approach to issues such as signage and lighting, this has maintained the uniformity of character intrinsic to the military landscape.
- 4.28 The proposed developments have been designed to respect the existing area therefore no additional landscaping is included as part of these proposals. The new build proposals have been designed in a manner to allow the retention of the most important trees in the vicinity. As noted above parking proposals have been developed to allow vehicles to be discretely parked as far as practicable.
- 4.29 This application is accompanied by a tree survey and report assessing the impact of the proposed new-build developments. A limited level of tree removal is confirmed to be required, it is however possible to mitigate impacts through the planting of a replacement tree for each removed.

Flooding

- 4.30 Bicester Heritage is not located in an area at risk of fluvial or surface water flooding, as confirmed by the Environment Agency's online maps, the site is however in excess of 1Ha, therefore flood risk must be assessed.



Environment Agency Flood Map for Rivers and Sea



Environment Agency Map of Flood Risk from Surface Water

4.31 The proposed development does not involve a material increase in roof area at the site. The increase in surfaced area is nominal with the limited areas of new hardstanding provided in permeable or SUDs compliant surfaces. In view of the low flood risk and limited levels of additional buildings the proposal will not give rise to an increased risk of flooding.

5.0 Summary

- 5.1 It is considered that the proposed re-use of the buildings for commercial purposes is in accordance with the site specific, employment and heritage related policies and guidance contained within the Adopted Local Plan, the NPPF. Additionally, the proposed use follows the principles set out in the Planning Brief for the site and would involve uses which are in accordance with those encouraged in the draft Bicester Masterplan.
- 5.2 The development will safeguard the future of the heritage assets, including listed buildings and the conservation area whilst providing employment. The development will not be detrimental to local amenity, therefore it is hoped Officers will support the application and recommend that planning permission and listed building consent is granted.

APPENDIX 1

Building descriptions from 'RAF Bicester'- Airfield Research Publishing

66. 101 Spotlight (Turret) Trainer and Turret Power House

The Spotlight Trainer device consisted of either dummy free guns mounted on scarf rings or alternatively, a power-operated gun turret. In either case, they were mounted on top of a steel frame with the free gun pointing at a hemispherical target screen. An instructor standing below with a powerful hand-held projector shone a figure of an enemy aircraft on the screen and manoeuvred it so that the gunner could follow and shoot at it with his spotlight. When the gunner pressed his trigger, a spotlight appeared on the target screen where his shot would have struck.

After 1941, this system was replaced by the Turret Gun Sighting Trainer and later still by the Standard Free Gun Gunnery Trainer. Both of these training aids used the same hemispherical target screen and a power operated gun turret mounted on a steel frame at a height so that the air-gunner sitting inside his turret was level with the centre of curvature of the screen. This gave him the impression that he was flying and surrounded by open sky. To further enhance the illusion, realistic sound tracks could be played. The turret was fitted with a projector unit mounted on a dummy gun. Its movement was controlled by the turret controls. This could project an image of a ring and bead pattern similar to a Mk.III free gun reflector sight.

On a platform above the turret, a 16mm Ensign projector, fitted with an endless roll of film projected an image of an enemy aircraft. An instructor could manoeuvre the aircraft image anywhere on the screen and the air-gunner tracked the target until he was in the correct position to score a hit.

The building at Bicester is an example of the first purpose built design to house the Spotlight Trainer and consists of a steel frame, clad with corrugated asbestos sheeting. Two Spotlight Trainers were provided here side-by-side in separate rooms. A temporary brick Turret Power House serving both bays was built in front of the main building. In here, either a diesel generator or hydraulic equipment provided the necessary power to operate the turrets.

NGR: SP 5927 2448

Comments: unfortunately the hemispherical target screens do not survive; the large door openings once used to give access to the turret and its trolley have been covered over with asbestos sheeting. Another building of this type survives at Jurby.

69. 103 Link Trainer Building 6414/37

The Link Trainer device provided a cheaper alternative for training pilots in instrument flying and was used in addition to flying real aircraft

The idea was invented in 1929 by Edwin Link, an American organ manufacturer, and his Link Trainer was first introduced into Britain in 1936.

The most common type of trainer used during WW2, the Type D2, was introduced in 1942, and superseded the Type D1. The D2 comprised a fuselage approximately eight feet long, of timber frame construction and covered with plywood. Powerful bellows enabled the device to simulate basic flying movements similar to pitching, banking and turning of a real aircraft. Early machines had wings, tailplane and fin with their corresponding control surfaces.

The cockpit closely resembled a typical single-engined aircraft of the period, with the usual six basic instruments, plus compass, radio, rudder pedals and control column. Any changes in flight attitude were indicated by these instruments and by the relevant control surfaces.

Connections led from the trainer to an instructor's desk where a small three-wheeled trolley called a "tracking crab" (automatic recorder) reacted to time and rate of movement of the fuselage. One of the wheels, known as an idler wheel, functioned as an ink pen and traced an accurate course onto a map of the countryside over which the "pilot" was supposed to be flying. The instructor's desk had a duplicate set of instruments which enabled him assess the pilot's flying ability.

The Link Trainer Building is constructed of permanent brick supporting a reinforced concrete roof. Two identical bays were provided housing two Link Trainers. Used post-war as an RAF electricians' workshop.

NGR: SP 5928 2446

Comments: although this design pre-dates the more common 1762/39 (Upper Heyford) it is thought they are very similar and it is unclear what, if any differences there between them.

39. 104 Meteorological Section Office 1762/39

Because the Watch Office with Tower was too small to accommodate a meteorological section, it became necessary to have a purpose-built hut for the meteorological staff. This was in the form of a typical wartime cement rendered temporary brick building. Constructed with brick piers at ten foot centres supporting steel trusses carrying corrugated asbestos sheeting. This particular building design (1762/39), is the same one used for a temporary brick Link Trainer hut. The Met compound where weather components were recorded, was situated close to the watch office. An important function of the meteorological staff was to report the current weather situation to the Flying Control Officers stationed in the watch office.

