

Planning Application for Bicester Heritage New Technical Site Proposal

Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment

For

Bicester Heritage

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1 Introduction

1.1 The following Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVIA) is carried out in support of an application for a proposed New Technical Site at Bicester Heritage (previously RAF Bicester) adjacent to the A4421. Anthony Stiff Associates was appointed in July 2018 to undertake this assessment.

Scope of This Study

1.2 The aim of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) process is to assess the impact of a development proposal on two aspects related to landscape and the public's enjoyment of it. These aspects are firstly the landscape setting itself and second the visual impact of the proposed development on the surrounding areas from which views are possible.

Methodology

- 1.3 The methodology for the LVIA is derived from the Landscape Institute Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition 2013. The methodology also draws from: Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland Swanwick C and LUC 2002. The report is based on a combination of desk based research and field survey work.
- 1.4 The latest guidance in the 3rd edition of the LVIA guidance has not changed the basic method of assessment from the previous guidance (Version 2) but has placed an emphasis less on formulaic methods and more on the judgement of a qualified and experienced professional. While this report does use matrices, these are not based on numeric values. Instead they use descriptive scales to inform the overall judgement and conclusions of the report and to provide a degree of transparency that would otherwise be lacking. The way in which the field data and other data compiled as part of the study are interpreted is defined by the Assessment Methodology contained in Appendix B. This methodology has been developed over a period of time and has been found to be robust, providing transparency and traceability of the findings of the report.
- 1.5 The LVIA process makes a distinction between the landscape effects and visual effects. Landscape effects are those which affect individual components of the landscape, its pattern and composition, or its perceptual qualities such as openness or tranquillity. Visual effects are those experienced by individuals or groups of people who are likely to view the development.
- 1.6 The LVIA process carried out for the study comprised of:
 - A baseline study to identify the existing landscape character and likely visual 'receptors'. This was carried out through a process of desk study and field observation. The extent and complexity of the study is proportionate to the

scale and size of the proposed development.

- The identification of the landscape and visual effects likely to result from the development;
- An assessment of the significance of these effects through an assessment of
 the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptors, and the likely magnitude
 of change that the receptors will experience compared to the existing
 landscape and visual baseline. Assessment Methodology and Criteria are set
 out in Appendix B.

2 The Existing Landscape Context

Site Location

- Occupying an area of c. 1.86 hectares, the proposed development is located c. 1.5km north of the centre of Bicester and immediately south-west of the Bicester Gliding Centre. The site location is shown on Figure 1. The site is part of former RAF Bicester which is continues as an active airfield with associated hangers and ancillary buildings in which several diverse commercial enterprises/organisations have been established. These include; Bicester Gliding Centre, and numerous automotive suppliers, dealers, restorer's and engineering specialists. The proposal consists of the construction of a New Technical Centre which will serve as a commercial and business space. In the vicinity of the Site land use comprises of mixed residential and agricultural land with access gained from the A4421 at the entrance to the Bicester Heritage Centre.
- 2.2 The site is located to the south west of the main airfield buildings and airfield itself.

 The existing site is predominantly occupied with scrub woodland with groups of larger trees and some hard standing.

Setting

2.3 The site is set within a predominantly urban setting with the former Airfield and military uses to the north and residential uses to the south and west. The A4095 (Skimmingdish Lane) is a busy by-pass road around the outer edge of Bicester and passes along the southern boundary of the site from which the site will have direct access. There are significant urban and commercial influences from the adjacent buildings and their uses and from the northern urban extension of Caversfield, Bicester to the south and adjacent busy roads. Beyond the extent of the airfield (0.8km to the north east) lies the Stratton Audley Quarries, now disused, which is now in parts designated as a SSSI.

Topography

2.4 The site lies in relatively low lying ground at around 83m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The ground falls away gently over the extent of the airfield to approximately 76m. Levels along the boundary are approximately 77-78mAOD. Land to the north and north east rises towards Stratton Audley.

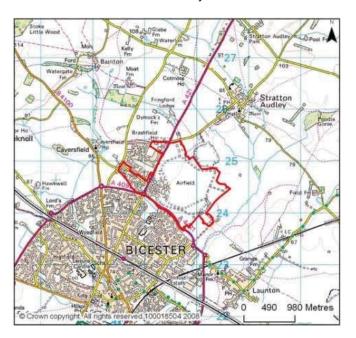
Land Use

2.5 The landscape is broadly rural to the north and east, and urban to the south and west. As mentioned previously, the busy roads (particularly to the west and south) dominate the local landscape in terms of landscape and visual impacts and also noise and pollution. The wider site itself is an established centre for businesses connected with

historic cars.

Statutory Designations and Rights of Way (Figure 1)

- 2.6 Figure 1 shows the currently recorded statutory designations and public rights of way for the study area which has been defined as a 3km radius from the site. The whole of RAF Bicester (Technical Site and Domestic Site) is designated as a Conservation Area, and as such, part of that character and appearance includes the existing trees, which will require notice to the local planning authority should works to the existing trees be required as part of the proposed development.
- 2.7 The conservation area boundary is shown below.

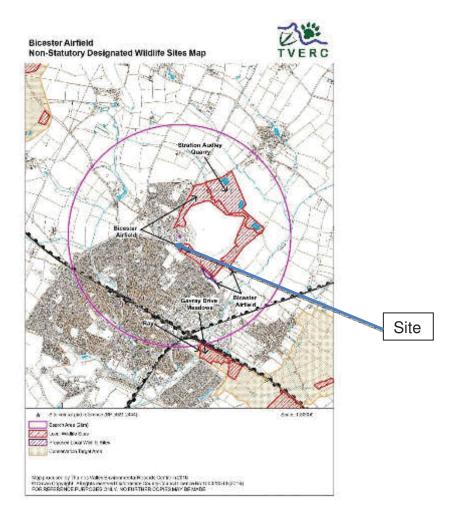


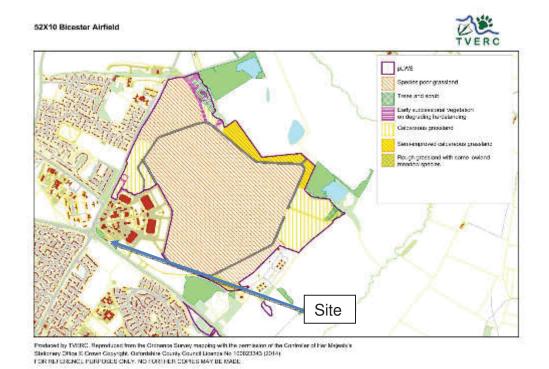
- 2.8 To the north east of the site (0.8km away) lies a designated SSSI site at Stratton Audley Quarries (disused).
- 2.9 There are total of 8 scheduled monuments and 21 buildings and structures designated as listed buildings, associated with the RAF Bicester Technical Site to the north of the proposed development.
- 2.10 There is an extensive network of public rights of way (PRoWs) (Shown on Figure 1) within the countryside around the site, however no PRoWs run within the site or the adjoining Bicester Airfield. To the north east of the site footpath 371/7/10 and 371/7/20 circulates the part of the disused Stratton Audley quarry site before returning to Stratton Audley. To the east are footpaths 272/17/20, 272/19/10, 272/17/10129/2/70, and others further to the east. None are considered to have significant views of the site.

Non-statutory designations:

2.11 The application site is within Bicester Airfield Local Wildlife Site (LWS) which is a site

of county importance, designated for presence of Habitats of Principal Importance Lowland Calcareous Grassland and also Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land.





3 Landscape Planning Context

National Planning Policy Framework

- Paragraph 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Of the methods listed to achieve this the following is the most relevant to this LVIA:
- 3.2 Paragraph 113 of the NPPF requires that local planning authorities should set criteriabased policies for any development on or affecting protected landscaped areas. It states:
- 'Local planning authorities should set criteria-based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites or landscape areas will be judged. Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks'.
- 3.4 Paragraph 126 of the NPPF requires that the local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. It states:
- 4.5 'Local planning authorities should take into account; the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation... the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.
- 3.6 The site lies within the Bicester Heritage Conservation Area and is adjacent to several Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings. There are no other statutory designations that apply to this site or the surrounding landscape and therefore it receives no special protection in this regard. The landscape to the north of the site is noted in the published landscape assessment (Supplementary Planning Guidance Cherwell District Landscape Assessment 1995) as being an 'Area of High Landscape Importance' which is a local designation.
- 3.7 The following table sets out the relevant Cherwell District Council Local Plan policies which are relevant to landscape issues. The table below sets out how the development proposals accord with these policies. The site lies within the Launton Parish but there is no Neighbourhood Plan as yet for this area.

