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5 July 2024

Planning Policy
Rutland County Council
Catmose
Oakham
Rutland
LE15 6HP*By email only:* local.plan@rutland.gov.uk

Dear Mr Ranson,

**EDITH WESTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2023 - 2041
THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING (GENERAL) REGULATIONS 2012 (AS AMENDED)
REGULATION 16 – SUBMISSION DRAFT
REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF THE DEFENCE INFRASTRUCTURE ORGANISATION**

On behalf of our client, the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (“DIO”), we write to submit representations on the Edith Weston Neighbourhood Plan (“the Plan”). As a key landholder in Edith Weston, the DIO welcomes the work undertaken by the local community on producing a plan that proactively tackles the issues surrounding new development in the Plan area.

As with previous representations submitted on the emerging plan, the DIO are largely supportive of the themes and policies within the draft Plan, including the support for the development of the Officers Mess site. These representations have been drafted to suit this formal consultation process, and the comments provided herein are intended to help ensure that, when adopted, the Plan is consistent and robust in both its production and application, and also aligned with the adopted Rutland Local Plan and National Guidance.

STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In preparing the draft Neighbourhood Plan the Parish Council have thoroughly considered the characteristics of the existing village, surrounding landscape context and community facilities. This assessment recognises the quality of the existing village, the surrounding open countryside, and the military community that forms an integrated part of Edith Weston.

In this regard, the DIO recognise the importance of creating a safe, accessible, and thriving village with appropriate community services and amenities to meet future need.

We are supportive of the Neighbourhood Plan’s overall planning strategy (Section 2.2) and Aims (Section 2.3) which seek to achieve sustainable development and growth, identifying suitable locations and policies to guide future development. The DIO supports the inclusion of Policy EW-SG02 in the Neighbourhood Plan, and the recognition that the Officers Mess is a key brownfield site for sustainable new development to deliver housing.

ST GEORGE'S BARRACKS – OFFICERS MESS SITE

Policy EW-SG02 supports the development of St George's Barracks Officers' Mess for residential purposes. The draft policy sets out criteria for the design of future development, including the protection of mature trees and boundary planting, maximising cycle and pedestrian connectivity and high-quality design which complements the existing village and surrounding landscape. The DIO are supportive of the inclusion of Policy EW-SG02 in the Neighbourhood Plan and the objectives outlined therein, which is reflected in the proposals for the site which were approved subject to the completion of a s106 agreement by Rutland's Planning Committee in April 2024.

In addition to housing delivery, the development will also contribute towards the identified Infrastructure Priorities at Section 7 of the Neighbourhood Plan, including support of community activities and creation of new commercial and green space, improvements to highway access and safety on Manton Road and cycle / pedestrian connections.

The DIO support the inclusion of Policy EW-SG02 in the Neighbourhood Plan and the identification of the Officers Mess site as an important brownfield site for residential development.

ST GEORGE'S BARRACKS – MAIN SITE & UNDESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

The draft Neighbourhood Plan makes several references to the St George's Barracks Main Site in respect of prospective land uses, future masterplanning and recognises features on site which could be of heritage interest. The Barracks remain operational and occupied by the MoD at this time, but it has been confirmed that the site will be closing and the land released for development. No detailed work on the future of the Barracks has been undertaken at this point and, at the appropriate time, the DIO will continue engagement with the local community and Rutland Council regarding the future of St George's Barracks.

As noted in previous representations, whilst the Neighbourhood Plan does not include policies for the future development of the St George's Barracks site, the Regulation 16 Neighbourhood Plan continues to include commentary on heritage matters pertaining to the main Barracks. Pages 40 – 42 and draft Policy EW-DH04 of the Plan refers to features on the St George's Barracks site, identifying them as key undesignated heritage assets that should be retained. Specifically, these are identified in the Plan as:

- a) Water Towers
- b) Heating Dome
- c) Type J Hangars

The draft Policy also refers to the Air Traffic Control Tower and Bloodhound Building, which are outside of the Neighbourhood Parish area. The Thor Missile site, which is already listed, has been included on the site plan (Figure 10).

The DIO continues to object to the inclusion of this policy within the Neighbourhood Plan. The St George's Barracks site has been assessed by Historic England on more than one occasion, with careful consideration given to the suitability of buildings for listing, with specific attention had to the J-Hangars.

It is the conclusion of the statutory body that the J-Hangars are not suitable for listing. A copy of Historic England's report on the buildings is enclosed for ease of reference. Furthermore, the DIO confirm that there is no "Heating Dome" on site.

Planning Practice Guidance is clear that that the decisions to identify them as non-designated heritage assets are based on sound evidence¹. Beyond listing buildings (some erroneously) within the emerging policy, no sound evidence has been presented as to the local importance of these buildings and why they should be considered as non-designated heritage assets. Without an appropriate and independent assessment of the buildings to support their inclusion, this policy of the emerging neighbourhood plan cannot be considered to be robust.

