

Bankstown Airport RAAF Headquarters

Photographic Archival Recording

Report to Aeria Management Group

March 2023



 artefact

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Document history and status

Revision	Date issued	Reviewed by	Approved by	Date approved	Revision type
1	24 March 2023	Sandra Wallace, Artefact	Sandra Wallace, Artefact	27 March 2023	Internal review
2	27 March 2023				Draft
3					Final

Project name:	Bankstown Airport Heritage Reporting– RAAF Headquarters PAR
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Project number:	21014
Name of organisation:	Artefact Heritage Services
Document version:	1

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Aeria Management Group (AMG) (formerly Sydney Metro Airports) are proposing demolition of a World War Two (WWII) era auxiliary building located within Bankstown Airport, the former Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Headquarters building. The former RAAF Headquarters building is in the vicinity of the northern precinct of the airport, colloquially known as the 'Chevron' due to the distinct layout of the buildings and streets. The RAAF building is in a highly dilapidated condition and is at risk of vandalism and collapse.

Artefact Heritage (Artefact) has been engaged by AMG to prepare a Photographic Archival Recording (PAR) of the former RAAF Headquarters building. The aim of the PAR is to provide a visual record of the former RAAF Headquarters prior to the demolition of the building. This PAR presents images that were taken in the late morning of 6 March 2023.

Bankstown Airport is located on Commonwealth land and has no formal heritage protections associated with the site. However, the site is located within the curtilage of Bankstown Airport, listed under Schedule 5 of the Bankstown Local Environmental Plan (LEP) as 'Bankstown Aerodrome' (LEP Item No. I18).

The *Draft Chevron Precinct, Bankstown Airport: Statement of Heritage Impact* prepared by Artefact in September 2022 (SoHI 2022) found that the demolition of the former RAAF Headquarters, in conjunction with the other WWII structures, would result in a major adverse impact to Bankstown Aerodrome (LEP No. I18) and the Chevron Precinct.

This PAR is being prepared pursuant to the mitigation recommendation outlined in the September 2022 SoHI stating the necessity for 'Archival Recording':¹

Prior to dismantling, each hangar, auxiliary building and non-structural element should be formally documented in situ via photographic archival recording according to the (former) NSW Heritage Office guidelines for Photographic Recording of Heritage Items Using Film or Digital Capture.

Methodology

This archival recording was prepared in accordance with the following guidelines:

- *Photographic Recording of Heritage Items Using Film or Digital Capture* (NSW Heritage Office 2006).

The following report meets the above guidelines. The archival recording includes a historical background, description and discussion of the significance of the former RAAF Headquarters. Digital copies of this PAR will be provided to AMG, the Commonwealth Government and the Canterbury Library and Knowledge Centres (Local and Family History).

¹ Artefact Heritage, 2022. *Draft Chevron Precinct, Bankstown Airport: Statement of Heritage Impact*. September 2022: 112.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Aeria Management Group (AMG) (formerly Sydney Metro Airports) are proposing demolition of a WWII era auxiliary building located within Bankstown Airport, the former Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Headquarters building. The former RAAF Headquarters building is in the vicinity of the northern precinct of the airport, colloquially known as the 'Chevron' due to the distinct layout of the buildings and streets. The RAAF building is in a highly dilapidated condition and is at risk of vandalism and collapse.

Artefact Heritage (Artefact) has been engaged by AMG to prepare a Photographic Archival Recording (PAR) of the former RAAF Headquarters building. The aim of the PAR is to provide a visual record of the former RAAF Headquarters prior to the demolition of the building. This PAR presents images that were taken in the late morning of 6 March 2023.

Bankstown Airport is located on Commonwealth land and has no formal heritage protections associated with the site. However, the site is located within the curtilage of Bankstown Airport, listed under Schedule 5 of the Bankstown Local Environmental Plan (LEP) as 'Bankstown Aerodrome' (LEP Item No. 118).

The *Draft Chevron Precinct, Bankstown Airport: Statement of Heritage Impact* prepared by Artefact in September 2022 (SoHI 2022) found that the demolition of the former RAAF Headquarters, in conjunction with the other WWII structures, would have major adverse direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to Bankstown Aerodrome (LEP No. 118) and the Chevron Precinct. The SoHI 2022 included an assessment of significance of individual items within the Chevron Precinct.

This PAR is being prepared pursuant to the mitigation recommendation outlined in the September 2022 SoHI stating the necessity for 'Archival Recording':²

Prior to dismantling, each hangar, auxiliary building and non-structural element should be formally documented in situ via photographic archival recording according to the (former) NSW Heritage Office guidelines for Photographic Recording of Heritage Items Using Film or Digital Capture.

1.2 Previous investigations

A number of reports have been prepared in relation to the former RAAF Headquarters building. The following reports are relevant to this report:

- *Heritage Report: Former RAAF Headquarters Building, Bankstown Airport*, Heritage21 2015 (Heritage Report 2015)
- *Draft Chevron Precinct, Bankstown Airport: Statement of Heritage Impact*, Artefact Heritage September 2022 (SoHI 2022)
- *Bankstown Airport Heritage Management Plan*, AECOM 2018 (HMP 2018)

² Artefact Heritage, September 2022. *Draft Chevron Precinct, Bankstown Airport: Statement of Heritage Impact*, 112.

1.3 Study area

The former RAAF Headquarters building is located northern precinct of Bankstown Airport referred to as the Chevron Precinct, on the north-eastern side of the intersection of Airport Avenue with Comper Street. Bankstown Airport is located approximately 26 km south-west of the Sydney Central Business District (CBD), between the suburbs of Bankstown and Georges Hall. The airport falls within the Canterbury-Bankstown Local Government Area (LGA), however the study area falls entirely within Commonwealth land and is outside the LGA's municipal jurisdiction.

The location of the study area is shown in Figure 1.

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Figure 1: Study area map

1.4 Proposed works

The proposal is part of an urban renewal programme at Bankstown Airport, which seeks to provide modern aviation facilities equipped with improved safety measures for employees, aircrafts, landside vehicles and pedestrians, ultimately improving the airside operation of the airport. Demolition of the dilapidated former RAAF Headquarters building forms part of this scope of work.

1.5 Methodology

1.5.1 Photographic Archival Recording Methodology

This archival recording was prepared in accordance with the following guidelines:

- *Photographic Recording of Heritage Items Using Film or Digital Capture* (NSW Heritage Office 2006).

The following report meets the above guidelines. The archival recording includes a historical background, description and discussion of the significance of the former RAAF Headquarters. This archival recording has been prepared in response to Artefact heritage's recommendation from the SoHI 2022.

A site inspection of the Bankstown Airport RAAF Headquarters was conducted on 6 March 2023 by Charlotte Simons (Senior Associate, Artefact Heritage) and Katherine Chalmers (Heritage Consultant, Artefact Heritage).

Each photograph was recorded on a photo log with the direction noted and a description provided (Table 3 in Section 6.0). The general locations and direction of the photographs were marked on an accompanying aerial map (figures hyperlinked here in Section 7.0). Thumbnails of the final archival photographs are provided in Appendix A, and all digital photographs are provided on an accompanying CD in RAW and JPG formats.

