URGENT CROWN DEVELOPMENT - SITE VISIT REPORT

SITE NAME	Bicester - (MOD 0015)
SITE ADDRESS	MOD015 (Site A), Bicester Garrison, off the B4011, between Arncott and Piddington, Oxfordshire.
PROPOSAL	Temporary use of land at MOD015, Bicester, for the phased installation and operation of a modular asylum accommodation facility, including the siting of containerised residential units and associated supporting infrastructure. The proposals provide up to approximately 1,250 bedspaces, together with ancillary buildings for welfare, healthcare, staff accommodation, communal facilities, circulation space, internal access roads, parking, services, lighting, boundary treatments, and security works. (This was the proposal information available at the time of the visit)
TYPE OF APPLICATION	It was indicated that the development would be temporary, however, this was not confirmed at the time of the visit.
APPLICANT	Home Office
DATE OF VISIT	19/5/2026
WEATHER AT TIME OF THE VISIT	The weather overcast with one rain shower towards the end of the visit. The visibility was clear.
MHCLG OFFICIALS PRESENT	[redacted]
HOME OFFICE OFFICIALS PRESENT	[redacted]

Statutory and Procedural Context

This site visit has been undertaken to inform consideration of potential Urgent Crown Development application by the Secretary of State for the Home Department under the Town and Country Planning (Crown Development) (Urgent Applications) (Procedure) (England) Order 2025.

The observations recorded form part of the application evidence base and should be read alongside any resulting planning application documentation.

Purpose of the Site Visit

The purpose of the site visit was to verify the physical characteristics and current use of the site; understand the surrounding context; observe relationships with neighbouring land uses; and inform consideration of potential planning impacts.

Site Description

The site extends to approximately 50.5 hectares and comprises a former military establishment previously used for large-scale storage and distribution. It is located between Arncott and Piddington, and circa 4,800 metres south-east of Bicester. Arncott lies circa 1,630 metres to the west, while Piddington is circa 700 metres to the east.

The site area for the proposed Phase 1 development comprises of hardstanding, gravel and tarmac surfaces, large-scale MOD logistics equipment, an open-sided barn-style structure and a former gatehouse. Phases 2 and 3 include 24 Nissen huts, further areas of hardstanding, a laid lawn containing a concrete platform from the former internal railway line, and two existing substations. Railway tracks remain across the site. Outside the area previously identified for development, the grassed areas comprise mown lawn and maintained vegetation.

Existing use: The site is closed, with the majority of existing buildings in a state of disrepair. One building remains in active use as a civilian car repair garage and appears to be in good condition. The 24 Nissen huts are vacant, in poor condition, and are proposed for demolition as part of Phases 2 and 3.

Part of the site has been developed under previous consent, this area is in centre of the wider site, which lies to east of the existing main entrance. This area includes fencing, which remains in good condition. However, the enclosed central area is heavily overgrown. It was explained during the site visit that the site had previously been considered for asylum processing accommodation. The MOD sold the site to the Home Office, which obtained planning permission for an asylum processing centre but did not proceed with the scheme. The site was later sold back to the MOD.

The submitted feasibility study explains that the site formed part of the former Defence Storage and Distribution Centre known as Site A. It was constructed between 1941 and 1943. At the time of the site visit, MOD logistics equipment was visible. The report further explains that many of the surrounding MOD sites (B to G) are also subject to future disposal and regeneration plans.

Surrounding Area and Context

Immediately to the south of the site, circa 400 metres on Widnell Lane lies Cow Pastures Farm, further beyond circa 450 metres from the site lies Ultranazz Plant Hire. To the south of the site, circa 595 metres is HMP Bullington which is located further along the B4011.

To the east, circa 312 metres from the site is Launton FC Bicester Garrison Sport Ground and beyond that is the village of Arncott, which is circa 1,630 metres to the west. To the southwest of the site is the Jubilee Nature Reserve located on Arncott Rd, Piddington, which is circa 694 metres. To the north of the site is a business, Pacer Leisure Vehicles International, circa 1,100 metres. Beyond Pacer Leisure Vehicles lies Meadow Farm, circa 1,032 metres from the site, and the village of Blackthorn circa 1,085 metres from the site. The latter, Church of St Nicholas, is

circa 1,000 metres to the southeast of the site, while Fir Tree House is the nearest Grade II listed structure and is circa 760 metres to the east of the site.

The site is within Flood Zone 1, there are no other land designations on or immediately surrounding the site.

Access and Movement

Access to the site was via the main entrance off the B4011. Within the site, an existing private road provides access to all areas, including the three proposed phases. Further along the B4011 is a secondary gate, which was blocked at the time of the visit (See Photograph 11). It is proposed that this gate will become the new main entrance. We viewed the proposed access from within the site, and visibility was unobstructed.

On the site visit we were advised that the new access gate will be subject to construction works including relocation (i.e., moved further back into the site) of the entrance, as well as widening the area for vehicle drop-off zone. It is also proposed that they will retain and make safe for the existing building, which was likely to have been used previously as a security gatehouse.

The visibility onto the site from the existing entrance from the B4011 is reasonably clear. There is some screening from the existing buildings and vegetation at the entrance. There are no footpaths to the front of the site, which runs parallel to the B4011 from either the existing or the new proposed gate. There are also no visible footpaths around the perimeter of the site.

The speed limit is 60mph on the B4011. Due to the flow of traffic and road speed, any views into the site, both the existing and the proposed, are likely to be fleeting glances due to the position of access gates and the dense existing vegetation along the perimeter of the B4011. During the winter months, visibility into the site from various points along the B4011 may increase, depending on tree species and seasonal loss of foliage.