NGR: SP 5931 2448

Comments: although temporary brick buildings are common on temporary airfields built during WW2, they are rare at Bicester and this one is a particularly fine example.

40-41. 108 & 113 Type "C" Aircraft Sheds (2)

The planning of the expansion of the RAF in 1934, when numerous new stations of permanent construction were being designed, demanded that a new standard RAF hangar for housing larger types of heavy bomber aircraft was required. After initial investigations with a prototype Type "B" Aeroplane Shed at Martlesham Heath, it was estimated that the new shed required a clear span of 150 feet, a clear length of 300ft. and a clear height of 35ft. These dimensions could now allow new specifications to be issued to aircraft manufacturers to design heavy bomber aircraft with a wing span greater than 100ft. The hangar design chosen to meet these requirements became known as the Type "C" Aircraft Shed, and after many improvements became the new standard RAF hangar.

Hangars of this type were erected on nearly all of the early Expansion Period aerodromes where it was common practice to erect either four or five hangars on a new bomber station, while fighter stations had three. Up to three hangars were built on existing stations to supplement unsatisfactory aeroplane sheds. A total of 155 Type "C" Aircraft Sheds were built in Britain; of these 76 were of

the later austerity type. Ten hangars similar to those erected at Bicester have been demolished and eleven of the later type have been removed.

Two 11-bay Type "C" Aircraft Sheds were constructed here under Scheme "F" of the RAF's Expansion Programme.

The steel structure was different from that used on types "A" and "B", spacing between lattice wall stanchions were reduced to 25ft., taking away the need for intermediate stanchions. These support lattice roof girders which are separated by portal roof trusses. Hipped-shaped gable ends are exposed above brick-built side walls, except the end bays where the wall was carried above the hipped trusses. Roof covering consists of timber purlins and timber boarding with asbestos slates. Normally, hangars built after 1936, had walls of reinforced concrete, but at Bicester brick was used instead which complemented the existing technical buildings. Doors arranged in six leaves were constructed with steel plates on both sides of a steel framework, the void filled with gravel to a height of 20ft. - to provide protection against bomb splinters. These 35 feet high doors open out along door gantries supported by steel trestles.

Annexes were provided along both side walls containing: squadron crew room, locker room, rest area, ground staff rooms. Various workshops included the following: machine-gun cleaning room, W/T workshop, auto-pilot workshop and ground equipment room.

Building 108 was used by 71 Maintenance Unit for aircraft crash investigation, where the remains of a crashed military aircraft were laid out and pieced together to establish the cause of the accident.

Type "C" Aircraft Shed 108 NGR: SP 5934 2454

Type "C" Aircraft Shed 137 NGR: SP 5936 2438

Comments: hangar 108 was extensively refurbished by the USAF when it was converted into a hospital store. Hangar 113 is more original, but has not benefited from the high level of maintenance that has been carried out to hangar 108. Hangar 113 is still used for housing aircraft.

47. 109 Watch Office with Tower 1959/34

The first serious attempt for the design of a watch office for RAF stations took place in 1934 with the invention of the two-storey Watch Office with Tower. This became the standard design for aerodromes at home where 41 were built between 1935 and 1937. Its shape resembles a child's toy fort with a large square-shaped ground floor watch office and an observation tower built in the centre of the flat concrete roof.

This version (1959-60/34) built at Bicester replaced an earlier building design (1440/27). Built c1937, the new building was one of the last examples of its type constructed in permanent red brick. After 1936 a change in design took place (207/36) to all-concrete construction which offered better protection against bomb blast. At Bicester however, the brick version was chosen instead for consistency with existing buildings. This is thought to be as a result of the recommendations made by the Royal Fine Art Commission.

The main room on the ground floor, the watch office for Duty Pilot, has large casement windows spanning the width of the building. Other rooms at this level included separate officers' and airmen's latrines. A spiral staircase led up to a narrow room where there was access to the roof of the ground floor. Further up the stairs led to the observation room.

NGR: SP 5945 2448

Comments: out of 41 buildings built, 12 are known to survive and only eight of these still retain the observation tower. Bicester is one of only five remaining which are both complete (with the observation tower) and of the original brick design.

The window casements fitted here are not the standard 1934 type, but look contemporary.

50. 111 Fire Tender Shelter & Night Flying Equipment Store 174/35

Built the same time as the Watch Office with Tower, this was in two parts consisting of a garage at the front housing the airfield fire tender. Behind this, another garage with doors opening out on a side elevation contained the following portable airfield night flying equipment: illuminated landing tee, goose flare trolley and glim lamp trolley.

Built in permanent brick construction with a flat concrete roof.

Comments: building used by the RAF Gliding and Soaring Association for storage.

21-26. 94, 105, 112, 116, 118 & 136 Petrol Tanker Sheds 2773/34

Prior to the RAF Expansion Period, the method of refuelling aircraft was to taxi aircraft to the Aviation Petrol Installation where they were refuelled. After 1934, the RAF's mobile tanker system of refuelling aircraft became the standard practice. To house the many petrol tankers required, a range of Petrol Tanker Sheds were designed for all Expansion Period stations. They were built close to hangar aprons so that tankers had easy access to aircraft dispersed out on the airfield.

Building Nos. 94 and 136 (both 3-bay sheds) were the first to be built here, located close the Type "A" Aeroplane Sheds. Construction is in permanent brick with a reinforced concrete roof. Steel rolling shutters were provided at either end of each bay. Later sheds were built to the same drawing and had either 4 or 6 bays and built close to the Type "C" Aircraft Sheds.