We also query as to why this policy only focuses on buildings within the St Georges Barracks site and does not consider any other buildings within Edith Weston which could be considered to be non-designated heritage assets. Again, no evidence has been provided to support the plan's approach to such designations, even to confirm that other buildings have been considered and discounted.

The DIO note that the Neighbourhood Plan has not been amended to reflect the DIO comments in respect of the St George's Barracks site, the assessment by Historic England, or the requested changes to Policy EW-DH04. The DIO reiterate that Policy EW-DH04 should be removed from the Neighbourhood Plan since it is inaccurate and not supported by appropriate evidence.

We therefore request that Policy EW-DH04, Figure 10 and the associated text are therefore removed from the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN

As identified in previous representations to the Neighbourhood Plan, the DIO are supportive of the core principles put forward for good quality design and placemaking for new developments within the Parish (Policy EW-DH01). The Neighbourhood Plan includes a number of draft policies to protect and enhance the Natural and Green Environment (EW-GE01) and Transport and Movement (EW-TM01).

OPEN SPACES

It is noted that the Neighbourhood Plan continues to designate a number of areas as Local Green Space, which are in MoD ownership. As per previous representations to the Plan, the DIO objects to these designations on the basis that it is unnecessary and prohibits any future ability for the DIO to improve its active estate and Service Family Accommodation.

In line with previous representations, the DIO object to the inclusion of the following areas as Local Green Space:

- LGS 3 Woodland, Pennine Drive/Chiltern Drive
- LGS 4 Mendip Play Area
- LGS 5 Pennine Drive
- LGS 6 Severn Crescent, Grassed Area 1
- LGS 7 Severn Crescent, Grassed Area 2
- LGS 8 Severn Crescent, Grassed Area 3
- LGS 11 Manton Road and Windermere Road, Verge and Trees
- LGS 12 Crummock Ave, Play Area
- LGS 13 Ullswater Ave, Play Area
- LGS 14 Derwent Ave Green Space
- LGS 15 Coniston Road Green Space

¹ Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 040 Reference ID: 18a-040-20190723

- LGS 16 Derwent Ave, Open Green Space
- LGS 21 Memorial Stones Open Grassed Area

It is important that the Neighbourhood Plan is amended to remove the Local Green Space designation for these areas to ensure that military activities are not restricted as there may be a need in future for this and surrounding land to be utilised for military purposes (including the provision of service accommodation). It is only when MoD land has been publicly identified as surplus to requirements, and not in active use, that it would be suitable for such designations to be applied. The land listed above has not been identified as surplus, and therefore must not have restrictions imposed.

The planning system and policies of the development plan already presents a suitable mechanism for controlling development in these locations without the need for additional designations to be put in place.

As per previous representations made by the DIO to the LGS Consultation in 2001 and Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 consultation, the DIO request the removal of LGS 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11-16 and 21 from Neighbourhood Plan Policy EW-GE02 on the basis that this is private land utilised for defence purposes in the form of Service Family Accommodation. It does not therefore meet local green space access criteria, and the DIO is at liberty to amend the role and function of these areas to meet service personnel requirements, at any time.

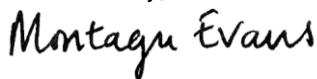
CLOSING

As noted at the outset, the DIO are supportive of the work undertaken by the Neighbourhood Plan Forum and welcome the inclusion of Policy EW-SG02 in the Neighbourhood Plan which supports the development of the Officer's Mess site as a key brownfield site for residential use. We welcome the opportunity to continue engagement with the community at the appropriate time on the future of the St Georges Barracks site. The comments made in these, and previous representations are important matters to ensure the continued effective operation of the DIO estate and military function.

We trust that these comments are of use to the Neighbourhood Plan process, and as per Regulation 19 we would welcome being notified of Rutland County Council's decision in relation to the neighbourhood development plan.

We would be grateful if Rutland Council could confirm that this letter has been received, and please contact Jon Bradburn (jon.bradburn@montagu-evans.co.uk) or Lauren Hawksworth (lauren.hawksworth@montagu-evans.co.uk) of this office in the first instance.

Yours faithfully,



Montagu Evans LLP

Case Name: J-Type Hangars, at the former RAF North Luffenham

Case Number: 1473441

Background

Historic England has been asked to consider designating numerous surviving features associated with the Thor Missile Site which was listed at Grade II* in 2011 (case reference 1465417). Given the association between the Thor missile site and the hangars in particular, it was considered appropriate/ important to assess these buildings as well.

We are also considering whether the two J-Type hangars meet the criteria for listing. These were used as the reception and maintenance buildings for the Thor missiles based at North Luffenham as well as its four satellite stations. Given the association between the Thor missile site and the hangars in particular, it was considered appropriate/ important to assess these buildings as well.

