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SECTION A: BACKGROUND TO PROPOSALS

A.1 15/01012/OUT The Current Outline Application - The Application Form Description:

A.1.1 'Development of up to 48,308sqm of employment floorspace (Class B1c, B2, B8 and ancillary B1a uses), the siting of buildings to the south of the site, servicing and circulation areas, vehicular and pedestrian access from Skimmingdish Lane and landscaping.'

The current outline planning application 15/01012/OUT is for 'Access' and 'Layout' for two large industrial style employment sheds for mixed employment use on a greenfield to the SE of RAF Bicester, see Figure 1. This is the first phase of a proposal to site four large sheds on the 18.45 hectare site, see Figure 2.

A.2 15/01012/OUT The Current Outline Application - The Application Site

A.2.1 The application site is adjacent to the nationally important RAF Bicester Conservation Area which includes listed buildings and scheduled monuments.

The assessment of significance and setting is summarised in Section B of this document. A Conservation Appraisal of RAF Bicester was written in 2008, this together with Section E: Appendix 1 'Understanding the significance of the siting and setting of RAF Bicester' gives a more detailed review of the historical design and setting criteria for airfields.

An assessment of the impact of the current outline planning application is given in Section C of this document.

Section D includes a summary which lists further information that would help to provide informed guidance for the design of the proposed development, without which it would be difficult to properly assess its impact on the Conservation Area, including the listed buildings the Scheduled Monuments within.

Section E: Appendix 1 'Understanding the significance of the siting and setting of RAF Bicester' and Appendix 2 lists policies relevant to Design and Conservation.

A.2.2 There are a number of previous applications for the site, for which the Planning Inspector, Cherwell District Council and English Heritage have recognised a connection between the open countryside and RAF Bicester. Concern has been expressed over the height of development and the need for good design.

Refer to Section A.3 below for a chronology of comments made in respect of the key planning history for the sites adjacent to the RAF Bicester Conservation Area.



Fig 1. 15/01012/OUT First Phase



Fig 2. 15/01012/OUT Illustrative Masterplan



Fig 3. 15/00072/PREAPP Masterplan

A.3 The Adjacent Conservation Area

A.3.1 The 15/01012/OUT application site abuts RAF Bicester Conservation Area, a nationally significant Designated Heritage Asset comprising listed buildings and scheduled monuments and airfield. The significance and setting likely to be effected by this application is outlined in Sections B and E, along with main relevant policies for the Heritage Asset.

A.3.2 RAF Bicester is currently owned by Bicester Heritage who lease the airfield to the Windrushers Gliding Club. Bicester Heritage recently staged an event where a Lancaster Bomber landed on the air field. Flight paths for larger aeroplanes still need to be considered, so as not to compromise events which will help to sustain the Heritage Asset. Although health and safety measures and aeroplanes are of a higher specification now than in World War II, aircraft crashes continue to be reported at air shows as well as in the private, military and commercial aircraft sectors. See comments on the latest RAF safeguarding map for the airfield in Section C.

A.4 The Adjacent Care Home

A.4.1 The comments in this document focus mainly on the effect on RAF Bicester and its setting but the amenity of residents in the care home also needs to be considered as does the streetscene to Skimmingdish Lane and within the site; this is assessed in Section C of this document.

A.5 Chronology of Key Planning History for sites adjacent to the RAF Bicester Conservation Area.

A.5.1 15/01012/OUT

A.5.1.1 For the current application 15/01012/OUT see Figures 1, 2 and Sections C and D, NB. The current application 15/01012/OUT refers to the 14/00272/PREAPP but not 15/00072/PREAPP.

A.5.2 15/00072/PREAPP

A.5.2.1 Application Summary:

15/00072/PREAPP - See Figure 3, this Preapp application included a site plan with proposed circulation and the first mention of 16m high buildings on the current application site.

A.5.2.2 Relevant comments from Internal/External Consultations:

15/00072/PREAPP CDC's letter to the Applicant of 11.05.2015, reported Officers had:

'notes indicated you were to draw up a design code and maybe that and the parameter plans can be submitted for an assessment before the formal application is submitted.'

'...expressed a number of concerns including heights, bulk, relationship to RAF Bicester, impact on the care home,

views through the site, landscaping and impact on wildlife. On the physical elements some details were tabled with regard to design and development zoning. I believed that further information was going to be sent to us to assess, particularly as these buildings would be of a significant size. You referred to the impact of the buildings in Noral Way but I am not sure the schemes are comparable. The visual impact is different; in that case the motorway is not far away, whereas this site is part of a flatter landscape, Bicester 11 backs on to RAF Bicester, etc. I am more concerned by the visual impact on Bicester by comparing it with the larger warehouses on the east side of the town, just inside the ring road, which have a significant visual impact and are seen from some distance. I am concerned that 16 metre high buildings on Skimmingdish Lane will have a greater visual and worse impact on the conservation area and RAF Bicester.'

'my conclusions remain very much as set out in my previous letter in so far as the proposal broadly conforms to local and national planning policy and subject to details of positions of buildings, their height, bulk, mass and scale, I consider the physical impact of the proposal can be designed to avoid causing demonstrable harm providing you can demonstrate the building height can be accommodated in the landscape without harm to the character and appearance of RAF Bicester and the conservation area or adversely affecting the use of the airfield....'

A.5.2.3 Summary of comments:

- Applicant to produce a design code and parameter plans before formal application.
- Concern was expressed over the proposed height of 16m in relation to the Conservation Area and RAF Bicester.
- Proposal broadly conforms to local and national policy..subject to details of positions of buildings, their height, bulk, mass and scale...the physical impact of the proposal can be designed to avoid causing demonstrable harm providing you can demonstrate the building height can be accommodated...without harm.'
- Request the Applicant demonstrate the proposed 16m building height could be designed and landscaped to avoid harm.

A.5.3 15/00009/SO

- A.5.3.1 Screening application submitted 02.02.2015 see Figure 4. The application was for points of access only with a subsequent reserved matters for layout, appearance, landscaping and scale to be submitted following granting of outline permission.

A.5.4 14/00272/PREAPP

A.5.4.1 Application Summary:

The preapp included a masterplan showing four large sheds on the site but did not include any information on building heights, only proposed finished floor levels. The masterplan showed a proposed landscape layout including service and parking zones.

An annotated Site Parameter plan was also submitted which highlighted some views and strong axial entrance from Skimmingdish Lane.

An annotated Site Context plan gave a further assessment of existing features on the site.

Existing site boundaries were shown on a map and aerial photograph of the site. See Figure 5.



Fig 4: 15/0009/SO Built Areas Parameter Plan



Fig 5: 14/00272/PREAPP Masterplan

A.5.4.2 Relevant comments from Internal/External Consultations:

The Officer's Report for 14/00272/PREAPP 19.11.2014 included:

'Policy Bicester 11...requires that proposals conserve or enhance the setting of RAF Bicester Conservation Area and adjoining scheduled ancient monument. Although the site is not part of RAF Bicester (Policy Bicester 8) the Local Plan explains the site's significance...Paragraph C 98 states - Careful design and landscaping is required to ensure development respects and preserves the setting and character and appearance of the Former RAF Bicester Conservation Area....The impact on RAF Bicester is a significant and material consideration in determining any planning application' and

'Heritage: To the north and north east is RAF Bicester, a conservation area, and on the other side of the boundary from your site are scheduled monuments, all of which you were aware and the impact of your development upon it will be fully assessed...prior to the care home application, a proposal for B1 development on the land occupied by it was refused planning permission but allowed on appeal in 2007...The Inspector seemed to agree harm was caused to the countryside but the need for employment outweighed that consideration. But in terms of impact on the conservation area, it was agreed buildings should be 2-storied and there should be green buffers to the site boundaries. Of course this site is further away from RAF Bicester than the Bicester 11 site so impact needs to be even more carefully assessed...' and

'Landscape: A comprehensive Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment...is required, particularly taking into account the comments of the 2007 Inspector. Viewpoints should be agreed with us beforehand...' and

'Design and Visual Impact: Policy Bicester 11 requires a high quality design and finish with careful consideration given to layout, architecture, materials and colourings with careful consideration to buildings height to reduce overall impact...Although the proposed application will be an outline one, illustrative sketches (and cross sections) would help to assess the visual impact of the development on RAF Bicester, the care home and the wider surroundings... see it as an opportunity for some positive modern design and not the run of the mill industrial sheds...' and

'Conclusion:...you should be aware there is an objection to the use of the site for B8 development and two on the impact upon RAF Bicester, one from a heritage viewpoint and one its development potential...In summary I would conclude that the proposal broadly conforms to local and national policy. Subject to details of position of buildings, their height, bulk, mass and scale...'

'The realigned footpath could pass through the centre of the site through the main boulevard rather than being pushed to the edge - with retained trees this could be an attractive route...'

A.5.4.3 Summary of comments:

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment with viewpoints to be agreed by the Local Authority's Landscape Architect.

Policy Bicester 11 highlighted the need for:

- 'careful consideration given to building heights to reduce the overall impact '
- 'High quality design and finish'
- 'Development proposals to be accompanied and influenced by landscape/visual and heritage impact

- assessments’ and ‘Development that respects the landscape setting’
- ‘Development proposals’
- ‘A comprehensive landscaping scheme to limit visual intrusion into the wider landscape, particularly given the need to conserve the open setting, character and appearance of the Former RAF Bicester Conservation Area’ and ‘Conserve or enhance the setting of the Former RAF Bicester Conservation area and adjoining Scheduled Ancient Monument’
- The Preapp Report letter stated there was opportunity for positive modern design, not run of the mill industrial sheds.
- The Preapp Report letter referred to the B8 Preapp for 11m high shed that was not looked on favourably. (NB. No heights were indicated in the application documents) See Figure 9 and Section A.5.9.

A.5.5 13/013878/REM

A.5.5.1 Landscaping application to Outline Application 13/00372/OUT for 61 bed care home.

A.5.6 13/00372/OUT

A.5.6.1 Application for 75 bed 2-storey care home - permitted for 62 beds. See Figure 6.

A.5.7 13/01056/OUT and Appeal APP/C3105/A/13/2208385

A.5.7.1 Application Summary:

Housing development immediately adjacent to RAF Bicester: 200 dwellings adjacent to RAF Bicester 13/01056/OUT dismissed at appeal APP/C3105/A/13/2208385:

A.5.7.2 Relevant comments from Internal/External Consultations:

APP/C3105/A/13/2208385 Appeal Decision:

‘Conservation Area

18. The RAF Bicester Conservation Area ...character also reflects the fact that it needed to be isolated from other development.’, ‘19 Despite its length, the conservation area appraisal makes little reference to land outside the area boundary and even then it is in connection with the opposite end of the airfield. The appraisal notes that the siting of any development outside the conservation area but visible from it should respect the open visual relationships with the adjacent countryside, the setting of the conservation area.’, Overall Conclusion ‘42. Finally, the harm to the landscape and the setting of listed buildings, with extra weighting to the latter...’

