

RIDGE

BICESTER HERITAGE

**NEW TECHNICAL SITE
DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT
INCORPORATING SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT**
July 2018

1 of 3

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1. INTRODUCTION



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

This Design and Access Statement (DAS) accompanies the Full Planning Application for the Bicester Heritage New Technical Site, in accordance with Article 4 of Statutory Instrument 2013/1238.

The New Technical Site was the subject of three Pre-Application Submissions (ref. 17/00285/PREAPP), the first dated 17 July 2017, the second 19 April 2017 and the third 27 June 2018, for the erection of buildings to provide new employment space for uses comprising workshops, storage, display and sale, together with the associated infrastructure works. Following the third pre-application discussion which responded positively to previous officer comments, the scheme is now put forward with this Full Planning Application, save for amendments due to site constraints.

This document explains the design principles and concepts for the project, how much development is proposed; the layout, scale, landscaping and appearance of the development. It explains and expands upon the design thinking behind the planning application, including showing how we have carefully thought about how everyone, including disabled people, older people and very young children, will be able to use the new facilities and wider site.

We also demonstrate how the local context has influenced the design, how materials in the area have informed our ideas and how the proposal fits in with the character of the area, whilst creating a sensitive contemporary form.

1.2 DOCUMENT AIMS

This document aims to explain the background and rationale to the proposals. Relevant planning policy is presented and interpreted in relation to the proposals.

This is accompanied by a background analysis of the site and the surrounding area and a summary of the main issues and opportunities that have been analysed through assessment. The document sets out the design principles of the scheme and how the design has been informed by studies undertaken to date, including Heritage, Arboricultural, Flood Risk, Landscape Visual Impact and Highways.

This DAS document has been prepared and compiled by Ridge and Partners LLP. Surveys and reports by other consultants are submitted as separate documents.

1.3 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bicester Heritage are aiming to provide new employment space on the south of the historic Technical Site at Bicester Heritage (former RAF Bicester), in Bicester, Oxfordshire. The proposed buildings will act as an expansion of the historic Technical Site in terms of use, complementing the existing premises.

The site is located at the south-western 'degraded' edge of the Bicester Heritage greater site. The proposed development is for 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.

The New Technical Site proposal has been developed in collaboration with Bicester Heritage and its consultants in order to establish the current site requirements, whilst formulating a considered approach to the design. From feasibility stage of the project to pre-application process and full planning application, various surveys and reports have been undertaken to understand design impacts and areas of sensitivity. This approach has enabled design development to relate directly to site constraints whilst considering the wider impacts to the site with a view to creating a modern, efficient and sustainable environment.

Since Bicester Heritage purchased the former RAF Bicester from the Ministry of Defence in 2013, it has been transformed from a derelict collection of dilapidated brick structures and buildings, classified by English Heritage as "At Risk," to a thriving business community working in a sensitively reclaimed and refurbished environment.

The vision is to create a worldwide centre of excellence for automobiles of the past, present and future. Bicester Heritage will become a destination for leisure and skills, automotive innovation and technology, exhibitions, cultural events, and experience centres. This mission has begun with the careful selection of the right partners, people and opportunities. The site, firmly embedded within the UK's 'motorsport valley', is already becoming an economically important centre for the local community, a national destination for families and enthusiasts and a global centre of excellence for automotive conservation, engineering and development.

