

Application Number: WNS/2021/1564/MAF

Location: Royal Air Force Croughton, Croughton Road, Croughton, NN13 5NQ

Proposal: Creation of a new base main gate, including formation of new access on to the B4031 and the erection of associated buildings including visitor centre, guard house and large vehicle inspection area.

Applicant: Defence Infrastructure Organisation

Agent: Mott Macdonald

Case Officer: Tom Ansell

Ward: Middleton Cheney

Reason for Referral: Major development

Committee Date: 12/05/2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT PERMISSION SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

Proposal

The application seeks permission to relocate the existing 'Main Gate' entrance into RAF Croughton from its present location around 2km west of the B4031 roundabout with the A43, to a new location around 650m west of this roundabout, which is also known as the 'Barley Mow' roundabout.

The formation of the new entrance onto the B4031, along with the creation of a traffic-light controlled junction with filter lanes, will be accompanied by a relocation and 'upgrading' of facilities available to both visitors and the base, including a dedicated visitor's centre, a large building for inspecting HGVs, guard houses with large canopy and I.D checkpoint kiosks.

There will be various internal roadways that link all of the above together, entering the base to the south-west of the junction, immediately opposite an overwatch tower and adjacent to Grade II listed fighter pens.

Consultations:

The following consultees have raised **objections** to the application:

- No outright objections, although Conservation has noted the proximity of the access road within the base to the Grade II listed fighter pens and has advised that this proximity affects the setting of the asset.

The following consultees have **offered no comments** or have raised **no objections**

[subject to conditions or unconditionally] to the application:

- Environment Agency, Environmental Protection [subject to conditions], Historic England, Planning Archaeology [subject to conditions], Ramblers Association, Evenley Parish Council [subject to queries being addressed], Local Highway Authority [subject to conditions], Highways England, Planning Policy, Ministry of Defence

6 letters of objection have been received (from four properties, all in neighbouring Astwick).

Conclusion

The application has been assessed against the relevant policies in the NPPF, the adopted Local Plan and other relevant guidance as listed in detail at Section 8 of the report.

The key issues arising from the application details are:

- The scope of permitted development
- The principle of development
- The visual impact of the development
- The impact on highway safety
- The impact of the development on the Grade II listed fighter pens
- The impact on archaeological remains/assets
- The impact on residential amenities
- The impact on protected species

The report looks into the key planning issues in detail, and Officers conclude that the proposal is acceptable subject to conditions.

Members are advised that the above is a summary of the proposals and key issues contained in the main report below which provides full details of all consultation responses, planning policies, the Officer's assessment and recommendations, and Members are advised that this summary should be read in conjunction with the detailed report.

MAIN REPORT

1. APPLICATION SITE AND LOCALITY

1.1 The application site is a 1.1ha area of land located between a perimeter track road within the RAF Croughton base (known as Glenn Road) and the B4031, which heads west from the Barley Mow (A43) roundabout towards Croughton and then Aynho.

1.2 The site is entirely in open countryside. Part of the site is on land owned by the Local Highway Authority (LHA), this being the strip between the northernmost perimeter fence and the west-bound carriageway of the B4031. The rest of the land, and the land containing most of the development insofar as built form and engineering operations, is within the base's curtilage, albeit on green paddock/pastureland which is not presently built upon.

- 1.3 The land slopes upwards to the south, heading away from the B4031, and as above it is presently a grassy field with sporadic trees. A hedgerow runs directly alongside the road. A perimeter fence delineates the boundary between the base and the land adjacent to the highway; a public right of way (PROW) also runs east/west along this boundary.
- 1.4 The application site is around 650m west of the Barley Mow Roundabout, and 1.5km east of the existing base's entrance. Croughton is a further kilometre or so to the west of that. Opposite is undulating fields and agricultural pastures, containing very sporadic dwellings and complexes of agricultural buildings.
- 1.5 The small hamlet/collection of buildings known as Astwick is around 450m north-west of the site's boundary and lies immediately north of the base's boundary and buildings/facilities within. Astwick is accessed to the south of the B4031, and constitutes a number of attractive (disassociated) traditional stone dwellings/buildings.

2. CONSTRAINTS

- 2.1. The application site is within open countryside, and two archaeological asset sites. There are a number of Local Wildlife Sites within 2km, and the part of the site within the base's perimeter is a Potential Wildlife Site. Grade II listed fighter pens are also located around 30m west of where the internal access road will join onto Glenn Road.

3. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1. The development seeks permission to relocate the existing base's vehicular entrance entirely to this new location, including a traffic-signal controlled junction with the B4031, internal access roads, a visitor centre with associated car park, a Lorry Visual Inspection Area (LVIA), a guardhouse/room and canopy building, kiosks, and an overwatch providing security.
- 3.2. The agent advises that a number of elements on the plans are considered (by them) to be permitted development. This will be considered in more detail in the first part of the report below.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1. The following planning history is considered relevant to the current proposal:

Application Ref.	Proposal	Decision
WNS/2021/1346/FUL	Storage facility for clothing and footwear	Approve 25 th October 2021
WNS/2021/0721/SCR	Screening opinion for proposed Main Gate development	Environmental Impact Assessment not required 23 rd July 2021
S/2020/1029/FUL	Construction of two radomes, antennas and associated security system components including lighting	Approve 18 th November 2021

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Statutory Duty

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

Development Plan

- 5.2. The Development Plan comprises the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) which was formally adopted by the Joint Strategic Planning Committee on 15th December 2014 and which provides the strategic planning policy framework for the District to 2029, the adopted Local Plan (Part 2) and adopted Neighbourhood Plans. The relevant planning policies of the statutory Development Plan are set out below:

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) (LPP1)

- 5.3. The relevant policies of the LPP1 are:

- SA – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- S1 – Distribution of Development
- S10 – Sustainable Development Principles
- BN2 – Biodiversity
- BN5 – The Historic Environment and Landscape
- R2 – Rural Economy

Local Plan (Part 2) (LPP2)

- 5.4. The relevant policies of the LPP2 are:

- SS1 – The Settlement Hierarchy
- SS2 – General Development and Design Principles
- HE1 – Significance of Heritage Assets
- HE5 – Listed Buildings
- NE5 – Biodiversity Geodiversity

Material Considerations

- 5.5. Below is a list of the relevant Material Planning Considerations

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- Supplementary Planning Guidance

6. RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

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.

Consultee Name	Position	Comment
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Environment Agency		<p>No comments to make on application.</p> <p><i>Officer note; the scheme is 'Major' development and proposing non-mains foul drainage. A condition will be used to require further details of drainage, whereupon further consultation with the Environment Agency can take place on that specific issue.</i></p>
Lead Local Flood Authority		<p>No comments received at time of writing – Officers have chased up LLFA</p>

		<p>on 12th April and 22nd April, and will chase up again on approach to committee.</p>
Historic England		<p>Do not wish to offer any comments.</p>
Planning Archaeology		<p><i>'The proposed development will have a detrimental effect upon the Second World War features present and on any surviving subsurface archaeological remains. Such effects do not represent an over-riding constraint to development provided that adequate provision is made for the investigation and recording of any remains so affected. In order to secure this please attach a suitable condition for a programme of archaeological work as recommended above and in line with NPPF paragraph 205 to any permission granted in respect of this application.'</i></p>
Ramblers Association		<p>No objections; observes that the diverted footpath seems to take the shortest way around the new proposed works and minimises the amount of diversion required.</p>

Evenley Parish Council		<p>No objection but some comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is regrettable that it has not proved possible to expand the existing entrances off the B4031 or A43. • A specialist evaluation of the lighting is requested to ensure it minimises the impact on Astwick and Barley Mow Farm and associated dwellings <i>[Officer note; this has since been undertaken]</i>. • Noted that the buildings appear to be elevated above the B4031, and are concerned about the impact of this on neighbouring properties. • Request 'investigation' of traffic lights at Barley Mow roundabout and risk of traffic back-up from new junction. <i>[Officer note; there is no mechanism available to Officers to require or stipulate the use of traffic lights at Barley Mow roundabout as a result of this application being approved]</i>. • Request a programme to replacement ecological habitats lost as a result of the development. • Request clarification on footpath diversion proposals and the installation of new 'interpretation' panel providing history of the base since WW2 and history of Astwick Deserted Medieval Village <i>[Officer note; there is no obligation for the base to provide additional signage/heritage</i>
		<p><i>panels/information etc, and no mechanism available to the Council to stipulate this].</i></p>