CDC Conservation Officer’s comments on Brown’s POE Woodhall Planning & Conservation for the Caversfield site 20.03.2014:

‘My problem with the proof is centred around what it doesn’t say. I can’t see any references at all to the point we are making about the Conservation Area being different from normal ones in that it’s within the countryside



Fig 6 13/00372/OUT 2013 application for care home

and not in the middle of a village. Surely this is key to its character. Consideration of its setting will also be very different to any normal CA situation. In my opinion, the main question would seem to be “what elements, other than appreciable views go to defining the Conservation Area’s setting?”.

Para 6.05

Disagree. The special interest does not simply result from different periods of development. RAF Bicester and RAF Upper Heyford were amongst the first airfields to be developed in the new understanding of aviation as a weapon of war in its own right. The layout of these military aviation sites at the time of their initial construction was unique – there were no others, no template to decide the layout of the airfield. Trenchard’s understanding of the dangers and possibilities of flight lead to a new and completely innovative approach. The dispersal of the flying field, the technical site and the domestic sites and their location in open countryside to optimise flying are all an integral part of the special interest of the site.

Military architectural ideas were employed in the construction of the site, but flight had a need for new buildings to serve new functions and therefore architects also took their inspiration not simply from the repertoire of existing military structures but also from railway architecture, railway sheds in particular.

Modern housing adjacent and to the north of Skimmingdish Lane pre-date 2000 thematic assessment of military aviation sites by English Heritage.

Para 6.07 Disagree. Setting is of more than limited relevance. The siting of the RAF Bicester in open countryside is integral to the functionality of the flying field...

Para 6.11 Sight-lines are an integral part of the significance of the conservation area because of their requirement for flight. View out of and into a military base are a functional necessity in the defence of the airbase. Views are not there for aesthetic indulgence – military bases are built for war.

The aerial photographs on pages 11 and 31 within the conservation area appraisal illustrate the extreme openness of the site when the airbase was in operation. The photograph on page 31 shows the lengths gone-to to retain this openness whilst at the same time disguising it but painting mock field boundaries and trees on the open ground and camouflage on the hangar roofs.

The photograph on page 11 shows uninterrupted views out of the conservation area towards the appeal site in 1935.

Loss of views are a by-product of late 20th development and lack of maintenance.

There is a very significant view looking north-west along Skimmingdish Lane from within the conservation area out across the appeal site.

Para 6.13 Disagree – Development would alter the land use north-west of the conservation area. Despite the assertion made in statement 6.10 this land – despite being outside the conservation area boundary – does contribute to the wider landscape context and therefore the setting and significance of the conservation area.

Para 6.14 This seems to be the principle point but doesn’t really relate to the wider setting, just appreciation of views. He then goes on to making the point that if there’s no effect, there are no opportunities to enhance so he scores twice with the same shot (retaining our army/air-force analogies!).

The Conservation Area setting is defined by:

Related functionality

Topography

Accessibility

There is a reason for the location - human add-ons are in addition to the intrinsic nature of the site.

6.16 The proposed development provides the opportunity to denigrate the designated conservation area but fundamentally altering the underlying open character of the countryside. Enhancement of the setting of the

conservation area could be achieved through a more considered management of the land to preserve its open character which does currently exist albeit behind electronic gates.'

CDC Conservation Officer 18.03.2014:

'One of the points the Council has made was that in order to function optimally there is a requirement that the aerodrome be located on level ground in open countryside. It therefore follows that 'countryside' is an integral part of the setting of the military airbase. (It could also be argued that rural isolation was a requirement for military security.)

These seem self-evident requirements to me - the technology was new and any 'dropping out of the sky' needed to be done away from built up areas, the aircrafts also needed uninterrupted access to the skies for both landing and take-off and a level flying field was needed to limit physical damages and promote ease of landing.

Is there any document that sets out the physical requirements of a site to make it a successful aerodrome/military flying base? It would be extremely helpful if we could point to said document to show what the emerging RAF leaders considered a necessary requirement of a site. We could certainly point out that if an analysis was undertaken of all flying stations at the time of WWII it would most likely show that the common denominators were - flat ground + open countryside, but it would be extremely useful to draw attention to a previous study that says the same so that it shows we are not skewing the data to support the argument.'

EH response 19.03.2014:

'The issue of the flying field in the 1930s is the subject of a chapter in 'Twentieth Century Fortifications in England Vol IX.1: Airfield Themes', C S Dobinson, Published by the Council for British Archaeology 1997' Refer to Appendix 1.

A.5.7.3 Summary of comments:

- RAF Bicester needed to be isolated from other development.
- The Conservation Area Appraisal makes little reference to land outside the area boundary and even then it is in connection with the opposite end of the airfield...that the siting of any development outside...but visible form it should respect the open visual relationships with the adjacent countryside, the setting...
- RAF Bicester Conservation Area is special and its setting was functional and beyond appreciable views for aesthetic indulgence, it was built for war.
- The camouflage of the airfield and its buildings to replicate field patterns and crops shows how much the airfield relied on its surrounding landscape for defence.
- Trenchard's layout that RAF Bicester was groundbreaking for its time and appreciated the dangers and possibilities of flight including the need for defence and dispersal of the flying field.
- The siting of RAF Bicester in open countryside is integral to the functionality of the flying field.
- The loss of views out of the airfield are due to a lack of landscape maintenance and late 20thC development.
- Confirmation that the setting of the airfield was an important part of its design in terms of a functioning flying field and defensive post.

A.5.8 09/01659/REM**A.5.8.1 Application Summary:**

This application followed the Appeal for 2 storey B1 use on the site (APP/C3105/A/06/2010115 for 05/01563/OUT) Refer to Section A.5.7 See Figure *. It was approved in 2011. An application 10/00324/OUT replaced 05/01563?OUT but was withdrawn on 24 August 2011 when this application was approved.

These buildings had green roofs. The proposed FFL was 70.075; the proposed height to eaves was c7.5m; although the proposed service core 'lantern' was c9m. The finished floor level of 70.075 is lower than the current application with 71.0; 71.5 and 72.0 FFL meaning the 7.5m/9m cannot be directly compared with the 16m currently proposed. A preapp was submitted at this time for a 3-storey c76 bed care home on the site of comparable height to the B1 units under 09/01659/REM. See Sections C and D for suggested way of comparing the present proposals with past proposals. See Figures 7 and 44.

A.5.8.2 Relevant comments from Internal/External Consultations:

Urban Design comments:

This is a high profile site and the only development to so far 'jumped' what is effectively Bicester's ring road. It will be prominent as one passes along Skimmingdish Lane...Launton Road.

The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the key vistas being from the Control Tower across the flying field and also that the visual relationship with the countryside beyond is important. For this reason, in allowing the appeal, the Inspector limited the height of the buildings to two storeys.

The intervening scrub and hedgerows provide some screening effect between RAF Bicester (and) this site in summer, but less so in winter. There is the opportunity here to provide a landmark development here whilst being sensitive to the setting of the conservation area.

Several changes...in response to pre-application matters raised. Most notable is with respect to the materials and the design approach, which are now far more locally distinctive coherent respectively...buildings face Skimmingdish Lane and a symmetrical gateway is provided...reflective materials...have been removed....gateway entrance suggesting some grandeur but leads nowhere. An alternative opinion would be that there is 'hope value' of an extension of the development in to the adjacent field, which I would not support.

Conclusion: seek a revised landscape scheme and parking layout to create a stronger landscape structure, more usable amenity space. Including seating. A signage strategy..so that an assessment can be made whether there is sufficient visual interest in some of the elevations as submitted.

A.5.8.3 Summary of comments:

- This proposal attempted to blend in with the countryside by displacing the greenfield it sat on with a green roof and followed the wartime camouflage precedent. Some of the buildings on site also had grassed roofs and the trenches had earthwork banks as part of their protection.
- The Urban Design consultation comments noted the importance of the setting and views relating to the conservation area but also set out the opportunity to design a landmark development that was sensitive to its surroundings, with a strong gateway and landscaping within the development that provided workers with some amenity space and seating. The 2-storey buildings proposed addressed Skimmingdish Lane in a positive way and proposed materials which were more locally distinctive. The signage of the buildings was also considered of importance in the formation of the elevational design, as was the lighting.



Fig 7: 09/01659/REM followed appeal for 2 storey FFL 70.075



Fig 8: APP/C3105/A/06/2010115 for 05/01563/OUT

A.5.9 PREAPP B8 Use:**A.5.9.1 Application Summary:**

There was a PREAPP application for B8 Use for an ALDI Proposed Regional Distribution Centre of 11m in height 2007. Withdrawn. See Figure 9.

A.5.9.2 Relevant comments from Internal/External Consultations:

There was an application for B8 Use for an ALDI Proposed Regional Distribution Centre of 11m in height 2007. CDC Conservation Officer response 09.11.2007:

'I am in receipt of a wire frame image placed over an aerial photograph illustrating your proposal for a regional office and distribution centre contained in an email sent to Dr Rose Todd, Conservation Officer. I am aware that you have previously met Tony Wilson and Huw Williams of the Planning Policy Team who, whilst cautioning you regarding the proximity of the conservation area, suggested that a proposal of this nature should be taken through the LDF process and that you have made representations accordingly.'

You will be aware that the development is proposed contiguous with RAF Bicester Conservation Area boundary and the Bomb Store, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The Council has a duty under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas and the areas outside conservation areas that affect their setting. The Conservation Area Appraisal for RAF Bicester identifies the open character of the flying field and its visual relationship with the landscape beyond as important characteristics for protection and key vistas are identified. Scheduled Ancient Monuments are the highest form of protection for built structures in the UK and Consent is needed from English Heritage. The setting of Scheduled Ancient Monuments needs protection as well as the structure.'

Colleagues and I met today to consider your pre-application submission, being now in receipt of your email showing the scale of the proposal for the first time.'

We were in agreement that there is absolutely no way that we could entertain such scale of building in this location due to the harm it would cause to the conservation area and to the scheduled ancient monument. I strongly advise you that there is nothing to be gained from pursuing this proposal further.'

EH response 05.11.2007:

'...we are similarly not impressed.'

A.5.9.3 Summary of comments:

Type C hangers require 35 feet clear height(10.67m), this is comparable with the proposed 11m high ALDI PREAPP for B8 use that was submitted and robustly objected to by the Design and Conservation Section and English Heritage on the grounds of the scale of the building and harm it would cause to the conservation area and scheduled monuments. The current application 15/01012/OUT proposes building up to 5m above this height from a higher FFL.



Fig 9 2007 PREAPP B8 Use: ALDI Distribution Warehouse 11m high - the FFL was not given but for comparison the 09/01659/REM FFL was 70.075

A.5.10 Appeal Ref: APP/C3105/A/06/2010115 for 05/01563/OUT

A.5.10.1 Application Summary:

Appeal Ref: APP/C3105/A/06/2010115 for 05/01563/OUT B1 Development 2-storeys high on site of current Care Home further from RAF Bicester than the current site. See Figure 8. This refers to 'the likely scale' of the development of a 2-storey building, the height would be expected to be 5 to 7m.

