

**E D G A R S**

# Planning Statement

New Technical Site, Bicester Heritage, Oxfordshire

Prepared for: Bicester Heritage Ltd.

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# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Edgars on behalf of Bicester Heritage Limited for a New Technical Site at Bicester Heritage, Bicester, Oxfordshire, OX27 8AL.
- 1.2 The proposed development is: *extension to existing Technical Site to provide new employment units comprising flexible B1(c) light industrial, B2 (general industrial), B8 (storage or distribution) uses with ancillary offices, storage, display and sales, together with associated access, parking and landscaping.*
- 1.3 The planning application comprises the following documents:
- Application forms;
  - Drawings and Elevations;
  - Planning Statement (this document);
  - Design and Access Statement;
  - Heritage Impact Assessment;
  - Transport Statement;
  - Transport Framework;
  - Arboricultural Assessment;
  - Desk Based Archaeological Assessment;
  - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA);
  - Landscape Framework;
  - Flood Risk Assessment (FRA);
  - Drainage Strategy;
  - Land Contamination Report; and
  - Ecological Assessment.
- 1.4 The following sections of this planning statement consider:
- the site and surrounding area;
  - relevant planning policy including the Development Plan, NPPF and other key documents;
  - pre-application discussions between Cherwell District Council and Bicester Heritage;
  - key planning considerations including the principle of development, design access and layout and heritage.
- 1.5 Within that context, the statement concludes that the proposed development is acceptable in planning terms in accordance with the Development Plan and wider presumption in favour of sustainable development.



## 2 Site and Surrounding Area

2.1 The site is 2.4km (1½ miles) north/north east of the centre of the market town of Bicester at Bicester Heritage (former RAF Bicester).

### **Bicester**

2.2 Bicester is identified in the 2011 Census as having a population of 32,642 having grown rapidly during the previous 50 years. The town is identified as being less sensitive in landscape terms than other towns in the district and is a focus for economic growth.

2.3 Bicester's economy is focused on storage and distribution, food processing, and motorsport engineering. Most of the employment in Bicester is in the distribution and manufacturing sectors. Previously, before closure, MOD activities at Former RAF Bicester also contributed to the economy of the town.

2.4 The town is well-connected by road and rail. It has good infrastructure and significant investment is either being delivered or planned. Bicester is approximately 14 miles from Oxford. The good connectivity, close-proximity and relationship with Oxford helps Bicester by creating opportunities for economic development. Bicester is also well-connected to and influenced by the Chilterns, M25 corridor and London markets.

2.5 The Economic Development Strategy for Cherwell identifies opportunities for Bicester to develop a knowledge economy around existing and new employers, sectors and clusters to create a centre of expertise and competitive advantage.

2.6 The strategy's vision for Bicester identifies the expansion of the knowledge economy to encompass other areas of innovation and connections to local industry – an example suggested is the motorsport engineering strengths.

2.7 Bicester is located at the focal point of a corridor of motorsport engineering expertise with 7 Formula 1 teams, and 7 tier 1 motorsport teams and suppliers located within 30 miles. Approximately 15 centres of motor manufacturing excellence are also located within 40 miles.

2.8 Bicester Heritage has made a significant contribution to the economy of the town and wider district since its inception in 2013. The substantial economic benefits that the proposal will bring to Bicester are discussed later in this report.

### **Bicester Heritage**

2.9 Bicester Heritage is a business park dedicated to historic motoring excellence (UK's 1<sup>st</sup>) comprising a hub of successful highly specialist businesses. Bicester Heritage Ltd. purchased the technical site and flying field in 2013 and since then have embarked on a meticulous, detailed and carefully considered redevelopment of the site. This is reflected in the planning history for the site that demonstrates the high quality of development.

2.10 The change of use and conversion of the existing technical site has been successful in planning terms, attracting more than 30 historic motoring specialists – including Porsche Classic Life, Autoclassics, Hero Events, Kingsbury Racing Shop, and Heritage Skills Academy.

2.11 Many of the buildings at Bicester Heritage are now being reused for their original purposes, with vintage Bentley specialist Kingsbury Racing Shop fitting engines to Bentleys in the former Engine Fitting Shop and Classic Oils, Aylesbury & Bicester storing and selling heritage oils from the RAF's Lubricant store.

2.12 A combination of careful management and development of the historic site and an 8-figure investment has led to the success of the site to date that has attracted national and local media interest.

2.13 Development has been delivered through a collaborative planning approach with Cherwell District Council, Oxfordshire County Council and Historic England. This relationship advanced and the parties worked together



to create the second only Heritage Partnership Agreement in the UK. Development delivered through the HPA at Bicester Heritage has been consistently of high quality and the site was removed from the Heritage at Risk Register in 2015.

- 2.14 Beyond the success identified above, Bicester Heritage also attracts thousands of people that regularly attend the events held each year. In 2017, for example, 22,500 visitors attended five days of events at the site, including Land Rover Legends, Flywheel Wings and Wheels, and Sunday Scrambles.

**Application Site**

- 2.15 The proposed development site is located adjacent to the A4421 (Skimmingdish Lane) at the south-west corner of Bicester Heritage - which occupies part of the former RAF Bicester.
- 2.16 To the north of the site is the existing former RAF Technical Site now renovated by Bicester Heritage Ltd. To the east of the site is the southern edge of the former RAF Flying Field (remaining in use). To the south and the west of the site is the A4421. Aerial images indicate there are young trees and overgrown scrubland on site. The land is flat and low-lying and is located at approximately 85 aOD. The site area is 1.61Ha (3.98 acres/16,100sqm).
- 2.17 The site comprises Previously Developed Land. The site is in Flood Zone 1 with a low probability of flooding. The site is adjacent to a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) to the east. A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is approximately 1km to the north. The site is not in Green Belt. The site is not in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 2.18 Existing access to Bicester Heritage is to the north-west of the proposed development site from the A4421 that is aligned north-south, and to the south-east of the proposed development site from the A4421 runs to the south of Bicester Heritage.

Figure 1: Location of Bicester Heritage

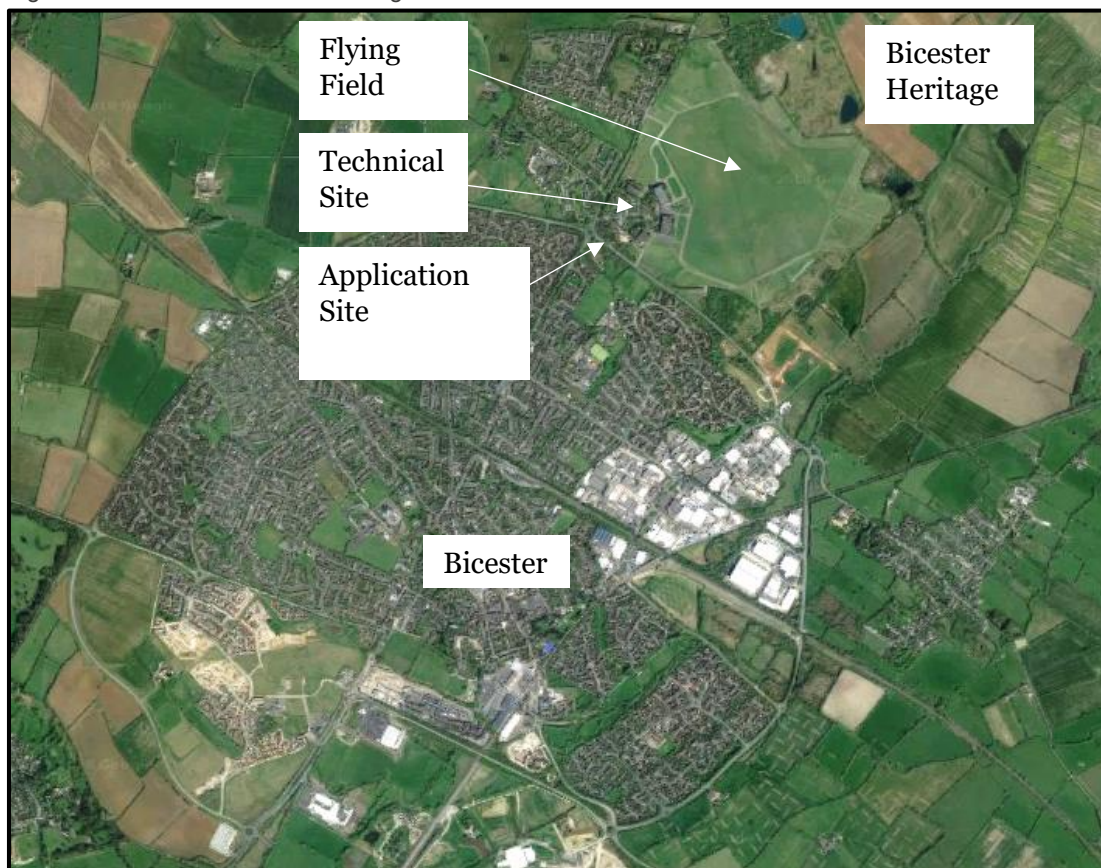
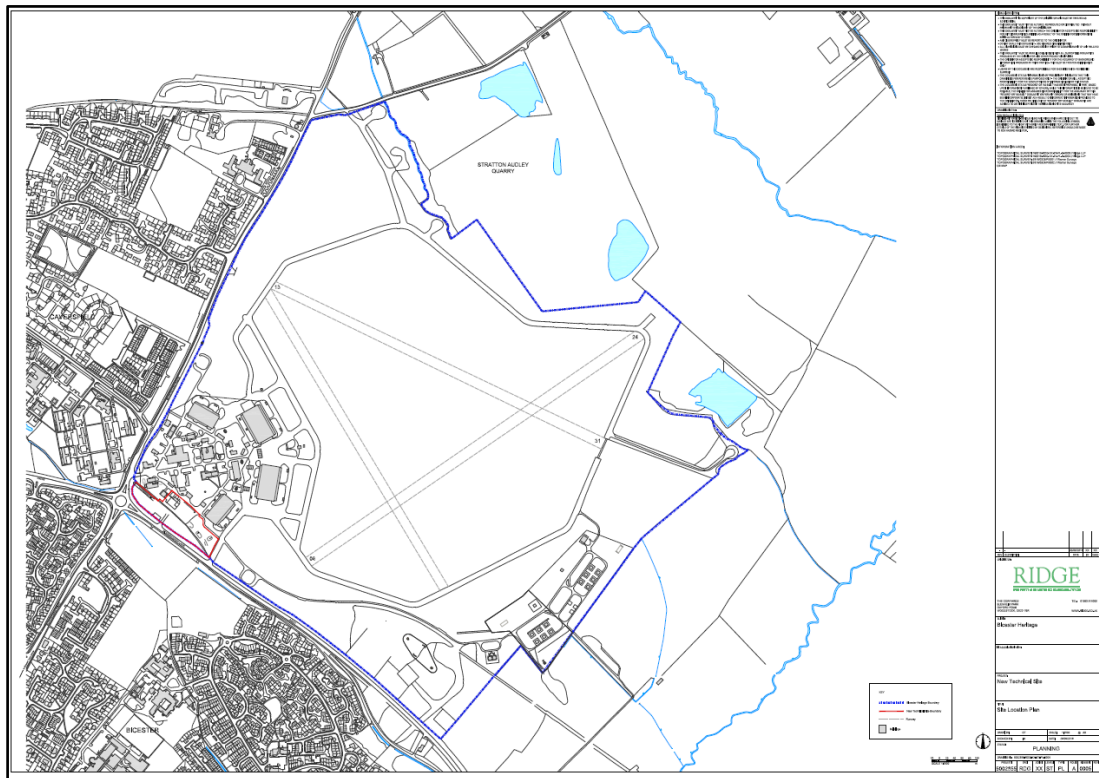