Petrol Tanker Shed	94	(3-bays)	NGR: SP 5917 2453
Petrol Tanker Shed	105	(3-bays)	NGR: SP 5931 2448
Petrol Tanker Shed	112	(6-bays)	NGR: SP 5935 2446
Petrol Tanker Shed	116	(4-bays)	NGR: SP 5931 2437
Petrol Tanker Shed	118	(3-bays)	NGR: SP 5932 2443
Petrol Tanker Shed	136	(3-bays)	NGR: SP 5920 2432

Comments: the six sheds built here are present and all are in excellent condition.

70. 123 **Station Armoury and Lecture Rooms 1052/24 & 541-3/35**

Originally built as a three squadron (bomber) Station Armoury in 1925 with a two-storey part containing an office, workshop and armament lecture room on the ground floor. The first floor contained an education office, library and lecture room. The single-storey part contained the armoury and it was in here, (in one half) where ammunition belts were loaded. In the other half, there were three sets of ammunition testing bays and three sets of machine-gun stores. All were independent of each other and had steel doors.

During the early part of the RAF Expansion Period, a two-storey extension was built at right angles to the existing building. This was carried out in a similar style so that it matched the original with the use of similar facing bricks, window sashes and consistent roof line. The new extension on the ground floor contained a lecture room, gas respirator workshops and a new armament instruction classroom. The whole first floor functioned as the photographic section, containing rooms devoted to chemical mixing, developing, film fixing, printing, instruction and a workshop.

NGR: SP 5921 2440

Comments: this is a fine building, with a refurbished interior. The armoury rooms have now been converted into an open-plan room. The high level of maintenance carried out here gives the building great potential as modern office accommodation.

18. 129 **Protected Long Bay 6225/37**

Built as part of the Motor Transport Yard during the RAF Expansion Scheme "L", this is similar in appearance and construction to the Articulated Trailer Shed, but only has timber folding doors at one end of the shed.

NGR: SP 5911 2446

Comments: Building now has a pitched roof built above the original flat reinforced concrete one. Original timber doors are present.

16. 133 **Articulated Trailer Shed 6879/37**

This is similar in appearance to a Petrol Tanker Shed, but has only a single bay for the garaging of a 44ft. long articulated trailer. Built under the RAF Expansion Scheme "L" of permanent brick and a reinforced concrete roof.

NGR: SP 5911 2438

Comments: still in excellent condition, retaining original window frames and steel roller type shutters at either end of the shed.

20. 135 **Special Repair Bay Shed 1368/38**

The MT section was further expanded during the RAF Expansion Period with the construction of another four bay Special Repair Bay Shed. As there was no longer room within the MT Yard, it was built nearby as a detached shed. Constructed to a similar style as the previous one, the new shed differed by not having separate glazing panels above the doors, and instead had taller doors containing glazed panels.

NGR: SP 5916 2435

Comments: this stand alone building is in excellent condition and is part of the curtilage of the MT Yard.

27-28. 137 & 79 Type "A" Aeroplane Sheds (2) 19a/24

Type "A" Aeroplane sheds were the first permanent end-opening hangars of the interwar period for RAF stations at home and abroad. Designed in 1924, they became the largest aeroplane shed, until a new design - the Type "C" - replaced them during the RAF Expansion Period. A total of 34 (12 in Oxfordshire) were built in the United Kingdom at 17 sites between 1925 and 1940.

The planning and layout of the new RAF station at Bicester included six hangars of this type which like that at Upper Heyford, would be the standard arrangement for a three squadron bomber station. In the event, only two hangars were built here and were positioned in a crescent shape, with space in the centre of the crescent and on the airfield side for future sheds - should they be required.

Main stanchions at 38ft.-4in. centres and intermediate stanchions support steel-framed roof girders with cantilever gable trusses (ridge and valley) running longitudinally. Wall in-filling consists of 14in. reinforced concrete up to a height of 12ft., then 9in. thick reinforced concrete for another eight feet. Natural light into the shed is achieved through rows of (wall and roof) patent "Mellows" wired glazing panels. Above the wall glazing panels are horizontal RSJs bolted to the stanchions that support gable end brickwork.

As two hangars were required for each squadron, they were designed to be constructed in pairs. Each one of a pair had a different arrangement of office and workshop annexes but at Bicester, a similar arrangement of office accommodation was used instead for both sheds. Consequently, it was the second shed of both pairs that were not built here. Furthermore, a complete pair were also omitted, which if they had been built, would have been placed in the centre of the crescent.

Office and workshop facilities on the side elevation, facing the airfield, are in the form of single-pitch, single-storey annexes either side of a two-storey central section with a flat roof. On the elevation facing the technical site single storey-annexes only were provided. Rooms included separate crew and locker rooms, ground equipment stores, flight equipment stores, heating chamber and gun cleaning room. Upstairs in the central section were offices for Adjutant, Squadron Commander and clerks.

Steel doors in four leaves could open full width along door guides supported by braced trestles at either end of the shed.

Type "A" Aeroplane Shed	79	NGR: SP 5920 2456
Type "A" Aeroplane Shed	137	NGR: SP 5925 2432

Comments: with all original features still present, these are perhaps the best examples of their type.

APPENDIX 2- Listing Description

BUILDINGS NOS 79 AND 137 (TYPE 'A' HANGARS)

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: BUILDINGS NOS 79 AND 137 (TYPE 'A' HANGARS)

List entry Number: 1393035

Location

BUILDINGS NOS 79 AND 137 (TYPE 'A' HANGARS), A 421 (SOUTH-EAST SIDE)

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Oxfordshire

District: Cherwell

District Type: District Authority

Parish: Launton

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 01-Dec-2005

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 497523

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

LAUNTON

SP5924 A 421 (SOUTH-EAST SIDE) 1714/0/10053 RAF Bicester:
Technical Site 01-DEC-05 Buildings Nos 79 and 137 (Type 'A' Hangars)

GV II Aircraft hangars with annexes housing associated stores, workshops and offices. 1926. By the Air Ministry's Directorate of Works and Buildings, to drawing number 19a/24. Steel main frame and roof trusses, concrete in-situ wall panels, some brickwork in Flemish bond, corrugated asbestos or asbestos slate roofing.