3.8 Summary of Local Planning Policy Relevant to Landscape

The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 How the proposal complies with policy Policy ESD 7: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) All development will be required to use sustainable drainage An appropriate SuDs drainage system systems (SuDS) for the management of surface water runwill be a condition of any new development. Where site specific Flood Risk Assessments are required in association with development proposals, they should be used to determine how SuDS can be used on particular sites and to design appropriate systems In considering SuDS solutions, the need to protect ground water quality must be taken into account, especially where infiltration techniques are proposed. Where possible, SuDS should seek to reduce flood risk, reduce pollution and provide landscape and wildlife benefits. SuDS will require the approval of Oxfordshire County Council as LLFA and SuDS Approval Body, and proposals must include an agreement on the future management, maintenance and replacement of the SuDS features. Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity

Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment

Protection and enhancement of biodiversity and the natural environment will be achieved by the following:

- In considering proposals for development, a net gain in biodiversity will be sought by protecting, managing, enhancing and extending existing resources, and by creating new resources
- The protection of trees will be encouraged, with an aim to increase the number of trees in the District
- The reuse of soils will be sought if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or as a last resort, compensated for, then development will not be permitted.
- Development which would result in damage to or loss of a site of international value will be subject to the Habitats Regulations Assessment process and will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there will be no likely significant effects on the international site or that effects can be mitigated
- Development which would result in damage to or loss of a site of biodiversity or geological value of national importance will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm it would cause to the site and the wider national network of SSSIs, and the loss can be mitigated to achieve a net gain in biodiversity/geodiversity
- Development which would result in damage to or loss of a site of biodiversity or geological value of regional or local importance including habitats of species of principal importance for biodiversity will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm it would

Local Plan Policy ESD10 mentions damage to or loss of sites of biodiversity value of regional or local importance. Given the intensively managed nature and poor condition of the majority of the woodland within the site, there is scope for appropriate compensation and enhancement measures

Areas of grassland, which are to be retained within the proposed development will be subject to appropriate management to maintain and enhance their value for biodiversity in the long term. These areas will be delivered as species-rich calcareous grassland through the clearing of stockpiled arisings, where appropriate. Once the open space has been appropriately landscaped and cleared of arisings and other undesirable vegetation, the grassland will be oversown using arisings taken from areas of species-rich grassland elsewhere within the adjacent Bicester Airfield LWS.

A management plan will be produced and implemented to ensure that the proposed grassland establishes properly whilst preventing the growth and spread of pernicious weeds and scrub species. These areas will be subsequently managed as a long sward, subject to twice yearly cutting (early-spring and autumn), with the arisings removed to ensure

- cause to the site, and the loss can be mitigated to achieve a net gain in biodiversity/geodiversity
- Development proposals will be expected to incorporate features to encourage biodiversity, and retain and where possible enhance existing features of nature conservation value within the site. Existing ecological networks should be identified and maintained to avoid habitat fragmentation, and ecological corridors should form an essential component of green infrastructure provision in association with new development to ensure habitat connectivity
- Relevant habitat and species surveys and associated reports will be required to accompany planning applications which may affect a site, habitat or species of known or potential ecological value
- Air quality assessments will also be required for development proposals that would be likely to have a significantly adverse impact on biodiversity by generating an increase in air pollution
- Planning conditions/obligations will be used to secure net gains in biodiversity by helping to deliver Biodiversity Action Plan targets and/or meeting the aims of Conservation Target Areas. Developments for which these are the principal aims will be viewed favourably
- A monitoring and management plan will be required for biodiversity features on site to ensure their long term suitable management.

that the soil conditions are enhanced in the long term and that the maximum species diversity of these areas is achieved.

A number of new trees and shrubs will be provided within the proposals, in order to mitigate for losses to areas of young broadleaved woodland. These will comprise a range of native species of known value to wildlife. Where tree planting is proposed within areas of grassland these will be at a low density and as such will have little impact on the species diversity of the surrounding grassland, furthermore providing opportunities for a range of nesting bird species.

Existing retained boundary vegetation will be enhanced with any gaps planted with native hedgerow species, any dead or diseased specimens removed and replaced and a sensitive management strategy implemented to ensure the health and longevity of the supported band of woodland.

Overall it is considered that the proposals will fully mitigate for any impacts to biodiversity through the long term management and enhancement of the existing habitats of ecological value within the Application Site, in addition to the provision and appropriate management of areas of the site for their botanical and ecological interest in the long term.

There are ample opportunities for ecological improvements which will offset the loss of the poorer grassland which makes up the majority of the site; these include the long-term conservation management of strategic areas of species-poor grassland outside the development footprint but within the airfield. In this way the proposed development will be able to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the LWS, as per Policy Bicester 8. The ecological consultant will put together a comprehensive Ecology Strategy for the development, detailing the proposed approach, which will involve full consultation with the CDC Ecology Adviser.

All lighting to comply with 'Artificial lighting and wildlife - Interim Guidance:
Recommendations to help minimise the impact artificial lighting' (BCT, 2014) on bats.

Policy ESD 13: Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement

Opportunities will be sought to secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape, particularly in urban fringe locations, through the restoration, management or enhancement of existing landscapes, features or habitats and where appropriate the creation of new ones, including the planting of woodlands, trees and hedgerows.

Development will be expected to respect and enhance local landscape character, securing appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided. Proposals will not be permitted if they would:

- Cause undue visual intrusion into the open countryside
- Cause undue harm to important natural landscape features and topography
- Be inconsistent with local character
- Impact on areas judged to have a high level of tranquillity
- Harm the setting of settlements, buildings, structures or other landmark features, or
- Harm the historic value of the landscape.
- Development proposals should have regard to the information and advice contained in the Council's Countryside Design Summary Supplementary Planning Guidance, and the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS) and be accompanied by a landscape assessment where appropriate.

The site is well contained to the north by the existing buildings and infrastructure of the former RAF facilities and airfield. The site is also contained to the south and west by a significant belt of trees along the highways verge. To the east the aspect is more open to the airfield edge with more containment in the form of scrub woodland around the south edge of the airfield.

The landscape has no statutory designations. Landscape impacts are predicted to be minimal with little to no influence beyond the site boundary. The degree of change will be more evident within the site itself with the loss of some mature trees and areas of scrub woodland. See Indicative Cross Sections in Appendix C.

There are no sensitive visual receptors that will be impacted upon by the proposed development. Lower sensitivity road users and cyclists may have glimpsed views through the boundary screening, but this is not considered to be significant in terms of harm.

Appropriate new planting and other mitigation measures to tie in with the ecological recommendations will be implemented.

Policy ESD 15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment

Successful design is founded upon an understanding and respect for an area's unique built, natural and cultural context. New development will be expected to complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high quality design. All new development will be required to meet high design standards. Where development is in the vicinity of any of the District's distinctive natural or historic assets, delivering high quality design that complements the asset will be essential. New development proposals should:

 Be designed to deliver high quality safe, attractive, durable and healthy places to live and work in.
 Development of all scales should be designed to improve the quality and appearance of an area The Heritage Statement reports that:

- •The evidential value the site holds will not be undermined;
- •The proposals will help to facilitate the preservation and rediscovery of such evidence, which will represent and enhancement:
- •Because the development is proposed to be sited on the edge of the existing Technical Centre, the aesthetic value of the existing group of service and technical buildings within the site and their interrelationship will be preserved;
- •The development is proposed to

- and the way it functions Deliver buildings, places and spaces that can adapt to changing social, technological, economic and environmental conditions
- Support the efficient use of land and infrastructure, through appropriate land uses, mix and density/development intensity
- Contribute positively to an area's character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features, including skylines, valley floors, significant trees,
- historic boundaries, landmarks, features or views, in particular within designated landscapes, within the Cherwell Valley and within conservation areas and their setting
- Conserve, sustain and enhance designated and non designated 'heritage assets' (as defined in the NPPF) including buildings, features, archaeology, conservation areas and their settings, and ensure new development is sensitively sited and integrated in accordance with advice in the NPPF and NPPG. Proposals for development that affect non-designated heritage assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset as set out in the NPPF and NPPG. Regeneration proposals that make sensitive use of heritage assets, particularly where these bring redundant or under used buildings or areas, especially any on English Heritage's At Risk Register, into appropriate use will be encouraged
- Include information on heritage assets sufficient to assess the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Where archaeological potential is identified this should include an appropriate desk based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.
- Respect the traditional pattern of routes, spaces, blocks, plots, enclosures and the form, scale and massing of buildings. Development should be designed to integrate with existing streets and public spaces, and buildings configured to create clearly defined active public frontages
- Reflect or, in a contemporary design response, reinterpret local
- distinctiveness, including elements of construction, elevational detailing, windows and doors, building and surfacing materials, mass, scale and colour palette
- Promote permeable, accessible and easily understandable places by creating spaces that connect with each other, are easy to move through and have recognisable landmark features
- Demonstrate a holistic approach to the design of the public realm to create high quality and multifunctional streets and places that promotes pedestrian movement and integrates different modes of transport, parking and servicing. The principles set out in The Manual for Streets should be followed

avoid undermining the preeminence of the hangar buildings thus the contribution the existing hangars make to the appearance of the Technical Site, understanding of its layout and functional relationship to the airfield would be preserved;