Asset(s) under Assessment

Facts about the asset(s) can be found in the Annex(es) to this report.

Annex	List Entry Number	Name	Heritage Category	HE Recommendation
1	1473450	J-Type Hangars at former RAF North Luffenham	Listing	Do not add to List

Visits

Date	Visit Type
24 July 2020	Full inspection

Context

St George's Barracks (formerly RAF North Luffenham) is due to close to military use. A partnership between Rutland County Council and the Ministry of Defence is currently progressing master planning for a development that includes mineral extraction on the open airfield area and its reinstatement as a country park, and the creation of a new 'garden village' on the technical and domestic part of the site.

The Development Advice team in the Midlands office of Historic England is engaging with the development partnership and with the Local Plan process to try to ensure that the historic character of the former RAF station is respected in the design of the proposed development and that the most significant designated and non-designated heritage assets are retained, repaired and sympathetically re-used where feasible.

In 2014, we recommended that the the buildings and structures at RAF North Luffenham (apart from the Thor Missile Site), did not meet the criteria for listing. Our recommendation was upheld by DCMS.

The hangars do not stand within a conservaiton area.

Assessment

CONSULTATION

Consultation on the factual details of the case was undertaken with the applicant; the owner - the MOD and their consultants Montagu Evans; the Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicestershire and Rutland; the local authority; Rutland Local History and Record Society; North Luffenham Parish Council; Edith Weston Parish Council; and numerous interested parties.

We welcome the engagement of all these organisations and individuals in the consultation process, and their comments have been carefully considered in our assessment of the Thor missile site. Additional information provided by them has been included in the History and Details section of the report where appropriate.

Montagu Evans enquired why the designations on the site are being revised at a sensitive time in the planning process, and present the following queries and points:

- * these were just two of an intended five hangars originally planned at RAF North Luffenham. Furthermore, it is understood that there are believed to be 46 known examples of this hangar type, of which 30 still remain. It is clear, therefore, that there is no rarity factor attached to these examples and the listing assessment itself does not highlight the main structure or design of the hangars as being of any particular importance.
- * for the eighty years of period between 1940 and 2020 the hangar was associated with Thor missiles for just four years, or 5% of its life, after which the buildings were again adapted and reused for alternative purposes to suit the military needs and function of that particular moment in time.
- * the hangars were altered subsequent to their short period in use for Thor purposes. The very thorough appraisal of the structures prepared by the expert Aldon Ferguson in 2019 concluded that for the western hangar (RIM building), 'the building cannot reliably be said to reflect the use, configuration, specification or layout during the period 1959 to 1964, ie, the period of Operation Emily [...] all evidence of the layout during Project Emily being destroyed'.

HE Response: we received an application asking us to consider additional elements and structures relating to the Thor missile site. Anyone can apply for a building to be listed or a site to be scheduled and we have a duty to take these assessments forward where they meet the criteria for doing so.

The significance of the hangars and the modifications carried out are considered in the Discussion.

The HER acknowledged receipt of the report but had no comments.

The local authority replied to confirm that they have no comments on the report but confirmed that the buildings do not lie within a conservation area.

RUTLAND LOCAL HISTORY AND RECORD SOCIETY responded in support of the listing of the J-Type hangars and made the following comments:

- * listing of the J-Type hangars will ensure not only that their context in relation to the Thor missile site and the previous military use of the area is retained but also that following recording of the buildings any subsequent conservation and works will comply with the heritage planning system.
- * we can provide evidence that preservation and conservation is possible. In 2003 the Local Authority presented the T2 hangars (also on the North Luffenham site) for a built environment award as part of a programme delivered in partnership with the Society, for the conservation of hangars that were in a more dilapidated state than the current J-Type hangars.
- * we would like to see a reassessment and a further project carried out comparable with the report on the former RAF Upper Heyford airfield (Cocroft 2017) which was produced in response to renewed development pressures. We would like a detailed systematic survey of the landscape, and of national and local archives. This, coupled with the future development of the site, presents a fantastic opportunity for heritage-led place shaping by the local community, linking the research project to the process of not only re-using, but preserving through listing/ scheduling the site to strengthen a positive sense of identity with the place along with a sense of community, ownership, education and empowerment, similar to those explored with Heritage Action Zones elsewhere but within a rural setting.

HE Response: since 2010 Historic England's Listing Team (East) has carried out three inspections of the former RAF North Luffenham. As a result, the Thor missile site was listed at Grade II* but none of the other buildings were listed due to the level of alteration to which they had been subject over the years. Once the current assessment of the Thor missile site and J-Type hangars has been finalised, we do not propose to carry out any further designation assessment of the former RAF North Luffenham.