PLAN: Large sheds with full height steel doors at each end, running to external gantries, with a series of single storey lean-to annexes on either long flank, in part rising to two storeys.

EXTERIOR: At each end two pairs of sliding doors with bolted sheet steel cladding on steel framework, but the upper half with corrugated steel; at each side a braced steel gantry to take doors when open. To each long side a series of 7 gables, in brickwork, but with encased steel external stanchions taken through almost to each ridge, and flush secondary stanchions at the valleys. Below these a continuous strip of patent glazing, in 9 lights to each bay, except the two end half-bays. Carried on cantilevered steel brackets the full length each side above the glazing a steel-framed catwalk, with steel ladder drop at the ends in open cylindrical protective shafts. The concrete infill below glazing is in horizontal lifts of about 450 mm.

The annexes have a variety of steel sashes set to flush concrete lintels and with stooled sills. One section to each hangar has an 8-bay 2-storey office unit. Large square hopper-heads feed down-pipes from the main roof.

INTERIOR: The standard framework for an 'A' Type hangar, has deep open trussed beams with double bottom chord, all in I-section steel, bearing the ridges, and carrying a series of transverse trusses in steel flat and angle, cantilevered out to a steel valley beam, carried in turn by vertical stanchions set flush to the concrete walling. Horizontal wind-bracing is set at each end immediately adjacent to the doors.

HISTORY: The dimensions of the A-type shed, the standard hangar type for Trenchard's Home Defence Expansion Scheme, designed in 1924 and of which 34 examples were built on 17 sites, were based on the need to accommodate the RAF's largest projected twin-engined bomber - the De Havilland DH9A. Its length of 249 feet (75.9m) and span of 122 feet 5 inches (37.3 m), was the result of discussion in November 1923 between the Aerodrome Board and the Directorate of Works and Buildings in which each hangar was envisaged to accommodate 12 machines. The Type 'A' aircraft shed was the RAF's standard hangar from 1924 until the 1930's. Six were planned for Bicester, but financial restrictions on Trenchard's scheme led to only two being built. In 1936, two Type 'C' hangars were added, and the four are grouped symmetrically at the end of the axial avenue, and sharing broad concrete aprons. Until the onset of perimeter dispersal from the late 1930s all the aircraft of an operational airfield - typically an omni-directional flying field of 1000 yards diameter - would be accommodated in its hangars: their construction took up a considerable part of the construction cost for a new site, the 6 hangars at Upper Heyford taking up 30% of its total budget. As a consequence, military planners shadowed aircraft development through the planning and development of hangar buildings, a fact which underpins the importance of the Bicester group and their relationship to this uniquely important site.

Bicester is the best-preserved of the bomber bases constructed as the principal arm of Sir Hugh Trenchard's expansion of the RAF from 1923, which was based on the philosophy of offensive deterrence. It retains, better than any other military airbase in Britain, the layout and fabric relating to both pre-1930s military aviation and the development of Britain's strategic bomber force - and the manner in which its expansion reflected domestic political pressures as well as events on the world stage - in the period up to 1939. It was this policy of offensive deterrence that essentially dominated British air power and the RAF's existence as an independent arm of the military in the inter-war period, and continued to determine its shape and direction in the Second World War and afterwards during the Cold War. The grass flying field still survives with its 1939 boundaries largely intact, bounded by a group of bomb stores built in 1938/9 and airfield defences built in the early stages of the Second World War. For much of the Second World War RAF Bicester

functioned as an Operational Training Unit, training Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders as well as British air crews for service in Bomber Command. These OTUs, of which Bicester now forms the premier surviving example, fulfilled the critical requirement of enabling bomber crews - once individual members had trained in flying, bombing, gunnery and navigation - to form and train as units.

Military flying at Bicester commenced in 1918, when the new aerodrome was established as a three-squadron Training Depot Station. The site was demolished after closure of the base in 1920, but it was selected as a bomber station by the Aerodrome Board as part of Trenchard's Home Defence Expansion Scheme, sanctioned by Baldwin's government in June 1923. General Sir Hugh Trenchard founded the independent status of the RAF upon the concept of offensive deterrence, a principle which he shared with Italy's Marshall Douhet and America's General Mitchell. This doctrine envisaged fleets of self-defending bomber formations as the instrument of war most likely to ensure swift victory in any future conflict, and underpinned the justification for the Strategic Bomber Offensive in the Second World War. The RAF's infrastructure was subject to severe political fluctuations in the inter-war period, the result of both events on the world stage and political and financial pressures at home. Only two of the proposed six 'A-type' hangars at Bicester for the 3-squadron station, for which plans were drawn up in August 1926, were built, due to an early deceleration in Trenchard's programme, the next major phase of building forming part of the post-1934 Expansion Period, which had been prompted by the collapse of the Geneva disarmament talks in 1933.

