

# UK Tentative List of Potential Sites for World Heritage Nomination: Application form

Please save the application to your computer, fill in and email to:  
[UKTL.Application@culture.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:UKTL.Application@culture.gsi.gov.uk)

The application form should be completed using the boxes provided under each question, and, where possible, within the word limit indicated.

Please read the [Information Sheets](#) before completing the application form. It is also essential to refer to the accompanying [Guidance Note](#) for help with each question, and to the relevant paragraphs of UNESCO's *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, (OG)* available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines>

Applicants should provide only the information requested at this stage. Further information may be sought in due course.

## (1) Name of Proposed World Heritage Site

Former RAF Upper Heyford

## (2) Geographical Location

Name of country/region

Oxfordshire Great Britain

Grid reference to centre of site

SP515625

Please enclose a map preferably A4-size, a plan of the site, and 6 photographs, preferably electronically.

## (3) Type of Site

Please indicate category:

		Cultural					
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## (4) Description

Please provide a brief description of the proposed site, including the physical characteristics.  
200 words

There has been an airfield at Upper Heyford since WW1 but it was in 1950 when taken over by the USAF and particularly the 'hardening' in the 1970s when it became one of the most important sites in the Cold War conflict with the USSR/Warsaw Pact. The area enclosed by the United States Air Force within the security fence operated effectively as 'Little America' and comprises about 540ha including both military and residential facilities. The airfield to the north of Camp Road, the public highway which bisects the site, includes nuclear bomb stores, runways, 56 Hardened Aircraft Shelters (including the Quick Reaction Alert), squadron buildings, Battle Command Centre and Avionics. The physical remains are very much as they were left by the USAF in 1994. Very little demolition has taken place and the low-key commercial uses have left the airfield physically intact as what the British Government regard as the best preserved Cold War remains in a Country which, during the Cold War, was regarded and functioned as the unsinkable aircraft carrier USS Great Britain. The site sits on a plateau within the north Oxfordshire countryside about 10 miles north of Oxford.

### **(5) History**

Please provide a short summary statement of any significant events in the history of the site.  
200 words

Throughout the Cold War, Upper Heyford was home to a wide range of aircraft; reconnaissance, bombers and fighters. In the early 1950s the site was developed by the USAF Strategic Air Command and in 1970s when NATO decided that the USAF air bases in the East of the UK were too vulnerable, major investment was made in airfields towards the middle of the country. By July 1971 Upper Heyford had become the largest 'fighter' base in Europe, equipped with the F-111E designed to deliver intermediate range nuclear weapons. The hardening of the base took place from 1979 and the arrangement of the 59 HASs sought to minimise the damage from a first strike and preserve the ability to retaliate as part of the strategy of Flexible Response (successor to Mutually Assured Destruction). Planes from the Quick Reaction Response at Upper Heyford would have been among the first to respond to an attack on NATO. After the end of the Cold War the Upper Heyford F-111s were used in the Gulf War and the attack on Ghaddafi's Libya. Since 1995 the site has been the subject of the most important and revealing debate about Cold War heritage and its uses.

### **(6) Why do you think this site should be inscribed as a World Heritage Site?**

Give reasons. 200 words

Quite simply, Upper Heyford is the best preserved of any site involved in the global genocide pact represented by the strategy of Mutually Assured Destruction, although subsequently re-modeled as Flexible Response, there could be no certainty that this would have led to a different result. As yet there are no military sites on the WHS list which represent the period in the history of mankind during which there was both the

capacity and the plan to destroy most if not all the people on the planet. This gap should be filled and, due to its extraordinary state of preservation and its location on the ‘frontline’; manned by the USAF and regularly ‘threatened’ by Soviet aircraft, Upper Heyford is uniquely qualified to fulfill this role. The value of WHS designation lies substantially on its ability to be appreciated by an international audience and Upper Heyford is at the most accessible point on the UK road network and readily served by both bus and rail. It also lies on a well trodden tourist trail which happens to include the home of Winston Churchill, a Cold War figure of huge importance. Designation is also important to prevent further careless changes to the Cold War landscape and ICOMOS –UK have questioned why this has not previously been proposed.

