## Representations on application 18/00825/HYBRID

**Introduction**

These comments arise from an examination of some of the documents submitted with this hybrid application, assumed to support the masterplan required by local plan policies V5. **A summary of elements/extracts of the application being considered and relevant comments (in italics) is attached.**

It should be noted that thousands of hours have been spent considering various proposals for the site over the last 23 years during which a consensus has been built about how a lasting arrangement for the site could be achieved through a redevelopment that respected its heritage value, i.e. the only reason that the military remains from the Cold War have not been demolished. Some elements of the current proposals appear to defy this consensus and substitute an incoherent juxtaposition of a new settlement, employment uses and theme park.

Notwithstanding the fact that the only justification for any development at this location is the conservation of what are now recognized as the pre-eminent remains from the Cold War, heritage has been placed in a subordinate position to the residential, employment and ancillary uses. The application is made in the context of vigorous debate about the Cold War; what it comprised, the extent and identity of the victims, and the lasting geo-political effects including, crucially, the current relationship with Russia and its former and current allies. In so far as built-heritage has been found to be a preferred and effective access to the study and understanding of history (see the 2016 Culture White Paper) the potential of the former airfield at Upper Heyford for heritage purposes should not be underestimated. Whilst the erosion (described by Pegasus group as ‘dilution’) of the site and its Cold War heritage value since 1995 is regrettable, it currently stands as an authentic example of the collective irresponsibility of the relevant authorities. However, this application represents an opportunity to ensure that no further damage is done to the potential for using the site to better understand the history of the world over the last hundred years.

There does not appear to be any reference in the application to collaboration with heritage organisations in other countries eg CWIHP, Presidential libraries or the National Parks Service in the US or Memorial or Perm36 in Russia or even with Oxford University a few miles away (with a number of specialist departments). Despite reference to some interest in ‘technology’ there do not appear to be any partnerships being proposed with the companies responsible for its development and operation; eg Constain, Laing, Amey, Heyfordian, General Dynamics, Northrop Grummon, Pratt and Whitney. The application seems to have a very limited vision of what could and should be achieved at Upper Heyford.

Since the permission was granted by the Secretary of State in 2009 the enabling residential allocation has been increased by about 250% and a proportionate increase in job creation. At the same time the LPA has agree that the space allocated to heritage use to be reduced by 10 times. This application is an opportunity for the authorities to establish a proper balance between the conservation of the heritage, the primary justification for development at Upper Heyford, and and all other uses.

**Support**

Notwithstanding the inordinate delay (‘heritage delayed is heritage denied’), the prospect of properly organised guided tours across the Cold War landscape to include important elements of the site is to be welcomed. However, this aspect of the proposals should be secured without any further delay based on the existing approval.

The proposal for a ‘Heyford Park Research Centre for Cold War and Contemporary Peace Studies’ would be a good idea if called the Upper Heyford Cold War Research Centre - RAF Upper Heyford being the logical name and the study of peace being a component of the work.

**Objections**

1. In the absence of the feasibility studies (2005 Structure Plan) or the Heritage Impact Assessment (Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031) there is no evidence to support any of the claims made in the application in respect of the heritage value of the site. There is no reference to the exceptional accessibility of the heritage site; that it is located at the most accessible point on the national road network and being connected by a proposed shuttle bus to a station on a main line between London, Oxford and Birmingham. The site is also on the tourist trail including London, Windsor, Oxford, Blenheim and Stratford and only 15 min from the 6.4 million visitors to Bicester Village. All this potential needs to be properly assessed. Compliance with the commitments made by the Government in signing up to the relevant Conventions Paris, Granada and Valetta should also be taken into account in respect of both conservation of heritage assets and public access.

2. The demolition of the southern bomb stores is without justification as is the unnecessary intrusion of residential development into the flying field.

3. There is no proposal to change the use of the flying field and related buildings to the heritage purposes that should be their primary use.