A.5.10.2 Relevant comments from Internal/External Consultations:

Appeal Decision:

'5. The development of the allocated land has no realistic prospect of proceeding in the way it was intended as the historic interest of Bicester Airfield has been acknowledged by Conservation Area Designation and a range of bomb stores and airfield defence structures have protection either as Building of Architectural or Historic Interest or under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Area Act 1979, as amended. These designations offer significant protection of the buildings, airfield structures and the open setting of the airfield and severely diminish its development potential.' and *'15. Looking wider at the impact on the Conservation area and the setting of protected buildings and structures within the airfield, the appellant and the local planning authority agree that development in the manner proposed would not harm any of these aspects. Whilst others disagree, I am satisfied that the separation of the site from the Conservation Area boundary, the likely scale of the development and the landscaping proposals would preserve the open setting of the airfield and ensure the continued preservation of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of nationally important buildings and structures within it'*

A.5.10.3 Summary of comments:

- *The proposal for a two-storey development was recognised as having a harmful impact on the setting of the conservation area by the Inspector at Appeal, this was for a much lower building than currently proposed in 15/010112/OUT.*

SECTION B: ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE AND SETTING

Significance

- B.1 RAF Bicester is a site of National importance, described in the Conservation Area Appraisal as ‘the quintessential airfield of its age; almost better than any other site it typifies the public perception of the World War II airfield’. English Heritage (now Historic England) stated ‘...better than any other military airbase in Britain...comprises the best preserved bomber airfield 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 1920 Home Defence Expansion Scheme’. It was designated a Conservation Area in July 2002, various structures were listed in 2005, the Bomb Stores and Seagull Trenches were scheduled in 2006 due to its significance as part of 20thC defences of Britain.

The Conservation Area Appraisal was published in November 2008 and the conservation area was extended at the same time. The information contained within the appraisal includes:

‘Proposals...not conflict or change...its visual relationship with the ...adjoining countryside’ page 4;

‘3.2 Justification for Conservation Area Designation...Although the airfield expanded considerably during the war, to accommodate the dispersal of parked aircraft, almost all this extension has been lost to subsequent development... The spacial relationships within and between these areas, together with the views across the flying field to open countryside beyond are also important aspects of the character of the area worthy of conservation’ page 5;

‘When the RAF was formed...in April 1918, General Sir Hugh Trenchard..concentrated on the concept of offensive deterrence, a principle that guided the siting and layout of stations until the Second World War. Offensive deterrence saw fleets of self-defending bomber formations as the instrument of war most likely to ensure a swift victory in any future conflict. The geographical position of these bomber stations was response to the considered need to deter aggression from France. The sites were selected by Air Commodore... Edgar Ludlow Hewitt in East Anglia and Oxfordshire. They created an aircraft fighting zone some fifteen miles deep and extending round London from Duxford...to Salisbury Plain.’ Page 7; RAF Bicester was considered unsuitable for night flying which became popular during the Second World War due to its compact layout and large number of trees. Page 13.

The appraisal describes the significance of the heritage assets, namely the listed buildings, the Conservation Area and the Scheduled Monuments. There may also be buried railway lines near the bomb stores and the coal yard which may also be of interest in explaining the logistic within the site and how it connected to other bases and munitions stores etc. The aerial map in Figure 10 the route of the railtrack to the bomb stores needs further investigation, a track appears to align with the public footpath which would give its current position more significance.

Setting

- B.2 The Home Defence Expansion Scheme of 1923 chose flat sites which required very little preparation to achieve a clear run of 1000 yards (914m) in all directions (RAF Bicester was extended to allow a take-off run of 1,390 yards). A suitable flat site could be blighted by its proximity to high buildings and where unavoidable, 200 yard wide flying gaps were advised. An obstruction diminishes available space for landing and take-off. Aerodromes should not be sited near high hills which cause dangerous air currents. Removal of hedgerows, trees and other obstructions was undertaken to ensure openness of ground.



Fig 10 Aerial view of countryside surrounding RAF Bicester



Fig 11 Aerial view of countryside surrounding RAF Bicester



Fig 12 Aerial view of countryside surrounding RAF Bicester

- B.3 The country around the aerodrome should be as open as possible with facilities for forced landings.
- B.4 Sites without physical obstruction were chosen and remote sites preferred; the land around airfields was bought to allow future expansion and to prevent adjacent development to safeguard their bounds and approaches or compromise the positioning of bomb stores.
- B.5 The 1930s expansion schemes for the Air Ministry reviewed their requirements for airfield size and a template for layout, facilities and design which included solid runways, perimeter tracks and flying control services was further defined by the requirements of the Second World War.
- B.6 The 1932 book 'Aviation and the Aerodrome' noted a site that is within minimum limits is extremely impolitic unless provision can be made for expansion. A recommended template within this book is closely followed at RAF Bicester, which in turn had an expansion scheme between 1940 and 1945.
- B.7 Figure 13 shows the importance of distant views beyond hedgerows for defence and the need for unobstructed flight paths for take off and landing. The safeguarding of flying approaches to three front line stations Northolt, Hornchurch and Hawkinge' were in danger of being absorbed by urban sprawl which resulted in land purchases being requested in 1933.
- B.8 'Aviation and the Aerodrome' also states that military aerodromes have to be located not only with regard to their particular function but also with such viewpoints to respond to possible attack. In such attacks the defence posts would be manned and planes would be scrambled. This shows a direct link between the layout of Bicester and takes into account the importance of remoteness and views to the surroundings.
- B.9 A building which is the iconic link between the airfield and the wider countryside is the The Grade II listed Watch Office with Tower of c1937. The design of such buildings was a progression from the 1920s Duty Pilot in a hut who oversaw the airfield before radio communications were available between air and ground. See Figures 14-17.
- B.10 The current lack of management of the planting and hedgerows on and around the RAF Bicester site has caused a degree of harm to the Conservation Area and its links with the open countryside adjacent and is reversible. Although any reduction of planting would in turn make the impact of adjacent development more prominent.
- B.11 The RAF Bicester airfield and buildings were camouflaged to replicate the field pattern surrounding them, this reinforces the link and importance of the countryside setting to the airfield.
- B.12 No specific approach or take off lanes were defined although prevailing winds dictated more popular runs they were deliberately varied to limit surface erosion especially as the planes were heavier than the gliders that use the airfield today. This means aircraft could approach the airfield from almost any direction depending on the weather.
- B.12 Section E Appendix 1 gives a detailed account of the factors that were considered when choosing a site for an aerodrome.



Fig 13 The photograph above which is under Copyright shows the importance of distant views beyond hedgerows

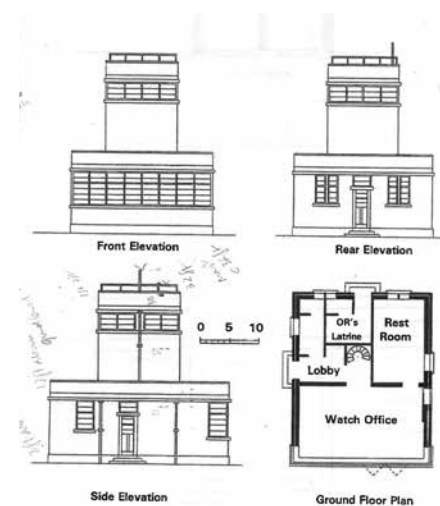


Fig 14 Grade II listed Watch Office with Tower. The Watch Office allowed views over the airfield, the roof of the Watch Office, the observation tower and the roof of the tower allowed 360 degree views to the surrounding countryside. This building, the pillarboxes and trenches needed clear views for defence. Before radio communication between ground and air, visual contact would have been very important to signal clearance for planes to land and take off.
Copyright: RAF Bicester Airfield Research Publishing

SECTION C: ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION 15/01012/OUT

C.1 15/01012/OUT

- C.1.1 Policy Bicester 11: Employment Land at North East Bicester has a development area of 15 hectares and aims to accommodate 1,000 jobs in B1, B2 and B 8 uses but recognises site constraints may reduce numbers slightly.
- C.1.2 The chronology of key planning applications and advice for the site are summarised in Section A.5 of this document. C2-C6 below should be read in conjunction with Section E - Appendix 2.
- C.1.3 Various information has been submitted for the proposed large sheds for the 15/01012/OUT application. The key documents for the Design and Conservation Section are:
- The Design and Access Statement (See item C.2 below)
 - The Heritage Impact Assessment (See item C.3 below)
 - The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (See item C.4 below)
 - The Design Codes (See item C.5 below)
 - The Parameter Plans (See item C.6 below)

C.2 The Design and Access Statement:

- C.2.1 Par. 1.3 of the Design and Access Statement states 'outline form, with approval sought for the access point into the site from Skimmingdish Lane along with siting of two buildings on the southern part of the site. Subsequent reserved matters seeking approval for the layout, appearance; landscaping and scale will be submitted following the grant of outline permission'

As the scale of the proposed 16m high sheds is not part of this application, concerns over height which were raised under the 15/00072/PREAPP do not need to be repeated here. Nor does the landscaping or the additional two sheds shown in the masterplan, however all of these are critical in terms of what the site can accommodate.

See the comments in Section D.3 which encourage long site sections and views from the Watch Office and Observation Tower to help assess the impact of the development on the heritage assets, the Care Home and the public domain.

- C.2.2 The Design and Access Statement, Item 2.4, refers to the conservation area and scheduled monuments but does not identify the key buildings within the conservation area which are specifically connected with the site as part of the wider countryside; namely the Watch Office with Tower and the defensive structures within the airfield.
- C.2.3 Item 3.1 of the Design and Access Statement refers to the long established employment use on the site but does not mention the 2007 ALDI application for 11m high buildings which was withdrawn - see Section A.5.6.
- C.2.4 Item 3.4 of the Design and Access Statement states the development parameters, design codes and illustrative masterplan aim to add to the overall quality of the area, establish 'a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and



Fig 15 View from Observation Tower looking north



Fig 16 View looking east towards the Observation Tower with Blenheim Mk 1s in 1939. Copyright Phil Davis



Fig 17 Quick panorama from the tower showing Graven Hill and the distribution warehouses at Launton Road.

buildings to create attractive...places to live’.

The illustrative elevations and proposed materials are discussed later but are unlikely to create a strong sense of place. They could be anywhere and cannot be described as attractive, indeed very few sheds are.

The existing field with its public right of way is likely to be appreciated more than walking past 16m high sheds.

C.2.5 ‘Be visually attractive as a result of good architecture...’ The term architecture conjures up quality design of interesting buildings. Industrial style sheds can be dull and oppressive. The Preapp Report for 15/00072/PREAPP encouraged good modern design - see Section A.5.2.

C.2.6 The Design Codes show a fairly standard design of industrial shed; it is hoped this can be made more interesting and respond to its greenfield setting in accordance with Item 3.11 of the Design and Access Statement ‘Development that respects its landscape setting’. This can be determined by a fresh take on detailing and thinking ‘outside the box’.

There is a precedent for green roofs and land sculpting inside RAF Bicester Conservation Area which could inspire the design within the application site, this could be done with a naturalistic design or with a modern take. The use of green roofs would be used to minimise the impact of the proposed buildings.

