

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared on behalf of Heyford Commercial Limited (the Applicant) to accompany a planning application for the demolition of external walls located adjacent to an Office building (Building 123) within the 'Technical Area' of the Former RAF Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire (see **Appendix 1**).
- 1.2 The use of the Building 123 as an office (use class B1) was consented under the 'outline consent' (reference 10/01642/OUT). The removal of the walls adjacent to the office building is required to enable the 'cat and dog proof' fencing to be installed along the preferred alignment (reference planning permission 10/01642/OUT, condition 19) and to provide the necessary car parking for staff and visitors to the building, as well as to improve the overall appearance and environment of the office building, making it more attractive to the office tenants.
- 1.3 This Heritage Statement provides a description of the external walls and their immediate surrounding context, and its significance as a heritage asset and then appraises the potential effects of its demolition.
- 1.4 The external walls comprise three sections of wall, each wall made up of one or several 'units' comprising a horizontal profiled metal containment structure (coloured white/cream to match the adjacent office building) with earth infill set on a concrete pad foundation. Each unit is 1.25m wide x 2.4m high and of various lengths (see **Appendix 2.1 and 2.2**). To the north-west (rear) of the office building the Walls comprise two separate sections, measuring 23.3m and 3.7m long. To the north-east (side) of the office building the Wall comprises 4 units in a Tetris 'S' shape, measuring 6.15m, 4.45m, 7.2m and 12.3m long.
- 1.5 All sections of the external walls are free-standing and not connected to any other building or structure, albeit the external walls to the north-east (side) of the office building is in close proximity/touching a former electricity sub-station building (building 127) (see **Appendix 2.3**). Whilst apparently unintentional, the external walls have colonising vegetation growing out of the containment structure.
- 1.6 The Former RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area Appraisal (CDC, April 2006) indicates that the external walls were constructed in the 'Other Post-War' period, in reference to World War II, thereby post 1945. The purpose of the external walls is understood to be 'blast walls', protecting the occupants of the office building (Building 123) from some form of explosion.

- 1.7 Notwithstanding its location within the Former RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area, the external walls are neither statutorily nor non-statutorily designated, nor are any parts of them identified as forming a structure of notable heritage value within the Former RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area Appraisal (CDC, April 2006).
- 1.8 To the south of the external walls, but not connected to, is 'The Battle Command Centre' (Building 126) which is a Scheduled Monument. Built in the 1970s The Battle Command Centre was used to oversee operations on the airfield. The Battle Command Centre is also 'protected' by a blast wall (not subject to this planning application) which is of a different construction (see **Appendix 2.4**). The external walls proposed for demolition are separated from the Battle Command Centre both physically and visually by the Store (Building 124) and concrete blast wall and are outside the footprint of the Scheduled Monument.
- 1.9 To the north of the external walls is one of the six Shed Type 'A' Aircraft Hangers (Building 345) built in circa 1926, which are classified as 'Non-Listed Building of Local Significance' in the RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area Appraisal. The external walls are physically and visually separated from the Aircraft Hangers by the intervening roadway and green buffer with trees.
- 1.10 The external walls are within character area 9 'Technical Area' as set out in the Former RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area Appraisal (CDC, April 2006). The Technical Area is described as:

"This area is characterised by the 'campus' layout of deliberately sited, mix function buildings, in an open setting with organised tree planting. The variation in building type is both a function of their differing use and the fact that there has been continual construction within the site as part of the different phases of development within the airbase. The setting of the 1930s aircraft hangers in an arc on the northern edge of the site provides a visual and physical edge to the site. The access to the Technical Site is dominated by Guardroom (100) and Station Office (52). To the east of these is the impressive 1920s Officers' Mess (74) set within its own lawns. The style of these 1920s, red brick, RAF buildings is British Military."