Figure 2: Site Location Plan



### Former RAF Bicester

- 2.19 Former RAF Bicester comprises the former domestic site to the west of the A421, the former technical site to the east of the A421 and the former flying field (remaining in use for civil aviation) to the north of the technical site. The former domestic site is not in the ownership of Bicester Heritage and has been redeveloped for housing.
- 2.20 The airbase at RAF Bicester essentially dates from 1925 (when the original Great War Flying Corps aerodrome was cleared) until 1994, when the offices and military hospital in use by the United States Air Force in Europe closed its operations (commensurate with the closing of RAF Upper Heyford).
- 2.21 The airbase had grown from its 1916 airfield site of c. 180 acres to a major base of some 793 acres, through a strategic military expansion programme formulated by General Sir Hugh Trenchard, the Chief of Defence staff in the 1920's and 1930's, and which had subsumed surrounding farmland and houses.
- 2.22 The layout was based on Trenchard's principle of separation between technical and domestic sites and dispersal of built elements within them.
- 2.23 In the 1940s a large number of pillboxes and trenches were built for the close defence of the airfield. The runway was also expanded but the use of the site was limited to training, packing and as a servicing base.
- 2.24 The role of the RAF at Bicester reduced up to the 1970s. However, the late 70s saw a revival of the airfield in the 1970s by the US Airforce and up to 1200 personnel were stationed there. The south-eastern Type 'C' hangar was converted into a USAF hospital store.
- 2.25 Military operations ceased by 1994, but the MOD continued to own and maintain the land and buildings after that time, until a strategy of land disposal took effect in 1997 for the Domestic Site and 2013 for the remainder to Bicester Heritage. The site was included in the Heritage at Risk Register in 2009.



### **The Flying Field**

- 2.26 The Flying Field is a well-drained short-mown grass airfield with three unmarked runways approximately 1,000m in length remaining in use by civilian gliders. The perimeter track has been refurbished in part to provide automotive facilities, including test track, experience days and Young Driver courses.
- 2.27 The Flying Field is not separated from the technical site by a defined boundary and instead the built-form extends into the flying field organically. The pattern terminates with the symmetrical arc of four hangars and the centrally located Control Tower.
- 2.28 Existing access between the Flying Field and adjacent Technical Site is via the internal site roads that lead to the perimeter road of the flying field.
- 2.29 A Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) containing 16 areas covers part of the bomb stores and the Mushroom Pill Boxes and Seagull Trenches in the south east of the flying field, together with a dozen defensive structures within and adjacent to the Technical site – including air raid shelters.

### **The Technical Site**

- 2.30 The Technical Site is based on the principle of 'dispersal', displaying elements of formality in the layout of roads and buildings.
- 2.31 Three roads fan out from the Gatehouse and Station Offices that face each other at the entrance to the site in the south-west corner adjacent to the A4421. Each road historically provided access to a variety of functional 1920s vernacular buildings in a range of uses.
- 2.32 The Trident Layout incorporated 'strategic' gaps between built development seemingly to make it more difficult for enemy aircraft to spot scattered small structures rather than an apparently easier to identify substantial mass of built development.
- 2.33 There is a strong functional relationship between the adjacent flying field and the siting of buildings in the Technical Site. Earlier A-type hangars are located at the northern and eastern extremities of the technical site, complemented by Type-C hangars extending into the Flying Field at a slightly different angle of alignment. A Watch Tower is located centrally, placed between and forward of the hangars, further into the flying field.
- 2.34 The deliberately planned Trident layout is reinforced on the outer routes by avenues of trees originally planted to assist with camouflage. These are now mature specimens - their height approximately equivalent to the hangars - making a positive contribution to the character of the area and contrasting with the open character of the flying field.
- 2.35 Most buildings on the Technical Site are constructed with pitched, hipped roofs, swept to boxed eaves with deep soffits and were originally of Welsh slate with blue terracotta ridge tiles and tile kneelers.
- 2.36 Buildings dating from the 1920s period of expansion at the site are generally of 9" solid brickwork of Flemish bond with lime mortar.
- 2.37 The continuing use of the site since its formation has ensure the interwar character has been maintained and this continues under the custodianship of Bicester Heritage.
- 2.38 In December 2017, 96% of the historic buildings within the technical site were restored and occupied by class-leading businesses and educational facilities.
- 2.39 The historic layout has been conserved and enhanced, and the site continues to be well-maintained.





### 3 Relevant Planning History

- 3.1 Having reviewed the online records held by Cherwell District Council, the most relevant planning history to the development proposal is outlined in the table below.
- 3.2 The approved permissions that have been implemented have been delivered to a high standard. It is noted that the site has an extensive planning history since disposal from military use and ownership took effect.

Reference	Description	Decision
<i>Recently submitted</i>	<i>Construction of a new hotel with restaurant, conference, and leisure facilities at Bicester Heritage along with associated parking and landscaping.</i>	<i>n/a</i>
16/01805/F	Change of use of buildings from sui generis MOD use to various commercial uses as detailed in accompanying Planning Statement with associated physical works and demolition of buildings 101 and 104 and erection of replacement structures.	Application Permitted  25/09/2017
16/01806/LB	Physical works to buildings 79, 108, 113, 123, 129, 130, 131, 135 and 137 to enable restoration and conversion to commercial use.	Application Permitted  25/09/2017
15/00820/F	Change of use of building 105 from sui generis MOD use to class B1 workshops and offices, class B8 storage and ancillary class A1 use for the sale of heritage motoring and aviation goods to include associated equipment, supplies, sundries, memorabilia and literature.	Application Permitted  25/02/2016
15/00616/F	Variation of Condition 2 of 14/00772/F to allow for Minor Material Amendments to approved scheme and variation of Condition 8 to enable the building to be used for B1 purposes and/or vehicle sales with ancillary residential accommodation.	Application Permitted  25/02/2016
15/00611/F	Change of use of building 92 from MOD use (sui generis) to class B1 (office) and B8 (storage use), change of use of building 93 from MOD use to vehicle showroom (sui generis) and change of use of building 94 from MOD use to class B1 workshops and offices, class B8 storage and ancillary class A1 use for the sale of heritage motoring and aviation goods to include associated equipment, supplies, sundries, memorabilia and literature.	Application Permitted  25/02/2016
15/00612/LB	Internal and external alterations to building 92.	Application Permitted  25/02/2016



15/00523/F	Change of use of building from sui generis Ministry of Defence use to B1(c) light industrial use with associated internal and external alterations and landscaping.	Application Permitted 29/06/2015
14/02065/LB	Change of use from Ministry of Defence to B1/A1 including structural repairs and alterations.	Application Permitted 20/02/2015
14/01759/F	Change of use from Ministry of Defence to B1/A1 including structural repairs and alterations.	Application Permitted 30/12/2014
14/01430/F	Material change of use from Ministry of Defence use to B1 use, including minor structural alterations and a new build extension.	Application Permitted 24/10/2014
14/01448/F	Change of use from Ministry of Defence use to B1 including minor structural repairs.	Application Permitted 21/10/2014
14/00772/F	Variation of condition 7 of 14/00209/F - To allow for wider potential usage of the approved residential accommodation.	Application Permitted 07/07/2014
14/00454/F	Material change of use of Ministry of Defence workshop use to office and workshop use.	Application Permitted 13/05/2014
14/00209/F	Change of use from Ministry of Defence workshop to office and ancillary residential use. The development will include minor alterations to the existing structure as indicated on the proposed plans and a general refurbishment of the existing building.	Application Permitted 11/05/2014
13/01774/F	Change of use from Ministry of Defence (sui generis) use to B1 use (Building 87).	Application Permitted 16/01/2014



## 4 Pre-application Discussions

- 4.1 The proposal progressed through fruitful pre-application discussions with officers at Cherwell District Council, which are summarised below and capture the evolution of the scheme.
- 4.2 **17/00285/PREAPP (submitted 17 July 2017):** 'the erection of new employment space to complement that provided in the historic buildings in on the technical site'.
- 4.3 The Council's pre-application officer response identifies that the principle of development for employment uses is considered to be acceptable as the site it will help to sustain Bicester Heritage's operations at the site and secure the future of this important historic site. Officers considered the site to be Previously Developed Land.
- 4.4 Officers considered that the provision of new building space will enable the integrity of the Listed Buildings within the existing Technical Site to be preserved by directing uses unsuitable to the Listed Buildings to modern, flexible employment space.
- 4.5 The response requested that the proposed uses of each of the buildings should be set out.
- 4.6 Officers identified that the proposal subject to the pre-application discussion represented an over development of the site and suggested that the proposed floorspace of the development be reduced.
- 4.7 Officers stated that heritage features, such as the defence structures and alignment of the old Skimmingdish Lane, should be retained in their original positions.
- 4.8 Officers commented on the layout and stated that development should not project beyond existing aircraft hangars and be laid out in a more organic fashion to blend better with the existing site. Officers commented that Policy Bicester 8 requires development proposals to be 'conservation-led'.
- 4.9 Officers stated that the scale of the proposal should be reduced to retain the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and enhance the historical significance of the site and setting of the Listed Buildings.
- 4.10 In terms of form, scale and massing, officers commented that the design of the building should be more varied and reflect the Heritage Partnership Agreement in terms of materials to be used and colour palette throughout the development.
- 4.11 Officers stated that street lighting and other ancillary structures should be consistent throughout the New Technical site and the car parking broken up to reduce the appearance of the site being car dominant.
- 4.12 Officers stated that some of the existing landscaping should be retained to provide a visual buffer from the main road (A4421).
- 4.13 It is noted that officers recommended that the application for the proposed hotel development be submitted concurrently with this application to enable a holistic assessment of both applications and allow more comprehensive considerations of matters like planning conditions and S106 requirements.
- 4.14 **Revised proposals (18 April 2018):** were submitted to Cherwell District Council that responded positively to previous officer comments and represented a substantially redesigned scheme – particularly addressing issues raised by officers relating to heritage.
- 4.15 Uses proposed were confirmed as business units, including B2 (general industrial uses), B8 (storage or distribution) and sui generis (motor sales) totalling 4,460sqm. The revised scheme included 62 parking spaces based on the more intensive B2 use at 1 space per 50sqm.



