RAF Croughton
SATCOM

Heritage Statement

July 2015

Defence Infrastructure Organisation
RAF Croughton
SATCOM

Heritage Statement

July 2015

Defence Infrastructure Organisation
Issue and revision record

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revision</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Originator</th>
<th>Checker</th>
<th>Approver</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>A</td>
<td>Aug 2015</td>
<td>Jenny Timothy</td>
<td>Phillippa Adams</td>
<td>Maurice Hopper</td>
<td>First issue draft for comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Feb 2016</td>
<td>Jenny Timothy</td>
<td>Phillippa Adams</td>
<td>Maurice Hopper</td>
<td>Final Issue</td>
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</table>

Information class: Standard

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Executive Summary

The site of the SATCOM facility is within RAF Croughton, a former World War II airfield close to the Northamptonshire Oxfordshire border. It is identified as local heritage asset and contains three Grade II listed type C fighter pens. There are a number of heritage assets in the surrounding area including Croughton Conservation Area and the Astwick medieval village scheduled monument. The proposed development includes two new buildings (approx. 4800sqm), a surface car park (3600sqm), hard standings for new geodetic domes (the domes will be subject to a separate planning application) and new foot and vehicular access.

The proposed SATCOM facility will have no impact on the heritage significance of Astwick medieval village, Croughton Conservation Area, Croughton House, Astwick Farm or Pimlico Farm. These heritage assets are all outside of the Site and therefore there will be no direct impact on their evidential value, for example historic fabric. The historic agricultural setting of these assets has already been compromised by the construction of RAF Croughton in 1938, its post war expansion and the significant road network. Therefore construction of the proposed SATCOM facility will have no further detrimental effect on the historic setting of these assets. Due to the topography and existing landscape features the proposed SATCOM facility will not affect key views to, from and within these assets.

Within RAF Croughton the proposed SATCOM facility will have a slight impact on the historic setting of both the World War II airfield and the Grade II listed type C fighter pens. The building will be located within the landing ground, an area where historically there were few structures due to its use. However the original cluster of buildings to the north of the perimeter taxiway has expanded into the landing ground during the latter part of the 20th century and early 21st century, including a new medical and dental centre, along with the aerials, geodetic domes and associated support buildings. The flat open nature of the landing ground will remain the dominant character and the historic function, use and relationship between the landing ground and the World War II structures and defences will still be apparent. The proposed SATCOM facility will interrupt long views to the fighter pens and across landing ground, but not to the extent that the historic setting or ability to understand function and use of RAF Croughton during World War II will be unduly compromised.
1 Introduction

1.1 Background

This heritage statement has been commissioned by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) to assess the impact of the proposed SATCOM facility on the listed structures and other heritage assets which may be affected. It is a supporting document for the planning application for SATCOM at RAF Croughton in Northamptonshire (NGR SP 56626 32459). The proposed development includes two new communication buildings (approx. 4800sqm), a surface car park (3600sqm), hard standings for new geodetic domes (the domes will be subject to a separate planning application) and new footpath and vehicular access.

1.2 Overview

The site of the SATCOM facility is within RAF Croughton, a former World War II airfield close to the Northamptonshire-Oxfordshire border. It is identified as local heritage asset and contains three Grade II listed type C fighter pens. There are a number of heritage assets in the surrounding area including Croughton Conservation Area and the Astwick medieval village scheduled monument. This heritage statement identifies assets which may potentially be affected, establishes their significance in relation to the proposed development and assess the potential impact of the scheme. It also describes how any impact on the historic environment will be reduced by the design of the buildings and associated infrastructure.
2 Methodology

2.1 Study Area

The study area covers the proposed SATCOM facility site (hereafter referred to as the Site) and 1.5km around the Site boundary in all directions. This allows the assessment to establish whether any heritage assets will be directly affected by the scheme. It also takes into account potential views and the setting of heritage assets which could be affected by the scheme. Although outside the study area, at 1.8km to the west, Croughton Conservation Area and associated listed buildings have been included in the assessment. This is in order to take into account the effect on potential views and setting to and from the heritage assets.

2.2 Desk based research

A number of resources have been used for this assessment, they include;
- Relevant national and local policy documents;
- Relevant national and local guidance documents;
- The online National Heritage List for England;
- The Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire Historic Environment Records;
- Local studies resources;
- Historic maps; and
- Online resources including the Defence of the Realm database and the Archaeological Data Service.

A full list of references can be found in Section 7.

2.3 Surveys

A Site walkover and photographic survey was conducted on 10th April 2015. This included an inspection of the Site and the rest of RAF Croughton, including the three Grade II listed Type C Fighter pens. The RAF Croughton site visit and photographic survey was subject to security restrictions. As such the photographic survey within the Site only covers the listed structures.

The Site walkover also included a walkover of the wider area to establish whether any key views and setting of heritage assets would be affected by the scheme. The walkover was also used to identify any additional unrecorded heritage assets which should be taken into account in the assessment which were not apparent in the documentary evidence. The results of the walkover survey are presented in Section 5.

2.4 Assessment of potential impact

This assessment is based on the guidance contained in Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning note 2 (GPA2) – Managing significance in decision taking in the historic environment (English Heritage, 2015). Paragraph six of the guidance outlines the steps which should be taken to establish potential impact of the scheme on the significance of heritage assets and where appropriate justify any harmful impacts and identify mitigation and enhancements. These steps are:
Understand the significance of the affected assets;
Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance;
Avoid, minimise and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF;
Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance;
Justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance and the need for change;
Offset negative impacts on aspects of significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.