- 1.11 The Landscape Character Assessment of the Airbase South of the Cold War Zone (ACTA, March 2006) subdivides this area and notes the area as being at the north-west edge of character area 6B 'Service Area' of the Technical Area, which is described as:

“This is the most complex part of area 6. In contrast to the adjacent areas there are no major buildings or uniformity of style and materials. The main visual structure is given by the avenues. Leading off the avenues, many of the buildings are arranged as clusters around yards or parking areas. The characteristics are therefore:

- **very wide mixture of building materials and types;**
- **in contrast to adjacent area no major buildings to dominate the area;**
- **building layout apparently haphazard, but largely a collection of yards/parking areas surrounded by single-storey buildings;**
- **clusters of minor 1920s buildings in red brick;**
- **water towers are not dominant features within the character area, but are prominent in some views from adjacent areas.”**

1.12 Both The Battle Command Centre and Shed Type ‘A’ Aircraft Hangers fall within character area 6A ‘Aircraft Sheds’ which indicates the differences in both function and character of these buildings and the external walls.

1.13 The significance of the ‘Service Area’ is considered within the Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Chapter of the Environmental Statement produced in support of the revised New Settlement Application, the ‘Lead Appeal’. This area is defined as Area 14B Service Area, for which it states:

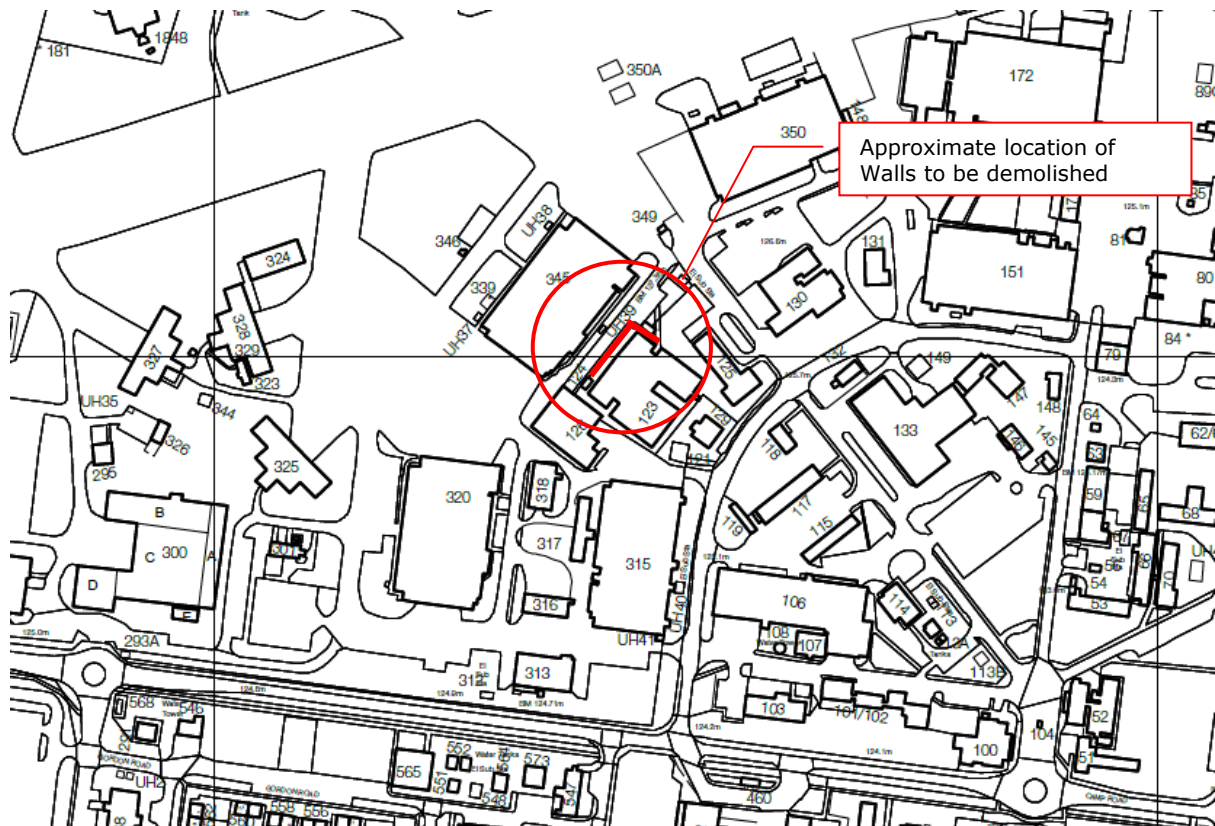
16.5.146 This is a complex area with a wide range of building materials and types, but does not contain any major dominating structures. It consists largely of yards/parking areas and single storey buildings and clusters of minor 1920s red brick structures, with Post-War (mainly office) structures to the east. A prominent characteristic is the plan form and radiating avenues which is considered to be of medium significance. This Character Area includes the Scheduled Monument of the Telephone Exchange, which is a Hardened Cold War structure. ...”