Digital copies of this PAR will be provided to AMG, Commonwealth Government and the Canterbury Library and Knowledge Centres (Local and Family History) in accordance with the *Photographic Recording of Heritage Items Using Film or Digital Capture*.³

1.5.2 Significance criteria

Commonwealth Heritage assessment criteria

The Heritage Management Plan for Bankstown Airport requires that all buildings within the Chevron Precinct, including the former RAAF Headquarters, need to be assessed in accordance with the Commonwealth Heritage assessment criteria. The criteria are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Commonwealth Heritage assessment criteria

Criteria	Description
A – Commonwealth Heritage List	The place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history

³ NSW Heritage Office, 2006. *Photographic Recording of Heritage Items Using Film or Digital Capture*. Parramatta: NSW Heritage Office.

Criteria	Description
B – Commonwealth Heritage List	The place has significant heritage value because of the place's possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history
C – Commonwealth Heritage List	The place has significant heritage value because of the place's potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia's natural or cultural history
D – Commonwealth Heritage List	The place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or • a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments
E – Commonwealth Heritage List	The place has significant heritage values because of the place's importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics values by a community or cultural group
F – Commonwealth Heritage List	The place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period
G – Commonwealth Heritage List	The place has significant heritage value because of the place's strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons
H – Commonwealth Heritage List	The place has significant heritage value because of the place's special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Australia's natural or cultural history
I – Commonwealth Heritage List	The place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance as part of Indigenous tradition

1.6 Report authorship

This report has been prepared by Katherine Chalmers (Heritage Consultant, Artefact Heritage) and Charlotte Simons (Senior Associate, Artefact Heritage). Dr Sandra Wallace (Managing Director, Artefact Heritage) provided input and reviewed the report.

The photographs were taken on 6 March 2023 by Charlotte Simons (Senior Associate, Artefact Heritage) and Katherine Chalmers (Heritage Consultant, Artefact Heritage).

2.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Bankstown Airport

2.1.1 Establishment and wartime operation

Following the commencement of WWII in 1939, Bankstown airfield was established as Sydney's second aerodrome and the base for the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and the Women's Australian Auxiliary Air Force (WAAAF).⁴ The aerodrome was originally known as No. 2 Aircraft Park, following the establishment of No. 1 Aircraft Park at Laverton in May 1940. Aircraft parks, as they were known, were intended as assembly and storage facilities for military aircraft prior to their dispatch to squadron units. Bankstown aerodrome was intended to supply aircraft to operational airfields and flying/training schools around NSW and had a close association with the Empire Air Training Scheme (EATS), a training scheme that recruited aircrew from around the British Empire.⁵

The Bankstown site was acquired for £60,000 under the *National Security Act* of June 1940; by 12 January 1941, the first aircraft had arrived for assembly.⁶ These aircraft included Avro Ansons and Airspeed Oxfords. The first hangar, a Bellman type (Hangar 15), was erected alongside these first aircraft, with the hangar assembly completed in twenty days.⁷ Dismantled aircraft were delivered to the site from the United States (US) or the United Kingdom (UK) and painstakingly assembled at Bankstown within large-scale, portable hangars.

Initially intended as a training facility, the airfield was given operational status in early 1941 due to fears of a Japanese invasion.⁸ A total of 22 RAAF units were associated with Bankstown throughout the war, including Squadron 451, No 101 Fighter Control Unit and No 453 Fighter Squadron.⁹ Following the Japanese attacks on American, British, and Dutch forces in December 1941, Bankstown airfield became a major military base in the Australian defence campaign. The aerodrome was able to be easily identified from the air due to its 'chevron' layout and was consequently vulnerable.¹⁰ This susceptibility was reflected in the six anti-aircraft guns positioned around the perimeter of the airfield to defend against enemy attack.¹¹ The aircraft manufacturing company de Havilland established its own aircraft assembly plant at the airport during 1942, with the first Australian-built de Havilland Mosquito aircraft completed in July 1943.¹²

In April 1942, the US Army Air Force (USAAF) arrived at Bankstown and assisted in the erection of a new hangar known as the 'American' or 'US Hangar', with units including the 41st Fighter Squadron, and the 35th and 49th Fighter Wings training at the site.¹³ By this time, Bankstown airfield was an impressive complex, with repair and assembly facilities, extensive fuel storage and accommodation for 700 officers (Figure 2). American officers returned to Bankstown for billeting, with their association

⁴ *Bankstown Airport Master Plan*, 18.

⁵ Ainsworth Heritage, 2007. *Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome: Bellman Hangar Conservation Management Plan*. Report prepared for Richmond Valley Council. 24.

⁶ White, K, 2001. 'Brief history of RAAF Station, Bankstown NSW'. Australian Aviation Museum, Bankstown.

⁷ Matts, C., Lockley, T. 2009. 'Bankstown Airport: Notes for a Heritage Assessment'. Australian Aviation Museum, Bankstown.

⁸ NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (former), 2001. 'Bankstown Aerodrome'. Accessed online 22 February 2021 at: <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?id=1060175>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Claoue-Long, Anne. 2015. *RAAF Bases Thematic Study: Report Prepared for the Department of Defence*. Redfern: GML Heritage, 23.

¹¹ Claoue-Long, *RAAF Bases Thematic Study*, 23.

¹² NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, 'Bankstown Aerodrome'.

¹³ NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, 'Bankstown Aerodrome'.

to Bankstown airfield leading to the area being playfully dubbed 'Yankstown'. The USAAF left Bankstown in 1944.

On 11 November 1944, Bankstown Aerodrome was commissioned as a Mobile Naval Operating Air Base (MONAB) for the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm. In January 1945, the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm took control of the MONAB, which was named HMS *Nabberley*.¹⁴ The Royal Navy used the MONAB to store, repair and assemble aircraft including Avengers, Corsairs, Expeditors, Hellcats, Martinets, Reliants, Sea Fires, Sea Otters and Fairey Fireflies.¹⁵ Following the conclusion of WWII, the Royal Navy departed Bankstown with the withdrawal of the British Pacific Fleet from Australia in 1946.



Figure 2: Map of building area at Bankstown Airport, dated 9 March 1945. Source: National Archives of Australia, SP857/10, 1045828

2.1.2 Post-war aviation use

Following the conclusion of WWII in 1945, a migrant camp was established at the airfield to house workers.¹⁶ The camp ran from 1949–52. At the same time, the remainder of the Bankstown airfield was taken over by the Department of Civil Aviation and significantly improved. The first paved runway was constructed in 1952 for the introduction of newer jet fighters assembled onsite.¹⁷ Further construction of runways and cross-runways followed in the 1960s and 1970s. These developments formalised Bankstown into a civil airport, with the site established as the largest general aviation airport in the Southern Hemisphere.¹⁸ To reflect this upgrade, a new control tower was commissioned in 1970.¹⁹

¹⁴ Royal Navy Research Archive, n.d. Fleet Air Arm Bases – RNAS Bankstown. Accessed online 11 May 2021 at: <http://www.royalnavyresearcharchive.org.uk/FAA-Bases/Bankstown.htm#.YJn32bUzY2w>

¹⁵ Boyd, Noni, Terry Kass, and Scott Robertson. 2006. *World Wars 1 & 2 Survey of Buildings, Sites & Cultural Landscapes in NSW. Final Report, Volume 1*. Naremburn: Robertson & Hindmarsh, 185.

¹⁶ *Bankstown Airport Master Plan*, 18.

