

Deadline 6 - Response to Submissions Received by Deadline 5

Please accept this submission as my personal views on representations made up to and including Deadline 5.

Many thanks for your consideration.

1) Formal change request relating to the Isleham plane crash site, outlined in REP3A-037 and Sunnica's Second Change Application REP5-059

- 1.1 As evidenced by the multiple submissions of local residents over the course of the statutory consultation, during the pre-examination and examination stages, it is clear that the tragic B-50 bomber crash is an important piece of Isleham's village history and the sentimental connection between the village and the tragedy is palpable.
- 1.2 Sunnica have now accepted the existence of the crash site, which is a positive step, but having read their proposals to deal with this I feel that they have not grasped what it *means* to local residents, who have fought over the years to conserve the site and who actively commemorate the bravery of the crew.
- 1.3 A 'bare minimum' approach appears to have been adopted, with Sunnica selecting the smallest possible exclusion zone over the main impact crater (a mere 50m square) and, despite requests by the Cambridgeshire councils (REP4-080) to not engulf the site, Sunnica have proposed to do exactly that.
- 1.4 The small 50 m crater exclusion zone would be engulfed by solar panels; these would in turn be engulfed by woodland planting and hedgerows so as to render the crater hidden from all.
- 1.5 I support the requests of the councils that field E05 should be removed from development (e.g. SCC REP4-121, ECDC REP4-080) not only because of its importance from a heritage perspective (crash site), but also because of the significant impacts that development here would have on changing the landscape character, the importance of the parcel for rare birds and other wildlife, as well as the importance of this land as high quality, versatile arable farmland.
- 1.6 The approach taken by Sunnica in relation to the crash site is highly disrespectful to the memories of the crew, their families (who still visit the site on occasion) and to our local community (especially those affected by the tragedy).
- 1.7 The disregard of the sentimental attachment of Isleham to the site and the disregard of those requesting for it to be treated with sensitivity should not be accepted.
- 1.8 As outlined in my previous submissions (e.g. REP4-082) and those of others (such as Isleham Parish Council REP2-075, Brian Challis REP2-109, Isleham Society REP2-149, as well as a number of relevant reps) residents of Isleham consider this site as a kind of cemetery / burial ground. When they pass by they remember the crew, they remember where they were at the time of the crash, they remember the stories that have been passed to them from their friends and families.
- 1.9 Part of the reason that the incident remains so much alive today is due not only to the commemorative activities that take place in and around the village but also as a result of these fleeting memories as people look out to the field from Isleham village or the Ark church, or as they pass by the field while travelling along Sheldrick's / Beck Road.
- 1.10 The engulfing of the site by panels and then by trees would completely block the views over the site from the village. The important visual connection would be lost. The passing thoughts and memories would, over time, no longer be triggered. The current peaceful, agricultural setting would be drill piled into, damaging and interfering with any remains. The majority of the crash area would then be covered over in industrial equipment, fenced in and then finally surrounded and further hidden by trees and hedgerows. This is the opposite of how the site has remained today (Figure 1).
- 1.11 I, like my fellow residents, do not find this a suitable proposal. My neighbours' lives would have been very different if the plane had crashed in the village and they are indebted to the crew who stayed on board to prevent an even greater tragedy. They feel that the site should not be built on.
- 1.12 There were a number of craters caused by the crash (whose impact was felt over a 12-mile radius due to its significant load of bombs) and debris was scattered far and wide (see Figures 2 and 3 as examples). People who I have talked to who attended the site at the time speak of body parts being found even close to Beck

Road. A journalist at the time reported how unbelievable it was to think that the “biggest bomber in the world could be reduced to small pieces” and how wherever you walked over the fields there were pieces aircraft or “gruesome reminders of the mutilation of some of the crew.” Even today local residents report that they can still find small body remains or fragments of the plane in field E05.



Fig. 1 View heading East out of Isleham along Beck Rd. Left is the Ark church. The crash site field is clearly visible for villagers, passers by and visitors to the Ark. Blue arrow is Lee Farm. Pink arrow is the barn that usefully marks the location of the crash area. Proposed mitigation planting at the corner of Sheldrick’s and Beck Rd would block this view.



Fig. 2. Newsclip of the crash showing wide area of scatter and craters

- 1.13 The 'crash site' extends beyond the main impact crater and should be considered as a whole. The remains of the brave crew and the fragments of the crash are present over a much wider area, which should be respected and preserved.