Relationship with Neighboring Uses

The site, due to its former use, is self-contained. The existing developments around the site are set out in the surrounding context areas above. Low road traffic noise was noted during the visit; this was further reduced towards the rear of the site.

During the site visit, we observed the current use of the buildings on site, as a vehicle repair garage. This had no impact on the site visit, and the users of the building were not observed. I did note that 3 vehicles were parked outside. The applicant advised that the tenant has been given notice to quit the use of the building. There is limited existing development in the vicinity of the site, but this is set out in the surrounding area and context section above.

Landscape, Townscape and Visual Considerations

On the site visit we drove to the surrounding villages of Arncott, Piddington Blackthorn and from these vantage points the site is not visible, due to existing screening and location of the site. The proposal will consist of modular units of both 1 and 2 stories. The 2 storey units will not be higher than 6 metres. It is likely that there will be fleeting glances into the site from the B4011 but with the existing screening this is likely to be minimal. However, during the winter months, the views from various points along the B4011 into the site may increase, depending on the

species of trees, due to potential loss of foliage. Overall, due to the lack of footpaths and the flow of traffic on a B-road.

Environmental and Physical Observations

The centre of the site contains an area of dense vegetation. This area was fenced off under the previous consent, as set out in the site description. There are no plans to develop this area. We were advised that on site there is one Category A tree, which will remain and will not be impacted by the proposed development. The remaining landscaped areas of the site are maintained, including the grassed areas.

The existing Nissen Huts and related surface pipe work are visible and are in a state of disrepair. There were numerous warning signs relating to the presence of asbestos on the site. We did not have access to these areas, as they are due to be demolished in the scheme.

There was an existing purpose-built pond, which appeared to be part of the former water and drainage system on the site, but the use was not confirmed during the visit. No detailed technical assessment was undertaken as part of the visit.

There are existing National Grid overhead Powerlines running across the site. There is an electricity pylon which falls within the site, and it was advised that this will be secured around the base and will not be accessible to users of the site.

Site Condition and Activity

At the time of the visit, the site was vacant and largely dilapidated, although areas of open grass were maintained. The vehicle repair garage, which appeared to be the newest building on site, seemed to be in good external condition.

No vehicular movements or other activities were observed during the site visit.

Sensitive Information

No sensitive information was observed or relied upon during the site visit. Any sensitive material submitted separately will be handled in accordance with statutory provisions.

Photographic Record

Photographs were taken during the site visit to support the factual record of observations.

Photo 1: Main gate

Photo 2: Main gate looking into the site (left)

Photo 3: View looking back towards the existing entrance (area previously selected for use)

Photo 4: Existing building on the right (near the entrance)

Photo 5: Existing hard standing showing MOD equipment (photos 1 & 2)

Photo 6: View of hard standing towards Nissan Huts

Photo 7: Existing view of wider hard standing and Pylon

Photo 8: Closer view of Pylon from existing hard standing

Photo 9: View of Pylon within the site

Photo 10: View of Pylon to be secured at the base.

Photo 11: Close up secondary access gate.

Photo 12: Existing security building at the second access, to be refurbished.

Photo 13: Existing security building at second access with view to pylon at the rear

Photos: 14, 15, 16 and 17: Existing Nissan Huts

Photo 18: View of existing Nissan Hut with existing substation

Photo 19: Top Corner of the site

Photo 20: Former Railway station platform

Link to aerial photos provides by HO [redacted]

Limitations of the Site Visit

The observations recorded reflect conditions at the time of the visit only. We did not have access to any of the existing structures, due to asbestos.

This report should be read alongside the full application documentation.

Status of visit report.

This document is a factual record of observations made during the site visit.

It does not constitute a planning assessment or recommendation.

Report written by:	[redacted]
Report cleared by:	[redacted]



Photo 1: Main gate



Photo 2: Main gate looking into the site (left)



Photo 3: View looking back towards the existing entrance (area previously selected for use)



Photo 4: Existing building on the right (near the entrance)

