

Section '3' - Applications recommended for PERMISSION, APPROVAL or CONSENT

**Application No :** 14/02136/FULL1

**Ward:**  
**Biggin Hill**

**Address :** RAF Station Main Road Biggin Hill TN16  
3AY

**OS Grid Ref:** E: 541071 N: 160687

**Applicant :** Biggin Hill Battle Of Britain Supporters Club **Objections :** NO

**Description of Development:**

Construction of a Museum with integral cafeteria, shop, display areas and lavatories and relocation of existing car park

**Key designations:**

Conservation Area: RAF Biggin Hill  
Biggin Hill Noise Contours  
Biggin Hill Noise Contours  
Biggin Hill Safeguarding Birds  
Biggin Hill Safeguarding Area  
Green Belt  
London City Airport Safeguarding  
Major Development Sites  
Techical Sites BH  
Techical Sites BH  
Techical Sites BH  
Techical Sites BH

**Proposal**

The proposal is for the construction of a new heritage centre commemorating the military role of RAF Biggin Hill. The centre would front the A233 Main Road and would be situated within the historic grounds of Biggin Hill Airport, within land owned by the Ministry of Defence and presently occupied by a car park. It would be situated to the north of the existing St George's RAF Memorial Chapel which is a Statutory Listed Building. The existing car park would be relocated the rear of the RAF Chapel.

The proposed heritage centre would comprise a detached building occupying a footprint measuring 21.8m (wide) x 21.5 (as scaled from the submitted plan) which would incorporate two storeys of floorspace. Part of the space would comprise an exhibition/gallery area which would occupy part of the ground and the entire first

floors. A cafeteria and shop would also be included within the ground floor as part of this proposal. Up to 38 parking spaces would be provided, together with cycle and motorcycle spaces, and an additional 20 overflow car parking spaces would be provided to the north of the proposed building.

The entrance to the heritage centre would front Main Road and the existing access would be changed to enable a more direct route from the public highway. The area surrounding the centre would be landscaped and an existing access road would be modified to serve the replacement car park. Five mature trees within the areas occupied by the proposed building and car park would be lost as a result of the proposal.

Externally, the building would be of modern design and incorporate a convex roof which would rise to a maximum height of 8.0m and comprise of metal decking with plasticol coating (copper green patination). The external walls would be made up of facing brickwork and 'Kalwall' translucent wall panels (of brown straw colour). The windows and doors would comprise of PPC aluminium with tinted panels.

The application is accompanied by a Supporting Report which incorporates a Heritage Statement, a Business Plan, an Archaeological Statement, and an Arboricultural Report.

### **Location**

As noted above the centre would front the A233 Main Road and would be situated in the historic grounds of Biggin Hill Airport to the north of the existing RAF Chapel. The site falls within the RAF Biggin Hill Conservation Area.

### **Comments from Local Residents**

Representations have been received which can be summarised as follows:

- source of pain that Biggin Hill has no museum to commemorate its wartime history
- long-overdue facility
- better use for the site
- centre will complement and ensure the long-term success of the RAF Chapel
- such a centre can only enhance the iconic name of RAF Biggin Hill
- this proposal will enable RAF Biggin Hill to achieve its full recognition
- it is to be hoped that Bromley Council will release the money it is holding for a heritage centre project, as this proposal meets all the requirements expected of it

### **Comments from Consultees**

No objections have been received from the Council's Drainage advisor, subject to conditions.

No objections have been raised by Thames Water.

Comments from the Council's Highways, English Heritage and other consultees will be reported verbally at the meeting.

## **Planning Considerations**

The following Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policies are relevant to this application:

- G1 The Green Belt
- BE1 Design of New Development
- BE8 Statutory Listed Buildings
- BE11 Conservation Areas
- C1 Community Facilities
- C3 Access to Buildings for People with Disabilities
- L9 Indoor Recreation and Leisure
- T3 Parking
- BH2 New Development (although this should be read in conjunction with the national guidance referred to below which clarifies national policy)
- BH4 Biggin Hill Airport: Passenger Terminal/Control Tower/West Camp
- NE7 Development and Trees

The Supplementary Planning Guidance for the RAF Biggin Hill Conservation Area is relevant to this application.

London Plan Policies 4.6 (Support for and enhancement of arts, culture, sport and entertainment) and 7.8 (Heritage assets and archaeology) are relevant to this application.

In addition, Sections 9 and 12: 'Protecting Green Belt land', and 'enhancing the historic environment' of the National Planning Policy Framework, are relevant in respect of this application.