Local Highway Authority		<p>Original comments on 20th October raised several significant queries in respect of the submitted Transport Statement. These were subsequently addressed in a revised TS dated 9th February 2022; LHA response to this was:</p> <p><i>'The Transport Statement is accepted as a reasonable document upon which to assess the future operation of the proposed junction improvement at the site, and as such, its conclusions that there will be no adverse impact to the highway operation and its users is acceptable to WNC.'</i></p> <p>Officers are awaiting a response from the LHA to the designer's response to the Stage 1 Road Safety Audit, submitted on 25th April 2022. This response will be made available and also included in written updates if submitted following the publication of this report.</p>
External Funding Partnerships (NNC)		No objection , request condition for provision of fire hydrant due to scale and nature of application.
Highways England		No objections raised.
Conservation		<i>'It is proposed to create a new main entrance to the base together with associated buildings including visitor centre, guard area and vehicle inspection area. The main access and buildings are located to the east of the fighter pens and beyond the outer boundary of the former airfield and whilst they will change the setting of the listed structures, that change is not considered to harm the understanding or significance of the structures. The position however where the new road leaves the existing perimeter track (Glenn Road) does lie very close to the apron to one of the fighter pens and clearly lies within what would have been the access point for aircraft to access this fighter pen, to protect the immediate setting of the fighter pen it would be preferred if the new road could be moved slightly further east.'</i>
Planning Policy		No comments , other than that the scheme should be determined in accordance with the adopted Development Plan.
Ministry of Defence		No statutory safeguarding objection to proposal.

Designs For Lighting [instructed by LPA in respect of the submitted lighting scheme, in response to Evenley PC's comments]		<p><i>'The calculations have not been conducted using a maintenance factor of 1, as per guidance on undertaking environmental lighting impact assessments. However, based on the calculations provided in "381015009A Lighting Assessment" it is unlikely that the affected residence highlighted in the provided plan "Site Plan – Affected Residents" and the B4031 will experience adverse effects of light pollution as detailed in ILP GN01:21. This is based on our understanding that the area the Application Site is located in is typical of a E2 environmental zone.</i></p> <p><i>Further to the above, there is likely to be some impact on the views from the highlighted residences, however this is likely to be Low (Change which, when compared to background levels, is only just noticeable) as there is existing attenuating foliage between the RAF Croughton Main Gate site and the highlighted dwellings, as such it is reasonable to say this effect would be Negligible or Minor Adverse is the worst-case.'</i></p> <p>In respect of ecology:</p> <p><i>'There are no references to ecological mitigation within the "381015009A Lighting Assessment" and no references to any guidance related to ecology and lighting. To this end, I would like to see details of how the findings of the Mott Macdonald ecology report have been account for within the lighting design, and justification of the selected correlated colour temperature of the luminaires.'</i></p> <p><i>Officer's note: this has been corrected in a subsequently revised preliminary ecological assessment.</i></p>
Ecology Officer		Awaiting comments

7. RESPONSE TO PUBLICITY

Below is a summary of the third party and neighbour responses received at the time of writing this report.

7.1. There have six comments (from four householders) all objecting or raising concerns in respect of the scheme on the following grounds:

- Ecological impact (loss of trees/hedgerows etc)
- Light pollution and impact on amenity of residential dwellings in Astwick
- Adverse traffic impacts caused by access's proximity to Barley Mow roundabout (i.e. cars backed from access into base to roundabout)
- Base should explore utilising A43 entrance instead

8. APPRAISAL

KEY ISSUES

- The scope of permitted development
- The principle of development
- The visual impact of the development (including effect on listed buildings)
- The impact on highway safety
- The impact on archaeological remains/assets
- The impact on residential amenities
- The impact on protected species

The scope of permitted development

- 8.1. As part of the submission, the agents Mott Macdonald (henceforth referred to as MM) have submitted a planning design and access statement which, amongst other matters, considers the scope of permitted development.
- 8.2. The Government has effectively granted permission for a number of different types of development undertaken by the Crown, in Part 19 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (henceforth referred to as GDPO). Any development falling under the regulations in the GDPO would not technically require planning permission, and as such the Local Planning Authority (LPA) has very limited control over when, where (within the site or base) and how these are implemented.
- 8.3. The letter makes it clear that permission is **not** being sought for these elements, but they are included within the application given that they are intrinsic to the scheme.
- 8.4. For avoidance of doubt, MM provide clarification on the wording of the relevant Classes of development within Part 19 of the regulations, and then consider what elements of the proposal are covered by those regulations.
- 8.5. This will be replicated here as it is considered to be of relevance and significance to this report and how the scheme (as a whole) is appraised.
- 8.6. It is submitted by MM that Class A(a) of Part 19 would allow the following elements of the scheme to be delivered without permission:
 - The Gate house (within the Guardhouse)
 - The ID booths (x2 – within the Guardhouse)
 - The new guard Overwatch
 - The new cycle store
 - The new bin store
 - Any works required to provide drainage in respect of foul and surface water provision
 - Any (small) works required to facilitate the diversion of the PROW
- 8.7. Class A(b) is submitted as permitting the following:
 - External lighting columns (assuming height below 4m)
 - New shelters (i.e. bus shelter)

8.8. Class C(a) is submitted as permitting the following:

- Below ground plant/works required for treatment of sewage

8.9. Class C(b) is submitted as permitting the following:

- Connections and services associated with the proposed development

8.10. Class C(c) is submitted as permitting the following:

- New private carriageways into the base (approximately 1400m in length)
- New parking areas within the base, including bus laybys (approximately 2250sqm)
- Laybys, access controls, barriers, gates, footpaths, drainage and other miscellaneous development associated with provision of the new access

8.11. Class R is submitted as permitting the following:

- Proposed security fencing (approximately 2.1m in height)
- Proposed gates (below 2.4m in height)

8.12. Finally, Part 4 of Class A of the GDPO is submitted as permitting...

'The provision on land of buildings, moveable structures, works, plant or machinery required temporarily in connection with and for the duration of operations being or to be carried out on, in, under or over that land or land adjoining that land.'

8.13. Officers have considered this and see no immediate reason to doubt the validity of what is being claimed. The permitted development rights available to the Crown are quite extensive and 'generous' insomuch as the scope of buildings, hardstanding, fences and ancillary structures. Having said that, there appears to be no specific rights that permit substantial engineering operations (i.e. the removal of soil, the reprofiling of land, changing levels/topography in any significant way).

8.14. Given the site slopes up from the B4031, it is difficult to see how some of the buildings that fall under Class A(a) of Part 19 of the GDPO could be built without levelling off a significant amount of the existing landscape. However, Officers have no evidence to submit that shows that it is impossible to do this, and it is noted that part of Class A(a) provides for '*similar structures or works [emphasis added] required in connection with the operational purposes of the Crown*'. Arguably, this could be regarded as covering any engineering operations that are commensurate to the installation of the respective building or structure.

8.15. While neither MM nor the applicant has sought to confirm any of the above through a Lawful Development Certificate, Officers are satisfied that there are a substantial number of elements that could be implemented (in some form) utilising permitted development rights.

8.16. It is clear that there is no viable or 'reasonably certain' fallback position that the applicant will rely on in the event the application fails; the main element of the scheme, the junction, does require permission.