C.2.7 Item 3.6 of the Design and Access Statement infers the development will ‘have a distinctive character’ and Item 3.11 refers to ‘meeting high design standards that complement distinctive natural or historic assets.’ The proposed materials pay no reference to the local area; it could be argued that they pay reference to the Type C hangers but equally they could be seen as detrimental to the understanding of the heritage asset.

C.2.8 Item 4.22 of the Design and Access Statement ‘The design and layout of the buildings will create a shared character identity for the development with attractive building forms...’ The proposed building form is functional, nothing more and has been laid out more in response to the care home and flood plain than the site itself or impact on the Conservation Area. There is no strong gateway or positive active street frontage which is contrary to Policy B11 in the Local plan.

C.2.9 Policy ESD16 ‘.Where development is in the vicinity of any of the District’s distinctive natural or historic assets, delivering high quality design that complements the asset will be essential’. The illustrative design and masterplan do not complement the heritage asset.

C.2.10 Item 4.7 of the Design and Access Statement states a clear eaves height of 12.5m is required and suggests 16m at the ridge. Introducing a flat green roof may keep the roof lower, alternatively a saw-tooth roof with shorter roof slopes could keep the height down.

The indicative sections do not appear to show a roof height of 16m (3.5m above eaves) and what the site can accommodate needs to be proven to not harm the conservation area or its listed buildings and scheduled monuments within, or setting, in terms of impact. Indeed, B11 states the development should be informed by the accompanying landscape/visual and heritage impact assessments and any archaeological and cultural heritage



Fig 18 Design and Access Statement - Site Constraints & Opportunities plan



Fig 19 Design and Access Statement - Development Area & Building Zone



Fig 20 Design and Access Statement - Site Levels & Building Heights

assessments. The existing level on the edge of the airfield is given as 72.92 and the AOD proposed is 88m - this needs to be related back to the Watch Office with Tower. See Sections C.3.1 and D.3 below.

C.2.11 Item 4.8 of the Design and Access Statement refers to a non-statutory safeguarding map for the gliding club but does not refer to the occasional landing of bombers. Item 4.12 refers to height guidance for the gliding club rather than the historical parameters on height associated with the heritage asset. See Sections B and E - Appendix 1.

C.2.12 Item 4.13 of the Design and Access Statement suggests the proposed development will be 4m above the tree canopy, Section C.3 below describes how the impact of this needs to be assessed. The height of the existing tree canopy relates to an unmanaged landscape which may be managed in the future. The height of the tree canopy is not a state that will necessarily persist and is therefore not a given; it will also change depending on the season.

C.2.13 The siting of the two sheds:
Any building on this site should be kept as far from the conservation area as possible. It may be better to group the two buildings and create a well landscaped route through the site which respects the existing features.

A lower building which occupies a greater footprint would be preferred to taller buildings. Has the possibility of parking on flood zones been explored, subject to well designed landscaped bunds?

Any development should create its own sense of place and guidance given on the 15/00072/Preapp encourages good modern design. The setting out of buildings benefits from envisaging the development from within and outside the Conservation Area. The impact of tall industrial buildings can sometimes be reduced by stepping the elevation down next to routes and outside views.

It is noted the design code mentions using colours to blend with the sky. The buildings could also be played down by camouflage, not the 'combat trouser' type but by using materials which blend with the environment around them; this could include 'green' roofs.

C.2.14 The orientation of the Care Home could be used to set out the alignment of the sheds in an attempt to provide a relationship between the buildings on the site.

C.2.15 Layout Item 4.15 of the Design and Access Statement, parking and low level development should be sited adjacent to the Care Home and the heritage assets. Item 4.19 refers to a proposed mound, bunds and earthwork can take naturalistic and more contemporary forms, softened by the use of grassed banks and planting. See landscape references at the end of Section E - Appendix 2.

C.2.16 Item 4.40 of the Design and Access Statement: Public Art and interpretation of the site has been raised in other pre-applications and in the RAF Bicester Planning Brief. This should be encouraged within the site and on the Public Right of Way to include interpretation of the adjacent heritage assets.

C.2.17 Item 5.2 of the Design and Access Statement concludes the development can effectively be assimilated into its surroundings. The large distribution sheds in Bicester can clearly be seen in View 3 of the LVIA and planting is unlikely to totally obscure 16m high sheds.

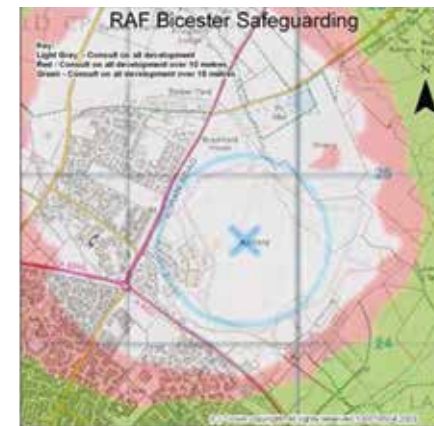


Fig 21 Design and Access Statement - RAF Bicester Safeguarding



Fig 22 Design and Access Statement - Illustrative warehouse sections relationship to proposed landscaping



Fig 23 Design and Access Statement - Siting Plan

C.2.18 The Design and Access Statement also states the proposal has responded positively to deliver a high quality scheme and realises the principles of good design. A good design should not need to be screened or hidden behind planting.

C.3 ‘The Heritage Impact Assessment’:

C.3.1 The Heritage Statement should be amended to include a section on the significance of the Watch office with Tower, including its views to the wider landscape. It should also include an assessment of views from the defensive pillboxes, seagull trenches etc. The proposed 16m high sheds may weaken the impact of the vast of the aircraft hangers which at the time were a building type only matched by dockside warehouses, shipbuilding sheds, railway sheds and stations, churches (albeit of a more interesting form); tythe barns being significantly lower.

Based on the additional information, the degree of harm to the listed buildings, conservation area and Scheduled Monuments should be reassessed.

C.3.2 Item 2.6 of the Heritage Impact Assessment, recognises the view from the Watch Tower over the whole of the flying field but doesn’t include ‘and beyond’.

C.3.3 Item 5.1 of the Heritage Impact Assessment states ‘This Heritage Assessment has outlined the historical development of RAF Bicester, and identified its heritage significance.’

The assessment of the relationship with the open countryside setting and views needs further review.

C.3.4 Item 6.1 of the Heritage Impact Assessment ‘In conclusion, the proposed development will not cause material harm to the setting or significance of the RAF Conservation Area or the southern bomb stores’. This needs to be reconsidered in light of the views from the Watch Office and Tower; views from the defensive trenches and pillboxes are also significant.

C.4 ‘The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’:

C.4.1 14/00272/PREAPP advised that the Local Authority’s Landscape Architect should advise on viewpoints, it is not clear if this was done. See view points 1-10 marked on Reform Plan Figure 1.11 Viewpoint Locations within the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment.

Although views 3 and 4 show the Watch Office and Tower in context with the hedgerow/tree boundary, the horizon, Graven Hill, the built distribution sheds, and the existing hangers, there are no views from the Watch Office and Tower, a building specifically designed for watching over the airfield, the skies and horizon. See Figures 14-17.

C.4.2 The whole of the airfield would have been on alert for enemy aircraft, views from the ‘Watch Office and Tower’ should be assessed. Hedgerows would have been managed around the airfield as any excess height would have rendered the perimeter of the airfield unusable by aeroplanes. See Figures 13-17.



Fig 24 Design and Access Statement - Illustrative Masterplan

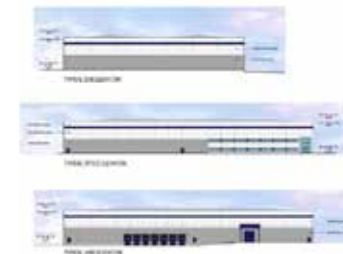


Fig 25 Design and Access Statement - Illustrative Typical Elevations



Fig 26 Design and Access Statement - Landscape Parameters Plan

C.4.3 The views from the former RAF Bicester site have arrow lines indicating the position of the proposed development but do not show the outline of the building. Oxford City Council encourages an assessment of the impact of critical development on pre-determined view cones in the City, based on the English Heritage/Historic England 'History in the View' Document. See Section D.3 and Figures 17, 33-38.

C.4.4 Greyed out areas have been shown to the roadside to give an impression of the building but this has not been done for the views from RAF Bicester or for the Care Home. See Figures 36-37.

C.4.5 It would be useful to compare Wartime views (with a hedge of c1.5m-2m); current views; and the views of the proposed development shown as grey block or wire-frame. The 2-storey development should be shown as a dashed line to compare what was deemed acceptable under APP/C3105/A/06/2010115 for 05/01563/OUT or 09/01659/REM. This should be done from the Observation Tower and from the Watch Office immediately below it. See Figures 13-17.

C.4.6 A full section of the site and the RAF Technical Base 'as existing' and 'as proposed' showing heights of the hanger, overgrown hedgerow and the Watch Office with Tower would illustrate the impact 16m high buildings would have on the conservation area. A dashed line to show the two storey buildings won at appeal in 2007 should be included, as this scale of development was considered by the Inspector to cause harm to the RAF Bicester Conservation Area (APP/C3105/A/06/2010115 for 05/01563/OUT), as no specific heights were given application 09/01659/REM could be substituted.

C.4.7 Elevations of the Watch Office with Tower are in existence, although they may be subject to copyright. These need to be shown in relation to the levels within the site. A long cross section should be drawn of the tower, the hangers and the B11 site including the Care Home in context as existing and as proposed. As the B11 site may be lower than the level beside the watch tower, this would give an informed height relationship between the two buildings. It would allow a better understanding of the effect of the proposal on the conservation area, scheduled monuments and listed buildings and assessment of the level of harm.

C.5 'Design Codes':

There has been no design code agreed for what scale, form etc. development should take, although one has been submitted as part of the current application and this is discussed in Section D.1.3.

C.5.1 The application site is a greenfield site, there is nothing contextual for the Design Codes to respond positively to other than the surrounding landscape. The Proposed building materials and cladding are as expected for industrial sheds. Good modern design was suggested in the 15/00072/PREAPPP Report see Section 1.8. The current proposals need to respond to the opportunity the site affords for good contemporary modern design within a greenfield setting adjacent to nationally significant Conservation Area.

C.6 'The Parameter Plans':

C.6.1 The proposed 10m offset to the bomb stores needs to be further explored through wire-frame views and site sections to determine what height and layout of development is likely to be permissible.

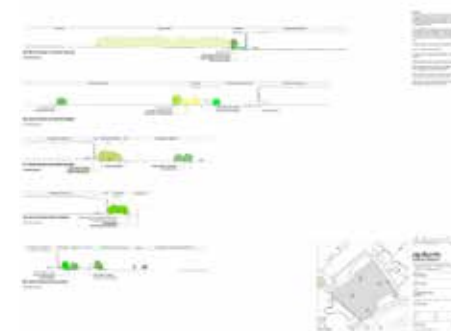


Fig 27 Design and Access Statement - Landscape Parameters Sections (1)

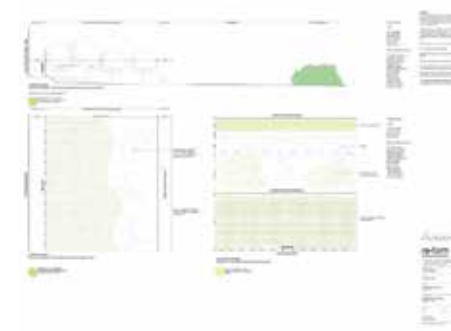


Fig 28 Design and Access Statement - Landscape Parameters Sections (2)



Fig 29 Design and Access Statement - Landscape Parameters Sections (3)

The footpath also needs to be identified on the circulation plan, compete with proposals for public art and interpretation of the adjacent RAF Bicester site.