**(7) Please say why the site has Outstanding Universal Value and specify the main features which underpin its importance. 200 words**

Apart perhaps from global warming, the potential of nuclear holocaust represents the greatest threat to human life on the planet. It will be partly from the use of Cold War heritage that peoples from all countries will be able to explore this global conflict and develop plausible stories about its origins, duration and ending. It would be of universal value to have a better understanding of how the super-powers equipped both themselves and their allies at a scale sufficient to destroy mankind several times over. The universal value in its designation and preservation (existing local designations notwithstanding) would be to realize the potential of the site in the context of international heritage. The history of NATO is already a step away from national heritage and there is scope at Upper Heyford to accommodate Cold War stories from other countries and power blocs. The ‘frontline’ occupied by Upper Heyford obscured the fact that there were many hot wars being fought in other corners of the world. Through associations with other Cold War heritage sites (some being related in a military sense), the international dimension of the conflict can be revealed, including the many million casualties and the geo-political outcomes reflected in the current world map.

**(8) Outstanding Universal Value**

Please state which of the [10 UNESCO criteria for Outstanding Universal Value](#) the proposed site meets, and describe briefly why the criteria were chosen. Please see criteria note at the end of the form.

<b>UNESCO criterion</b>		<b>Why was this criterion chosen? 100 words</b>
(i)		
(ii)		
(iii)		

(iv)		<p><b>Be an outstanding example of a type of technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;</b>Upper Heyford represents the best preserved Cold War remains in the UK. It was the largest base, (now) with the longest runway, and with massive nuclear capability. The planned nuclear holocaust must count as the ultimate folly and could have been the final stage in human development and history. The air base includes all the components of both MAD and Flexible Response in a landscape contained within an intact and unscalable security fence. Its nuclear capability and state of preservation makes it the outstanding example of its type in western Europe if not in the world.</p>
(v)		
(vi)		
(vii)		
(viii)		
(ix)		
(x)		

**(9) Authenticity (for cultural or mixed sites only)**

Authenticity concerns the current state of conservation of a cultural or mixed site; especially whether its importance, its Outstanding Universal Value, is still obvious from its physical condition. Please outline the condition of the site. 200 words

The military side of the air base has suffered a number of minor but unfortunate changes. One HAS has been converted to a commercial storage use and the UK Government has granted permission for others to be used likewise (currently subject to a High Court challenge). This permission would also allow for a small area of the site to be used for car storage. However, none of these changes are irreversible and the current owners have indicated that they are unlikely to further implement the current permission (if it survives the legal challenge). Importantly, the Cold War landscape (buildings, fences and runways) are intact and will remain so. Equally, if not more important, is that the unfortunate changes represent and authentically reflect the attitude to Cold War heritage of the authorities (MoD, DCMS, English Heritage, DCLG and local government), private business, the history academy and the general public in the years immediately following the conflict.. Heritage is ‘used’ not only to understand more about what happened during the period while the site was in use, but to understand more about our current values and norms. The precise condition of the Cold War remains at Upper Heyford is redolent of both histories of the Cold War and more recent British attitudes towards that global conflict. The result of this application would be a very important addition to this ensemble of attitudes to an awareness of the importance of Cold War heritage.

#### **(10) Integrity**

For cultural or mixed sites, please state how much original fabric is included in the proposed site, and its condition. For guidance on how the test of integrity is met for natural sites under criteria (vii) – (x), please refer to the OG 90-94. Information Sheet 6 also provides help on this point. 200 words

A purist and uncompromising approach to the protection of such a valuable heritage asset would suggest that both military and civilian areas of the airbase should not only have WHS status but also be preserved. Whilst the preference is still to have designated all of the area located within the current security fence, it is acknowledged that the residential area to the south of Camp Road, where only about half of the servicemen actually lived, is most likely to be redeveloped. The extent of the redevelopment is still the subject of consideration by the (new) owners and possible planning applications. The primary purpose of the WHS designation would be to preserve the character and appearance of the military facilities which will retain outstanding universal value. The perimeter fence, runways, buildings and bomb stores currently remain in a state of near operational readiness. Hardened against aerial attack they are likely to remain so for a very long time, even under a regime of benign neglect. The detail of the conservation strategy is contained within legal agreements with the local planning authority. The extent to which the ‘integrity’ of the site would be affected by redevelopment is a matter of opinion, but has been found to be acceptable by English Heritage.