2. PROJECT CONTEXT



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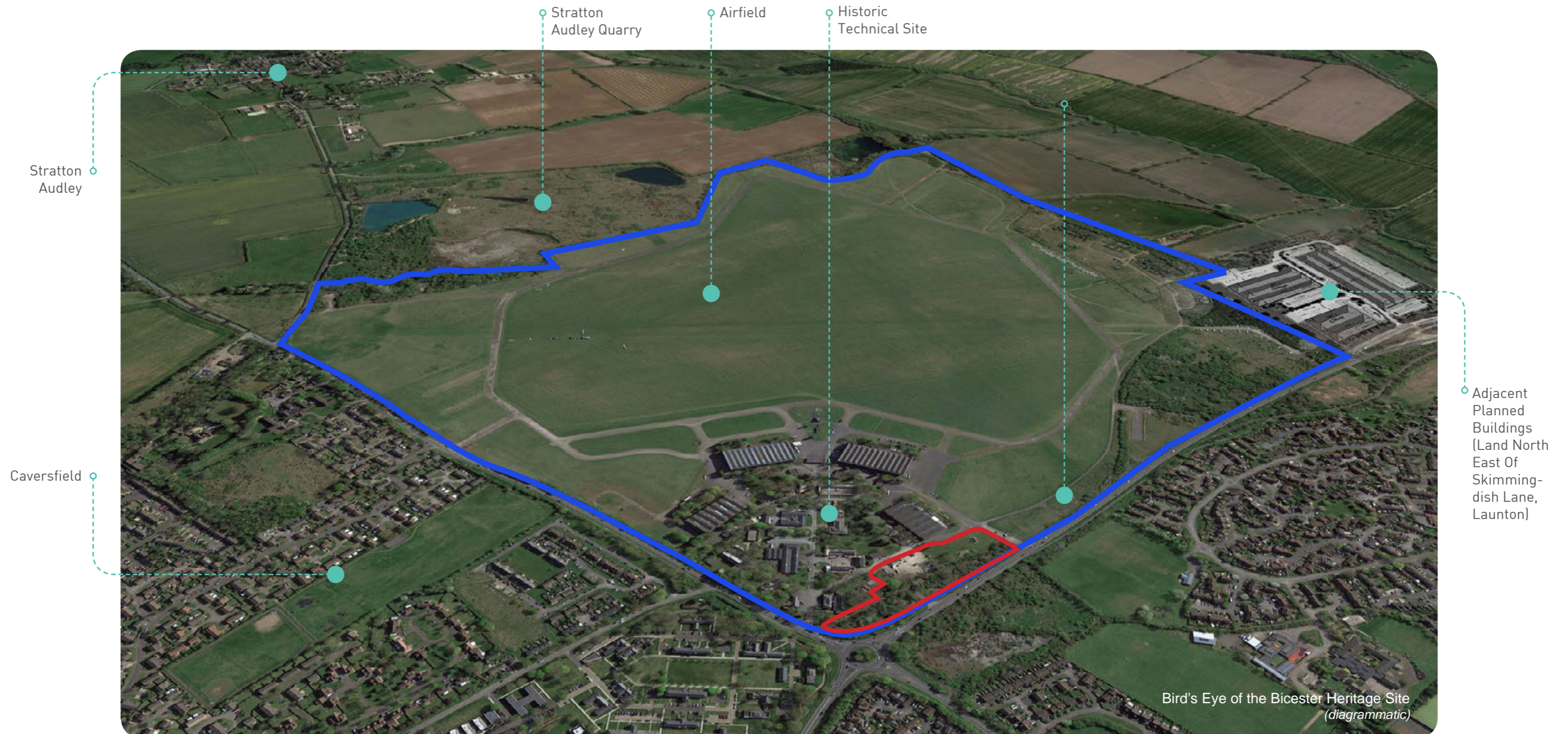
2.1 SITE LOCATION

The Bicester Heritage site lies approximately 2.4km (1.5 miles) north east of the centre of Bicester, a market town located in the Cherwell district of north Oxfordshire, approximately 60 miles north west of London.

The Bicester Heritage site sits on the southwest of Stratton Audley and is accessed both from Buckingham Road (A4421) on the west and Skimmingdish Lane on the south.

The proposed site is within the Bicester Heritage ownership boundary and sits on the south west of the existing Technical Site, adjacent to Skimmingdish Lane on the south and Buckingham Road and the roundabout on the west.