The station was opened in January 1928, the 10th of that month seeing the arrival of Hawker Horsleys from Spittlegate. The fabric and layout, planned on dispersed principles, retains an identifiable 1920s character, and provide examples of the first permanent buildings erected for RAF operational stations. Air Commodore (later Air Chief Marshall Sir) Edgar Ludlow-Hewitt, President of the Aerodrome Board until late 1925 and C-in-C Bomber Command early in the Second World War, was responsible for the selection and outline planning of these stations, often in close collaboration with Trenchard. Designs for the built fabric were developed in detail by the staff of the Director of Works and Buildings (Maj-Gen Sir Andrew M Stuart, and Maj-Gen Sir William A Liddell from April 1924 to July 1929). The most prominent technical buildings, most notably the guardroom (Building 89) and station headquarters (Building 47), and the buildings on the domestic site were designed in a simple, astylar, neo-Georgian style. The domestic buildings were laid out in an open plan manner, more formally than the technical site to the east (see below) and thus enabling the principal buildings around the parade ground area to play a particularly important role in defining the character of the site. The planning of the technical site is dominated by a strong east-west axis, from the west entrance to the flying field. This road is tree-lined and flanked by the 1920s motor transport group (Buildings 129, 130 and 131), armoury (123) and workshops (90 and 99). It provides clear views towards the hangars to the east and, across the A421, the domestic site to the west. From the west entrance, which is flanked by the impressive

group of Station Headquarters and Guardhouse (Buildings 146-7 and 89), two service roads branch out, one to the north-east serving the power house and water supply group (Buildings 81, 82 and 84) and that to the south-east serving the Air Ministry Works Department Group (Building 144) and the now-demolished coal yard. The latter, and the main workshops (Building 99), was served by an Air Ministry railway which entered the site from the east.

The 1930s extensions and new buildings carefully match the style of the 1920s scheme. Whilst the married quarters to the N of Skimmingdish Lane and the W of Buckingham Road drew their inspiration from the Garden City Movement, the neo-Georgian officers' mess (Cherwood House, Buckingham Road) and married quarters off Skimmingdish Lane reflect the distinct change in the aesthetic quality and design of RAF stations, which resulted from the Air Ministry's consultation with the Royal Fine Arts Commission and appointment of an architectural advisor to the Directorate of Works and Buildings in 1934. The buildings constructed in 1939 for Scheme M, notably the decontamination centres, boiler and power houses and flat-roofed barracks buildings, are characterised by developed Art Deco characteristics; Buildings 23, 25 and 20 are distinguished by flat protected concrete roofs - to counter the effects of incendiary bombs and minimise the effects of bomb blast - and the use of glazing detail and string courses to give a much more streamlined horizontal design. The increase in aircraft at Bicester was marked by the completion of new C-type hangars in 1937, and the building of a new control tower in 1938 reflected the increased importance given to the need to control movement with the defined zoning of serviceable landing and take-off areas.

1938 was marked by the arrival of Blenheim bombers, which replaced the obsolete Overstrands with which many airfields had been equipped into the mid 1930s, and in October 1939 the first Halifax prototype made its maiden flight from Bicester. From 1938 to October 1944 Bicester served as an Operational Training Unit, mainly for the training of pilots, observers and gunners for the Blenheim crews of 2 Group. The outset of the conflict saw the completion of the bomb stores group to the south and construction of pillboxes and trenches for the close defence of the airfield, now surviving on the east side of the hangars and in a group to the south of the flying field. The flying field was considerably enlarged to the north and south, with tracks and 'panhandle' standings for the dispersed parking of aircraft characteristic of World War Two bomber stations. RAF Bicester functioned as an Operational Training Unit until October 1944, training Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders as well as British air crews for service in Bomber Command. These OTUs, of which Bicester now forms the premier surviving example, fulfilled the critical requirement of enabling bomber crews - once individual members had trained in flying, bombing, gunnery and navigation - to form and train as units. Crews for the medium bomber units in the Middle East and then the Far East were formed and trained at Bicester and Upwood, Mosquitos replacing the Blenheims from January 1944. From autumn 1943 it was already serving as a Forward Equipment Unit for the logistical support of

Operation Overlord. After 1945, 71 Maintenance Unit formed here as one of the principal aircraft salvage units, responsible for southern England. Crashed aircraft were brought here and reconstructed in one of the hangars for crash investigation purposes. This use, together with its role as a gliding school and the administrative use of the domestic site (DCTA Caversfield) has ensured the preservation of the inter-war character of the site and the rare and consistent preservation of exterior detail and fitments. Post-war redevelopment and encroachment by quarrying has removed most of the Second World War extensions to the flying field.

(Dobinson, C: Airfield Themes (Report for English Heritage), 1997;
 Francis P: British Military Airfield Architecture, 1996; Francis,P: RAF Bicester (Site Report for Cherwell District Council), 1996, 28)

Selected Sources

Books and journals

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Francis, P, British Military Airfield Architecture From Airships To The Jet Age, (1996)

Francis, P , RAF Bicester, (1996), 28

National Grid Reference: SP 59202 24564, SP 59247 24313

BUILDING 103 (LINK TRAINER)

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: BUILDING 103 (LINK TRAINER)

List entry Number: 1392761

Location

BUILDING 103 (LINK TRAINER), A421 (SE)

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Oxfordshire

District: Cherwell

District Type: District Authority

Parish: Launton

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 01-Dec-2005

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 500288

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

LAUNTON

1714/0/10024 A421 (SE) 01-DEC-05 Technical Site, RAF Bicester Building 103 (Link Trainer)

GV II Link Trainer building. By the Air Ministry's Directorate of Works and Buildings, to drawing number 6414/37. Flemish bond brick with steel casements and flat reinforced concrete roof. PLAN: rectangular plan, with two rooms for the accommodation of Link Trainers (see below). West elevation has two steel-framed windows flanked by outer doors. INTERIOR: original doors and joinery.

HISTORY: The Technical Site at Bicester, separated from the Domestic Site, still has many of the original buildings, mostly of 1926 but with others added during successive phases of the 1930's Expansion Period. The Link trainer, first introduced to Britain in 1936, provided a cheap method of training pilots.