#### **(11) Are there other examples of this kind of site already on the World Heritage List?**

Yes    No

if yes, please list. 100 words

**(12) What distinguishes this site from other similar sites?**

150 words

There are other airfields in the UK which were used by the USAF/NATO during the Cold War. However some have been 'restored' (eg Greenham Common), remain operational (eg Lakenheath) or have been put into new uses (eg Alconbury). Upper Heyford remains substantially in the condition in which it was operational during the Cold War and is the best preserved air base on the NATO side of the Iron Curtain. In so far as WHS designation is part of a project to make heritage and history accessible to an international audience, Upper Heyford also happens to be by far the most accessible of the Cold War remains in the UK, which itself represents an accessible location in terms of international interest in such sites including from former NATO and Soviet/Warsaw Pact countries. Upper Heyford was not a missile base (like Greenham or Molesworth) but accommodated a wide range of aircraft and a very substantial nuclear arsenal.

**(13) How does the site contribute to meeting UNESCO's priorities for a balanced World Heritage List?**

200 words

Upper Heyford would start to fill the gap in world heritage resulting from the absence of any site relating to the global and nuclear armed conflict between the first and second worlds. Whilst it is not a 'natural' site or located in a less represented country, Upper Heyford is part of the heritage of all countries involved in the Cold War (whose existence was threatened by nuclear holocaust) and its proxy wars, and has the capacity to tell histories from around the world (including the third world) since the Communist revolution of 1917. The massive and imposing physical remains would also act as both a counterpart and complement to the other media through which the Cold War is remembered, eg books, film, and museums. The current List appears to be unbalanced in the absence of a Cold War site and lays UNESCO open to charges that is denying or underplaying the actual harm caused during the conflict, the geo-political remains and the existential threat which nuclear (and biological/chemical) weapons presented to the future of mankind or its civilizations.

**(14) What benefits do you think World Heritage Site inscription would bring?**

Please indicate the main opportunities and benefits.

Education	X	Tourism	X	Regeneration	X
Conservation	X	Protection	X	Other benefits	X

Please describe. 100 words.

Local and central government had previously hoped to see the airbase removed from the landscape. The prolonged debate about its future would be told and would reveal the story of growing awareness of the importance of Cold War memory and history. WHS designation would be the culmination of efforts to educate this and future generations about the importance of remembering the time immediately preceding and joining onto and into the current era. The protection of the site from inappropriate developments would be enhanced as would the conservation of remains such as the perimeter fence (and possibly iconic artifacts such as F111 aircraft). The site would tap into an existing tourist trail. A WHS would give prestige and regenerate what would otherwise be a somewhat bleak new housing development. WHS inscription would give the strongest possible signal that belatedly, but just in time, there is some official recognition being given to the importance of Cold War heritage, both national and universal.

**(15) Are there any known threats to the proposed World Heritage Site?**

Yes

Please indicate any proposed developments, or other potential impacts on the site.

<b>Impact</b>	<b>Please describe.</b> 100 words for each issue.
Development	The 15 year long planning process describes changing awareness and attitudes to the Cold War and this process is reflected in existing and proposed changes to the land and buildings. The owners are focusing on the addition of 700 dwellings to the 300 ex-servicemen houses which will be retained. The heritage value of the airfield should not be seriously affected. There is a greater threat from a permission for commercial storage if implemented without proper safeguards. As they say that they bought the site in 2009 due to its historic interest the owners should welcome the prospect of WHS designation and to accommodate a heritage imperative in their new plans.
Environmental	

Other	

**(16) Legal Protection**

Please list any legal and other protections, including cultural and natural designations, which cover the whole or part of the proposed site. 200 words

The whole of the military and residential areas, including the peripheral fencing were included by Cherwell DC in a Conservation Area in 2006 and there are a number of Listed Buildings including the control tower (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990). The Scheduled Ancient Monuments (Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979) include nuclear bomb stores, battle command centre, avionics building and the Quick Reaction Alert comprising 9 Hardened Aircraft Shelters. The conservation area designation protects all buildings from demolition without consent. The whole of the site is subject to the statutory controls over new development in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

**(17) Ownership** Please list the main owners of the site, where possible.

Dorchester Group of Companies

23 Berkeley Square

Mayfair

London

W1J 6HE

Tel - +44 (0)20 7665 6624

Mob - +44 (0)7870 606 269

Do the owners support the application? The owners say that they are preoccupied with the residential aspects of the redevelopment but also that “...we are very interested with the onsite history at upper Heyford, which was part of what first attracted ourselves to the base,”

A statement of support from the principle owners of the proposed site should be attached to the application, preferably electronically.