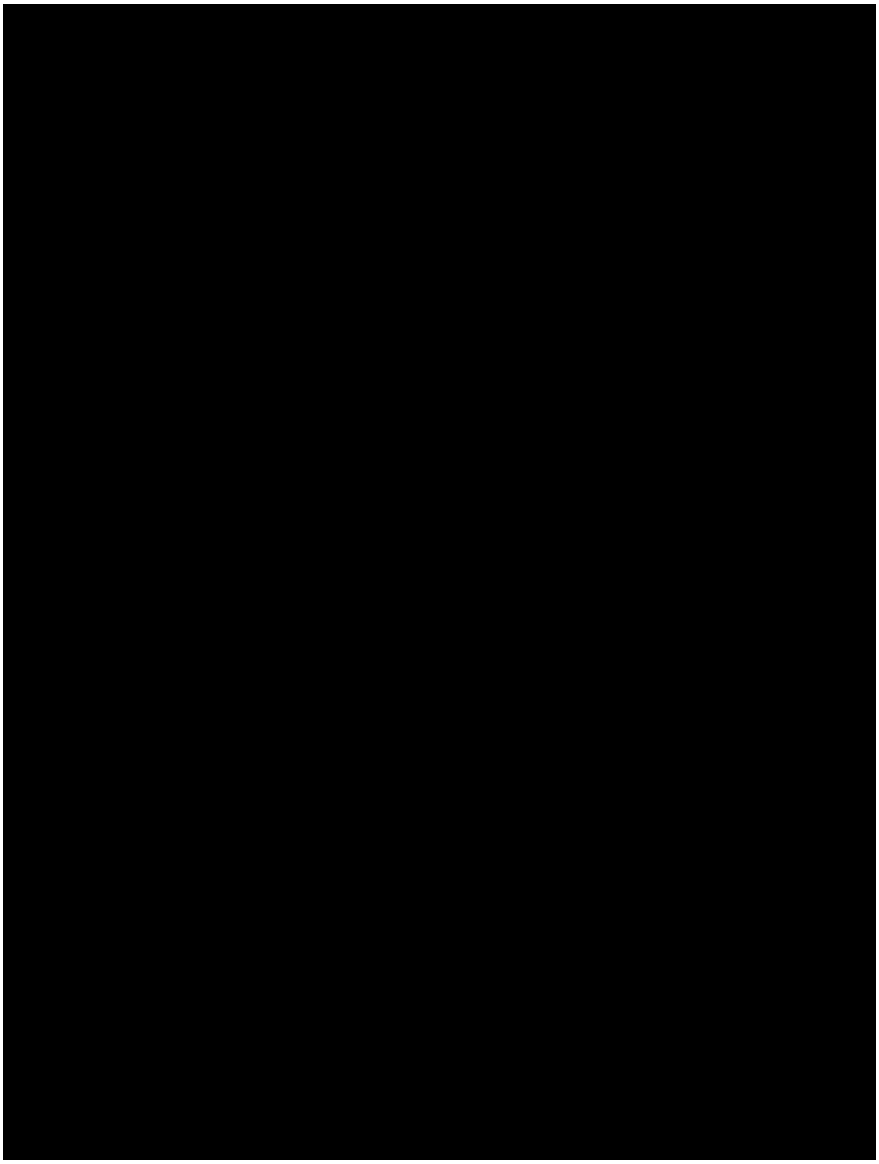


Photo 5: Existing hard standing showing MOD equipment (photos 1 & 2)

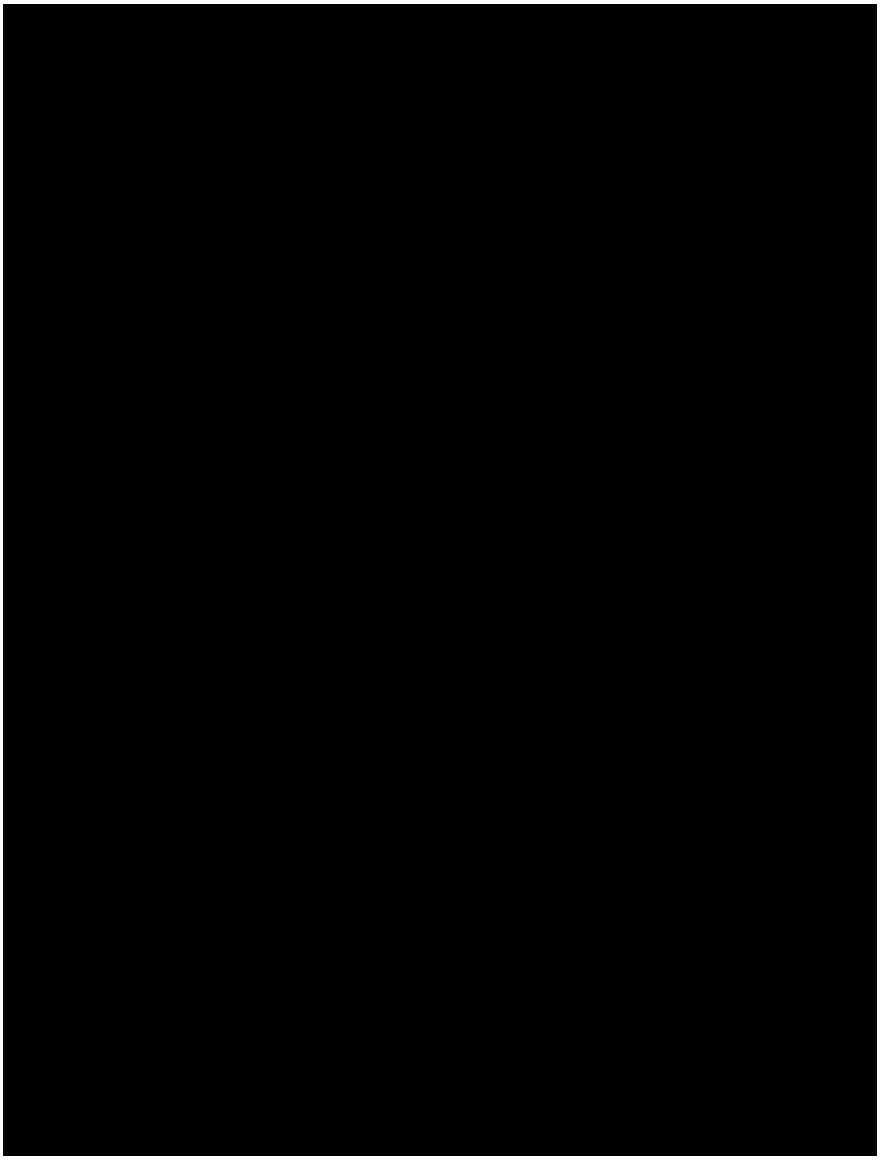


Photo 5: Existing hard standing showing MOD equipment (photos 1 & 2)

