DYSON TECHNOLOGY LTD

HANGAR 180, HULLAVINGTON AIRFIELD – NEW SECURITY FENCING AND GATES

HERITAGE STATEMENT

Site Description

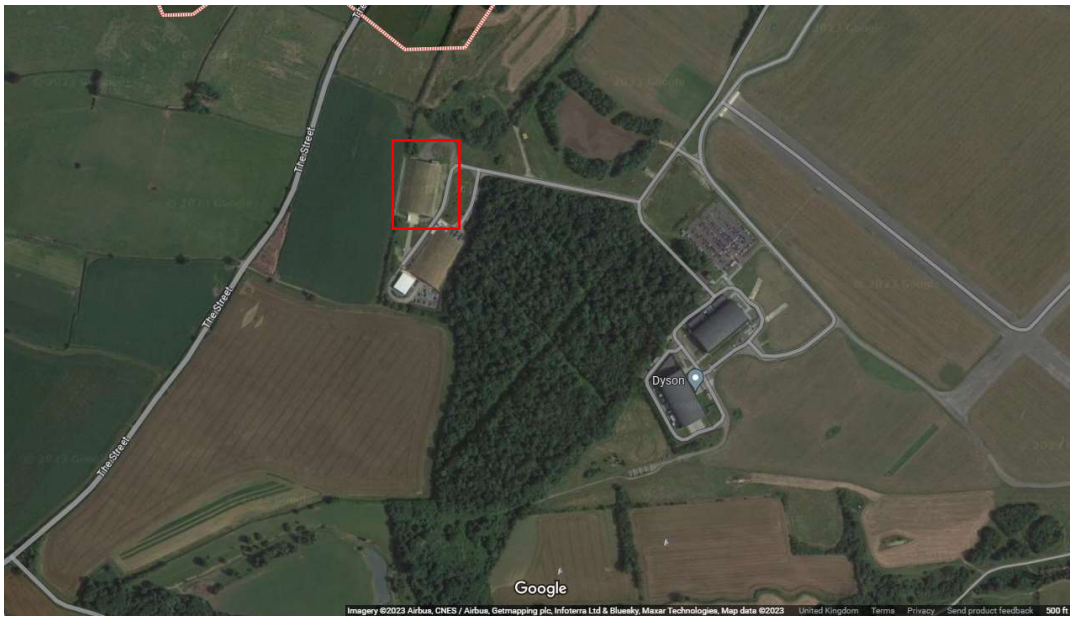
Hullavington Airfield is located north of Chippenham and between the villages of Hullavington, to the south west, and Stanton St Quintin and Lower St Quintin. The airfield is irregular in plan and is bounded to the east by Buckley Barracks and to the west by the settlement of Hullavington.

The application site (Hangar 180) lies within the airfield in the south western part. The hangar is used for storage and workshop purposes and is accessed via an existing tarmac road to the north east. The site is bordered by open land to the south, east (Stock Wood) and west. Hangar 180 is located within the Hullavington Airbase Conservation Area.

Immediately adjacent to the south is Hangar 181, which is also used by the applicant for storage and workshop purposes.

Prior to the applicant acquiring the airfield, Hangar 180 was used for workshop and ancillary purposes by the MoD. Such use included maintenance, repair and assembly of aircraft and other military vehicles, vehicle testing facilities, ancillary storage and other related activities requiring a covered workshop space. The neighbouring Hangar 181 was also previously used by the MoD for such purposes.

The hangar and its location, relative to the adjacent Hangar 181, and Hangars 85 and 86 to the east beyond Stock Wood, are shown on the images below.





Proposed Development

Planning permission is sought for the erection of new security fencing, incorporating pedestrian and vehicular access gates.

The fencing will be 2.4m high and constructed of metal weld mesh, as will the gates.

It is noteworthy here that a 2m high fence of the design and siting being proposed would be permitted development and would not need LPA approval. Therefore, in practical terms the application seeks just 400mm higher fencing and gates than that which would not need consent.

The proposed works are required to address ongoing security issues at the site. The nature of the fencing being proposed is entirely consistent with both the character of an airfield location and other fencing that can be found across this wider airfield.

Legislative & Planning Policy Background

Legislation

Legislation regarding Conservation Areas is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the 1990 Act) and includes a statutory duty to have regard to the character and appearance of conservation areas. Development should preserve or enhance the character and appearance.