¹⁷ Rosen, Sue. 1987. 'What's Under the Hill', *Bankstown Historical Society Journal*, Vol 21 No. 3.

¹⁸ *Bankstown Airport Master Plan*, 18.

¹⁹ NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, 'Bankstown Aerodrome'.

In 1988, Bankstown Airport was operated by the Federal Airports Corporation (FAC).²⁰ The Australian Aviation Museum opened in the southern section of the airport in 1994. The museum featured a non-local Bellman hangar, which had been sourced from a storage facility at Hoxton Park. The museum closed in 2018 and the hangar was removed. A decade after its acquisition by the FAC, Bankstown Airport was privatised and transferred to the BAL in 1998.²¹ The long-term lease of the airport, along with the BAL, was secured from the Commonwealth Government in 2003.²² The BAL continues to manage the airport.

2.2 The RAAF Headquarters

In December 1940, the RAAF Headquarters were established at Bankstown to manage and control aviation operations at the new air base. The No.2 Aircraft Park was transferred to Bankstown from its previous location in Laverton, Victoria.²³

The building, which was one of the earliest buildings on the site, was originally constructed with its central core form (without wings) with frontage to the east facing onto the associated Parade Ground. This original configuration is illustrated in the first available aerial photograph of the area taken in 1941. A subsequent aerial photograph taken in 1941 shows the building in its extant form, with two wings having been added to the building giving it a characteristic 'U' shape (Figure 3 to Figure 8).²⁴

During the course of WWII, there were twenty-two RAAF units and squadrons based at Bankstown aerodrome. While the former RAAF Headquarters building was briefly leased to Fairey Aviation as office space during the 1950s, it remained as the RAAF headquarters until around 1980. Most recently, the building was used as the 'Precision Flight Simulator Training' facility, however the building has been vacant since 2005.²⁵



Figure 3. View across Bankstown aerodrome from the north-west (RAAF Headquarters indicated by arrow), 1945. (Source: Flickr, Jim Dixey Collection, courtesy Tony Drury)

²⁰ *Bankstown Airport Master Plan*, 18.

²¹ *Bankstown Airport Master Plan*, 18.

²² *Bankstown Airport Master Plan*, 18.

²³ AECOM, *Bankstown Airport Heritage Management Plan*, A5

²⁴ AECOM, *Bankstown Airport Heritage Management Plan*, B-35

²⁵ AECOM, *Bankstown Airport Heritage Management Plan*, B-35

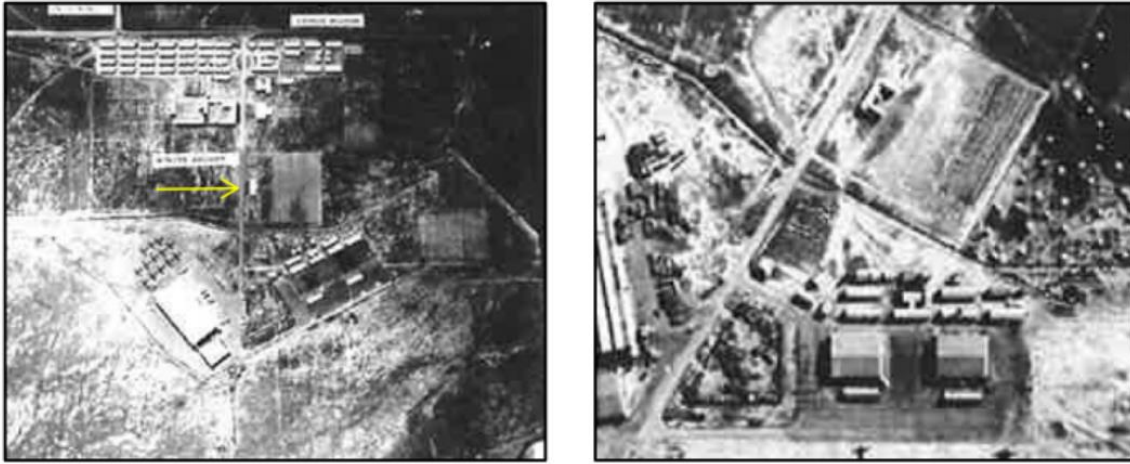


Figure 4: Left – aerial photograph from 1940 showing original footprint of RAAF Headquarters building without wings. Right – aerial photograph from 1941 showing ‘wings’ added to RAAF Headquarters building (Source: *Heritage Report: Former RAAF Headquarters Building, Bankstown Airport* by Heritage21: 7)



Figure 5: Left – aerial photograph from 1943 showing RAAF Headquarters building and relationship with parade ground (outlined red). Right – aerial photograph from 1950 showing RAAF Headquarters building and parade ground (outlined red) (Source: *Heritage Report: Former RAAF Headquarters Building, Bankstown Airport* by Heritage21: 8)