Section 5 of this heritage statement addresses the significance and level of potential impact of the scheme on affected assets. In accordance with the guidance the level of detail supplied is proportionate to the level of significance of the asset and the overall effect the scheme will have.
3 Planning Legislation, Policy and Guidance

3.1 Legislation

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

This act sets out the protection given to buildings of special architectural or historic interest through the listing process. It also sets out the process for the designation of conservation areas; areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

3.2 National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012)

The relevant historic environment policies are paragraphs 128, 131,132 and 133 in Chapter 12, Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Paragraph 128 states that;

“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.”

Paragraph 131 states that;

“In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.”

Paragraph 132 states that;

“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation.”

Paragraph 133 states that;

“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.”
3.3 **Local Planning Policy**

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy - Local Plan (Part 1) (December 2014)

The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy – Local Plan (part 1) recognises that historic environment is one of the plan area’s most valued assets.

Policy BN5 states that in order to secure and enhance the significance of the area’s heritage assets and their settings and landscapes, development in areas of landscape sensitivity and/or known historic or heritage significance will be required to:

1. Sustain and enhance the heritage and landscape features which contribute to the character of the area including:
   a. conservation areas;
   b. significant historic landscapes including historic parkland, battlefields and ridge and furrow;
   c. the skyline and landscape settings of towns and villages;
   d. sites of known or potential heritage or historic significance;
   e. locally and nationally important buildings, structures and monuments

2. Demonstrate an appreciation and understanding of the impact of development on surrounding heritage assets and their setting in order to minimise harm to these assets; where loss of historic features or archaeological remains is unavoidable and justified, provision should be made for recording and the production of a suitable archive and report

3. Be sympathetic to locally distinctive landscape features, design styles and materials in order to contribute to a sense of place.

Croughton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, Draft for consultation (South Northamptonshire Council, 2015)

The draft conservation area appraisal sets out the character and significance of the Croughton Conservation Area. It identifies important views from the village into the rural hinterland. Actions for the management of the conservation area also set out. The most relevant action with regard to the proposed SATCOM facility is;

“Action 13: The impact of development on the character and appearance of the conservation area should be considered. This applies equally to development outside the conservation area if it is likely to affect the setting of the conservation area.”

3.4 **Guidance**

The following guidance has been used to inform this heritage statement;

- Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning note 2 (GPA2) – Managing significance in decision taking in the historic environment (English Heritage, 2015)
- Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning note 3 (GPA3) – The setting of heritage assets (English Heritage, 2015)
4 Baseline assessment

4.1 Site context

RAF Croughton lies in Northamptonshire, just under 1km west of Croughton village and 4km south of Brackley (NGR SP 56626 32459). It sits between two parishes: Croughton on the west; and Evenly on the east. The A43, a major route from Stamford in Lincolnshire to the M40 near Ardley in Oxfordshire, runs along the eastern boundary of RAF Croughton. The area is predominantly rural however the construction of the significant road network and associated traffic noise has diluted this character. The scale of the road effectively divorces the Site from the landscape to the east.

RAF Coughton is a former World War II airfield now used by the United States Air Force (USAF) as a communications centre for the US Military. The Site is characterised by its military status with modern USAF buildings, services and accommodation clustered around the northern part of RAF Coughton. There are two entrances into the base. The main entrance is off the B4301 and there is an emergency entrance off the A43. The former airfield is dotted with communication equipment including masts, aerials “golf balls” and associated buildings. This communication equipment has become a local landmark. There is a secure perimeter fence which runs around the base. RAF Coughton is partially screened from public views by high hedges along Portway and in some areas along the A43 and B4301.

4.2 Topology and geology

RAF Croughton sits on a large plateau of Blisworth limestone formation (Great Oolite) (RNRP, 2006). This is Jurassic limestone, which was particularly sought after when identifying suitable locations for airfields in the 1930’s as it provided a solid base for grass runways (Blake, 1981). The Site of the proposed SATCOM facility is at approximately 131.6m OD, on the lower part of the RAF Coughton site. The land immediately around the Site is relatively flat with an undulating quality. This landscape was sought after for airfields as completely flat land resulted in uninterrupted high winds which make difficult flying conditions (Blake, 1981). The plateau falls away at the southern boundary of RAF Coughton, approximately 10m over 1.5km to the Ockley Brook valley.

4.3 Historic development

The landscape in and around RAF Croughton has historically been predominantly agricultural. Within the study area there is limited evidence of settlement until the medieval period with the deserted medieval village of Astwick (MM01) 1.4km to the north of the Site.

The wider landscape is characterised by the regular field pattern of 19th century enclosures interspersed with settlements (RNRP, 2006). The main settlement is the village of Croughton (MM05), just outside the study area. This is a linear settlement which formed along the Warmington to Buckingham turnpike (MM08). Within the study area the 1883 Northamptonshire map (Ordnance Survey, 1883) and the 1900 Oxfordshire map (Ordnance Survey, 1900) shows an agricultural landscape of late-18th and 19th century parliamentary enclosures. Three farmsteads are shown within the study area: Rectory Farm approximately