- 8.17. However, establishing this before the main appraisal is nonetheless important. The scope of what can be done without permission and within the parts of the site within the applicant's ownership and control must form a material consideration when considering the harm that the entire scheme might cause (in terms of visual amenity, flood risk, ecology/protected species etc). This is because permitted development rights effectively establish a significant 'baseline' of works that the Council has no means or mechanisms to prevent taking place. The subsequent impact of those works is also, therefore, unpreventable.
- 8.18. Having considered the list of works provided by MM in the covering letter, and due being (for the most part) in broad agreement with what is being submitted, Officers are of the view that there are three main elements to the scheme which justify the most scrutiny and detailed appraisal. These elements all require the benefit of planning permission:
- The formation, laying out, construction and finish of the junction between the base and the B4031 (a classified road).
 - The siting, design and finish of the 23m x 15m (footprint) x 7.4m (high) Large Vehicle Inspection System (LVIS) building on the eastern edge of the site, to the south-east of the proposed visitor car park.
 - The siting, design and finish of the 11m x 16m (footprint approx.) x 5.6m (high) mono-pitched visitor's centre located centrally within the parking/vehicular management complex, to the west of the LVIS
- 8.19. Furthermore, all works beyond the base's curtilage, within the ownership/control of the LHA, require permission as the base does not benefit from permitted development rights on land not in its ownership. This mainly constitutes the traffic-signal controlled junction itself and the four-laned private carriageway heading into and out of the base respectively (along with any forms of boundary treatment used to delineate/control these carriageways).
- 8.20. All other elements listed by MM as being permitted development will also be afforded significance and assessed together with the above. However, the weight afforded to the contribution of these elements towards any visual harm will be low, given the Council's inability to prevent or control them.

The principle of development

Policy

- 8.21. Policy SS1 of the LPP2 establishes the site's open countryside designation, given that it is outside of the recognised settlement confines of any nearby village or town.
- 8.22. Beyond this, however, the LPP2 is silent on this type of development; that is, works required to facilitate the needs of a Crown-controlled base of operations. It is noted that policy EMP2 of the LPP2, which is more focussed on existing employment and commercial sites, does support the expansion/intensification of a premises within its own curtilage, should it be located in open countryside.
- 8.23. The National Planning Policy Framework requires Councils to determine applications in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as a starting point for decision making, but it does constitute guidance for LPAs and decision-takers in determining applications.

- 8.24. Paragraph 97 of the NPPF requires policies and decisions to '*promote public safety*' and take into account wider security and defence requirement by taking '*appropriate and proportionate steps*' that '*reduce vulnerability, increase resilience and ensure public safety and security*' (97(a)). Paragraph 97(b) goes on to advise that development should be supported where it is '*required for operational defence and security purposes*'.

Assessment

- 8.25. In this instance, considerable weight is afforded to material considerations. The main consideration is, specifically, the established and nationally important use of the site by the Crown, and the fact it is, effectively, a self-contained planning unit with a clearly defined boundary.
- 8.26. RAF Croughton is a 280ha site that contains a mixture of buildings and uses that all contribute to the running of the military base. These include administrative, community commercial, community services, housing, industrial, outdoor recreation and open space land use classifications. The above uses have been established over a number of years.
- 8.27. The extensive scheme before the Council today is not recognised as an 'exceptional' development in the open countryside in terms of policy (either LPP1 or LPP2). It is also appreciated that, by necessity, the scheme involves 'encroachment' beyond the existing curtilage of the established 'confines' of the base, albeit into a limited parcel of open countryside between the base and the B4031.
- 8.28. However, it is reasonable to argue that the site's entrance complex is absolutely fundamental to the base's ability to welcome and facilitate visitors, perform critical checks on identification, vehicles and belongings, await security/escorts for visitors attending from outside organisations and ensure the day-to-day management (and safety) of those working and living on the base. Given the base's status and degree of national importance, ensuring adequate levels of security are achieved at all times is understandably a priority.
- 8.29. The scheme before the Council represents a substantial amount of development taking place in a visually prominent location. While a lot of this might be permitted development (as established earlier in the report), some fundamental elements, including the access itself along with main visitor and security buildings (the LVIS) will result in a significant alteration to the appearance of the landscape and road in this part of the district, otherwise characterised by its pleasant, green rural character.
- 8.30. The base already has an established entrance off the B4031, around 1km further west of where the new entrance is proposed. This entrance contains parking areas for visitors, a guard's hut, a covered area for inspecting vehicles/lorries and a checkpoint that outside visitors must pass through before continuing into the base.
- 8.31. Given the open countryside location of the site, and the amount of work being proposed, Officers have considered the justification for this relocation as provided by MM. MM advise that the objective of the scheme is to '*improve traffic movement into and out of the base, improve existing security features of the base and to potentially facilitate the future expansion of the base mission*'.
- 8.32. Expanding on this further, Section 2.5 of the Planning Design and Access Statement (PDAS) submits the following:

- The current access to the base is not compliant with current United States Visiting Forces (USVF) standards.
 - It has no traffic speed reduction capability and no queuing capacity due to being only 50m from the public highway (risk of congestion on public highway).
 - It has no means of dealing with suspicious vehicles without resulting in the closure of the public road, preventing local traffic travelling to either Croughton or the A43.
 - The current gate has no way of inspecting large vehicles, resulting in one of only two lanes being closed while security inspects an HGV.
 - There is no visitor control/processing centre, creating a distraction for guards when visitors require processing at the guardhouse.
- 8.33. In Section 8.1, the PDAS submits that the new scheme will comprise of an improvement to the existing facilities and will be compliant with USVF standards, and will reduce traffic congestion of the public highway.
- 8.34. Having visited the base on a number of occasions, Officers can confirm that the existing base suffers from congestion and manoeuvring difficulties when a large vehicle is being inspected in one of the lanes. It is also clear that, in the event a number of visitors turn up at once, the limited parking area and inability to queue would likely result in vehicles stopping and waiting on the B4031. It is also clearly undesirable for the entirety of the public highway to be closed in the event a suspicious vehicle requires attention; this matter should be resolvable entirely within the curtilage and facilities of the base.
- 8.35. The new scheme takes clear steps to address the shortcomings of the existing access.
- The private carriageway from the B4031 is much longer, and there are now dedicated areas for larger vehicles (including a Large Vehicle Inspection System, or LVIS).
 - Cars have a separate car park to use, with ample spaces such that the risk of cars queuing back to the road is substantially reduced.
 - A central, dedicated visitor's centre will allow processing of visitors to take place separately, by personnel different to those stationed at the guardhouse/I.D checkpoint to the west.
 - The POV search area and I.D checkpoint area now has three dedicated lanes instead of two, with one of these solely set aside for larger vehicles. There is an 'Overspeed detector loop' to provide traffic speed reduction capabilities for vehicles approaching the checkpoint, and 'Wrong way' detection loops for vehicles exiting the base too.
 - The new junction will be traffic-signal controlled, with left-only and right-only filter lanes for vehicles wishing to enter the base from the east and west respectively. Vehicles exiting the base will be required to use either a left or right-turn filter lane respectively, too.
 - Vehicles will also be provided with space before the first set of gates to perform a safe U-turn if they have erroneously turned into the base from the B4031.

Conclusion

- 8.36. Officers have no reason to dispute the claims made by MM in the PDAS statement that the existing access does not meet USVF standards. Having visited the base in person, the claims made about the shortcomings of the existing access are felt to be truthful and self-evident in many cases.
- 8.37. The scheme before the Council is considered to demonstrably address these shortcomings. The scheme is attempting to improve upon the existing situation to not just the benefit of the applicant (in terms of safeguarding those working and living on the base, reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience) but to the longer-term benefit of highway users as well. On this latter point, there are no outstanding objections or concerns from either the Local Highway Authority or Highways England (the authority covering the A43 and Barley Mow roundabout to the east).
- 8.38. Consequently, Officers afford considerable weight to the benefits of delivering a scheme that significantly improves upon the base's existing entrance, such as that shown on the submitted drawings. However, it is crucial that the scheme also avoids causing substantial harm in other respects, particularly in respect of visual amenity. The impact of the scheme on other matters will be considered in subsequent sections below.