4. The “Flying Field Park" is an unjustified intrusion of an inappropriate use into the ‘core area of national heritage significance’. The Cold War landscape has been variously described by English Heritage and the Secretary of State as ‘bare functionality’, ’ hostile’, and ‘engendering awe and foreboding’. Visitors cannot receive more than an introduction to the existence and complexities of the Cold War period, and the primary aim should be to instill a lasting impression and inspire further interest from experiencing the authentic landscape of nuclear holocaust. The current proposals (in particular the parkland and school) would, instead, reinforce an impression that there is a continuing level of indifference and denial regarding that period.

5. The Flying Field Park and 20 ha of hardstanding for car storage and processing would not just intrude into the Cold War landscape but isolate the Battle Command Centre/Hardened Telephone Exchange, the listed nose-docking sheds, the A frame hangars and the SW HASs from the airfield. The coherence of the airfield would be lost and, likewise, the setting of these scheduled monuments and listed buildings would be seriously harmed.

6. It is important to establish whether the application preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the conservation area. The designation document states that, “in the case of RAF Upper Heyford the sum holistic character is greater than the collection of the parts and each area within the airbase is crucial to the functioning of the site." Until now, the owners have made proposals “without compromising the integrity of the site as a monument to the Cold War". The official advice at NPPF para 132 applies to heritage assets of this importance. There is no, “clear and convincing justification" as is required in the case of development within the setting of a site of international heritage importance. In the circumstances the justification for the approval of such harmful proposals would be “wholly exceptional". In this case the suggested benefit of providing public access to the main runway would be outweighed by the impact the means of access (i.e. a recreational park) would have on the Cold War landscape. Perfectly adequate access by the public could be achieved without causing serious harm to the landscape they have come to appreciate.

7. No assessment is made of the traffic generated by the heritage use. The shuttle bus to Lower Heyford station would be welcome but the 1 hour service to Oxford might be inadequate.

8. It is unclear what access is being provided to the QRA and the HASs with a nil use (this should be heritage use) or the associated hardened squadron building.

**Summary**

9.The proposals comprised in this application will define the future of what is currently acknowledged as representing the best preserved Cold War airfield in the country. While its particular contribution to the conflict lasting over 100 years can be debated, this will apply to any individual site (the basis for the World Heritage Site panel to recommend a ‘transnational’ approach to Cold War heritage that may include Upper Heyford). What is beyond dispute is the current state of preservation, its availability for public access and the exceptional locational characteristics.

10. 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.

11. The damage to heritage assets of international importance (e.g. the setting of the Battle Command Centre), in particular to the ability to appreciate and experience the site as a whole, would conflict with the development plan (also its requirement for heritage impact assessments) and the relevant advice in the 2012 NPPF.

**Call-in**

12. The application raises significant matters of wider than of local importance (in this case of international interest) and should be referred to the Secretary of State for determination (unless previously refused). When considering whether the LPA is likely to take proper account of the wider (ie international interest) the Secretary of State should note that the LPA is primarily responsible for the fact that over 20 years since the site became redundant and 8 years since the requirements set out in the 2010 appeal decision, there is still no heritage centre or public access to the site. There is no reason to believe that the planners or the committee/council will give any greater weight to the heritage interests or start to take note of either the conservation officers or heritage organisations responsible for providing that advice.