The proposed floor levels and possibility of landscape bunding to the site were discussed in previous applications for the site.

C.7 Assessment of proposals against Policy Bicester 11 is examined in Section D.2:

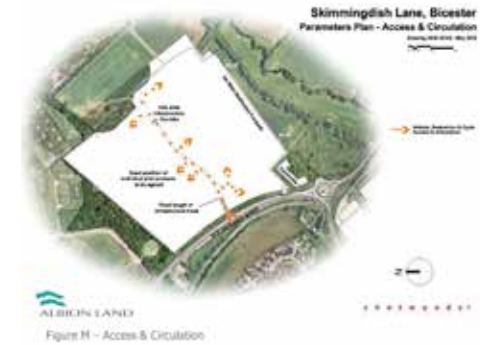


Fig 30 Design and Access Statement - Access & Circulation

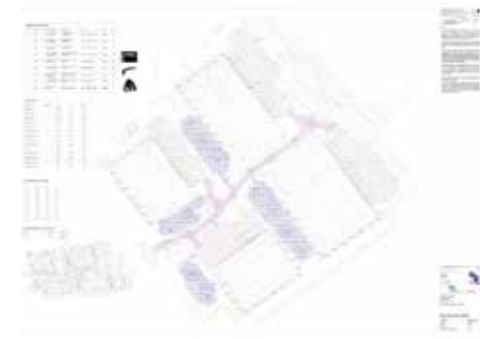


Fig 31 Design and Access Statement - Illustrative Lighting Plan

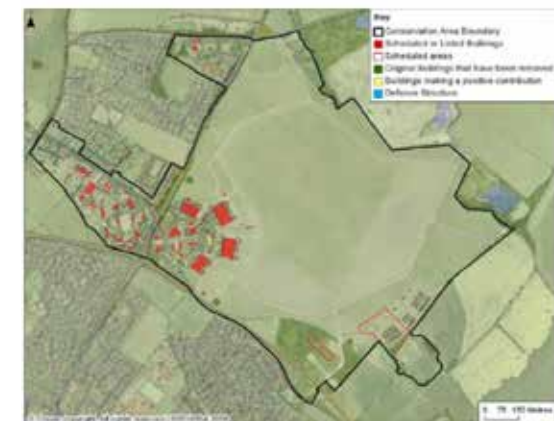


Fig 32 HIA Plan of the RAF Bicester Conservation Area

SECTION D: SUMMARY

D.1 Understanding of significance, harm, public benefit and the NPPF

D.1.1 NPPF: Core Planning Principles should 'take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts round them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside' (NPPF 17) Policies Bicester B11 and ESD15 of the Adopted Cherwell local Plan 2011-2031 of 20 July 2015 give guidance on development specific to the application site, conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their setting. It also states that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

D.1.2 NPPF 56 and 58 highlights the weight that Government gives to good design and establishing a strong sense of place which responds to the local character and history, reflecting the identity of local surroundings and materials; whilst not discouraging appropriate innovation. Development should be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

D.1.3 NPPF 59 encourages local authorities to use design codes to help deliver high quality development. Design codes should guide the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area. In this instance 15/00072/PREAPP encouraged the applicant to submit design codes for the site.

Although CDC have not yet set the parameters for a design code for the site, guidance can be extracted from Officers' comments for the key applications relating to sites around RAF Bicester summarised in Section A and in Section C. Section D.3 requests further information to help assess the impact of the current application.

D.1.4 'Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.' NPPF 61.

The proposed large monolithic buildings do not intergrate well with the surrounding natural, built and historic environment and rely on planting to screen them. Proposals which respond to their surroundings and the Heritage Asset will be looked on more favourably.

D.1.5 'Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions' The elevations, materials, scale, design and layout contained within the Design Codes fails to improve the existing character of the site or the adjacent conservation area; this is contrary to NPPF 64.

D.1.6 NPPF 65 advises 'Local planning authorities should not refuse planning permission for buildings or infrastructure which promote high levels of sustainability because of concerns about incompatibility with an existing townscape, if those concerns have been mitigated by good design (unless the concern relates to a designated heritage asset and the impact would cause material harm to the asset or its setting which is not outweighed by the proposal's economic, social and environmental benefits). The proposals do not currently promote a high level of sustainability

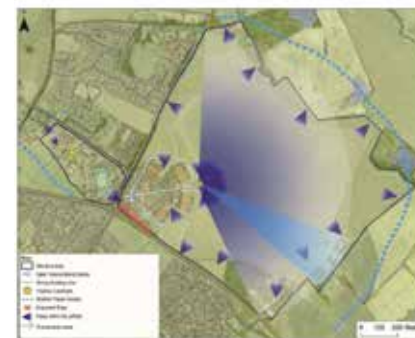


Fig 33 HIA Plan showing important vistas

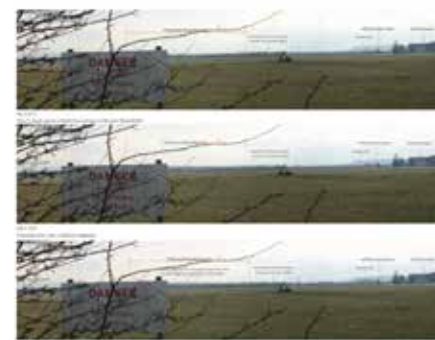


Fig 34 LVIA View 3 shows the Watch Tower with the application site beyond



Fig 35 LVIA View 4 Not arrows but no grey showing the proposed buildings

or good design and would harm the designated heritage asset and its setting. Any economic, social or environmental benefits are highly unlikely to redress the placement of four buildings on the application site of up to 16m in height.

D.1.7 NPPF 75 Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails. The current proposal diverts the existing Right of Way to the perimeter of the site, B11 encourages the retention and enhancement; it suggests the introduction of public art and a high degree of connectivity between other Rights of Way, new and existing development.

D.1.8 NPPF 126. Local planning authorities should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; Bicester Heritage is positively managing the RAF Bicester Conservation Area and has a long term strategy for the site; any development within the site will be closely scrutinised as apart of the development process in light of the Conservation Area Appraisal, listed buildings and scheduled monuments. The plethora of caravans within the conservation does need to be addressed in the short term
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring; this is recognised in the suggestion to include public art on the site and interpretation as part of the realignment of the public right of way through the application site
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; the design code does not show buildings which would positively contribute to the local character and distinctiveness of the area
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place, the proposals do not draw on the contribution made by RAF Bicester Conservation Area and will obliterate the character of the open field which forms part of the countryside setting to the airfield.

D.1.9 RAF Bicester is a Conservation Area of national significance which upholds NPPF 127.

D.1.10 NPPF 128. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

The submitted documents, most specifically the Heritage Impact Assessment, need to examine the importance of the design of the airfield in terms of the setting and function of the airfield at the time of its design. The Conservation area was designated because RAF Bicester is the best preserved and archetypal bomber base of its kind in the country.



Fig 36 LVIA the proposed buildings in grey to Skimmingdish Lane

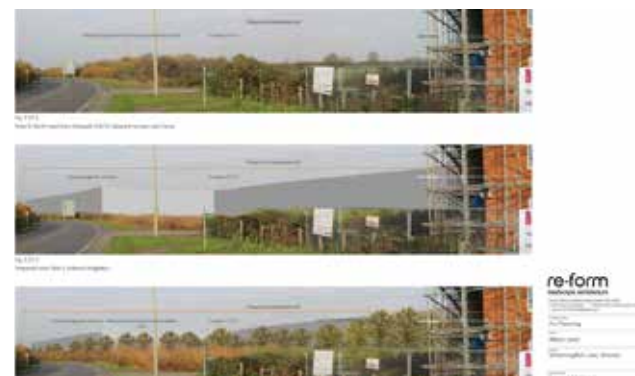


Fig 37 LVIA the proposed buildings in grey to Skimmingdish Lane adjacent to the care home



Fig 38 LVIA view from Buckingham Road

D.1.11 NPPF 129 Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. The LVIA and site sections need further work to allow an informed assessment of the impact on the conservation area.

D.1.12 NPPF 130. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of or damage to a heritage asset the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision. The hedgerow around the airfield has not been managed and has therefore grown to cause an obstruction at the edge of the airfield when considered with the design of the military airfield. The height of the existing trees and hedgerow should be discounted when considering the views from the Watch Office and Tower, yet these have actually been referenced in the determination of what the Applicant considers a suitable height for buildings on the application site.

D.1.13 NPPF 131 In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; Bicester Heritage lease the airfield to a gliding club, they organise heritage days where the focus is on historic automobiles but the have recently linked up with RAF Duxford who landed a Lancaster bomber that was restored at Duxford.
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; RAF Bicester has links to Bicester and local people and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; there are many elements of RAF Bicester that could positively be referenced in any new development, there could include green roofs and clever camouflage that is beyond just having lighter cladding to the top of the buildings.

D.1.14 NPPF 132. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional. The proposed development, within the setting of the RAF Bicester Conservation Area and its component parts, has the potential to harm the designated heritage asset(s), The information contained within any application needs to clearly illustrate the proposals in the context of the designated heritage asset in order to ascertain the degree of harm.

D.1.15 NPPF 133. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site: It has already been determined by the permission granted 09/01659/REM that development of a certain scale, design, materials etc is likely to be



Fig 39 Amazon distribution Centre



Fig 40 Cooperative distribution Centre

approved on the site. Policy B11 mentions 1,000 jobs and acknowledges the site may not be able to support this number. In deed large warehouse may only have a skeleton staff per sqm compared with other employment uses under B1, B2 and B8.

- the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use: The B11 site can quite easily continue as parkland or farmland. The proposal does not bring the site back into use.

D.1.16 NPPF 134. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

The heritage asset is in a viable use; the development proposal is outside the Conservation Area and will not effect the viable use of the asset unless it effects planes landing there. The significance of the setting would however still be harmed and the degree of harm has still to be assessed following the request in Section D3 for further information.

D.1.17 NPPF 137. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably. The proposal would only provide some benefit to the designated heritage assets if it include some site specific public art and interpretation of RAF Bicester for the public. The proposed 16m high sheds would neither enhance or better reveal the significance of those elements of the setting which make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. The open countryside around the airbase is part of the character and reason for its location – refer to ‘Aviation and the Aerodrome’

D.1.18 NPPF 138. Not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 133 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 134, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

The loss of setting in this instance includes functional aspects in relation to defensive views, the control of the airfield and avoidance of collisions, the taking off and landing of aeroplanes including possible crashes, the isolation of the bomb stores, the rail link to the bomb stores, and the camouflage of the site. The impact on views is to be further examined through the work recommended in Section D.3.

