

# **UPDATED HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

## **PARCEL 31 – THE EDUCATION SITE**

**ON BEHALF OF DORCHESTER GROUP**

**PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990  
TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)  
PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004**

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**DESIGN** | **ENVIRONMENT** | **PLANNING** | **ECONOMICS** | **HERITAGE**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared to consider the changes to the Parcel 31 of the proposed development at Heyford Park (LPA ref: 18/00825/HYBRID).
- 1.2 A full suite of detailed Heritage Impact Assessments was prepared and submitted to the Local Authority in March 2020, and this update assessment should be read alongside the main Heritage Impact Assessment document. It adopts the same methodology and is made in respect of the same policy context as set out in the overarching document, and solely provides an update in relation to the updated proposals within Parcel 31 (the education site).
- 1.3 The Assessment has been prepared to compliment and expand upon the analysis provided within the submitted Environmental Statement and its subsequent updates, including the update provided by Oxford Archaeology in respect of Parcel 31.
- 1.4 Parcel 31 is to be used as a new education site, facilitated by the change of use of Building 2004 to education use (Class D1) and demolition of Buildings 357, 359 and 5022, the erection of new school building up to 10.5m in height, including a single storey link to Building 2004 and 2,415sqm of floorspace, with associated hard and soft landscaping within a total area of 2.47 ha.

### 3. THE SITE/BUILDING DESCRIPTION

3.1 Parcel 31 incorporates part of the former Victor Alert Complex, south of the main runway and includes Buildings 2004, 357, 359 and 5022. The complex of buildings was constructed in the early 1970s and provided an initial quick response area prior to the construction of the QRA to the east.

3.2 Building 2004 is one of the nine former open sided shelters, three of which have previously been converted and the open ends infilled (Buildings 2001-2003). The building, along with the other eight shelters in the grouping, was described in detail in the RAF Upper Heyford Assessment Document<sup>1</sup> as follows:

**"A system of four, portal steel frames spaced at 20ft. centres and giving a span of 79ft.-4in., was used here for all nine shelters. No doors were provided, they were simply weather shelters. Each frame was cross-braced to its neighbour for wind loading, wall cladding was corrugated asbestos sheeting. At the rear of the open shelter, was a pre-cast reinforced concrete exhaust deflector so that engines could be run and the hot jet exhaust deflected upwards. Bomb blast protection with earth traversed walls, but these have now been removed."**

3.3 Building 357 is a two-storey, brick built, former crew quarters building, although last used as an office and now vacant. It has a hipped, pitched tiled roof.

3.4 Building 359 is a flat roofed sub-station building, with brick walls on a concrete plinth. The building is disused and in a poor condition.

3.5 Building 5022 is a timber clad, prefabricated unit which has a shallow barrel vault roof. The building is in a poor condition.

3.6 The surrounds of the buildings are currently used for Car Processing, which was approved in this area under Planning Permission 08/00716/OUT. The Conservation Area Appraisal notes however that this use has "*robbed the landscape of any defining characteristics*"<sup>2</sup>. The Environmental Assessment agrees with this assessment confirming that "*the prominent feature of this landscape is car storage, which has compromised the military coherence of the landscape*".

3.7 The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the whole of the Victor Alert Area and the buildings contained within it, as being non-listed buildings of local significance,

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<sup>1</sup> P. Francis, *RAF Upper Heyford*, Airfield Research Publishing, 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Cherwell District Council, *RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area Appraisal*, April 2006.

although the Conservation Plan differentiates the open shelters (including Building 2004) as being of regional significance, Building 357 of only local significance, and does not identify Building 359 or 5022 as being of any significance.

