



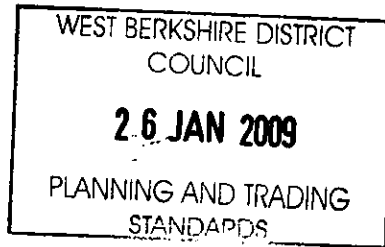
ENGLISH HERITAGE

SOUTH EAST REGION

Mr Gary Lugg
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Our ref: P00069611

21 January 2009

Dear Mr Lugg

**Notifications under Circular 01/2001 & GDPO 1995
AWE BURGHFIELD, BURGHFIELD, WEST BERKSHIRE
Application No 08/02287/COMIND**

Thank you for your letter of 30 December 2008 notifying English Heritage of the above application.

Summary

AWE Burghfield has been the subject of recent research into its historic significance which culminated in an Historic Characterisation and Management Strategy produced by Atkins in May 2007. This report also covered the Aldermaston and Blacknest sites. The historic significance of the site in a national and international context has led to English Heritage considering designation of selected structures as Scheduled Ancient Monuments, although that process has not been concluded.

The proposals under consideration are an important element in a wider project that seeks to ensure sustainable change to the site so that it can continue to perform its very specialist and nationally important role. The impact of the redevelopment on the existing character of the site will be significant and will be visible from the structures under consideration for designation. However recent demolition has already eroded the historic character of the site.

English Heritage does not object to the proposed development although it notes that demolitions have been carried out under permitted development rights and we hope that appropriate recording was commissioned. We recommend that any further demolition should only be carried out within the context of the need to provide the fullest possible record as discussed in our letter of 1 December 2006 to Andrew Holmes of Atkins Heritage.

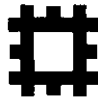


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English Heritage Advice

AWE burghfield is important because so much of the 1950's fabric continues in the purpose for which it was originally designed and because until recently little had been demolished. This is the site where weapons components are quality and safety checked before assembly, a role that it has always historically performed. It retains a large number of its World War II Royal Ordnance Factory buildings and features which makes it distinctive. The low rise, painted brick structures are an obvious component of its character and provide an historic "military village" atmosphere (*Atkins Report Page 71 para 2*) The majority of the site is identified as possessing Medium Heritage Value in the Atkins report, (*figure on page 101*) although this assessment is based on assessment of physical survival and does not fully incorporate assessment of the political or technical background of the site which represent further heritage values that affect significance. The potential designation of the Gravel Gerties suggests that the area of High Heritage Value should be re-assessed.

The recent programme of clearance has had a significant impact on the "military village" character of the site and the scale and design of the new facility will be in marked contrast to the remaining earlier buildings. English Heritage is clear that contrary to the assertion in the Non-Technical Summary of the Defence Exempt Environmental Appraisal (*14 Cultural Heritage*) there will be a significant impact on the historic character of the site. However, the change in character that will result from the erection of what will be by far the largest structure at AWE Burghfield is within a discrete part of the site, located within the retained road network. The bigger impact is the loss of the earlier structures which English Heritage hopes were recorded appropriately before they were demolished.

The scale of the building and associated structures will also result in visual impact on the area of the site containing the Gravel Gerties. However whilst there is an impact English Heritage does not regard it as detrimental because these structures are self contained, enclosed within a defensible doundary with no designed setting that relates to the remainder of the site.

Recommendation

English Heritage recommends that before any further demolition is contemplated appropriate recording strategies are agreed to ensure that the heritage values are sustaioned as far as possible on what is clearly a very special site.



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It is not necessary to consult us again on this application. Please send us a copy of the decision notice in due course. This will help us to monitor actions related to changes to historic places.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Barker

Team Leader

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cc



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