The visual impact of the development (including on listed buildings)

Legislation and policy context

- 8.39. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) states that: In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local *planning authority...shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses*. Therefore, significant weight must be given to these matters in the assessment of this planning application.
- 8.40. Policy SS2 of the LPP2 requires new development to, amongst other things, avoid the *'unacceptable loss of undeveloped land, open spaces and locally important views of particular significance'* (SS2(1.a.)). This policy goes on to advise that developments should use a *'design-led approach to demonstrate compatibility and integration with its surroundings and the distinctive local character of the area in terms of type, scale, massing, siting, form, design, materials and details'* (SS2(1.b.)).
- 8.41. SS2(1.d.) requires new development to incorporate sensitive and suitable landscape treatments and SS2(1.e.) requires lighting schemes to be sensitive and respect the surrounding area and *'reduce harmful impacts on wildlife and neighbours'*.
- 8.42. Policy SS2(2.) advises applicants that any schemes that contravene any of the criteria set out in SS2(1.) that are of relevance to the proposed development will be refused *'unless outweighed by other material considerations'*.
- 8.43. Policy S10(a) of the LPP1 requires new development to *'achieve the highest standards of sustainable design incorporating safety and security considerations and a strong sense of place'*.

Assessment – loss of countryside/green space

- 8.44. RAF Croughton is a self-contained planning unit containing a wide variety of buildings, of various sizes, designs and finishes each of which perform differing functions. The design and appearance of most buildings within the base are biased towards practicality and functionality than recognising local vernacular. The built form is concentrated mainly on the north-western side of the base's complex, with a 'buffer' of agricultural land sited between most of the buildings and the B4031 in this location.
- 8.45. That being said, views towards the base from the public realm, and particularly at the site's entrance, are mainly of low-lying brick-built admin/office buildings and slightly larger storage/functional buildings clad in metal. Due to the dark green perimeter fence surrounding the site, it is relatively easy to identify these buildings as serving the base rather than forming an isolated group of dwellings and/or farm yard.
- 8.46. To the south of the main complex are large fields of open grassland, featuring (in places) radomes and other pieces of equipment vital to the base's function (in communications). These are dotted sporadically around the site and can be glimpsed from the A43 to the east. Being of a very distinctive 'golf ball' shape and quite large, these specialist buildings (along with the ancillary equipment around them) are quite eye-catching and make identifying the base very easy.
- 8.47. To the east of the main complex, built form peters out a bit. In this location, there are the three Grade II listed fighter pens, and immediately to the north of the site's boundary is a PROW which affords a relatively good view of these (albeit at a slightly lower level). The fighter pens are quite distinctive to the base, similar to the radomes and other general admin buildings, and again are only visible behind a green perimeter fence.
- 8.48. The site identified for the new entrance is currently undeveloped, as is the grassy paddock/field between the base's curtilage and the B4031. Its development for the purposes of providing an entrance complex will result in the loss of the present green landscape in this location, and will actually result in its effective 'urbanisation' with hard landscaping, lighting, fences (i.e. subdivisions) and buildings of both contemporary design (the visitor's centre) and purely functional design (the LVIS) all encroaching into this landscape.
- 8.49. The submitted landscape technical note concludes in its assessment of the 'RAF Croughton Local Character Area' that the base has a '*low scenic value*' and, due to its ongoing function as a communications facility for the US Air Force, it has a low susceptibility to change. The technical note goes on to submit that the scenic quality of the surrounding '*agricultural fringe*' is of a medium value, mainly due to the views attainable over the undulating landscape with minimal interruption from road and rail infrastructure. There is also a '*high tranquillity*' that is partly compromised by proximity to the A43.
- 8.50. The landscape technical note concludes thusly:

'Once the entrance gateway buildings and infrastructure have been completed, their presence will introduce built elements into an area of predominantly green open space. It is likely that this change will have a minor adverse effect on the landscape character of both the RAF Croughton base and the surrounding countryside. Further afield, the existing radomes are a noticeable presence in the surrounding countryside landscape character and provide some visual

interest. It is not anticipated that the new buildings and entrance infrastructure will result in a significant magnitude of change from the existing situation.

The majority of sensitive receptors around the application site enjoy views of medium value that are affected by the presence of the A43 to varying degrees. The introduction of construction plant, materials and lighting will be temporary and be seen in the context of the military infrastructure and the busy A43. During operation, the new buildings and road infrastructure will be seen in the context of the existing RAF Croughton buildings and viewed as an extension of the existing built form in an easterly direction. Views from the footpath that crosses the Scheme site will see a change from open grassland to views of the new entrance buildings.'

- 8.51. Having visited the site and walked along the PROW to the immediate north of the base's perimeter, Officers consider the impact will be 'minor adverse' in respect of the impact on the base's landscape character and closer to 'moderate adverse' in respect of its impact on the surrounding countryside, simply due to the scope and magnitude of development being proposed, and amount of green landscape being lost.
- 8.52. Having said that, Officers do agree that the development will ultimately be viewed against the backdrop of the existing base's 'vernacular', insomuch that built form associated with the base is on its northern side and tends to be of a design, scale and appearance comparable to what is being proposed in this location. The continued use of security fencing and signage will allow the new built form to be easily visually associated with the base; it will not appear as a completely incongruous and disassociated intrusion into the open countryside.
- 8.53. As such, it is reasonable to conclude that the overall magnitude of change, when considering the scheme against the wider backdrop of the base rather than as an observer standing immediately in the field or on the PROW to the front, is going to be less severe and impactful.
- 8.54. Consequently, the use of this parcel of land, in terms of its relationship with the wider complex and open countryside, is considered to be acceptable.

Assessment – engineering operations and built form

- 8.55. Officers again stress that a considerable amount of work shown on the submitted drawings is likely to be permitted development. In particular, to take a pertinent example, the comments of the Conservation Officer are noted in relation to the proximity of the private carriageway to the Grade II listed fighter pens. However, the applicant could install new private carriageways (and other development such as fences/lighting) in this location without requiring permission.
- 8.56. A low level of less-than-substantial harm is caused to the setting and significance of the fighter pens by virtue of the carriageway's proximity. However, while not ideal, the harm is likely unavoidable should the applicant choose to exercise permitted development rights and change the internal road layout (in the event permission were refused).
- 8.57. Notwithstanding this, a lot of the hard surfaces, fences and other lower scale building works which are otherwise unsympathetic to the appearance and character of the area do not require permission.

- 8.58. The three elements that do require permission and are perhaps the most significant, are the junction with the B4031, the LVIS building and the visitor centre. To take each in turn...

Junction

- 8.59. The rural road known as the B4031 will be widened and re-engineered to provide a traffic signal controlled junction. The changes to the road and introduction of traffic lights, which are typically found in more urban areas, will result in a degree of visual harm, particularly when all relevant signage and other street furniture is considered too.
- 8.60. However, the new junction will also deliver substantial benefits by being much safer to use. By utilising filter lanes and arrows on the road surface, as well as traffic islands which solidly divide the two carriageways heading east and west, it is now much more straightforward to use for those entering and exiting the base (particularly visitors who may not have driven on roads in this country before).
- 8.61. The final design and layout of the junction will be determined at a later stage, in discussions between the applicant and LHA. All details will be secured via planning conditions. Officers are comfortable that the degree of urbanisation caused by the increase in width of the carriageway and introduction of traffic lights is outweighed by the benefits this new road layout will deliver in terms of improvements to highway safety.