Local Planning Policy

The local planning context is primarily set out in the Wiltshire Core Strategy. It was adopted in 2015 and sets out the spatial planning strategy for the area up to 2026. A number of earlier policies

relating to development, archaeology and the historic environment have been superseded by two overarching policies in the Core Strategy, within Strategic Objective 5: protecting and enhancing the natural, historic and built environment.

Core Policy 58: Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment [extract]

Development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment. Designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance, including:

- The special character or appearance of conservation areas

Distinctive elements of Wiltshire's historic environment, including non-designated heritage assets, which contribute to a sense of local character and identity should be conserved, and where possible enhanced.

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraphs 189-208 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) relate to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. These paragraphs set out an approach for decision-making, taking into account the harm to a heritage asset's significance, if any harm results the extent of such harm, and, in the case of designated heritage assets, the need to weigh harm against public benefit.

NPPF Paragraph 194 outlines the requirement for applicants to proportionately describe the significance of an identified heritage asset, including any contribution made by their setting, to understand the potential impact that development proposals will have upon that significance.

Overall, the NPPF requires an assessment of any impact that proposals may have upon the significance and setting, which needs to be proportionate to both the heritage asset's significance, and the degree to which the proposals will enhance or detract from that significance.

Assessment of Significance

Hullavington Airbase Conservation Area

<u>Description</u>

Hullavington Airbase was designated as a Conservation Area in 1992. A short Conservation Area Description Document was produced by the Design and Estate Team in 2005. It describes the Conservation Area as follows:

> *RAF Hullavington, a particularly well preserved and representative example, was the 'showplace' of the government's 'Expansion Scheme' for the construction of some new permanent stations of standard function built between 1935 and 1940. It may even have been deliberately chosen by the Air Ministry as the prime example of the high standards of airfield construction and architecture that they could achieve.*
>
> *Unique on any RAF station, the majority of the buildings are faced with locally produced 'Bath' stone. This may have been requested by the Duke of Beaufort, but was likely an*

attempt by the Air Ministry to satisfy the Royal Fine Arts Commission and the Society for the Preservation of Rural England.

The station has a fascinating and unique history from 1937 to the present day, although it ceased to be fully operational airfield in 1965. RAF Hullavington is also a fine example of the 24 vast 'Aircraft Storage Units', built between 1936 and 1940, besides which it is one of the best surviving examples of the few combined 'Flying Training School' and 'Aircraft Storage Unit' stations.

Many of the original buildings have been retained in very good condition and several are considered to be rare survivors of their types. The three-storey officer's mess building is particularly fine and the six 'E' type and two 'L' type aircraft storage hangars retain their original protective earth covering which helped considerably in camouflaging these large hangars in World War 2. Most surviving similar hangars elsewhere have had their earth layers removed postwar.

The Conservation Area encompasses buildings on the RAF base as well as the entire airfield, and some adjacent land.

The airfield is generally level and retains its tarmac runways and taxi routes with open grassy areas between. Open views across the airfield are possible in all directions due to the lack of tree cover, although Stock Wood is a key feature in views towards Hangars 85 and 86. Stock Wood, along with the trees now screening Wellington Place, marks the western extent of views across the airfield from the east.

The surviving tarmac taxi routes and the undeveloped grass between them make a strong contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area due to their illustrative historic value.

The hangars are arranged in pairs around the airbase and within the airbase there are views of hangars in practically every direction, reflecting their dispersed layout.

Only glimpsed views into the airfield are possible, due to the hedged field boundaries in the area. However, there are views of Hangars 89 and 90, and 180 and 181 which are nearer to the surrounding the roads. The dispersed hangars make a strong contribution to the aesthetic and illustrative historic values of the Conservation Area.

None of the hangars are designated as listed buildings. The hangars are considered as non-designated heritage assets within the Hullavington Airbase Conservation Area. They have illustrative historic value and a very limited degree of aesthetic value.

Significance

The significance of the designated asset is high and derives principally from the historic illustrative value of the airbase buildings, both designated and non-designated, together with their configuration and locations within the airfield as a whole.

The intactness of the group is a key feature contributing to its significance. The panoramic open vistas of the airfield allow for the appreciation of the coherence of the group of buildings on the technical site.