- 4.16 The revised, conservation-led scheme more more closely reflected the historic trident layout of the buildings on the Technical Site by retaining a central avenue following the path of Old Skimmingdish Lane.
- 4.17 The revised scheme also proposed retention of historic structures – including pyrotechnic store – and to clearly reflect historic separation between buildings.
- 4.18 The revised scheme proposed that no building exceeded the size of any hangar and the built form did not extend beyond the building line of the hangars. The design of the buildings included varied footprints, heights, and roof forms to significantly reduce the massing.
- 4.19 A range of materials including red brickwork and corrugated panels informed by the Heritage Partnership Agreement was also proposed as such to provide a varied yet coherent development complementing the historic site.
- 4.20 Comments from officers regarding the April 2018 revised scheme were received via email and are summarised below.
- 4.21 Officers commented that the orientations work much better with the grain of the site than previous proposals and welcomed the revised layout and building footprints. Officers particularly welcomed the reinstatement of the alignment of Old Skimmingdish Lane, including the footpath link.
- 4.22 Officers commented that the workshop heights were still large at 8.6m to ridges.
- 4.23 Officers commented that unit designs are an improvement on earlier proposals and suggested further detailing including reviewing window rhythms on visible elevations, more use of brickwork or a variety of cladding where elevations face sensitive areas and reviewing roof light styles where visible.
- 4.24 Officers suggested that the former pyrotechnic store should be retained following their further research.
- 4.25 **Further revised proposals (27 June 2018):** were submitted to Cherwell District Council that responded positively to previous officer comments. This is the scheme that is proposed through this planning application save for amendments due to site constraints.
- 4.26 Officers commented in an email response that the scale of development proposed is now acceptable subject to detailed design and a workable car parking layout.
- 4.27 Officers suggested providing design enhancements to the detailing – particularly on the brick/gable elements.
- 4.28 Officers considered the ridge and eaves heights to be acceptable.
- 4.29 Officers considered the reduction in scale of building D coupled with turning it through 90 degrees will lessen the impact on the existing technical site and this is acceptable.
- 4.30 Officers commented that the positioning of building B and the introduction of building G worked well and will add to the visual appearance of the technical site by creating interest and key views.
- 4.31 The proposal to retain an element of the pyrotechnic store was welcomed and considered to be acceptable by officers.
- 4.32 Following pre-application discussion, minor alterations were made due to the location of a main sewer. Building A is now proposed to be divided in two as building A and building H. Following the amendment, the overall GIA has remained at 6530sqm. Each building is at least 3m from the sewer as required.



## 5 Relevant Planning Policy

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.2 The development plan comprises:

- Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031: Part 1
- Saved Policies of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996

5.3 The following are identified as material considerations:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
- Bicester Heritage – Heritage Partnership Agreement (2014)
- Draft Bicester Masterplan (August 2012)
- RAF Bicester Planning Brief and Draft Development Principles (2009)
- RAF Bicester Conservation Area Appraisal (November 2008)

### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

5.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England. The chapters and paragraphs of the NPPF identified as of particular relevance to this proposal are identified in this section below.

5.5 **Paragraph 7** states that there are three dimensions to sustainable development and planning is required to perform a number of roles:

- **Economic:** contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation.
- **Social:** supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities.
- **Environmental:** contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.

5.6 **Paragraph 15 states that** policies in Local Plans should follow the approach of the presumption in favour of sustainable development so that it is clear that development which is sustainable can be approved without delay. All plans should be based upon and reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development, with clear policies that will guide how the presumption should be applied locally.

5.7 **Paragraph 17 – Core Planning Principles:**

- be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area. Plans should be kept up-to-date and be based on joint working and co-operation to address larger than local issues. They should provide a practical framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency;
- not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;
- proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. Plans should take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability, and set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient



land which is suitable for development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities;

- always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
- encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value;
- promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions;
- conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.

5.8 The NPPF defines significance and setting of heritage assets as follows:

- **Significance** (for heritage policy): *The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.*
- **Setting** of a heritage asset: *The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve.*

5.9 **Chapter 1** (Building a Strong, Competitive Economy) states, in **paragraph 18**, that the Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the country's inherent strengths.

5.10 **Paragraph 20** states that to help achieve economic growth, local planning authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century.

5.11 **Paragraph 21** states that Investment in business should not be over-burdened by the combined requirements of planning policy expectations and policies should recognise and seek to address potential barriers to investment. This includes seeking to plan positively for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries.

5.12 **Chapter 7 (Requiring Good Design)** states, in **Paragraph 58**, states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

5.13 **Paragraph 66** states that Local planning authorities should not refuse planning permission for buildings or infrastructure which promote high levels of sustainability because of concerns about incompatibility with an existing townscape, if those concerns have been mitigated by good design. Where proposals relate to heritage assets there is a balance to be achieved between any impact on the heritage asset and the proposal's economic, social and environmental benefits.

5.14 **Chapter 11 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment)** states, in **paragraph 109**, that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

5.15 **Paragraph 111** states that Planning policies and decisions should encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value.

5.16 **Paragraph 118** comprises a number of principles which Local Authorities should apply, including encouraging opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments; provision for refusal of planning applications if significant harm cannot be avoided, mitigated or compensated for; applying the protection given to European sites to potential SPAs, possible SACs, listed or proposed Ramsar sites and sites identified (or



required) as compensatory measures for adverse effects on European sites; and the provision for the refusal for developments resulting in the loss or deterioration of 'irreplaceable' habitats-unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.

- 5.17 **Chapter 12 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment)** states, in **paragraph 131**, that In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of; the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 5.18 **Paragraph 128** requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand potential impact on their significance. An archaeological desk based assessment will also be required.
- 5.19 **Paragraph 132** states that considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.
- 5.20 **Paragraph 134** states that Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.
- 5.21 **Paragraph 135** states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required.
- 5.22 **Paragraph 137** states that proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

#### **Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031: Part 1**

- 5.23 The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031: Part 1 aims to link three themes together; the economy, communities, and sustainable development and seeks provide a proactive, positive set of policies to help places thrive, to deliver essential and longer-term infrastructure and achieve development that will improve the quality of life in the District.
- 5.24 The plan states the Council is seeking to achieve sustainable economic growth and aim to create jobs; to significantly boost housing supply in targeted, sustainable locations. The most relevant policies to this application are identified and summarised below.
- 5.25 **Policy PSD1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development:** is a continuation of the NPPF and outlines a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 5.26 **Policy Bicester 8 – Former RAF Bicester:** allocates the former RAF Bicester (including the Technical Site, Flying Field and Domestic Site) for heritage tourism, leisure, recreation, employment and community uses. The development of hotel and conference facilities will also be supported as part of a wider package of employment uses. A map of the site allocated by **Policy Bicester 8** is shown in Appendix 1.
- 5.27 **Bicester 8** encourages conservation-led proposals to secure a long-lasting economically viable future for the Former RAF Bicester technical site and flying field. All proposals will be required to accord with the approved Planning Brief for the site and take in to account the Bicester Masterplan.



- 5.28 **Bicester 8** also states that proposals 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. Biodiversity should be protected and enhanced. 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 Policy ESD 15.
- 5.29 **Bicester 8** aims to establish uses that will be complementary to, and help enhance, the character and appearance of the conservation area and the nationally important heritage value of the site. It seeks to encourage a mix of uses that will best preserve the sensitive historic fabric and layout of the buildings and the openness of the grass airfield. However, the need to allow some flexibility in the interests of securing an economically viable future for the site is recognised.
- 5.30 **Bicester 8** supporting text indicates that the Planning Brief indicates that employment uses on the technical site could be appropriate and identifies a range of other uses including aviation, museum, cultural, sport and community uses.
- 5.31 **Policy SLE1 – Employment Development:** focuses employment development on sites at Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington. It also outlines a set of criteria to support employment proposals. Support shall be given to proposals that make efficient use of previously developed land wherever possible, make efficient use of existing and underused sites and premises increasing the intensity of use on site and meets high design standards, using sustainable construction and of an appropriate scale and respects the character of its surroundings.
- 5.32 **Policy SLE2 – Securing Dynamic Town Centres:** states retail and other 'Main Town Centre Uses' will be directed to the town centres of Banbury and Bicester and the village centre of Kidlington. When considering edge of centre and out of centre proposals, preference will be given to accessible sites that are well connected to the town centres.
- 5.33 **Policy SLE3 – Supporting Tourism Growth:** states that the Council will support proposals for new or improved tourist facilities in sustainable locations, where they accord with other policies in the plan, to increase overnight stays and visitor numbers within the District.
- 5.34 **Policy SLE4 – Improved Transport Connections:** states that all development where reasonable to do so, should facilitate the use of sustainable modes of transport to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling.
- 5.35 **Policy BSC7: Meeting Education Needs:** states that the Council will work with partners to ensure the provision of educational facilities which provide for education and the development of skills.
- 5.36 **Policy ESD 1 – Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change:** states that growth will be directed to the most sustainable locations as defined in this Local Plan. The supporting text explains that Bicester is considered to be one of the most sustainable locations.
- 5.37 **Policy ESD 2 – Energy Hierarchy and Allowable Solutions:** seeks to promote an energy hierarchy that reduces energy use through sustainable design and construction and makes use of renewable energy.
- 5.38 **Policy ESD3 – Sustainable Construction:** states that all new development should incorporate sustainable design.
- 5.39 **Policy ESD4 – Decentralised Energy Systems:** encourages the use of decentralised energy systems.
- 5.40 **Policy ESD5 – Renewable Energy:** states that Council supports renewable and low carbon energy provision.





- 5.41 **Policy ESD6 – Sustainable Flood Risk Management:** states that The Council will manage and reduce flood risk in the District through using a sequential approach to development; locating vulnerable developments in areas at lower risk of flooding.
- 5.42 Flood risk assessment will be required for proposals located in flood zones 2 or 3, are 1 hectare or more in flood zone 1 or in areas that have experienced flooding. The policy also states that development should be safe and remain operational (where necessary) and proposals should demonstrate that surface water will be managed effectively on site and that the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere, including sewer flooding.
- 5.43 **Policy ESD7 – Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS):** states all development will be required to use sustainable drainage systems for the management of surface water run-off.
- 5.44 **Policy ESD8 – Water Resources:** states that the Council will seek to maintain water quality by avoiding adverse effects of development on the water environment.
- 5.45 **Policy ESD10 – Biodiversity and the Natural Environment:** outlines an approach to protect and enhance biodiversity and the natural environment. These include; seeking proposals that provide a net gain in biodiversity, proposals that do not provide appropriate mitigation or compensate for any significant harm from development will not be permitted, seek proposals that incorporate features to encourage biodiversity, and retain and where possible enhance features of nature conservation value within the site.
- 5.46 **Policy ESD 13 – Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement:** seeks to secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape particularly in urban fringe locations. Proposals would not be permitted if they would: be inconsistent with local character, harm the setting of settlements, buildings, structures or other landmark features or harm the historic value of the landscape.
- 5.47 **Policy ESD15 – The Character of the Built and Historic Environment:** states that, within the vicinity of any of the district's distinctive natural or historic assets, delivering high quality design that complements the asset will be essential. It goes on to outline criteria for proposals to meet.
- 5.48 **Policy ESD17 – Green Infrastructure:** highlights the importance of maintaining and improving the green infrastructure network, with reference made to its contribution to biodiversity and nature conservation.
- 5.49 **Policy INF 1 – Infrastructure:** states that the Council will identify required infrastructure and work with partners to ensure delivery.

#### **Saved Policies of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996**

- 5.50 The relevant saved policies that remain part of the Development Plan for the District are outlined below.
- 5.51 **Saved Policy C1 – Protection of Sites of Nature Conservation Value:** seeks to promote the interest of nature conservation, it goes on to state that development which would result in damage to or loss of sites of special scientific interest or other areas of designated wildlife or scientific importance will not normally be permitted.
- 5.52 **Saved Policy C2 – Development Affecting Protected Species:** states development which would adversely affect any species protected by schedule 1, schedule 5 and schedule 8 of the 1981 wildlife and countryside act, and by the E.C Habitats Directive 1992 will not normally be permitted.
- 5.53 **Saved Policy C4 – Creation of New Habitats:** promotes the interests of nature conservation within the context of new development. The Council will establish or assist with the establishment of ecological and nature conservation areas.
- 5.54 **Saved Policy C5 – Protection of Ecological Value:** states that the Council will seek to protect the ecological and rural character of areas in the district.