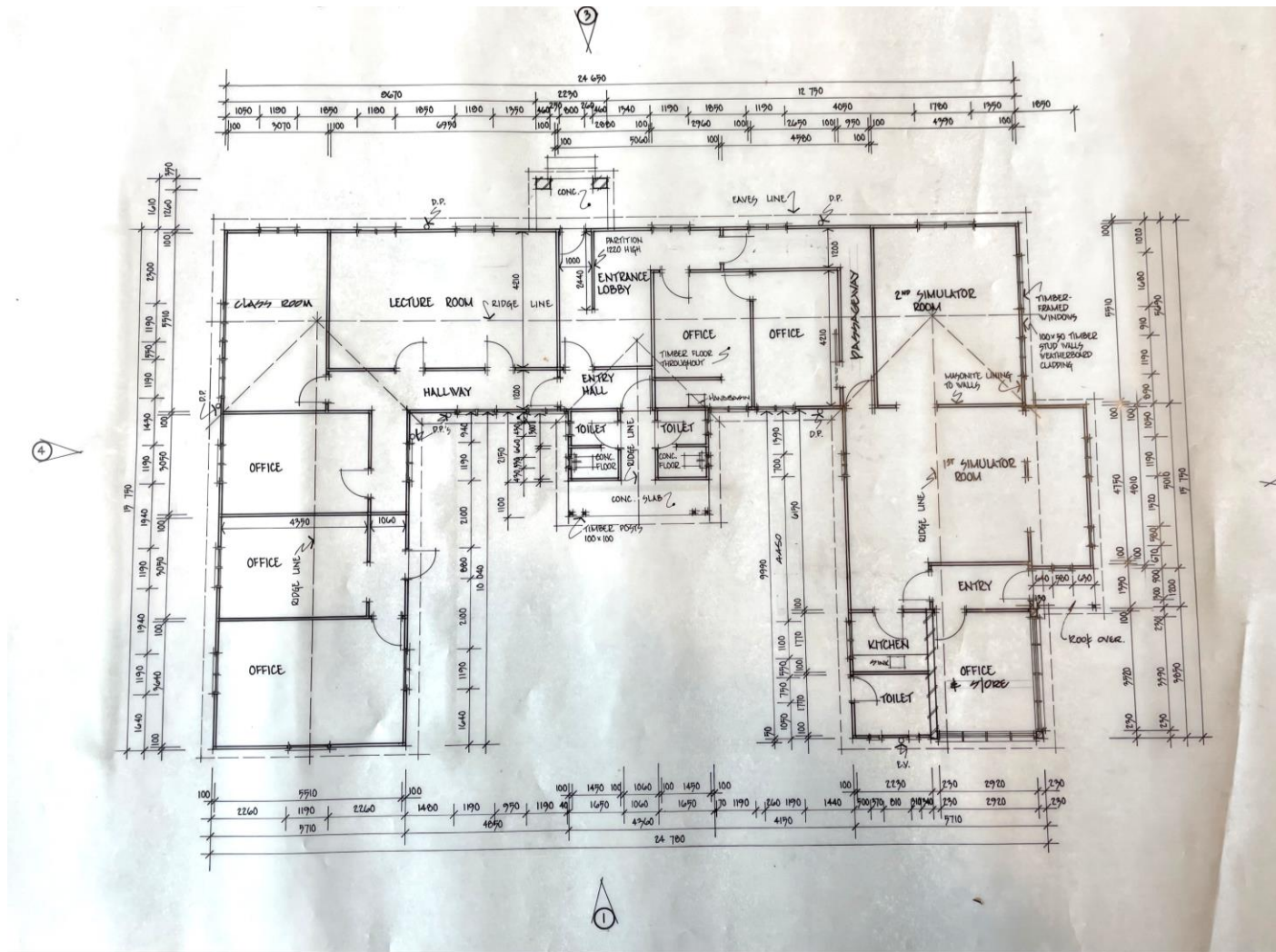


Figure 6: Floorplan of existing former RAAF Headquarters building (Source: provided by Aeria Management Group)

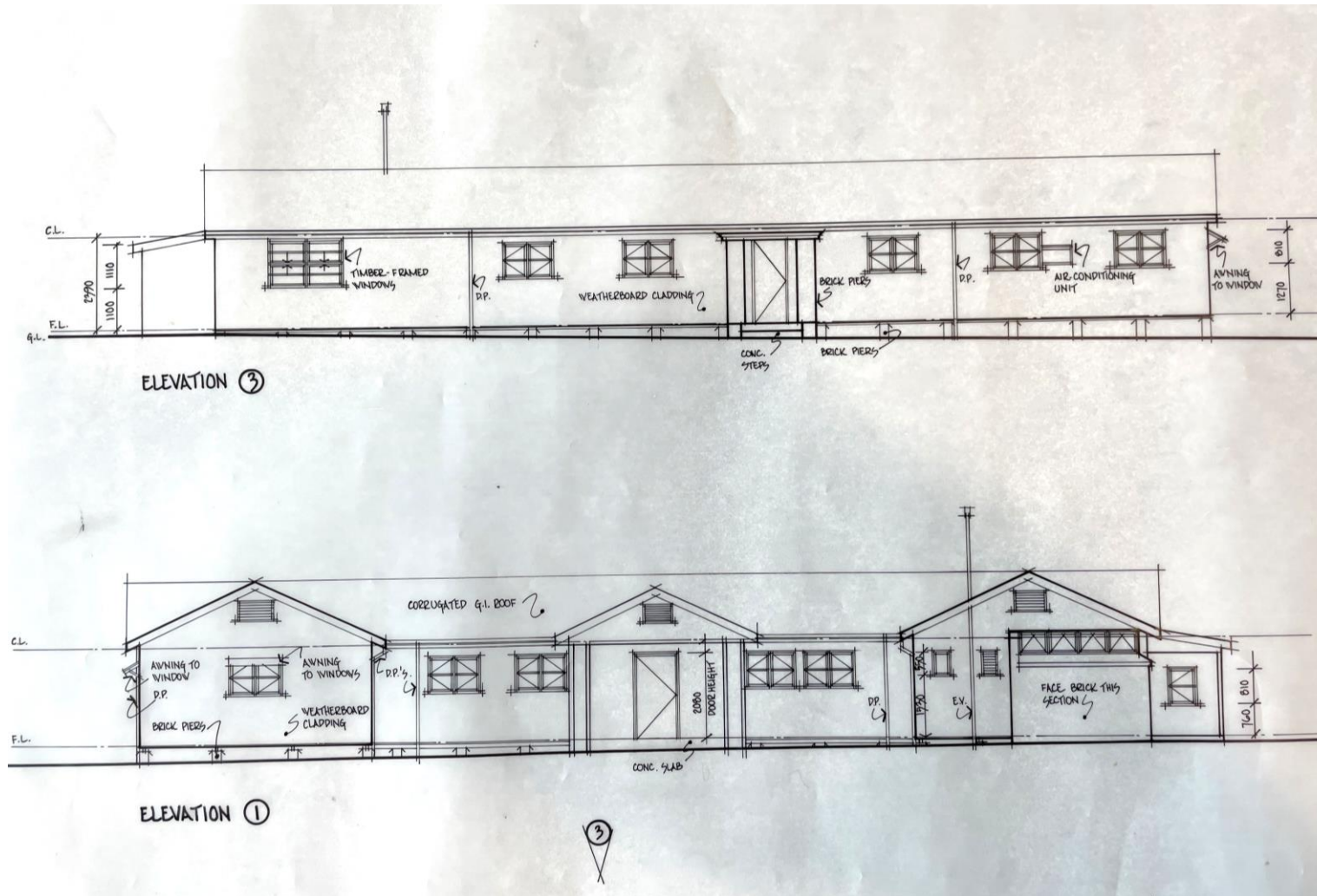


Figure 7: East (front) and west (rear) elevations of former RAAF Headquarters building (Source: provided by Aeria Management Group)

