

Dear Andrew

Thank you for consulting the Conservation and Design Team on the above application.

There have been long-standing concerns about the proposal to site the school in this location with particular concerns about the relationship between the taxiway, the runway and the aircraft hangars. There was earlier discussion about a proposal to incorporate the school buildings within the aircraft hangar buildings and this would have been welcome, but was not acceptable from an educational point of view.

It is understood that there is no other location for a school building and therefore the aim is to mitigate the harm to the surrounding context of the airfield.

There was early agreement that buildings 357, 359 and 5022 are all of limited significance and could be demolished to allow for construction of a school, but the principle was that buildings 2004 along with 2005 and 2006 would be retained and the relationship between them maintained.

A Heritage Impact Assessment has been produced for the site – the document sets out a fair assessment of the impact on the heritage assets based on the fact that the detail is not yet available. A full consideration of the impact will need to be considered with a more detailed application.

General points

- Any development on the site for a school will require a management agreement for the retention, maintenance and use of the aircraft hangars. It is important to maintain the relationship between all the hangars in the area regardless of whether they lie within the boundary of the school or not.
- Great attention to detail will need to be paid with the parking, lighting, boundary treatments, surfacing, playground / sports pitches. It should be noted that bespoke solutions to fencing and lighting around the temporary nursery building on the Heyford site have been successful in better integrating the building into the site.
- A more flexible approach including sharing facilities with the existing Heyford Free School and / or utilising areas outside the formal boundary of the school would help to mitigate many of the elements of concern.
- Consideration would need to be given to the integration of the school with the neighbouring area and how the taxi-way can best be utilised for the use of the school and community whilst retaining its significance.

Specific points

- The Heritage Impact Assessment document refers to a single storey link between the proposed new structure and building 2004. This has been discussed, but was part of a discussion about finding an appropriate relationship between the school building and the hangar. There is no indication of even the location of the school building (other than a 'zone' for building) and therefore the principle of the link should not be established at this stage.
- The zone for the single storey building / link should be removed from the plans in Design Revision B. A link of the size / scale indicated on this plan would not be acceptable. It should also be noted that this zone also corresponds with the main vehicular entranceway.
- It is unclear what the 'buffer zone' on the constraints and opportunities plan is.

- It is the form of the hangar buildings that is of significance rather than necessarily the current materials, but any alterations to the fabric should be conditioned and carefully considered.
- Significant concerns relating to the reference to school parking on the taxiway. This is very ambiguous at this stage and would need to be carefully detailed to ensure any harm is minimised.
- There is more than just one viewpoint of significance between the taxiway and the hangars and this should be reflected on the parameters plan in Design Update Revision B.
- Further details required about proposed 'modifications' to the Victor Alert Shelters which lie outside the school boundary will need to be justified. There may be concerns if there are alterations to the form of the building.
- Further details required of the proposed retaining wall between the nursery and the taxiway.
- Ambiguity within documents about proposed height of school building should be cleared up – varies between 10.5m and 7m.