- 5.55 **Saved Policy C7 – Landscape Conservation:** states that development will not normally be permitted if it would cause demonstrable harm to the topography and character of the landscape.
- 5.56 **Saved Policy C23 – Retention of Features Contributing to the Character or Appearance of a Conservation Area:** states that there will be a presumption in favour of retaining buildings, walls, trees or other features which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.
- 5.57 **Saved Policy C25 – Development Affecting the Site or Setting of a Scheduled Ancient Monument:** states that in considering proposals for development which would affect the site or setting of a Scheduled Ancient Monument, other nationally important archaeological sites and monuments of special local importance, the Council will have regard to the desirability of maintaining its overall historic character, including its protection, enhancement and preservation where appropriate.
- 5.58 **Saved Policy C28 – Layout, Design and External Appearance of New Development:** states that control will be exercised over all new development, including conversions and extensions, to ensure that the standards of layout, design and external appearance, including the choice of external-finish materials, are sympathetic to the character of the urban or rural context of that development. In sensitive areas such as Conservation Areas, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and areas of high landscape value, development will be required to be of a high standard and the use of traditional local building materials will normally be required.

#### **Emerging Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031: Part 2**

- 5.59 The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031: Part is being prepared and a consultation was held in January 2016. An issues document was published for the consultation.
- 5.60 The Part 2 Plan remains at an early stage (due to a part review of the Part 1 Plan) and can only be afforded very limited weight in decision making. However, it is recognised that the plan identifies a range of issues and highlights the emerging evidence base documents and their findings. These are key to delivering the spatial strategy of the district.
- 5.61 The Part 2 Plan will contain non-strategic site allocations and development management policies based on meeting the objectives of the spatial strategy set out in the Part 1 plan.
- 5.62 The plan's questions focus on a wide range of key issues in the district including;
- the delivery and protection of employment land;
  - skills, apprenticeships and local employment; education;
  - retail and town centres;
  - tourism and associated facilities;
  - transport and associated infrastructure;
  - heritage;
  - land contamination;
  - and the brownfield land register.

#### **Skills, Apprenticeships, Local Employment, Education**

- 5.63 The Part 2 Plan identifies the importance of ensuring a highly skilled local population. It states that: *given the economic ambitions and priorities of the Local Plan Part 1, it will be important to ensure that the local population is sufficiently skilled to attract companies and investment to Cherwell particularly in the high value 'knowledge economy' sectors that the Local Plan seeks to develop.*



- 5.64 The Part 2 Plan also identifies that improving skills levels is also a county-wide priority for Oxfordshire County Council, in the Corporate Plan<sup>1</sup>, and for the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, in the Skills Strategy<sup>2</sup>.

#### **Tourism**

- 5.65 The Local Plan Part 1 identifies that tourism makes a significant contribution to the local economy (worth £300mill to the district). The Part 2 Plan identifies that: *“tourism can help support local services and facilities, provide employment, promote regeneration, and help preserve the natural and historic environments.”*
- 5.66 However, the Part 2 Plan identifies that the district does not attract the level of tourists who visit surrounding areas, such as Stratford and Oxford. It is suggested that district has the potential to develop tourism and the Cherwell Tourism Development Study would be updated to provide background evidence and justification.
- 5.67 The Part 2 Plan identifies that, as part of supporting tourism growth in the District, the Local Plan Part 2 could seek to support existing and new visitor accommodation. Additionally, emerging work on an updated tourism evidence base highlights current peak period shortage in accommodation and anticipated future growth in accommodation demand.

#### **Historic Environment**

- 5.68 The Part 2 Plan identifies that the historic environment is protected and enhanced. The plan highlights existing statutory and non-statutory policies and documents relating to the historic environment in the district.
- 5.69 The Part 2 Plan considers the replacement of Saved Policies of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 that relate to the historic environment. The Part 2 Plan asks respondents whether additional guidance should be included in the plan on the historic environment. These include the impact of development, integrating new development and assets considered to be at risk.

#### **Bicester: retaining local identity and character**

- 5.70 The Part 2 Plan identifies the historic environment and heritage of Bicester, including the designated Conservation Area at RAF Bicester, as a consideration. The document requests views on how Bicester's local identity and character can be retained and enhanced as the town continues to grow.

#### **Non-statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011 (December 2004)**

- 5.71 The Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011 was intended to review and update the Local Plan adopted in 1996. Due to changes to the planning system introduced by the Government, work on this plan was discontinued prior to adoption.
- 5.72 The Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011 is not part of the statutory development plan but was approved as interim planning policy for development control purposes in December 2004. The Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) includes policies that supersede some of those within the Non-Statutory Local Plan. Where appropriate this proposal has had regard to the non-statutory Local Plan 2011 (December 2004).

#### **Bicester Heritage – Heritage Partnership Agreement (October 2014)**

- 5.73 The document aims to provide a blanket vision for the site acquired by Bicester Heritage. The document identifies that Bicester Heritage is the most appropriate user possible and the combination of a historic site and historic vehicles is a natural fit.

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<sup>1</sup> (2016) Oxfordshire County Council; Ambition for Oxfordshire [available at]: <https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/aboutyourcouncil/localgovernment/CorporatePlan.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> (2017) OxLEP; Oxfordshire Skills Strategy [available at]: <https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/OxLEP%20Skills%20Strategy.pdf>



- 5.74 It is also identified that change will need to take place to make the new use for the site sustainable. The HPA considers the history of the site, site constraints and opportunities, the Bicester Heritage business plan, and economic considerations.
- 5.75 Given the historic and protected nature of the site the agreement provides an agreed baseline amongst all stakeholders as to the nature of the repair works and interventions that are possible without the time-consuming and costly independent planning/Listed Building applications which would otherwise be needed for each proposal.
- 5.76 The HPA sets out a conservation framework, which is largely based on the character identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal, and identifies the following capacity for change (many of which have taken place under the custodianship of Bicester Heritage):
- of use, as many of the important buildings are domestic in scale and architectural style, and appear to lend themselves to a variety of new tenants;
  - in those parts of the layout and setting which have been altered since 1939, including barriers and boundary treatments;
  - in those buildings whose form and detailing have been altered since 1939;
  - to those existing areas of unimproved grasslands, where there is an opportunity to ensure both ecological and historic conservation;
  - to those services or buildings which do not meet current health and safety requirements, building and/or fire regulations, or where upgrading cannot be avoided by law
  - to all existing buildings and landscaping, provided any new works pass the tests set out in PPG15 and preserve or enhance the character of the CA.
- 5.77 The HPA sets out Specifically Agreed Refurbishment Works, Specifically Agreed External Works, and more detailed requirements such as paint colours, materials and construction methods.
- 5.78 The application site is identified as a potential development area and as having a site frontage that is overgrown and unmaintained. A map of the potential future development site is shown in Appendix 2.
- 5.79 It is noted that new development is not covered by the HPA and would need independent planning, listed building and/or Conservation Area consents.

#### **RAF Bicester Planning Brief (September 2009)**

- 5.80 Notwithstanding that the brief is not a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), the document is identified as a material planning consideration. An overview is contained in Appendix 3.
- 5.81 The Planning Brief contains informal development principles drafted prior to disposal of the site by the MOD. The site was considered to be in a poor state of repair and the planning brief was drafted within that context.

#### **RAF Bicester Conservation Area Appraisal (October 2008)**

- 5.82 The RAF Bicester Conservation Area was designated in 2002 and reviewed in 2008. The 2008 review led to the boundary being extended. An overview is provided in Appendix 4.
- 5.83 The Appraisal identifies that an English Heritage study published in 2000 concluded that:

*“RAF Bicester retains, better than any other military airbase in Britain, the layout and fabric relating to pre-1930s military aviation...With West Raynham in Norfolk it comprises the best-preserved bomber airfield dating from the period up to 1945...It also comprises the best preserved and most strongly representative of the bomber stations built as part of Sir High Trenchard’s 1920s Home Defence Expansion Scheme”*



## 6 Proposed Development

6.1 The development proposed is: *extension to existing Technical Site to provide new employment units comprising flexible B1(c) light industrial, B2 (general industrial), B8 (storage or distribution) uses with ancillary offices, storage, display and sales, together with associated access, parking and landscaping.*

6.2 The total Gross Internal Area (GIA) of the development will be 6530sqm comprising 7 units as follows:

Unit/Building	Ground Floor Area (GIA) (m <sup>2</sup> )	Mezzanine Floor Area (GIA) (m <sup>2</sup> )
A	570	325
B	710	240
C	570	250
D	990	600
E	550	320
F	320	150
G	90	N/A
H	485	360
TOTAL	4285	2245

6.1 Existing access will be maintained and the proposed development will provide 125 car parking spaces incorporating 6 disabled spaces and 14 bicycle shed spaces. Space for 15 cycles will be provided.

6.2 The maximum height of the proposed new buildings will be:

Building	Maximum Ridge Height (mm)
A	8100
B	8100
C	7300
D	7600
E	8100
F	8100
G	6100
H	8100



## 7 Planning Considerations

7.1 Having regard to the NPPF, Development Plan, planning history, and pre-application discussions with Cherwell District Council, the key planning considerations in respect of this application are considered to be:

- The principle of development;
- Economic benefits;
- Design, access and layout;
- Impact on heritage assets;
- Impact on archaeology;
- Landscaping and visual impact;
- Trees;
- Ecology;
- Flooding and drainage;
- Transport and parking;
- Land contamination;
- Waste management.

### **Principle of Development**

7.2 Policy Bicester 8 seeks to secure an economically viable future for the Former RAF Bicester Technical Site and Flying Field. Bicester 8 is a permissive policy supporting employment, tourism and leisure uses.

7.3 The proposed development is in accordance with the allocation by delivering employment units for flexible B1(c), B2, and B8 uses, with ancillary offices, storage, display and sales. The proposal will complement the success of the existing historic Technical Site at Bicester Heritage and enhance the character of the Conservation Area by improving a site that is identified as being degraded and of poor quality.

7.4 Policy Bicester 8 seeks to encourage mix of uses aligned to the constraints and sensitivities of the site whilst also recognising the need for flexibility to secure the commercially viable future of the site.

7.5 The proposal will support the delivery of a mix of employment, and ancillary storage and sales that will help to secure the long-term viability of the site whilst being sensitively designed in recognition of the historic qualities of the site. The design and economic benefits of the proposal are discussed in more detail later in this section.

7.6 Policy Bicester 8 seeks to protect the biodiversity of the site. Ecological surveys have been undertaken and are submitted with this application, which indicate there is no impact on protected habitats and species and on-site ecological mitigation is appropriate where other habitats are affected.

7.7 In accordance with Policy Bicester 8, the development will maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings and will protect other buildings identified as being important. A Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared by Worlledge Associates and is submitted in support of this application.

7.8 The Heritage Impact Assessment concludes that the setting and sensitive historic fabric of the buildings and openness of the airfield will be maintained and protected. The proposal will not impact on the heritage significance of the site.

7.9 The proposal is in accordance with Policy ESD15 (Character of the Built and Historic Environment). The proposed development will complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high-quality design. These elements are discussed later in this section.