Large Vehicle Inspection System [LVIS]

- 8.62. This building will likely be one of the most prominent and, arguably, incongruous buildings within the complex once completed. This is mainly due to its siting some distance from the road but in an elevated position, and its overall scale, which is dictated strongly by its intended function (to allow for the thorough inspection and processing of large vehicles entering the site).
- 8.63. The building will have an overall height of 7.1m, and a height at the eaves of around 5.5m. Its width of over 15m creates a somewhat squat-looking building, with two large roller shutter doors in both front and rear gables. The building's side profile will feature vertical metal cladding and high level windows, which are to provide light to the gantry within the centre of the building (necessary to allow guards to inspect the roofs of lorries easily).
- 8.64. A brick lean-to office is shown on the side elevation (north-east). This is where paperwork and admin for each large vehicle is undertaken. The floor plan of the main building shows how there needs to be space for two 18.75m lorries with drawbar trailers (the largest common vehicle on UK roads), with room around them for manoeuvring of personnel as they check the vehicle.
- 8.65. From a distance, with the exception of the brick lean-to, the building has a vaguely agricultural appearance to it. Furthermore, other functional warehouse/storage buildings within the base are clad in green metal. This softens the visual harm it causes modestly, but nonetheless, the building arguably sits in a prominent location and will be a noticeable feature within the complex from most vantage points.
- 8.66. However, Officers again afford positive weight to the benefits that providing the base with a facility like this will deliver. Separation large lorries from smaller vehicles will make the processing of all traffic through the base more efficient. The current arrangement makes it very difficult to adequately check the roofs of large vehicles. The layout suggests that

once a lorry leaves the LVIS it will either have been 'approved' and will simply proceed to enter the base, or it will have been 'rejected' and will leave using a specified lane and route out. There is presently no easy way to 'reject' a large vehicle without causing to perform a contrived and dangerous manoeuvre involving reversing into the car park where smaller vehicles (and their occupiers) await entry.

- 8.67. As such, Officers consider that these benefits comfortably outweigh the visual harm that such a building will cause to the landscape in this location.

Visitor centre

- 8.68. This building is a more modest, brick-built structure of a contemporary appearance, with a lean-to roof. It will sit to the west of the LVIS but will not compete with it due to its lower roof level (at its highest point it is around 5.6m tall).
- 8.69. The building's footprint is also smaller than the LVIS's, as it is simply a dedicated building designed to process incoming visitors. It will contain a lobby/waiting area (50sqm) for visitors and then a back-office complex where administrative tasks are undertaken, and storage too.
- 8.70. At present, visitors are processed by a very small kiosk with no shelter from inclement weather, and which has no welfare facilities for those stationed inside. The facilities proposed here are superior in that regard, and are more interesting architecturally too. There is an opportunity, with the appropriate brick and finishing materials, to deliver something that is of a high quality that sits well in this location.

Conclusion

- 8.71. The development will unavoidably result in a degree of visual harm to the appearance, setting and character of the landscape in this location. The introduction of substantial areas of private carriageway, parking, fencing and both small and large buildings – some of these quite intrusive in terms of scale and unfortunate in design – will all permanently change this part of the site, urbanising it substantially.
- 8.72. There is also some less than substantial harm caused, where that harm is on the lower end of that scale, to the setting of the Grade II listed fighter pens.
- 8.73. However, considering the reasonably high 'base level' of harm established by what is permissible through permitted development rights, and also being mindful of the benefits that the new facilities will deliver in terms of improving efficiency, welfare/conditions for visitors and those working on this part of the base, the ability to carry out full and thorough inspections of incoming vehicles etc, Officers are satisfied that there are sufficient material benefits to warrant taking an exceptional position on this occasion.
- 8.74. As set out in policy SS2(2.), the material considerations on this occasion are felt to outweigh the conflict with policies SS1(1.a. and 1.b.) and allow Officers to support the scheme subject to standard conditions relating to materials, landscaping and other details.

The impact on highway safety

Policy

- 8.75. Policy SS2(1.c.) requires new development to be designed to provide '*accessible, safe and inclusive environment which maximises opportunities to increase personal safety*'

and security through preventative or mitigation measures'. SS2(1.j.) requires new development to include 'a safe and suitable means of access for all people (including pedestrians, cyclists and those using vehicles)'.

8.76. The NPPF's test for highway safety is set out in paragraph 111:

'Development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network will be severe.'

Assessment

8.77. To support this application MM submitted a Transport Statement which was, in response to initial comments from the LHA, superseded by a new one that used more up to date and relevant data/information to inform its conclusions.

8.78. The most recent revision to the Transport Statement provided by MM has been reviewed by the LHA and accepted as a *'reasonable document upon which to assess the future operation of the proposed junction improvement at the site'*. The LHA concludes that there will be *'no adverse impact to the highway operation and its users'*.

8.79. There are no objections from Highways England.

8.80. Officers will need to ensure appropriate control is afforded to both the LPA and LHA in respect of designing and laying out the new junction. This is typically done using a Grampian planning condition, requiring the submission of full details showing all works that will be undertaken, including details of construction and technical information pertaining to traffic signal timings etc if considered relevant.

8.81. On the basis of such conditions being used, Officers see no reason to disagree with the conclusion reached by the LHA. It is evident that the scheme of junction improvement before the Council today improves upon the existing situation and reduces the risk of confusion for those exiting the base who are unfamiliar with the country's driving laws.

8.82. Internally, the layout allows for larger vehicles to be processed separately from cars, and provides sufficient space such that there is no risk of queues forming back to the B4031.

8.83. The diverted footpath takes a logical route around the base's new perimeter, allowing for a safe crossing beyond the initial entrance gates.

Conclusion

8.84. Consequently, Officers find that there are no highway safety related reasons to resist or refuse the planning application.

Impact on archaeological remains/assets

8.85. The archaeologist recommends the standard archaeology condition that requires the pre-commencement submission of a Written Scheme of Investigation, the carrying out and submission of the subsequent report detailing any findings from that investigation and the submission of the report to HER.

8.86. Officers have no reason to question this approach given the site's location within a site of archaeological interest. This pre-commencement condition will be imposed.

Impact on residential amenities

- 8.87. The site is 450m west of Barley Mow Farm and its associated dwellings, and 550m east of Astwick and the small group of dwellings located to the south of the B4031. Given these separation distances, there is no risk of any buildings within the site harming the amenities of occupiers of these dwellings.
- 8.88. The lighting scheme proposed for the site, which the applicant intends to deliver entirely under permitted development, and which is accompanied by a technical document, has been reviewed by Designs For Lighting following concerns raised both by neighbours and Evenley Parish Council. Even if the lighting could be provided under permitted development, a lighting scheme that results in harm would be vulnerable to action taken by the Council's Environmental Health team. However, the consultant has concluded that there would be negligible or minor adverse impacts to the neighbours at Astwick and Barley Mow (essentially little to no change to the existing situation).
- 8.89. The scheme could potentially result in an intensification of use and movements that result in elevated noise levels. The site is presently described as 'tranquil' by the PDAS, albeit with some interference from the A43, which means the introduction of vehicles turning in and accelerating out of the site, lorries manoeuvring within the site and the associated noises that come with having personnel stationed permanently in this location (i.e. from welfare facilities) would all have an impact on this tranquil character.
- 8.90. However, the distances to neighbouring properties are such that these noises are unlikely to result in a statutory nuisance. This is a position that appears to be agreed with by the Environmental Protection officer, who noted in respect of noise:

'Whilst no details have been submitted regarding hours of use and additional plant, given the distance from residential properties, I do not believe there are specific noise issues to mitigate. However, if the visitor centre intends to use a commercial kitchen extractor, the following condition is recommended:

Prior to food preparation and cooking being undertaken on site full details of the cooking equipment and odour control system and system to prevent the emissions of noise, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The equipment shall thereafter be installed and maintained in accordance with the approved details at all times thereafter.

REASON: In the interest of safeguarding residential amenity and reducing pollution in accordance with Policy BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.'

- 8.91. The visitor centre is unlikely to use a commercial kitchen extractor, or even have a commercial kitchen within. The purpose of the visitor centre is to temporarily accommodate those attending the site from elsewhere who need to have identification verified, and/or be escorted into the site. The facilities behind the desk are likely to be for the benefit of those staffing the visitor centre, and not intended to be used to prepare hot food for those waiting within.
- 8.92. Given this, Officers do not consider it reasonable or proportional to impose a condition relating either to the development as a whole (i.e. any food preparation or cooking anywhere within the proposed site) or the visitor centre specifically. The risk of harm to distant neighbours of noise from extraction units is considered to be very low.