D.2 Suggested further response required in relation to Policy B11, following examination of the submitted material in Section C:

D.2.1 Policy Bicester 11; Employment Land at North East Bicester: (relevant to Design and Conservation)

- A green buffer with planting immediately adjacent to the care home...to protect residential amenity
- A high quality, well designed approach to the urban edge
- Buildings that provide for an attractive frontage to Skimmingdish Lane and a strong gateway at the site entrance
- Development that respects the landscape setting
- Development proposals to be accompanied and influenced by landscape/visual and heritage impact assessments
- ..limit visual intrusion into the wider landscape, particularly given the need to conserve the open setting, character and appearance of the Former RAF Bicester Conservation Area and adjoining Scheduled Ancient Monument' 'Conserve or enhance the setting of RAF Bicester Conservation Area and adjoining Scheduled Ancient Monument
- Preparation of an archaeological and cultural heritage assessment to inform development proposals
- A high quality design and finish, with careful consideration given to layout, architecture, materials and colourings and careful consideration given to building heights to reduce overall visual impact
- The provision of public art to enhance the quality of the place, legibility and identity

See Section E - Appendix 2.

D.2.2 Summary of comments on the submitted material in relation the Policy B11:

D.2.2.1 The green buffer to the care home will be assessed by the CDC Landscape Architect.

D.2.2.2 B11: A high quality, well designed approach to the urban edge which functions as a high profile economic attractor but which also achieves a successful transition between town and country environments.

It has not been demonstrated that the proposals will present a high quality urban edge or an attractive and active frontage.

It is recognised the scheme has not been designed but the elevations and materials in the design codes show buildings which are utilitarian and uninspired. The layout needs to be designed to provide a good active urban edge and a strong sense of place.

D.2.2.3 B11: Buildings that provide for an active frontage to Skimmingdish Lane and a strong gateway at the site entrance.

Lorries drawing up and pulling away from roller shutter doors would provide an active frontage but not one that would create a positive interest to the streetscene unless coupled with something more interesting above. The inclusion of glazing which allows views into offices, tea-rooms or mess rooms above would help to establish a connection with the 'outside world'.

Abrupt 16m high elevations with no attempt to breakdown the massing to the edge of the site is unlikely to be acceptable; aisled loggias and land art as part of landscaping schemes can help.

The need for a strong gateway has not been addressed. The proposed two sheds as part of the illustrative masterplan for four sheds has not been laid out to create a strong gateway. They are arranged around site constraints with a view to squeezing maximum floor area onto the site with associated parking and circulation.

D.2.2.4 **Development that respects the landscape setting...**

Any development of the land to the north east of Skimmingdish Lane needs to consider the significance of the siting of the airfield on this particular parcel of land, as well as the defensible vistas out of the airfield.

It may be possible to develop the site sensitively, taking heed of sight lines, flying approaches, and possibly even camouflage using 'living roofs' to respect the significance of the site and the engineered layout and defensible RAF base which has been designated a Conservation Area as a whole, with its scheduled Bomb Stores and Seagull Trenches. MONUMENT NO. 1440771 and MONUMENT NO. 1440777

D.2.2.5 B11 'Development proposals. To be accompanied and influenced by landscape, visual and heritage impact assessments':

The 16m high buildings do not appear to respect the landscape setting, see Sections A, B, D and E generally and D.3 in particular.

Landscape/visual and heritage impact assessments have been written but they have not shown the relationship between the heritage asset and the site which allows proper analysis of the impact the proposed 16m high development would have. Further investigation needs to be carried out to include the following:

Site sections through the buildings on the technical site, including the Grade II listed Watch Office with Tower as existing and as proposed (see Figure 44); it would also be useful to compare with the proposal relating to the 2007 Appeal and the subsequent permission given for 09/01659/REM followed appeal for 2 storey (FFL 70.075) see Figures 4 and 5. A further application followed 10/00324/OUT but was withdrawn. In 2007 a different application was made for 11m high ALDI sheds for a B8 use, see Figure 9.

Landscape viewpoints - views 3 and 4 look from Buckingham Road to the application site and show the Watch Office with Tower and the Type C hangers. The key views highlighted in the RAF Bicester Conservation Area Appraisal are from the Watch Office with Tower; the ground floor windows are tall with a relatively high cill allowing views across and skyward across the whole airfield including views beyond to the countryside; the Observation Tower at first floor allows a 360 degree view, as do the roof tops.

A baseline view from the Grade II listed Watch Office and from the observation Tower above towards the development site needs to be taken showing the existing view, the wartime view prior to the hedgerows and trees becoming overgrown and the proposed view of the two and four sheds. The landscape mitigation measures can then be added. A similar exercise could be done for the scheduled Seagull Trenches and pillboxes.

The bomb stores were camouflaged by foliage and false methods during wartime but access between the various components had to be clear. They are completely overgrown now and would not be able to function. Their setting and functionality has been compromised by a lack of landscape management. This lack of landscape management for the bomb stores and airfield is to be consolidated by the planting of a dense green buffer to the B11 development site. B11 actively encourages a 'comprehensive landscaping scheme to limit visual intrusion into the wider landscape, particularly given the need to conserve the open setting, character and appearance of the former RAF Bicester Conservation Area', however, trees in themselves can be seen as an obstruction to the functioning of the airfield use for which it was laid out.

The B11 'rainwater run off' can be channelled into the irrigation of the landscaping and could potentially be used within the buildings. Any development such as parking or landscaping within or near flood zones will need careful handling.

The design needs to respond to the findings in the revised impact assessments in light of the significance of operational and defensive views in the context of the countryside setting of RAF Bicester Conservation Area as described in this document.

D.2.2.6 B11 'Conserve or enhance the setting of RAF Bicester Conservation Area and adjoining Scheduled Ancient Monument.'

The proposed development will clearly not enhance the conservation area or the scheduled monuments or the key listed building which is the Watch Office with Tower.

The question remains will the proposed development conserve the setting? It is considered the development will affect the important distant views from the Watch Office with Tower and the proposed views from the watch office and the observation tower with the greyed out areas of the proposed two sheds and the sheds on the illustrative masterplan will allow an informed analysis of the degree of harm the development will cause. The proposed site section will allow for an assessment of the effect the development would have on the understanding of the design of the site and its operation during the Second World War.

D.2.2.7 B11 'Preparation of an archaeological and cultural heritage assessment to inform development proposals' The layout of the illustrative masterplan and the two sheds currently proposed appear to have taken their form more from flood measures and the Applicant's desire to create sheds which are capable of housing any tenant under B1, B2 and B8 use. The proposals do not appear to have been informed by an archaeological or cultural assessment. The train lines/whether the proposed sheds create an obstruction in relation to the design of RAF Bicester etc.

D.2.2.8 B11 'a high quality design and finish, with careful consideration given to layout, architecture, materials and colourings and careful consideration given to building heights to reduce overall impact'

The proposed layout of the sheds does not appear to take account of the significance of the important site it bounds. Design and Conservation concerns relate to the height of the buildings, the layout of the site, the form of the buildings in the context of the airfield, the design and materials. Good quality buildings are more appealing and less likely to be taken down.

The proposed 16m high buildings would cause harm. Historic England refer to 'view significance views out...the bomb stores were deliberately built in an isolated spot...This sense of isolation would be compromised to an extent by the large buildings proposed nearby and thus there would be a degree of harm to the understanding of the function of this structure and this its significance'

Refer to 'assessment of proposals' as the impact of the proposals have not fully been explored*

The relationship of individual listed buildings within is discussed but it concludes the settings and significance of these listed buildings will be unaffected by the development proposals. This needs to be demonstrated see 'assessment of proposals'.

It only refers to the Conservation Area Appraisal views 7.2.3. view from the Watch Office and Tower over the flying field but does not mention the countryside beyond. Further defence views were also important – refer to 2.16/2.17 again states the defence would be unaffected by the development

Plate 2: disguising structure – could this be used as a precedent? The planning application resulting from the successful appeal 2007 included a green roof.

Check countryside comment in 2007 Appeal.

There has been no concession given to building heights. No reference has been given to the precedent of camouflaging the buildings or reducing their impact beyond having a lighter cladding towards the top of the sheds and this has limited success as can be seen from the run of the mill warehouses elsewhere (Amazon/Co-op/DHL). The use of green roofs to the fuse sheds within the scheduled monument area provides a precedent for softening the impact of the development.

Architecture is the art of building, the proposed sheds in this outline application are buildings, not architecture. Architecture can take many forms including some which are stark or brutal, some are successful, others not. The air craft hangers at RAF Bicester are a functional building type, symmetrically composed as part of a well designed layout of the military airfield. It is important that any development on the B11 site addresses the significance and setting of the RAF Bicester Conservation Area, its listed buildings and scheduled monuments, the care home, Skimmingdish Lane, the streetscene within the site, the Public Rights of Way and the views of the site from the surrounding countryside.

D.2.2.9 B11 states 'Retention and enhancement of existing Public Rights of Way':

The proposal diverts the existing Right of Way which currently runs through open field. This Right of Way is not time specific but there will be less visibility and overlooking behind buildings with large footprints and height. There needs to be some positive benefit for walkers and it has been suggested this should take the form of site specific public art and interpretation of the area with specific reference to RAF Bicester and the Local Wildlife Site. B11 states 'The provision of public art to enhance the quality of the place, legibility and identity.'

Should a layout and scale of development be agreed, there is scope to include some interpretation and public art that will inform local people and visitors about the significance of RAF Bicester and this should be integral to the proposed re-routing of the public footpath through the site. Public Art, possibly through competition.

D.3 What needs to be done

D.3.1 Assess the impact of the proposed buildings on the B11 site on the RAF Bicester Conservation Area, further to C.3.1 and C.4.5-7:

D.3.1.1 Submit full site sections which show the B11 site in the context of the airfield, including the Watch Office and Tower (include FFL to the Watch Office, (observation)Tower and the Tower roof; the level at the boundary to the airfield and the proposed sheds with their 71.00/71.5 and 72.00 FFL AOD/88.00 roof ridge. It would be useful to include the DHL buildings in the section for comparison, alongside different coloured dashed lines to indicate the key applications for the site. The section should be shown as built at the end of the War with managed hedgerow, as existing in 2015, as proposed with planting. Bicester Heritage may have levels inside the site and they hold the key to the Watch Office with Tower. See Figure 44.

D.3.1.2 Other significant views would have been from the airfield defence system 'Battle instruction school set up in 1940 and the larger numbers of Pillboxes and Defended air raid shelters built here...Bicester was known as Vulnerable Point 429 and for defence from enemy aircraft , had four gun sites...'

Sections through the trenches and pill boxes would also be relevant subject to design guidance which established recommended clear viewing angles.

D.3.1.3 Submit views from the Watch Office, the Tower and the tower roof looking towards the B11 site as built at the end of the War with managed hedgerow, as existing in 2015, as proposed with planting. The section should include a 4 degree angle projection, taken from ground level at the boundary, and a further 6 degree angle for a horizontal distance of 500 yards offset from the boundary. The proposed sheds should be greyed out or shown in wire frame; this could be developed to show how the physical massing could be broken down or softened. See Figures 17 and 44.