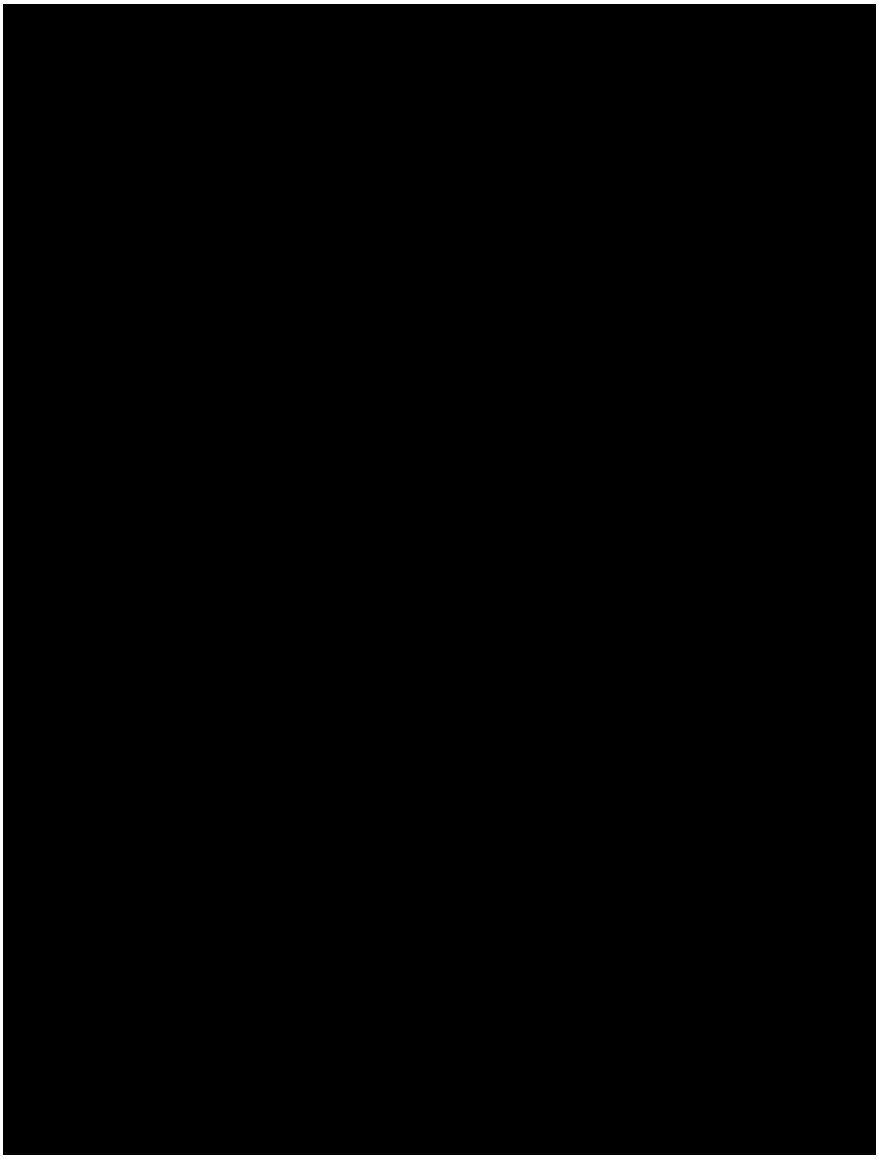


Photo 6: View of hard standing towards Nissan Huts

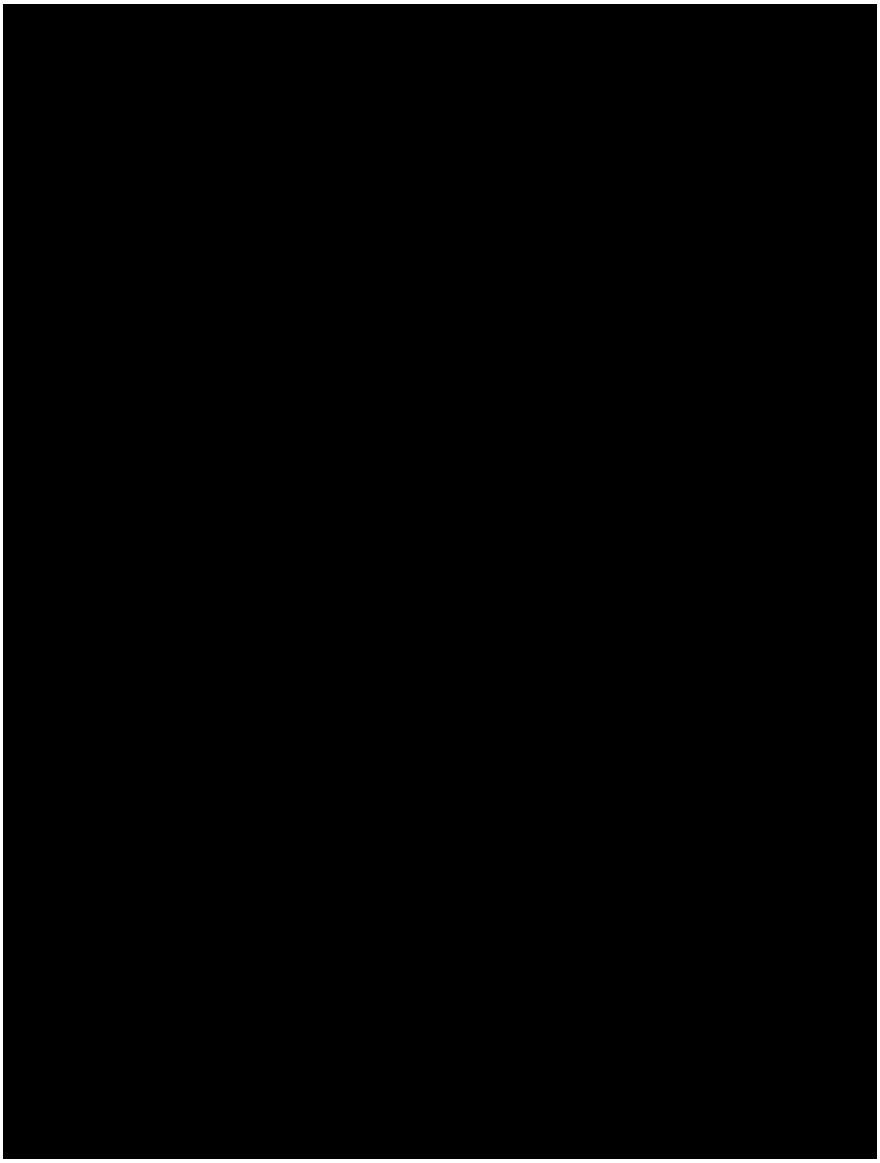