- BICESTER HERITAGE OWNERSHIP BOUNDARY
- NEW TECHNICAL SITE APPLICATION BOUNDARY



2. PROJECT CONTEXT



fig. 2.2.1. RAF Bicester Aerial Photograph
5 February 1941



fig. 2.2.2 RAF Bicester Aerial Photograph
12 December 1946

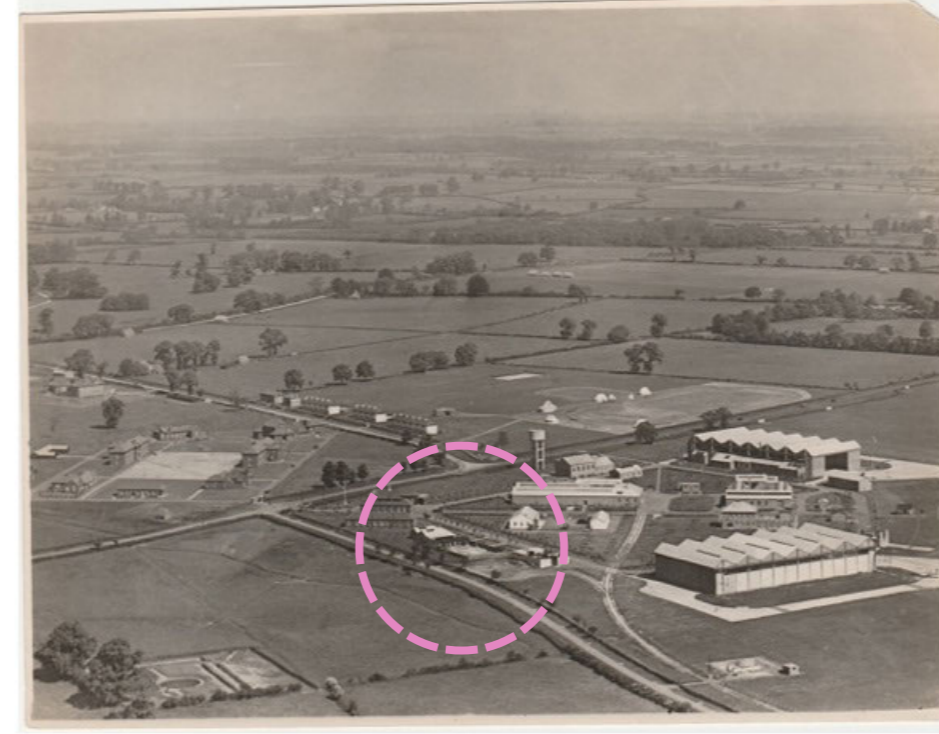
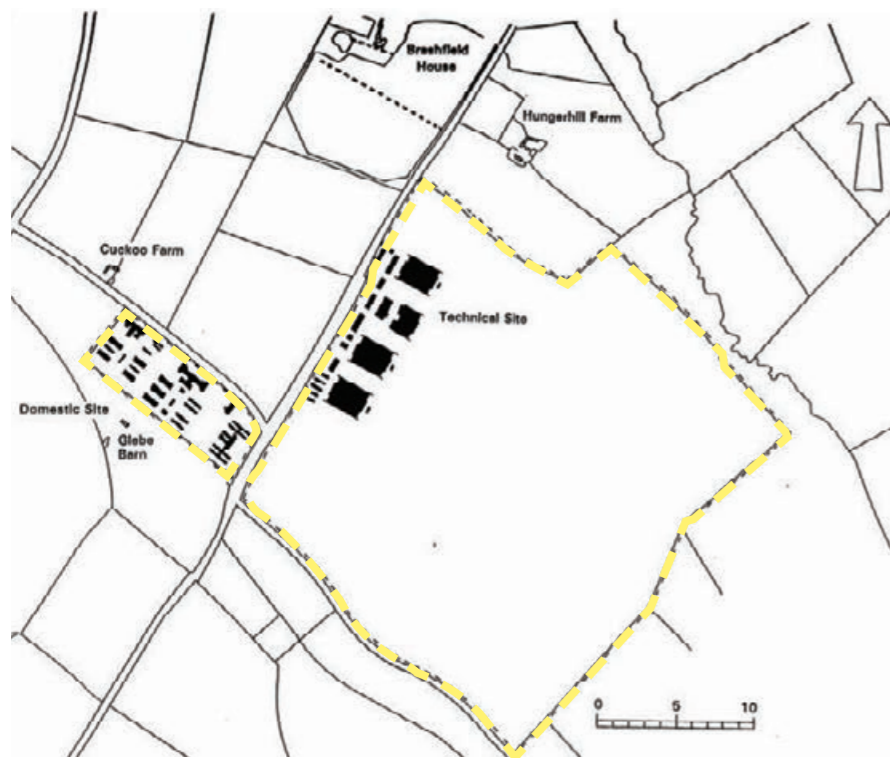