There are copyright drawings in the 'RAF Bicester – Airfield Research Publishing' which include the Watch Office and Tower. The Watch Tower looks to have been c 2 feet above ground level, the roof of the Watch Office looks to have been c 12 feet above ground level, the tower floor is estimated to be around 18 feet above ground floor level. There was a further platform with guard rail above the tower which would have been c 28 feet above ground level, the top of the handrail was c 32 feet and the top of the aerial mast was c 36feet above ground level. The windows in the Watch Office have high cills and they are also tall suggesting the duty pilot watching the skies was looking across and up – compare with door positions on Figure 14. View cones from the windows would show the application site was within the view cone. The Tower allowed a 360 degree watch over the skies.

D.3.1.4 Views from Skimmingdish Lane were submitted with greyed-areas depicting the proposed sheds within the B11 site. It would be useful to show the proposed buildings shown in the masterplan at the gateway to the site, from the Care Home and within the site to ensure a sense of place.

D.3.1.5 Wire-frame or shaded areas on the submitted LVIA views 3 and 4 would also be useful from the Buckingham Road

D.3.1.6 The site sections and views will help to assess the development in accordance with the staged approach to decision making outlined in Historic England's 'The setting of Heritage Assets'. This document includes 'Views which contribute more to understanding the significance include: those relationships between the asset and other historic assets or places or natural features are particularly relevant' this is taken to be the surrounding countryside which was integral in the selection of the site. It also includes 'those with historical associations, including viewpoints and the topography of battlefields' the defensive and operational views across open countryside are relevant here. It also mentions 'military and defensive sites' and 'views identified in character area appraisals'. 'Settings of heritage assets which closely resemble the setting in which the asset was constructed are likely to contribute to significance' the hedgerows have grown up around the site through a lack of landscape maintenance but the setting remains much as it was at the time it was built.

SECTION E: APPENDICES**APPENDIX 1****E.1 Understanding the Significance of the siting and setting of RAF Bicester:**

E.1.1 RAF Bicester is a site of National importance, it is the quintessential airfield of its age. It was designated a Conservation Area in July 2002, the Bomb Stores and Seagull Trenches were scheduled in 2006 due to its significance as part of 20thC defences of Britain. The Conservation Area Appraisal was published in November 2008 which extended the conservation area. The appraisal describes the significance of the heritage assets, namely the listed buildings, the Conservation Area and the Scheduled Monuments. More detailed information on the importance of views and the selection of the RAF site is given in the following extracts:

E.1.2 'Twentieth Century Fortifications in England Vol. IX.1: Airfield Themes', C S Dobinson, Published by the Council for British Archaeology 1997. Chapter 6 The flying field in the 1930s:

6.1 Introduction: Throughout the 1920s the criteria upon which airfields were selected remained little changed from those in force during the First World War. In the decade from the approval of the Home Defence Expansion Scheme in mid 1923, airfield dimensions remained more or less constant, and their layouts extremely simple. Sites were chosen to give a clear run of around 1000 yds (914m) in all directions, and whilst some work may be necessary to level contours, airfield preparation in general seldom occupied more than a tiny fraction of the site's development budget – the £2,000 estimated at Upper Heyford, for example, forming only 0.4% of the cost of the site...

On some airfields the grass surface was also used for practice bombing, containing a notional 'bombing circle' within its bounds.

No specific approach or take-off lanes were defined, beyond those which evolved naturally in relation to the prevailing wind, and even in these were deliberately varied to limit localised surface erosion. In order to avoid existing flying obstructions, sites acquired (and reacquired) in the 1920s and early '30s were chosen for their remoteness, necessary in part because the Treasury policy defined in 1924 forbade the pre-emptive purchase of land around airfields to safeguard their bounds and approaches from development. Aircraft movements throughout this period – and indeed for much of the 1930s – were largely uncontrolled. With no routine use of radio communications between the air and ground, activities on the airfield were overseen simply by a duty pilot, housed in a hut. These were the principles on which sites such as Upper Heyford, Bicester, Hornchurch or North Weald were selected and planned.

These approaches began to change in the year before the approval of the first 1930s Expansion Schemes, when the Air Ministry had cause to examine afresh its requirements for airfield size. In time, with the accelerating technical sophistication of aircraft towards the end of the decade, Air Ministry planners began a more searching examination of the requirements for airfield layout, facilities and design. So it came about that the template of an airfield layout familiar today – particularly solid runways, perimeter tracks and flying control services – was in origin a product of the late 1930s, moulded further by the requirements of the war. The importance of these developments for the long-term evolution of airfield layout is such as to justify close examination.'

E.1.3 RAF Bicester closely follows a recommended template for a Military Airfield contained within the 1932 book 'Aviation and the Aerodrome' by H A Lewis-Dale.

'The first step in such plans is the acquisition of a suitable site. The danger of delay is that areas at present available may in five or ten years become so congested by building or other developments that the only possible sites remaining for consideration will be distinctly lacking in many of the features that go to make a good aerodrome...'

The 'Aerodromes Committee' was formed in May 1929 by the RIBA and issued a report on requirements of the landing field, town planning and architectural considerations.

'Location of Aerodromes...Military Aerodromes have to be located not only with regard to their particular function.. but also with such view-points in mind as freedom from possible hostile attack. Peacetime requirements have to be considered in relation to possible future war requirements' p9

Chapter II Selection of aerodrome sites p12-13:

'Requirements of a site – factors to be considered –...

Extent of ground required – give a clear run of at least 1000yards in all directions ...the selection of a site which is just within minimum limits, unless absolutely unavoidable, is extremely impolitic, unless of course provision can be made for extension at a later date if necessary...

Nature and contour of ground – The country around the aerodrome should be as open as possible, with facilities for forced landings...An aerodrome should not be constructed near high hills, which cause dangerous air currents and are themselves a serious obstruction...Seldom, however, will a ready-made site be found to fulfil all the necessary requirements, especially within the radius of any particular locality in which it is desired to establish the aerodrome. Such work as the removal of hedges, trees and other obstructions...

Air approaches – Obstructions...Ground fulfilling other necessary conditions for an aerodrome may be rendered totally unsuitable by its proximity to high buildings, church spires, tall chimneys, overhead electric cable lines, telegraph and telephone poles, woods, or belts of trees etc.....Such obstructions as trees, hedges, telegraph wires, poles etc. are not insuperable, as they can be removed if necessary...Where high obstructions are absolutely unavoidable, flying gaps 200 yards wide should be provided. It may be taken as axiomatic, however, that an aerodrome must be as free from obstruction to clear air approach from every direction as possible...An obstruction diminishes the available space for landing and taking-off by a distance equal to ten times its height measured from the foot of the obstruction. If for instance, in a certain direction the aerodrome measures 700 yards and there is a row of tall trees 60ft high on the border of the aerodrome, the useful available space will be only 500 yards, that is, 700 yards minus 200 yards (ten times 60 feet) A simple method of checking obstructions is to draw in the direction of the obstruction, from the nearest point of the perimeter of the aerodrome, a line at 6 deg to the horizontal, when it can be assumed that any obstruction within 500 yards of the aerodrome which extends above that line must be considered as dangerous to aircraft. It is not advisable, however, that any existing or proposed obstruction should extend above a line drawn at four degrees to the horizontal'

E.1.4 **RAF Bicester – Airfield Research Publishing:**

1940-45 'Further land was acquired to the north and south for the construction of a concrete perimeter track and from this a remarkable series of tracks and loops led off into the surrounding countryside. A total of 41 'Frying Pan' aircraft hardstandings were scattered, two tracks crossed the Buckingham Road in the north west and Skimmingdish Lane in the south. The total area embraced by this dispersal scheme was huge...'

'RAF Bicester – Airfield Research Publishing':

109 Watch Office with Tower: 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 square-shaped ground floor watch office and an observation tower built in the centre of the flat concrete roof.

This version ...built at Bicester replaced an earlier building design. 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...to all concrete construction which offered better protection against bomb blast...

The main room on the ground floor, the watch office for Duty Pilot, has large casement windows spanning the width of the building...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.

E.1.5 List Description of the Watch Office with Tower

'SP5924 A 421 (SOUTH-EAST SIDE) 1714/0/10057 RAF Bicester: Technical Site 01-DEC-05 Building No 109 (Watch Tower and Office)

GV II Airfield watch tower and office. 1938, to 1934 type design. By A Bulloch of the Air Ministry's Directorate of Works and Buildings, to drawing number 1959/34. Brickwork facing to reinforced concrete frame and flat roofs with asphalt finish.

PLAN: A square structure to flat roof with smaller central tower, also square rising two further storeys. The ground floor has the main watch office and rest room, with latrines, from which a tight spiral stair rises to the observation room in the tower; both levels with flat roof decks, the lower with raised brick parapet, and the upper with parapet and safety railing.

EXTERIOR: Steel casements across full width of lower floor, returned one light at ends, and smaller lights to other fronts, and door with over-light to rear (W) and south sides. The upper level glazed all round, some of the original horizontal glazing bars later removed. Small plinth, continuous frieze bands with projecting toe at roof levels.

INTERIOR: Iron stairs to top floor. 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 1930s Expansion Period. This observation tower - which replaced an earlier 1927 design - is typical of the design made in 1934; a total of 41 were built, this being one of only five remaining in brick as, after 1936, most were reinforced concrete. It represents the first attempt for a design of a military watch office. Located at the end of the main axis through the site from the guardhouse, closing the vista at the edge of the flying field, it is strongly representative of developments on flying fields in the mid 1930s. The now-familiar airfield landscape of runway, perimeter dispersals and flight control was only beginning to gain acceptance within the Air Ministry in the late 1930s, when increasing attention was being given in airfield planning to their ability to disperse and shelter aircraft from attack, ensure serviceable landing and take-off areas, and control movement: hence the increasingly sophisticated designs

for control towers. Grouped with the 'C' type hangars which were built under Scheme F in 1936/7, this is a significant element of an 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...'

- E.1.6 Type C hangers needed 35 feet clear height (10.668m), the Type C hangers at Bicester replaced earlier Type A hangers which requires c20 feet clear height (c6m)
- E.1.7 The guidance given in E.1.1-4 is relevant at the time RAF Bicester was built, however, bombers still occasionally fly into the RAF Bicester Conservation Area airfield for heritage events and gliders use the site daily.
- E.1.8 The 1935 aerial photograph of the airfield looking west (on page 11 of the Conservation Area Appraisal) shows countryside with trimmed hedgerows and occasional trees, along the boundary and trees were specifically planted later on to help to camouflage the technical site, possibly in rows, see photograph of King George VI on page 4 of the Conservation Area Appraisal and the 1935 aerial photograph mentioned above. The flying field itself was camouflaged/painted as overgrown hedgerows with shelter-belts as shown on an aerial photograph taken in February 1941 (page 31 of the Conservation Area Appraisal)
- E.1.9 The RAF Bicester Conservation Area Appraisal ii) Proposals for the use of the open airfield must not 'conflict with or change its open, flat and treeless landscape character and its visual relationship with the technical area and adjoining countryside.' This shows there is a link between the surrounding countryside and the airfield and what happens on the surrounding countryside needs to be considered in the context of the airfield. The camouflage given to the airfield reflected the field patterns, hedgerows and crops in the surrounding area; this forms part of the setting of the airfield: 'Even the open grass areas were painted to imitate hedge-lines and black, brown and yellow powders were scattered to imitate crops'
- E.1.10 The vegetation has grown up around the site which in itself affects the setting of the conservation area and the former RAF airfield. The trees around the perimeter of the site effectively screen views in but tall buildings beyond this may be seen from within the Conservation Area and the effect of this needs to be considered in relation to the requirement to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of the conservation area. Indeed, the RAF Bicester Conservation Area Appraisal of 6 October 2008 states 'The contents of this document are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within the conservation area and its setting.'