Photo 7: Existing view of wider hard standing and Pylon

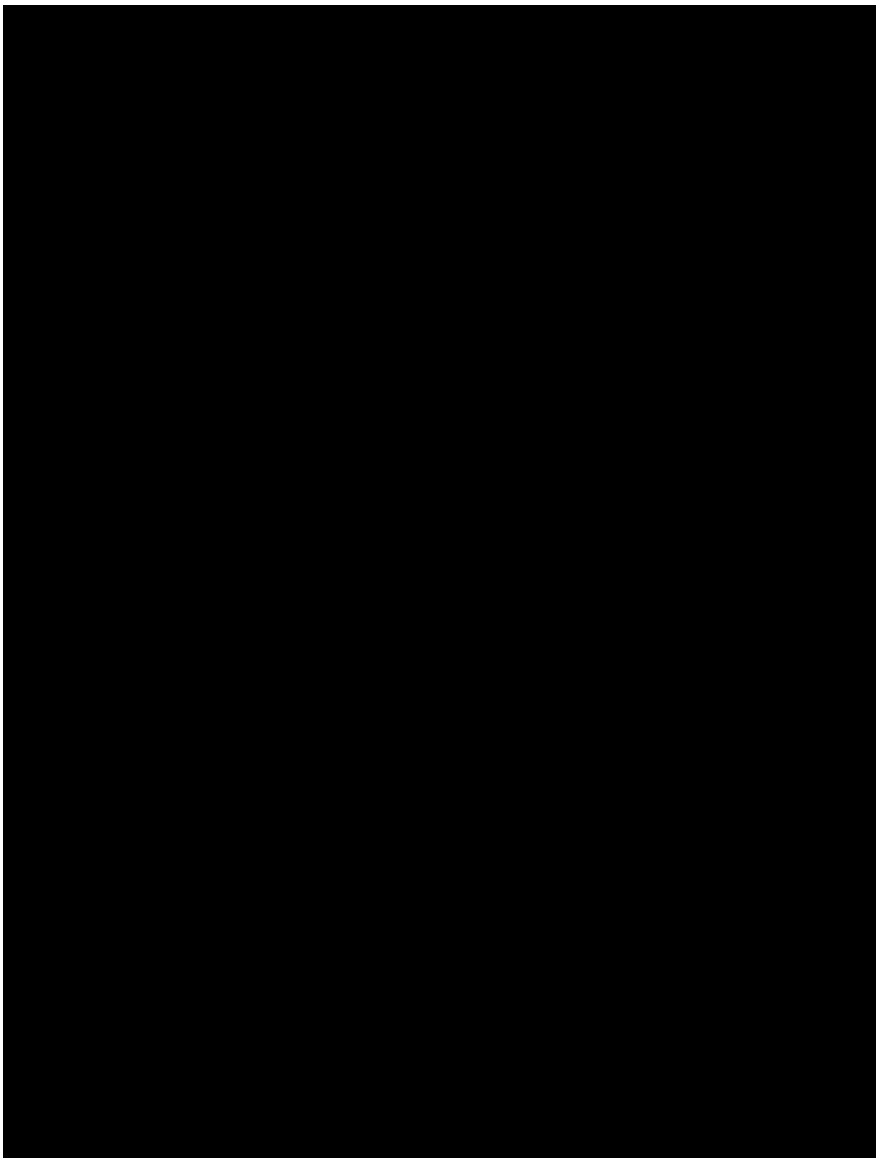