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1 MM numbers please refer to table 01 for description of the heritage asset.
RAF Croughton (MM02) was built in 1938 (Smith, 1998) as part of the expansion scheme of military airfields approved in 1935 following the rise of Nazism (Blake, 1981). It was originally built as Brackley Landing Ground, a satellite airfield to Upper Heyford (Smith, 1981) which lies 7km south west of RAF Croughton. The 280 hectares of land for the airfield was taken from three farms (Forces War Records, 2015), probably Rectory Farm, Astwick Farm (MM07) and Pimlico Farm (MM09) judging by the location of the farmsteads. The landing ground, the open area within the perimeter taxiway, had three grass runways and was on the higher ground to the south, this was surrounded by a concrete perimeter taxi way. The buildings including control tower and hangars were clustered around the lower northern part of the site (MM02) (Forces War Record, 2015). Airfield defences were built in 1940-1941, these included seagull trenches, a mushroom FC construction pillbox with 2 gun mounts (MM04) (Council for British Archaeology, 2006) and six type C fighter pens in two groups of three (MM03 and MM04) (Historic England, 2011). The group three fighter pits on the northern edge of the perimeter runway have survived relatively intact and have consequently been listed Grade II. The three on the eastern edge of the perimeter runway, opposite the access road to the current SATCOM building, have not survived to the same extent and only remnants, including the eroded banks and some hard standing, are still extant.

In 1940 the airfield was renamed RAF Brackley and in 1941 renamed again RAF Croughton. It was established as a training airfield, initially for night training for bomber pilots and then from 1942 for glider pilots. In September 1940, during the battle of Britain, RAF Croughton was designated an emergency landing ground. This was an airfield specifically for planes with engine trouble or who had got lost (Forces War Record, 2015). This meant that at night the landing ground had to be fully illuminated with flares, making it a target for enemy fire. Its use as a training ground also made it a legitimate target, with both sides judging it acceptable to disrupt training (Smith, 1998). The airfield was, as a result subject to bombing on a number of occasions in 1941 (Historic England, 2011).

The airfield continued in its training capacity until after the war, with flying ceasing at RAF Croughton on 25th May 1946 (Bowyer, 1983). In 1947 RAF Croughton became an ammunition store, before being taken over in January 1951 as a communications centre by the USAF, a role it continues today. The World War II structures were gradually replaced by modern buildings and structures suitable for the changing role of the base. The base has expanded with modern accommodation being built on the western side of RAF Croughton. Numerous communications equipment is located on the former landing ground and includes aerials and geodetic domes known colloquially as “golf balls” with associated buildings. The base is continuing to expand with a medical and dental centre currently under construction on the former landing group.
### 4.4 Heritage assets

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| MM01         | MNN3310       | Medieval Village of Astwick and associated moated site | Earthworks of the deserted medieval village of Astwick covering an area of 450m x 150m. The earthworks indicate that the village had a broadly L-shaped plan, and it is likely that there were at least two phases of construction. The site contains a number of hollow ways as well as well-defined house platforms and gardens. The moated site is likely to be a manor associated with the settlement. The village likely to be early medieval in origin 10th or 11th Century, with the first reference to it by name in the 12th Century. The land was enclosed in 1585 and by the 1883 map there is no evidence of the village other than the moat earthwork. The site is currently laid to pasture and the moat is scrub. | 1.2 km north | Scheduled Monument  
List entry number: 1002898 |
| MM02         | MNN7375       | RAF Croughton | World War II airfield now used as USAF communications centre. The landing ground is on the southern higher ground of RAF Croughton. It is surrounded by a concrete perimeter taxi way. Within the landing ground were three grass runways. Construction of support buildings such as offices, hangars and control tower were focussed on the northern lower area of RAF Croughton. The majority of the buildings used during the war have either been removed or adapted for modern use, there are some WWII defence structures extant (see MM03 and MM04). The airfield was predominantly used for training including training for bomber pilots and glider pilots. It was also designated as an emergency landing ground resulting in it having to be heavily lit, this left it open to enemy attack. The airfield was bombed on several occasions during 1941. There is a dispersal site to the north west of the airfield, this is now Croughton industrial estate. | Site is within RAF Croughton | N/A |
| MM03         | MMN141610     | Three type C fighter pens | The three pens are laid out in a line along the northern edge of the perimeter taxi way, approximately 55m apart. They are constructed with C shaped banks 12 metres wide around concrete hard standing and a central bank 6.4 metres wide bisecting the concrete creating six holding pens. The holding pens are large enough to accommodate Blenheims or other medium sized bombers. The banks are constructed with a brick retaining wall five course high with a brick on end coping. These walls contain significant earth banks, the C shaped banks are 3m high and the central banks are 2.2m high. There is a brick access at the rear of each holding pen, this leads into a modular precast concrete shelter in the centre of each mound. The shelter could accommodate 25 men during an attack. The purpose of the pens was to protect the planes from lateral damage from bomb blasts and splinters. There is still evidence of associated infrastructure, including an F shaped concrete taxi way which lead to now removed hangars. Concrete paths | 500m north | Grade II listed  
List entry number: 1403308 |
between the two eastern most pens which lead to support buildings, now also
gone. There are also raised circular and rectangular platforms showing the
locations of a sleeping shelter for each fighter pen, flight offices, squadron
offices, a parachute store, a drying room and toilet. Three of these circular
platforms are on the southern side of the perimeter taxiway within the airfield.