The proposed design and siting of the new buildings responds to the Arcadian and campus like qualities of the Technical site, which would be preserved;

•With the access proposed direct off

the public highway and making use

of the previous alignment of an earlier route, understanding of the former arrangement of perimeter routes and the surviving buildings will be better preserved than at present; •The historic interest lies in the survival of the existing military buildings, other structures and the trident layout. The proposed development will not have any direct adverse impact on existing buildings or structures. Indeed, an accepted benefit of the proposed development is that it will facilitate the ongoing regeneration and repair of existing buildings;

- Consider the amenity of both existing and future development, including matters of privacy, outlook, natural lighting, ventilation, and indoor and outdoor space
- Limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation
- Be compatible with up to date urban design principles, including Building for Life, and achieve Secured by Design accreditation
- Consider sustainable design and layout at the master planning stage of design, where building orientation and the impact of microclimate can be considered within the layout
- Incorporate energy efficient design and sustainable construction techniques, whilst ensuring that the aesthetic implications of green technology are appropriate to the context (also see Policies ESD 1 - 5 on climate change and renewable energy)
- Integrate and enhance green infrastructure and incorporate biodiversity enhancement features where possible (see Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment and Policy ESD 17 Green Infrastructure). Well designed landscape schemes should be an integral part of development proposals to support improvements to biodiversity, the micro climate, and air pollution and provide attractive places that improve people's health and sense of vitality
- Use locally sourced sustainable materials where possible.
- The Council will provide more detailed design and historic environment policies in the Local Plan Part
 2.
- The design of all new development will need to be informed by an analysis of the context, together with an explanation and justification of the principles that have informed the design rationale. This should be demonstrated in the Design and Access Statement that accompanies the planning application. The Council expects all the issues within this policy to be positively addressed through the explanation and justification in the Design & Access Statement. Further guidance can be found on the Council's website.

Policy ESD 17: Green Infrastructure

The District's green infrastructure network will be maintained and enhanced through the following measures:

- Pursuing opportunities for joint working to maintain and improve the green infrastructure network, whilst protecting sites of importance for nature conservation
- Protecting and enhancing existing sites and features forming part of the green infrastructure network and improving sustainable connectivity between sites in accordance with policies on supporting a modal shift in transport (Policy SLE 4: Improved Transport and Connections), open space,

Some existing mature trees and scrub woodland will be lost.

The proposals will include new tree planting to provide new structure and amenity landscape as a setting to the new buildings

A SuDs strategy will be integral to the development proposals.

- sport and recreation (Policy BSC 10: Open Space, Outdoor Sport
- and Recreation Provision), adapting to climate change (Policy ESD 1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change), SuDS (Policy ESD 7:
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)), biodiversity and the natural environment (Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment), Conservation Target Areas (Policy ESD 11: Conservation Target Areas), heritage assets (Policy ESD 15) and the Oxford Canal (Policy ESD 16)
- Ensuring that green infrastructure network considerations are integral to the planning of new development. Proposals should maximise the opportunity to maintain and extend green infrastructure links to form a multi-functional network of open space, providing opportunities for walking and cycling, and connecting the towns to the urban fringe and the wider countryside beyond
- All strategic development sites (Section C: 'Policies for Cherwell's Places') will be required to incorporate green infrastructure provision and proposals should include details for future management and maintenance.

Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 161 Section C - Policies for Cherwell's Places

Policy Bicester 8: Former RAF Bicester The Council will encourage conservation-led proposals to secure a long-lasting, economically viable future for the Former RAF Bicester technical site and flying field. It will support heritage tourism uses, leisure, recreation, employment and community uses. The development of Technical and conference facilities will also be supported as part of a wider package of employment uses. All proposals will be required to accord with the approved Planning Brief for the site and take into account the Bicester Masterplan. They must maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, protect listed, scheduled and other important buildings, their setting, and protect the sensitive historic fabric of the buildings and preserve the openness of the airfield. The biodiversity of the site should be protected and enhanced and habitats and species surveys (including a Great Crested Newt survey) should be undertaken. The continuation of gliding use will be supported. Opportunities for improving access to the countryside will be encouraged. The Council's SFRA should be considered. Proposals should be considered against

The proposal seeks to maximise the benefits that are promoted within this policy as set out in the various supporting documents that relate to this application. The proposal will also preserve and enhance the historic setting of the wider site, facilitating the continuing restoration of the site facilities and maintaining a viable commercial use for the site.

Summary

Policy ESD 15.

3.9 In term of Policy ESD13 Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement, the proposals will have only a local impact on the landscape of the site itself mostly by the loss of the existing scrub woodland and mature trees (VP1, VP12). The screening by the vegetation along the highway verge will be effective and further new planting within the site will be implemented. The impacts of new buildings on less sensitive visual receptors (road users and cyclists) will be low.

4 Proposed Development

Description of Development

- 4.1 The proposal is for a new Technical Site to complement Bicester Heritage's vision of making the former RAF site into a long term and sustainable business and focussing on the enjoyment of historic vehicles. The aim is to create a unifying idea responding directly to the site's rich and unique story, inspired by its aviation and motoring history and the existing period buildings.
- The general layout and site arrangements can be seen in ASA-561-DR-001. The new Technical buildings sit within an area near to the south western perimeter of the airfield. There are five buildings located near to the boundary and three set back into the site. The two rows of buildings are set back either side of the alignment of the former Skimmingdish Lane. Building height vary between 5.82m to the ridge to 6.1m high for the frontage buildings. These rise to up to 8.05m. All have pitched roofs. Buildings in the second row are between 5.82m and 8.05m.
- 4.3 The boundary vegetation generally ranges between 6-9m high (mostly around 9m) which means that the building behind would be screened from the road. The screening height is in effect better than this as the trees are planted on the road embankment that slopes up to the road.
- 4.4 The car parking is located in discrete areas next to individual buildings and access is provided along the old Skimmingdish Lane, accessed off the A4095.

Mitigation (See Landscape Framework Plan (ASA-561-DR-001)

4.5 A landscape framework plan has been prepared to indicate the broad extent and type of planting proposed. 47 new trees and 180m of native hedge will be planted between the new buildings and the boundary, supplementing the existing screening along the boundary on the highway verge. Most of the rest of the 'green' areas between buildings is laid to grass which is keeping with the character of the wider Bicester Heritage site. Tree species will all be native and they will be planted at a small size to facilitate better establishment.

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4.6 Within the site more ornamental planting will enhance the immediate environment of the Technical site and trees will be used with car parking area to break up the scale of these spaces and to provide some shade.

5 Landscape Assessment

5.1 The description of the landscape and its importance is informed by published sources including the National (Joint) Landscape Character description and the 'OWLS' Landscape Study, plus from a field visit and photographic survey for this report. At a local level, the Cherwell District commissioned the Cherwell Landscape Character Assessment in 1995 which remains as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

National (Joint) Character Area

- 5.2 The National (Joint) Character Areas were first developed in the mid 1990's by Natural England and divide England into 159 Character Areas. This study places the site in *The Cotswolds* (NCA 107). The link for this JCA is: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk.
- 5.3 The NCAs provide a broad brush description of the landscape. At a more local level, which is more focussed on the landscape characteristics of the specific area in question, a regional study and Cherwell-specific study are available as reference documents to assist in the definitions of the baseline landscape. Selected extracts to describe key features include:
- 5.4 Low-lying clay-based flood plains encircle the Midvale Ridge. Superficial deposits, including alluvium and gravel terraces, spread over 40 per cent of the area, creating gently undulating topography. The Upper Jurassic and Cretaceous clays and the wet valley bottoms give rise to enclosed pasture, contrasting with the more settled, open, arable lands of the gravel.
- 5.5 The large river system of the River Thames drains the Vales, their headwaters flowing off the Cotswolds to the north or emitting from the spring line along the Chilterns and Downs escarpments. Where mineral extraction takes place, pits naturally fill with water, and limestone gravels from the Cotswolds give rise to marl formation. There are a high number of nationally important geological sites.
- 5.6 Woodland cover is low at only about 3 per cent, but hedges, hedgerow trees and field trees are frequent. Watercourses are often marked by lines of willows and, particularly in the Aylesbury Vale and Cotswold Water Park, native black poplar.
- 5.7 Wet ground conditions and heavy clay soils discourage cultivation in many places, giving rise to livestock farming. Fields are regular and hedged, except near the Cotswolds, where there can be stone walls. The Vale of White Horse is made distinct by large arable fields, and there are relict orchards on the Greensand.
- In the river corridors, grazed pasture dominates, with limited areas of historic wetland habitats including wet woodland, fen, reedbed and flood meadow. There are two areas of flood meadow designated for their importance at a European level as

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). There are also rich and extensive ditch systems.