The Link trainer provided a cheaper alternative for training pilots in instrument flying than flying actual aircraft. The trainer was invented by in 1929 by Edwin Link, an American organ manufacturer, and it was first introduced into the UK in 1936 when a company called JVW Ltd. was set up at Aylesbury to handle sales, installations and maintenance. The wartime Link trainer comprised a fuselage approximately 10ft long of timber frame construction and covered with plywood or fabric. Powerful bellows enabled the device to simulate basic flying movements similar to pitching, banking and turning of a real aircraft. Early machines had wings, tailplane and fin with their corresponding control surfaces. The cockpit closely resembled a typical single-engined aircraft of the period, with the usual six basic instruments plus compass, radio, rudder pedals and control column. Any changes in flight attitude were shown by the instruments as well as the relevant control surfaces.

Connections led from the trainer to an instructor's desk where a small three-wheeled trolley called a 'tracking crab' (automatic recorder) reacted

to time and rate of movement of the fuselage. One wheel functioned as an pen recorder and traced an accurate course onto a map of the countryside over which the 'pilot' was supposed to be flying. The desk also had a duplicate set of aircraft instruments enabling him to assess the pilot's flying ability (see Flight, 28.10.1937: 416-9).

At the beginning of the Second World War, because of the fear of bombing raids on our cities, cinemas and theatres were shut. The companies who had relied on supplying theatre equipment had to seek alternative work. The firm of Fitups Ltd. of Manchester (later to become Watts & Corry Ltd.) was in 1940 operating with the north of England branch of Strand Electric (later to become Rank Strand Electric). The staff of these two firms included joiners, scenic artists, draughtsmen, engineers and electricians. They were versatile in their approach at finding suitable work. Representatives were sent to the Air Ministry to try and obtain camouflage work. This was not available, but a contract was won for the design and manufacture of painted scenic cycloramas for Link trainers. The target screen at Crail (Scotland) is part of the extensive Scheduled Ancient Monument on that exceptionally well-preserved Second World War airfield.

This building, one of the permanent standard designs produced by the Air Ministry in the late 1930s, has special importance for its relationship to RAF Bicester's wartime function as a training centre for Bomber Command and this uniquely well-preserved group of both phases of the inter-war expansion of the RAF. It faces the main axial route through the technical site.

Bicester is the best-preserved of the bomber bases constructed as the principal arm of Sir Hugh Trenchard's expansion of the RAF from 1923, which was based on the philosophy of offensive deterrence. It retains, better than any other military airbase in Britain, the layout and fabric relating to both pre-1930s military aviation and the development of Britain's strategic bomber force - and the manner in which its expansion reflected domestic political pressures as well as events on the world stage - in the period up to 1939. It was this policy of offensive deterrence that essentially dominated British air power and the RAF's existence as an independent arm of the military in the inter-war period, and continued to determine its shape and direction in the Second World War and afterwards during the Cold War. The grass flying field still survives with its 1939 boundaries largely intact, bounded by a group of bomb stores built in 1938/9 and airfield defences built in the early stages of the Second World War. For much of the Second World War RAF Bicester functioned as an Operational Training Unit, training Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders as well as British air crews for service in Bomber Command. These OTUs, of which Bicester now forms the premier surviving example, fulfilled the critical requirement of enabling bomber crews - once individual members had trained in flying, bombing, gunnery and navigation - to form and train as units. For further historical details see Buildings Nos 79 and 137 (Type 'A' Hangars).

BUILDINGS 108 AND 113 (TYPE C HANGARS)

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: BUILDINGS 108 AND 113 (TYPE C HANGARS)

List entry Number: 1392762

Location

BUILDINGS 108 AND 113 (TYPE C HANGARS), A421 (SE)

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Oxfordshire

District: Cherwell

District Type: District Authority

Parish: Launton

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 01-Dec-2005

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 500286

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

LAUNTON

1714/0/10019 A421 (SE) 01-DEC-05 Technical Site, RAF Bicester Buildings 108 and 113 (Type C hangars)

GV II Aircraft hangars with annexes housing associated stores, workshops and offices. 1937. By the Air Ministry's Directorate of Works and Buildings, to drawing number 872 and 1581/35. Steel main frame and roof trusses, brickwork in Flemish bond, sheet roofing replacing asbestos slates.

PLAN: Large sheds with full height steel doors at each end, running to external gantries, with a series of single storey lean-to annexes on either long flank, in part rising to two storeys, which housed workshops, rest rooms and squadron offices. The roof a series of transverse ridges with hipped ends, behind a parapet, and with deep apron above doors.

EXTERIOR: At mid height of side walls are 10 large 32-pane fixed steel casements separated by concrete piers, and with continuous sill and lintel bands. Above the windows a high parapet to flush coping. One bay at each end, also in concrete, is slightly brought forward, and with a higher parapet; a tall single light with horizontal bars is centred to the bay. The short ends have full height and width steel doors, with 12-pane lights at the top, under a deep projecting concrete rail carrying the rolling headgear; beyond the opening a light steel lattice beam projects out and is carried by a light steel strutted support, with steel ground-stops for the doors. Above the doors, and contained by the wing walls of the first bays, a deep apron with asbestos-cement slate hanging. The doors originally had sand or gravel fill between inner and outer sheeting at the lower panels, to enhance blast protection. Replacement windows to annexes.

INTERIOR: Plain concrete floor, steel stanchions exposed internally carry deep lattice trusses in steel channel, double to top and bottom chords, set to the ridges of the transverse roofs and shaped to the hipped ends. At right angles to these are cantilevered members, in steel angle, at 15ft

(4.6m) centres, meeting at and carrying the internal gutters. The bays adjoining the doors have horizontal wind-bracing members. The roof slopes are underlined in softwood square-edged boarding.