**(18) Local Authority support for the site**

Please list all Local Authorities with an interest in the proposed site.

Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council

Does the proposed site have local Authority support? Cherwell District Council has stated that they would be “neutral” in respect of this application (not having the time and resources to assess the implications)

Please attach a statement of support from each one in relation to the application.

Please indicate whether the site is included in the local plan/s by specific policies.

Yes

Please describe. 200 words.

Oxfordshire Structure Plan Policy H2 allows for a settlement of a total of about 1000 dwellings as a means of enabling environmental improvements and the heritage interest of the site as a military base with Cold War associations to be conserved. There are no relevant site specific policies in plans produced by Cherwell DC. Government policy in PPS 15 would support the highest level of recognition and protection to a site acknowledged by Government to be the best of its kind. These policies have been found by the Communities Secretary to be not materially different from those in PPGs 15 and 16 which, in turn, were found to be consistent with those in the relevant European Conventions.

**(19) Stakeholders**

Please list the main parties with an interest in the site. 100 words.

Various businesses have businesses tenancies on some of the land and buildings. Some of the houses are let out. Thames Valley Police occupy a building and use some of the runways/hardstandings. Upper Heyford Parish Council has been involved in consultations on the future of the site. English Heritage regard the site as unique in terms of scale and state of preservation. Heritage groups in US and Russia have expressed an interest in using the site for heritage purposes. As with all heritage sites the ‘interest’ is largely with future generations who are unable to make the case for the need which, in this particular case is to afford the highest level of recognition and protection to a site that threatened the actual prospect of future generations.

**(20) How will the Site be managed?**

Please outline the management arrangements for the proposed World Heritage Site, including where the responsibilities lie. 200 words

Subject to the result of a legal challenge, the owners would have a permission that is subject to planning obligations relating to the provision of a heritage centre and

controls over the use of the airfield and its buildings all drafted with the assistance and support of English Heritage. In fact the management plans were produced on behalf of previous owners with no particular interest in the heritage of the site. The site has now been bought by a company attracted to the base due to historical interest and which has made it clear that the approved plans are inadequate and are seeking ideas of how they could be improved. There is no doubt that the management of the site will incorporate heritage objectives (more so than in the current plans) although the details are yet to be developed and agreed, It is likely that there will be a management company for the airfield with separate management and dedicated staff for a heritage centre and tours

**(21) Funding: the nomination**

Please indicate how the preparation of the nomination would be funded.

100 words

The question of whether the ‘enabling’ requirement in the Structure Plan policy H2 would extend to the ‘preparation of the nomination’ would have to be discussed with the new owners when the cost implications are known. The Oxford Trust for Contemporary History has private funds and resources. Were the DCMS were to support the nomination at this stage investigations would be carried out into what further work would be necessary to progress the application.

**(22) Funding: management**

Please outline how the future management would be funded. 100 words

The ‘outstanding universal heritage value’ of the site is a hardened Cold War landscape, most of which comprises Scheduled Monuments and their settings which have statutory protection. This landscape would not lose any heritage value were no active management to take place. Although the site has potential for enhancement with artifacts (eg aircraft), archives and interpretation, these are inessentials and would be provided as and when they could be afforded (from owner’s current obligation for at least the first 5 years, OTCH, admittance receipts, sales, grants) and when their additional value can be properly assessed.

**Name and Contact Details of Applicant**

Name	Daniel Scharf
Status	Oxford Trust for Contemporary History
Address	

Telephone	
Email	

Completed applications should be forwarded, preferably in electronic format, to the World Heritage Team, Department for Culture, Media and Sport at the following email address:  
[UKTL.Application@culture.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:UKTL.Application@culture.gsi.gov.uk)

Any material that cannot be sent electronically should be sent to the following address:

World Heritage Team, Department for Culture, Media and Sport

2-4 Cockspur Street

London

SW1 5DH

The closing date for applications is 11th June 2010

## UNESCO's criteria for the assessment of Outstanding Universal Value

(para 77 of the Operational Guidelines)

- (i) represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
- (ii) exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;
- (iii) bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
- (iv) be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;
- (v) be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;
- (vi) be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.
- (vii) contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
- (viii) be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;

(ix) be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;

(x) contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.