- 5.9 Brick and tile from local clays, timber and thatch are traditional building materials across the area, combined with limestone near the Cotswolds and occasional clunch and wichert near the Chilterns.
- 5.10 Settlement is sparse on flood plains, apart from at river crossings, where there can be large towns, such as Abingdon. Aylesbury and Bicester are major urban centres, and the outer suburbs of Oxford and Swindon spread into this NCA. Market towns and villages are strung along the spring lines of the Chilterns and Downs. Major routes include mainline rail, canals, a network of roads including the M40 and M4 and The Ridgeway and Thames Path National Trails.

Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)

5.11 'OWLS' is the current landscape character assessment for Oxfordshire. Its main purpose is to investigate the landscape character and biodiversity resource of the county and to use the results of the survey work to help safeguard, maintain and enhance this resource.

Clay Vale (Landscape Type)

This landscape type extends from the vale landscapes adjacent to the northern part of the River Cherwell to the Upper Thames area south and east of Bicester and the site. It also occupies a large part of the Vale of White Horse to the north-east of Wantage and borders part of the River Thame and its tributaries. This is a low-lying vale landscape associated with small pasture fields, many watercourses and hedgerow trees and well defined nucleated villages

Key Characteristics

- A flat, low-lying landform.
- Mixed land uses, dominated by pastureland, with small to medium-sized
- hedged fields.
- Many mature oak, ash and willow hedgerow trees.
- Dense, tree-lined streams and ditches dominated by pollarded willows and
- poplars.
- Small to medium-sized nucleated villages.

Wooded Estatelands

5.12 The airfield is described within this landscape type. The descriptions below relate to the landscape to the north of the site rather than the site itself.

Key Characteristics

- Rolling topography with localised steep slopes.
- Large blocks of ancient woodland and mixed plantations of variable sizes.
- Large parklands and mansion houses.
- A regularly-shaped field pattern dominated by arable fields.
- Small villages with strong vernacular character.
- 5.13 Two of the guidelines noted within the OWLS document are relevant to the site:
 - Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses such as quarries, landfill sites, airfields and large-scale development, such as new barns and industrial units, with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area. This will help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surrounding countryside.
 - Maintain the nucleated pattern of settlements and promote the use of building materials and a scale of development and that is appropriate to this landscape type.

Cherwell Landscape Character Assessment 1995

5.14 At a local (District) level, the Cherwell Council commissioned a district landscape assessment in 1995. This study (the CDLA) is now over 20 years old but remains on the Council's web site as supplementary planning guidance (SPG). Some reference is made to this study below but this report also refers above to the OWLS Study which is also cited as SPG.

Otmoor Lowlands (Character Area) (This equates to the OWLS Clay Vale Landscape)

5.15 At the south of the district is the distinctive, low lying are associated with the River Ray flood plain which forms the large character are of the Otmoor Lowlands. This flat, open farmland has a distinctive atmosphere, particularly where the traditional wet meadows and pastures and their important flora and fauna exist.....A number of isolated low hills dominate the skyline, and the south of the area is contained by the low ridges of the Oxford Heights. Military development has had considerable influence upon settlement and land use within the area.

Landscape Type: 'Transitional' (within the Landscape Character Area)

5.16 Transitional landscape: This is one of several landscape types that have specific uses

(in this case a military airfield) that also therefore have a specific and overwhelming influence on their landscape character.

Oxfordshire Estate Farmlands (to the north of the airfield on rising ground) (This equates to the OWLS Wooded Estate lands)

5.17 This is a rolling arable landscape with a strong field pattern of copses and trees, with a patchwork of arable and pasture, defined by well maintained hedges and is an 'Area of High Landscape Value'.

Sub-Landscape types here are defined within the CRC Report as being:

- R1a (land to the north east of the airfield): Elevated or low lying arable farmland with weak structure
- R2a (to the north of the airfield): arable landscape with weak field pattern and isolated trees
- R2b (to the north east of the airfield beyond Landscape Type R1a): Rolling arable landscape with strong field pattern, copses and hedgerow trees.
- 5.18 The Cherwell Landscape Character Assessment sets out a strategy for landscape intervention. This includes the following categories:
 - Conservation
 - Repair
 - Restoration
 - Reconstruction
- 5.19 The site lies within an area identified as being within the 'Reconstruction' category defined as:
- 5.20 'These landscapes are those where the landscape has been so modified by human activity that they no longer bear any resemblance to their former character. They included quarries and airfields which occur in significant numbers throughout the study area'.
- 5.21 This was the conclusion in 1995, and from the point of view of the underlying landscape remains true today in terms of the continued dominance of the airfield and its associated former military buildings. The key characteristics of the local landscape have been significantly eroded, but positive characteristics remain in terms of the historic attributes of the site and its evolution into a sustainable business. A new contemporary Technical Site with an associated landscape scheme will be a positive influence on this landscape providing a stimulus for the continuing use of the site as a commercial going concern while at the same time preserving its place in history and the community.

- 5.22 As the CRC Report states: These landscapes would benefit from the introduction of a new character and strong sense of place. The report states further that: These landscapes have a high capacity to accommodate change as they have lost their intrinsic character. This is statement is perhaps worded too strongly in the context of today's situation where the character of the former airfield and its associated buildings and structures are appreciated for what they were and are, and are now being used within an appropriate context that celebrates this character. However there is still a considerable capacity to absorb appropriate change within this site.
- 5.23 For the Technical Site, the removal of the area of scrub woodland and some mature trees will be a loss in amenity terms, but mostly as perceived from within the site. This area is not obviously used or valued for its amenity value, but will, as part of the proposed development, become an integral part of the longer term development plan for the site. This in turn will ensure the sustainability of the heritage setting and longer term vision for the site.

Site Baseline

- 5.24 This site area itself is characterised by scrub woodland with some groups of mature trees forming the west perimeter to the Bicester Heritage site. The former RAF buildings lie in a cluster generally to the north of the site. Immediately to the north west of the site is an area of RAF housing and other buildings, and to the south east and south west of the site are areas of residential development.
- 5.25 The main town of Bicester lies to the south and west of the site. The busy A4095 and nearby junction are dominant uses and influences, creating a very urban feel to the site context.

Landscape Effects: Sensitivity (derived from considering the landscape value and its susceptibility to change)

Overall the value of the landscape (local to the site) is relatively high due to the national importance of historic features on the site and their settings and the fact the whole site is a Conservation Area. The local landscape and views are dominated by the adjacent busy Skimmingdish Lane (the A4095) which is a visual detractor. One of the large hanger buildings is also visible from the east of the site from Skimmingdish Lane. This can be viewed either as a positive attribute to the historic landscape or a negative influence on the urban edge of Bicester. Overall it is considered that the hangers are set within an appropriate setting and that they form local landmarks and features which are valued and help provide a sense of place and history on this edge of the town. Overall, the landscape is rare due its good state of preservation being intact with so many original features and buildings. The character of the site itself is not rare, comprising mostly unmanaged woodland scrub of generally poor quality. The site has an abandoned appearance with remnants of the former Skimmingdish Lane.

The site does however provide a green and leafy setting to the perimeter of the side site which would be lost.