HISTORY: The Technical site at Bicester, separated from the Domestic Site, still has many of the original buildings, mostly of 1926 but with others added during successive phases of the 1930's Expansion Period. In 1937, two Type 'C' hangars were added to the earlier pair of hangars on the site, and the four are grouped symmetrically at the end of the axial avenue, and sharing broad concrete aprons. The C-type shed was the standard hangar type for the post-1934 Expansion Scheme, originally designed in 1934 and of which 155 examples were built. Its dimensions (300ft long, 150ft span and clear height of 35ft), were intended to accommodate 100-ft span heavy bombers, enabling new specifications to be issued to aircraft manufacturers by the Air Ministry. It evolved from the earlier Type A, and first versions had exposed gabled ends to the roofs: after 1935 the hipped version behind parapets, as here, was normal. An internal height of 35ft (10.7) was later reduced to 30ft (9.1), as used in this example.

Until the onset of perimeter dispersal from the late 1930s all the aircraft of an operational airfield - typically an omni-directional flying field of 1000 yards diameter - would be accommodated in its hangars: their construction took up a considerable part of the construction cost for a new site, the 6 hangars at Upper Heyford taking up 30% of its total budget. As a consequence, military planners shadowed aircraft development through the planning and development of hangar buildings, a fact which underpins the importance of the Bicester group and their relationship to this uniquely important site. Although subjected to some loss of original detail, these form an historically important and prominent part of the site as viewed from the flying field.

Bicester is the best-preserved of the bomber bases constructed as the principal arm of Sir Hugh Trenchard's expansion of the RAF from 1923, which was based on the philosophy of offensive deterrence. It retains, better than any other military airbase in Britain, the layout and fabric relating to both pre-1930s military aviation and the development of Britain's strategic bomber force - and the manner in which its expansion reflected domestic political pressures as well as events on the world stage - in the period up to 1939. It was this policy of offensive deterrence that essentially dominated British air power and the RAF's existence as an independent arm of the military in the inter-war period, and continued to determine its shape and direction in the Second World War and afterwards during the Cold War. The grass flying field still survives with its 1939 boundaries largely intact, bounded by a group of bomb stores built in 1938/9 and airfield defences built in the early stages of the Second World War. For much of the Second World War RAF Bicester functioned as an Operational Training Unit, training Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders as well as British air crews for service in Bomber Command. These OTUs, of which Bicester now forms the premier surviving example, fulfilled the critical requirement of enabling

bomber crews - once individual members had trained in flying, bombing, gunnery and navigation - to form and train as units.

For further historical details see Buildings Nos 79 and 137 (Type 'A' Hangars).

BUILDING NO 123 (LECTURE ROOMS AND ARMOURY)

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: BUILDING NO 123 (LECTURE ROOMS AND ARMOURY)

List entry Number: 1393043

Location

BUILDING NO 123 (LECTURE ROOMS AND ARMOURY), A 421
(SOUTH-EAST SIDE)

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Oxfordshire

District: Cherwell

District Type: District Authority

Parish: Launton

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 01-Dec-2005

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 497531

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

LAUNTON

SP5924 A 421 (SOUTH-EAST SIDE) 1714/0/10058 RAF Bicester: Technical Site 01-DEC-05 Building No 123 (Lecture Rooms and Armoury)

GV II Station Armoury with Lecture Rooms. 1926 and cross-wing added 1936. By the Air Ministry's Directorate of Works and Buildings, to drawing number 1052/24 and 541-3/35. Dark red Flemish bond brickwork, slate roof.

PLAN: A long T-plan 2-storey range containing laboratory lecture rooms, offices, workshop and a library continues as a one-storey flat-roofed unit with the armoury, ammunition testing bays and machine-gun stores; the armoury section in independent rooms with steel doors.

EXTERIOR: The 2-storey range has tall casement windows, with flush concrete lintels and stooled sills, in 7 + 3 bays under hipped roofs to box eaves, with 4 bays on the returned end. The rear is similar, but with one bay having staircase windows at dropped levels. To the front is a length of blast wall, also concrete stairs down to a basement. At the left end are doors to a steel escape stair. At the upper sill level a 3-brick projecting plat-band. Small ridge stack near right-hand end.

The flat-roofed block has garage doors to the outer end, 3 windows to the front, and a series of small lights, plus 2 doors with over-lights to the

rear.

INTERIOR: Remodelled in 1980s.

HISTORY: The Technical Site at Bicester, separated from the Domestic Site, still has many of the original buildings, mostly of 1926 but with others added during successive phases of the 1930s Expansion Period. The main range was carried out in two stages, the shorter cross wing having been added c1936, but carried out in carefully matched materials and detail. As one of the original buildings it comprises an example of one of the first permanent designs for Britain's independent air force. It is prominently sited, facing the main central avenue that bisects the site.

Bicester is the best-preserved of the bomber bases constructed as the principal arm of Sir Hugh Trenchard's expansion of the RAF from 1923, which was based on the philosophy of offensive deterrence. It retains, better than any other military airbase in Britain, the layout and fabric relating to both pre-1930s military aviation and the development of Britain's strategic bomber force - and the manner in which its expansion reflected domestic political pressures as well as events on the world stage - in the period up to 1939. It was this policy of offensive deterrence that essentially dominated British air power and the RAF's existence as an independent arm of the military in the inter-war period, and continued to determine its shape and direction in the Second World War and afterwards during the Cold War. The grass flying field still survives with its 1939 boundaries largely intact, bounded by a group of bomb stores built in 1938/9 and airfield defences built in the early stages of the Second World War. For much of the Second World War RAF Bicester functioned as an Operational Training Unit, training Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders as well as British air crews for service in Bomber Command. These OTUs, of which Bicester now forms the premier surviving example, fulfilled the critical requirement of enabling bomber crews - once individual members had trained in flying, bombing, gunnery and navigation - to form and train as units. For further historical details see Buildings Nos 79 and 137 (Type 'A' Hangars).