- 3.8 The complex and the buildings contained therein have been variously assessed for Listed or Scheduling by Historic England on a number of occasions but have not subsequently been designated. As such, the buildings within Parcel 31 are not considered to be designated heritage assets of either the highest or less than the highest significance as defined by the NPPF.
- 3.9 The significances of the buildings are also identified within the Environmental Statement as follows:
- Building 357 – Low significance
  - Building 359 – Negligible significance
  - Building 2004 – Medium significance
  - Building 5022 – Negligible significance
- 3.10 Overall, it is considered that Parcel 31 does positively contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, although this significance is limited by the existing use and condition of the buildings within it, and the surrounding consented land use.
- 3.11 Building 2004 is however of medium significance in its own right and can be considered to be a non-designated heritage asset as defined by the NPPF. Buildings 357, 359 and 5022 are of much less significance in their own right, although do contribute to an understanding of the former use of the area, along with the layout and siting of the buildings as a whole.
- 3.12 The Grade II Listed Control Tower lies to the west of Parcel 31, although it is separated by the easternmost open shelters (Buildings 2001, 2002 and 2003) and other intervening built form, and thus it is not considered that Parcel 31 specifically contributes to the significance of the Listed Control Tower via setting.
- 3.13 Parcel 31 is not within the vicinity of any of the other Listed Buildings or Scheduled Monuments within the wider Conservation Area and thus it is not considered that Parcel 31, or the buildings contained within it, specifically contribute to the significance of the those buildings via setting, other than forming part of the built form of the wider Conservation Area within which they are all sited.

#### 4. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

- 4.1 The proposals for Parcel 31 seek, the change of Use of Building 2004 to education use (Class D1) and the demolition of Buildings 357, 359 and 5022 within an area of 2.47 ha, and erection of new school building up to 10.5m in height, including a single storey link to Building 2004, as part of the wider redevelopment of the site, which includes the laying out of a new soft PE zone and boundary treatments.
- 4.2 As a building of low significance, the demolition of Building 357 is assessed within the Environmental Statement as having a major impact given the building will be completely lost, with this resulting in a slight / moderate adverse significance of effect. The demolition of Buildings 359 and 5022 is considered to have a slight significance of effect as they are buildings of less significance (negligible).
- 4.3 Whilst the details of the conversion of Building 2004 are yet to be determined as they will form part of a detailed planning application at a later stage, the scale and size of the building will be retained and so will the relationship between it and the other hangers within the group. The Environmental Statement suggests that the conversion will have a moderate / slight significance of effect.
- 4.4 The proposed use of the site for educational purposes will however also beneficially remove the Car Processing use from the area, which will have a positive impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 4.5 The detailed design of the new school building, as well as the proposed linking structure has also yet to be agreed as these details will form part of a future detailed planning application. However, the parameters which this application sets indicates the construction of a building up to 10.5m in height, with a single storey link connection to the retained and refurbished Building 2004. It is considered that this scale of building would be appropriate for this location, reflecting the scale of the larger buildings across the former Flying Field.
- 4.6 This impacts of the demolition and renovation of the buildings would be mitigated by a programme of recording of the Building which will form part of the Heyford Park Archive.
- 4.7 Whilst the detailed design of the grounds to the new school site is yet to be determined as it will form part of a detailed planning application at a later stage, the Zoned Parameters Plan for the education site identifies areas for use as Soft PE along with hard surfacing. These areas will, on the whole, seek to retain hard

surfacing in front of the hangers (Buildings 2004-2006) to allow for the legibility of the original layout to remain, and thus will only have a negligible impact on the understanding of the former operation of this part of the site. It is noted that the proposed soft PE area is located to the west, and rear of Building 2007 which faces and was accessed from the east thus having no impact on its significance.

- 4.8 The proposals are not considered to have any impact the significance of the Listed Control Tower (Building 340) via setting.

## 5. SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 To summarise, the proposed development within Parcel 31 will result in the demolition of Buildings 357, 359 and 5022, the conversion of Building 2004, the construction of a new school building and the use of the site for educational purposes. The detailed design of the area has yet to be determined, but parameters have been set and the Environmental Statement has considered the impact of these parameters.
- 5.2 The buildings within Parcel 31 are considered to be of medium, (Building 2004), low (Building 357) and negligible (Buildings 359 and 5022) significance and contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, albeit their current use has compromised the military coherence of the landscape in this area.
- 5.3 It is thus considered that the impact of the demolition of the building and reuse of the site as part of the wider development proposals would be at the lower end of the spectrum of less than substantial harm due to the impact to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area resulting from the demolition of Building 357 and the reuse of the site as a school site. This would result from the loss of a building which positively contributes to the military character of the area and the limited changes to the hard and soft landscape within the Parcel.
- 5.4 It is not considered that the demolition of the building will have any impact on the significance of the Scheduled or Listed Buildings within the wider area.
- 5.5 The level of harm has been minimised by commitment to the implementation of a programme of Building Recording.
- 5.6 The less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area will therefore need to be balanced against the public benefits of the proposed scheme as a whole, including the retention and refurbishment of Building 2004 and the removal of the Car Processing use from within this area.