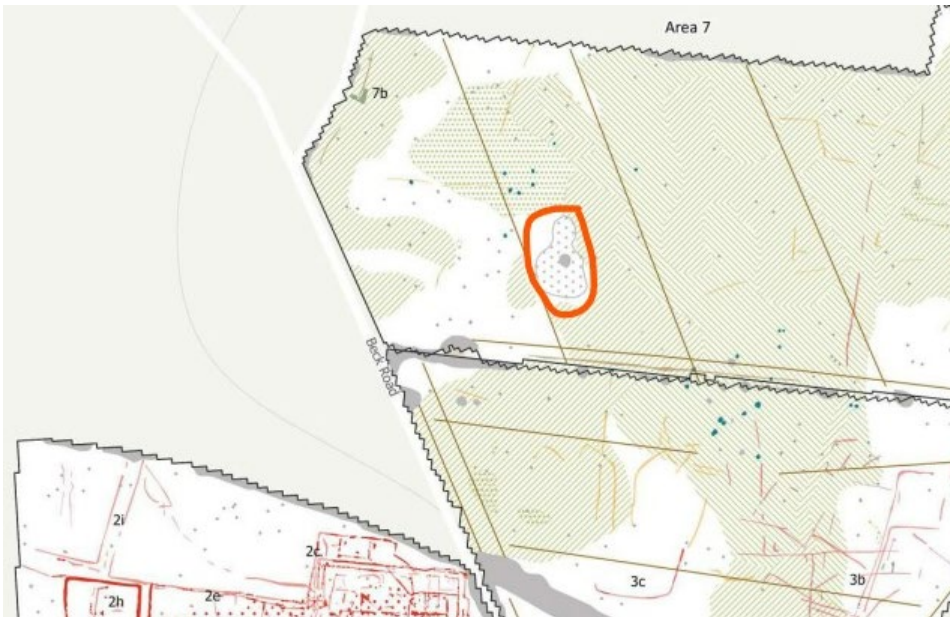


Fig. 3 Surveys of the site show the main crater (red circle) with 'dots' of ferrous scatter over a large part of E05

1.14 The suggestion by Sunnica that the location was only known to a few individuals is contradicted by the multiple newspaper reports at the time, including national press, which indicate where the crash happened. These reports have been passed onto younger generations and commented on in various commemorative activities in the village.

1.15 The suggestion of a further commemorative plaque and an information board is welcome, and I would agree that this is best placed on public land so that people can read if they stop at the site. However, the proposed plans would make this difficult to interpret or appreciate to any suitable level since the views over the site as a whole would be blocked and covered over by industrial development. This includes the visual context of the nearby airbase of Lakenheath, which is where the tragedy unfolded.

1.16 Even the wider exclusion area of 100m would still fail to preserve the visual connection from the village with the site if the mitigation tree/ hedgerow planting went ahead, and if it were surrounded by panels/inverters etc.

1.17 As mentioned before, Field E05 in which the crash happened is also the closest scheme area to Isleham village, and has the highest landscape and visual impact. The proposed changes still result in a dramatic change to the characteristic open Fen Edge landscape and replaces the attractive, far reaching agricultural views with a highly visible, unattractive industrial one, in which the crash site would be screened off and where the visual connection beyond to our neighbouring towns and villages to the east/northeast would be lost. Removal of E05 would reduce some of this landscape harm, while retaining the crash site.

2. Comments on other submissions

2.1 Dr Alastair Burn REP5-092

I agree with the points raised by Dr Burn at the hearings and also in his representation at Deadline 5 that the mitigation measures for other farmland birds that are in decline (in addition to the stone curlew) are not adequate and I also agree that residents of Isleham and the surrounding area (including me and my family and friends) enjoy the wildlife and particularly the birds that we have on our doorstep. This area is certainly not void of wildlife, as is occasionally inferred by the Applicant.

2.2 Dr Edmund Fordham REP5-093

Having listened to the representations made by Dr Fordham at the hearings and also in this most recent submission I am convinced that the BESS compounds would be subject to Hazardous Substances Consent and I fully support the submissions made by him and a number of other interested parties on this matter, as well as the multiple requests that the Health and Safety Executive must be fully consulted at this stage. I understand that the councils are also in agreement that the matter of Hazardous Substances Consent must be resolved during the planning application process. I would agree with this approach.

2.3 Dr Anne Noble REP5-089

Having read submissions by Dr Anne noble and also by agriculture experts retained by the Say No to Sunnica group, as well as the many representations from other interested parties who know the land in this area and what it can produce, I remain convinced that the ALC assessment by the Applicant is flawed. I agree with the various submissions made at the hearings and since the hearings that a re-assessment is required, which ideally should be a joint activity between the Applicant and the soil experts retained by Say No to Sunnica.