- 5.27 Hence for the site itself the value of the landscape and its setting is relatively high. The susceptibility of the site to change is stated in the published landscape assessment to be relatively low. The susceptibility to absorb change is determined by gauging how vulnerable (and rare) the landscape is and how it is able to accommodate change taking account of any mitigation measures that are proposed as part of the development. The judgement of this factor is made using a balance of positive and negative features within the landscape, and takes account of physical characteristics of the land as well as human perceptions and how rare or irreplaceable the landscape is. The assessment describes the landscape character within the influence of the site in terms of the presence or absent of various landscape elements and the judgement takes account of the overall contribution these elements make in defining the key characteristics of the landscape.
- 5.28 In recognition of the historic value and rarity of the site, the site's structures and buildings it is considered that the ability to absorb change must caveated by the fact that any change should be appropriate, should not erode the historic character of the site and indeed should provide an overall positive influence on the site for the future.
- 5.29 The site is therefore of relatively high sensitivity due primarily to the historic landscape attributes and the fact that the whole of the site lies within a Conservation Area. The condition and value of the site are reduced due to the generally unmanaged nature of the scrub woodland and areas of spoil heaps and hard standing that are also evident within the site (VPs 2 and 3).
- 5.30 For receptors within the highway landscape adjoining the site sensitivity is considered to be less than for the site itself. The landscape is less valuable and is dominated by moving traffic. For the nearby residential landscape the sensitivity would be relatively high but impacts are not considered significant for these receptors. Visual impact is examined in the Visual Impact section.
- 5.31 The overall Sensitivity is judged by considering the aggregate effects of the importance/value of the landscape and its susceptibility to change.
- 5.32 Overall the **Sensitivity** of the site itself is **Medium** (this combines the factors of Importance/Value [Medium] and susceptibility to change [also Medium]).
- 5.33 For landscape receptors within the highway corridor, the Sensitivity would also be **Low** (this combines the factors of Importance/Value [Low] and susceptibility to change [also Low]).
- 5.34 The methodology detailing the criteria for the assessment is contained in Appendix B.

Landscape Effects: Magnitude of Change

- 5.35 The magnitude of change is a combination of the impact of the development on the key features of the landscape and also the area over which these changes are evident.
- 5.36 As described in Section 4, the proposal will comprise a new Technical Site comprising a total of 8 new buildings.
- 5.37 The building layout, position, mass, scale and form have been the subject of extensive 'pre-app' discussions and design iterations that have informed the design. One of the key aspects that was considered was the space available for new planting between the buildings and the boundary. The proposals now incorporate 47 new trees and 180m of native hedgerow. The buildings are at a level that will comfortably be screened by the existing boundary planting, and the layout allows room between buildings for parking, circulation and access, and landscaped areas.
- 5.38 The magnitude of change is considered taking account of the mitigation proposals that have been described above.
- 5.39 As the site is so well screened, lighting associated with the new site is not thought to be a significant issue with regards to impact on the wider landscape. Other factors, such as ecology, may be more of a constraint.
- The magnitude of change within the context of the site landscape is considered to be **Medium/High** taking account of the above factors of local context. However this potential negative impact must be balanced against the positive response that the new development will have as part of the evolving use of the site. The New Technical Site would become part of the wider development on the perimeter of the airfield and would be therefore located within an appropriate context alongside similarly proportioned buildings.
- 5.41 A **Medium-Low** magnitude of change will be apparent in local views from the Skimmingdish Lane corridor. Limited glimpsed views would be available in the winter time through thinner parts of the highway tree screening and through the existing gap of a former access point.
- 5.42 As can be seen from VPs 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10 the highway boundary planting can be seen screening the site virtually completely. The only views into the site are from VP9 through the former access gate and VP6 where oblique views into the site from the east are possible.
- 5.43 The new buildings are a mix of traditional brick to match existing buildings on site with and corrugated metal cladding, metal window frames and sectional access doors. This industrial look will not be out of place in the context of the existing workshops, hangers and ancillary buildings behind the 'waterfront'. The Magnitude of Change

- from remote landscape receptors such as those above is considered to be Low.
- 5.44 The extent of the change is also taken into account when considering the aggregate magnitude of change. Within, and local to, the site this extent must be considered to be **Low**.
- 5.45 The overall **Magnitude of Change** for the new site itself is considered to be **Medium**. For the highway landscape this would be **Low**

Significance of Impact (on the Landscape)

- 5.46 Combining the Sensitivity of the landscape and the Magnitude of Change the Significance of effect on the site landscape character is judged to be Moderate/Minor for the site and Minor for the highway landscape.
- 5.47 Within the methodology in Appendix B the following definitions would be applied and the overall result would be a combination of these descriptions: '
- 5.48 Overall the impact on the site landscape is considered to be between Moderate and Moderate-Minor, though this may reduce as the new surrounding landscape matures.
 - Moderate adverse: The proposed development would be out of scale with the landscape and/or result in the partial loss of characteristics of the site.
 - Minor adverse: The proposed development would have some effect on some characteristics of the site but the overall character is sustained and the value of the landscape is not materially harmed or has been mitigated.

6 Visual Assessment

Introduction

- 6.1 The visual impact assessment is a separate exercise to the landscape impact assessment. It consists of assessing the impact on views into and out of the site of the proposed development. The impact takes into account the location of the viewpoint, its sensitivity, the importance of the view and the magnitude of change to the view that the development represents.
- 6.2 The importance of the view is a balance of how visible the site is and by whom it is viewed. Also important is whether the views are short or long term and if any negative changes can be mitigated.

Methodology

- 6.3 Potential viewpoints have been determined from a site visit. In practical terms the site is well screened from most views from the south due to existing verge screening. The only glimpses into the site are from the possible accesses in the centre of the site frontage and at the east end where there is a security gate.
- A representative selection of viewpoints is presented here with the locations chosen where there is likely to be an impact with respect to the sensitivity of the users and the magnitude of the change experienced. Other views are included for context.
- 6.5 Refer to Figure 2 for the viewpoint (VP) locations and photos from the viewpoints are contained in Appendix A (Viewpoints). All photos are taken with a 50mm equivalent focal length lens approximating to the human eye.
- 6.6 Mitigation is assumed to be in place on completion of the development for the purpose of assessment of impacts. Winter views are generally considered to be worse than summer views when leaves on the trees and hedges make screening vegetation more effective. This has been taken into account within the assessment.

Sensitivity of Receptors

6.7 In this analysis and in common with best practice public viewpoints and public routes and paths are considered the most sensitive locations as the users are moving slowly and most likely using and valuing the view as recreation. Residences with permanent views can also be in this category. Less sensitive receptors include people using road and transport corridors as the landscape experience is transitory and the user's focus is mainly on the activity of driving or cycling.

Survey Dates

6.8 The site visit was made during clear conditions in the summer month of July 2018 and this therefore represents the best case scenario in terms of the effectiveness of screening vegetation.

Overall Visibility

- 6.9 The study area for this assessment has been defined as a 3km radius from the site. In practical terms, views beyond the site boundary are not significant for the reasons already explained above.
- 6.10 A selection of views have been taken within the site to demonstrate the enclosed nature and degree of vegetation cover, but also the rather unmanaged aspects and abandoned appearance of the site (VPs 1, 2, 3, 7 and 12). Other views have been taken from the A4050 to demonstrate the effectiveness of the verge vegetation adjacent to the site (VPs 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10).
- 6.11 Within the site the views are considered to be of significant value with important historical references and features that are in the view and which contribute to the setting of the site. The site is a Conservation Area and Scheduled Monuments and listed buildings add to the viewer's experience. The sensitivity of the views is also significant given that visitors to this site have an expectation for the landscape and heritage assets to contribute to the view.
- 6.12 The existing vegetation and mature trees contribute to the current amenity of the site and to the setting of the Conservation Area and heritage assets. However the site has a neglected appearance having been left for a period of time to naturalise with the woodland scrub that now dominates the view. There are visual detractors such spoil heaps and areas of hard standing used for parking old cars, which, given the use of the Bicester Heritage site as a whole, are not inappropriate. The spoil heaps are temporary features.
- 6.13 The overall sensitivity of the views within the site is considered to be High.
- 6.14 The sensitivity of views from road users is Low and the importance of the view from the road user is also Low. The overall sensitivity from these receptors is therefore Low.

 The magnitude of change as perceived from within the site will be high. The loss of the mature vegetation and the scrub woodland, will from amonity point of view.
 - the mature vegetation and the scrub woodland, will from amenity point of view represent a significant adverse change. However, the extent of the change will be contained within the site as the site remains enclosed by virtue of the surrounding buildings and the verge screening to the highway side. The extent of change (Low) combined with the Magnitude of change (**High**) is combined to provide an aggregate score of **Medium**.
- 6.15 Outside the site, within the road corridor, the viewer would not perceive a significant change and therefore the scores would be aggregated to **Low**.
- 6.16 In terms of significance of overall visual impact, taking the sensitivity and magnitude of change together, the impact for viewers within the site would be **Moderate**. For road

users this would be Minor.