The current assessment is informed by the research carried out by a Senior Archaeological Investigator at Historic England and co-author of *Cold War Building for Nuclear Confrontation 1946-89* (English Heritage, 2003), and other relevant sources. List entries are not intended to be detailed recordings of buildings or exhaustive accounts of their historic background and context using all available sources. They are based on an appropriate level of research and investigation, including as much information as is necessary to identify the designated asset and explain its special interest.

The suggestion that the site presents the opportunity for heritage-led place shaping by the local community is beyond the scope of what can be considered in a designation assessment and has therefore been forwarded to Historic England's Development Advice Team.

North Luffenham Parish Council responded in support of the listing of the J-Type hangars because they formed part of the Thor complex at North Luffenham and thus an integral part of the operation. They commented that the consultation report makes clear the historical importance of RAF North Luffenham at the time of the Cold War, and that the various architectural features of the Thor site are the only surviving ones within its original military context.

They also pointed out that the hangars were the Receipt, Inspection and Maintenance (RIM) Buildings not just for North Luffenham but for the four satellite airfields (each also with three launch pads). These were located at other Second World War airfields at Melton Mowbray, Harrington, Polebrook and Folkingham. All missiles arrived at North Luffenham (by air) and were then transported by road to each of the four satellite sites.

HE Response: the significance of the hangars is considered in the Discussion.

Edith Weston Parish Council commented that the hangars and the Thor missile site together represent one of the last few remaining sites of this kind, and the only one still set within its original military context. They also suggested that a comparative assessment with other sites would be useful.

HE Response: the significance of the Thor missile site within a national context is considered in the Discussion.

An interested party (number 1) provided a copy of his DIO-commissioned report 'St George's Barracks/ RAF North Luffenham: Hangars 1 and 3 in relation to Operation Emily Triangulation Stations in relation to Operation Emily Officers' Mess for Defence Infrastructure Organisation', (April 2019). He does not support the listing of the hangars on the following principal grounds:

* there is lack of evidence relating to plans and specification of their conversion for Thor use. The RIM building (western hangar) was extensively modified for use by the RAF Ground Radar Servicing Centre post Thor. The resultant changes removed much of the evidence of Thor use. The building was again modified by the Army for Rapier use circa 2000, removing more evidence and was subsequently used by the Army for MT vehicle maintenance. The eastern hangar was totally refurbished in 1984-85 which removed all traces of Thor occupation.

* the hangars have been modified so many times, and quite comprehensively over their life period, that it is impossible to determine which modifications were specific to Thor operations. They do not reflect their condition or configuration at the time of Project Emily; they are far from unique and the interior gives no clue to their former uses as it is impossible to determine the date line of the many internal modifications from the original over their 80 years of existence. The RAF used both hangars for repair and modification of ground-based radar for many years. During this tenure they were modified internally for this specific work. Subsequently, further modifications took place during the Army tenure.

* under these circumstances the building cannot reliably be said to reflect the use, configuration, specification or layout during the period 1959 to 1964, ie, the period of Operation Emily. In addition, there are many J-Type hangars still in existence, with at least 30 remaining today.

HE Response: the detailed information regarding the modifications to the hangars has been carefully considered in the Discussion and added to the History and Details sections where appropriate.

Another interested party (number 2) replied in strong support the listing of the hangars, providing further useful background information and making the following points:

* although Historic England has been asked to evaluate the use of the Hangars in the Thor period, there is also a rich history of use over a number of phases: the early years and Battle of Atlantic and operational training, the Cold War, use of the Hangars by RAF Regiment Rapier, Signals Command, 90 Signals Group and Maintenance Command and Support Command in the period from the 1960s to the 1980s. Whilst the report has a good level of detail on the Thor features, further detailed evaluation of the heritage available may reveal more.

* the archive of facilities information and plans for the former RAF North Luffenham, if it exists, would be extremely valuable in ensuring that the heritage aspects of the hangars, Thor launch complex and other historical features could be understood.

HE Response: the uses to which the hangars were put both before and after the Thor period are of historic interest but it is their association with the Cold War that was considered to potentially confer special historic interest – one of the key criteria for listing.

No plans, drawings or specifications detailing the conversion work for Thor have been discovered even though it is known that over 300 were prepared.

A further interested party (number 3) responded in full support the listing of both hangars, stating that their adaptation and requirement is documented in almost every historical account of the Thor story and its association is no doubt significant. They provide further background information and make the following points:

* there were only four hangars across the whole of the UK adapted for Thor, three of which are C-Type hangars whereas at North Luffenham it is a J-Type hangar.

* the report provides no information as to how many of the three C-Type hangars remain on other Thor Wing HQ sites or detail as to their current use or condition. It would be useful if this had been included in the report. I think it should be noted that at no other wing location will there be a J-Type hangar adapted as a RIM building for Thor, the North Luffenham example is unique in this regard.