- 7.10 The proposal is in accordance with Policy SLE1 (Employment Development). The proposed development will deliver employment uses in Bicester, make efficient use of previously development land, and make efficient use of an underused site. Designed to the highest standards and respecting the character of its surroundings the development will be of an appropriate scale.
- 7.11 Paragraph 111 of the NPPF encourages the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value. The proposal will re-use a site that has already been developed. An Ecological Assessment and LVIA have been prepared and submitted with this application and the site is not considered to be of particular environmental value. Having regard to the core planning principles in the NPPF, to encourage the effective use of land, the development of the site is considered to be appropriate.
- 7.12 It is noted that, during pre-application discussion, officers considered the principle of development to be acceptable and an outcome of those discussions is that officers considered the proposed scale of development to be acceptable subject to design and car parking.
- 7.13 In summary, the site is already developed, is located to the south west corner of a historic airfield and is of poor environmental quality. The principle of development is considered to be acceptable for the following reasons:
- the site is allocated for development in the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031: Part 1;
  - the proposal will not harm the significance of heritage assets;
  - the proposed development makes effective use of previously developed land that is not of high environmental value.

#### **Economic Benefits**

- 7.14 Having regard to paragraphs 7 and 21 of the NPPF, the proposed development will contribute to building a strong economy and delivering positive growth. New employment space will be delivered, creating highly skilled jobs and aligning with the priorities of the Development Plan.
- 7.15 The proposal responds positively to identified opportunities for growth in accordance with paragraph 17 of the NPPF and facilitates the expansion of a knowledge driven, creative and high-technology industry. From its excellent location in Bicester, the development will contribute to the economy of the Cherwell district, Oxfordshire, south-east England, and the United Kingdom.
- 7.16 Internationally recognised brands will occupy the new employment space. Some of those companies – such as Historit and Porsche Classic Life – are currently located at Bicester Heritage and the proposed development will allow the retention and expansion of these businesses allowing them to build on their success to date. New firms will be attracted to the site, building upon the international reputation of the existing site.
- 7.17 New businesses located at Bicester Heritage will increase the potential opportunity for apprenticeship schemes and training from the specialist skills colleges on site. Bicester Heritage is already home – in the former RAF Engine Test House – to the UK's first accredited historic vehicle restoration apprenticeship scheme run by Activate Learning and Banbury and Bicester College.
- 7.18 The site location is well-connected to the University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University as well as the existing corridor of motorsport research and design, and motorsport engineering.
- 7.19 The proposed development will contribute to the success of Oxfordshire, which is a globally-renowned region with a strong and diverse economy. This is demonstrated by the following key economic facts:
- £22bn GVA is generated by Oxfordshire for the UK economy each year - having grown by 47% (£7.3bn) between 2006 and 2016;



- Oxford University is ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in the Times Higher Education global rankings - approximately 14 miles from the site;
  - Oxfordshire is 1 of 3 net contributors to the UK exchequer;
  - 1,500 high-technology firms are located in Oxfordshire;
  - Oxfordshire includes one of the largest life sciences clusters in Europe and the highest concentration of science research facilities in western Europe;
  - 7 million people visit Oxfordshire each year;
  - 40,000 new private sector jobs have been created in the wider LEP area since 2011.
- 7.20 Occupiers of the proposed development will include a skilled workforce, focusing on motorsport and high technology industries aligning with the priorities upon which Oxfordshire has built its success.
- 7.21 The Strategic Economic Plan<sup>3</sup> for Oxfordshire aims to deliver a vibrant, sustainable, inclusive, world leading economy, driven by innovation, enterprise and research excellence. The proposed development will align with and strongly contribute to delivering that aim, capitalising on being sited in a key location within the Oxfordshire 'knowledge spine' and being in close proximity to Oxfordshire's Strategic Economic Assets (page 19 of SEP a map is included at Appendix 5).
- 7.22 Sitting underneath the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) is the Creative, Cultural, Heritage and Tourism Investment Plan (CCHTIP) that will help to deliver economic growth in Oxfordshire up to 2030. The proposed development will support the delivery of the document's key priorities, including developing skills and talent, delivering business growth, representing creative place-making, and providing productive and engaging experiences.
- 7.23 Bicester itself is well-located to capitalise on Oxfordshire's success and other wider initiatives that will bring economic benefits to the town, including the following:
- Local infrastructure funding;
  - The Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor and associated projects will increase the GVA of the area from £163bn to £250bn. The Economic Development Strategy for Cherwell recognises that Bicester is provided with the opportunity to become a location for high value and knowledge-based business.
  - East-west rail will provide enhanced public transport connectivity for Bicester;
  - Improvements have been made to rail connectivity and these continue;
  - Bicester is identified as an eco-town.
- 7.24 The proposed development is well-placed to take advantage of these opportunities - including in locational terms and building upon the achievements of Bicester Heritage to date - and help to secure them for Bicester and Cherwell.
- 7.25 The proposal seeks to contribute to the delivery of a sustainable local economy and to secure the economic future of the district, which is the main priority of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031: Part 1. The proposed development seeks to deliver the economic ambitions and priorities of the Part 1 plan, including those relating to Bicester in the following ways:
- Delivering knowledge-based employment;
  - Exploiting the site's location in the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc;
  - Exploiting the good transport connectivity;
  - Utilising ex-MOD land;

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<sup>3</sup> 2016 Strategic Economic Plan for Oxfordshire

[https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/pdfs/Oxfordshire\\_SEP.pdf](https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/pdfs/Oxfordshire_SEP.pdf)





- Maintaining and increasing the role of the motorsport industry and performance engineering;
- Encourage international brands and visitors to Bicester complementary to the town centre and Bicester Village;
- Encouraging and delivering high-technology business;
- Encouraging and delivering higher value distribution companies;
- Improving the sustainability and self-sufficiency of Bicester.

7.26 The emerging Part 2 Plan also identifies the importance of ensuring a highly skilled local population to attract high value companies. The proposed development will help to ensure that the local population is highly-skilled, and will attract companies and investment to Cherwell particularly in the high value 'knowledge economy' sectors that the Development Plan seeks to develop.

7.27 In accordance with Policy SLE1 (Employment Development), the proposed development will support existing businesses by meeting their needs thus allowing their expansion. The application site is allocated for employment uses, is outside of the Green Belt and will make efficient use of previously-developed land. The proposed development will have good access – including by public transport and other sustainable modes, will be delivered to high standards of design and use sustainable construction. The proposed development will not have an adverse effect on surrounding land uses, residents and the historic and natural environment.

7.28 Having regard to paragraph 126 of the NPPF, the proposed development will also support the conservation of heritage assets at the site supporting the wider economic benefits that this can bring.

#### **Design, Access and Layout**

7.29 Policy ESD 15 (Character of the Built and Historic Environment), a Design and Access Statement prepared by Ridge and Partners demonstrates how the design of the development is informed by an analysis of the context and explains and justifies the design principles underpinning the proposed development. Design has been addressed through pre-application discussions in accordance with Policy ESD15.

7.30 In accordance with Policy SLE1 (Employment Development) the proposed development will be delivered to high standards of design and the new buildings will be of an appropriate form, scale and mass and respect the character of their surroundings.

7.31 In accordance with ESD15 (Character of the Built and Historic Environment) the design of the proposed development is founded upon an understanding and respect of the built, natural and cultural context.

7.32 Having regard to the intended uses, the proposed development will be functional, and the new buildings designed in such a way to ensure longevity. The design incorporates a Sustainable Drainage System, adequate parking, space for refuse and recycling and space to incorporate appropriate utilities.

#### **Layout, Siting and Orientation**

7.33 In accordance with ESD15 the proposed development will deliver a high-quality design in the vicinity of heritage assets and will be sensitively sited and integrated in accordance with national planning policy and guidance.

7.34 The proposed development is for 8 functional buildings of various shapes to be proportionately spaced throughout in response to the site's historic sensitivities, constraints, and wider context - particularly the historic character of the adjacent Technical Site.

7.35 The proposed development is designed to integrate with existing streets, spaces, and the orientation of the new buildings is configured to create defined frontages. Spaces between the new buildings are created having regard to the campus layout of the adjacent Technical Site.



- 7.36 In accordance with Policy ESD15 the siting of the new buildings respects the traditional pattern of routes, spaces, blocks and plots. Central to the layout of the site is the reinstatement of the historic alignment of Skimmingdish Lane that will be a key internal access route and will create a central vista.
- 7.37 The proposed development retains an element of the recently identified historic pyrotechnic store and the new buildings are sited to incorporate this into the layout.
- 7.38 It is noted that a Thames Water asset search identified a main sewer cutting through the western area of the site. Development is not proposed above or within 3m of the currently identified location of the sewer.
- 7.39 Having regard to paragraphs 58 and 60 of the NPPF, the siting of the proposed buildings responds to the locally distinctive character. The form of the proposed development provides a strong response to the development site and its context.

#### **Scale, Massing and Appearance**

- 7.40 In accordance with Policy SLE3 and Policy ESD15 the proposed development is of an appropriate scale having regard to the surroundings. The proposed development will include buildings with a range of heights. The maximum height of any building will be 8100mm at ridge.
- 7.41 In being congruent and harmonious with the surrounding wider context the proposed development is not considered to be over dominant. Within the site, the proposed new buildings will relate in scale to each other and tree the proposed landscaping further complements the built form. The overall mass of the development is broken up by the varying shapes of the proposed new buildings.
- 7.42 The new development creates a permeable, accessible and easily understandable place by creating spaces that connect with each other and are easy to move through.
- 7.43 The proposed development will comprise new brickwork, grey corrugated metal wall panels and corrugated metal roofs. Please refer to the drawings and Design and Access Statement.

#### **Impact on Heritage Assets**

- 7.44 Policy Bicester 8 (Former RAF Bicester) states that conservation-led proposals to secure a long-lasting, economically viable future for the site will be encouraged by the Council. Conservation has been a key consideration in the evolution of the proposed design, including from a position of informed understanding regarding the heritage significance the site holds with reference to the evidence base.
- 7.45 Paragraph 132 of the NPPF requires the consideration of the impact of proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset. Having regard to paragraph 128 of the NPPF and as identified above, a Heritage Impact Report is submitted alongside this application which considers the heritage significance, management and benefits of the proposal.
- 7.46 Positive pre-application discussions with Cherwell District Council at an officer level have been ongoing throughout the evolution of the proposed development and heritage has been a principal aspect of those discussions.
- 7.47 In terms of layout, identified as being of historic significance is Trenchard's Trident configuration which will not be affected by the proposed development new buildings registering as a new phase in the future development of the site. Understanding of the Arcadian and campus-like layout qualities of the Technical Site and its functional relationship to the flying field will be preserved.
- 7.48 Being sited on the edge of the current Technical Site the proposed development respects the aesthetic value of the existing group of service and technical buildings within the site and ensures that their interrelationship will be preserved.