- 6.17 The **Moderate** adverse description from the methodlogy criteria is: The viewpoint may be more or less sensitive and the degree of harm to the view will depend on the scale of change. The proposal would cause obvious deterioration to a view from a moderately sensitive receptor, or perceptible damage to a view from a more sensitive receptor.
- 6.18 This conclusion also has to be balanced with the potential longer term aspiration for the site, and the appropriateness of the proposed development and how it will benefit the rest of the valued heritage assets, their setting and views of them. From the heritage standpoint, the Heritage Impact Statement concludes that the proposed development will, overall, represent a net benefit to this historic site. From a visual point of view the short term adverse changes need to take account of the wider picture of the site development and land use as a whole.

7 Construction, Residual and Cumulative Effects

Construction Effects

- 7.1 The nature of the development will require a period to construct the new buildings and access will be required during this time from the A4095. This will cause a period of temporary disruption and disturbance to the road but will be managed in employing suitable traffic management techniques.
- 7.2 It is anticipated that working hours will be limited in accordance with good practice and control of other factors such as noise and dust will also be controlled. The development programme is as yet unknown.
- 7.3 Temporary landscape and visual impacts would be relevant to those local receptors on within and local to the site.
- 7.4 The existing road receives heavy use and traffic is extremely busy on the local junctions and roads. Any increase in site traffic will be a relatively minor impact in terms of effects on landscape or visual receptors in this context.

Residual Effects

- 7.5 Residual effects are those that are apparent once the development is complete and in use. These will include the visual and landscape effects described above in terms of how the development is perceived long term by the various receptors. This relates closely to the quality of the design, the mitigation, the detailing and colour of the buildings and the appearance of the site.
- 7.6 The new development will be screened from the south by existing verge screening on the highway boundary. New tree planting will supplement this within the site. There will also be a native hedge planting along the site boundary. To the north of the site, views are screened by existing buildings within the wider site. Glimpsed views will be possible from the gaps where existing access points are possible. The strategy for mitigation and for providing a landscape framework of robust planting on the site boundary as is portrayed on the Landscape Framework Plan.
- 7.7 The Technical will be finished externally with a range of brick and cladding solutions that will reflect the materials found on the existing buildings. Building articulation will provide interest a relief to the roof profiles, facade and elevations. The predominant cladding colour is a mix of brick and metal.
- 7.8 The new development will sit within an established context of similar sized buildings and it will therefore represent an incremental impact on the landscape and on visual receptors rather than a totally new development.

Cumulative effects

7.9 The cumulative effects of any development in landscape and visual terms are

important as the impact on the long term integrity and sustainability of the landscape depends on the retention of its inherent qualities. The gradual erosion of these qualities due to the increasing numbers or frequency of developments, or indeed the expansion of existing developments can influence the quality and character of a landscape. The landscape has an established use and the expansion of this use to include the Technical Site is an appropriate evolution of the site to facilitate the long-term success and sustainability of Bicester Heritage and the site's assets.

7.10 As to other developments within the wider area we have not undertaken a search of other planning applications and have no knowledge of other possible developments in the area. Should other applications for development come forward within the site or elsewhere, then these would have to be taken on their own merits.

8 Conclusions

- 8.1 The key characteristics of the underlying local landscape have been significantly eroded through the extensive development of the airfield and ancillary areas and the urban influence of Bicester and the local road network. However, many positive characteristics remain in terms of the historic attributes of the site and its evolution into a sustainable business. A new contemporary Technical Site with an associated landscape scheme will be a positive influence on this landscape providing a stimulus for the continuing use of the site as a commercial going concern while at the same time preserving its place in history and the community.
- 8.2 The site landscape has an abandoned appearance and would benefit from the introduction of a new character and strong sense of place. There is a considerable capacity to absorb appropriate change within this site. The character of the former airfield and its associated buildings and structures can still be appreciated for what they were and are, while being used within an appropriate context that celebrates this character.
- 8.3 In term of Policy ESD13 Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement, the proposals will have a significant local impact that is confined to the site itself.
- 8.4 Wider impacts will be mitigated by existing screening from buildings that already exist on the wider site, or from local screening on the highway verge, plus supplementary planting within the site as part of a new landscape scheme.
- 8.5 The proposals have been assessed within a Heritage Impact Assessment which has concluded that the proposed development will help to ensure that the site and its constituent buildings have a sustainable future. The proposals do not involve the demolition of any of the existing buildings. The new uses associated with Bicester Heritage will add to the site's communal value.
- In terms of the natural environment, there are ample opportunities for ecological improvements which will offset the loss of the poorer grassland which makes up the majority of the site; these include the long-term conservation management of strategic areas of species-poor grassland outside the development footprint but within the airfield. In this way the proposed development will be able to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the LWS, as per Policy Bicester 8.

Landscape Impacts

8.7 In terms of the impacts on the site landscape the effect is considered to be a Moderate/Minor adverse impact. This is taking account of the larger picture considering the site's future and the continuing use of the airfield within an appropriate

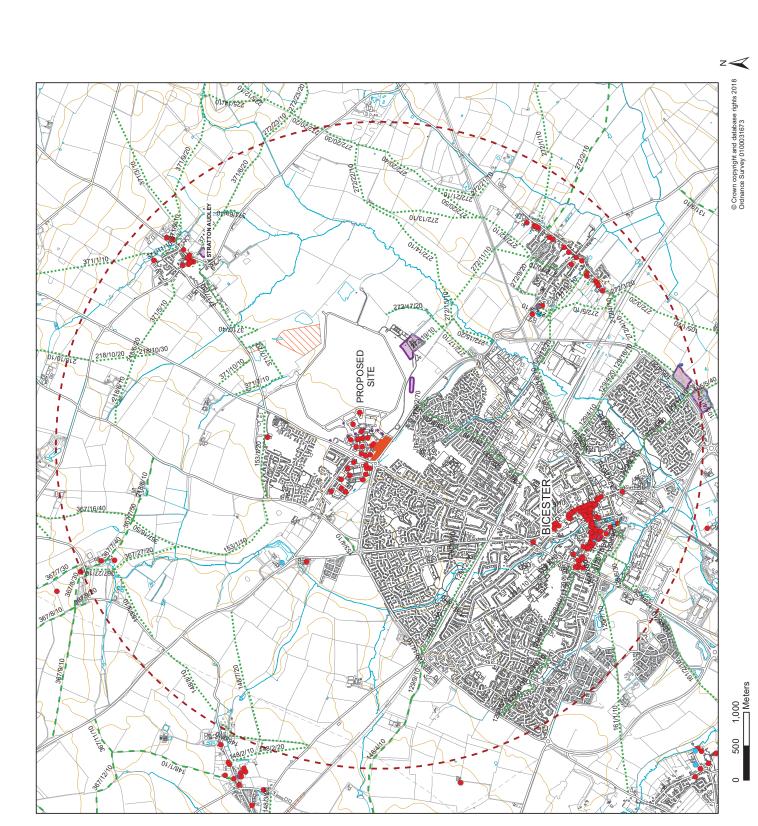
use and context. Also key to the assessment is the impact on the historic landscape which has been analysed in detail within the Heritage Impact Statement and has found there to be no significant harm resulting from this proposal. The proposal will help secure the preservation of the valued features of the former airbase and will benefit their restoration. The communal 'place memory' of the site will be preserved through the continued use of the site and its buildings and the new development will make the site more accessible to the public which will add to this 'place memory' with new memories being facilitated.

Visual Impacts

- In visual terms sensitive receptors considered to have any significant impact are those within the site itself. Within the site itself views are moderately sensitive, being within the setting to the Conservation Area and including numerous listed buildings and scheduled monuments. There will be a significant change to some views. However, the Technical Site buildings will not be out of scale with the other existing nearby buildings. The materials used for the new Technical Site will be sensitive to those already used within the site. In the round, taking account of the existing and future uses and context of the site, the visual impact is considered to be acceptable. In time the new planting on the boundary around the New Technical Site will provide added screening to that which already exists and will provide a maturity and setting to the buildings and it is considered that the Technical Site will be assimilated successfully into this historic setting.
- 8.9 Views from outside the site are from the busy road corridor and these are not considered to be significant in terms of visual impact.