**Supporting Notes based on application documents *Comments added in italics inform the representations dated 20 May 2018***

**Application 18/00825/HYBRID**

Demolition of buildings and structures as listed in Schedule 1; Outline planning permission for up to 1,175 new dwellings (Class C3); 60 close care dwellings (Class C2/C3); 929 m2 of retail (Class A1); 670 m2 comprising a new medical centre (Class D1); 35,175 m2 of new employment buildings, (comprising up to 6,330 m2 Class B1a, 13,635 m2 B1b/c, 9,250 m2 Class B2, and 5,960 m2 B8); 2.4 ha site for a new school (Class D1); 925 m2 of community use buildings (Class D2); and 515 m2 of indoor sports, if provided on-site (Class D2); 30m in height observation tower with zip-wire with ancillary visitor facilities of up of 100 m2 (Class D1/A1/A3); 1,000 m2 energy facility/infrastructure with a stack height of up to 24m (sui generis); 2,520 m2 additional education facilities (buildings and associated external infrastructure) at Buildings 73, 74 and 583 for education use (Class D1); creation of areas of Open Space, Sports Facilities, Public Park and other green infrastructure; Change of Use of the following buildings and areas: Buildings 357 and 370 for office use (Class B1a); Buildings 3036, 3037, 3038, 3039, 3040, 3041, and 3042 for employment use (Class B1b/c, B2, B8); Buildings 217, 3102, 3136, 3052, 3053, 3054, and 3055 for employment use (Class B8); Buildings 2010, 3008, and 3009 for filming and heritage activities (Sui Generis/Class D1); Buildings 2004, 2005 and 2006 for education use (Class D1); Buildings 366, 391, 1368, 1443, 2007, 2008 and 2009 (Class D1/D2 with ancillary A1-A5 use); Building 340 (Class D1, D2, A3); 20.3ha of hardstanding for car processing (Sui Generis); and 76.6ha for filming activities (Sui Generis); the continuation of use of areas, buildings and structures already benefiting from previous planning permissions, as specified in Schedule 2; associated infrastructure works including surface water attenuation provision and upgrading Chilgrove Drive and the junction with Camp Road

*There is no proposal for the material change of the use of the flying field to authorize the heritage uses being proposed which constitute the primary reason for retaining and not demolishing the site as originally envisaged by OCC and CDC.*

*It is also necessary to secure protection for the runways (through conditions/legal agreements)*

**Statement of Competence for ES**

Pegasus

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Planning:Environmental Impact Assessment, Urban Design, Socio Economics  Landscape and Visual Impact  Oxford Archeology: Cultural heritage  *OA was responsible for the Conservation Plan that misapplied the methodology of attributing*  *different significances to parts of complex sites; the fence being said to be of local interest and*  *the runways of regional interest (designed for the bombing of Slough?). These attributions were*  *unhelpful but have since been superseded by all parties referring to a ‘holistic approach’. All parties*  *had reached agreement that the heritage and conservation of the whole site is of international*  *interest – although this consensus is threatened by the submitted heritage offer.*  **Report of Community Engagement** | | | |
| **Comments from consultation**  Do you feel the accessible heritage proposals will give you a greater understanding and appreciation of Heyford’s history?  Yes 64 (78%) | |  |
| No 6 (7%) |  | |

*Nearly 30% find the heritage of Heyford unsatisfactory and there was no question about understanding and appreciation of the international context or Cold War*

**60 Acre Public Park**

4.7 At the centre of Heyford Park a new 60-acre public park will be provided allowing direct access to a substantial part of the flying field. It is a significant green infrastructure contribution with new safe routes for walking proposed.

4.8 The community have expressed satisfaction with the proposed park, as residents would like to see open space and walks suitable for dog walking. Feedback included:

“My\_expectation has been exceeded\_i.e 60 –acre area.”

“Parks and cycleways are important.”

“I am pleased about the provision of the park.”

“Open space is in desperate need right now, especially for those with dogs. There is nowhere to go right now.”

“We are in need of walkways to take dogs for walks at Dorchester end. Either paths through fields linking to the top of the village green to the outside bridleways or more access for dogs on green spaces like the village green.”

*No question about whether dog walking would incongruous in the historic core of on site equipped to deliver nuclear bombs*

**Heritage**

4.22 Dorchester’s philosophy for an enhanced heritage offering at\_Heyford Park (*actually former RAF Upper Heyford*) focuses on activities and attractions which are key themes of Heyford Parks (*ie RAF Upper Heyford*) history. Dorchester seek to attract new audiences and broaden the appeal of the site, by finding viable new uses for key structures, enabling buildings to be refurbished and combining the heritage offer with leisure uses so that residents of Heyford Park can regularly access the assets of the airfield day to day.