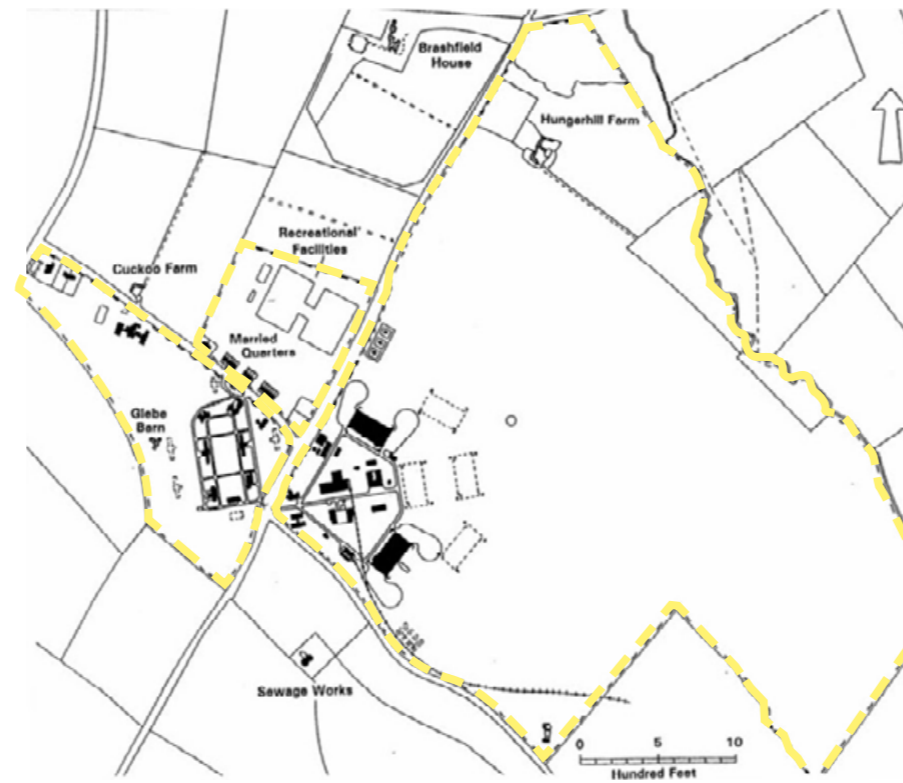
fig.2.2.3 Aerial Photograph showing buildings on
degraded edge 1930's

- RAF Bicester Site Boundary
- Bicester Heritage Site Boundary
- - - Focus over New Technical Site Land

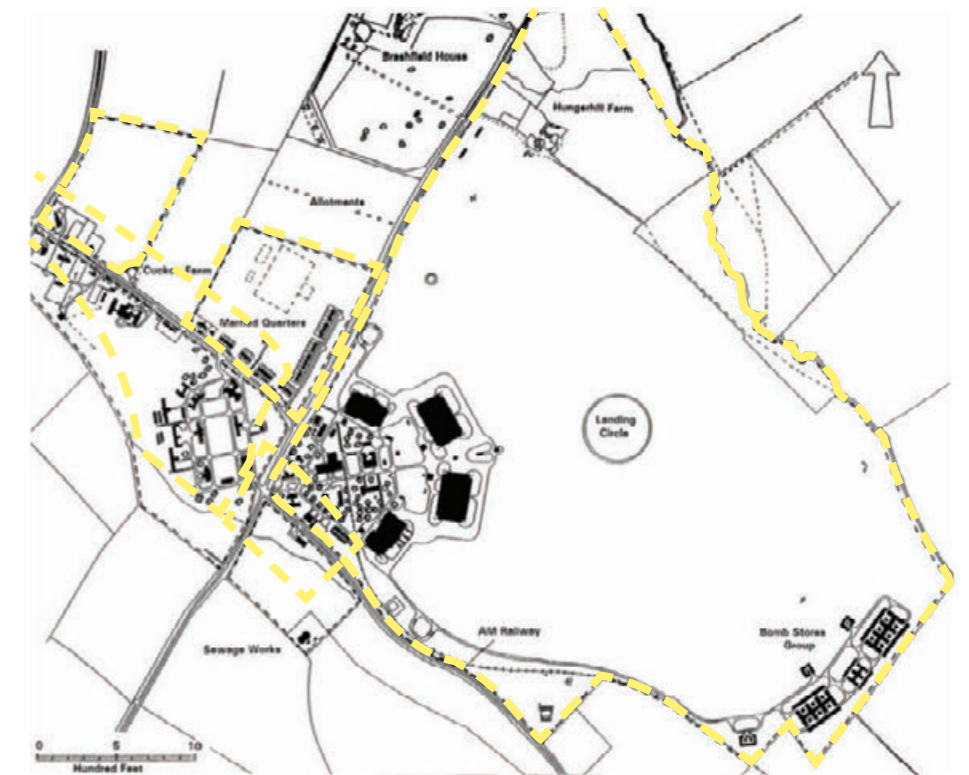
**not to scale / site boundaries are for
diagram purposes only*