Photo 8: Closer view of Pylon from existing hard standing

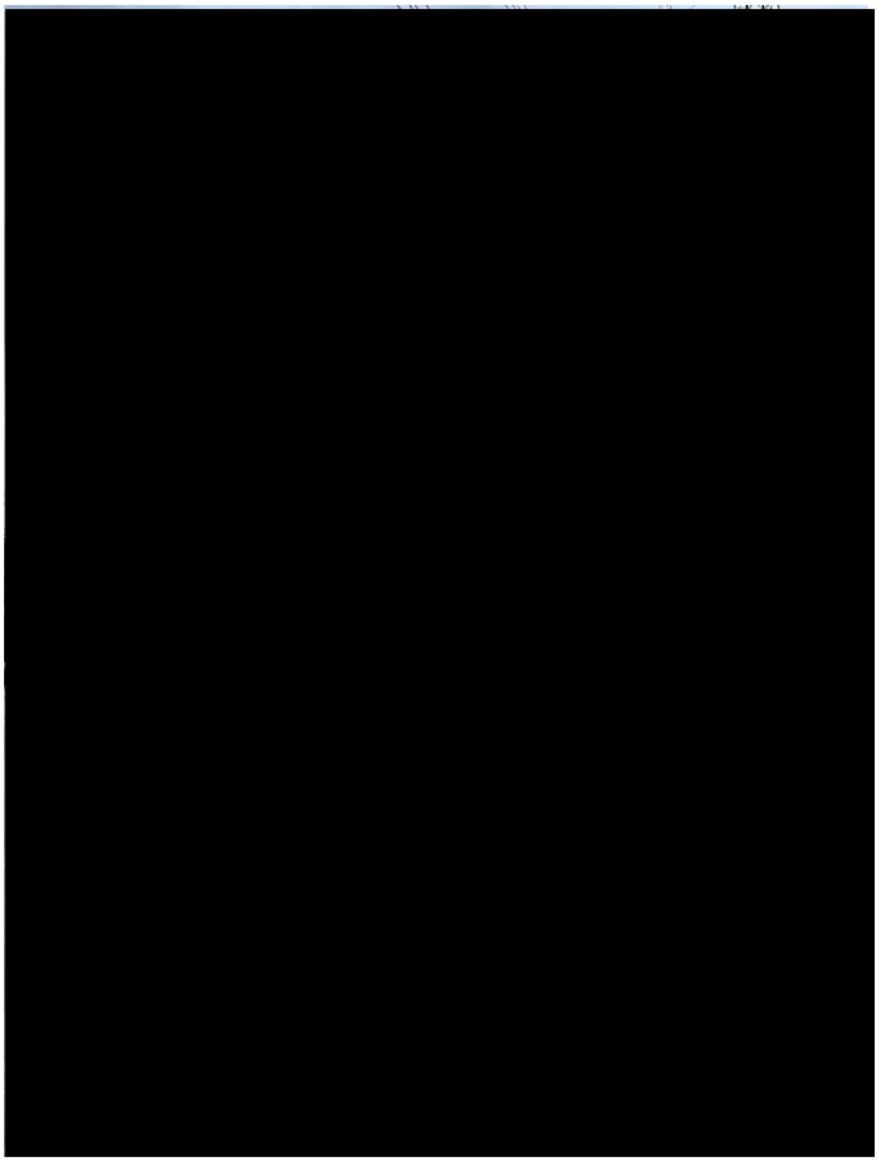