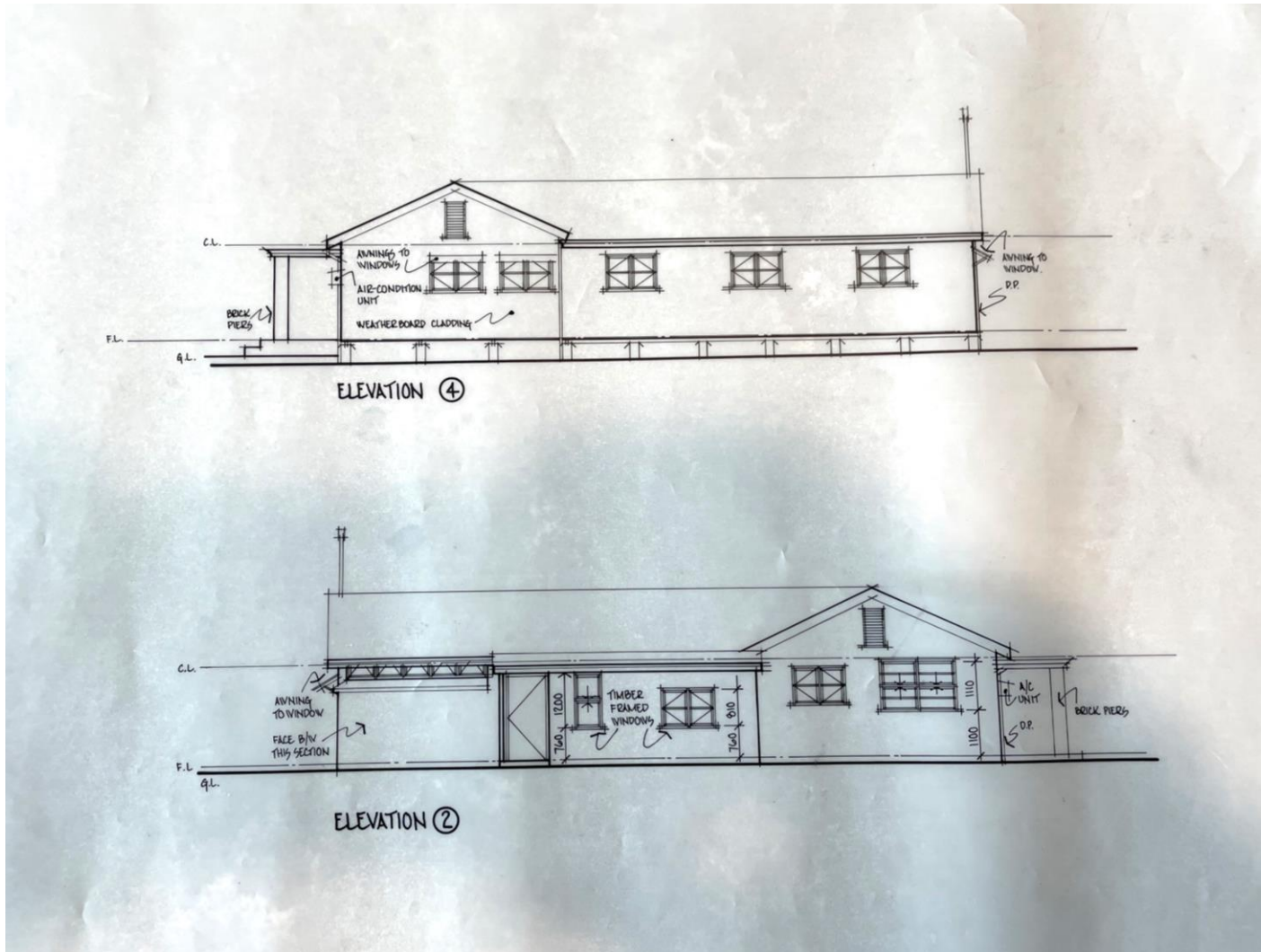


Figure 8: North and south (side) elevations of former RAAF Headquarters building (Source: provided by Aeria Management Group)

3.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

3.1 Introduction

This section identifies the significance of the former RAAF Headquarters building, and listed heritage items in proximity to the study area.

3.2 Former RAAF Headquarters

The following assessment includes an assessment of significance of the former RAAF Headquarters building at Bankstown Airport against the Commonwealth Heritage Assessment Criteria. The assessment has been drawn from the draft SoHI 2022 prepared by Artefact and the Bankstown Airport HMP 2018 prepared by AECOM.

Table 2: Significance assessment for the Former RAAF Headquarters against the Commonwealth heritage assessment criteria

Criteria	Description
A- Historical Significance	<p>The former RAAF Headquarters building was one of the earliest structures on the site, and has historical significance as the headquarters for the RAAF station at Bankstown Airport during WWII. This building, in addition to other WWII Auxiliary buildings within the Chevron Precinct, has remained in its original position and supported the ongoing aviation use of Bankstown Airport for over 70 years.</p> <p>The former RAAF Headquarters building meets the threshold of State Significance under this CHL criterion.</p>
B- Rarity	<p>The former RAAF Headquarters building is a rare timber framed building in the Chevron precinct and the wider context. Timber framed buildings were common during WWII, few examples of the typology remain in Bankstown and other airbases. The RAAF building is a modified P1 type hut that has been adapted for use as the headquarters, and has rarity value at a national level although it is in a state of dilapidation.</p> <p>The former RAAF Headquarters building meets the threshold of State Significance under this CHL criterion.</p>
C- Research Potential	<p>The continued aviation of the former RAAF Headquarters building may offer information about evolving aviation activities in the Bankstown Airport since the 1940s. As a rare P1 timber framed building adapted to form the RAAF Headquarters, the building may offer research potential around the increasingly rare P1 typology.</p> <p>The former RAAF Headquarters building meets the threshold of State Significance under this CHL criterion.</p>
D- Representativeness	<p>The building does not demonstrate the principal characteristics of a class of Australia's natural or cultural places/environments.</p> <p>The former RAAF Headquarters building does not meet the threshold for significance under this CHL criterion.</p>

Criteria	Description
E- Aesthetic Significance	<p>The former RAAF Headquarters building was designed in the modest Commonwealth Vernacular architectural style, which was typical for bases designed and completed during the 1940s. The timber framed P1-type hut was once a numerous typology within the Bankstown air base. The RAAF building is a P1 hut that was adaptively designed as a headquarters building, although it remains in a dilapidated condition.</p> <p>The former RAAF Headquarters building meets the threshold of local significance under this CHL criterion.</p>
F- Creative or Technical Achievement	<p>The former RAAF Headquarters building is a significant example of the P1 hut typology that was innovatively designed for rapid production of standardised, cheap and reliable Defence accommodation. The P series were developed to be adapted as headquarters, mess halls, laundries, guard houses, quartermasters stores, aid stations and hospitals.</p> <p>The former RAAF Headquarters building meets the threshold of State significance under this CHL criterion.</p>
G- Associative Significance (Community)	<p>Social significance has not been formally assessed for the purposes of this report. However, the former RAAF Headquarters building is associated with the presence of the RAAF, along with the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force. This gives the auxiliary building association with the Defence aviation community, and likely importance with former military personnel. The building may also have significance for other more recent aviation tenants.</p> <p>The former RAAF Headquarters building meets the threshold of State significance under this CHL criterion.</p>
H- Associative significance (person or Group of Persons)	<p>The former RAAF Headquarters building is closely associated with Defence aviation, notably from WWII. The building maintains close associations with the RAAF, having been established as their headquarters when the RAAF were quartered at Bankstown during WWII and in the immediate post-war period.</p> <p>The former RAAF Headquarters building meets the threshold of State significance under this CHL criterion.</p>
I- Indigenous Significance	<p>The former RAAF Headquarters building has not been found to be associated with any sort of Indigenous tradition.</p> <p>The former RAAF Headquarters building does not meet the threshold of significance under this CHL criterion.</p>

3.2.1 Statement of Heritage Significance

The following Statement of Heritage Significance, which summarises the cultural heritage values of the former RAAF Headquarters building, has been adapted from the SoHI 2022 prepared by Artefact:²⁶

The former RAAF Headquarters building played an important role in supporting the ongoing aviation use of Bankstown Airport for around seventy years. The building is associated with Defence aviation, notably from WWII. In particular, the building is closely associated with the RAAF, having been established as the headquarters for the RAAF stationed at Bankstown during WII. The building remains as a rare

²⁶ Artefact Heritage 2022, *Chevron Precinct, Bankstown Airport: Statement of Heritage Impact*, 91-92

surviving timber framed P1 hut at Bankstown Airport, which were once a numerous typology on the site. Designed in the simple Commonwealth Vernacular style, the P1 huts are typical of the designs that were innovatively standardised and utilised for rapid production of auxiliary buildings at bases during the 1940s. The building has rarity values as a P1 hut that was adaptively designed as the headquarters for the RAAF during WWII. Despite this significance, the building is in a heavily deteriorated condition.