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<td>MM04</td>
<td>MNN34602</td>
<td>World War II airfield defence structures</td>
<td>As part of the airfield defence structures a mushroom FC construction pillbox and associated seagull trenches (so called because their V shape when viewed from the air was thought to look like a seagull) were identified as part of the Defence of Britain survey. There are also the remnants of three other fighter pens which were located on the eastern side of the perimeter taxiway.</td>
<td>Unclear, although a Site walkover confirmed they are not within the Site. They are likely to be within the defences in the north eastern corner of the RAF Croughton.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM05</td>
<td>MNN3258</td>
<td>Croughton Conservation Area</td>
<td>Croughton is a linear development running along High Street. The conservation area covers the historic core of the village. This is dominated by vernacular stone buildings using the local Blisworth limestone. There are number of polite buildings including the Church and Croughton House. The draft conservation area appraisal (2015) identifies key views out of the village looking south west from the end of Church Lane and west from Wheelers Rise.</td>
<td>1.8km north west</td>
<td>Conservation Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM06</td>
<td>MNN106002</td>
<td>Croughton House and Gardens</td>
<td>Croughton House sits at right angles to the road with the entrance front facing into the garden. It is an example of polite architecture constructed of the local limestone in ashlar cut blocks, with a rear wing in coursed limestone rubble. It is two storeys with a hipped roof and three equal bays. The door is centrally placed with sash windows either side and three sash windows on the first floor. The gatepiers face onto Church Lane, also of lime ashlar block with ball finials. The wall is rubble stone with dressed limestone coping. Maps from 1883 show Coughton House with a significant garden to the rear and east of the property with what appears to be an ornamental lake and Ha Ha to the south. Much of the garden has now been built on.</td>
<td>1.8km north west</td>
<td>Grade II listed building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MNN106003</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>List entry no: 1192548</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MNN140386</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grade II listed gatepiers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MNN140387</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>List entry no:1371801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM07</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Astwick Farm and cottages</td>
<td>Likely to be one of the farms which provided land for the airfield, the farmhouse and some outbuildings survive. The farmhouse appears to date from the mid-19th century is three storeys with gabled roof. Built from local limestone it is three bays wide. There are barns to the north of the farmhouse, now converted into dwellings; these are also built of local limestone with a pitched roof. The cottages face onto the B4031 and are two storeys high with gables. The group</td>
<td>750m north</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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</table>
is prominent in views when approaching the RAF Croughton from the east, although there is a communications mast which forms the backdrop to the group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MM reference</th>
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Distance from Site</th>
<th>Designation and reference</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>MM08</td>
<td>MNN135319</td>
<td>Warmington to Buckingham turnpike</td>
<td>A toll road established by an act of 1744, although the route in this location pre dates the turnpike with Croughton village developing along it in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. It ran from Warmington in Warwickshire to Buckingham. Through the study area it follows the line of the modern B4031.</td>
<td>800m north</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| MM09         | MOX13332      | Pimlico Farmhouse and barns | Likely to be one of the farms which provided land for the airfield. The historic farm complex consists of a farmhouse and attached barns. The farmhouse is late 18th century with 20the alterations. It has an L-shaped plan, squared coursed limestone blocks and a steeply pitched slate roof. Immediately to the east of the farmhouse is a yard enclosed by barns, including a threshing barn of coursed limestone rubble. | 1.5km south west  | Grade II listed farmhouse  
List entry: 1369785  
Grade II listed barn  
List entry: 1192863  |
5 Impact assessment

5.1 Description of the scheme

The proposed SATCOM facility is centred on NGR SP 56571 32472, to the west of the existing SATCOM facility. The proposed development includes two new communication buildings (approx. 4800sqm), a surface car park (3600sqm), hard standings for new geodetic domes (the domes will be subject to a separate planning application) and new footpath and vehicular access (see Figure 5-1).

Figure 5-1 – RAF Croughton with Site outlined in red (not to scale)

The hard standing for surface car parking will sit between the two buildings effectively containing it within the development. The area required for the geodetic domes will be to the south of the proposed Communications building. The access to the buildings will be a spur off the current access used for the existing SATCOM facility.
The proposed Communications (PL1) Building (southern building) is approximately 6.15m in height with a footprint of 40.2m by 69.2m. The roof will be concealed by a parapet, which will be capped with reconstituted stones to match brickwork. The walls will be in facing buff brick, laid in stretcher bond. The external doors to the PL1 Building shall be 12 gauge steel doors. Rainwater goods will be manufactured uPVC (see Figure 5-2). The building has been designed to sit well within its context; the considered contemporary design reflecting the modern character of RAF Croughton as a working USAF base. The overall form and design sits low in the landscape, with the use of buff brick reflecting the colouring of the local stone so it does not appear as an unfamiliar feature within the wider landscape.

Figure 5-2 – Indicative view of the proposed Communications (PL1) Building, north and east elevations (not to scale)
The proposed administration building (northern building) has a stepped rectangular footprint, at its longest extents measuring 37.2m by 56.0m. The height varies to reflect internal use and break up the massing, with the lower tier at 4.85m, the middle tier at 5.95m and the warehouse at 7.4m. The overall design of the building is similar to the proposed communications building with concealed parapet roof and facing brick for the majority of the structure. The windows, doors and louvre panels will be grey powder coated aluminium while rainwater goods will be manufactured uPVC. The warehouse section of the building, which at its longest extents measures 11.2m by 15.1m, will be clad in a translucent external rain cladding system. This will help to break up the massing of the building as well as helping to reduce the impact of the structure in views with a visually less imposing material.