- 7.49 In terms of scale and massing, the development avoids undermining the pre-eminence of the existing hangar buildings and thus their contribution to the appearance of the Technical Site will be preserved.
- 7.50 The Heritage Impact Report demonstrates that historic interest lies in the survival of the existing military buildings and other structures and it is considered the proposal will not have any direct adverse impact on existing buildings or structures. The proposed development will not detract from the understanding and experience of the history and aesthetics of the historic site.
- 7.51 In accordance with local plan policy ESD13 (Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement), the proposed development respects and enhances local landscape character and proposals and does not harm the setting of settlements, buildings, structures or other landmark features. The Heritage Impact Report concludes that the proposal would not result in any harm on the significance of the site.
- 7.52 In accordance with paragraph 134 of the NPPF, if it were to be considered that the proposals would result in harm, then the level of harm would be at the lower end of the 'less than substantial' scale and there are clear public benefits that would outweigh any harm.
- 7.53 The proposal will deliver the following public benefits:
- Contribute to the delivery of the Council's objectives including sustainable economic growth;
  - Enhance and ensure the future commercial viability of the wider site including technical site;
  - Facilitate the restoration and ongoing maintenance of heritage assets, including the former pyrotechnic store requested to be protected by officers during pre-application discussions;
  - Deliver substantial economic benefits for the town and wider district;
  - Provide public access to an otherwise closed and inaccessible site to enable understanding of the former arrangement of perimeter routes and surviving buildings that will be better than currently;
  - Develop an underutilised Previously Developed site and secure the optimum viable use of land.
- 7.54 In accordance with Policy Bicester 8 the proposal will maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the Former RAF Bicester Conservation area, listed buildings, scheduled and other important buildings, their setting and support the protection of the sensitive historic fabric of the buildings on the application site and across the wider site.
- 7.55 In accordance with Policy ESD15 (Character of the Built and Historic Environment) the proposal will complement and enhance the historic character of its context. The proposed development is in accordance with Saved Policy C23 (Retention of Features Contributing to Character or Appearance of a Conservation Area).
- 7.56 The history and character of the site will not be undermined, heritage assets at the site, including the Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments will be not be harmed by the proposed development and by extension will be conserved.
- 7.57 It is considered that the history and character of the existing Former RAF Bicester will not be undermined, and the setting of buildings, structures and other features will not be harmed.

#### **Impact on Archaeology**

- 7.58 In accordance with policy ESD15 (Character of the Built and Historic Environment) new development proposals should conserve, sustain and enhance designated and non-designated heritage assets including archaeology. An archaeological Desk Based Assessment prepared by Oxford Archaeology is submitted alongside this application incorporating a walkover survey of the site.
- 7.59 No over-riding archaeological constraints which are likely to prohibit development have been identified.



- 7.60 The line of a Roman Road passes close to the western boundary and remains of a Romano-British settlement have been found directly to the south. The site was previously used as a WWI and WWII airfield.
- 7.61 There is potential for the site to contain archaeological deposits despite a degree of truncation within the site from WWI and WWII buildings and the realignment of Skimmingdish Lane.
- 7.62 In accordance with paragraphs 128 and 141 of the NPPF the archaeological Desk Based Assessment identifies that a trial trench evaluation is likely to be required to ascertain the presence, survival and potential significance of any deposits and inform a suitable mitigation strategy.

### **Landscape and Visual Impact**

- 7.63 The LVIA identifies that 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.
- 7.64 Having regard to NPPF, including paragraph 109, the proposal will not harm protected and valued landscapes. The landscape has no statutory designations. Good design will ensure that impacts of the proposed development are limited.
- 7.65 In accordance with Policy ESD13 (Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement), the proposed development will not result in harm the historic value of the landscape. The Heritage Impact Assessment states that 'the evidential value the site holds will not be undermined' and overall there will be a net benefit from the proposal, including facilitating the preservation of existing buildings.
- 7.66 In accordance with Policy ESD13, the proposed development will not result in harm to landmark features and in accordance with Saved Policy C7 (Landscape Conservation) the proposal will not cause demonstrable harm to the topography or character of the landscape.
- 7.67 Landscape impacts are predicted to be minimal with little to no influence beyond the site boundary. 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.
- 7.68 The degree of change will be more evident within the site itself with the loss of some mature trees and areas of scrub woodland. Existing landscaping will be retained and enhanced by appropriate planting and other mitigation measures aligned to the ecological recommendations.

### **Ecology**

- 7.69 Policy ESD10 (Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment) requires relevant ecological surveys to be prepared. A Phase 1 Ecological Survey is submitted alongside this application prepared by Ecology Solutions which evaluates the importance of the habitats present in accordance with published guidance and best practice guidelines.
- 7.70 Policy ESD10 seeks the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, including by protecting, managing and enhancing resources. As part of the allocation for development, Policy Bicester 8 requires the protection and enhancement of biodiversity of the site.
- 7.71 The proposed development is not likely give rise to any significant adverse impacts on any statutory designated sites. The proposals will not result in the loss of habitats included in the designation features of the adjacent non-statutory Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and no other pathways to impacts to the LWS have been identified.



- 7.72 Several scattered trees and areas of young semi-natural broadleaved woodland that is not noted to support a diverse range of species and only supporting minimal ground flora will be lost. The scattered trees and young woodland offer some nesting and foraging opportunities for birds and limited suitable foraging and navigational resources for bats. Existing short-mown semi-improved grassland that is considered to be species poor will be lost.
- 7.73 In accordance with Policy ESD10 (Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment) and ESD17 (Green Infrastructure), mitigation is proposed that will include the provision and future management of areas of long tussocky calcareous grassland and tree and shrub planting that will mitigate negative impacts and provide for the ecological enhancement of the development site.

### **Trees**

- 7.74 Policy ESD10 (Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment) encourages the protection of trees and those trees within a Conservation Area are also afforded protection. The proposal seeks to protect trees, particularly those with arboriculture interest or merit and these will be retained where possible.
- 7.75 An Arboricultural Implications Assessment prepared by Crestwood Environmental is submitted with this application. Some individual mature trees are identified on site and other trees in the area are generally invasive, scrub species and are predominantly of poor form and low quality.
- 7.76 Most existing trees on the site are proposed to be retained and will be enhanced through appropriate management, including at the western and eastern extent of the site and along the highway frontages.
- 7.77 The proposed development will have no impact on existing trees outside of the site boundary along the highway frontage which are identified as important. The health and stability of the trees will not be undermined and the boundary planting will be enhanced through planting of additional trees and shrubs. The site will be screened from the highway and immediate surrounding area.
- 7.78 Planting of good quality native species of trees and shrubs along the landscape bunds and within the site will reinforce existing trees to be retained and provide opportunity for enhanced biodiversity. Views of the proposed development will be restricted and highly filtered by landscaping.
- 7.79 Removal of self-set, low quality scrub vegetation, existing trees that run parallel to Skimmingdish Lane, and a small number of individual, mature trees located within the site will be required to facilitate the development. Mitigation for this loss will be provided by additional tree planting and landscaping across the site.
- 7.80 Overall the quality of trees on the site will be enhanced through additional planting of native species, leading to improved ecological value and opportunity for biodiversity, the screening and filtering of views, and enhanced corridors for wildlife movement and connectivity.

### **Flooding and Drainage**

- 7.81 In accordance with Policy ESD3 (Sustainable Construction), ESD6 (Sustainable Flood Risk Management) and ESD7 (Sustainable Drainage Systems) the proposed development incorporates sustainable design. A Flood Risk Assessment Report prepared by RAB Environmental and a Drainage Strategy and Water Quality Management Report prepared by AKS Ward is submitted with this application.
- 7.82 In accordance with Policy ESD8 (Water Resources) adverse effects on the water environment will be avoided and water quality will be maintained.
- 7.83 The technical work identifies that ground conditions are permeable indicating infiltration as a means of disposal is feasible.



- 7.84 The development will include a Sustainable Drainage System that will effectively manage surface water on site and not increase flooding elsewhere – including sewer flooding. The system to manage surface water drainage will be designed to agree with the National Standards for Sustainable Drainage.
- 7.85 To discharge and infiltrate runoff from the southern access road a new swale will be incorporated as part of the scheme's design.
- 7.86 Surface water drainage from the building and some hard-paving areas will be attenuated and infiltrated using three new cellular soakaways. New parking areas and access road will be drained using permeable paving.
- 7.87 The technical work identifies that there will be no discharge flow rate from the site therefore peak runoff will not exceed the current flow rates for the 1 in 1-year rainfall event and the 1 in 100 year rainfall event with an allowance for climate change. It is identified that there is no additional discharged volume as the proposed hard paving areas and building will be drained into the permeable paving, cellular soakaway and swale therefore it will not exceed the current volume form each storm.
- 7.88 The system has been designed to be in accordance with CIRIA SuDS manual with no flooding in the 30 year event and no flood water leaving the site for the 100 year + 40% climate change critical storm event. In storm events exceeding the designed storm events above the 100 year + climate change the flow of water would run towards the southeast of the site and ultimately discharge into the existing watercourse. This path is as per the existing situation.
- 7.89 Finished Floor Levels of proposed new buildings will be located higher than ditch level to reduce the risk of surface water flooding to the buildings.
- 7.90 Foul water will discharge via private pumping chamber into the existing public sewer located within the site. Connection will be on site and via direct connection to the existing public drainage system. Legal agreements will be reached with the appropriate stakeholders.

#### **Transport and Parking**

- 7.91 Policy SLE4 (Improved Transport and Connections) supports the implementation of proposals in the Movement Strategies and Local Transport Plan. A Framework Travel Plan and Transport Statement prepared by Mode Transport Planning are submitted alongside this application.
- 7.92 In accordance with Policy SLE4, the proposed development supports and facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport to make the fullest use of public transport, walking and cycling. The site is adequately accessible by sustainable modes of travel; existing pedestrian and cycle links are located within close-proximity of the site and there are good connections with local facilities/amenities in the local area and towards Bicester Town Centre.
- 7.93 Bus stops are sited within a 2-minute walk to the north of the existing Bicester Heritage site access providing connections between the site, Bicester Village and Bicester Town Centre. The site is also linked to key towns and cities such as Oxford, Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Buckingham provided by the frequent half-hourly (Mon-Sun) X5 service.
- 7.94 Existing access to Bicester Heritage will provide vehicular access to the proposed development. The two existing, gated, access junctions from the site onto Skimmingdish Lane will be retained only for special event days (vehicular access, as existing), and also for emergency access.
- 7.95 The proposed development also seeks to provide new footway and informal pedestrian crossing (tactile paving/dropped kerbs) to the south of the access, towards the roundabout with Skimmingdish Lane; and also, a new footway link towards the existing bus stop on the eastern side of Buckingham Road. Appropriate legal agreements will be reached.



7.96 Provision will be made for 125 car parking spaces - including 6 disabled bays (5% of the total) as agreed during pre-application discussions - in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council car parking standards. Electric Vehicle charging points will also be provided. Provision will be made for 14 cycles in a secure and covered bicycle shed.

7.97 The development is suitable for the roads that serve the development and will not have a severe traffic impact.

#### **Land Contamination**

7.98 Saved policy ENV12 (Development on Contaminated Land) requires that adequate measures should be taken to remove any threat of contamination to future occupiers of the site. Having regard to the previous military use of the site there is a need to ensure that any contamination is addressed effectively through redevelopment. A Phase 1 Land Contamination and Ground Condition Report is submitted alongside this application.

7.99 Technical work finds that there is no evidence to indicate that the existing ground is anything other than naturally arising materials and made ground, with small area of soil and stones deposit.

7.100 The main sources of pollutants are identified as having the potential to impact receptors at the site were determined as the residual substances from aircraft maintenance, fuel storage and the construction of buildings. In addition, the fuel spillage to the north of the application site is a potential contributor to contamination.

7.101 Review of historical maps, undertaken through the technical work, indicates no evidence of other sources of contamination/pollution or any source material likely to cause significant risk to people or the environment. Similarly, there is no indication of intensive farming practice affecting the application site which might otherwise affect the ground condition present.