3.3 Bankstown Airport

3.3.1 Statement of Heritage Significance

The former RAAF Headquarters building is located within Bankstown Airport. The following Statement of Significance for Bankstown Airport, as provided in the Bankstown Airport HMP 2018 prepared by AECOM, provides a summary of the heritage values of the site:²⁷

The Airport has been identified as holding Natural and Historical heritage values. The populations of Hibbertia glabrescens MS and Hibbertia fumana, meet Criteria B (rare/uncommon) and C (research). As either the only (Hibbertia glabrescens MS) or one of only two (Hibbertia fumana) known populations, these are rare within Australia. The populations of Hibbertia glabrescens MS and Hibbertia fumana, as reasonably newly identified species, have the potential to yield information regarding the natural history of Australia that is not available from other sources.

The Airport was established as a WWII airport. It was important in the defence of Australia, with intact surviving wartime infrastructure including erecting and stabling hangars, aviation support workshops and airside taxiway layout. The Airport is of Commonwealth significance under Criteria A (historic), B (rare/uncommon), D (representative), G (social) and F (creative/technical). The significance is contained within the historic heritage of Bankstown Airport. No Indigenous or natural values have been identified as meeting the significance threshold.

The Airport has strong historic associations with the Australian war effort in WWII. The airfield at Bankstown was established in early 1940 in response to Australia's wartime defence needs. Bankstown was selected as the RAAF's No. 2 Aircraft Park, owing to its proximity to the industrial heartland of Sydney, with its primary function being the construction, assembly and maintenance of RAAF aircraft. Private companies in the vicinity, including Clyde Engineering Works and de Havilland, also manufactured and repaired wartime aircraft at Bankstown Airport, including the famous 'Mosquito' fighter-bomber. A number of physical elements are retained at the Airport that demonstrate the contribution of the Airport to the air defence of NSW during WWII (CHL Criterion A).

The Airport was also associated with the Royal Navy and with preparations undertaken in 1945 for the defeat of the Japanese in the Pacific. The Airport was one of nine MONAB established in Australia associated with this effort. Several surviving buildings at the Airport are specific designs manufactured in large numbers and used by the Royal Navy in WWII. The erecting hangars and supporting manufacturing facilities of aircraft components during wartime are

²⁷ AECOM 2018, Bankstown Airport Heritage Management Plan: 55

evidence of early Australian involvement in the aviation industry, and were the forerunner of a number of locally designed and manufactured light aircraft (CHL Criterion F).

The Airport is potentially important to the many Defence personnel who were trained or stationed at the Airport, and to military historians, members of the Australian Aviation Museum and former members of the Royal Aero Club (CHL Criterion G).

The Airport is a complex of airport facilities within an urban residential setting. It was one of several airports established in Sydney during WWII. The Airport today is a representative example of an airfield that was originally commissioned by the RAAF for wartime duties and then converted to a civilian airfield, catering to light and medium aircraft. The layout and form of the original airfield is reflected in the present day pattern of road alignments and built form orientation within the administration and operations area (Area 1). The chevron pattern formed by the roads and streets leading to the hangars and associated infrastructure pointing to the runways to the south is still linked to the rectilinear patterning of roads identifying the location of the wartime barracks by the north–south axis of Airport Avenue. This reflection of the war years is further emphasised in the post-war adoption of aviation related street names such as Gipsy, Avro, Kestrel, Sopwith and Stinson, referring to some of the aircraft manufactured or maintained at the base. The visual link between Area 1 and the Hawker de Havilland Area 3 continues the wartime relationship of these two areas with the central wartime airfield (CHL Criterion D).

4.0 SITE ANALYSIS

This section provides an archival record of the former RAAF Headquarters as observed during the photographic recording of the area on 6 March 2023. It provides a description of the former RAAF Headquarters and a selection of illustrative photographs taken during the photographic recording. The site description and interior photographs have been derived from the SoHI 2022 by Artefact. Exterior photographs were captured on 6 March 2023.

Due to the poor condition of the interior of the building and risk of asbestos contamination photographic recording was not undertaken in during the site inspection on 6 March 2023.

4.1 Site description

The former RAAF Headquarters is a timber framed white-painted weatherboard building set on brick piers with a gabled roof that is clad with corrugated cement sheeting. An adapted version of the typical P1-hut design, the 'E-shaped' building once served as the RAAF Headquarters controlling military operations on the site during WWII (Figure 9). The western Airport Avenue frontage features a non-original central awning set on brick pillars, and irregularly spaced timber framed windows (Figure 10). The central awning on the building's principal east elevation, aligned towards the former parade ground, once served as the main entryway. Mature palm trees (likely planted in the 1960s) flank the awning. In the interior of the awning, the doors and signage for men's and women's lavatories are present to the left and right respectively (Figure 13). The eastern external wall of the building's north wing features decaying lettering reading "PR[E]C[!]SION FLIGHT", one of the post-WWII tenants. A small brick annex building has been added to the building's north-eastern corner. Overall, the exterior of Building 62 remains in a dilapidated condition, with the building having been unoccupied for nearly two decades. The roofing, guttering, windows, weatherboards and paintwork exhibit signs of deterioration and damage.

The interior of RAAF Headquarters is divided irregularly into rooms (Figure 13 to Figure 20). Upon entry to the Airport Avenue frontage is a small reception area and service counter, likely non-original. The northern wing of the building featured two classrooms with chalkboards and fold-out tables affixed to the wall. The door handles throughout the northern wing are of a fine art deco style and are likely original. The southern wing was in poorer condition than the northern wing, with evidence of vandalism and extensive ceiling deterioration throughout the wing. Original electrical fixtures were observed throughout the wing, although a number of more modern air conditioning units were also affixed to the walls. The wing's small kitchenette, a later addition to the building, was in fair condition.



Figure 9. View west across former parade ground to the building's principal (east) elevation, showing palm tree plantings.



Figure 10. View of the building's Airport Avenue frontage.



Figure 11. View of side elevation, showing annex to left, looking south.



Figure 12. View of side elevation, looking north.



Figure 13. Original entry beneath the awning on the building's east elevation, with lavatory signage.



Figure 14. Reception room at Airport Avenue entryway.



Figure 15. Former classroom space in northern wing of the building.



Figure 16. Art deco doorhandles located within the building.



Figure 17. Classroom in northern wing of the building.



Figure 18. Vandalism and dilapidated window in southern wing of the building.



Figure 19. Early/original kitchenette located in southern wing of the building.



Figure 20. Broken windowpane with overgrown vegetation.

5.0 MATERIAL SPECIFICATIONS

5.1 Camera

The following details apply for the photographic recording undertaken for the former RAAF Headquarters.

Item	Detail
Camera	Nikon D750 (35mm full-frame equivalent camera with no crop factor)
Lens	AF-S NIKKOR 24p- 120 mm 1:4 G ED
Photographers	Katherine Chalmers and Charlotte Simons
Date	6 March 2023

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6.0 CATALOGUE SHEETS

The following catalogue sheets include descriptions of the content of each photograph taken during the PAR, along with the directions in which they were taken. The catalogue sheets should be cross-referenced by corresponding numbering on the aerial maps (Figure 21 and Figure 22) and photograph contact sheets (Appendix A). Due to the poor condition of the interior of the building and risk of asbestos contamination photographic recording was not undertaken in during the site inspection on 6 March 2023.

All digital photographs (JPG and RAW) are provided on an accompanying CD.