HE Response: the context and rarity of the J-Type hangar in relation to other hangars at Thor sites is considered in the Discussion.

An interested party (number 4) replied in support the listing of the hangars and made the following points:

* the historic interest of the site is of international significance which should be reflected in the History section. The most important element of the historic interest of the hangars is that they provided an essential part of the infrastructure and were integral to the way a Thor main base functioned and supported its four satellite sites. The operational period, when the hangars were in use as a Thor RIM Building and for technical storage, needs to feature prominently in the report.

* it is not clear if the Missile Control Centre was definitely housed within the RIM building or within one of the annexes close by, it is implied that it is with the RIM structure but the use of the term 'annexes' is confusing. This is compounded by a reference in Wilson (2008) to Thor missile control centres being located in a 'brick extension to the RIM building'. The presence of the missile control centre within the RIM building clearly adds to its importance.

* the bund for a fuel tank is located immediately to the west of the RIM building. It is clearly visible in aerial photographs and appears to match similar surviving Thor structures at both North Luffenham and the former RAF Harrington. Its exact function is not known, however it may have supplied fuel to power an emergency generator or for a Power Conversion Building.

* consideration also needs to be given to protecting other ancillary buildings that were integral to the functionality of the Thor main base and its satellite stations, including the Motor Transport (MT) Section (housed in a B1-Hangar still in situ), Motor Transport Servicing Section, Equipment Store, Air Traffic Control, Sick Room, Mess Building, Guardroom, and Station Headquarters. The site operated as a huge undertaking and ran continuously for 4 years. The rollcall in October 1962, for example, included 965 RAF officers and men, 42 US Air Force officers and men and 140 'Established Civilians', a total of 1,147 personnel.

* while the consultation report provides a useful description of the hangars themselves and their historical use, it would benefit from providing greater detail on how the surviving features at North Luffenham compare to those at other Thor main bases.

HE Response: in regard to the Missile Control Centre, in accepted hangar terminology the single-storey 'side rooms' are generally referred to as annexes. The Control Centre was located in a room or rooms within one of the annexes, rather than in a separate building.

The fuel bund was possibly associated with a nearby building (demolished), probably used as a boiler house to provide heating for the RIM and possibly the technical storage building. The bund was for mounting and containing diesel fuel tanks.

The whole station was being used by the Thor Wing/ Squadrons but the purpose of the designation assessment is to capture the essential core elements of the Thor site. The supporting features have varying levels of significance.

The historic interest of the site is considered in the Discussion.

DISCUSSION

The statutory criteria for listing are the special architectural or historic interest of a building, as set out in the Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings (November 2018). To be of special architectural interest a building must be of importance in its design, decoration or craftsmanship. Special interest may also apply to particularly significant examples of building types or techniques and significant plan forms. To be able to justify special historic interest a building must illustrate important aspects of the nation's history and/ or have closely substantiated historical associations with nationally important individuals, groups or events; and the building itself in its current form will afford a strong connection with the valued aspect of history. Before 1700, all buildings that retain a significant proportion of their original fabric are likely to be regarded of special interest; from 1700 to 1850, most buildings that retain a significant proportion of their original fabric are likely to be regarded of special interest, though some selection is necessary; from 1850 to 1945, because of the greatly increased number of buildings erected and the much larger numbers that have survived, progressively greater selection is necessary.

Also relevant is our Listing Selection Guide for Military Structures (December 2017) which explains that throughout the Cold War the threat of mutually assured nuclear destruction overshadowed spheres of national life – political, economic, scientific and cultural. Some sites were purpose-built, although it was more common to adapt existing defence sites, from naval dockyards to barracks, munitions factories to airfields. But there was also a significant amount of new building. It is acknowledged that Cold War sites represent challenges for designation. Some buildings were short-lived, others were designed with very specific functions in mind, and may represent challenges for re-use. Other categories were built to standard designs and may survive on various sites. The principal considerations in most cases will be rarity, group value, military and technological significance, and architectural or structural interest.

Military sites are often evocative witnesses to past conflicts. All have an emotive power which connects communities with world events of the greatest magnitude. While all military structures will therefore be of some historic interest, the degrees of historical association will inevitably vary. Government policy is clear that candidates for listing ought to be well preserved in a form which directly illustrates and confirms their historical associations, if they are to be designated on historical grounds. Particularly close links with noted military actions may sometimes be significant.