Photo 9: View of Pylon within the site

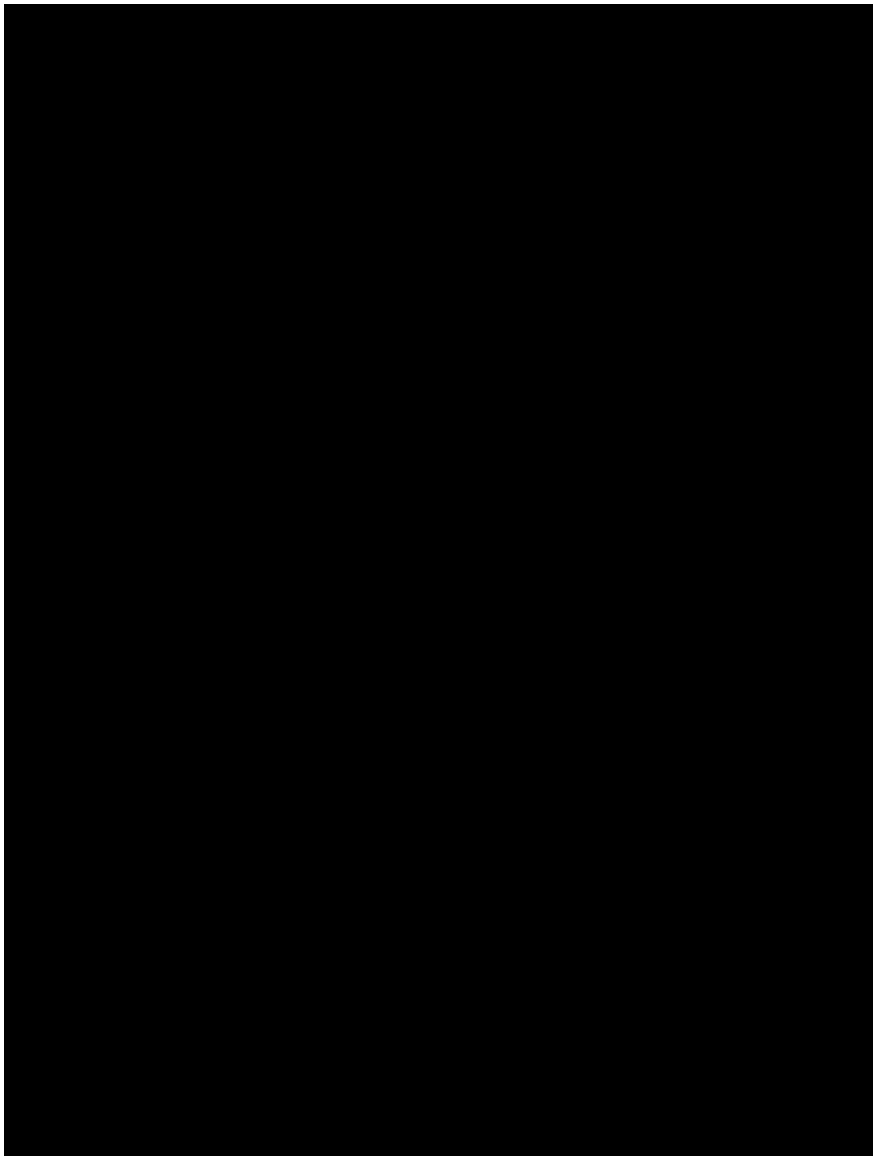
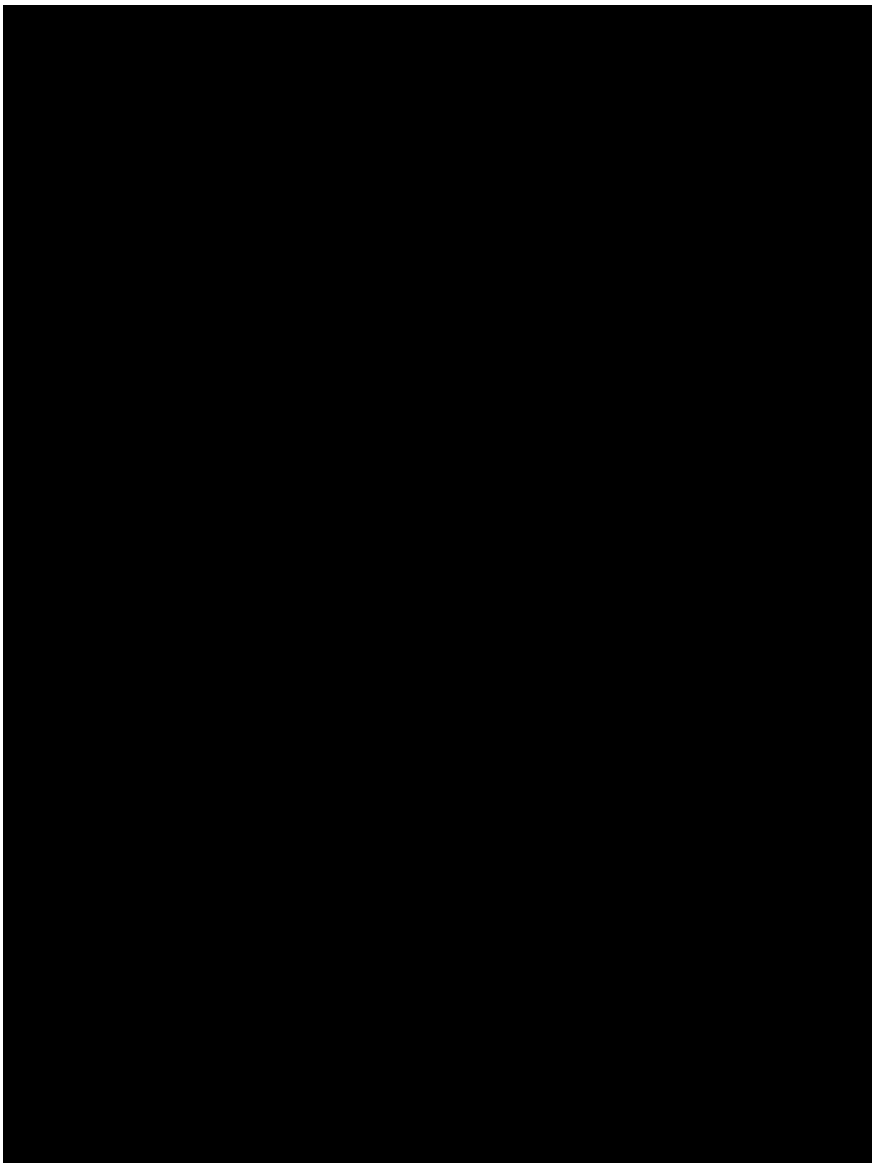