Table 3: Catalogue sheets of the photographic record of the former RAAF Headquarters

Photo No.	Frame ID	View to	Description	Date
1	DSC_2136	W	View of the eastern façade of the building, with the parade ground in the foreground	06/03/2023
2	DSC_2147	W	View of the gable end of the southern wing	06/03/2023
3	DSC_2149	SW	View of the brick footings of the gable end of the southern wing	06/03/2023
4	DSC_2153	SW	Detailed view of the window and awning on the gable end of the southern wing	06/03/2023
5	DSC_2155	SW	View of the gable end of the southern wing showing the vent and barge board	06/03/2023
6	DSC_2154	SW	Detailed view of the vent in the gable end of the southern wing	06/03/2023
7	DSC_2157	SW	Detailed view of the bargeboard and finial of the gable end of the southern wing	06/03/2023
8	DSC_2158	S	View of the northern elevation of the southern wing	06/03/2023
9	DSC_2160	S	View of the corrugated iron roof of the southern wing	06/03/2023
10	DSC_2161	S	Detailed view of the warning sign on the corrugated iron roof of the southern wing	06/03/2023
11	DSC_2162	S	View of the door to the southern wing on the northern elevation	06/03/2023
12	DSC_2163	S	Detailed view of the sticker on the door of the northern elevation of the southern wing	06/03/2023
13	DSC_2164	W	View of the south-eastern elevation of the N-S wing, behind the palm trees	06/03/2023
14	DSC_2165	W	Detailed view of the window in south-eastern elevation of the N-S wing	06/03/2023
15	DSC_2166	W	View of the central awning on the eastern elevation, which would once have been the main entrance	06/03/2023
16	DSC_2169	W	Detailed view of the vent and bargeboard of the central awning	06/03/2023

Photo No.	Frame ID	View to	Description	Date
17	DSC_2173	W	View of the door to from the central awning the N-S body of the building	06/03/2023
18	DSC_2171	NW	Detailed view of the sign to the ladies' bathrooms off the central awning	06/03/2023
19	DSC_2172	SW	Detailed view of the sign to the men's bathrooms off the central awning	06/03/2023
20	DSC_2174	N	View of the southern elevation of the northern wing	06/03/2023
21	DSC_2175	N	View of the door and window of the southern elevation of the northern wing	06/03/2023
22	DSC_2176	N	View of the window and corrugate iron roof of the northern wing.	06/03/2023
23	DSC_2177	N	View of the corrugated iron roof and western most door of the southern elevation of the northern wing	06/03/2023
24	DSC_2178	N	Detailed view of the warning sign on the corrugated iron roof of the northern wing	06/03/2023
25	DSC_2180	W	View of the eastern elevation of the northern wing	06/03/2023
26	DSC_2189	W	Detailed view of the gable end of the northern wing, showing the bargeboards, finial, vent and PRECISION FLIGHT sign	06/03/2023
27	DSC_2187	W	Detailed view of the windows of the gable end of northern wing	06/03/2023
28	DSC_2191	S	Wide view of the northern elevation of the northern wing	06/03/2023
29	DSC_2190	S	View of the northern elevation of the northern wing	06/03/2023
30	DSC_2209	SE	View of the northern gable end of the main N-S building	06/03/2023
31	DSC_2193	S	View of the brick portion of the northern elevation of the northern wing	06/03/2023
32	DSC_2194	S	View of the central extended portion of northern elevation of the northern wing	06/03/2023
33	DSC_2198	W	Detailed view of the window on the eastern end of the extension of the northern wing	06/03/2023
34	DSC_2195	S	View of the northern gable end of the main N-S portion of the building	06/03/2023
35	DSC_2202	S	Detailed view of the window in the northern gable end of the main N-S portion of the building	06/03/2023
36	DSC_2206	S	Detailed view of the bargeboard, finial and 'PRECISION [F]LIGHT simulator training' sign	06/03/2023
37	DSC_2211	E	Wide view of the western elevation of the RAAF Headquarters, fronting Airport Avenue.	06/03/2023
38	DSC_2213	E	View of the northern portion of the western elevation	06/03/2023

Photo No.	Frame ID	View to	Description	Date
39	DSC_2216	E	Detailed view of the building number '62', the number designated to the former RAAF Headquarters	06/03/2023
40	DSC_2215	E	Detailed view of the double sash window on the western elevation of the building	06/03/2023
41	DSC_2218	SE	View of the western building elevation showing the rusting metal downpipe and sash windows	06/03/2023
42	DSC_2223	E	Detailed view of the brick pilings beneath the western elevation	06/03/2023
43	DSC_2227	S	View of the awning on the western elevation supported by brick panel piers.	06/03/2023
44	DSC_2228	E	Detailed view of the deteriorating weatherboard and missing door on the western elevation	06/03/2023
45	DSC_2229	SE	Detailed view of deteriorating paint on the barge board of the western elevation awning	06/03/2023
46	DSC_2231	N	View of the southern side of the awning, brick panel piers and blocked door of the western elevation	06/03/2023
47	DSC_2236	E	View of the southern portion of the western elevation showing the sash windows and brick piers	06/03/2023
48	DSC_2233	Vertical	Detailed view of the downpipe rusted off the western elevation	06/03/2023
49	DSC_2232	NW	Detailed view of a double window on the western elevation	06/03/2023
50	DSC_2249	N	Wide view of southern elevation of the southern wing	06/03/2023
51	DSC_2244	N	View of the southern elevation of the southern wing and gable end of the N-S portion of the building	06/03/2023
52	DSC_2251	N	Detailed view of the brick piers beneath the southern elevation	06/03/2023
53	DSC_2245	N	Detailed view of the casement windows and awnings on the southern elevation, beneath the gable end	06/03/2023
54	DSC_2253	N	Detailed view of the barge board, finial, aerial and vent of the gable end on the southern elevation	06/03/2023
55	DSC_2258	N	View of the eastern elevation of the southern wing showing the corrugated iron roof, casement windows and A/C vents, and a boarded window	06/03/2023
56	DSC_2257	N	Detail of casement window on the southern elevation of the southern arm	06/03/2023
57	DSC_2262	E	Brick piles beneath southern elevation of the southern wing	06/03/2023
58	DSC_2265	N	View of the original kerbing and surface of the driveway adjacent to the southern portion of the western elevation of the building	06/03/2023
59	DSC_2267	N	View of the original kerbing and surface of the driveway adjacent to the northern portion of the western elevation of the building	06/03/2023

Photo No.	Frame ID	View to	Description	Date
60	DSC_2240	SW	View of the decorative landscaping dating from the 1940s, adjacent to the RAAF Headquarters	06/03/2023
61	DSC_2243	S	View of the landscaped garden bed south of the RAAF Headquarters	06/03/2023
62	DSC_2242	Vertical	Detail of the kerbing around the garden bed south of the RAAF Headquarters	06/03/2023
63	DSC_2250	N	The landscaped garden bed in the foreground and RAAF is the background	06/03/2023
64	DSC_2295	SW	Contextual view of the RAAF Headquarters from the north eastern corner of the parade ground	06/03/2023
65	DSC_2297	SW	Detailed view of the concrete piles, which are remnants of previous structures in the parade ground	06/03/2023
66	DSC_2290	W	View of the concrete area of the parade ground with the RAAF Headquarters in the background	06/03/2023
67	DSC_2289	NW	View of the RAAF Quarters from the south east corner of the parade ground	06/03/2023
68	DSC_2282	N	View of the RAAF Headquarters and the parade ground from the southern footpath of Comper Street	06/03/2023
69	DSC_2279	N	Contextual view of the RAAF Headquarters on the eastern side of Airport Avenue and the heritage substation on the western side.	06/03/2023
70	DSC_2284	W	View of the heritage substation on the corner of Airport Avenue and Comper Street	06/03/2023