1918 RAF Training Depot Site Plan
fig. 2.2.4



1926 Proposed Layout
fig. 2.2.5



1939 Site Plan
fig. 2.2.6

2. PROJECT CONTEXT

2.2 SITE CONTEXT AND HISTORY

Former RAF Bicester was comprised of 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, which is still in use today for civil aviation. Its design and layout reflect the philosophy and policies of General Sir Hugh Trenchard who founded RAF in 1918; *“it is the best preserved of the bomber bases constructed as the principal arm of Sir Hugh Trenchard’s expansion of the RAF from 1923, which was based on the philosophy of offensive deterrence. It retains, better than any other military airbase in Britain, the layout and fabric relating to both pre-1930s military aviation and the development of Britain’s strategic bomber force in the period up to 1939”* (Historic England).

The former Domestic Site has been redeveloped for housing and is not part of the Bicester Heritage ownership. This section provides an outline of the former Technical Site and Flying Field and focuses on the pocket of land which is proposed for the development of the New Technical Site.

The Technical Site & Flying Field of Former RAF Bicester is by nature a unique site; its landscape, geometry, structures, are all imprints of its ever evolving history; from a RAF Training Depot, opened in 1917, to its military

development during 1924-1934 and from its great expansion between 1934-1939 to its change of role to Training and Storage during WWII. While in its heart an Airforce station and airfield, it has accommodated a mix of different uses, including Administration, Storage & Glider Training, RAF Scrapyard, Camouflage Training Centre, Motor Transport Unit. The ever changing needs have shaped very much a site that has been constantly evolving; from site boundaries to buildings which would be erected and removed as required in order to serve certain functions.

All military operations ceased by 1994; the Ministry of Defence continued to own and maintain the land and buildings until a strategy of land disposal took effect in 1997 for the Domestic Site and in 2013 for the Technical Site & Airfield, which is now Bicester Heritage. The site was included in the Historic England’s (then English Heritage) Risk Register in 2009. Bicester Heritage purchased the site in 2013 and by 2015 it was transformed from a derelict collection of dilapidated structures and buildings, to a thriving business community working in a sensitively reclaimed and refurbished environment. The high quality of development was delivered through a collaborative planning approach with Cherwell District Council, Oxfordshire County Council and Historic England, which also resulted in the creation of the Heritage Partnership Agreement (HPA), only the second one in the UK. In 2015 the “At Risk” classification was lifted and currently circa 92% of the building spaces