8.93. As such, there are no reasons to resist the development in respect of neighbour amenity.

The impact on protected species

Legislative context

8.94. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 provide for the designation and protection of 'European sites' and 'European protected species' (EPS). Under the Regulations, competent authorities such as the Council have a general duty to have regard to the EC Habitats Directive and Wild Birds Directive.

8.95. In terms of EPS, the Regulations make it an offence (subject to exceptions) to deliberately capture, kill, disturb, or trade in the animals listed in the Regulations, or pick, collect, cut, uproot, destroy, or trade in the plants listed therein. However, these actions can be made lawful through the granting of licenses by the appropriate authorities by meeting the requirements of 3 strict legal derogation tests:

- a. Is the development needed to preserve public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment?
- b. That there is no satisfactory alternative.
- c. That the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

Policy Context

8.96. Paragraph 170 of the NPPF states that Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by (amongst others): a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils; and d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity. Paragraph 175 states that planning authorities should refuse planning permission if significant harm to biodiversity cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for and should support development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity. Opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

8.97. Paragraph 180 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should (amongst others) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on nature conservation.

8.98. National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that Local Planning Authorities should only require ecological surveys where clearly justified, for example if there is a reasonable likelihood of a protected species being present and affected by development. Assessments should be proportionate to the nature and scale of development proposed and the likely impact on biodiversity.

- 8.99. Policy NE3 of the Part 2 LP seeks to conserve and wherever possible enhance green infrastructure. Policy NE4 seeks to protect and integrate existing trees and hedgerows wherever possible and requires new planting schemes to use native or similar species and varieties to maximise benefits to the local landscape and wildlife. Policy NE5 requires that proposals aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity in order to provide measurable net gains. Development proposals will not be permitted where they would result in significant harm to biodiversity or geodiversity, including protected species and sites of international, national and local significance, ancient woodland, and species and habitats of principal importance identified in the United Kingdom Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.
- 8.100. Policy BN2 of the JCS 2014 states that development that will maintain and enhance existing designations and assets or deliver a net gain in biodiversity will be supported. Development that has the potential to harm sites of ecological importance will be subject to an ecological assessment and required to demonstrate: 1) the methods used to conserve biodiversity in its design and construction and operation 2) how habitat conservation, enhancement and creation can be achieved through linking habitats 3) how designated sites, protected species and priority habitats will be safeguarded. In cases where it can be shown that there is no reasonable alternative to development that is likely to prejudice the integrity of an existing wildlife site or protected habitat appropriate mitigation measures including compensation will be expected in proportion to the asset that will be lost. Where mitigation or compensation cannot be agreed with the relevant authority development will not be permitted.

Assessment

- 8.101. Natural England's Standing Advice states that an LPA only needs to ask an applicant to carry out a survey if it's likely that protected species are present on or near the proposed site. , The Standing Advice sets out habitats that may have the potential for protected species, and in this regard the site is partly within a Potential Wildlife Site and is otherwise within the open countryside, involving the removal of hedgerow/trees and developing a rural landscape.
- 8.102. In order to discharge its legal duty under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 the LPA must firstly assess whether an offence under the Regulations is likely to be committed. If so, the LPA should then consider whether Natural England would be likely to grant a licence for the development. In so doing the authority has to consider itself whether the development meets the 3 derogation tests listed above.
- 8.103. In respect of planning applications and the Council discharging of its legal duties, case law has shown that if it is clear/ very likely that Natural England will not grant a licence then the Council should refuse planning permission; if it is likely or unclear whether Natural England will grant the licence then the Council may grant planning permission.
- 8.104. The application is supported by a detailed protected species survey which has been reviewed in detail by the Council's Ecology Officer. They have expressed satisfaction with its contents and mitigation proposed, although have not yet provided comments in writing. Nonetheless, Officers have been advised that they intend to recommended a number of conditions which will be found within the full comments published online.
- 8.105. Officers are satisfied, on the basis of the advice from the Council's Ecologist and the absence of any objection from Natural England, and subject to conditions that will be recommended by the Ecology Officer in due course, that the welfare of any EPS found to be present at the site and surrounding land will continue and be safeguarded

notwithstanding the proposed development and that the Council's statutory obligations in relation to protected species and habitats under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017, have been met and discharged.

9. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1. CIL is not applicable as the development proposes no new residential accommodation nor any retail development.

10. PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

- 10.1. RAF Croughton is a well-established and important facility within the Council's district, providing a vital service to the country. Its existing access from the B4031 is described as being not up to United States Visiting Forces specification for a number of reasons.
- 10.2. The existing access has insufficient parking and manoeuvring space for both small and larger vehicles, no dedicated areas for inspecting larger vehicles, no visitor's centre or spaces dedicated to processing incoming visitors to the base, no capacity to manage the speed of vehicles, and no space for vehicles to queue.
- 10.3. The new access and associated works seek to, and successfully, address all of these issues. The new layout allows for the separation of small vehicles from larger ones, provides a dedicated space for inspecting larger vehicles, allows the base to manage the speed of vehicles within the site, and provides a more comfortable facility for managing incoming visitors.
- 10.4. Importantly, the new junction with the B4031, now 1km closer to the Barley Mow roundabout, is traffic-signal controlled with dedicated filter lanes to ensure those entering and leaving the base are not in any doubt as to which direction they need to travel in, or side of the road they should be on. This junction has been reviewed extensively by the Local Highway Authority, which has declared its satisfaction with the proposals and the accompanying Traffic Statement.
- 10.5. The scheme before the Council does result in harm. Arguably, the development will result in the total loss and urbanisation of the green space to the north of Glenn Road, to the north-east of Grade II listed fighter pens and a parcel of agricultural land between the base and the B4031. The buildings within the site, and in particular the LVIS, are not particularly sympathetic in scale or design to the agricultural landscape in which it sits. The engineering operations and introduction of artificial lighting will also contribute to the urbanisation of the landscape in this location.
- 10.6. However, weight must be afforded to the fact that a lot of the development is proposed to be delivered while exercising permitted development rights. The construction of private carriageways, erection of certain smaller buildings, fences, lighting poles and other ancillary works are all potentially covered by Part 19 of the GDPO.
- 10.7. The construction of the junction, LVIS and visitor centre are the three main elements requiring permission, and these elements alone are not felt to cause substantial enough harm to warrant refusing permission, given the material benefits not just to the base but to the wider public using the B4031 that will be secured through the delivery of the scheme.
- 10.8. As such, in an exercise of planning balance, while Officers acknowledge that the scheme will result in some harm, some of this harm cannot be prevented as it forms permitted

development. Furthermore, this harm is considered to be proportionate and necessary to achieve the desired outcome of substantially improving the base's security and ability to safeguard those within, and improving matters for highway users who will be less likely affected adversely by the base's day to day operations.

- 10.9. Consequently, Officers recommend the application for approval subject to conditions as set out below.