4.23 The community are supportive of the Heritage offering, with residents wishing for it to be more accessible. Feedback included:

Support for preservation of heritage (to be kept and utilized ‘…as much as possible…’) for purposes of local history and of USAF (‘..an important period of our history) *but not one mention of the Cold War*. *No assessment of the possible attraction to an instructional monument without its trivialization. One or a few impactful visits might be more meaningful than day to day access.*

**A socially led community development**

**Improved Heritage**

Innovative and integrated vision

Improved public access to heritage and new destination park

Enhanced interpretation and destination facilities, new observation tower

Community and heritage events,

Repurposing of key heritage buildings

**New Dorchester masterplan approach (Mid 2016 -today)**

Following advice from Cherwell District Council, it was decided the joint LDA development framework was not suitable to form a planning application. Over the past 12 months Dorchester have been working with their consultant team, with input from Historic England, Cherwell District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, the Local Enterprise Partnership and local stakeholders to create an innovative new approach to the masterplan which will bring forward the development in a comprehensive way and provide high quality new homes, employment opportunities, schooling and leisure opportunities for both residents of Heyford Park and the wider neighbourhood to enjoy. Later in the exhibition there are further details of what is planned. Whilst the masterplanning work has been taking place, Dorchester have submitted applications for Phase 9 and the Village Centre North, in order to ensure delivery would be maintained, however both of these parcels will still form part of the overarching masterplan, as we understand the importance of a holistic approach to development. *There is no mention of heritage in this holistic approach.*

**Heyford Park MasterPlan**

The new masterplan creates a pioneering opportunity in Heyford’s history to provide true accessibility to the heritage of the airfield for local residents… (*what about world heritage?*)

• New heritage interpretation area that will comprise of a variety of heritage attractions, including the Heyford Park Sky Tower - an observation tower and zip lining experience

The following map shows where the new heritage interpretation area will be located, as well as a full list of what is to be included, but we are particularly excited by the following elements:

• A new observation tower - this will contain a zip line experience that will fly visitors down the run way.

• A cold war gallery to celebrate a range of cold war and inter-war art

• A new educational hub that will promote science and technology research. This experience will culminate (sic) in an exciting Escape Room attraction.

• A large public park in the heart of the airfield that will promote connectivity from the residential areas towards the runway. *Historically the housing was kept* *well away from the flying field*.

**Extract from ES**

*The Cold War (1945-93)*

9.3.122 The primary historical and archaeological interest of the former airbase is its role during the Cold War, in particular the substantial ‘Cold War landscape’ of the Flying Field. The ’core’ of this landscape is considered to be of international significance. *The welcome and logical change from earlier appraisals referring to ‘national significance’*

9.3.129\_...by July 1971 RAF Upper Heyford could claim to be the largest fighter base in Europe.

*No reference to the compliance (or not) with the 2016 Culture White Paper or the international conventions on culture and heritage (Paris, Granada and Valetta). No reference to (the lack of) feasibility studies or heritage impact assessments.*

**Heritage Offer at Heyford Park**

***No author specified – a site of international importance merits analysis, assessment and recommendations of the highest calibre, preferably including an international convention/conference as was proposed by DG in 2017. The Secretaries of State for HCLG and CMS should be concerned about the superficiality of the proposals being considered by the LPA.***

The allocation of additional development at Heyford Park has provided a unique opportunity to consolidate and expand upon the obligations that were set out in the first masterplan. The key opportunity that this masterplan is able to provide is the ability to deliver increased public access and appreciation of the heritage at Heyford Park. *Increased access to a depleted and fragmented landscape*