The buildings within the technical site, and particularly those of higher status such as the officers mess, demonstrate aesthetic value as well as further historic illustrative value through the hierarchy of function which is expressed through their diverse forms, spatial relationships, and levels of detailing.

The legibility of the airfield runways is still evident, and this generates further historic illustrative value.

The area proposed for development is located in the south western part of the site. In its current state this outlying area is considered to make a minor positive contribution, at most, to the significance of the Conservation Area as a whole, with the central areas making a positive contribution to the asset's significance.

Hangar 180

Description

For the purposes of this assessment, Hangar 180 identified as a non-designated built heritage asset. This relates to the contribution that the building makes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, as well as its contribution to the wider setting of the technical site.

Non-designated heritage assets are afforded material consideration status within the planning process. Unlike consideration of designated heritage assets, there is no requirement to give "great weight" to the preservation of the significance, and no requirement to balance any identified harm to a heritage asset against public benefit arising from any proposed scheme.

The hangar was constructed between 1939 and 1942 and is of steel framed and reinforced concrete domed roof construction, covered by earth/vegetation, and with a concrete floor. The interior of the hangar comprises one large space, open to the roof structure, with a plain, concrete floor. The long side walls are punctuated by concrete piers marking the bays.

The hangar is partly surrounded by poor quality concrete post and wire mesh fencing which varies in height.

Significance

The hangar is considered to be an asset of moderate significance. The significance of the asset derives from the historic illustrative value of its construction, its relatively intact nature, and the scarcity value of its typology.

Its scale, massing, external appearance and recognisable former function make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and within the wider setting of the technical site.

The existing concrete post and wire mesh fencing that encloses much of the hangar is generally of poor quality and is in a poor condition.

Assessment of Impacts

Hullavington Airbase Conservation Area

This assessment identifies that the significance of the designated asset is high and derives principally from the historic illustrative value of the airbase buildings, both designated and non-designated, together with their configuration and locations within the airfield as a whole. The intactness of the group is a key feature contributing to its significance, as are the panoramic open vistas of the airfield which allow for the appreciation of the coherence of the group of buildings on the technical site. The legibility of the airfield runways is still evident, and this generates further historic illustrative value.

The area proposed for minor development is identified as making a minor positive contribution, at most, to the significance of the Conservation Area as a whole.

The proposed security fencing will not detract from either the historic illustrative value of the airbase buildings or the coherence of the buildings which are appreciated through the open views.

The 2.4m high fencing, through its siting and detailed design, will not harm the legibility of the airbase nor will it affect the key elements of this area's contribution. The fencing will be dwarfed by the scale of the hangar itself and is entirely consistent with both the character of an airfield and other existing fencing.

As noted earlier, 2m high fencing of the kind being proposed would not need planning permission and is a relevant fallback position in terms of assessing impacts. The application, in essence, proposes fencing only 400mm higher than that which would not need planning permission.

Furthermore, there is already some existing fencing which is poor quality concrete post and wire mesh fencing. Some of this fencing can be seen in the photograph of the hangar above. This fencing will be removed.

The proposal reflects the character of other airbase structures, and it is concluded that it does not result in any harm to the significance of the Hullavington Airbase Conservation Area.

Hangar 180

No works are proposed to the hangar itself.

Small scale development within the setting of the hangar in the location given, does not serve to impact on the legibility of the historic function of the non-designated asset, nor its relationship to the wider airfield and the technical site, with key views being maintained.

The essential form and character of the hangar remains and the experience of this is considered to be preserved by the proposed fencing.

Stock Wood and other woodland means that the hangar is not seen in certain views. There are some limited glimpsed views through vegetation from The Street, to the west, but these will not be harmed by the small scale nature of development being proposed.

The proposed security fencing is necessary and is consistent with the type of fencing one would expect at an airbase.

As noted above, 2m high fencing of the kind being proposed would not need planning permission and the application proposes fencing only 400mm higher than that which would not need planning permission. While the proposed fencing is acceptable on its own merit in heritage terms, the permitted development fallback position is a material consideration here.

It is, therefore, concluded that the proposed development will not give rise to any harm to the contribution of this non-designated heritage asset.

Conclusion

Based on the above, it is concluded that these minor proposals constitute the preservation of the character and appearance of the conservation area in accordance with Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990.

The proposal complies with national policy and with Core Policy 58.

Therefore, planning permission should be granted for this minor but necessary development.