7.102 The Phase 1 Land Contamination and Ground Condition Report concludes that it is unlikely that ground conditions or potential pollutant sources identified would have any significant impact on the condition of the land or the receptors identified, including people. It is noted that appropriate construction methods to meet health and safety requirements, including the use of PPE, will be utilised.

#### **Waste Management**

7.103 Policy ESD3 (Sustainable Construction) encourages high environmental standards and sustainable construction methods including reducing waste and pollution and making adequate provision for the recycling of waste.

7.104 In accordance with Policy ESD3, existing waste management arrangements at the wider Bicester Heritage site will continue, with acceptable and appropriate provision incorporated for the proposed new development.

7.105 Bicester Heritage currently works collaboratively with its tenants for waste management with a key aim of maximising recycling and minimising waste going to landfill. All tenants are instructed to adhere to the Bicester Heritage waste management strategy within the site operation regulations.

#### **Air Quality**

7.106 The proposed development site is not within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The proposed development will not give rise to impacts on any AQMA. It is noted that an AQMA is to the south of Bicester town centre.

7.107 The proposed development will be well connected by sustainable transport including rail and buses. Good pedestrian and cycle access will be provided. Secure cycle spaces will be provided. The site is accessible by car utilising the perimeter roads of Bicester.

7.108 A Framework Travel Plan and Transport Statement prepared by Mode Transport Planning are submitted alongside this application.



## 8 Conclusion

- 8.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared to explain the rationale and evolution of the proposed New Technical Site development at Bicester Heritage, Bicester, OX26 5HA.
- 8.2 The development proposed is: *extension to existing Technical Site to provide new employment units comprising flexible B1(c) light industrial, B2 (general industrial), B8 (storage or distribution) uses with ancillary offices, storage, display and sales, together with associated access, parking and landscaping.*
- 8.3 The principle of development is considered to be acceptable as the proposal is in accordance with Policy Bicester 8, will not harm the significance of heritage assets, and makes effective use of previously development land that is not of high environmental value.
- 8.4 In accordance with Policy SLE1 (Employment Development), the proposed development will support existing businesses by meeting their needs thus allowing their expansion.
- 8.5 The proposed development will deliver significant economic benefits by responding positively to identified opportunities for growth, particularly in the knowledge driven, creative and high-technology industries. Internationally recognised brands will occupy the new employment, such as Historit and Porsche Classic Life. New companies will be attracted to the site and those already on site will be able to expand building on current success.
- 8.6 Occupiers of the proposed development will include a skilled workforce, focusing on motorsport and high technology industries aligning with the priorities upon which Oxfordshire has built its success. New businesses located at Bicester Heritage will increase the potential opportunity for apprenticeship schemes and training from the specialist skills colleges on site.
- 8.7 In accordance with local plan policy ESD13 (Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement), the proposed development respects and enhances local landscape character and proposals and does not harm the setting of settlements, buildings, structures or other landmark features. The Heritage Impact Report concludes that the proposal would not result in any harm on the significance of the site.
- 8.8 In accordance with paragraph 134 of the NPPF, if it were to be considered that the proposals would result in harm, then the level of harm would be at the lower end of the 'less than substantial' scale and there are clear public benefits that would outweigh any harm.
- 8.9 The proposal will deliver the following public benefits:
- Contribute to the delivery of the Council's objectives including sustainable economic growth;
  - Enhance and ensure the future commercial viability of the wider site including technical site;
  - Facilitate the restoration and ongoing maintenance of heritage assets, including the former pyrotechnic store requested to be protected by officers during pre-application discussions;
  - Deliver substantial economic benefits for the town and wider district;
  - Provide public access to an otherwise closed and inaccessible site to enable understanding of the former arrangement of perimeter routes and surviving buildings that will be better than currently;
  - Develop an underutilised Previously Developed site and secure the optimum viable use of land.
- 8.10 Having regard to the key planning considerations the proposal is considered to be in accordance with the Development Plan for the district of Cherwell and national planning policy. Therefore, in accordance with Policy PSD1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) and having regard to paragraph 14 of the NPPF the proposed development should be approved without delay.



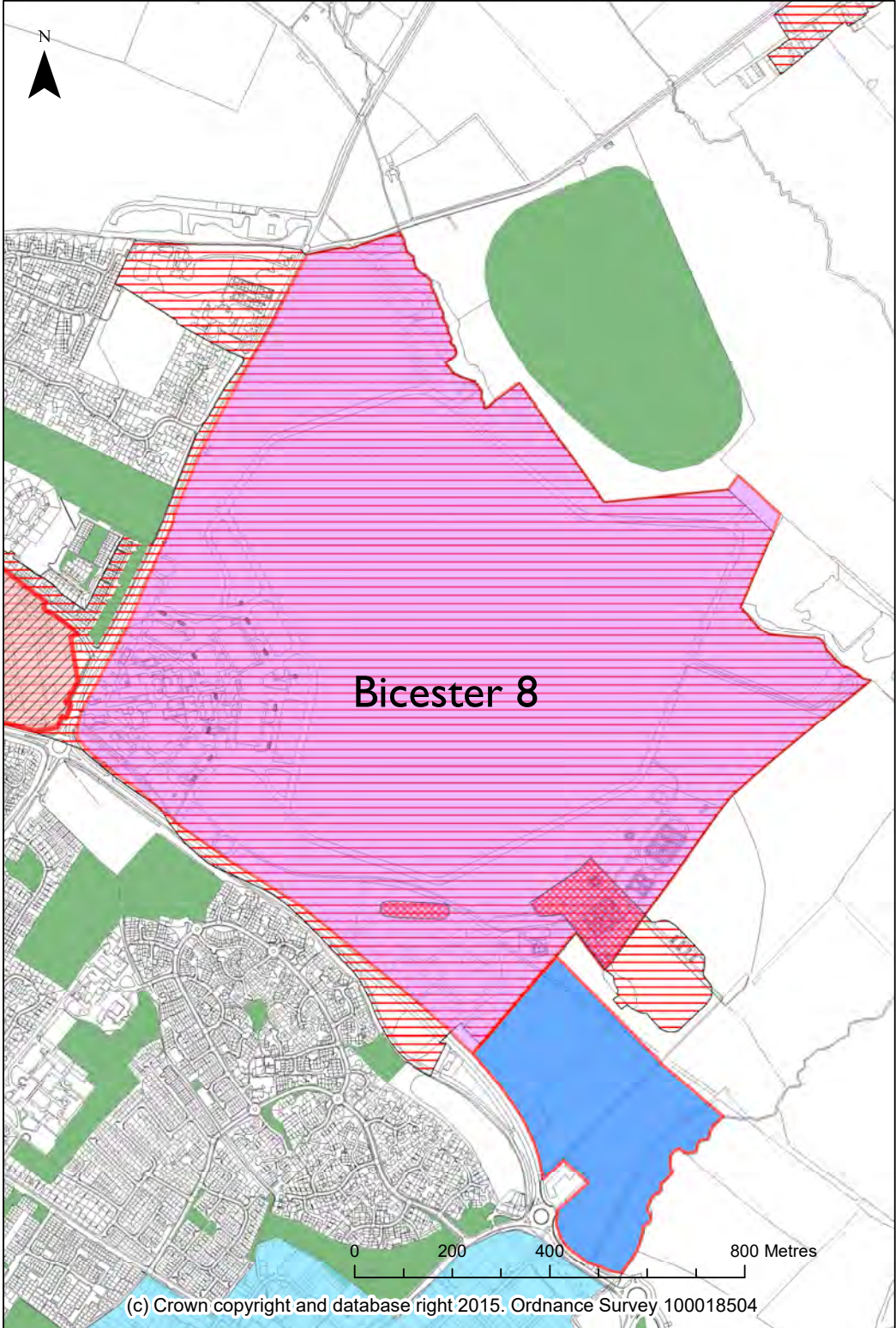
# Appendices



# Appendix 1



**Policy Bicester 8: Former RAF Bicester**



# Appendix 2



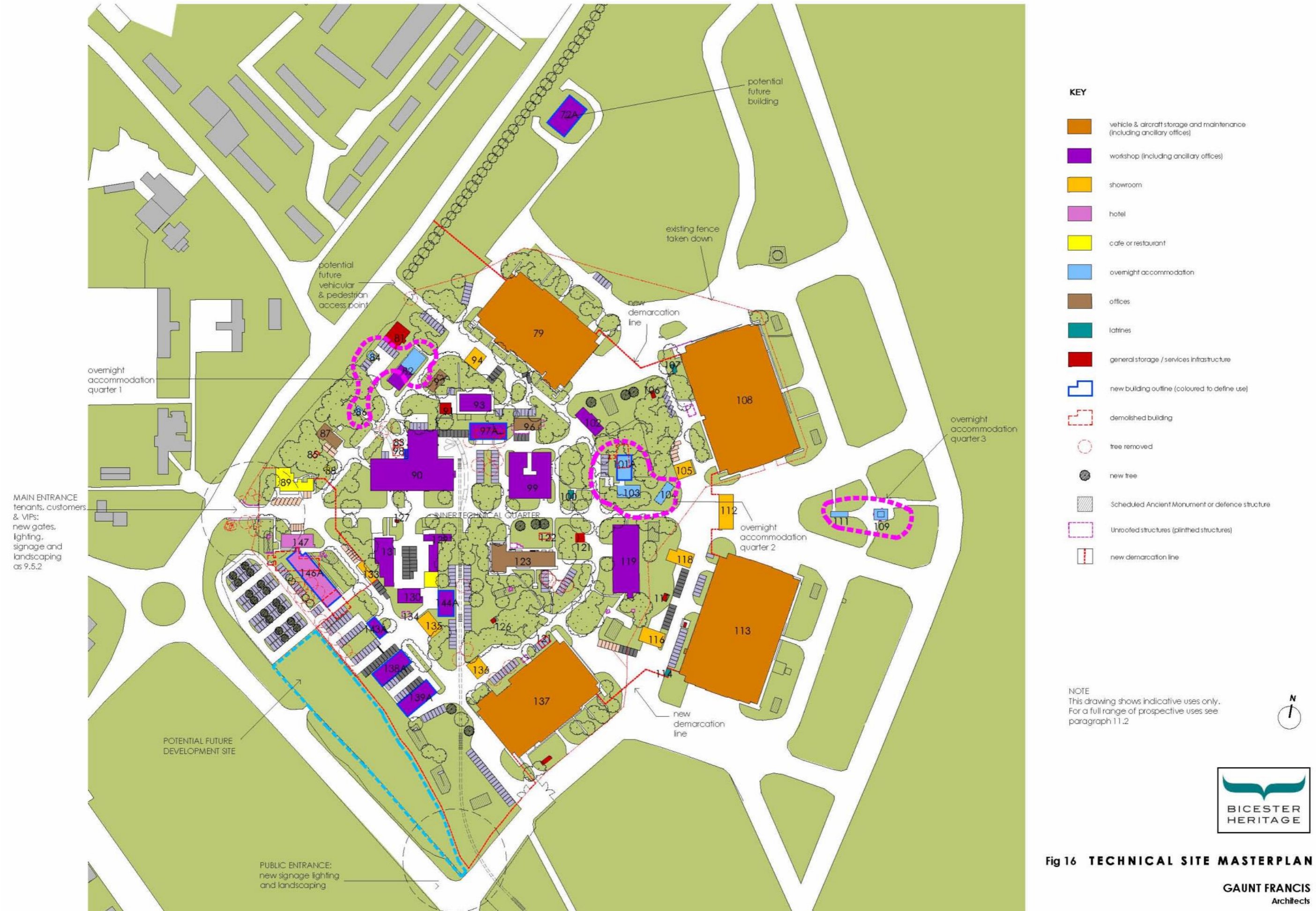


Fig 16 TECHNICAL SITE MASTERPLAN

# Appendix 3



## Overview: RAF Bicester Planning Brief (September 2009)

The RAF Bicester Planning Brief sets out:

- informal development principles for the entire site (Domestic Site, Technical Site and Flying Field)
- Management Guidelines for the Domestic Site
- *Draft* Management Guidelines for the Flying Field and Technical Site.