In summary, therefore, Upper Heyford should be regarded as a site that has been and still is:

• \_CONSTANTLY EVOLVING, ADAPTIVE, ALWAYS RELEVANT

• \_INTERNATIONAL IN OUTLOOK AND MAKE UP AND GLOBALLY INFLUENTIAL

INNOVATIVE, AND AT THE LEADING EDGE *has there been international involvement in these proposals?*

• \_A CENTRE FOR TRAINING AND NEW SKILL DEVELOPMENT

• \_A CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

These key attributes or the ‘DNA’ of Heyford Park have been considered when designing the new heritage tourism offer for the site. By focussing on the DNA of the Heyford Park site rather than purely on the military and aviation story of the site, there is the ability to widen the potential audience that Heyford Park may have.

“1) A substantial public Flying Field Park covering some 20.3 hectares within the core of the Flying Field…*This is the area previously accepted by all parties as of core national (since upgraded to international) heritage interest.*

3)We are still committed to providing the Upper Heyford Trail, which is an obligation from the first masterplan. This will comprise of a circular walk around the Flying Field perimeter that will include at least eight interpretation boards so that walkers can gain knowledge on their route. (*is this on land owned by DG or public rights of way?*) We envisage that this will be a popular and well utilised route. During our recent Masterplan consultation exercise, where we revealed plans for the heritage trail to the public and local residents, this was very well received as local people feel there is a lack of suitable walking routes around Heyford Park at the moment. We have also done more to increase green connectivity into Heyford Park from surrounding villages based on this feedback. Thus, it is conceivable that this route will be utilised not only by residents and visitors, but also by neighbouring communities.

6)New interpretation boards will be located throughout both the Flying Field Park, Control Tower Park and along the Upper Heyford Trail which will provide information on the site, its history and key views and buildings.

“We also wish to digitally archive the historic plans of Heyford Park that are currently being stored in Building 100, with the physical copies to be available on request and to be archived in a new facility. Digital archive facilities are to form part of the enhanced Heritage Centre specification and the archiving of the historic plans will form part of an ongoing project led by the Heritage Centre. *including the planning history that has delayed the heritage offer for 25 years?*

**Goals…**

The emphasis of the attractions will be about delivering creative, immersive, experiences ranging from the thrilling and adrenalin driven, to the discovery and educational. By exploring themes such as Technology Innovation, Social History and Espionage in this exciting and immersive way, we can attract a wider audience than would normally be expected of a site of this nature...

*There has been no heritage impact assessment to support a claim that trivialising the heritage is necessary in order to attract visitors or the extent to which these ‘attractions’ detract from the understanding of the Cold War – that is the primary purpose of the retention and conservation of the site.*

**The Proposal**

**1. Building 366 (the Fuel System building)** -this will be refurbished as the new Heritage Centre that, alongside the museum exhibits and archive storage, will also contain a conference space and research facility called “The Heyford Park Research Centre for Cold War and Contemporary Peace Studies*.”*  The existing Heritage Centre currently housed in Building 103 will be relocated into this space. This will consolidate the offer into a more defined geographical area and will also ensure the Heritage Centre can expand with the greater offer. *An Upper Heyford (not Heyford Park) Research Centre for the Cold War is an excellent idea. Contemporary peace studies might be part of this, but more naturally occurs at Oxford University a few miles away where funding is currently required for a chair of peace studies.*

**A STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION OF THE COLD WAR HERITAGE OF THE FORMER RAF UPPER HEYFORD BASE**

31 July 2017

By Colonel James P Cook OBE

*‘Who cares about the Cold War? Using former RAF Upper Heyford as a touchstone’, MA Public History Ruskin College Oxford by Daniel Scharf MRTPI might be more relevant to the application*

**Exec Summary**

‘The F-111 role was to carry nuclear bombs into enemy territory as part of the strategy of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD)… (*but* *not apparently a ‘mutual genocide pact’?)*