## **Planning History**

There have been previous plans to construct a heritage centre within the historic RAF Biggin Hill Airport environs. Previous proposals were larger in scale and would have involved greater financial expenditure. It was previously envisaged that the heritage centre would be constructed at land on the opposite side of Main Road, beside the housing development within the former RAF Married Quarters, linked to an application approved under ref. 04/02334 which reserved an area of land specifically for the siting of a heritage centre. That application was submitted in connection with application ref. 04/02322 which related to the development of some 139 dwellings within those former Married Quarters. The application was subject to a legal agreement relating to the provision of a financial contribution toward a heritage centre. However, that proposal did come to fruition.

## **Conclusions**

The main issues for consideration relate to the appropriateness of this proposal, in terms of the historic context of RAF Biggin Hill and its impact on the Conservation Area and wider Green Belt.

As Members will be aware, there have been previous proposals (and a planning permission) to provide a heritage centre around the historic environs of Biggin Hill Airport, although the size and siting of those earlier schemes have varied in relation to this proposal. The principle of this proposal is therefore considered acceptable.

This proposal is located in West Camp is within Area 1. This application conforms with Policy BH4 which requires that new developments should contribute to the conservation and historic interest of the area and retain the open 'campus' nature. In turn this should ensure the continuation of the long-term relationship between this area, the airport and the local community. The proposal may also help to support the long-term upkeep of the neighbouring RAF Memorial Chapel.

The proposal is considered to be appropriate in view of its immediate connection with the activities of the airfield, the RAF Chapel and connection with the local communities and relatives of those who served the RAF during the Second World War. Whilst the design of the proposed heritage centre will differ in comparison to the surrounding buildings within the airport grounds, it will incorporate some reference to the neighbouring RAF Chapel, including the use of facing bricks, whilst it is considered that the setting of that listed chapel will be maintained in view of the separation between the two buildings. Taking account of its design and proposed use, it is also considered that the development will serve to preserve the character and appearance of the RAF Biggin Hill Conservation Area. Whilst it is noted that five mature trees will be lost, given the overall benefits identified in relation to this proposal, and the provision of a landscaping scheme and replacement-trees condition, on balance no objection is raised in this regard.

Although the site falls within the Green Belt there are various policy considerations, serve to justify this proposal. These include the siting of the proposed building and car park which will be situated within the historic grounds of Biggin Hill Airport amongst a cluster of various buildings, of which the proposed development would form a related use, and which would provide an important cultural and educational facility in the locality. Notwithstanding that issue, however, Policy BH4 does support applications which would contribute to the conservation and historic interest of the area. It is considered that these points represent very special circumstances which support such development in the Green Belt.

In terms of the financial viability of the scheme, it is noted that the Airport and adjoining business area are a major asset to the Borough and are direct and indirect generators of employment. The assessment of financial viability is considered to be adequate to justify this scheme in its own right, taking account of projected visitor numbers and revenue.

The scheme is compliant with Policy C1 as it does not reduce the number of community facilities in the area and is already in an area with suitable public access through public transport and A233. Rather, the proposal will add to the

number of community facilities in the area and provide enhanced access through the provision of a new entrance and parking spaces (Policy C3). Furthermore, the scheme seeks to promote the provision of developments that would meet the current and future education, social or other needs in the Borough.

Taking account of the above considerations, it is recommended that planning permission be granted for this proposal.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on the files refs. 04/02332, 04/02334 and 14/02136, set out in the Planning History section above, excluding exempt information.

## **RECOMMENDATION: PERMISSION**

Subject to the following conditions:

- 1      ACA01      Commencement of development within 3 yrs  
ACA01R      A01 Reason 3 years
- 2      Details of a surface water drainage system (including storage facilities where necessary) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any part of the development hereby permitted is commenced and the approved system shall be completed before any part of the development hereby permitted is first occupied, and permanently retained thereafter. In order to check that the proposed storm water system meets the Council's requirements the following information shall be provided:
  - a clearly labelled drainage layout plan showing pipe networks and any attenuation soakaways
  - where infiltration forms part of the proposed storm water system such as soakaways, soakage
  - test results and test locations are to be submitted in accordance with BRE digest 365

Calculations should demonstrate how the system operates during the 1 in 30 year critical duration storm event and climate changes.