Bibliography

- Landscape Institute Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition 2013.
- Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland Swanwick C and LUC 2002.
- Natural England National (Joint) Character Areas: The Cotswolds (NCA 107)
- The Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)
- Cherwell Landscape Character Assessment 1995
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031



Scheduled Monument

SSSI

3km Radius Study Area

Legend

Rights of Way + + BOAT +-+ Restricted Byway

Site Boundary

Listed Buildings

Grade

Grade II* Grade II

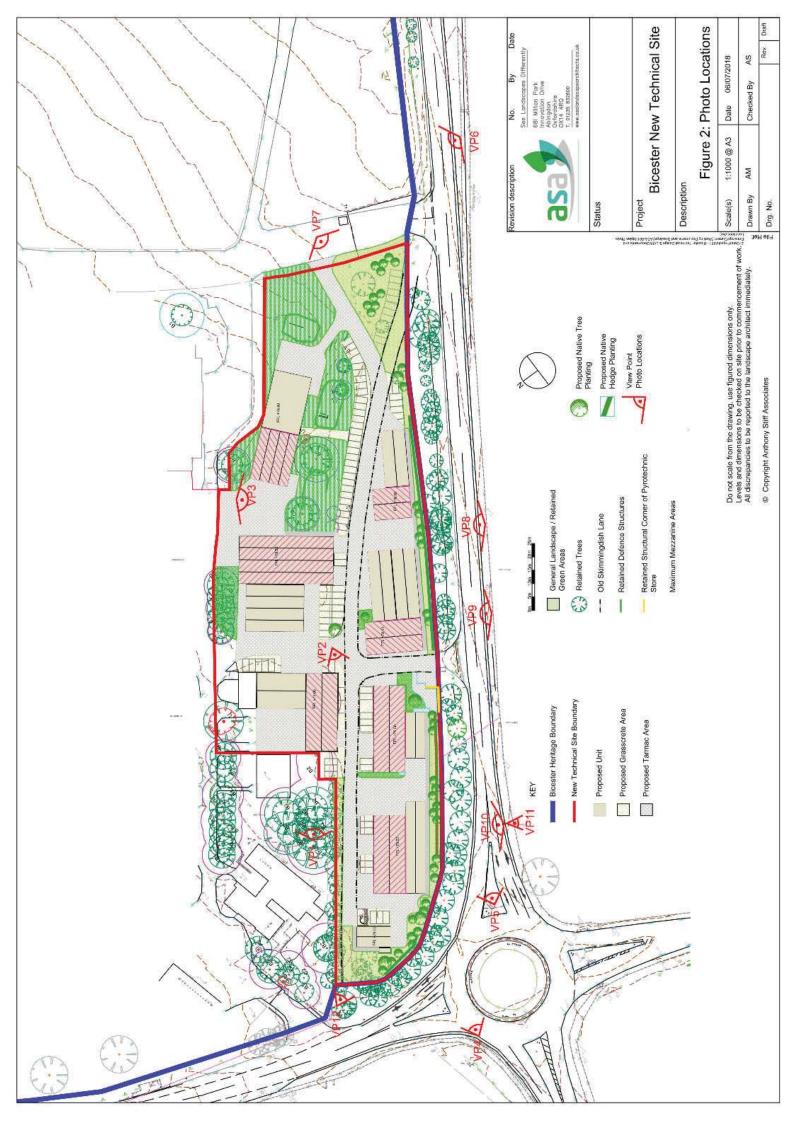
Grade I

- - - Public Bridleway Public Footpath



Figure 1: Site Location & Designations Plan

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS



Bicester Technical Design LVIA

Appendix A (VPs 1 - 12)



Prepared by Anthony Stiff BSc MA CMLI







Opination Prespective Views For best regresentation of monocaler perspective, his sheet should be printed as At I (mage) registly are Datum had at controlled arms leight accurate attached they. Veraing distance and action is 50mm. If printed ast AS Image height see it 20mm and viewing distance and reliation is 25mm.

Camera: Panasonic DMC-G2, Iens equivalent: 50mm equivalent. Date of Photograph and survey: 3rd of July 2018, 11:00



Camera position: Refer to viewpoints plan. Vertical field of view: 27 degrees Horizontal field of view: 92 degrees

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Camera position: Refer to viewpoints plan. Vertical field of view: 27 degrees Horizonial field of view: 30 degrees

Appendix B – Assessment Methodology – derived principally from standard guidance texts on Landscape Character and Landscape and Visual assessment including:

- Scottish National Heritage (SNH)/Countryside Agency
 - o Landscape Character Assessment 2002
 - Landscape Character Assessment Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity
- Landscape institute and Institute of Environmental Assessment
 - o Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Second Edition 2002
 - o Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition 2013

The following tables are general assessment criteria used to inform judgements about landscape and visual effects. The tables and criteria are used as guide only.

Landscape Value

VALUE	TYPICAL CRITERIA	TYPICAL SCALE	TYPICAL EXAMPLES
High	High importance (or quality) and rarity. No or limited potential for substitution	International National	World Heritage Site National Park/ AONB SSSI EH Register of Parks and Gardens Grade I and II* listed buildings and their settings National recreational route or area
Medium/High	High importance (or quality) and rarity. Limited potential for substitution	National Regional Local	National Park/AONB AGLV/other local landscape designation Landscape value identified in SPD SINC/Conservation Areas Grade II listed buildings and their setting Local Wildlife sites Regional recreational route/area
Medium	Medium importance (or quality) and rarity. Limited potential for substitution	Regional Local	Undesignated but value expressed through publications Local buildings of historic interest and their settings Local recreational facilities of landscape value
Medium/Low	Low importance (or quality) or rarity	Local	Site has some value (redeeming feature/benefit to the community)
Low	Low quality, generic contemporary, degraded landscape	Local	Area of little value and identified for improvement

Other factors taken into consideration are judgements of perception including tranquillity, cultural associations and aesthetic attributes.

Importance of View

More valuable / Important	Less Valuable / Important
More valuable / Important	Less valuable / Important
General Visibility	General Visibility
A combination of landform influences tree and woodland	A combination of landform influences tree and woodland
cover contribute to importance of view	cover constrains view
Open, clear views	Partial views or glimpses only
Site dominant within view	Site part of wider view, often set within a wider context
Site has clear influence on other sensitive feature or	No features or landmarks of significance
landmark	
Site visible on skyline	Site not visible on skyline
Population	Population
A public viewpoint	A viewpoint from private property
Many people experience the view e.g. at a recognised	Few or single people only affected by the view
tourist view, or multiple residents	
People experiencing the view over longer periods of time,	The view is experienced fleetingly on a road
for example in their homes	
The view relates to a heritage asset or is recognised in	The view has no associated designations or links with
planning designations	local heritage, or is degraded or blighted in some way
The view is noted in guidebooks, on tourist maps or	View occurs on a little used footpaths or other rights of
occurs on nationally important trails	way
The view is mentioned in literature, art or has other	The view has few cultural associations, is 'generic' (e.g.
cultural associations	contemporary commercial/industrial development)
Mitigation	Mitigation
Mitigation potential restricted	Mitigation potentially successful
Key views could be interrupted	No key views affected
Mitigation could harm local character	Mitigation could strengthen local character

Importance of view is based on professional judgement based on typical criteria set out below.

Susceptibility to change of Landscape Receptors

Field Observations summarised below capture key natural, cultural and aesthetic elements contributing to or detracting from the overall landscape sensitivity.

Topography

Flat	Steep	Rolling Lowland	Hills	Broad Valley
Undulating	Vertical	Plateau	Dry Valley	Narrow Valley
Rolling	Plain	Scarp / cliffs	Deep Gorge	

Other:

Landcover and Landscape Elements

Landcover and La	andscape Element	TS .				
BUILDINGS	HERITAGE	FARMING	LANDCOVER	WOODLAND / TREES	HYDROLOGY	ROADS / COMMS
farm buildings	vernacular buildings	walls	designed parkland	deciduous woodland	river	road
masts / poles	country house	fences	scrub	coniferous	stream	track
turbines	,	hedges		plantation	reservoir	footpath
pylons	field systems	fields	marsh	mixed woodland	dry valley	lane
industry	prehistoric ritual	arable	peat bog	shelter belt	winterbourne	railway
commercial	hill top fort / enclosure	improved	moor / heath	hedge trees	(winter river)	pylons
settlement		pasture	rough grassland	orchard	pond	communication
	ecclesiastic	rough grazing	water meadows		lake	masts
urban	monuments of war	hedge banks	grassland	clumps	drainage ditch	
follies	coppice		species rich	isolated trees		
			grassland			
	other monuments					
	listed buildings					

Landscape Assessment Criteria

PATTERNS (2D):	dominant	strong	broken	weak
SCALE:	intimate	small	medium	large
TEXTURE:	smooth	textured	rough	very rough
COLOUR:	monochrome	muted	colourful	garish
COMPLEXITY:	uniform	simple	diverse	complex
REMOTENESS:	wild	remoteness	vacant	active
UNITY:	unified	interrupted	fragmented	chaotic
FORM (3D):	straight	angular	curved	sinuous
ENCLOSURE:	expansive	open	enclosed	constrained
VISUAL DYNAMIC:	sweeping	spreading	dispersed	channelled

Perception:

SECURITY:	intimate	comfortable	safe	unsettling	threatening
STIMULUS:	monotonous	bland	interesting	challenging	inspiring
TRANQUILLITY:	inaccessible	remote	vacant	peaceful	busy
PLEASURE:	unpleasant	pleasant	attractive	beautiful	

- Main features, attractors, detractors
- Key characteristics/distinctive features and why they are important:
- Rarity/replaceability
- Condition
- Perception

Landscape susceptibility to change takes account of the above considerations and is based on a professional judgement as to how vulnerable the landscape is and how able it is to accommodate change and this is described more fully in the report.