Figure 5-3 – Indicative view of the proposed administration building, east elevation (not to scale)
5.2 Potential impact on heritage assets

5.2.1 Astwick deserted medieval village

Description and Significance

Astwick deserted medieval village (MM01) is a scheduled monument. It is an exceptional example of surviving earthworks and waterlogged archaeological deposits depicting the form and plan of a medieval settlement and associated moated manor site (Historic England, 2014). Its principle significance comes from the evidential value in the level of survival and the likely survival of buried artefacts.

The village’s relationship with the rural hinterland which supported it is also significant. However, much of the medieval landscape and post medieval landscape which was part of the village’s setting has disappeared through post medieval enclosure landscaping, modern farming practices and quarrying activities. This has resulted in the historic setting being reduced to the area immediately around the asset, although the modern agricultural landscape still contributes to views and the aesthetic value of the asset.

Potential Impact

The deserted village is 1.2km from the Site, with the majority of the earthworks beyond, as such there will be no physical impact on the asset. The asset sits in a slightly elevated position when compared to the Site of the scheme, however the distance between the scheme and the asset, along with the local
topography, mean that the two will not be inter-visible. Views to and from the deserted village will not be affected by the scheme as the building will be read as part of the established built form of RAF Croughton.

5.2.2 RAF Croughton including World War II defence structures

Description and Significance

RAF Croughton (MM02) was constructed as a World War II landing base and operated as a satellite airfield to Upper Heyford and then Kidlington (Smith, 1998). It was used predominantly for training, initially as a night flying airfield for bomber pilots and then for glider training. It was also a designated emergency landing ground for planes with engine trouble or who had got lost. This meant that it was illuminated at night making it a target for enemy fire. This resulted in the airfield being bombed on a number of occasions during 1941 (Historic England, 2014).

The landing ground, the area within the perimeter taxiway that contained the runways, is on the higher, flatter southern area of RAF Croughton. Its geology of Jurassic limestone is significant in the location of the airfield as this allowed grass runways to be used. The topography is undulating rather than a completely flat landscape, and this is also significant as it is likely to have played a part in the decision to locate an airfield outside of Croughton - flat areas tend to be susceptible to high cross winds (Blake, 1981). The airfields buildings and services were clustered to the north of the landing ground outside the perimeter taxiway (Forces War Record, 2015). As this was a later expansion airfield operating as a satellite to Upper Heyford the architectural quality of the buildings would have been limited. It is likely that the majority of building were utility construction and adapted farm buildings (Brown et al, 1996).

After the war the airfield fell out of active use, with flying ceasing from the RAF Croughton in 1946 (Bowyer, 1983). It was used for ammunitions storage until 1951 when it became a USAF base and communications centre for the USA in Europe (Smith, 1998).

During the occupation of the USAF many of the World War II structures and buildings have been replaced or heavily altered. The built area of the base has expanded to the north and the east, and the layout of the World War II buildings is no longer clear. The modern buildings do not contribute to the historic significance. The built form still clusters around the northern edge of the RAF Croughton which allows the landing ground, and the historic development of the Site to be understood. Recent development has encroached into the landing ground, including the medical and dental centre, communications equipment and ancillary buildings. However the flat open nature of the landing ground is still dominant.

There is an amount of World War II infrastructure extant. This includes the perimeter taxi way, some taxi ways from the perimeter taxi way to hangar sites, both sets of type C fighter pens and associated roads and building platforms. It is difficult to identify the runway locations; aerial photographs from 1945 are unclear. It can be assumed that they would have taken the standard form of three intersecting runways.

There are three defence structures (MM04) identified in the Defence of Britain project. These take the form of two seagull trenches and a mushroom FC construction pillbox (Council for British Archaeology, 2006). It is not clear where they are on the airfield, but it is likely they are to the north east of the airfield.
outside the perimeter taxiway. It is also likely that they are in a relatively poor condition. A Site inspection confirmed that they were not within the site of the proposed SATCOM facility.

Potential Impact

The proposed SATCOM facility is adjacent to the existing SATCOM building, within the landing ground. It does not impact directly on any World War II built infrastructure. The eastern set of fighter pens sits opposite the access to the Site from the perimeter runway. This is an existing access for the current SATCOM building, leaving the setting of the fighter pens unaltered by the proposed development. The building will have an impact on the historic setting of RAF Croughton as it encroaches on the landing ground where, historically, there was limited built development due to its use. The development will be part of an established cluster of built form on the eastern side of the landing ground which includes buildings, aerials, a geodetic dome and hard standing.

The land drops away to the south with 5m difference between the established dominant northern cluster of buildings and the Site. The height and massing, combined with the lower level of the development Site in comparison to the wider landscape will be as such that it will not dominate views within or into RAF Croughton.

The scale and topography of the landing ground means the flat open nature will remain the dominant character of the southern part of the RAF Croughton, with the northern area continuing to be the main focus for the buildings and structures. The perimeter taxiway will not be altered giving a clear indication of the extent of the landing ground. As such the impact of the new building on the significance of RAF Croughton is limited; it will not reduce the ability to understand and interpret its historic development and no historic structures will be lost. The design and setting of the building has also been considered to reduce any harm to the significance of RAF Croughton (see 6.1).