11. RECOMMENDATION / CONDITIONS AND REASONS

- 11.1. Detailed recommendation here and full list of conditions and reasons here

RECOMMENDATION – DELEGATE TO THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR PLANNING AND ECONOMY TO GRANT PERMISSION, SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS SET OUT BELOW (AND ANY AMENDMENTS TO THOSE CONDITIONS AS DEEMED NECESSARY)

CONDITIONS

Time Limit

1. The development to which this permission relates shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason - To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Compliance with Plans

2. Except where otherwise stipulated by conditions attached to this permission, the development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the following plans and documents:
 - Site Location Plan [Drg No. 381015-MMD-00-XX-DR-C-1235 Rev P03] received 16th September 2021
 - Main Gate - Planning, General WNS/Planning Applications/Permitted Development Areas [Drg No. 381015-MMD-00-XX-DR-C-1240 Rev P3] received 16th September 2021
 - Main Gate - Planning, General Arrangement, PRoW and Diversion [Drg No. 381015MMD-00-XX-DR-C-1241 Rev P2] received 16th September 2021
 - Main Gate - B4031 Junction Layout [Drg No. 381015-MMD-00-XX-DR-C-1250 Rev P04] received 8th October 2021
 - LVIS - Proposed Ground Floor Plan [Drg No. 381015-MMD-00-GF-DR-A-2100 Rev P7] received 16th September 2021
 - LVIS - Proposed Roof Plan [Drg No. 381015-MMD-00-RF-DR-A-2400 Rev P2] received 16th September 2021
 - LVIS - Proposed Elevations [Drg No. 381015-MMD-00-XX-DR-A-2200 Rev P7] received 16th September 2021
 - Guard House - Proposed Ground Floor Plan [Drg No. 381015-MMD-00-GF-DR-A-3100 Rev P6] received 16th September 2021

- Guard House - Proposed Canopy Elevations, Section and Roof Plan [Drg No. 381015MMD-00-XX-DR-A-3400 Rev P3] received 16th September 2021
- Guard House - Proposed Gatehouse Elevations and Finishes Schedule [Drg No. 381015MMD-00-XX-DR-A-3300 Rev P6] received 16th September 2021
- Guard House – Proposed Gatehouse Area & Roof Plan & Sections [Drg No. 381015MMD-00-XX-DR-A-3200 Rev P6] received 16th September 2021
- ID Booth - Proposed Elevations [Drg No. 381015-MMD-00-XX-DR-A-3500 Rev P2] received 16th September 2021
- Overwatch - Proposed Plans, Elevations and Section [Drg No. 381015-MMD-00-GF-DRA-4100 Rev P7] received 16th September 2021
- Visitor Centre - Proposed Ground Floor Plan [Drg No. 381015-MMD-00-GF-DR-A-1100 Rev P6] received 16th September 2021
- Visitor Centre - Proposed Roof Plan and Area Plan [Drg No. 381015-MMD-00-XX-DR-A1150 Rev P1] received 16th September 2021
- Visitor Centre - Proposed Elevations 1 of 2 [Drg No. 381015-MMD-00-XX-DR-A-1200 Rev P6] received 16th September 2021
- Visitor Centre - Proposed Elevations 2 of 2 [Drg No. 381015-MMD-00-XX-DR-A-1201 Rev P6] received 16th September 2021
- NVC Grassland Survey [Doc Ref: 412155BA01 | 001 | A - FIRST DRAFT] received 16th September 2021
- Arboricultural Report [Doc Ref: 381015-013 | D] and specifically Tree Protection Plans 381015-MMD-00-XX-DR-C-1210 to 381015-MMD-00-XX-DR-C-1212 contained in Appendix C, received 16th September 2021
- Flood Risk Assessment [Doc Ref: 381015 | 001 | D] received 16th September 2021
- Preliminary Ecological Report [Doc Ref: 100381015 | 005 | C] received 16th September 2021
- Preliminary Ecological Report Addendum Rev A received 25th April 2022
- External Lighting Design - Lighting Assessment [Doc Ref: 381015 | 009 | A] received 16th September 2021
- Geotechnical and Geo-environmental Desk Study [Doc Ref: 381015-017 | B] and Appendices A and B, received 16th September 2021
- RAF Croughton Transport Statement Rev C and all drawings contained in Appendix D 'Proposed Site Access' Pages 91 - 95, received 18th March 2022
- RAF Croughton Signalised Junction Stage 1 Road Safety Audit Document 287864-TPNITD-697-B received 18th March 2022
- RAF Croughton Stage 1 Road Safety Audit Designer's Response received 25th April 2022

Reason – For the avoidance of doubt, to ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority and comply with Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. PLACEHOLDER ECOLOGY CONDITION – COMPLIANCE WITH REPORT(S)

CONDITIONS REQUIRING LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY WRITTEN APPROVAL OR TO BE COMPLIED WITH BEFORE ANY DEVELOPMENT COMMENCES

4. PLACEHOLDER ECOLOGY CONDITION – COMMENCE WORK OR DO NEW SURVEY

Land Contamination – Intrusive Investigation

5. A potential risk from contamination has been identified within the Geotechnical and Geo-environmental Desk Study [Doc Ref: 381015-017 | B] and its appendices received 16th September 2021, and as such no part of the development hereby permitted shall take place until:
- a) a comprehensive intrusive investigation in order to characterise the type, nature and extent of contamination present has been carried out;
 - b) the risks to receptors and to inform the remediation strategy proposals has been documented as a report undertaken by a competent person and in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's 'Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, CLR 11' and
 - c) both a) and b) above has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

No development shall take place unless the Local Planning Authority has given its written approval that it is satisfied that the risk from contamination has been adequately characterised as required by this condition.

Reason: To ensure that any ground and water contamination is adequately addressed to ensure the safety of the development, the environment and to ensure the site is suitable for the proposed use, to comply with Policy SS2 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan, Policy BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework. This information is required prior to commencement of the development as it is fundamental to the acceptability of the scheme.

Land Contamination – Remediation

6. If contamination is found by undertaking the work carried out under condition 5, then no development hereby permitted shall take place until
- a) a scheme of remediation and/or monitoring to ensure the site is suitable for its proposed use has been prepared by a competent person and in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's 'Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, CLR 11' and
 - b) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

No development shall take place until the Local Planning Authority has given its written approval of the scheme of remediation and/or monitoring required by this condition.

Reason: To ensure that any ground and water contamination is adequately addressed to ensure the safety of the development, the environment and to ensure

the site is suitable for the proposed use, to comply with Policy SS2 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan, Policy BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework. This information is required prior to commencement of the development as it is fundamental to the acceptability of the scheme.

Archaeology

7. Prior to the commencement of the development the applicant will secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority.

This written scheme will include the following components, completion of each of which will trigger the phased discharging of the condition:

- (i) fieldwork in accordance with the agreed written scheme of investigation;
- (ii) post-excavation assessment (to be submitted within six months of the completion of fieldwork, unless otherwise agreed in advance with the Planning Authority);
- (iii) completion of post-excavation analysis, preparation of site archive ready for deposition at a store (Northamptonshire ARC) approved by the Planning Authority, completion of an archive report, and submission of a publication report to be completed within two years of the completion of fieldwork, unless otherwise agreed in advance with the Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined

and recorded and the results made available, in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 205.

Tree Protection

8. No development shall take place until the existing tree(s) to be retained as listed in Table 3.1 of the Arboricultural Report [Doc Ref: 381015-013 | D] received 16th September 2021 have been protected in accordance with the Tree Protection Plans in Appendix C [see below] and the Tree Protection Measures set out in Appendix D:

- Drawing 381015-MMD-00-XX-DR-C-1210 Rev P2 [Sheet 1 of 3] • Drawing 381015-MMD-00-XX-DR-C-1211 Rev P3 [Sheet 2 of 3]
- Drawing 381015-MMD-00-XX-DR-C-1212 Rev P3 [Sheet 3 of 3]

...unless, prior to the commencement of any development, the trees are otherwise protected in the following ways listed below, unless a further alternative is first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

- a) Protective barriers shall be erected around the tree(s) to a distance not less than a radius of 12 times the trunk diameter when measured at 1.5m above natural ground level (on the highest side) for single stemmed trees and for multistemmed trees 10 times the trunk diameter just above the root flare.

- b) The barriers shall comply with the specification set out in British Standard BS5837:2012 'Trees in Relation to Construction – Recommendations' that is steel mesh panels at least 2.3m tall securely fixed to a scaffold pole framework with the uprights driven into the ground a minimum of 0.6m depth and braced with additional scaffold poles between the barrier and the tree[s] at a minimum spacing of 3m.
- c) The barriers shall be erected before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought onto the site for the purposes of development [and / or demolition] and shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus material has been removed from the site.
- d) Nothing shall be stored or placed within the areas protected by the barriers erected in accordance with this condition and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavations be made, without the written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason : To ensure the continued health of retained trees/hedges and to ensure that they are not adversely affected by the construction works, in the interests of the visual amenity of the area, to ensure the integration of the development into the existing landscape and to comply with Policies SS2 and NE5 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. This information is required prior to commencement of the development as it is fundamental to the acceptability of the scheme.