Low, Medium/Low, Medium, Medium/High, High Susceptibility to change based on the criteria recorded above.

Sensitivity is based upon a combination of landscape susceptibility to change and importance/value

Susceptibility to	Low	Medium/	Medium	Medium/High	High
change		Low			
Importance/value					
High	M	МН	MH	Н	Н
Medium-High	ML	M	MH	МН	Н
Medium	ML	ML	M	МН	MH
Medium-Low	L	ML	ML	M	MH
Low	L	L	ML	ML	M

Magnitude of Change for Landscape Receptors

Effect on important/key landscape features

High	Total loss or alteration to key elements/ features/ characteristics of the baseline. Introduction of elements which are totally uncharacteristic with set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
Medium-high	Significant loss or alteration to the above, but not complete loss or alteration and/or introduction of prominent features which are generally uncharacteristic.
Medium	Partial loss or alteration to one or more key elements / features/ characteristics of the baseline and / or the introduction of prominent features, although not necessarily uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
Medium-low	Partial to Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/ features/ characteristics of the baseline and/or the introduction of elements which may not be uncharacteristic with set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
Low	Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/ features/ characteristics of the baseline and/or the introduction of elements which may not be uncharacteristic with set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
Negligible	Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/ features/ characteristics of the baseline. And/or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic with the surrounding landscape.

Geographical extent of change experienced by receptors

deograpilical extent o	i change experienced by receptors
High	The change is at a landscape level, affecting a number of landscape character areas/types
Medium-high	The change affects an entire landscape character area of type
Medium	The effects apply to a substantial part of a receptor
Medium - Low	The effects are limited to a minor part of a landscape receptor
Low	Highly localised effect to a receptor

Magnitude of change

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Effect on	Negligible/Low	Medium/	Medium	Medium/High	High
important/key		Low			
landscape					
features					
Geographical					
extent of					
change					
experienced by					
receptors					
High	M	МН	MH	Н	Н
Medium-High	ML	M	MH	МН	Н
Medium	ML	ML	M	МН	MH
Medium-Low	L	ML	ML	М	МН
Low	L	L	ML	ML	M

Negligible/Low, Medium/Low, Medium/High, High Magnitude of Change Where the duration of effect is short lived it may be judged that the "Aggregate Magnitude" rating can be reduced.

Significance of Landscape Effects

Sensitivity	Low	Medium/ Low	Medium	Medium/High	High
Magnitude of Change					
High	Moderate	Moderate/ Major	Moderate/ Major	Major	Major
Medium-High	Moderate/Minor	Moderate	Moderate/ Major	Moderate/ Major	Major
Medium	Moderate/Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate	Moderate/ Major	Moderate/ Major
Medium-Low	Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate	Moderate/ Major
Negligible/Low	Minor	Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate

Definitions of Significance

Major adverse: The proposed development would result in material changes to the landscape of the site, to its landform, scale and pattern which cannot be effectively mitigated. The integrity of the site is compromised and the value substantially undermined.

Moderate adverse: The proposed development would be out of scale with the landscape and/or result in the partial loss of characteristics of the site.

Minor adverse: The proposed development would have some effect on some characteristics of the site but the overall character is sustained and the value of the landscape is not materially harmed or has been mitigated.

Neutral: The proposed development would not materially alter the character of the site and its setting nor detract from the value of that landscape.

Based on the nature of the view it may be judged that these effects are positive or negative effects.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

More sensitive receptors	Less sensitive receptors
Focus or attention drawing to particular view during outdoor recreation (e.g. walking along footpath)	People engaged in outdoor sport/activities in which the focus is not on the surrounding landscape (football, other organised sport)
Visitors to landscape or heritage assets, where the view is likely to contribute to the visitor experience	Visitors to countryside where landscape is less likely to an important contributor to visitor experience (i.e. the focus is indoors)
Communities where views contribute to the setting enjoyed by residents (e.g. a Cotswold village)	Communities in more urban areas where landscape is not a reason why people may have chosen to live in an area
Occupiers of residential properties affected by the views	Where receptors are predominantly non-resident
Occupiers of work places where views contribute to the quality of working life e.g. landscaped business park, offices with heritage value	People at their place of work where activity is focused on work and not surroundings
Travellers on scenic road or railway routes where travelling through the landscape is part of the experience	Transient receptors in vehicles that are not likely to notice views.

Judgements Low, Medium/Low, Medium, Medium/High, High Sensitivity

Aggregate Sensitivity is based upon a combination of Sensitivity of receptors and importance of views

Sensitivity	Low	Medium/ Low	Medium	Medium/High	High
Importance of View					
High	M	МН	МН	Н	Н
Medium-High	ML	M	МН	МН	Н
Medium	ML	ML	M	МН	MH
Medium-Low	L	ML	ML	M	MH
Low	L	L	ML	ML	M

Magnitude of Change for Visual Receptors

Magnitude of change experienced by receptors

	, ,
High	The proposals become the dominant feature in the view and they significantly affect / change its character
Medium-high	The proposals form a significant part of the scene and affects the character of the view
Medium	The proposals form a visible and identifiable new element in the scene readily noticed by observers
Medium-low	The proposals form a visible and identifiable new element in the scene noticeable by receptors from some views
Low	The proposals only constitute a minor part of the view, possibly missed by a casual observer and not affecting the overall character of the view
Negligible/Low	Very small or no parts of the development are discernible, with very little or no effect on the scene

Extent of the area which receptors are affected

High	The change is at a landscape level, affecting receptors over a wide area of the landscape and/or from a large distance from the site e.g. experienced over the length of a long distance footpath
Medium	The change affects groups of receptors within that are within a discrete area(s), probably identifiable by description or by recognised/defined boundaries.
Low	The change is specific to a single viewpoint / receptor or only experienced within close proximity of the development site.

Medium – High or Medium – Low rating may be given where appropriate

Aggregate Magnitude is based upon a combination of the magnitude and extent of the change experience by receptors

Magnitude	Negligible/Low	Medium/ Low	Medium	Medium/High	High
Extent of Change					
High	M	МН	МН	Н	Н
Medium-High	ML	М	МН	МН	Н
Medium	ML	ML	M	МН	МН
Medium-Low	L	ML	ML	M	МН
Low	L	L	ML	ML	M

Negligible/Low, Medium/Low, Medium, Medium/High, High Magnitude of Change

Where the duration of effect is short lived it may be judged that the "Aggregate Magnitude" rating can be reduced.

Significance of Visual Effects

Aggregate Sensitivity	Low	Medium/ Low	Medium	Medium/High	High
Aggregated Magnitude of Change					
High	Moderate	Moderate/ Major	Moderate/ Major	Major	Major
Medium-High	Moderate/Minor	Moderate	Moderate/ Major	Moderate/ Major	Major
Medium	Moderate/Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate	Moderate/ Major	Moderate/ Major
Medium-Low	Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate	Moderate/ Major
Negligible/Low	Minor	Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate/Minor	Moderate

Definitions of Significance.

Major adverse: The viewpoint is very sensitive and there will be a substantive change in the view; the proposed development will dominate the view, to the detriment of existing valued views.

Moderate/Major adverse: The viewpoint is sensitive and the proposals would result in a material change in the view both of the site and its setting; the development will be highly visible and detract from existing valued views.

Moderate adverse: The viewpoint may be more or less sensitive and the degree of harm to the view will depend on the scale of change. The proposal would cause obvious deterioration to a view from a moderately sensitive receptor, or perceptible damage to a view from a more sensitive receptor.

Minor adverse: The viewpoint is usually less sensitive and the proposals have a more localised effect on the view, effecting only elements of the view.

No significant impact: The viewpoint is usually much less sensitive and the change in view is slight, with the view towards the site remaining little changed.

Based on the nature of the view it may be judged that these effects are positive or negative effects

Appendix C

Landscape Framework Plan
Indicative Cross Sections



