



Historic England

# BUILDING NO 89 (GUARD AND FIRE PARTY HOUSE)

## 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 89 (GUARD AND FIRE PARTY HOUSE)

**List entry Number:** 1393037

## Location

BUILDING NO 89 (GUARD AND FIRE PARTY HOUSE), 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: 497525

## 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) 1714/0/10052 RAF Bicester: Technical Site  
01-DEC-05 Building No 89 (Guard and Fire Party House)

GV II

Guardhouse with exercise yard and accommodation for fire party. Dated 1926. By the Air Ministry's Directorate of Works and Buildings, to drawing number 959/25. Dark brick in Flemish bond, but some stretcher bond, slate gambrel roof, some flat concrete extensions, brick stack.

PLAN: A long rectangular building containing guardhouse and office, with cells; roof sweeps down over non-enclosed verandah to the front, and at the rear is a walled exercise yard.

EXTERIOR: Verandah on four square chamfered concrete posts to stone pads and with broad impost blocks set to shallow concrete platform; sloping soffit is boarded. Steel casements set to flush chamfered concrete lintels and stooled sills, one doorway with second blocked, and in flat-roofed bay at each end a further plank door with over-light. Large double casements to rear. Centred over the verandah at the ridge a square bell-turret in timber with clad skirt, small metal cupola. The walled rear enclosure in stretcher bond, rising to parapet at mains eaves level. Metal vents to rear cells.

INTERIOR: Retains original joinery. Wooden cell doors with original fittings.

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. As part of the first phase of buildings on this uniquely important site, this comprises one of the first permanent designs for Britain's independent air force. It is a good example of the larger version of guardhouse of its period, thought to be the only extant example (Francis, 1996, 23). It is also prominently sited at the main gate, facing the Station Offices (qv) across the main axial route that bisects the technical site and leads to the hangars and 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).

## Selected Sources

### **Books and journals**

Dobinson, C, *Airfield Themes*, (1997)

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

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

National Grid Reference: SP 59056 24427

## Map



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For a copy of the full scale map, please see the attached PDF - [1393037 .pdf](#)  
(<http://gisservices.HistoricEngland.org.uk/printwebservicehle/StatutoryPrint.svc/354187/HLE A4L Grade|HLE A3L Grade.pdf>)

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