1.14 The overall significance of Area 14B Service Area is defined as ‘Low’.

1.15 At no point within any of these sources of information are the external walls or the Office (Building 123) to which the external walls relate assigned any form of heritage significance or individually identified within any gazetteer, indicating that there is little, if any, heritage significance other than forming part of the built form across the wider site.

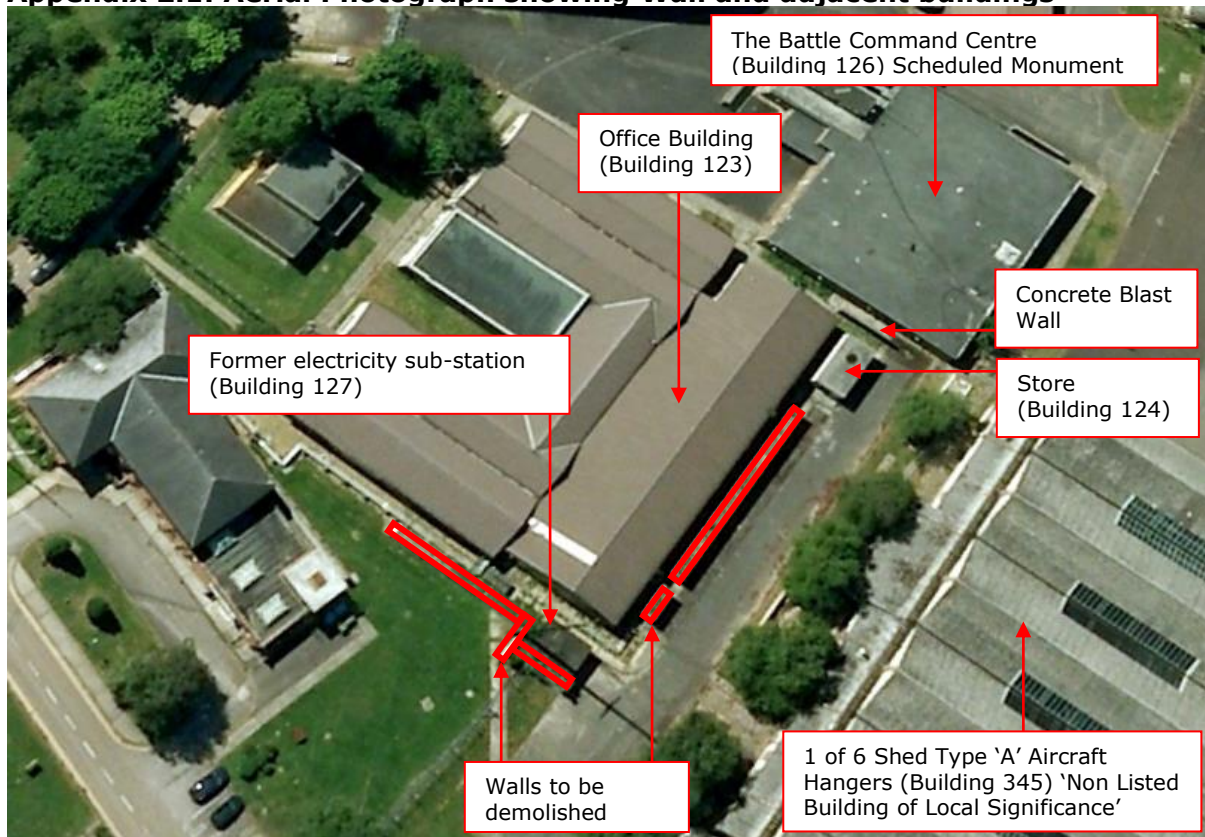
- 1.16 In summary, the external walls proposed to be demolished are non-designated heritage assets, protected only by virtue of their location within the Former RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area. The external walls make little/no contribution to the Conservation Area in themselves or in terms of their function in protecting the former occupants of an otherwise unremarkable (in terms of either its function or architecture) office building (Building 123), nor the function or setting of adjacent heritage assets (Building 124 and 345). Furthermore, there is no mechanism by which their heritage significance could be improved or provide any positive contribution to the Conservation Area or sustainable community. By their very nature, the external walls have no current 'use' nor is there any viable alternative use.
- 1.17 It is therefore concluded that the demolition of the external walls would be of no detriment or harm to the Conservation Area's function, setting or historic interpretation. The removal of the external walls would enable the 'cat and dog proof' fencing to be installed along the preferred alignment and facilitate the occupation of the office building and thereby indirectly assist in the maintenance of the more notable heritage features across the Former RAF Upper Heyford site.