BUILDING NOS 129, 130 AND 131 (MOTOR TRANSPORT SHEDS)

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: BUILDING NOS 129, 130 AND 131 (MOTOR TRANSPORT SHEDS)

List entry Number: 1393044

Location

BUILDING NOS 129, 130 AND 131 (MOTOR TRANSPORT SHEDS), A
421 (SOUTH-EAST SIDE)

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Oxfordshire

District: Cherwell

District Type: District Authority

Parish: Launton

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 01-Dec-2005

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 497532

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

LAUNTON

SP5924 A 421 (SOUTH-EAST SIDE) 1714/0/10059 RAF Bicester: Technical Site 01-DEC-05 Building Nos 129, 130 and 131 (Motor Transport Sheds)

GV II Three ranges of motor transport sheds. 1927 (Buildings 129 and 131) and 1937 (Building 130). By the Air Ministry's Directorate of Works and Buildings, to drawing number 6225/37 (130), 2033-5/26 (129 and 131). Steel framing with in-situ cast concrete or brick walling, diagonal asbestos-cement slate roofs.

PLAN: The two parallel ranges (129 and 131) face a wide concrete manoeuvring apron, and were complemented by a later shed (130) to provide a 3-sided yard. They are basic garages, with 6 low and 3 higher bays in the left-hand unit (129), in turn linked to a later workshop adjacent to the avenue (not included). To the right (131) are 6 high bays, with 2 lower, left, and workshops to the right, with a broad-span roof to an outer end gable.

EXTERIOR: The inner fronts of 129 and 131 have steel H-stanchions tied back to similar verticals housing full-width roller shutters to each garage, but one unit in 131 has later external sliding doors. Gable and rear walls normally in steel frame set flush to cast concrete walls, but the higher bays to 129 have Flemish bond brickwork gables and rear wall, including two external piers to the outer gable end. The broad-span section also

has cast concrete walling, with various openings. In front of the dividing stanchions between garages is a protective concrete block set to the paving.

Building 130 has four large part-glazed timber doors hung to bold bull-nosed concrete piers, below a continuous lintel band, above which are horizontal clerestory windows. Plain gable ends, brick rear wall with four large vertical steel casements.

INTERIOR: Steel trusses to steel stanchions or brick piers.

HISTORY: The Technical Site at Bicester, separated from the Domestic Site, still has many of the original buildings, mostly of 1926 but with others added during successive phases of the 1930's Expansion Period. This is an unusually complete example of an important surviving group, motor transport comprising a key function on military air bases. The group is entered from the main avenue, and is sited opposite the Station Stores (qv), all part of a uniquely important site.

Bicester is the best-preserved of the bomber bases constructed as the principal arm of Sir Hugh Trenchard's expansion of the RAF from 1923, which was based on the philosophy of offensive deterrence. It retains, better than any other military airbase in Britain, the layout and fabric relating to both pre-1930s military aviation and the development of Britain's strategic bomber force - and the manner in which its expansion reflected domestic political pressures as well as events on the world stage - in the period up to 1939. It was this policy of offensive deterrence that essentially dominated British air power and the RAF's existence as an independent arm of the military in the inter-war period, and continued to determine its shape and direction in the Second World War and afterwards during the Cold War. The grass flying field still survives with its 1939 boundaries largely intact, bounded by a group of bomb stores built in 1938/9 and airfield defences built in the early stages of the Second World War. For much of the Second World War RAF Bicester functioned as an Operational Training Unit, training Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders as well as British air crews for service in Bomber Command. These OTUs, of which Bicester now forms the premier surviving example, fulfilled the critical requirement of enabling bomber crews - once individual members had trained in flying, bombing, gunnery and navigation - to form and train as units. For further historical details see Buildings Nos 79 and 137 (Type 'A' Hangars).

BUILDING NO 135

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: BUILDING NO 135

List entry Number: 1393049

Location

BUILDING NO 135, A 421 (SOUTH-EAST SIDE)

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Oxfordshire

District: Cherwell

District Type: District Authority

Parish: Launton

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 01-Dec-2005

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 497534

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

LAUNTON

SP5924 A 421 (SOUTH-EAST SIDE) 1714/0/10062 RAF Bicester:
Technical Site 01-DEC-05 Building No 135

GV II Special Repair Bay Shed. 1938. By the Air Ministry's Directorate of Works and Buildings, to drawing number 1368/38. Brick with slate gabled roof. Rectangular plan. Four-bay front, articulated by concrete columns with original half-glazed folding doors.

HISTORY: The Technical Site at Bicester, separated from the Domestic Site, still has many of the original buildings, mostly of 1926 but with others added during successive phases of the 1930's Expansion Period. This building is sited close to the main MT group, and comprises an unusually complete example of a 1930s technical building, relating to a uniquely important site.

Bicester is the best-preserved of the bomber bases constructed as the principal arm of Sir Hugh Trenchard's expansion of the RAF from 1923, which was based on the philosophy of offensive deterrence. It retains, better than any other military airbase in Britain, the layout and fabric relating to both pre-1930s military aviation and the development of Britain's strategic bomber force - and the manner in which its expansion reflected domestic political pressures as well as events on the world stage - in the period up to 1939. It was this policy of offensive deterrence that essentially dominated British air power and the RAF's existence as an independent arm of the military in the inter-war period, and continued to determine its shape and direction in the Second World War and afterwards during the Cold War. The grass flying field still survives with its 1939 boundaries largely intact, bounded by a group of bomb stores built in 1938/9 and airfield defences built in the early stages of the Second World War. For much of the Second World War RAF Bicester

functioned as an Operational Training Unit, training Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders as well as British air crews for service in Bomber Command. These OTUs, of which Bicester now forms the premier surviving example, fulfilled the critical requirement of enabling bomber crews - once individual members had trained in flying, bombing, gunnery and navigation - to form and train as units. For further historical details see Buildings Nos 79 and 137 (Type 'A' Hangars).