The two J-Type hangars at the former RAF North Luffenham were designed in 1939. The J-Type hangar is a transitional type between the permanent hangars of the 1920s and 1930s and the lighter, temporary wartime types. A study in the late 1990s identified 46 J-Type hangars in the UK on 35 sites, of which 40 hangars were in England (Airfield Research Group, 1999). Of these it is believed that around 11 have been demolished, leaving around 29 or 30. The J-Type hangars at North Luffenham are particularly significant for their part in the deployment of Thor intermediate ballistic missiles between 1959 and 1963. At the other main Thor bases earlier C-Type hangars were adapted as Receipt Inspection and Maintenance (RIM) buildings. All of these survive, although the condition of their interiors is unknown. At Hemswell the hangars were used as grain stores and latterly for storing plastics, one being badly damaged in a fire. Those at Driffield were also used as grain stores and more recently have been used as factory units. At Feltwell, the RIM building is used as a school gym and in the late 1990s it retained the compartmentalised servicing rooms, although the floor surface had been covered to create sports courts. North Luffenham is the only example where J-Type hangars were adapted for Thor use.

The Thor sites are of international historic significance, representing one of the tensest periods of the Cold War when their missiles were raised to alert position during the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962, an

event widely acknowledged to have been the closest yet the world has come to nuclear confrontation. The significance of North Luffenham is enhanced by its strong military association with a noted example of a late pre-War expansion period aerodrome with significant Second World War interest, and the retention of a Bloodhound Missile Tactical Control Centre - factors which continue to contribute to its interest. At no other British site does the missile base remain within its contemporary military context.

The hangars at North Luffenham, while retaining their original basic form, have been considerably altered through their use by the Thor missile squadron and numerous subsequent phases of modification. During the Cold War the eastern hangar was converted into the Technical Storage building, and the western hangar was adapted as the Receipt, Inspection and Maintenance (RIM) building, a role which confers upon it considerably greater interest. No drawings of the modifications made to this hangar for its adaptation as a RIM building have been discovered. The uncertainty about the extent and nature of the alterations undergone by both hangars is compounded by the many subsequent uses to which they have been put. Modifications carried out during successive phases include the sub-division of the interiors of the hangars to create environmentally controlled work spaces and secure storage areas; and alterations have also been made to the side annexes containing workshop and office spaces. These changes include the blocking of windows and reconfiguring of entrances. In addition, the main doors have been permanently closed and smaller entrances and windows cut into them. The roofs have also been re-clad.

In his 2019 report, Aldon Ferguson concluded that the refurbishment of the eastern hangar in the mid-1980s had removed all traces of Thor occupation; and the western hangar had been modified to the extent that any evidence of the building's configuration and specification during the Thor period was no longer apparent. The recent Historic England site inspection in 2020 mostly concurred with these findings, with the exception of the possibility that there may be Thor-related features obscured by the suspended ceilings, and that the floor conduits in one of the hangars may be Thor-related. This limited evidence, even if confirmed, is insufficient to confer special interest on the hangars given the accumulative impact of the alterations on their fabric and layout. They simply do not survive in a form that illustrates and confirms their association with the Thor missile operation.

One of the consultees has asked that consideration be given to protecting other ancillary buildings that were integral to the functionality of the Thor main base and its satellite stations. Whilst it is acknowledged that the site as a whole is of historic interest, not all of the buildings and structures share the same level of significance. The purpose of this designation assessment is to identify and assess the core elements that were constructed specifically for the operation of the Thor missiles.

The two J-Type hangars, particularly the western one which was adapted as the RIM building, had an extremely important role in the operation of the Thor missiles at North Luffenham, and they continue to provide architectural and historic context for the Grade II* listed missile emplacements, but they have undergone such extensive alterations that this role is no longer manifested in their physical form. They do not therefore meet the criteria for listing.

CONCLUSION

After examining the available records and other relevant information and having carefully considered the architectural and historic interest of this case, the criteria for listing are not fulfilled. The two J-Type hangars are therefore not recommended for listing.

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION DECISION

The two Air Ministry J-Type Aircraft Hangars, designed in 1939 by the Air Ministry Directorate of Works, are not recommended for listing for the following principal reasons:

Level of Architectural interest:

- * no drawings of the modifications made to the western hangar for its adaptation as a RIM building have been discovered, and the uncertainty about the extent and nature of the alterations undergone by both hangars is compounded by the many subsequent uses to which they have been put;
- * the accumulative impact of multi-phase modifications on their fabric and layout is such that they simply do not survive in a form that illustrates and confirms their association with the Thor missile operation.

Level of Historic interest:

* the two J-Type hangars, particularly the western one which was adapted as the RIM building, had an extremely important role in the operation of the Thor missiles at North Luffenham, and they continue to provide architectural and historic context for the Grade II* listed missile emplacements, but they have undergone such extensive alterations that this role is no longer manifested in their physical form.

Countersigning comments:

Agreed. The two J-Type hangars at the former RAF North Luffenham are of clear interest for their role during wartime and later, and particularly for their use as Receipt, Inspection and Maintenance buildings for the Thor missiles, and the wider role played during the Cold War. However, the buildings have been altered over time, and the cumulative impact of these is such that they do not retain sufficient interest either as example of J-Type hangars, or for their use during the Thor period, and subsequently cannot be recommended for listing.