Hence, it is the unbiased (*really*) findings of this report that Upper Heyford is worthy but not significant, primarily due to the magnitude of the Cold War and the relative small size of the base and its aircrafts contribution. While it has some specific features, none are the only representation. Indeed, similar facilities exist at RAF Fairford and RAF Brize Norton (both former USAF Stations) and many other former bases within the UK. (*sites* *not currently subject to redevelopment and public access. The National Cold War Museum is at RAF Cosford that has less connection to the Cold War than Upper Heyford, as have the displays at the Imperial War Museum premises in London and Duxford.*

The most significant element of the Upper Heyford story is and will remain the people, servicemen and women and their families who stood in harms way and defended the NATO Alliance (*ideally to be told as oral histories at Upper Heyford*). They deserve our recognition and thanks, not the empty concrete skeletons of a former era of war that history has not yet decided upon (*the histories should be designed to be part of that process*). The Cold War was not won or lost and as such will struggle for its place in history as time moves on (*demonstrating no understanding that everything we use and experience today is to some extent part of the remains of the Cold War)*. Those who served there will remember Upper Heyford fondly, but others will look on in bewilderment to a war that never was and a set of aircraft that never did…(*those in the Soviet Union/Warsaw Pact and developing world (the Darker Nations’ should be given a chance to contribute their ‘take’ on that claim*)

**Premise**

…Hence, this paper (*despite the title*) endeavours to steer clear of heritage policy and planning factors and considers in isolation the following questions:.. *the distinction between history and heritage is important. This history could be made part of the interpretation of the heritage and made available in the proposed research centre.*

**Introduction**

The transform (*sic*) into a purpose-built USAF base began in 1950 but no sooner

had it started than the Grand Strategy and approach of the USAF changed and meant that Heyford would require new aircraft, such as the F-111E bombers. These aircraft had the ability to respond at any time and under any conditions, day or night, with the primary role of these bombers to carry intermediate range nuclear weapons.

**Cold War Overview**

Many historians now agree (*and others don’t*) that this bilateral binge of nuclear weapons stockpiling was a major reason why the United States and the Soviet Union managed to avoid going to war with each other… Social commentators constantly denude the MAD strategy, but at a time of world instability and huge pressures on the economy, the fact that a war would result in no winners ultimately kept it from happening…*or maybe social commentators are entitled to suggest other reasons.*

Heyford’s part in this Cold War is represented in its aircraft, the F-111, its

structures and its location in the UK and the West of Europe. But the Cold War was in many ways its raison d'être. *and its use as an instructional monument to the Cold War should now be its raison d'être* *since the decision not to have the base demolished.*

**The physical location**

After many research hours (*but not apparently in proof reading*) , there is simply nothing that makes Upper Heyford more significant than any other USAF or RAF base of the Cold War era. (*no mention of the ‘physical location’; at the most accessible part of the national road network or the proposed shuttle bus to the main line station at Lower Heyford between London, Oxford and Birmingham* *or the 6.4million visitors to Bicester Village 15mins away or the tourist route including London, Windsor, Oxford, Blenheim to Stratford.*

**Conclusions**

While Upper Heyford had held the line for some time, ultimately, technology moved on and its capabilities were forgotten as relics of a war that never was.

While the base and its associated equipment is important, the true debt of gratitude should be placed at the people who made it happen. The physical site will somehow always be associated with these remarkable people, but it was the human being that won, not the concrete, aluminium or paper that makes up an air station. Any commemoration or celebration should be focused on the people, not the site; lest we forget.

*This is an interesting history of the Cold War and the role played by Upper Heyford but states that it ‘steers clear of heritage policy and planning factors’. As such it is only helpful to the understanding of the ‘DNA’ described in the unattributed Heritage Offer that seeks to exploit this downplaying of the Cold War landscape at Upper Heyford to justify demolitions, fragmentation and encroachments by inappropriate development.*