5.2.3 Type C Fighter Pens

Description and Significance

The three Type C Fighter Pens at RAF Croughton (MM03) are Grade II listed structures. They are rare surviving examples of this type of airfield defences. The pens were designed to protect the planes, in this case medium sized bombers, from lateral damage caused by bomb blasts, strafing fire and associated shrapnel. They are made from a C shaped bank bisected by a central bank to create individual holding pens (see Photo 1). The C shaped banks are three meters in height, the same height as a Blenheim bomber, with a curvilinear form designed to create an enclosure around the planes to give as much protection as possible whilst allowing planes to easily enter and exit the pen. The central bank is to separate the planes from each other and minimise collateral damage. It is likely that the orientation of the pens was also to allow for ease of taxiing and parking, along with protecting the other planes from shrapnel by the earth banks, with the outer two pens facing away from the central pen (see Photo 1).
Photo 1 Central fighter pen viewed from the perimeter taxi way
The pens have a brick retaining wall facing into the concrete bay. The walls are English garden wall bond, five courses high with a brick on end coping. These contain the grassed earth banks (see Photo 2). At the rear the earth banks are continuous and steeper to accommodate the local topography. The earth banks would have helped to camouflage the structures and well as providing protection from lateral impact. The earth would dissipate the force of an impact more effectively than a solid, more rigid structure such as concrete, as well as being a cheaper more easily available material.
Within the central bank there is a Stanton type shelter (Historic England, 2011), a semi-sunken shelter comprising of modular pre-cast concrete panels (Brown et al, 1996) (see Photo 3). Each shelter could hold up to 25 men during an attack (Historic England, 2011) These are accessed from brick openings, one in each holding pen, which enter on either end of the shelter (see Photo 1). There is an emergency exit to the rear of the each fighter pen which leads down the bank to where the ancillary buildings were located (see Photo 4).
Photo 3 – Stanton Shelter in the central bank of the fighter pen
The fighter pens would have had a number of support structures around them including sleeping shelters, flight offices, squadron offices, a parachute store, a drying room and a toilet. There are surviving remnants of this infrastructure outside the foot print of the structures. There is an F-shaped taxiing area of concrete tracks which extend from the perimeter taxiway between the western and central fighter pens. This originally led to three hangars, now gone. There is a pathway which would have run from the eastern fighter pen to support buildings, now also gone and a short road which gave vehicle access to the flight office. On the other side of the perimeter taxiway are three circular platforms, which are remains of other support buildings (see fig 5.1).

The historic setting of the fighter pens has been eroded through the loss of the support structures. They would have originally stood within a complex of buildings rather than in isolation as they do today. The remnants of these support structures are significant in helping to understand the function of the fighter pens and how they were used. The fighter pens relationship with the airfield still remains with their position on the main perimeter taxi way and the flat open landing ground still recognisable beyond.
The key views to the pens are from the B4301 (see Photo 5), approaching them from the perimeter taxiway (see Photo 6) and across the airfield from the perimeter taxiway. Historically the pens were designed to blend in with the landscape to camouflage them from attack. When viewed from the B4301 and along the perimeter taxiway the earth banks reduce the dominance of the pens in the landscape. This is due to banks being continuous and integrating with the natural landscape. They appear as a low regular raised bank within an otherwise even landscape. When the pens are viewed from the landing ground they become more visible due to the expanse of concrete and brick walls. This view is limited as the further away the viewer moves the more the scale of the fighter pens and banks help the structures to be visually absorbed into the landscape.

Potential Impact

The SATCOM facility lies approximately 500m south of the fighter pens and approximately 400m from any of the remains of the associated infrastructure. As such there will be no physical impact on the listed structures or their curtilage from the proposed development. The visual link between the fighter pens and the landing ground will remain unaffected by the SATCOM facility given the distance between the two, and the location of the proposed development being within an established cluster of buildings and aerials.

The land level between the fighter pens and the SATCOM facility falls by 5m, resulting in the new development sitting lower in the landscape, reducing the visual impact of the listed structures further. Key views from the B4301 to the fighter pens will be unaffected (see Photo 5).

Views north across the landing ground when travelling around the perimeter taxiway will be interrupted for a limited distance by the new development. However this is at the furthest point between the fighter pens and the taxiway. At this point the fighter pens are not immediately visible and do not dominate views due to their scale and the camouflage nature of their design. This interruption of views will not harm the setting of the fighter pits or the ability to understand their historic use and development.

The approach from the perimeter taxiway will remain unaffected with the new development visible in distant glimpses; again this will not harm the setting of the fighter pens or the ability to understand their historic use and development (see Photo 6).

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2 Unable to provide photographs showing view across the landing ground due to security restrictions
Photo 5 – Northern type C fighter pens viewed from the B4301
5.2.4 Croughton Conservation Area and Croughton House and Gardens

Description and Significance

Croughton Conservation Area (MM05) is 1.8km to the west of the Site, with Croughton House and Gardens (MM06) on the edge of the Conservation Area closest to the Site. Its special interest is based on its linear form and historic core of limestone built vernacular properties, many with slate roofs. Apart from the church, which is medieval, properties tend to date from the 17th century. These were most likely built to replace earlier buildings. The linear form means that there is no central focus for the village. Key views from the village are those which allow glimpses of the open countryside between breaks in the built form. The conservation area appraisal identifies key views looking south west from the end of Church Lane and west from Wheelers Rise (see Figure 5-6). The views to the west and south west are of appreciably less significance, as the agricultural landscape has been substantially altered with the construction of RAF Croughton and its dispersal site, which is now Park End Industrial Estate.
Croughton House is a 19th century polite house which sits at right angles to the road (see Photo 7). The 1883 map shows it with extensive gardens and parkland. There are still remnants of the parkland to the south of the house including tree planting, the remains of a Ha-Ha and what appears to be an ornamental pond. The western part of the garden now has modern housing development built on it.
Potential Impact

