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**Dear Sir or Madam**

**Masterplan application 18/00825/HYBRID**

1. The application will determine the future of what is accepted to be the best preserved remains/landscape in UK, surviving from the defining global historical 'event' of the last hundred years. The redevelopment of the site, rather than its demolition, has only been allowed to conserve this international historic interest. These basic facts need to be repeated because of the continuing failure to have them reflected in redevelopment proposals that, instead, for the last 25 years have relegated the heritage use and potential behind house building and job creation, while the historic interest has been described as being cleansed, diluted or destroyed.

2. From what can be discerned from the amended plans and submissions, the objections raised in previous representations (22 May 2018 and 14 July 2018) still apply. It would be surprising if the concerns raised by the senior conservation officer and Historic England had been overcome. In summary, the submitted masterplan implies that the 'comprehensive integrated approach' required by policy V5 would cause substantial harm to the Conservation Area and to the setting of listed buildings/SAMs. There is substantial doubt that the heritage experience will be proportionate to the international importance of the site.

3. Heritage Impact Assessments required by V5, but omitted from the original application, have now been submitted. The legal framework intended (see paras 3.2 to 3.5) to apply to the demolition of buildings, actually explains very well the substantial harm that would be caused by the recreational open space (primarily supported by local dog walkers) adjacent to the main runway and separating this from the proposed heritage facilities. This would cause a fundamental change to the defining character of the Cold War landscape that is stark and foreboding. The cost to a visitor (possibly from abroad) paying to experience the best preserved Cold War landscape in the UK of having this trivialized by the intrusive appearance of local people out for a daily stroll, would be incalculable, and an abrogation of good conservation practice (see international conventions). The Flying Field Park would harm and not benefit Cold War tourism as being claimed.

4. There have been many expert assessments made of the Cold War landscape and a consensus has developed around preserving the impression of awe and foreboding that it represents. Some of the proposals that have no

evidential justification would cause the further dilution or cultural cleansing of the historic remains, conflicting with national planning advice and international conventions.

5. The substantial harm to heritage assets of international importance (e.g. the setting of the Battle Command Centre confirmed by the submitted Heritage Assessment), in particular to the ability to appreciate and experience the site 'as a whole', would conflict with the development plan, statutory provisions for listed buildings, scheduled monuments and conservation areas, and the relevant advice in the 2019 NPPF.

6. The revised Heritage Report (attributed to Dorchester Living) does not include the background to Cold War heritage that is necessary to consider the merits of these or any other proposals. Other than the response to feedback from the few visitors that have accessed the site in the last few years, that shorter tours might be appreciated, no attempt has been made to establish the potential of Upper Heyford as a Cold War heritage site. No mention is made to the nuclear capability of the site. No reference is made to the international conventions that apply to the conservation and interpretation of sites of such international significance. The potential for a 'transnational heritage designation' (see 2011 WHS Panel recommendation) has not been explored. No reference is made to the organisations already operating in this field (eg Cold War International History Project at the Smithsonian, the US Cold War Museum in Virginia, the 17 relevant US Presidential Libraries (and counting), ICOMOS, English Heritage, the RAF National Cold War Museum or the heritage organisations in the former Warsaw Pact countries. No evidence of investigations into potential of links with Bicester Village (7 million visitors) or Blenheim Palace with Churchillian/Cold War connections, or Oxford University (eg Torch/outreach project). There has to be an authoritative assessment (from those with qualifications in museums and heritage) of the feasibility and scope/scale of the heritage that could be established at Upper Heyford before any decision could be made on the proposals in the submitted report that would close down the potential.

7. It is asserted that providing an adrenaline rush would widen the audience. No evidence has been submitted to show that this might be the case, or whether it is more likely to disappoint and deter those expecting a heritage experience that respects the profound effects that the Cold War has imprinted on global history. The English 'perverse desire to trivialise' (Martin Amis) should be resisted.

8. Upper Heyford not only benefits from the best preserved physical remains from the Cold War in the UK, but is also well located in transport terms. However, the possible tourism/visitor traffic has not been included in the transport assessments despite the applicants claiming that this is to be promoted. It seems that there will continue to be an absence of a Sunday bus service (the current legal agreement refers to the heritage centre being open on weekends?). The popularity of the site for visitors from Oxford might not be helped by the proposal to require a change from the train at Bicester (a

dedicated heritage bus from Bicester/Heyford Stations might help, but has not been investigated). Visitor transport clearly needs to be properly assessed to satisfy the 'comprehensive integrated approach' required by the Local Plan.

9. The Heritage Management Plan will be fundamental to the success of Upper Heyford as a pre-eminent monument to the Cold War. The proposal to employ a manager for '4 days a month' seems to be based on the previous legal agreement made in 2010, but there was no evidence then or now that this would be adequate to meet or, crucially, create the demand that a site of this international importance would justify. Approval of the Management Plan as proposed could condemn the heritage site to failure within the five years being guaranteed. The Management Plan must be based on evidence that requires the kind of feasibility assessment described in para 6 above, and not limited to what the current owners perceive as the DNA of the site.

10. Given that the conservation and heritage use of the physical remains are the justification for all the re-development that has occurred, it is incomprehensible that the heritage use of the land and buildings has not been formally approved (other than Building 103). Nor have the runways been formally protected. These omissions should be made good when permission is granted.

11. The Council and a succession of owners have had 25 years to find a satisfactory way to allocate and approve housing and supporting infrastructure in order to achieve environmental improvements and the heritage interest of the site as a former military base with Cold War connections to be conserved. The land owners have succeeded in developing hundreds of houses (and employment opportunities) while the heritage that was intended to justify the development has amounted to few hundred visitors a year. While heritage delayed is history denied (a million people could have benefited in just the last ten years if the heritage side had been properly developed and managed), the Council should require the applicants to prioritize this aspect of the application before consenting to any more residential and commercial developments which continue to harm the heritage value and potential.

Yours sincerely

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Copy Senior Conservation Officer, Historic England, Dorchester Group