7.0 REFERENCE AERIALS

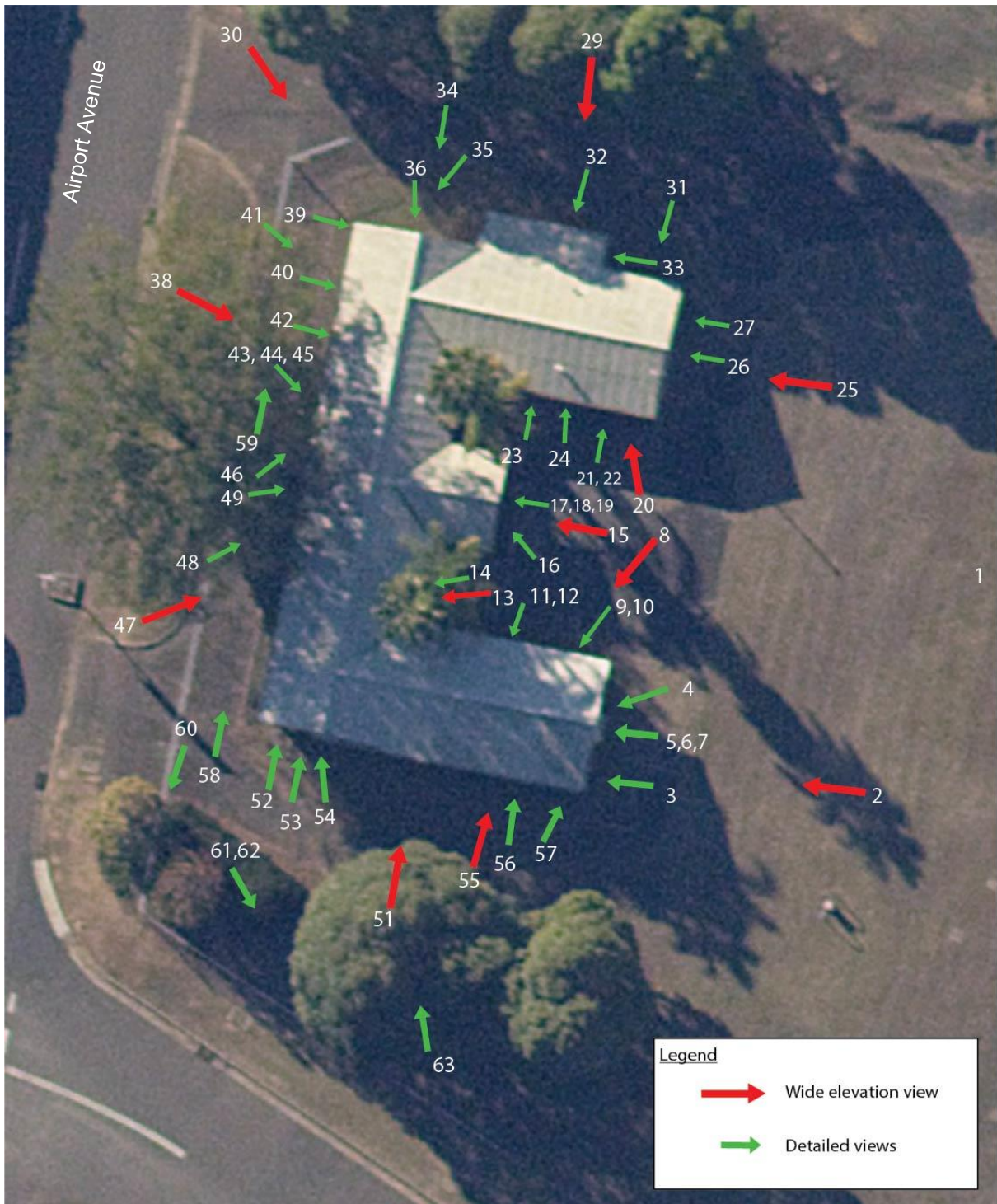


Figure 21: Location and direction of main elevation shots and detailed views of the RAAF Headquarters



Figure 22: Location and direction of wider contextual photos of the RAAF Headquarters

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9.0 APPENDIX A

9.1 Thumbnail sheets

Photo 1 – DSC_2136



Photo 2 – DSC_2147



Photo 3 – DSC_2149



Photo 4 – DSC_2153



Photo 5 – DSC_2155



Photo 6 – DSC_2154



Photo 7 – DSC_2157



Photo 8 – DSC_2158



Photo 9 – DSC_2160



Photo 10 – DSC_2161



Photo 11 – DSC_2162

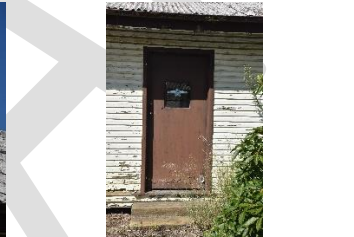


Photo 12 – DSC_2163



Photo 13 – DSC_2164



Photo 14 – DSC_2165



Photo 15 – DSC_2166



Photo 16 – DSC_2169



Photo 17 – DSC_2173



Photo 18 – DSC_2171



Photo 19 – DSC_2172



Photo 20 – DSC_2174



Bankstown Airport Former RAAF Headquarters PAR

Photo 21- DSC_2175



Photo 22- DSC_2176



Photo 23 - DSC_2177



Photo 24 - DSC_2178



Photo 25 - DSC_2180



Photo 26 - DSC_2189



Photo 27 - DSC_2187



Photo 28 - DSC_2191



Photo 29 - DSC_2190



Photo 30 - DSC_2209



Photo 31 - DSC_2193



Photo 32 - DSC_2194



Photo 33 - DSC_2198



Photo 34 - DSC_2195



Photo 35 - DSC_2202



Photo 36 - DSC_2206



Photo 37 - DSC_2211



Photo 38 - DSC_2213



Photo 39 - DSC_2216



Photo 40 - DSC_2215



Bankstown Airport Former RAAF Headquarters PAR

Photo 41 – DSC_2218



Photo 42 – DSC_2223



Photo 43 – DSC_2227



Photo 44 – DSC_2228



Photo 45 – DSC_2229



Photo 46 – DSC_2231



Photo 47 – DSC_2236



Photo 48 – DSC_2233



Photo 49 – DSC_2232



Photo 50 – DSC_2249



Photo 51 – DSC_2244



Photo 52 – DSC_2251



Photo 53 - DSC_2245



Photo 54 – DSC_2253



Photo 55 – DSC_2258



Photo 56 – DSC_2257



Photo 57 – DSC_2262



Photo 58 – DSC_2265



Photo 59 – DSC_2267



Photo 60 – DSC_2240



Photo 61 – DSC_2243



Photo 62 – DSC_2242



Photo 63 – DSC_2250



Photo 64 – DSC_2295



Photo 65 – DSC_2297



Photo 66 – DSC_2290



Photo 67 – DSC_2289



Photo 68 – DSC_2282



Photo 69 – DSC_2279



Photo 70 – DSC_2284



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