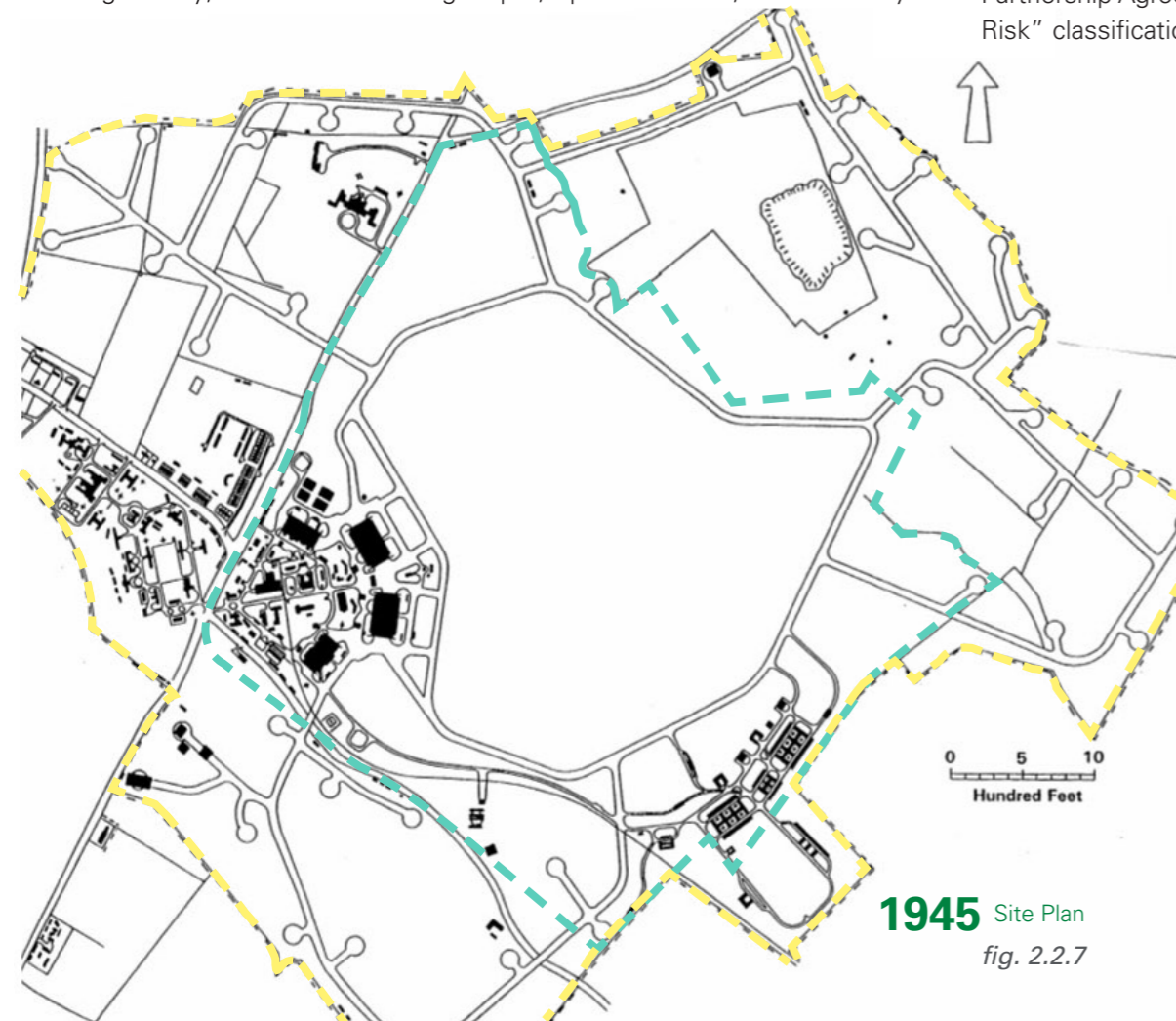
are in use. Examples of buildings prior to renovation and post renovation are found in the sections 2.4 and 2.5 respectively.

The proposed New Technical Site is mainly located on what the Conservation Area Appraisal (October 2008, page 34, fig. 11) shows as a degraded edge on the “Spatial Analysis”. This edge is a pocket of land defined by the Old Skimmingdish Lane on the north, part of which is still traceable on site today, and the greater site’s boundary on the south west.

The northern part of the site of the proposal runs parallel to the trident and is south of Hangar 137. Historic maps show evidence that this part of the site was populated with buildings which have now been removed; 138, 139, 140, 143, 304, 305.

The site is also home to three wartime defence structures; two air-raid shelters and a blast-shelter (with an open top). These three structures although within the Conservation Area, are not Scheduled Monuments.

The site’s history and heritage significance is explored in the Accompanying Heritage report prepared by Worlledge Associates.