APPENDIX 1 – SITE LOCATION PLAN

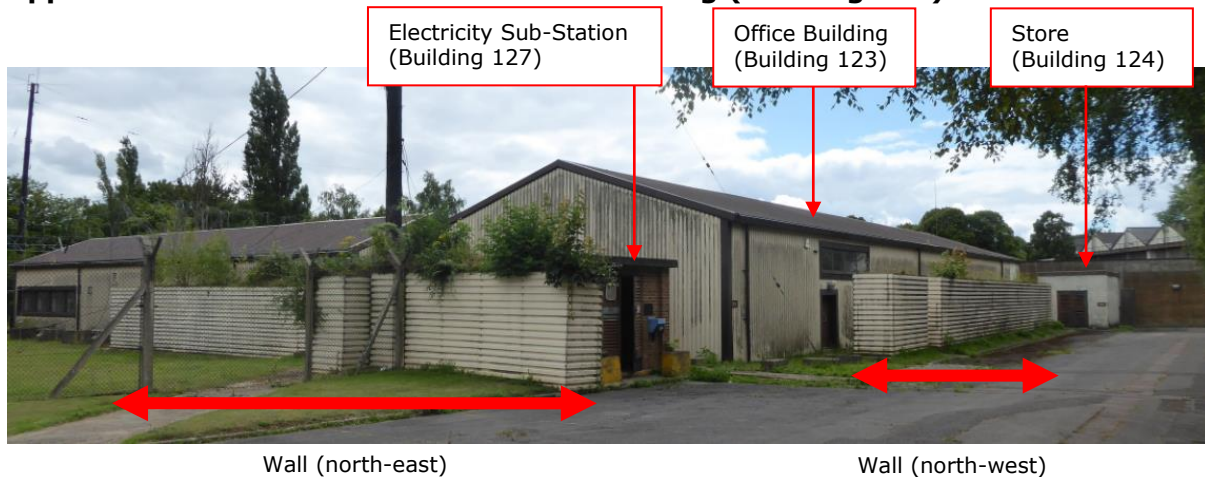


APPENDIX 2 – PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE WALL

Appendix 2.1: Aerial Photograph showing Wall and adjacent buildings



Appendix 2.2: Photo of Wall and Office Building (Building 123) behind



Appendix 2.3: Photos of Wall and separation from Office Building (Building 123)



Appendix 2.4: Photo of Blast Wall to Battle Command Centre (Building 126)