- 3      AED02R      Reason D02
- 3      ACA03      Compliance with landscaping details  
ACA03R      Reason A03
- 4      ACA07      Boundary enclosure - no detail submitted  
ACA07R      Reason A07
- 5      ACB01      Trees to be retained during building op.  
ACB01R      Reason B01
- 6      ACB02      Trees - protective fencing  
ACB02R      Reason B02
- 7      ACB04      Trees - no trenches, pipelines or drains  
ACB04R      Reason B04
- 8      ACB05      Replacement tree(s) elsewhere on site  
ACB05R      Reason B05
- 9      ACC01      Satisfactory materials (ext'n'l surfaces)

	ACC01R	Reason C01
10	ACK01	Compliance with submitted plan
	ACC03R	Reason C03

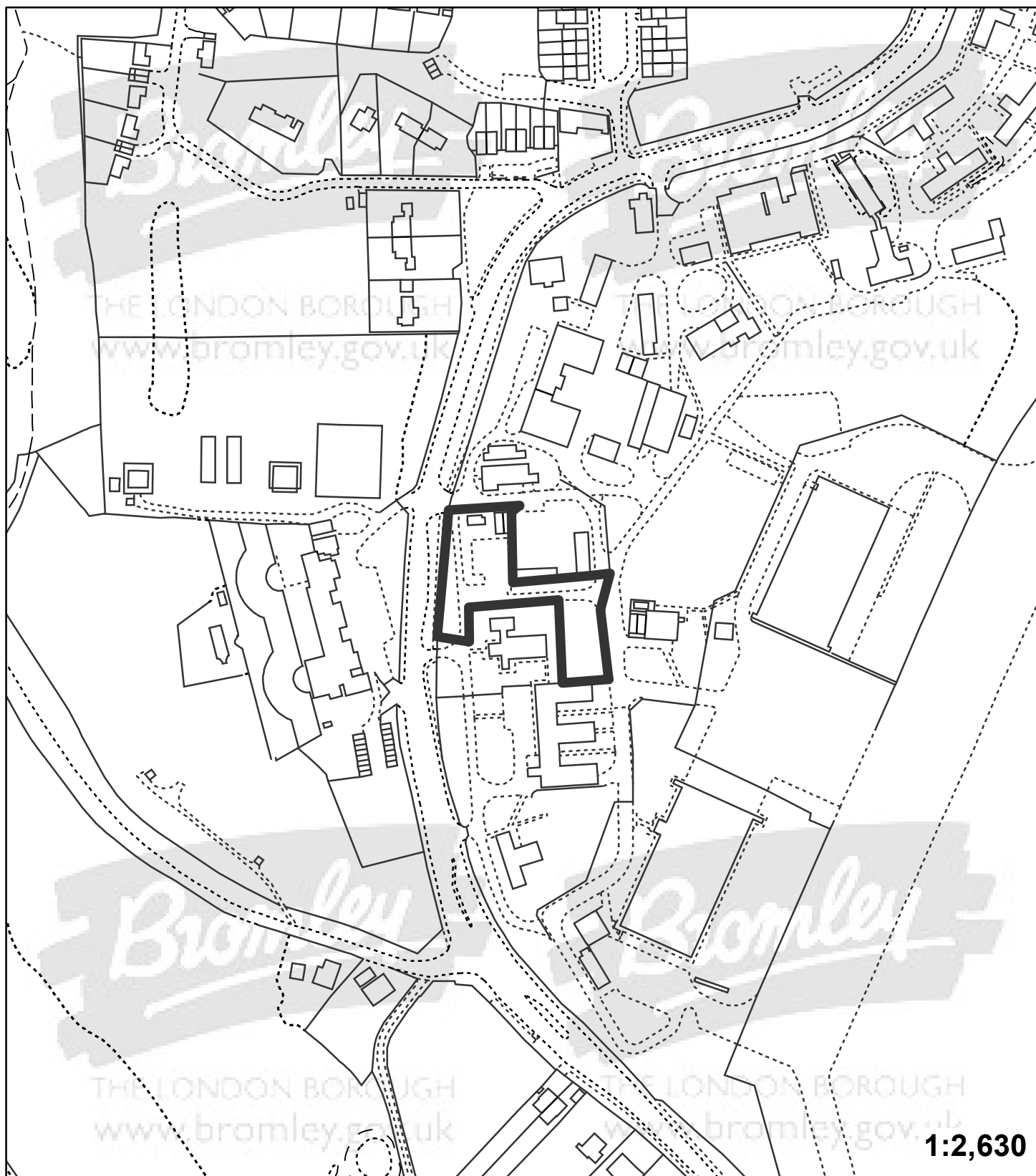
INFORMATIVE(S)

1 The applicant is advised that matters relating to advertising within the site are subject to Advertisement Consent which should be the subject of separate applications.

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"This plan is provided to identify the location of the site and should not be used to identify the extent of the application site"

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