S Mee

16 April 2021

Annex 1

Factual Details

Name: J-Type Hangars at former RAF North Luffenham

Location: West hangar – SK 93582 04782 East hangar – SK 93713 04838

County	District	District Type	Parish
	Rutland	Unitary Authority	Edith Weston
	Rutland	Unitary Authority	North Luffenham

History

Construction of RAF North Luffenham was completed by late 1940. It was one of a series of stations established under the 1939 M Scheme for expanding the number of RAF airfields. Typically, airfields associated with this programme had two J-Type Aircraft Sheds, or hangars, flanking a Watch Office with a meteorological section of 1939 design, with associated technical buildings, domestic accommodation, and open grass flying field. The J-Type Aircraft Shed, or hangar, was a standard form designed in 1939 by the Air Ministry Directorate of Works to design drawing 3084/39 and were designed by Sir William Arrol and Co. They may be seen to bridge the hangar types built on the late 1920s and 1930s permanent airfields and later temporary wartime expedients. This type is typically associated with the maintenance of aircraft on operational airfields. Two hangars of this type were built at North Luffenham.

The station opened in January 1941 as Number 17 Elementary Flying Training School. By the summer of 1941, Numbers 61 and 144 Squadrons were brought to North Luffenham from Hemswell, but from 1943 work commenced to lay hard surfaced runways and hardstandings for heavy bombers. The airbase re-opened in March 1944 and was used initially by the Heavy Glider Conversion Unit, but returned to bomber crew training from September of that year until October 1945. Many airmen were lost from North Luffenham during the war, some within sight of the hangars. The base was bombed twice in the early part of the war. In December 1946 the Heavy Glider Conversion Unit returned to the airfield until December 1947 when the airfield passed to Transport Command and 240 Operational Conversion Unit. They stayed until April 1951 when Number 102 Flying Refresher School opened. With increasing East-West tensions in November 1951 it was decided that the airfield should be handed over to the Royal Canadian Air Force for the deployment of air defence fighters under the country's obligations to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. The Canadians stayed until April 1955 when it passed to RAF Fighter Command before flying ceased in June 1958.

Around this time, the airfield was identified as a main base for a Thor intermediate range ballistic missile squadron, with four satellite stations at RAF Harrington, RAF Polebrook, RAF Melton Mowbray and RAF Folkington. Thor missiles were the first operational Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM) system deployed by the West during the Cold War. The function of each main base was to receive the missiles and warheads from the United States and to inspect them after their journey before they were issued to a group of launch sites. Each main base had three launch emplacements, a Receipt, Inspection and Maintenance (RIM) building and a Technical Storage building. These buildings were adapted from existing RAF permanent build hangars. At North Luffenham, the western hangar was adapted as the Receipt, Inspection and Maintenance (RIM) building and work on its conversion was complete by October 1959. No drawings of the modifications made to this hangar to adapt it as a RIM building have been discovered. Probably at the time the hangar doors were permanently sealed and new openings created. The eastern J-Type Hangar was converted into the Technical Storage building for the Thor project. The modification was relatively minor in comparison to the RIM Building, involving the permanent closing of the original full-width sliding doors; provision of new, smaller openings; internal subdivision, improved lighting and heating and enhanced security. There was a ceremonial parade at North Luffenham to mark the (national) completion of Operation Emily on 5 May 1960.

Concurrently, a Tactical Control Centre with a Type 82 radar was in operation for the control of remotely based Bloodhound air defence missiles. The radar remained in service into the early 1970s as part of the civil air control system.

After the Thor missiles were stood down in August 1963 the airfield was used by a variety of RAF units. The western hangar was modified for use by the RAF Ground Radar Servicing Centre involving extensive subdivision of former open plan areas, construction of external hutting and changes to the ventilation and

electrical installations. This use continued from November 1963 until November 1997. During this period major work involving the removal of asbestos took place in the Eastern hangar between November 1984 and July 1985. This involved emptying half the building in a phased manner for the work to be undertaken and then the other half for the second phase, effectively removing all traces of the earlier conversion of the building during the Cold War. Single-storey, timber constructed external hutting, very likely added for Thor operations, had been totally removed by 1997.

The RAF remained on the airfield until 1998 when it passed to the army and became known as St George's Barracks. The western hangar remained empty until 2006 when it was occupied by the 16th Regiment Royal Artillery for Rapier maintenance, who continued there until 2014. There are drawings that show changes to the internal configuration required for Rapier maintenance. The 16th Regiment was replaced by the Royal Army Medical Corps who remained until 2018. The principal unit on the base in 2020 is the 1 Military Working Dogs Regiment, Royal Army Veterinary Corps. In November 2016 the Government published the document 'A Better Defence Estate' in which the closure of St George's Barracks was announced.