1945 Site Plan
fig. 2.2.7

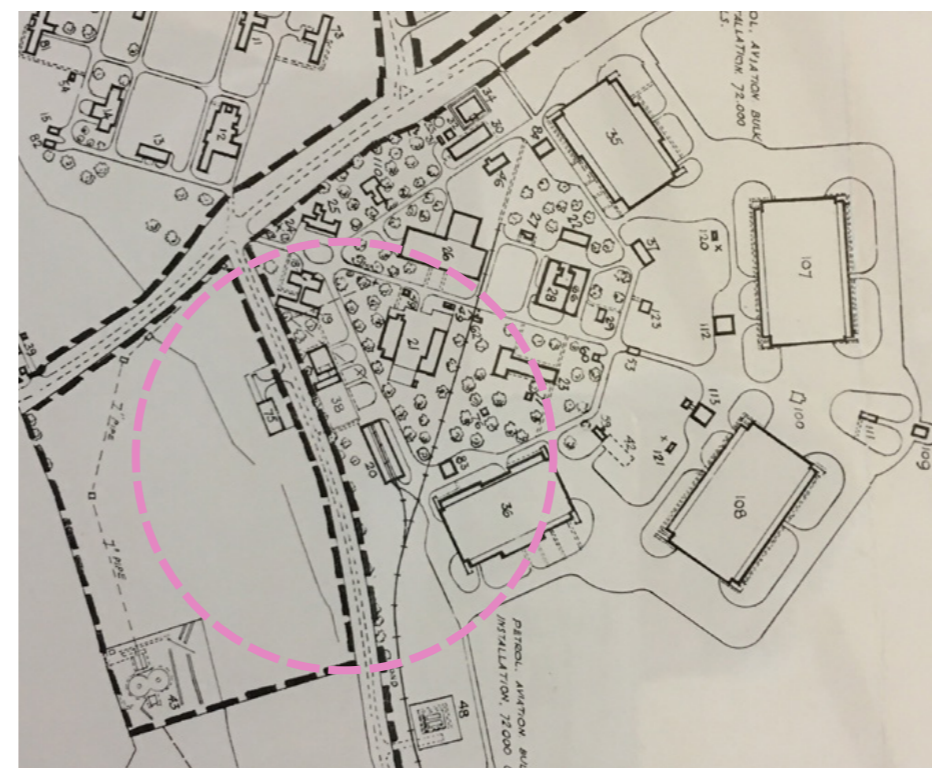


fig.2.2.8. Historic map showing Old Skimmingdish Lane and buildings on either side, including adjacent to the Trident

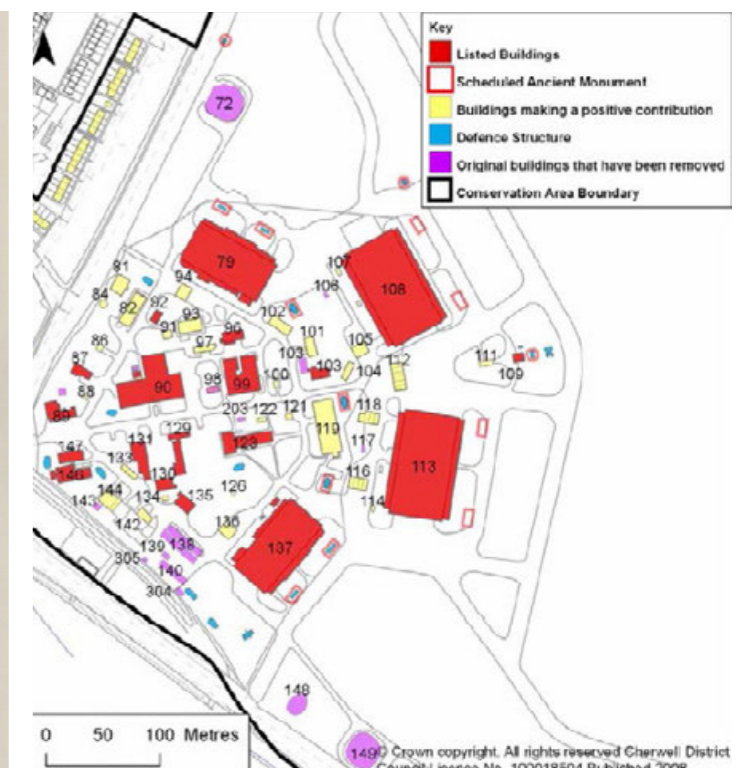


fig.2.2.9. Map from the Conservation Area Appraisal (2008) showing the existing structures on the Technical Site