There will be no direct impact on either the conservation area or Croughton House and Gardens, as the Site is 1.8km to the west of both. The historic setting and views of both heritage assets have already been compromised by the modern development to the west. This now disrupts views across the remains of the historic agricultural landscape to RAF Croughton. Where RAF Croughton is visible, this is in glimpses of communication equipment above the tree line (see Photo 8). Given the topography, modern development and tree planting the proposed SATCOM facility will not be visible from the conservation area, nor will it be visible in views into the conservation area.
5.3 **Astwick Farm and cottages**

**Description and Significance**

Astwick Farm and cottages (MM07) are an example of a post enclosure 19th century farm group. The group consists of a farmhouse, converted barns and cottages. Within the group there are two modern bungalows which do not contribute to the significance of the asset. The buildings are of local importance, being built of the local stone with slate roofs and are a good example of a post enclosure farmstead. Their relationship with their surrounding agricultural landscape also contributes to their significance. To the east and west of the group the 19th century post enclosure landscape is still visible and gives context to the farmstead. This is particularly apparent in views west along the B4301 (see Photo 9). However to the south of the group this setting has been lost with the construction of the airfield in 1938, and the expansion of the base in the late 20th and early 21st century with construction of modern buildings on the land immediately south and south west of the group.
Potential Impact

Astwick Farm and Cottages are 820 metres north of the Site therefore there will be no direct impact on the fabric of the assets. The historic setting of the buildings to the south has already been compromised by construction of the airfield and the modern expansion of the base. The proposed SATCOM facility will not be inter-visible or visible in views south from the Astwick Farm group due to topography of the land and the screening from trees and modern development within the base.

5.3.1 Warmington to Buckingham Turnpike

Description and Significance

The Warmington to Buckingham turnpike (MM08) is an 18th century toll road, set up by act of parliament in 1744. Turnpikes were roads awarded to a trust through act of parliament. This act enabled them to raise
tolls to pay for the upkeep and improvements of the routes. The route running passed the Site pre-dates the turnpike as Croughton village developed and extended along it in the 17th and 18th centuries. It now follows the line of the B4301, which passes the Site, the survival of the route being the main contributor to it historic significance rather than its physical fabric and setting.

Potential Impact

The proposed SATCOM facility will be visible in glimpses from the B4301 (see Photo 5). However they will be in the context of the wider modern development of the base. Given the setting of the route has a limited contribution to its significance, and that the setting in this location will remain the airfield with modern military development, the scheme will not affect the historic significance of the Warmington to Buckingham turnpike.

5.3.2 Pimlico Farmhouse and barns

Description and significance

Pimlico Farmhouse and barns (MM09) is a farm complex dating from the late 18th Century. It lies approximately 100m south of the Ockley Brook within a wider agricultural landscape. The farm contains two Grade II listed buildings, the farmhouse and a barn 25m to the east. The historic core of the farm includes the farmhouse with a range of barns, including the listed barn, extending from the east elevation of the farmhouse in a rough square surrounding an enclosed yard. Beyond this to the east is a collection of modern large agricultural sheds which effectively screen views to and from the historic core to the north east.

The farmhouse is constructed in the predominant local style for a building of this status with squared coursed limestone blocks. It is two storeys with an attic, five bays and has a steeply pitched slate roof. The barn is constructed in coursed limestone rubble, a lower status form of construction reflecting its use as a functional farm building. It has a steeply pitched corrugated iron roof and six bays. The entrances have replacement 20th century doors.

Potential impact

The historic core of the Pimilco Farm complex is 1.5km south east of the proposed SATCOM facility. The land falls away from the plateau, which RAF Croughton sits on, towards the Ockley Brook Valley, with the farm approximately 10m lower than the development Site. As such RAF Croughton and its associated structures are already dominant in views to the north. To the east of the farm is the A43, part of the significant road infrastructure. The existing dominance of both these modern interventions has eroded the historic agricultural setting of the farmstead.

The proposed SATCOM facility is situated to the north west of the historic core of the farm, with the modern agricultural structures in between. This means that the views to and from Pimlico Farm from the proposed development will be limited to glimpses. Where the new development is visible it will read as part of the established modern built character of RAF Croughton and will have no impact of the significance of the historic farm complex or its setting.
6 Conclusion

The proposed SATCOM facility will have no impact on the heritage significance of Astwick medieval village, Croughton Conservation Area, Croughton House, Astwick Farm or Pimlico Farm. These heritage assets are all outside of the Site and therefore there will be no direct impact on their evidential value, for example historic fabric. The historic agricultural setting of these assets has already been compromised by the construction of RAF Croughton in 1938, its post war expansion and the significant road network. Therefore construction of the proposed SATCOM facility will have no further detrimental effect on the historic setting of these assets. Due to the topography and existing landscape features the proposed SATCOM facility will not affect key views to, from and within these assets.