- E.1.11 RAF Bicester Conservation Area Appraisal: 7.2.3 The Flying Field ' From the Watch Tower (109) a wide and open vista is, by necessity, afforded over the whole of the flying field and also to the open countryside beyond...From the Watch Tower a direct view is also obtained of the Bomb Stores beyond the perimeter of the track, which are set against scrub and tree planting for camouflage purposes...There are also extensive vistas across the flying field for the Pill-Boxes located in an arc around the technical site and west of the Bomb Stores. These were designed and located to enable the station to be defended'
- E.1.12 Scheduled Bomb Stores and the Seagull Trenches nearby:
'A group of bomb stores and associated buildings at the former RAF Bicester airfield, built 1938-1939. They are situated in the southern part of the airfield. They comprise two rows of back to back concrete buildings with surrounding banking and a gantry running along the northern and southern frontages for lifting bombs. The next stage in the bomb arming process would have been undertaken at the Ultra Heavy Fusing Point (building 216). This was built of steel and earth, with a curved corrugated steel roof. Within were 10 bays for the adding of fuses, which would have been stored in the component store (building 214). This group is one of the constraint areas of the Scheduling of the former RAF airfield.' http://www.pastscape.org.uk/hob.aspx?hob_id=1440771
- E.1.13 'An airfield defence site at the former RAF Bicester airfield. This group of defences comprises a 50 metre long seagull trench flanked by two "mushroom" or cantilevered pillboxes, situated about 300 metres to the west of the bomb stores in the southern part of the airfield. The name of the seagull trench derives from the similarity in the "W-shaped" zig-zag plan of the trench to a schematic drawing of a seagull's wings in flight. Seagull trenches were specially designed to defend military airfields. This group is one of the 16 constraint areas making up the Scheduling of sections of the former military airfield.'
http://www.pastscape.org.uk/hob.aspx?hob_id=1440777
- E.1.14 The scheduled bomb stores are located on the boundary of the site, deliberately kept away from any buildings at the opposite end from the technical site, open farmland surrounded the site as it does now. The bomb stores were isolated as their contents were dangerous.
- E.1.15 The tree and scrub planted to camouflage the Bomb Store area is now overgrown and there are many self-seeded plants with some ecological value; I understand the current owners are liaising with English Heritage about a voluntary 'clearing' of the bomb store site and this needs to be carefully managed as the original planting clearly served a defence purpose.
- E.1.16 The most used landing strip is determined by the prevailing wind but in a grass airfield, using the same landing strip was discouraged to ensure it was not eroded.

APPENDIX 2

E.2 Policies relevant to Design and Conservation

E.2.1 The Adopted Local Plan 2011-2031 20 July 2015

Policy ESD15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment gives general guidance on designated and non-designated heritage assets throughout the District and is in line with NPPF.

Policy Bicester 11 relates specifically to the application site and this is examined in Section D.2. Policy ESD15.

E.2.2 NPPF:

Core Planning Principles

17...'take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our urban areas, protecting the Green Belts round them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside
'Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations'

7 Requiring Good Design

56. 'The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

58 'Local and neighbourhood plans.. should aim to ensure that developments: will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development; establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable spaces to live, work and visit.. respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation...are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.'

59 'Local planning authorities should consider using design codes where they could help deliver high quality outcomes. However design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally'

61. 'Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.'

64.'Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions'

65. Local planning authorities should not refuse planning permission for buildings or infrastructure which promote high levels of sustainability because of concerns about incompatibility with an existing townscape, if those concerns have been mitigated by good design (unless the concern relates to a designated heritage asset and the impact would cause material harm to the asset or its setting which is not outweighed by the proposal's economic, social and environmental benefits)

75. Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.

12. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

126. Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

127. When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

128. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

129. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.



Fig 41 Example of tiered green roofs



Fig 42 Included as an example of an active frontage, not for the architectural design or materials:
Combined active frontage where there is glazing above the lorry bays - ignore the 'architecture'



Fig 43 Sculpting the land - a mound is proposed, land art can be naturalistic or modern.

130. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of or damage to a heritage asset the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision. 29 The principles and policies set out in this section apply to the heritage-related consent regimes for which local planning authorities are responsible under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as to plan-making and decision-taking. Achieving sustainable development.

131. In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; ● the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

132. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

133. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

134. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

137. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

138. Not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 133 or less than

substantial harm under paragraph 134, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

141. Local planning authorities should make information about the significance of the historic environment gathered as part of plan-making or development management publicly accessible. They should also require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible.³⁰ However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

E.2.3 Historic England - The Setting of Heritage Assets GPA3

E.2.3.1 ‘Curtilage..The setting of a historic asset will include, but generally be more extensive than, its curtilage’
The setting of the RAF Bicester Conservation Area is more extensive than its curtilage.

E.2.3.2 ‘The Character of a historic place is the sum of all its attributes, which may include: its relationships with people, now and through time; its visual aspects; and the features, materials and spaces associated with its history, including its original configuration and subsequent losses or changes. Heritage assets and their settings contribute to the character but it is a broader concept, often used in relation to entire historic areas and landscapes.’

The space around RAF Bicester Conservation Area now and through time, including its original configuration where visibility would have been key for defence, take offs and landings is all part of the character of the heritage asset.

E.2.3.3 ‘The context of a heritage asset is a non-statutory term used to describe any relationship between it and other heritage assets, which are relevant to its significance, including cultural, intellectual, special or functional. They are irrespective of distance, sometimes extending well beyond and asset’s setting.’
The context of an RAF airbase is far reaching; it links with other military sites, to munition factories, aircraft factories etc..

E.2.3.4 ‘The extent of setting
The NPPF makes it clear that the setting of a heritage asset is the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve’
The shrubbery camouflage and boundary of the airfield has not been managed and this affects the views out of the airfield. The need for these views may be less now in peacetime in a redundant RAF airbase but they are still significant in the understanding of the airbase, in terms of its design, site selection and functional purpose.

Landscape references:

Greenfield buffer to north-east and east of RAF Bicester:
Capability Brown reshaped earth to form lakes that were naturalistic and he also used planting to create shadow, depth and soften his designs.

The Elizabethans also sculpted land, see:

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/lyveden-new-bield/> shows photographs of the spiral/snail mound and lake they are copyright. Spin round with the arrow which shows views from the spiral towards the coarse fishing lake – Elizabethan landscape recreated by NT on <http://www.inter360.co.uk/lyveden.html>

A more modern take on Liveden New Bield can be seen in Charles Jenck’s work:

Landform Ueda

Model Landform Ueda Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, Scotland

The Garden of Cosmic Speculation, Dumfries, Scotland

Portrack Plan

?Copyright @ <http://tazfriend.blogspot.co.uk/2012/01/managing-landscape-by-charles-jenks.html#!>/2012/01/managing-landscape-by-charles-jenks.html accessed 08.15 on 24.07.2015

Kim Wilkie’s work ranges from natural landscaping with a twist to very geometrical layouts

<http://www.kimwilkie.com/uk/private-house-4/>

<http://www.kimwilkie.com/uk/private-house-2/>

<http://www.kimwilkie.com/uk/orpheus-at-boughton/> too geometrical for greenbelt but shows how earth movement can be worked into a scheme

<http://www.kimwilkie.com/uk/heveningham-hall/> working within a Capability Brown landscape

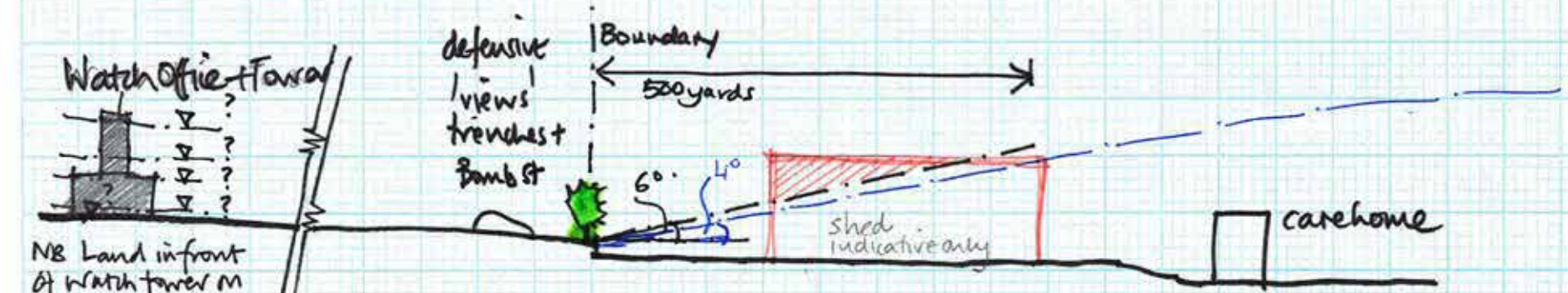
<http://www.kimwilkie.com/uk/great-fosters/> she has used earth-work bunds here and on other projects to screen car parks etc.

<http://www.kimwilkie.com/uk/preshaw-park/> in context

<http://robertthrusell.blogspot.co.uk/2011/01/kim-wilkie-inspiration.html>

NOT TO SCALE : FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY TO REQUEST A SITE SECTION TO BE DRAWN WITHOUT 'BREAKS' TO SHOW THE FULL RELATIONSHIP OF WATCH TOWER, HANGER, BOMBSTORES, HEDGE ROW/TREES, BOUNDARY AND THE APPLICATION SITE TO SCALE.

if the Aldi proposal used 70.075 FFL as the 09 application, the top may have been roughly in line with the ground level near the watch tower



NB Land in front of watch tower in Historic England List description shows 82.00.
The level at the base + the watch office FFL + watch office roof FFL + watch tower FFL + roof of watch tower FFL need to be confirmed.

* anything within a 500 yard zone offset from the boundary which was above a 6° angle from the horizontal at the boundary would be considered an obstruction in the design guide 'Aviation and the Aerodrome' - see red hatch showing the obstruction of an indicative shed.

* anything above a 4° angle from the horizontal at the boundary would be regarded an obstruction, regardless of distance.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 1. compare the existing with the | 11m Aldi proposal which was not supported. |
| 2. " | 09 proposal which followed the successful 05 appeal. |
| 3. " | The current proposal for 16m high sheds |
| 4. " | the illustrative masterplan for 4 sheds. |

Fig 44 See D.3 Proposed site section to allow assessment of the proposed sheds