CONDITIONS REQUIRING LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY WRITTEN APPROVAL OR TO BE COMPLIED WITH BY DEVELOPER BEFORE SPECIFIC CONSTRUCTION WORKS TAKE PLACE

Drainage Information [Surface Water & Foul Sewage]

- 9. Before any above ground works commence a scheme for the provision and implementation of surface water drainage **and** foul water drainage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage works shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the approved plans before the first occupation of any of the buildings/dwellings hereby approved.

Reason : To ensure satisfactory drainage of the site in the interests of achieving sustainable development, public health, to avoid flooding of adjacent land and property to comply with Policy SS2 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan Policy BN7 and BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and Government advice in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Construction Method Statement

- 10. No development shall take place, other than works that are permitted development as defined by Part 19 of Schedule 2 of the General Permitted Development Order, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in

writing by the Local Planning Authority. The statement shall provide for at a minimum:

- a) The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
- b) The routing of HGVs to and from the site;
- c) Loading and unloading of plant and materials;
- d) Storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
- e) The erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate;
- f) Wheel washing facilities including type of operation (automated, water recycling etc) and road sweeping;
- g) Measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction;
- h) A scheme for recycling/ disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works;
- i) Delivery, demolition and construction working hours;

The approved Construction Method Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period for the development.

Reason : To ensure the environment is protected during construction in accordance with Policy SS2 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. This information is required prior to commencement of the development as it is fundamental to the acceptability of the scheme.

Brick Samples

11. The external walls of all buildings shown as being finished in brick (including the visitor's centre and the lean-to extension on the LVIS building) shall be constructed in brickwork, of a type, colour, texture, face bond and pointing which is in accordance with a sample panel (minimum 1 metre squared in size) which shall be constructed on site to be inspected and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the commencement of the brickwork. The sample panel shall be constructed in a position that is protected and readily accessible for viewing in good natural daylight from a distance of 3 metres. The panel shall be retained on site for the duration of the construction contract.

Reason : To ensure that the materials are appropriate to the appearance of the locality and to ensure the satisfactory appearance of the completed development in accordance with Policies SS2 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Roofing Material Samples

12. Samples of all roofing materials (including ridge tiles if applicable) for all buildings shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of those works. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the samples so approved.

Reason: To ensure that the materials are appropriate to the appearance of the locality and to ensure the satisfactory appearance of the completed development in accordance with Policy SS2 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan.

Schedule of materials [metal cladding]

13. A schedule of materials, including samples or photographs of the proposed materials to be used in the external walls of all buildings finished in metal cladding (including the LVIS) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of those works. The development shall thereafter be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason : To ensure that the materials are appropriate to the appearance of the locality and to ensure the satisfactory appearance of the completed development in accordance with Policies SS2 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan Policy and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Architectural Detailing [Visitor Centre]

14. Notwithstanding the submitted details, further details of the construction and finishes, including sections, of the proposed windows and doors and their surrounds, rainwater goods, eaves and verges of the visitor's centre, to a scale no less than 1:5, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of that work. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the new works are sympathetic to the contemporary character and appearance of the building, and to accord with policy SS2 of the Local Plan Part 2.

Landscaping

15. A scheme for landscaping the site shall be provided to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority which shall include:
 - a) details of the proposed tree and shrub planting including their species, number, sizes and positions, together with grass seeded/turfed areas and written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment i.e. depth of topsoil, mulch etc),
 - b) details of the existing trees and hedgerows to be retained as well as those to be felled, including existing and proposed soil levels at the base of each tree/hedgerow and the minimum distance between the base of the tree and the nearest edge of any excavation, **to be submitted in conjunction with Conditions 8 and 18**

Such details shall be provided prior to the development progressing above slab level or such alternative time frame as agreed in writing by the developer and the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented by the end of the first planting season following occupation of the development.

Reason: To ensure that a satisfactory landscape scheme is provided in the interest of well planned development and visual amenity and to accord with Policies SS2 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Unexpected Contamination

16. In the event that contamination to land and/or water is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. No development shall continue until a risk assessment has been carried out by a competent person in accordance with current government and Environment Agency Guidance and Approved Codes of Practice. Each phase shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

- Phase 1 shall incorporate a desk study and site walk over to identify all potential contaminative uses on site, and to inform the conceptual site model. If potential contamination is identified in Phase 1 then a Phase 2 investigation shall be undertaken.
- Phase 2 shall include a comprehensive intrusive investigation in order to characterise the type, nature and extent of contamination present, the risks to receptors and to inform the remediation strategy proposals.
- Phase 3 requires that a scheme of remediation and/or monitoring to ensure the site is suitable for its proposed use shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The remediation shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme and the applicant shall provide written verification to that effect.

The development shall not be occupied until any approved remedial works have been carried out and a full validation report has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason : To ensure that any ground and water contamination is identified and adequately addressed to ensure the safety of the development, the environment and to ensure the site is suitable for the proposed use to comply with Policy SS2 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan.

Highway Improvement / Junction Details [Grampian Condition]

17. No development shall take place in respect of the new junction until full construction and layout details for the widened carriageways, footpaths, traffic islands and signals and lane markings, signposts and all relevant traffic furniture been provided in accordance with details which have previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This submission must show that it has fully addressed the problems highlighted in document 381015-024-A RAF Croughton Stage 1 RSA Designers Response received 25th April 2022. The junction shall then be delivered in accordance with the approved details prior to any of the building(s) within the site, including the LVIS and visitor's centre, being brought into use.

Reason : To accord with Government Guidance in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy SS2 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan which

requires that development shall have a satisfactory means of access and in the interests of highway safety and the convenience of users of the adjoining highway. This information is required prior to commencement of the development as it is fundamental to the acceptability of the scheme.

CONDITIONS REQUIRING LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY WRITTEN APPROVAL OR TO BE COMPLIED WITH BY DEVELOPER BEFORE OCCUPATION

Land Contamination - Verification

18. If remedial works have been identified in condition 5, the development shall not be occupied until the remedial works have been carried out in accordance with the scheme approved under condition 6. A verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that any ground and water contamination is adequately addressed to ensure the safety of the development, the environment and to ensure the site is suitable for the proposed use, to comply with Policy SS2 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan, Policy BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

EV Charging for Visitor's Centre

19. The visitor's centre shall not be brought into use until its parking area has been provided with EV charging infrastructure, with one EV-dedicated parking bay for every 10 parking bays (or part thereof) provided with DC fast charging equipment or equivalent providing for no lesser standard of efficiency.

Reason : To comply with Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and Policy INF4 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2, and to maximise opportunities for sustainable transport modes in accordance with paragraph 110(e) of the National Planning Policy Framework.

CONDITIONS TO BE COMPLIED WITH AT ALL TIMES

Maintenance of Landscaping

20. All planting, seeding or turfing shown in the approved landscaping plan shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the building(s) or on the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner, and shall be maintained for a period of 5 years from the completion of the development. Any trees and/or shrubs which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent for any variation.

Reason: To ensure that the agreed landscaping scheme is maintained over a reasonable period that will permit its establishment in the interests of visual amenity and to accord with Policy SS2 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan.

INFORMATIVES

1. The applicant's and/or the developer's attention is drawn to the requirements of the Control of Pollution Act 1974, the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Clean Air Act 1993, which relate to the control of any nuisance arising from construction sites. The applicant/developer is encouraged to undertake the proposed building operations in such a manner as to avoid causing any undue nuisance or disturbance to neighbouring residents. Under Section 61 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974, contractors may apply to the Council for 'prior consent' to carry out works, which would establish hours of operation, noise levels and methods of working.