Within RAF Croughton the proposed SATCOM facility will have a slight impact on the historic setting of both the World War II airfield and the Grade II listed type C fighter pens. The building will be located within the landing ground, an area where historically there were few structures due to its use. However the original cluster of buildings to the north of the perimeter taxiway has expanded into the landing ground during the latter part of the 20th century and early 21st century. For example the new medical and dental centre as well as communications equipment and their ancillary buildings. The flat open nature of the landing ground will remain the dominant character and the historic function, use and relationship between the landing ground and the World War II structures and defences will still be apparent. The proposed SATCOM facility will interrupt long views to the fighter pens and across landing ground, but not to the extent that the historic setting or ability to understand function and use of RAF Croughton during World War II will be unduly compromised.
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Appendices

Appendix A. List Description: Three type C fighter pens

34
Appendix A. List Description: Three type C fighter pens

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: Three Type C Fighter Pens

List Entry Number: 1403308

Location: Three Type C Fighter Pens, RAF CROUGHTON

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Northamptonshire

District: South Northamptonshire

District Type: District Authority

Parish: Evenley

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 21-Jul-2011

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Asset Groupings: This List entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List Entry Description

Summary of Building

Three Type C fighter pens built in 1940-41 and constructed in accordance with standard Air Ministry designs of concrete and brick, and covered in earth. Concrete hard-standings.

Reasons for Designation

The three type C fighter pens at RAF Croughton, constructed 1940-41, are recommended for designation for the following principal reasons: * Rarity: fighter pens at former RAF aerodromes are quite rare, and this group of three is a good example, showing approaches to airfield defence * Intactness: the group survives
in good condition, and its function is clear through the survival of hard-standings and the legible sites of adjacent structures. Historic Interest: RAF Croughton served as an Emergency Landing Ground during the Battle of Britain, and had an interesting history.

History

RAF Croughton occupies an area of relatively flat ground 1 km to the south-east of the village of Croughton. It was built in 1938 as part of the RAF's massive pre-war expansion programme, started in 1935 in response to the increasing strength of the German armed forces. Known as Brackley Landing Ground, it became RAF Brackley in 1940 and obtained the name of RAF Croughton in July 1941. It consisted of a grass airfield with three grass runways, surrounded by a perimeter track. From June 1940 until July 1942 the station functioned as a satellite for RAF Upper Heyford and the No.16 Operational Training Unit (OTU), providing extra airfield space for night-flying training. In September 1940, during the Battle of Britain, the airfield became designated as an emergency landing site in order to provide assistance to any operational aircraft returning damaged or with engine problems. The airfield was bombed several times in 1941. From July 1942 onwards, RAF Croughton functioned as a training base, for training on the gliders which played an important role during D-Day and the Battle of Arnhem. Training continued until after the war, but ceased on 25th May 1946. In 1950, the USAF took over the airfield, giving RAF Croughton a new role as a communications base which it retains to the present day.

The Fighter Command Works aircraft fighter pens at RAF Croughton are thought to have been built in 1940 or 1941, when the airfield functioned as a satellite for RAF Upper Heyford. Each provided protection for two Bristol Blenheim-sized or similar twin-engine, medium-sized bombers. Originally there were six fighter pens divided into groups of three, one group positioned on the northern edge of the perimeter track and the other group on the eastern edge. Only fragmentary remains of the eastern group survive.

Details

Laid out in a line along the perimeter track of the airfield, 55 metres apart, each fighter pen consists of three arms arranged in the shape of a curvilinear 'E', enclosing a concrete hardstanding, for two aircraft, one either side of the central arm. The arms are evident as turf covered, earth mounds, revetted by low brick walls on either side of the central mound and on the inner edge of the outer mound. The central arm measures approximately 23.8 metres long, 6.4 metres wide and 2.2 metres high. The outer mound is curved and is approximately 3 metres high and 12 metres wide. As the natural topography drops down to the north, the northern slopes of the outer mound are considerably longer and wider than the internal slopes. On either side of the central arm of the fighter pens and set within the curved outer mound, is a brick-lined entrance which gives access to a pre-cast, concrete, Stanton type air-raid shelter set within the central section of the outer mound. The shelter could accommodate up to 25 men during an attack. The rear of the outer curved mound contains a third entrance, originally an emergency exit. The hardstandings are surfaced in concrete slabs and some small areas have been patched with tarmac. The eastern hardstanding has four round holes which are believed to have been the positions of aircraft tie-down points.
Outside the footprint of the fighter pens, an F-shaped taxiing area consisting of a series of concrete tracks extends from the main perimeter track, midway between the western and the central fighter pen. Originally, three Blister hangars were located at the end of the tracks, but these are now gone. Concrete footpaths run between the eastern and central fighter pen to support buildings, now lost, beyond the fighter pens. A short road allowed vehicle access to the flight offices. Rectangular and circular slightly raised platforms represent the remains of a sleeping shelter for each fighter pen, flight offices, squadron offices, a parachute store, a drying room and a latrine.

Selected Sources

1944 and 1948 Air Ministry Site Plans (RAF Museum, Hendon),
Figure 7-1 – Listing map (not to scale)

Heritage Category:
Listing

List Entry No: 1403308
Grade: II

County: Northamptonshire
District: South Northamptonshire
Parish: Eynesbury

For all entries pre-dating 1 April 2011 maps and national grid references do not form part of the official record of a listed building. In such cases the map here and the national grid reference are generated from the information held in the official record and within their Historic Environment Identification of the principal listed building or buildings only and must be read in conjunction with other information in the record.

Any object or structure listed is the principal building or buildings and any object or structure within the curtilage of the building which, although not listed, forms part of the land and has some or all of its character and/or www.englishheritage.org.uk

This map was delivered electronically and when printed may not be to scale and may be subject to distortion.

List Entry NGR: SP565733049
Map Scale: 1:1250
Print Date: 23 April 2015

Name: Three Type C Fighter Pens

This is an A3 sized map and should be printed full size at A3 with no page scaling set.