The Brief supports the following uses of the site:

- gliding and other aviation
- public access to the flying field, including informal low key recreational uses
- heritage centre/museum
- uses that preserve the openness of the flying field, including possible temporary uses such as festivals, concerts and markets
- limited potential for sports provision.

The Brief also supports the following uses for the buildings:

- reuse of buildings for their original purposes connected to aviation use
- heritage, cultural, sporting, community uses and employment uses.

The RAF Bicester Urban Capacity Study<sup>1</sup>, forming part of the evidence supporting the Brief states that: '*limited redevelopment may be possible on and to the south of the old line of Skimmingdish Lane*'. The area is identified in the report as '*a piece of land which could be used to help to sustain the future use of the technical site*'.

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<sup>1</sup> (2003) CGMS Consulting; RAF Bicester Urban Capacity Study [available at]: <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/downloads/download/177/raf-bicester-urban-capacity-study>

# Appendix 4





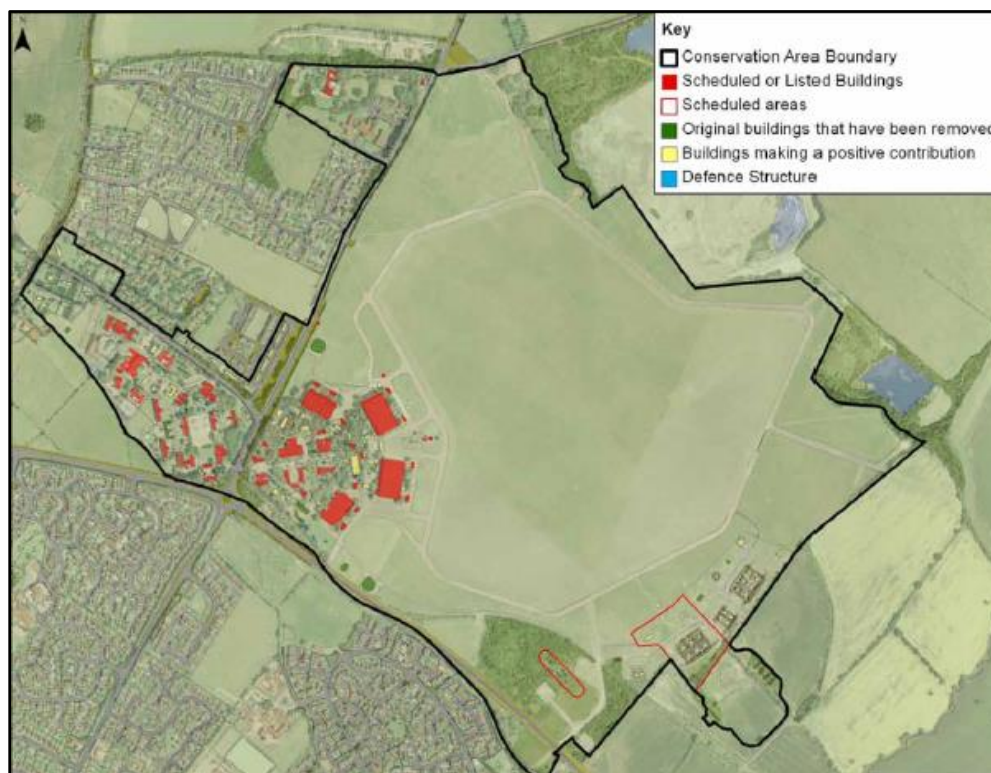
## RAF Bicester Conservation Area Appraisal (October 2008)

The Conservation Area designation covers:

- The Technical Site;
- The Domestic Site, including the pre-war married airmen's housing and the former Officers' Mess (now Cherwood House) and former RAF officers' mess (now Brashfield House) on Buckingham Road; and
- The remaining flying field including the remaining defensive structures on and adjacent to the flying field, which equates to the 1939 boundary of RAF Bicester.

A map of the Conservation Area and key heritage assets is shown below.

Figure 1: RAF Bicester Conservation Area



The Conservation Area is characterised and unified by its function as a military station.

The key principles of planning airfields in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century dominate and are the key determinants of the character that remains. In stations of this period, the technical site (comprising hangars and workshops with the guardroom and headquarters at the site entrance) was separated from the domestic site (barracks, institute and mess).

The key principles are as follows:

- Dispersal – personnel were dispersed across the site. Airmen's accommodation was provided in relatively small buildings set within a spacious layout.
- Uses – recreation was separated from accommodation to avoid concentrating the entire live-in senior staff in one structure.

- Built fabric – was dispersed to minimise damage from potential airborne attack.
- Layout – is spacious and therefore differs from earlier formal layouts of naval or army barracks. Domestic buildings were provided within spacious layouts.
- Building height – restricted to one and two storeys to minimise obstruction to aircraft.
- Materials – selected to be permanent and so brick, concrete and slate dominate.
- Landscaping - significant tree cover was required as camouflage that are now fully mature across the Conservation Area, including within the technical site (but not flying field of course).

The principle of dispersal underpins the layout of both the domestic and the technical sites and both display elements of formality in the layout of roads and buildings. Additionally, there is a strong functional relationship between the siting of buildings, and also between the flying field and many of the structures adjacent to it.

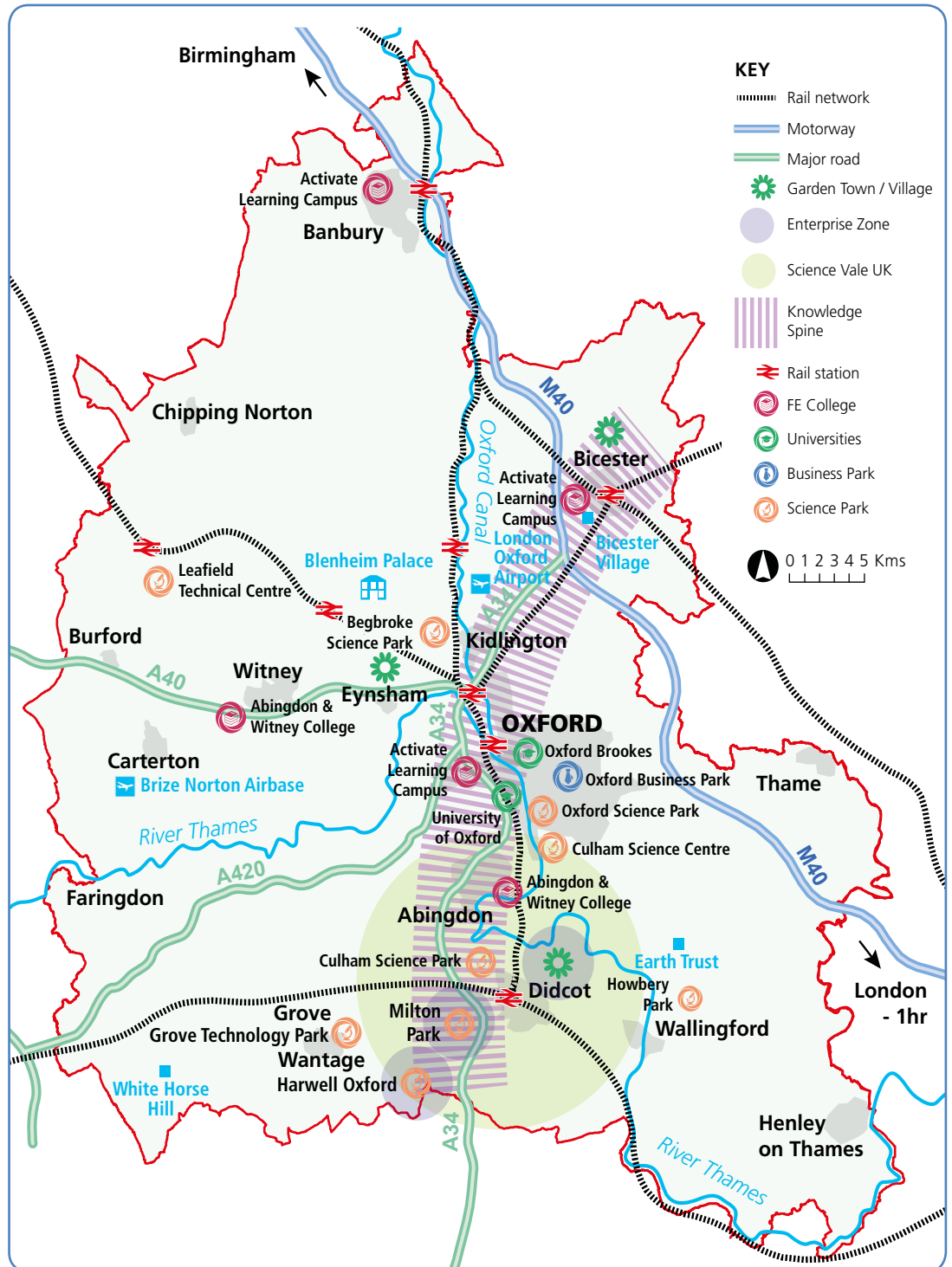
The Conservation Area Appraisal concludes that:

- The integrity, appearance and setting of the listed buildings and SAMs within the site may be compromised; any reuse of the existing buildings must safeguard the identified character and appearance of these historic structures whilst simultaneously preserving the underlying character of the site.
- The heritage interest of the site is a product of its layout and the visual and functional relations between the different sectors. The significance of the flying field would be fundamentally compromised if it were to be developed.
- The siting of any development outside the conservation area but visible from it should respect the open visual relationships with the adjacent countryside, the setting of the Conservation Area.
- Many of the important buildings are domestic in scale and architectural style and therefore may lend themselves as suitable for sensitive reuse.
- Many of the buildings and structures within the site are listed. In order to preserve the setting and significance of these buildings, reuse or development should be judged against planning policy.
- The campus nature of the site, the dispersal and utilitarian nature the buildings are all integral to the historic significance of the site.
- The views across the site are integral to the historic function as a military airfield. The capacity of the site to absorb development without significant visual impact within the site as well as on the surrounding landscape must be measured against policy, guidance and the Urban Capacity Report Published in 2003.
- The Domestic and Technical Sites both have a campus-style layout which is integral to their historic and functional significance. The capacity of these areas to absorb additional development without compromising the historic and architectural integrity of the site needs be measured against policy, guidance and the Urban Capacity Report Published in 2003.
- The edge of the existing technical site where it bounds the A4421 (Skimmingdish Lane) is considered to be degraded and of poor quality.

# Appendix 5



Figure 3: Oxfordshire's Strategic Economic Assets



Oxfordshire's built heritage and natural environment have played a substantial part in the county's economic and social development and they will continue to be a vital part of its future