Details

Two Air Ministry J-Type Aircraft Sheds, or hangars, designed in 1939 by the Air Ministry Directorate of Works to design drawing 3084/39 and constructed by Sir William Arrol and Co. The western hangar was adapted in 1959 as the Receipt, Inspection and Maintenance (RIM) building for Thor missiles. The eastern hangar was converted into the Technical Storage building for the Thor project.

MATERIALS: the hangars are principally constructed from steel and brick with concrete floors.

PLAN: the hangars are located about 530m east of the main entrance on Edith Weston Road. They are rectangular in plan and are 300ft (91.44m) in length, 197ft 2in (60.09m) in width and to the roof apex measure 48ft 10ins (14.88m).

EXTERIOR: the J-Type hangars are 18 bays in length formed from arched steel lattice roof trusses supported by steel columns set at 16ft 8ins (5.08m) centres, giving a total length of 300ft (91.44m) and clear internal span of 150ft (45.72m). The ends of the roof trusses project outside the hangar and above the side annexes. The roofs are covered by 0.25 inch (0.635cm) mild steel plates. Typically, this hangar type had lifting tackle runways the width of the span, but here in both cases later inserted ceilings have obscured the roof structure. The hangars are entered at either end through 30ft (9.144m) tall steel-framed and steel-covered sliding doors mounted on rails. Each opening has six door leaves with steel end frames at either end to support the doors. Above the doors the span of the truss is sealed in corrugated iron.

To either side of the hangars are flat-roofed annexes that typically accommodated offices and crew rooms on the airfield side and workshops to the rear. These were lit by a large number of windows and entered from numerous doorways. All annexes show evidence of altered doorways, blocked windows, and all the window frames have been replaced. Above the annexes the main hangar walls are lit by a band of steel-framed windows and above these the wall was originally clad in corrugated iron. On the western end wall of the southern annex belonging to the western hangar is a faded painted plan of the airfield.

Probably as part of the conversion work to adapt the western hangar as the RIM building in 1959, the hangar doors were permanently sealed and new openings created. To the west a vehicle-sized opening was cut and a roller shutter door installed, a single smaller personnel entrance was also made. The eastern doors were also permanently closed and a roller shutter door inserted at the northern end giving access into a self-contained bay. Two smaller personnel doors and windows were also inserted into this hangar door.

INTERIOR: the internal alterations to the western hangar to adapt it as the RIM building in 1959 included the installation along the walls of a double row of flat plate radiators, the upper set angled downwards. The lower set has been removed and the position of the upper set obscured by a later suspended ceiling. In operation the missiles were brought into the west end of the building for inspection on their road trailers. Tests were carried out from a trailer mounted checkout station and a launching equipment simulator. The missile was also connected to a trailer mounted air conditioning unit. To manage the electrical supplies and other cabling sub-floor channels were laid, which remain visible in the floor with access covers by Elkington Gatic. Along the northern wall of the hangar brick compartmentalised workshops and offices were added, with a return that blocks access to the eastern hangar doors. In the centre of the hangar are two enclosed columns and a steel girder framework, whose tops are obscured by the suspended ceiling. These may represent extra supports for an overhead crane. At the eastern end of the hangar the roller shutter doors

gave access to a self-contained bay. Within this area are two, free-standing, monorail overhead cranes with chain pulley blocks manufactured by Morris, each rated at 1 ton, running on pierced steel beams. Rooms were also set aside in the annexes for the squadron headquarters and missile control centre, which was permanently manned by an RAF missile controller and USAF authentication officer who had radio links to their respective headquarters.

When the RAF Regiment Rapier air defence unit was moved to North Luffenham in the 1970s, it is likely that the former RIM building retained a specialised maintenance function for the sensor systems of the Rapier missiles, which also required a controlled environment. During this phase it is likely that the suspended ceiling was inserted and associated lighting. Modifications were also probably made to the compartmentalised rooms to the north and east which are two-storey with upper offices. On the rear wall of the crane bay a clear horizontal break line is visible with a lower brick wall and an upper breeze block section. It is uncertain to which phase the cranes to the east belong. Currently this suite of rooms is used for offices and storage.

The eastern J-Type hangar was converted into the Technical Storage building for the Thor project. Its main hangar doors were also sealed and to the west a roller shutter door inserted for vehicle access and a single personnel door. To the east two vehicle-sized roller shutter doors and a single personnel door were installed. Internally, the hangar was divided lengthways into two sections by a steel framed and panelled wall with access between the two areas controlled by roller shutter doors. In the area to the south a free-standing brick-built compartment has been built. A suspended ceiling has also been inserted into this hangar and below this a piped fire suppression system covering the entire hangar.

Selected Sources

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Map

National Grid Reference: SK9358604763



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