

Case Officer: Rebekah Morgan**Recommendation:** Approve**Applicant:** Bicester Heritage**Proposal:** Construction of a new timber framed car port within the existing car parking area**Expiry Date:** 19 September 2019**Extension of Time:** 15 November 2019

1. APPLICATION SITE AND LOCALITY

- 1.1. The application site comprises the former RAF Bicester Airfield which is located to the north of Bicester on the outskirts of the town centre. The site is now occupied by Bicester Heritage, a company specialising in historic motoring and aviation. The site occupied by Bicester Heritage comprises the main technical site area (where the majority of the buildings are located) and the flying field which extends to the north and east of the main technical site area. For the purposes of this application, the site area and redline just relates to a single proposed building and does not include any other part of the site.
- 1.2. The whole of the site (including the flying field) is designated as a conservation area and the majority of the buildings within the main technical area are listed (grade 2). There are also a number of Scheduled Monuments located on the edges of the flying field and within the main technical area. Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site is gained just north of the roundabout on Buckingham Road. There are residential properties located to the west and south-west of the site.
- 1.3. This application relates to part of an existing car park located within the technical site. The buildings within the technical site are constructed of red brick with various roofing treatments. The existing vehicular access is located to the south-western corner of the site on Buckingham Road and comprises the main access to the site.
- 1.4. The following constraints relate to the wider Airfield site:
 - The site is located within the Conservation Area of RAF Bicester;
 - The building is a Grade II listed building;
 - The majority of other buildings on the site are either Grade 2 listed or locally listed;
 - There are a number of Scheduled Monuments located within the main technical site area;
 - There is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within 2 km of the site (the quarry to the north);
 - There is a proposed District Wildlife Site to the south of the site on the opposite side of Skimmingdish Lane;
 - Much of the adjoining airfield is allocated as a Local Wildlife Site;
 - The site is bordered to the south by the A4421 Skimmingdish Lane and to the west by the Buckingham Road;
 - There are residential properties to the south, south-west and west of the site (opposite sides of the road);

- The site is allocated in the Cherwell Local Plan for 'Tourism Development' (Policy Bicester 8) and there is a site adjacent which is allocated for 'New Employment Development' (Policy Bicester 11).

2. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1. The application seeks consent for a 5 bay car port to be located at the southern end of the existing car park. The car park is located between Building 123 and Buildings 129/130.
- 2.2. The proposed building would be constructed of brick with a tile roof to match existing buildings on the site. During the application process, the design, scale and siting has been amended to reduce the length of the building and to introduce the brick walls and window details, and to reposition the building to the south.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1. There is a complex planning history relating to the redevelopment of the technical site at Bicester Heritage. The planning history does not relate to Building 146 and is not directly relevant to this application.

4. PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS

- 4.1. The car port was included on a previous application (19/00145/F). however, the applicant was advised the size and location were unacceptable. During the site meeting for this application, alternative locations and design of the car port were discussed. The car port element was removed from the application.

5. RESPONSE TO PUBLICITY

- 5.1. This application has been publicised by way of a site notice displayed near the site, by advertisement in the local newspaper, and by letters sent to all properties immediately adjoining the application site that the Council has been able to identify from its records. The final date for comments was **30 August 2019**, although comments received after this date and before finalising this report have also been taken into account.
- 5.2. No comments have been raised by third parties.

6. RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

- 6.1. Below is a summary of the consultation responses received at the time of writing this report. Responses are available to view in full on the Council's website, via the online Planning Register.

PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS

- 6.2. LAUNTON PARISH COUNCIL: The parish Council commented that *'While there were no objections to the proposal, the Council wished to raise concern about the water run-off from the roof which is was felt should be managed with a proper specified, drainage solution'*.

STATUTORY CONSULTEES

- 6.3. OCC HIGHWAYS: No objection.

NON-STATUTORY CONSULTTEES

- 6.4. CONSERVATION OFFICER: The Conservation Officer attended the site meeting to discuss/suggest amendments. They have reviewed the amended plans and verbally confirmed they raise no concerns in terms of impact on heritage assets.

7. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 7.1. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 7.2. The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 - Part 1 was formally adopted by Cherwell District Council on 20th July 2015 and provides the strategic planning policy framework for the District to 2031. The Local Plan 2011-2031 – Part 1 replaced a number of the ‘saved’ policies of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 though many of its policies are retained and remain part of the development plan. The relevant planning policies of Cherwell District’s statutory Development Plan are set out below:

CHERWELL LOCAL PLAN 2011 - 2031 PART 1 (CLP 2031 Part 1)

- ESD15 - The Character of the Built and Historic Environment
- BICESTER 8 – RAF Bicester

CHERWELL LOCAL PLAN 1996 SAVED POLICIES (CLP 1996)

- C28 – Layout, design and external appearance of new development

- 7.3. Other Material Planning Considerations

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- RAF Bicester Conservation Area Appraisal
- RAF Bicester Planning Brief

8. APPRAISAL

- 8.1. The key issues for consideration in this case are:

- Principle of development
- Design, impact on the character of the area and impact on heritage assets
- Residential amenity
- Highway safety
- Other matters

Principle of the development

- 8.2. The application seeks consent for a car port to provide a modest amount of covered car parking within the existing car park. The wider technical site has been developed around businesses within the historic motoring industry and Bicester Heritage holds events for historic car enthusiasts. As such, it is a regular occurrence for clients with high-end cars (including convertibles) to visit the site.

- 8.3. Policy Bicester 8 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2031 is a site specific policy and states *‘The Council will encourage conservation-led proposals to secure a long-lasting, economically viable future for the Former RAF Bicester technical site and flying field.*

It will support heritage tourism, leisure, recreation, employment and community uses'.

- 8.4. Although the car port is not proposed for a specific business use, it does support the wider business use of the technical site. It is of a modest scale and would not conflict with the purpose of Policy Bicester 8.

Design, impact on the character of the area and impact on heritage assets

- 8.5. During the application process the proposal has been reduced in size and re-positioned to the southern end of the car park. Amendments have been made to the design to introduce brick work on three elevations and windows.
- 8.6. The design of the car port is considered to be sympathetic to its setting and in keeping with the style of the historic military buildings on the site. The re-positioning of the car port has reduced its potential prominence and retained the openness to the rear of Building 123; an element considered important to the setting of Building 123.
- 8.7. The initial design was very rural in character and the design changes were necessary to ensure the historic military character of the site was reflected in the design detailing for the car port. The introduction of the brick and windows will ensure the building fits well with the site.
- 8.8. In the amended location, the car port will be a modest addition to this part of the site and would not have a detrimental impact on the character of the Conservation Area or the setting of neighbouring listed buildings. Therefore, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in this regard and complies with Policy ESD15 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031, saved Policy C28 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 and Government Guidance on Conserving the Historic Environment contained within the NPPF.

Residential Amenity

- 8.9. The proposed car port would be located centrally within the technical site and would not be in proximity to any neighbouring residential properties (the closest properties are on the other side of Buckingham Road and Skimmingdish Lane). Therefore, the proposal raises no concerns in terms of impact on residential amenity.

Highway Safety

- 8.10. The Local Highway Authority raised no objection to the initial design and principle of the car port. The car port has been reduced in size and re-positioned, this does not have a significant impact on the existing car park and will enable more of the existing spaces to be retained.
- 8.11. The proposal would not have a detrimental impact on highway safety.

Other Matters

- 8.12. Launton Parish Council has raised concerns regarding drainage. The applicant has confirmed the surface water will drain to underground soakaways located in the soft landscaping to the rear of the building.
- 8.13. Given the size of the building proposed, this type of sustainable drainage is considered to be acceptable.

9. PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

- 9.1. The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 requires that the three dimensions to sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) are not undertaken in isolation, but are sought jointly and simultaneously.
- 9.2. The proposal is for a new building which supports the economic activities on the wider site in accordance with Policy Bicester 8 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2031. The proposals are conservation-led taking account of the historic character of the site to ensure the design is appropriate. The proposals respect the historic nature of the site, having regard to the setting of listed buildings and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The site is accessible by both public transport and pedestrian access providing visitors with sustainable options for accessing the site other than by private motor vehicle.
- 9.3. Overall, the proposals are considered to be acceptable and comply with Government guidance contained within the NPPF, Policies SLE1, ESD15 and BICESTER 8 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2031 and saved Policy C28 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996.

10. RECOMMENDATION

That permission is granted, subject to set out in the decision notice.

Case Officer: Rebekah Morgan

DATE: 14/11/2019

Checked By: Alex Keen

DATE: 15/11/2019