Photo 10: View of Pylon to be secured at the base



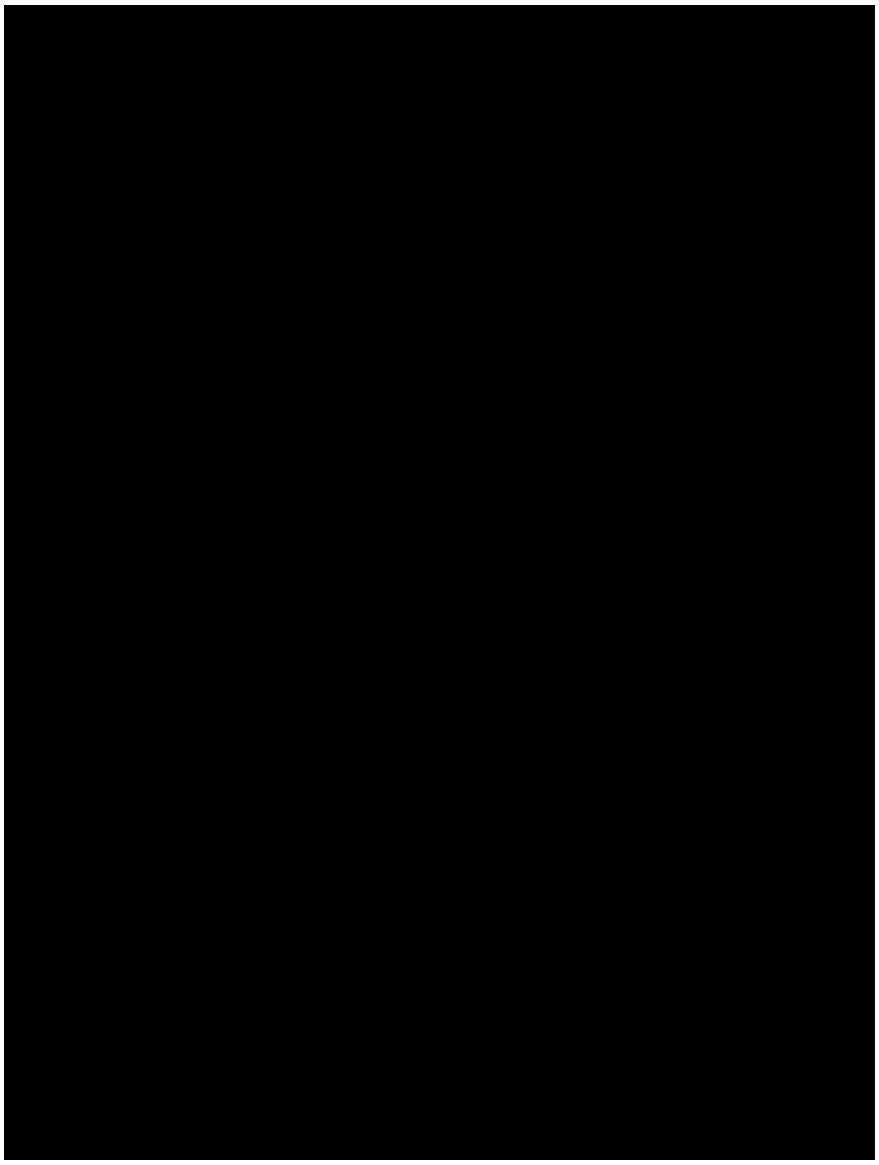


Photo 11: Close up secondary access gate.



Photo 12: Existing security building at the second access, to be refurbished



Photo 13: Existing security building at second access with view to pylon at the rear



Photos: 14 Existing Nissan Huts



Photos: 15: Existing Nissan Huts



Photos: 16: Existing Nissan Huts



Photos: 17: Existing Nissan Huts



Photo 18: View of existing Nissan Hut with existing substation

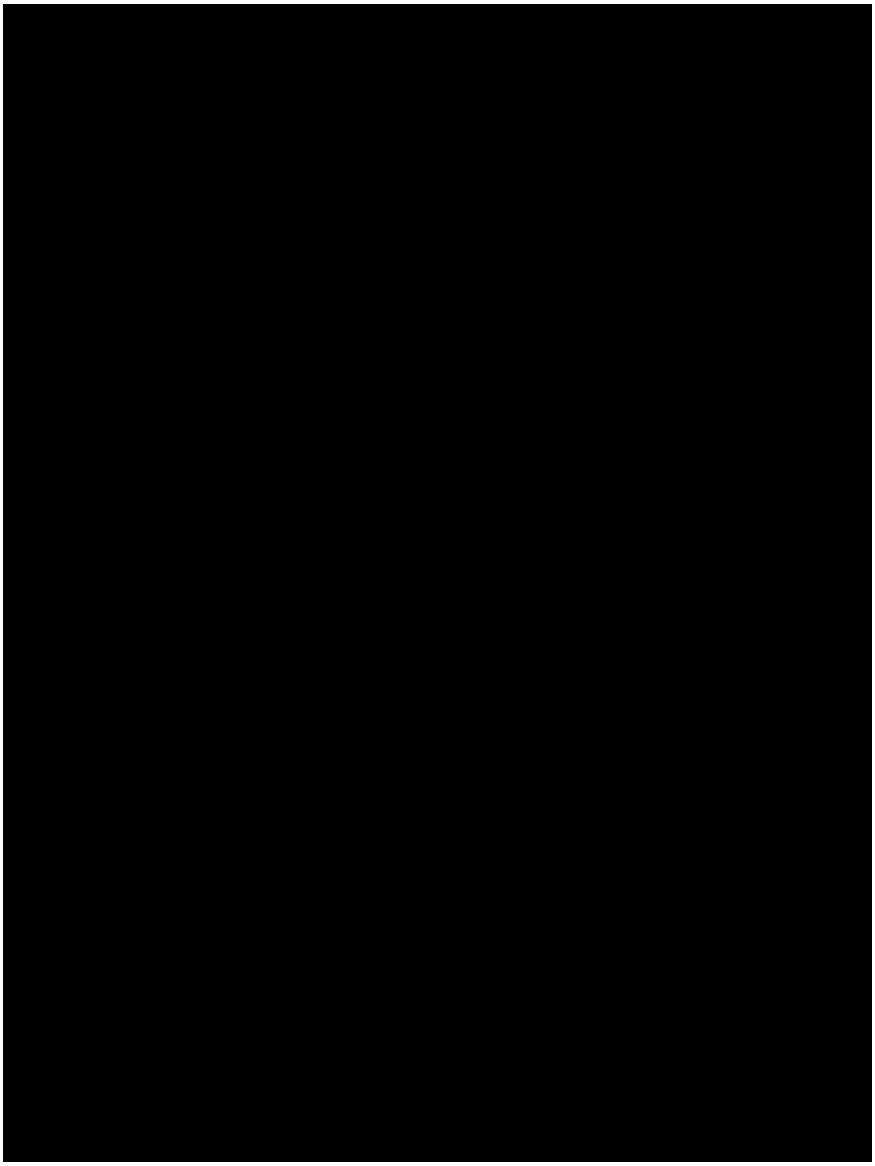


Photo 19: Top Corner of the site



Photo 20: Former Railway station platform